

CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION:
On The Cultural Dynamics in the Cairene Public Space

by

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ABSTRACT

The informal regulations governing the patterns of inhabiting the public spaces of contemporary Cairo result in the chaotic appearance of the use and imagery of these spaces. Through the documentation and analysis of some of these patterns and their spatial implications, one could identify two sets of cultural values with two possible frameworks, or models. The one is ascribed to an institutional and formal framework while the other is a non-codified, yet culturally agreed upon, set of values. The dynamics between the two cultural models, as this study argues, involve different modes of interaction. In Cairo, modes of either a confrontation or of a denial are apparent in the public space, as they are manifest in the cultural discourse in general.

By tracing the origins and the evolution of these models, the formal and the informal, two processes of cultural change are identified. The one embraced by the cultural elite is an abrupt, rapid and more responsive to external forces. The other, undertaken by the society at large, is gradual and slower in pace. It also requires wider span of time to absorb external cultural impulses. To the former, I refer as a 'High' culture, embraced by a culturally 'Ruling' group; while for the latter I use the term 'Popular' culture. Through the study of selected periods of urban/cultural history of the city, I argue for three stages of transition from one civilizational model to another. Each phase involves different dynamic between the two cultural groups, and in the nature of their distinctive role in the process of change.

From the perspective of this 'bifurcation', two issues I consider essential, and should be addressed. The first, a theoretical one, is that the process of change undertaken by the popular group, which I define here as an 'indigenous' process of change, needs to be revealed, understood and acknowledged. It must be both culturally and physically incorporated in any developmental scheme. Secondly, is that most conventional planning approaches, which attempt to promote the physical conditions of the public space by restoring its absent 'order' while ignoring these indigenous processes eventually fail. In short, it is seen as imperative to develop a reconciliatory approach between the two apparently conflicted models rather than to subdue one by another.

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To my mother and the memory of my father..

1. INTRODUCTION:

For the purposes of this study, there are two arguments regarding the interpretation of history. The first is evolutionary and linear; it asserts the quantitative dimension of change either politically, culturally or economically. The second argument is a structural one emphasizing the qualitative differences among these aspects. I will briefly introduce both perspectives and, by quoting some examples, clarify this study's position regarding the two.

An Evolutionary Approach

In sociological studies, the evolutionary interpretation of history regards 'developing' societies as undergoing a process of change that had already taken place centuries ago in the 'developed' world. Most views consider Classic civilizations (Greek and Roman) as the starting point for the continuous evolution of today's Western culture. Others admit that the Middle-ages were a time when the West was asleep while the Orient was awake. The Renaissance, however, remains an agreed historical base, upon which the modern world re-emerged. Scientific and industrial revolutions accompanied by Enlightenment thought were major manifestations of such civilizational revival. In the meantime, the East, according to this view, was in a state of numbness and backwardness. It has anxiously started to undertake such a revolutionary process only in the nineteenth century, thanks to the colonial hegemony which offered the opportunity to introduce the 'civilized' world to these societies.

Derek Hopwood, in accordance with this view, argues that "Western countries have had centuries to absorb modernization and the changes it can bring in all aspects of life such as the growth of secularization, the weakening of family ties, different moral attitudes, the changing status of women, and despite the length of time involved tension and disruption have been unavoidable. Developing countries are having to accelerate the pace of change, some to an almost intolerable

degree.”¹

Some proponents of this view argue for the inevitability of both the gains and losses of modernization, while others claim that societies, which are undergoing a process of modernization can and should learn from mistakes of the more advanced[in their view] societies to avoid some of modernization’s failures. Perhaps most interestingly among the latter opinions is the paradoxical definition of the fashionable term ‘Community Development’ in both ‘First World’ and ‘Third World’ contexts. According to this view, “the concept of ‘community development’ is an instrument for the people in developing countries seen as in need of such assistance to their transition to a more ‘advanced’ stage of community life, whereas the people living in an industrialized [modern] urban location would be assisted to return to a more ‘traditional’ form of community life.”² Such a seemingly reversible statement is a serious attack on the linear argument of historical development. Yet, as we will see below, this argument is never given up.

Reflecting on the Middle East as one region suffering from the most problematic political and cultural turmoil, this evolutionary approach seems even more severe. In his comprehensive analysis of early twentieth century Middle-East politics, David Fromkin argues that

“[e]verywhere else in the world--everywhere outside Asia--European occupation had resulted in the destruction of native political structures and their replacement by new ones of European design. The Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa were no longer divided in terms of tribe; they were divided, as Europe was, into countries. Governmental administration of most of the planet was conducted in European mode, according to European percepts, and in accordance with European concepts. Still, there was some reason to question whether Europe occupation could produce quite so deep or lasting an impression in the Middle East as it had elsewhere. It was not only that the Middle East was a region of proud and ancient civilizations, with beliefs deeply rooted in the past, but also that the changes Europe proposed to introduce were so profound that generations would have to pass before the changes could take place. These matters take time. Ancient Rome shaped Europe, and renaissance Europe shaped the Americas, but in both cases it was the work of centuries ...”³

¹ Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), Chapter 9, ‘The Life of the People’, 161.

² Jo-Anne Lee, “Organizing with Immigrant Women: A Critique of Community Development on Adult Education”, CJSAE/RCEEA 7, 2 Nov. 1993.

³ David Fromkin, A Peace to End All Peace: The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle

The twentieth century Middle East, he continues,

“will eventually be seen to be a situation similar to Europe’s in the fifth century AD, when the collapse of the Roman Empire’s authority in the West threw its subjects into a crisis of civilization that obliged them to work out a new political system of their own. The European experience suggests what the dimension of such a radical crisis of political civilization might be. It took Europe a millennium and a half to resolve its post-Roman crisis of social and political identity: nearly a thousand years to settle on the nation-state form of political organization, and nearly five hundred years more to determine which nations were entitled to be states.”⁴

Without succumbing to the evolutionary approach of historical development, this above presented view serves as a model illustrating the time needed, according to this argument, for change not only politically but culturally as well. Having some reservations in regard to the exaggerated time frame envisioned, this argument remains, from my perspective, essentially true and valid.

The Second approach to cultural history is the one arguing for separate cultural and civilizational models and processes of change. One does not lead to the other. The Modern project is accordingly a starting point for an irreversible divergence between itself (the Modern) and the pre-Modern or non-Modern civilizational models or paradigms.

Constructed Realities: Two Worlds

Colonial territorial expansion reached its apogee during nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The ‘Great Game’ between England, France and Russia to expand into and control more territorial gains in the Middle East resulted in the designated boundaries, drawn frontiers and decided political destinies of their people according to colonial agendas. In the same manner, it is argued here that a ‘modern’ cultural model was transplanted by the imperial powers in their colonies according to both their strategic (political) and economic priorities.

In order to dismantle the different parts of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled both temporally and spiritually an extended Islamic region, colonial powers invented pan-Arab nationhood and

East (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 560.

⁴ Ibid. 565.

partitioned its region into secular nation-states headed by a local ruling protégé, and under its control as an immediate or nominal protectorate. A concept that was hitherto alien to the Middle East people, this nationhood was meant to substitute loyalty to the *Ummah* (Muslim Community) by the adherence to invented geographical boundaries based on both linguistic and historical claims.

From that perspective, this invented political entity entailed a new constructed cultural identity. The modern state of Egypt, for example, was constructed to oppose, negate and transcend the 'backward' Turkish (Muslim) Empire.⁵ The Ottoman Caliphate had inevitably to be replaced by a secular modern state; a parliament as well as all other associated modern institutions.⁶ Changing the country's status from a middle-age feudal province to a modern industrial nation was conditioned, according to this construct, by abandoning the past, the whole civilizational package, and embracing the new one, the European cultural model of modernity.

During the early phase of political, cultural and institutional modernization, a rapid pace of profound transformation was to take place in different facets of society. In relentless attempts to catch up with the industrial world, tremendous efforts were spent to mimic the West, and breathtaking schemes were launched in order to achieve such a modernization project. Military, education and urban programs were a few of the obvious fields that received huge amounts of investment and a painful process of schizophrenic development. Torn between deeply rooted traditions and values and rapidly changing modern technology and needs, each of those modernization schemes, until perhaps the awakened nationalists' movement in the early twentieth century, aimed ambitiously at abandoning the past and starting fresh. By copying European cities,

⁵ The duality of two civilizational models in Egypt was first established by the scholars and artists who accompanied Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798. In their depiction of Egyptian society, one could recognize what they consider as two models: the glorified past of Ancient Egypt, the one they identified with as a legacy of the West; and the backward contemporary Arab-Islamic Ottoman tradition.

⁶ For educational, military and urban institutions that were established during the nineteenth century, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989).

new districts or suburbs were founded as models, without the need to deal with the 'hopeless' medieval city. By the same token, old cultural and institutional models were left to decay, while new, 'modern' ones were established. Although further deteriorated, the traditional models survived, and still, today, this dual nature of cultural and physical manifestation is evident.

In keeping with this argument, some post-modern cultural theorists argue for the continuity of such constructed reality. Post-colonialists insist that, today, this hegemonic cultural duality is unbridgeable. Edward Said, for example, argues that the Orientalist approach not only affects the Western consumers of this constructed moral system but also the people in the Orient themselves and the very way they conceive the developmental stage of their history.⁷

In his study on nineteenth century, colonized Egypt, Timothy Mitchell elaborates on the notion of knowledge becoming the realm of the 'conceptual.' He argues that the world, constituted as what lay outside the texts of such knowledge, was thus made to appear meaningless. People were no longer to read what was inscribed in the continuous world of streets, books, or buildings, but were to look outside the world, for a text containing its meaning.⁸ The separation is established between an act conceived as 'organization' or 'ordering' on the one hand and what was 'orderless' on the other. The world was divided, as Mitchell argues, into two. The tendency to think of two worlds recurs, as Samuel Huntington argues, throughout human history. People are always tempted to divide people into "us" and "them", the in-group and the "other", our civilization and those barbarians.⁹

This study however starts from the premise that a reconciliation between the two apparent conflicting modes is not only possible, but also historically evident, and inevitable. It establishes a framework for co-presence; the one that, as I will discuss in my historic survey, had prevailed when

⁷ Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 67.

⁸ Timothy Mitchell, "As If The World Were Divided in Two: The Birth of Politics in Turn-of-the-Century Cairo" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1984).

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 32-33.

enough time was permitted to achieve an essential balance.

An Inclusive Model

From this perspective, the immediate consequences of cultural alienation and identity crisis should not be seen as an ultimate destiny for the apparently divided societies. Precedents do exist of cultural conflict between a weakened authentic model and an empowered invading one. The centuries-long process of assimilation and cultural reconciliation is argued in this study to be inevitable. Along this process, understandably, there initially exist periods of cultural alienation. Lack of bases, identity crisis, chaos and disorder are among the many terms attempting to describe these phases of cultural turmoil. In this study, however, I believe and will make the point that an eventual 'new' indigenous cultural model is being developed, and that the chaotic condition we are witnessing is a transitional phase which bears a potential to reconcile the apparent conflict. This study is concerned with periods of cultural turmoil, and as this consistently identifies with the built environment, an urban approach and methodology is undertaken. It explores the current transitional phase, identifying measures of its (both cultural and urban) conflicts, and, more ambitiously, contemplates some frameworks for action.

It begins with some observations on a few physical and behavioral patterns of cultural conflict in the contemporary city of Cairo. Being a metropolis in a developing country, Cairo serves as an example with potential generalization applications for a larger domain of urban centers in developing countries. In today's global structure, Cairo suffers both its economic and cultural ramifications, as most post-colonial major cities do. A historical analysis of different phases of the city's history follows these observations with an attempt to portray both the cultural and physical conditions in each phase. Three phases are identified as essential to this historic survey: That preceding the advent of modernity (end of Islamic phase); the early modern (colonial phase); and the late modern one (contemporary phase). In each phase, I will focus on societal groups, and discuss both their cultural and urban models. Finally the study poses a theoretical model - a

possible interpretation of the process of cultural change that would provide, first, an explanation of the current conflict; and, secondly, a future reconciliatory scheme of such alleged conflict.

This study's approach is not in accord with the evolutionary argument, although it agrees with the possibility of avoiding some of Modernism's failures; nor does it recognize an established separation between two worlds, as the second argument goes. It argues for an indigenous, non-Western model for modernization, which in that context denotes being contemporary without necessarily being Modern.

PART I

: BACKGROUND, OBSERVATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

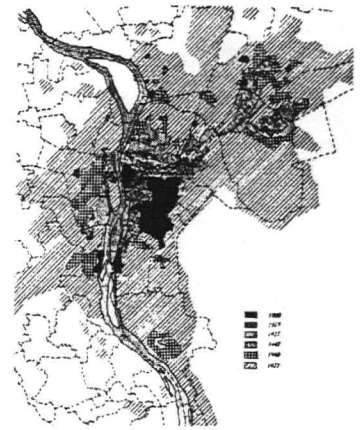
"Other cities would be hard-pressed to match Cairo's vibrancy. Its population is estimated at 16 million and it is said there are more than two million automobiles in the city--often, it seems, all on the road at the same time. The teeming population and the always-congested streets give Cairo the feel of a carnival midway gone awry. ... Even by big-city standards, Cairo's traffic is the stuff of legends. Roads exist as dusty asphalt battlefields where trucks hauling gravity-defying loads jockey for position with archaic municipal buses, just as overloaded with their Cairene commuters. Then there's the legion of taxis weaving in and out of lanes with stunt man-like precision, their horns honking incessantly; the constant horde of pedestrians; donkeys hauling rickety wooden carts; and the occasional cyclist complete with an extra passenger or two straddling the handlebar. It is mayhem"

The Financial Post Magazine, September 1996



2. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

During the last two decades, beginning in the mid 1970s, the cultural change that took place in Egyptian society was so dramatic that it could only be compared to the early nineteenth century's encounter with the West. This earlier encounter has motivated the ruling stratum and upper middle classes to embrace modernity as a cultural and institutional framework, and to adopt the Western model as an ideal. The adoption of this 'Modern' paradigm was associated with the establishment of new educational, political and military programs. Perhaps more importantly from the perspective of this study, it introduced radical changes to the urban fabric of the city of Cairo through a series of planning schemes. Not only in their formal aspects were these imported urban schemes alien to the existing urban fabric, but the process by which the city had grown was terminated, and its product obliterated. These formal interventions thus resulted in a severe rupture in the historical continuity of an indigenous model,¹⁰ operating hitherto both culturally and physically, on different societal levels. Different societal groups, and here I will introduce the terms 'Ruling' and 'Popular' groups,¹¹ were up till this moment embracing the same paradigmatic model, way of life or world view. The encounter with Europe in early nineteenth century was, I will argue, not only abrupt, but has also caused the process of modernization to be carried out by two



2.1. A map illustrating the city expansion till 1980

¹⁰ The term 'indigenous' is being used here tentatively to contrast it with the new coming 'Western' model, with no implication of a fixed or an ahistoric cultural positions. I will elaborate on these terms in the following part while discussing the conceptual model. See below Part III.

¹¹ By the former I refer to the cultural elite, groups having High culture and operating within institutional frameworks; while the latter describes mass culture, having non-institutional frameworks. Both groups, the Ruling and the Popular, and their characteristics will be further discussed in Part III of this study.

different societal groups. From then until today, both the 'Ruling' and the 'Popular' groups have been undergoing two patterns of cultural change and with unequal paces of transition.¹² Each group is still operating within a different cultural framework, or paradigm.

In 1952, one and a half centuries later, a *coup d'état* in Egypt managed to overthrow the monarchy and establish a national government. This event is often viewed as the point of departure from colonial (foreign) to national (local) rule. The political transformation it has introduced, however, was not paralleled by an equivalent measure of cultural change. Despite its ambitious programs of economic and social reform,¹³ the nationalization policies failed to achieve a real cultural reconciliation between the two groups; the Ruling and the Popular. The ruling classes, including the elite and upper middle class were, culturally, still operating within the colonial institutional framework. Through the 1950's and 1960's this cultural hegemony continued to manifest itself; foreign models continued to be adopted and imposed on the already alienated popular classes. They continued to be culturally colonized although they remained politically independent. In short, the split between two cultural groups, having their separate cultural realms, persisted, albeit with Egyptian protagonists.

Led by three major phenomena, the mid-seventies witnessed the

¹² The first is pursued by a culturally-ruling minority, embracing foreign models, and characterized by rapid change and abrupt transition. An indigenous process of modernization, on the other hand, carried out by the society at large, usually follows a slower pace and has a gradual pattern of change.

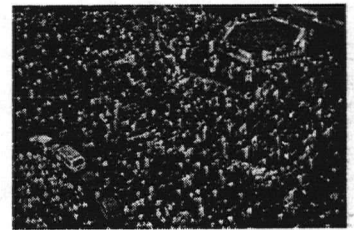
¹³ For detailed discussion of the Post-revolution phase, see Part II, Chapter 6 of this study.

start of a cultural turmoil, which in turn was reflected in the open space of the city. The first of these phenomena was the oil boom of 1974 in the neighboring Gulf and North African states, which drew out millions of Egyptian laborers for the past two decades. These workers eventually returned with both their savings and aspirations to acquire new status in a society undergoing a fundamental reshaping process. The second phenomenon was the Open-Market policy introduced by the Sadat regime as a strategy for economic reform. Motivated by an entrepreneurial spirit, many small businessmen were able to rise economically by taking advantage of the newly emerging opportunities, and the still-vague market regulations. These individuals soon constituted a *nouveau riche* class, possessing a rapidly acquired wealth and a will to share the front lines of the society. The third and last phenomenon was the Islamist movements and the rise of religious consciousness with both its cultural and militant facets. Rising religious sentiments, which should not be separated from the other two major factors, have in turn influenced the social behavior of a major sector of society, particularly within the influx of rural emigrants, who settled in the informal districts or fringes of the city.

By the mid-seventies, the chance for social mobility on a large scale was available for the first time in the nation's modern history. This phenomenal shift from low-income conditions of 'traditional' families to a *nouveau riche* status occurred within a relatively short period of time. The rapid acquisition of wealth was in turn paralleled by a physical mobility, allowing for a massive migration from



2.2. Cultural manifestations of the economic forces during the 1970's



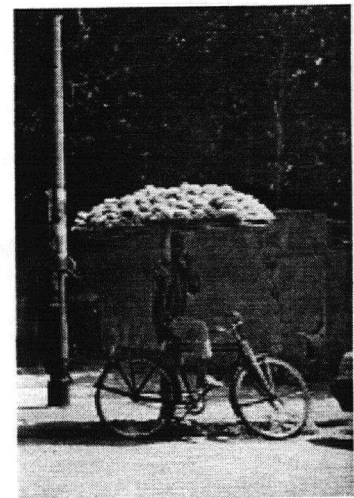
2.3. Rising religious sentiments affected the use of public spaces

traditional neighborhoods to affluent districts. A frantic desire to be affiliated, and identified with, the 'modern' elite and its life style was predominant. 'Modern' parts of the city, once inhabited by upper-middle classes having their quasi-Western cultural values and practices, were suddenly becoming magnets for a constant migration by the newly-enriched class. Both social boundaries and cultural exclusiveness were once and for all dissolved.

Once culturally and physically segregated, the two above groups have already started a process of re-convergence. This has led to the current state of fluidity and cultural turmoil, where bases and values became subject to assessment, and which is manifested in public space as it is in other societal arenas. Among other characteristics of the current transitional phase, the spatial conflict taking place in public spaces is identified and documented through two main patterns: either a mode confrontation between the two cultural models or a denial by one (in power) of the other. Using empirical observations, the following part will portray such conflict in a series of examples, in which I intend to illustrate both the cultural bases and physical manifestation.

3. OBSERVATIONS: Spatial Patterns of a Cultural Conflict

This part identifies the physical manifestation of what I argue to be an underlying cultural conflict currently apparent in the city of Cairo. Through the documentation and analysis of spatial patterns described below, selected examples are used as a device to substantiate my argument. The number and kind of their categories are therefore non-exhaustive. All examples are selected from within the western side of the city - an area which was predominantly developed during the second half of this century, and which exemplifies the post-colonial urban and cultural transition of the city as a whole.¹⁴ The spatial patterns are organized in terms of their public vs. private relationship into three main categories: the domestic domain (individual scale), the local domain (neighborhood community scale), and the urban domain (district community scale). Examples of the first category include the informal property domains and outdoor territorial extensions. The second category comprises the re-use of street medians for social events and religious festivities, while the last category includes the traffic informal organization. Each pattern illustrates a spatial conflict and concludes with an interpretation of its underlying cultural bases, manifested in a mode of either a confrontation or a denial, as will be presented below.



3.1. A typical example of the encroachment of informal patterns

¹⁴ For further discussion of this part of the city, see below Chapter 6: "The Post-revolution City;" and Chapter 7: "Three Cities in one".

3.1. Informal Property Domain: Outdoor Territorial Extensions

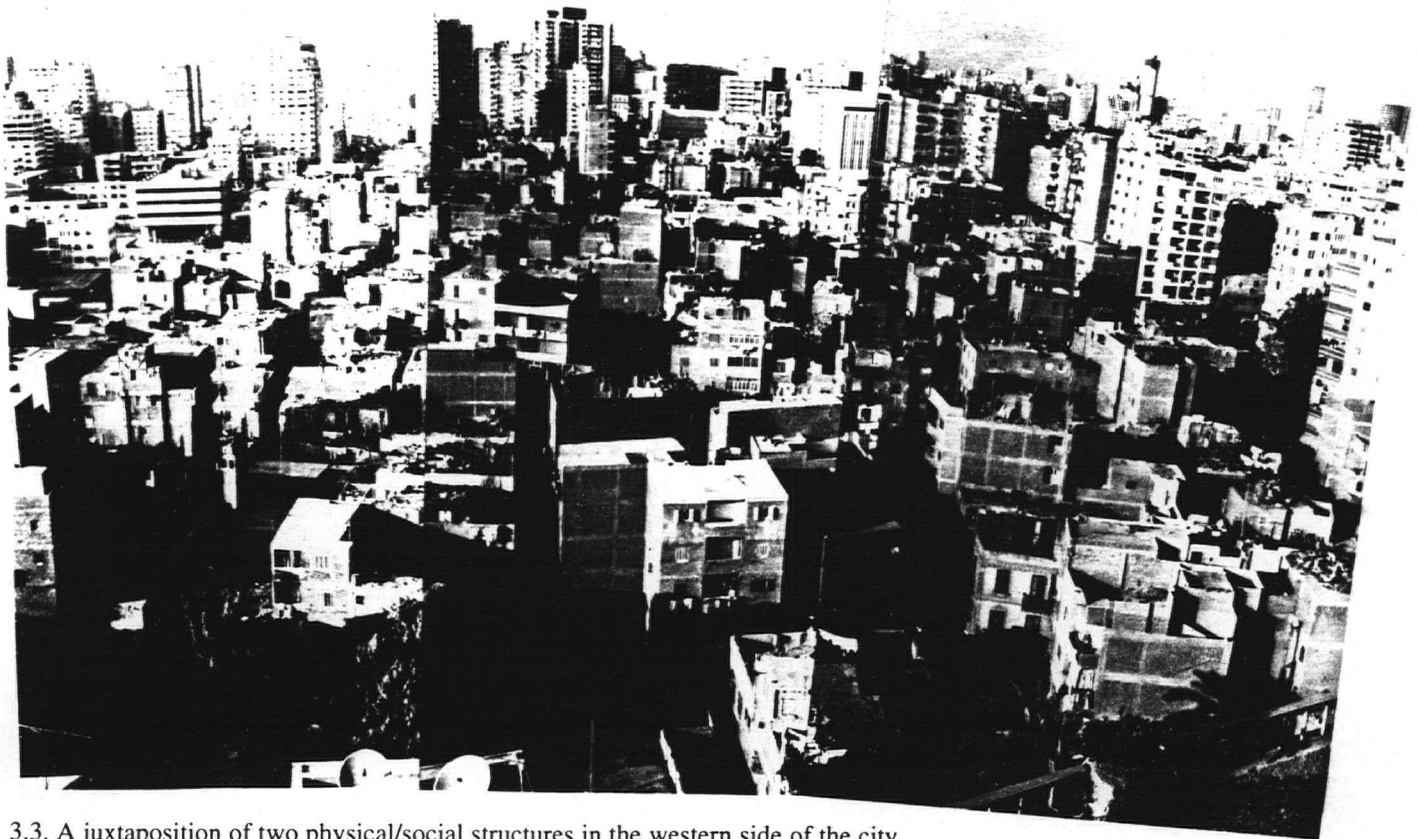
This group of spatial patterns involves actions taking place within the individual's property and its outdoor extension. It includes two main categories: those occurring in residential areas on the one hand and those in commercial/light industrial areas on the other. The main characteristic of the spatial conflict on this level is the different, and occasionally opposed, perceptions of territorial boundaries. The conflict may be displayed either between two individuals, when private property is at issue; or between an individual and the public, when these two levels of ownership are conflicted. In either case, the spatial conflict is due, as the study argues, to different modes of cultural values, different ways of perceiving realities, hence their rights, rather than the violation of one's rule by the other. In other words, particularly in the case of public vs. private informal domains, each individual is content that s/he is claiming one's (formal or informal) right.

In each of the following patterns the study has identified three measures of spatial arrangement: a) actions of claiming and controlling one's perceived territory; b) tools and physical elements of spatial demarcation; and c) exchanging mechanisms of such informal territorial domains.

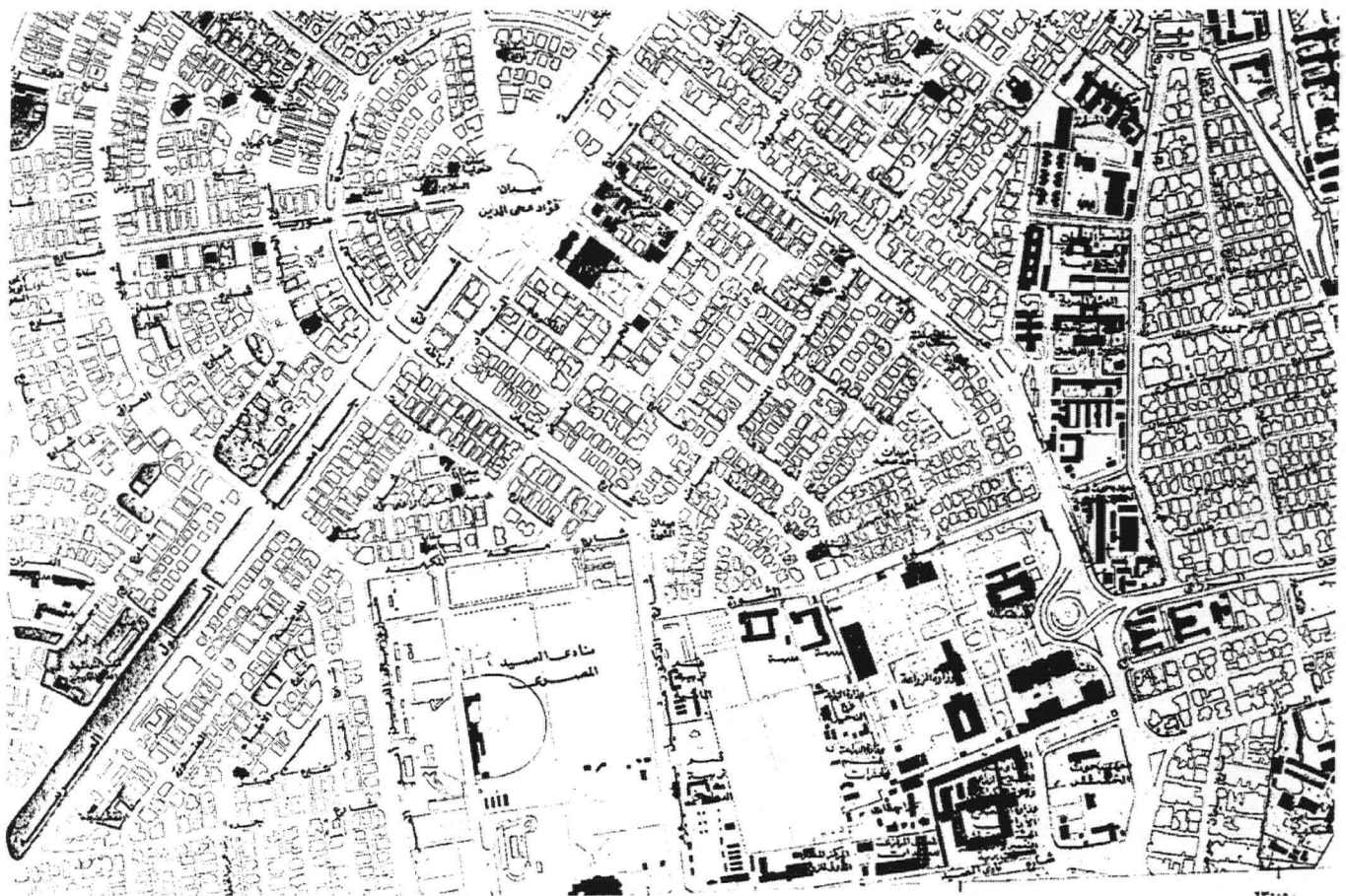
Because it is beyond the scope of this study to include all existing patterns, selected examples are presented as models.



3.2. The western side of the city



3.3. A juxtaposition of two physical/social structures in the western side of the city

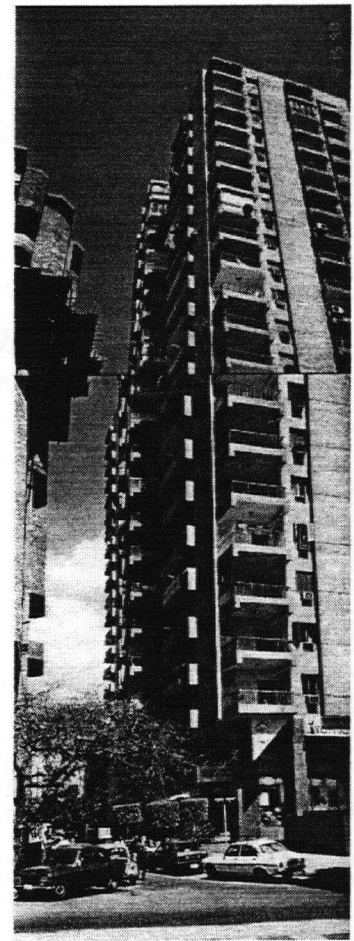


3.4. Al-Muhandisin district, a typical planning scheme in the western city

3.1.1 Residential areas

Neighborhoods, located in planned districts on the western bank of the Nile (the city of Engineers, of Journalists, of University Staff, etc.) were originally inhabited by an emerging post-revolutionary class of technocrats and high civil servants - those who once shared, or imitated the quasi-Western cultural values of the local aristocrats. Based on the Garden City model, plans of these neighborhoods consisted of small villas and two to three story detached family houses, each on an individual plot, surrounded on two sides by yards. As part of the zoning plan, streets were laid out to accommodate vehicular traffic on a residential level. For each unit a parking garage is always attached, and thus parking spaces were not estimated as an essential factor in determining the street width. It was the densities as well as the demographic and social conditions of the targeted communities that were the prime criteria upon which these neighborhoods were planned and implemented as a model for the rising upper middle classes of the 1950s and the 1960s.

In contrast to contemporaneous rural settlements adjacent to these districts (which were separated by a regional railway line) both the affluence and governing civic regulations of their inhabitants were predominant characteristics of these formal districts. During the mid-1970s, the socio-economic change described above brought about two waves of migration from eastern and western sides of Cairo, changing both the demographic and cultural characteristics of these hitherto exclusive neighborhoods. First and foremost was the new wealthy entrepreneurial class of the--still-new Open Market economic policy and, at a comparable rate, the returning technocrats



3.5. A residential tower, an example of the socio-urban fabric in the western city



3.6. The character of the adjacent rural enclaves in the western city

from Oil States. The sudden wealth of the former and the savings of the latter pumped these neighborhoods with the increasing pressure of housing demands. A phenomenon, that could be explained in three ways. First, because of the relative availability of land in this part of the city (compared to other upper-middle classes districts, namely Zamalek and Garden City, fig. 1.1). Secondly, because there was a desire to associate with its residents as a sign of an economically well-off, and hence a social status. And finally, because the building laws in this area allowed the demolition of the existing family houses and their replacement by high-rise apartment buildings (fig. 3.5).

The first migration wave was predominantly from eastern quarters, from the city proper across the river. Groups that came to share, or replace, the existing socio-cultural residents. Home ownership, as opposed to rent, was a main reason behind this migration.¹⁵

Geographic, and thus physical mobility, one could argue, was a immediate manifestation of a rising economic status.

Encroaching from the west, the second wave crossed the railway boundary from an already evolved stretch of informal settlements that had circumscribed the formal districts from the western and northern sides. Searching for new opportunities in the emerging cultural and economic blend next door, these low-income communities fulfilled the needed residential services in such neighborhoods. Retail shopkeepers, daily domestic services (ironing, hairdressing, etc.), as well as house guards or porters

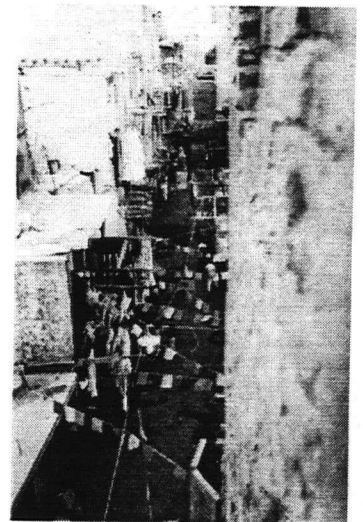
¹⁵ In contrast to the real-estate laws during Nasser reign, where residential units were predominately rented, the 1970's has witnessed the notion of home ownership in the apartment high-rise buildings.

were among these needed jobs. The commercial and light industrial services, however, such as coffee places, car repair, plumbing, wood and metal shops, building materials and hardware stores etc., were not comparably implanted in these districts. They will be discussed separately.

Both groups of new migrants brought values and cultural norms that were (at that time) foreign to the existing, quasi-Modern, groups and cultures. The clash between them was unavoidable, and can be identified on different levels of spatial configurations. To portray such a complex process, the following patterns are selected as examples.

On the street level, three basic domains could be identified. The indoor, private domain, whether it is residential, retail, or service (barber for example); the public domain, originally the roadway and the two strips of sidewalks; and the in-between zone, an ill-defined and formally unacknowledged domain. The first, private, zone was the least affected and modified as a result of the cultural conflict for which I am arguing. The public domain on the one hand has undergone a process of increasing shrinkage, while the in-between, informal, semi-public domain on the other hand has gained more territory, obviously at the expense of the public zone. It is not entirely true that the public domain simply remained the vehicular traffic roadway, and that the sidewalks were completely colonized. More complex patterns and (informal) principles of use and reuse, power structure and territory exchange were established.

Before presenting these patterns and principles it is important to



3.7, 3.8. Informal patterns in the public domain in a 'traditional' neighborhood, above, and a 'modern' one, below

define what is meant by different cultural groups. My argument that, generally speaking, most of the informal territorial gains were the result of the migrating groups and values, is based on the premise of cultural change that is further explored in part III of this study. For the time being, one could use terms as “more traditional” and “less modern”, or perhaps civic and non-civic to describe such an ambiguous polarity of formal and informal. Using the term “indigenous” values to contrast with “foreign” ones does not help either to avoid such a fixed dichotomy. I will focus here, however, on the process of cultural interchange rather than defining, and hence perpetuating, the boundaries of each groups. My argument is simply that the losses of the public, formal, civilly regulated, domains were mostly at the expense of the original inhabitants’ agreed-upon boundaries within these neighborhoods. In other words, spatial reconfiguration was a direct reflection of a cultural negotiation. I will demonstrate the two mutual processes through the following patterns.

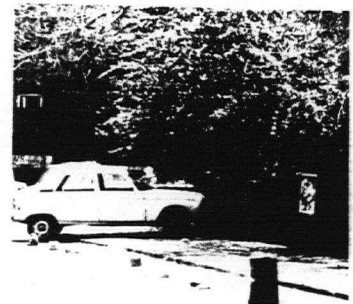
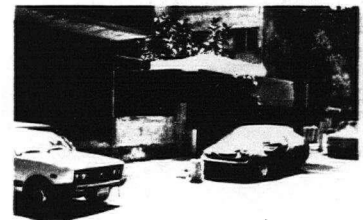
The first group of patterns is the outdoor extension of a retail or service shop. A zone that extends from a simple display of goods outside the entrance to the colonization of the sidewalk and parts of, or sometimes (as in the case of a dead-end street) the whole roadway. This colonization is either temporary (during working hours), permanent, or both on different spatial levels. For example, a grocery shop extending its footprint up to the street edge or beyond during the day, when it closes, claims a portion of the sidewalk permanently as storage area. This claimed portion is



3.9, 3.10. Outdoor extension of shops in the medieval city, above, and in a low-income neighborhood in the western city

employed during closure to place a locked coolers and/or perhaps to accommodate a sleeping area for one of the workers. This zone is regarded as his/her (informal) property and therefore responsibility. Cleaning, water splashing and in some cases painting, planting and paving are among these acknowledged duties. Other tools are also used to prevent cars from parking in front of the shop, either for unloading requirement or for his/her objection that they might hinder customers' visual and physical accessibility to the shop. This space in front of the shop, however, could be negotiated with neighbors, their visitors and the fellow shopkeepers next door. The physical tools of demarcation are therefore adjustable. Some still are movable. Barrels, cement blocks, steel poles and chains are among these tools.

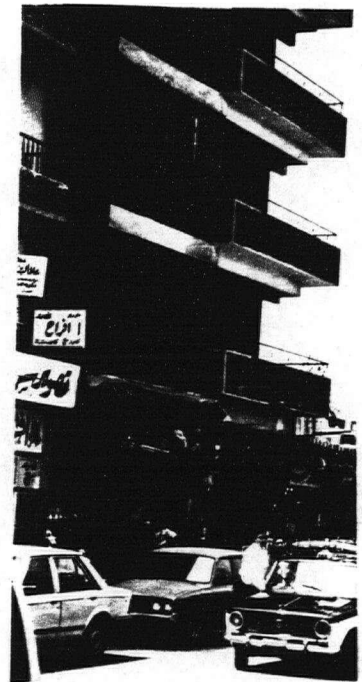
The second pattern in this category involves the parking spaces in front of houses and apartment buildings. Keeping these spaces reserved for the owner's and his visitors' vehicles is often the responsibility of the porter (*Bawwab* in Arabic), although sometimes such responsibility is being extended to the shopkeeper. The latter is normally a tenant renting the ground-floor of the same building, or sometimes a neighboring unit. In this case, the mutual benefit of both the landlord/resident and the shopkeeper in using the same space is evident. A landlord, for example, driving to work during the day, would leave the space to be occupied by the goods and merchandise of the shopkeeper, who, in return, maintains it, protects it from any outside intruder and returns it back by the end of the day. The same above-mentioned tools of demarcation are



3.11, 3.12, 3.13. Examples of tools of demarcation used to reserve parking spaces in residential areas

employed. The result of an “unauthorized” parked car in these claimed territories could result in violence. This could be expressed through vandalism against the violated vehicle itself (flattening a tire, breaking a windshield or a mirror, and/or scratching the paint for example). But it may also result in a personal aggression against the invaders, although the latter is uncommon. However, parking territories in residential areas are occasionally the cause and the battlefield of fights between (spatially) close neighbors. They belong, according to my interpretation, to the different migrating - and currently residing - groups described above. If the conflict occurred between two persons belonging to one group, it is usually resolved through their perceived common terms, either formal or informal ones. The confrontation arises when these terms belong to two conflicting cultural values.

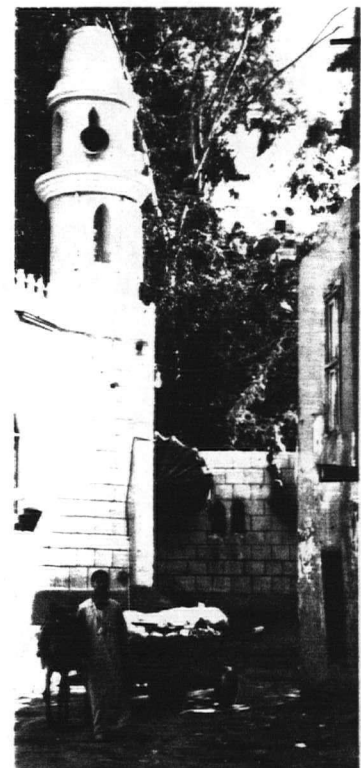
To highlight this point, we may consider the same situation taking place among varying cultural groups. For example, a person who has lived in this area since it was a low-density, civilly regulated neighborhood would find it hard to tolerate, acknowledge, or even understand the notion of the informal territorial domain, which s/he considers as illegal. From the other end of the equation, a shopkeeper, or a resident who moved to this neighborhood from a rather “traditional” one would be highly offended if these (informal) rights are violated. The apparent conflict will be resolved according to the power structure rather than to any set of rules, be they, once again, formal or informal ones. Power structure in this context is often established through personal connections. It is also dependent on the ability to demonstrate them, sometimes in a violent way as



3.14. The sidewalk is an extension claimed by shopkeepers, hence both their responsibility and control

mentioned above.

The last identified pattern in the residential area is that of the mobile merchants, or peddlers. Using either movable or fixed stalls, these merchants, such as sandwich and fast-food stalls, vegetable and fruit carts, book stands, and bread sellers, have the least permanent territories. It does not follow, however, that they share the smallest domains. The location of these rather parasitic stalls is often dependent on other existing fixed, either residential or commercial, activities. Their domains usually spill from the sidewalk over the roadway itself with a tangible effect on traffic movement - a fact that makes them vulnerable and constantly susceptible to removal by municipal authorities. In addition to the above mentioned tools of demarcation, these stalls often establish their domains using more spatially defined elements, such as sheds, stands, boxes, shelves etc. Moreover, because of their extended working hours into the evening (some of the food stalls are open 24 hours a day), they frequently have lanterns that, at night, accentuate their spatial domains. It is perhaps because this is neither permanent nor a fixed spatial pattern, sellers are less involved in maintaining and enhancing the surrounded space quality as is the case in spaces around permanent shops. A sense of control, and hence responsibility, is nevertheless apparent. They are also less powerful, considering their temporary location and vulnerable condition, in any negotiation of territorial exchange. Yet, the mutual benefit between the stalls' merchants and the shopkeepers (understandably) constitutes a base for a strong alliance against the private car driver,



3.15, 3.16, 3.17. Examples of mobile merchants and peddlers use of the public domain. A bread seller, top; a fast food stall, above; and a vegetable carte, below

unless s/he is their customer.

Before moving to the next category, it is important to note that the three above described patterns of informal property domains in residential areas are by no means exclusive. Overlaps between the three (in addition to other less prominent patterns) establish a complex non-unilateral pattern of spatial conflict between user groups residing or working in these neighborhoods.

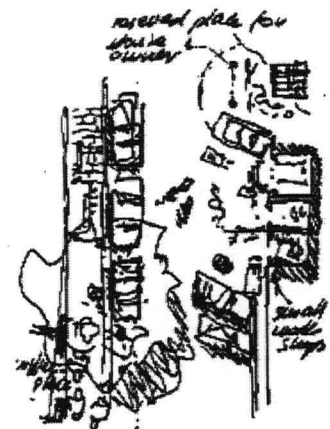
3.1.2 Commercial/Light Industrial areas

The term Commercial/Light Industrial is perhaps not the best definition of areas discussed here. This question of terminology arises from the fact that mixed land-use prevails in different parts of the area of study. What is meant, however, is an area where light industrial and commercial activities on a scale larger than retail are predominant on the street level, and sometimes on mezzanine floor, in addition to the existing residential use on the upper levels. It might be easier to give some examples of activities included rather than trying to reach an inclusive definition. Examples of activities included in this category are coffee places, fast-food shops and stalls, shopping streets or open markets, craft workshops and light industrial services on both domestic and commercial levels. Also included are other public services that are not necessarily privately owned, such as child care, schools, clinics, training and vocational centers.

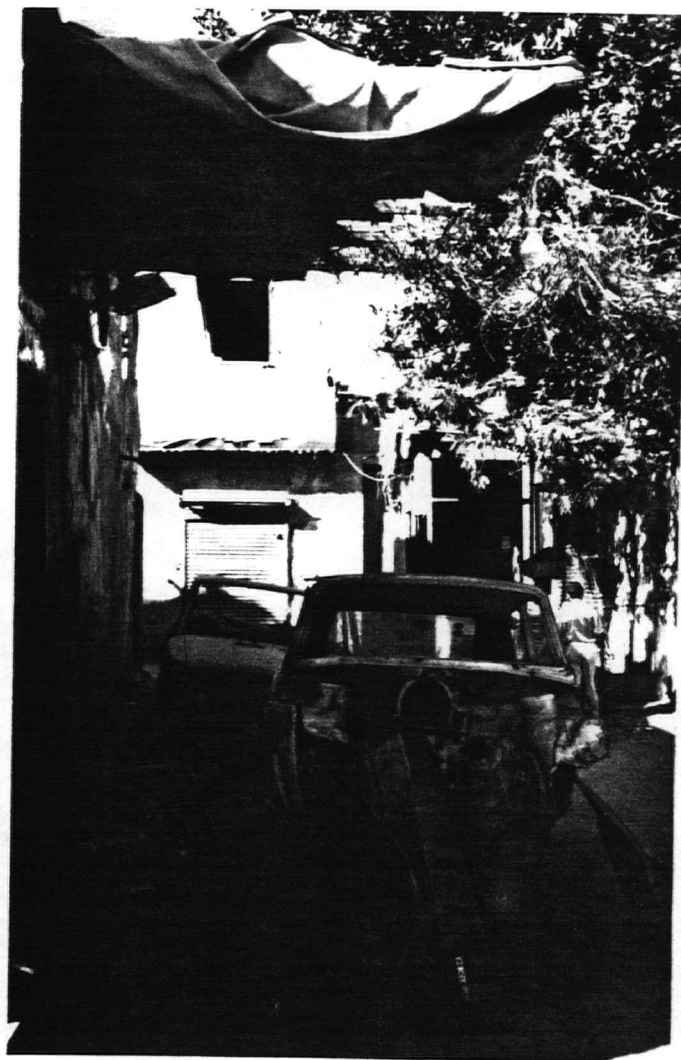
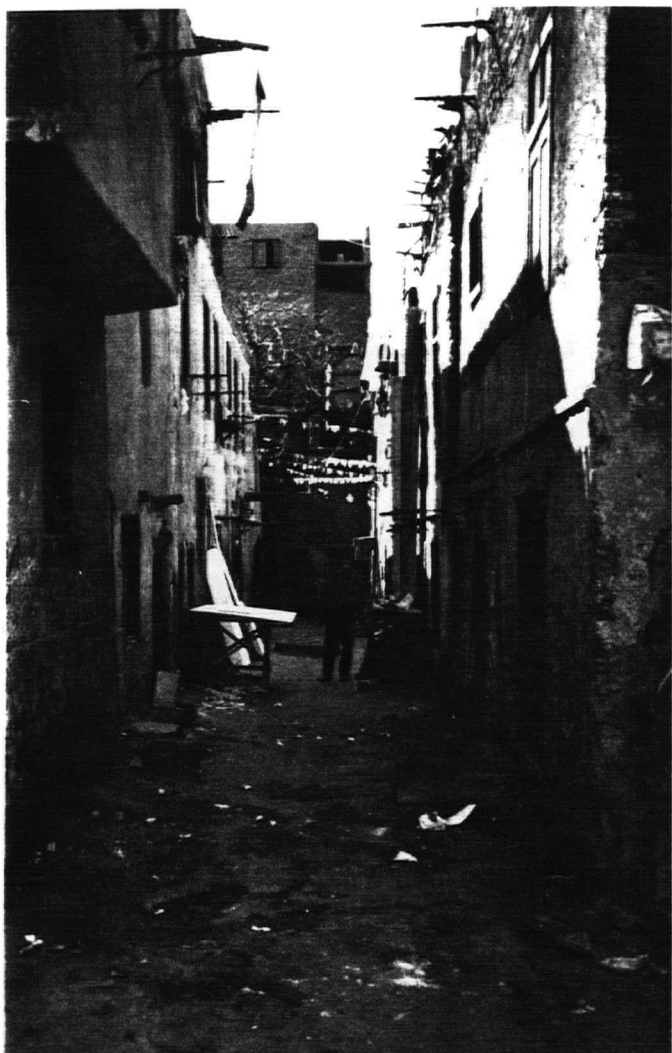
It should be noted that the description of the socio-cultural migrating groups described above in the residential areas could also be applied



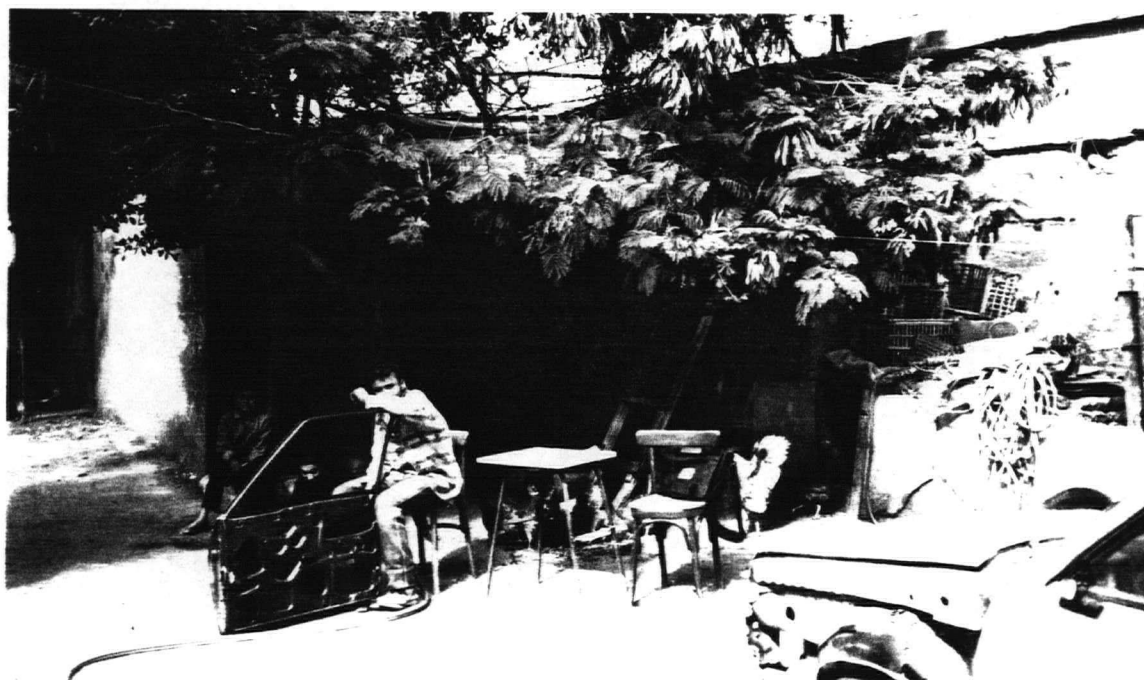
3.18, 3.19. The outdoor extension as a working area for craftsmen: car mechanics, above; metal work, below



3.20. Mapping of some spatial



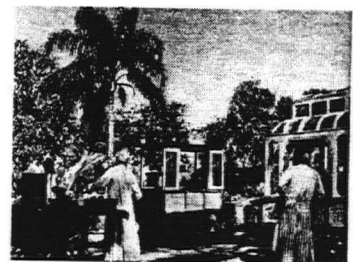
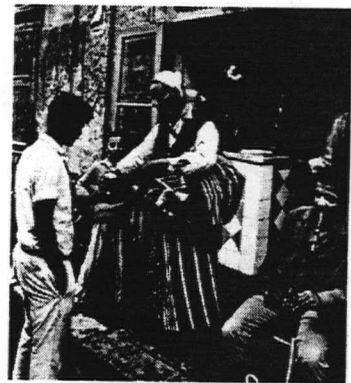
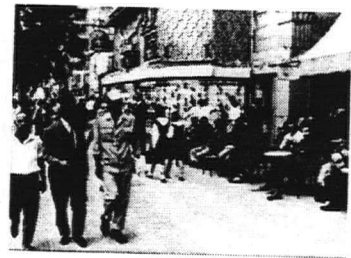
3.21, 3.22. Outdoor extension as a storage area for workshops such as a carpenter, to the left, and a car mechanic, to the right



3.23. The street as *the* working area for some care mechanics who own only their tools without workshops

here. The fact that commercial activities prevail on the street level does not entail that the patterns identified in residential areas are not present. They are less prominent however. In other words, the interaction between the two identified cultural groups, although still apparent, is primarily manifest on the commercial level, as customers and business owners, employers and employees, and to a lesser extent as apartment residents and street users. Avoiding repetition, the following few selected patterns will exemplify cultural conflict and its spatial manifestation.

Coffee-places are urban elements that often accommodate social¹⁶ as well as entertainment activities. Not surprisingly, they are dominated by men, as are most of other public activities in this culture. They are also centers for gathering crowds of particular labor groups (who are hired per contract, or more often per day). Ranging from construction workers, movers, to third-rated musicians, they wait here to be employed. The third distinctive function of these focal points is that of providing catering services. Wherever a node of activity evolves, a coffee-place, surrounded by fast food stalls, immediately emerges. It is almost a generic pattern to find, for example, a stretch of workshops such as car repair, carpentry, metal work, some other retail and domestic services, will have amidst them a coffee-place and food stalls. The latter provide for day-round hot and cold drinks, places for eating (breakfast or lunch) and



3.24, 3.25, 3.26. Coffee-places, top; mobile merchants, middle; and food stalls, bottom are three examples of catering service in the commercial/light industrial area

¹⁶ Rural migrants from the same village or area are likely to reside within a proximity of the same neighborhood or district. They tend to hang out in particular coffee-places. Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 177.

smoking¹⁷ for both customers and workers. It is no wonder, therefore, that out of the mutual benefit of these places/activities a set of patterns of territorial exchange is established and well organized. In addition to the above-mentioned tools of territorial demarcation, each of these activities use tools that are necessary for its operation. For example, chairs and tables are essential to the coffee-place's setup; wooden horses, frames and works in progress are some the carpenter's tools; while cars under repair are the car-mechanic workshop's spatial elements for defining its domain, and the list goes on for the rest of the professions. The expanding and shrinking territories of each of these businesses respond to a) the working hours of each, hence day vs. evening cycle and weekdays vs. weekend cycles; and b) the need for each according to its customers' flow rate. It is very common, for example, for a coffee-place waiter to pull back some of the chairs allowing for an extra space needed by a new customer coming to the next door workshop. This space could also be spared for a visitor of the upper floor neighbor. The most common case, however, is that such space is offered to the food stall setup, i.e. tables and chairs, if both activities (coffee-place and food stall) are not already sharing their furniture according to the needs of each.

The picture seems so far to be ideal, and far from what could be described as in conflict. Yet, the dynamics described above are mostly between members of the same cultural group, the small

¹⁷ Smoking tobacco in water-pipes while sitting at coffee-places is a phenomenon the is common in the 'traditional' parts of the city, while being increasingly fashionable in the 'Westernized' parts recently.

businesses' owners and workers. Moreover, it is important to mention here that this mutual relationship occurs only within a particular (physical) circle and not beyond. It is very unlikely for a workshop owner to give away a space for a customer of a shop in the parallel street for example or of public building on the corner and so on. Given the city's increasing density, and consequently the numbers of vehicles¹⁸, the reservation of parking spaces is among the major (spatial) issues causing tension between groups in these informal territories. In almost all cases, at least during working hours, cars park in streets other than those in which the errand is intended. In other words, and referring to the same example, customers normally need spaces in areas organized by small business owners for whom such customers are outsiders. Business owners have no interest in providing such outsiders with a space, so long as they are not customers/users/residents of the same domain. This is because such a customer is not part of the already-established pattern of exchanging spatial territories. On the contrary, shop owners (and residents) consider him/her as a burden and apparent pressure on the spatial reserve that they might need in the case of an unexpected increase in the rate of customers.

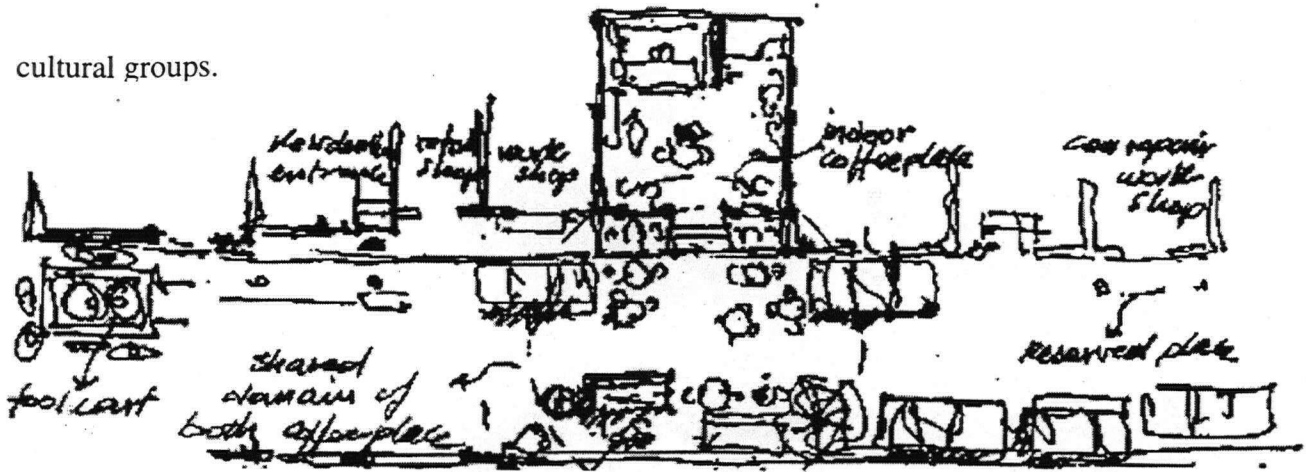
If this customer belongs to another cultural group, the one that does not accept nor acknowledge these informally claimed territories, and abides instead by civic regulations such as property line, public right of way, parking signs etc., then conflict is unavoidable. It is hard,

¹⁸ See The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, The Expanding Metropolis Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo (Singapore: Concept Media Pte Ltd., 1984)

however, to confine the conflict to this particular, although far from rare, case. Even between the above mentioned members of the same network, disagreements and conflicts often arise out of the unresolved relationship between its established mechanisms, i.e. internal causes, on the one hand and the surrounding institutional regulations, i.e. external causes, on the other. A traffic police patrol, for example, may pass by and tow the three rows of parallel parked cars, waiting for (or under) repair or for other customers. Bribing, small deals and personal connections are among other reconciliatory tools for such informal vs. institutional conflict.

To conclude, commercial and light industrial spatial patterns provide two models of cultural relationship. A positive model is based on the established, well-defined and informally organized exchange of outdoor domains. Most members within the same cultural group agree upon the set of values and rules governing these patterns. This includes domains of control on both the micro scale (such as the space in front of the shop), and those on the macro scale (how far the mutual reciprocal action extends - a street, for example). A negative model, however, involves the tension that arises between the informal pattern of exchange on the one hand and the formal, institutional regulations on the other. It also includes the confrontation between two cultural groups with their two sets of values and expectations. This, as I have mentioned above, is due to the different waves of migration to these areas during the last few decades. In the case of residential areas, the resulting clash is settled through the power structure of members belonging to each of the

cultural groups.



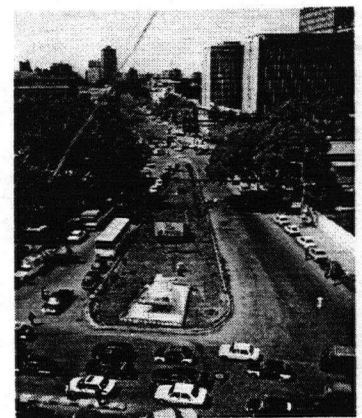
3.27. An attempt to understand of the spatial boundaries and exchange dynamics in a typical commercial/light industrial street with residential use on top

3.2. Informal Reuse of Open Space

On this level the private and public property domains are less prevalent than they are in the preceding level. The areas of conflict at this level do not involve an extension of the individuals' territory. Instead, these are areas that are either leftovers of urban infrastructure, or have a designed use that is no longer valid. In either cases these areas provide places for potential expansion for informal use that replaces the original designated function. In the following examples I will illustrate the informal reuse of public spaces that are located within the western side of the city.

3.2.1. Green median in city boulevards

Boulevards and green vistas were essential elements of the urban planning schemes in the western side of post-revolution Cairo, where some parts of this area were developed based on borrowed models of planning such as the Garden City. During the post-colonial phase, in the 1950s and 1960s, formal districts were originally inhabited by remnants of the bourgeoisie as well as by the

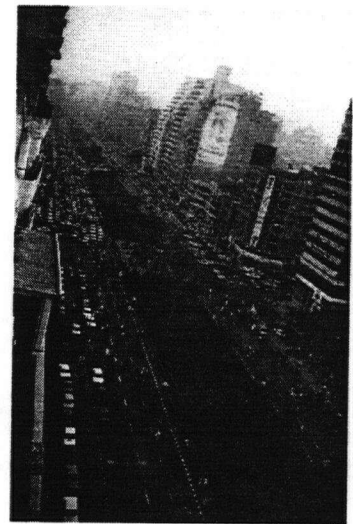


3.28. A typical traffic-generated median decorated with a water fountain

emerging technocrats and upper-middle classes.¹⁹ Green medians, fountains and sculptures are among other features that were primarily employed for their aesthetic values. The expansion of the city and its incorporation of informal neighborhoods that had been located on its peripheries resulted in a condition of immediate adjacency between two contrasted patterns. Poor communities lacking sufficient open spaces were set against, and in close proximity to affluent districts with urban open spaces having formal use. The lack of recreational facilities and open spaces in low-income communities on the fringe areas have created a pressure on the formal districts urban spaces and infrastructures. Furthermore, the dissolution of the former sharp boundaries between both districts, both spatially and culturally, allowed a migration from informal districts to use these open spaces. Although occupying these green open areas started as an essential need of the informal districts' communities for recreational spaces, it eventually became an accepted normalized habit to colonize them. The green medians, in other words, began to serve as an open living room for the densely populated adjacent informal districts rather than their originally passive visual intent.

This situation had two consequences. The informal neighborhoods' communities have changed the purpose, image and configuration of these originally aesthetic (green) spaces. Ornamental vegetation, fountains, etc. were incorporated and reshaped to accommodate new pragmatic functions, such as seating, playing, picnicking, etc.

However, this new use involved large numbers and greater intensity



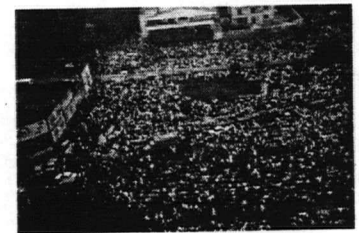
3.29, 3.30. One of the major boulevards in the western city with a wide green median, top, and the way it was fenced in response to informal encroachment, bottom

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, "Context and Background", and Chapter 6, "The Post-Revolution City" of this study.

which caused a non-estimated pedestrian movement to and from these spaces, and an unavoidable mingling with the vehicular traffic on both sides. The change in configuration and the traffic hazard were both considered a threat to the formal districts' residents. Their prompt, formal, response was to fence these medians and prevent any further informal spill over which, allegedly, served to reduce traffic-hazards. More importantly, however, is the desire of the 'Higher' social strata not to allow for further encroachment by the 'Popular' use, hence culture. An attitude, on the behalf of the 'High' culture, that intends to protect and perpetuate its spatial as well as cultural exclusiveness as I shall discuss in part III of this study. This battle is far from being over; paradoxically, the more the fencing takes place, the more the informal encroachment persists. The insistence of the formal plans to deny the adjacent realities causes this constant tension and confrontation between the formal and informal attitudes.

3.2.2. Religious festivities in city squares²⁰

In addition to the habitual informal reuse of open spaces mentioned above, a more conspicuous and dramatic pattern takes place in the considerably larger urban (district-scale) spaces. This pattern is what could be described as religious festivities through collective rituals. The spatial manifestations of these popular rituals, which are intense in the medieval parts, have persisted in most parts of the



3.31, 3.32. A plan and an aerial view during *al-Id* prayer of the *Maydan Mustafa Mahmud* in the western city

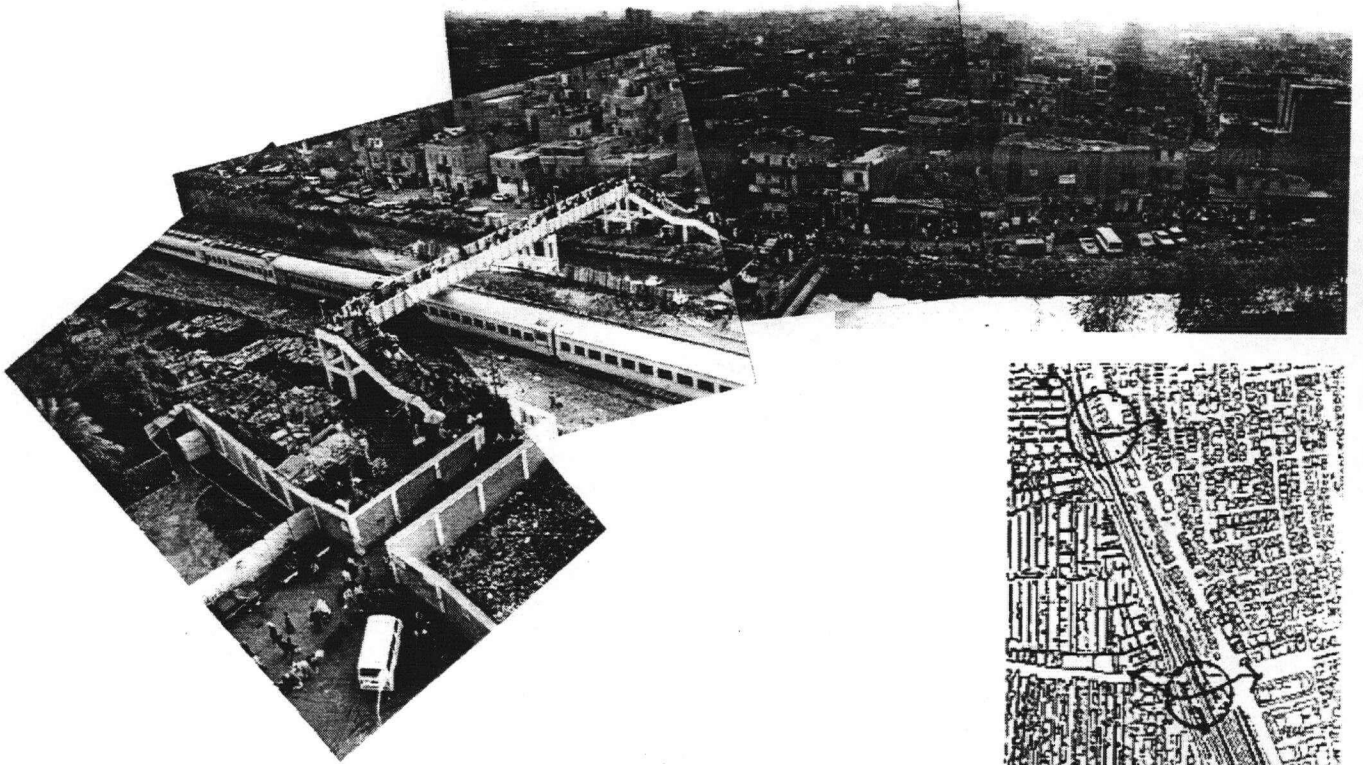
²⁰ For historic reference of these rituals see Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Chapter 5, 'Popular Culture and High Culture in Medieval Cairo', 67-78. For the contemporary manifestation, see Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), Chapter 9, 'The Life of the People', 161-164.

contemporary city as a whole. A clear example is perhaps the massive celebration of the *Al-Id* prayer.²¹ Practiced twice a year, this ritual is a congregational prayer that usually takes place in every neighborhood on a fairly moderate scale not far beyond that of the weekly congregational Friday prayer. Yet, whereas traditionally there existed a state mosque in which the formal prayer was held, the modern city has for a long time lost the equivalent city-scale mosque and its outdoor extension (*Saha*, plaza). This loss could be explained by two factors. Spatially, is the size of the metropolis and the impracticality of any mosque and space of commensurate size. From a cultural perspective, the state mosque, such as *Al-Azhar*, has lost its role as a cultural, educational and political center since the secularization of the state institutions started during the nineteenth century's modernization programs.

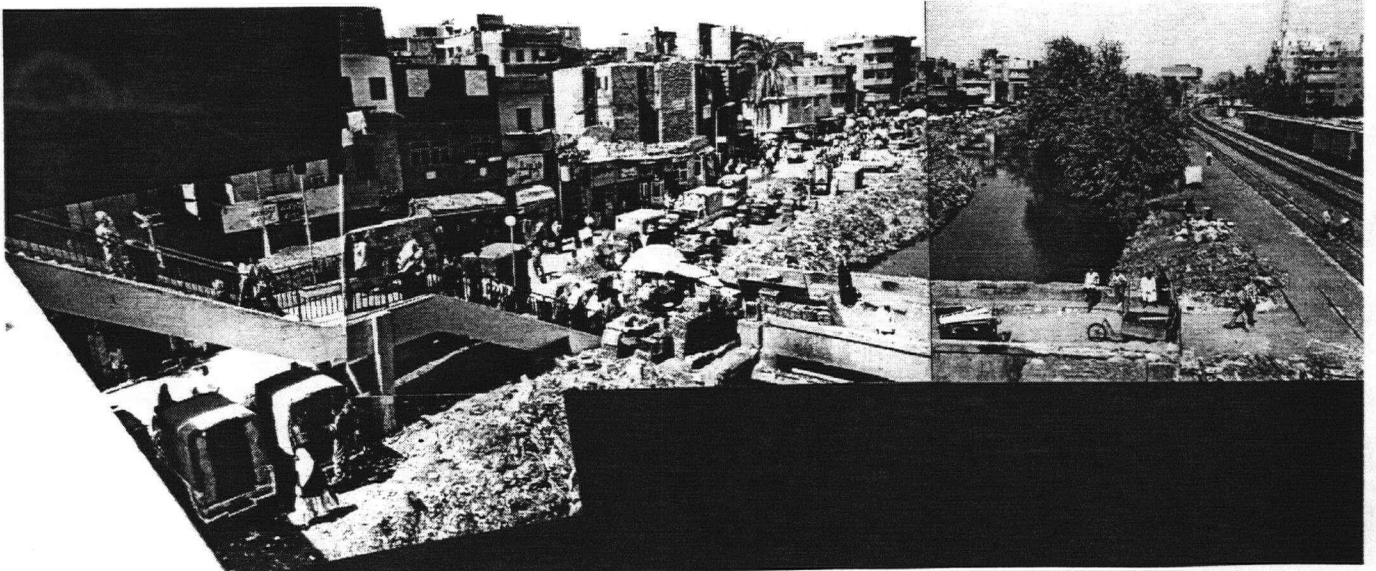
The recent rise of Islamic movements however has revitalized this ritual on a city scale as it did many other religious practices. The need for such space, the appropriately scaled mosque not being available, has therefore regained its legitimacy. The only open spaces within reach on this urban level in this densely populated city were the traffic roundabouts, *maydans*, which were designed for an entirely different purpose and therefore with function-specific configurations.

As is the case in the informal reuse of the green median, the users of these *maydans* resided in the dense informal neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the formal districts. An event of such a

²¹ The other major event, which has even larger magnitude and hence spatial consequences, is the *Mulid*, or the saint's birthday celebration. Such event however takes place in areas around saints' tombs and shrines. These elements do not exist in our study area.



3.33, 3.34, 3.35, 3.36. The informal settlements to the north and west of the formal district. Physically segregated by the rail line, top right, and an irrigation canal, below, accessibility is confined to few crossing points, bridges and overpasses, above and bottom right



magnitude and momentum, with its particular time, duration and orientation usually requires the mobilization and highly organized efforts of its attendants. Starting from the spatial setting, mass transportation, cleaning and maintenance of the space in addition to the required religious practices on this large scale (publications, microphones for the sermons, mats, canopies, partitions between men and women, etc. for the practice itself), these organizing efforts are carried out by local informal organizations. The only formal contribution, which took place only after the recognizable organizing success, was the vehicular traffic coordination as well as the security measures in case of the unpredictable events that may occur after the prayer.²²

On this level the conflict between formal and informal planning and cultural schemes is manifested not only in the reuse of the urban space for a different purpose, but also in the socio-cultural norms of both cultural groups, as I will discuss in the next part of the study. To highlight this point, it is worth mentioning that cultural values generating this event reside primarily in the communities inhabiting the adjacent informal districts, namely the lower-middle classes with traditional or rural origins. Inhabitants of the formal districts, however, where these urban spaces are located, are predominantly upper-middle class and less engaged in such practices. For most members of the latter group, such an event is considered a paid professional holiday, a chance to travel to their out-of-town resorts. Leaving their districts behind, open spaces in such deserted

²² Although rarely occur in the *Al-Id* prayer, riots, mobilized political demonstration sometimes accompanied by violence have all had precedents in other parts of the city after congregational prayers.

residential area are in turn colonized by the lower classes and popular culture groups, who reuse them for recreational and festival activities. The conflict in this case takes a form of avoidance rather than confrontation as the case in the previous cited examples. Instead of a traditional clash between two opposing groups having different interests and competing for one spatial arena, one could view this case as an unconscious arrangement or agreement. It allows both groups to use the same space in different times for entirely different utilities through different patterns and according to their own rules and values. Such a case, although might exemplify a model for co-presence, implies a mutually exclusive rather than reconciliatory framework. Its non-conflicted appearance hides an essentially established socioeconomic and cultural tension that needs to be addressed.

3.2.3. Social events in local streets

The last pattern of this category defined by the private/public polarity involves social events taking place on the street level. Traditionally, small plazas in front of mosques and other public buildings (*sabil*, *madrasah*, *wikalah* for example) have occasionally accommodated not only social events such as weddings and funerals, but also recreational activities such as children's playgrounds. They have also served as grounds for commercial practices as well as the above mentioned religious festivities. The modern city, partly because of its geometrical plan and traffic requirements, lacked these variously sized urban pockets. Moreover, the modern city did not offer a substitute for such urban/social vehicles. Community halls,

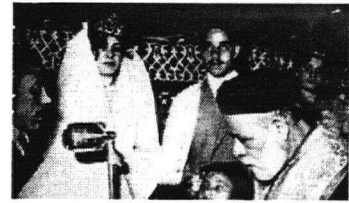
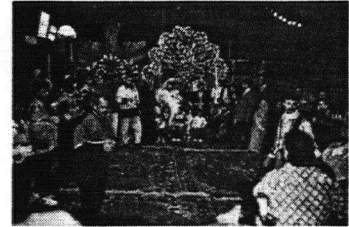


3.37, 3.38, 3.39. A map, bottom left, and two aerial views showing the *Maydan Mustafa Mahmud* before, above, and during, below, the *al-Id* prayer

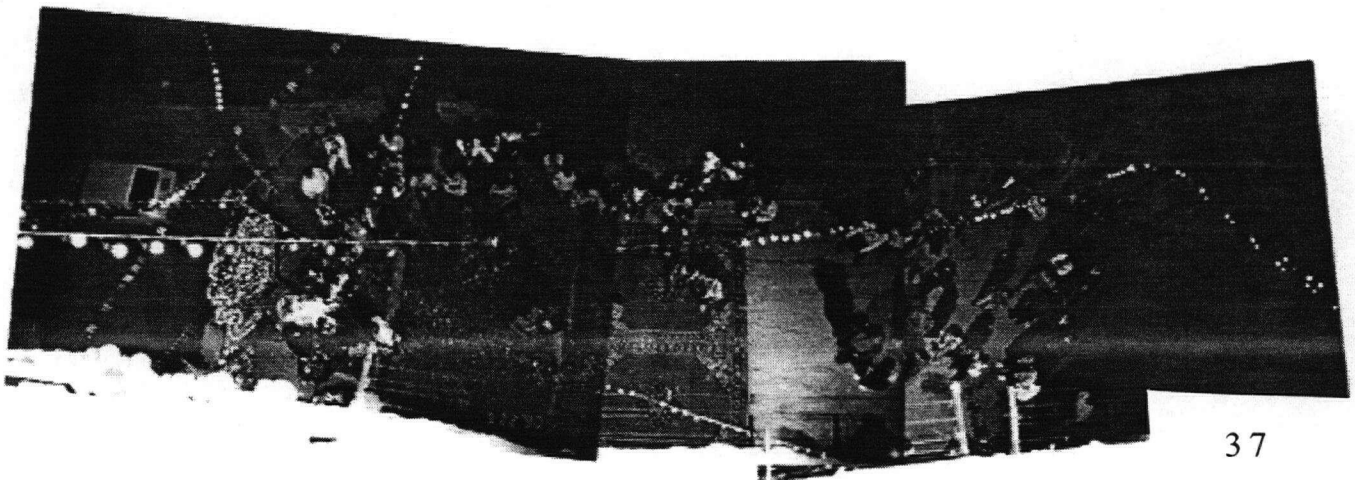


recreational parks or sports fields were far from being an alternative, both quantitatively (the need has always exceeded the availability of land) and qualitatively (as traditional values favored the conducting of such events within proximity of the family residence). There was thus no other solution but to use the street level--linear or narrow as it may be--to accommodate these events.

Both wedding settings and funeral tents cause a major transformation in the street configuration. They often require traffic rerouting, temporary structures, including furniture and catering services, in addition to organizing the events themselves (guests, band, priest, etc.) It is also culturally preferable, if possible, to have these settings right in front of the family's residence, otherwise in the closest available street. What determine these measures of suitability are the street width, the possibility of traffic adjustment, the accessibility to both hosts and guests, and sometimes its potential for processions. However, if the family's entire neighborhood does not allow for such an event because it is spatially impossible, as in the case of an alleyway that is too narrow or because of a sewage overflow for example; or culturally improper, such as is the case of celebrating a wedding while a family next-door has a recently deceased member, then another location is selected.



3.40, 3.41, 3.42. Weddings are one of the major events that take place in the street. Top and above are two views of the setting, and below is an aerial view of the general layout



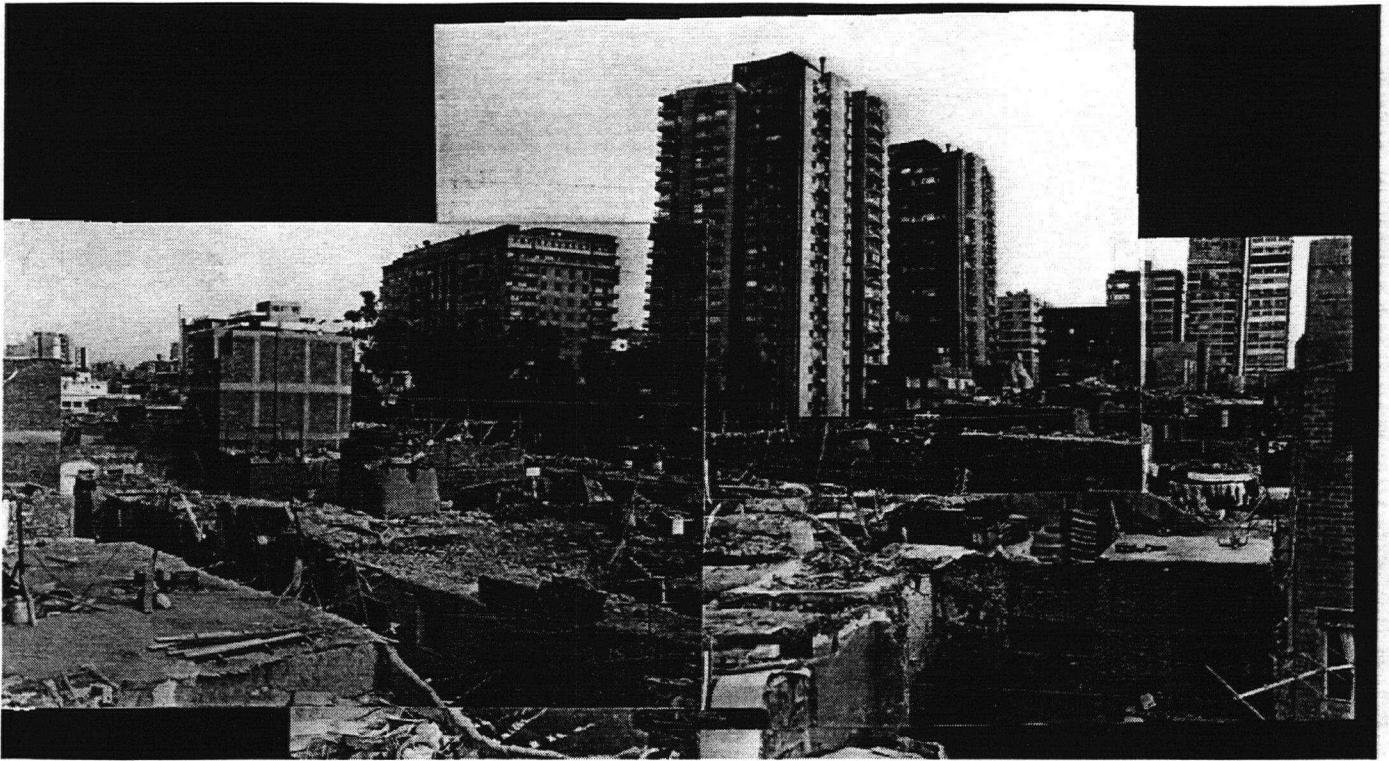
This is often situated in a neighborhood of one of the family's close relatives. Although conducting such an event in community halls or hotels is very common today, it is still more affordable and, to some extent, preferable for the lower classes to organize it in the street, especially in the case of funeral tents.

If the whole event is incorporated within a (culturally) homogeneous neighborhood, then conflict is not a major issue. On the contrary, neighbors take pride in participating in both the arrangement and practices in a communal, reciprocate system either helping out, lending tools and furniture and/or in some cases creating a loan system. The conflict arises when such events are held in, or adjacent to, a neighborhood populated by different socio-cultural groups, hence with different values, practices and expectations. Traffic rerouting is the least inconvenience to be measured as a result of this setting. Noise, smell and dirtiness, or 'unnecessary' extravagant celebrations are few among other complaints made by the upper middle classes.

It is noteworthy to mention that the abrupt city expansion toward the west side of the Nile resulted in an engulfing of already-existing rural settlements, which continued to exist as enclaves. The sharp contrast between the formal districts and these rural enclaves amplifies the spatial/cultural conflict as a result of these events on the street because of both districts' immediate adjacency and through-traffic possibility.

3.3. Vehicular Traffic "Chaos"

Moving further away from the private domain, the pattern of



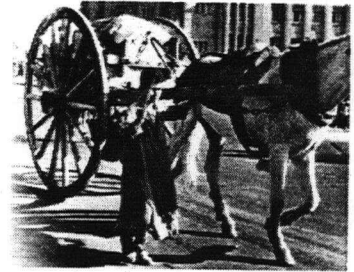
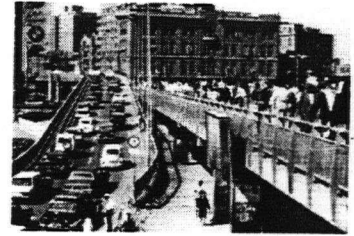
3.43, 3.44, 3.45. A map, bottom left, showing the original villages, now rural enclaves in the western city. Above is a view from within looking towards the adjacent residential towers, and below is a view from these towers to one of these enclaves



vehicular traffic is the most remote from individual control. The traffic network is predominantly controlled and maintained by civic institutions. Traffic engineers and police as well as other municipal agencies are involved in determining how and when this network is to be operated. Nonetheless, informal patterns are far from being absent or inactive. Although their manifestation is not as spatially fixed, physically permanent nor organizationally personal as the previously discussed patterns, they have an even stronger impact on the above formal mechanisms (i.e. institutional systems). There exists, in other words, a more severe conflict between the formal and informal patterns on this level. This can be explained due to the fact that the public interest, "protected" by formal mechanisms, is more vulnerable and likely to be impaired (traffic flow for example) by an informal intervention. The formal and informal mechanisms are therefore more sensitive to confrontation whenever the latter cause the slightest interference with the former. Finally, the spatial patterns and their domains of confrontation included in this level are primarily taking place in the roadways.

Informal Microbus terminals and frequent stops

Microbuses are a privately owned and locally organized network of transit systems, which have the least formal intervention in fares, routes and terminal locations. The municipal authorities have recently acknowledged the role of this informal system, especially with the apparent pressure on the public transit system and its inability to cope with the increasing population - particularly in the informal settlements on the fringes of the metropolis.



3.46, 3.47. Traffic jam and mix of uses and means of transportation are usually described as 'chaotic'



3.48. Fencing the sidewalks to confine the pedestrian movement

Within this Microbus system three main issues require exploration, which exemplify a spontaneous response to the public need. The first is their frequent, non-systematized stops; the second is the location of their terminals within the city fabric itself; and the third is the other end of their routes, the furthest terminals that extend as far as informal settlements expand.

3.3.1. "Traffic chaos", a term often used by foreign visitors as well as some of local upper-middle classes, who could be described as 'High' cultural elite²³, is a result of a much more complex process than could be outlined in this study. Moreover, the manners and modes of behavior involved in traffic organization and regulations require an anthropological methodology lacking in my approach. In terms of their spatial consequences, however, one could identify few cases. One of the obvious and tangible phenomena in this context is the pattern of Microbus stops. It not only impedes the traffic flow, but is also one of the most successful and convenient transit systems for the lower and middle classes. A driver's decision to stop, picking up or letting off someone, is the one sole measure upon which the Microbus traffic system is based. Thousands of small decisions constitute this informal system, and in turn cause a traffic hazard and frustration on the behalf of the formal system. Attempts to 'organize' and control these frequent stops by the municipal authority have failed. Most schemes that were developed to coordinate these stops with the formal public transit system have

²³ For further discussion of both the 'High' and the 'Popular' cultural groups, their definitions, boundaries, agencies and mutual dynamics see Part III of this study.

been generally unsuccessful. This is not only for practical reasons (because of their complex network of routes), but, ironically, because of the informal relationship developed between these Microbuses' drivers on one hand and the traffic police members (who are predominantly part of the same cultural group) on the other. It is this informal relationship between the actors, i.e. the drivers and users of the Microbus system; and the members of controlling agency that hinders the traffic planning scheme to accommodate these stops. Such very cultural affinity between users/drivers and policemen makes the institutional framework more permeable, hence the term 'chaotic'. From the point of view of institutional authorities, this 'chaotic' system is a clear violation of the traffic 'regulations', whereas drivers and customers of these Microbuses consider these regulations as a denial of their right and convenience, and as serving primarily private vehicles. These formal rules are dispensable to their informal system.

3.3.2. Locations of the Microbus terminals within the city are a direct response to the actual (informal) needs and the non-planned nodes of concentrated activities. Formal public transit terminals, railway stations, governmental buildings, entrances to bridges or access points to informal settlements with no vehicular accessibility, public markets, inter-cities (informal) taxi service stops and so on are among these nodes of activities. What distinguish these nodes from the formally planned ones are their users. On one hand, nodes of activities exist that are not served by the informal system because their users are either car owners or Taxi users, and because the



3.49. An example of the microbuses as a local, informal, means of public transportation

customers of the Microbuses are primarily the lower-middle classes. On the other hand, the city's formal public transit has a less sensitive response to the newly emerging or diminishing nodes. Because of its stagnant bureaucracy, hence the long decision-making process, as well as the needed economic investment for each rerouting or extension, the formal system is also less flexible than the informal one.

Finally, these terminals, although they are a response to a need, are also a cause for a further concentration of activities around it. These activities include catering services, such as food stalls, and coffee places; commercial activities, such as temporary markets, mobile merchants; as well as other public facilities, such as public washrooms or light structure canopies, which are constructed either informally or formally - after an acknowledgment by municipal bodies.

Once again, the confrontation between a formal system of a hierarchy of nodes and focal points based on master planning on the one hand, and the informal responsive distribution of nodes on the other, is established and can easily be observed. Several planning schemes have been approved to demolish or relocate these Microbus terminals, as they are not in accord with the city's traffic plan or zoning strategies. Yet, because of their remarkable success, these terminals have persisted and, most of the times forced the formal bodies to acknowledge their locations and size. Furthermore, formal authorities were encouraged to reinforce these terminal locations by means of providing them with public facilities and connecting them with the municipal traffic network.

3.3.3. The last identified pattern of the informal Microbus system is its outermost terminals at the city edges. These are real and sensitive indicators of the organic (informal) urban growth. City planners are becoming more inclined not only to acknowledge these terminals but also to rely on their location as a means to measure the urban expansion within the informal neighborhoods. In this case the conflict is to be identified between a predetermined Master Plan of the city fringes, circumscribed for example by a ring road, and the continuous incremental growth along these Microbus routes, originally connecting the city to its surrounding nearby villages. The informal transit system in this case is both a cause and an effect of the informal process of urban growth. On one hand it responds to the rural-into-urban transformation, while on the other it encourages it. In the latter case, it serves as a connecting device by which the rural fringes of the city are being gradually, and informally urbanized. Initially neglected or denied but eventually acknowledged and incorporated in the planning schemes, the city fringes are one of the major battlefields between the formal and informal mechanisms of urban growth. The Microbus traffic system is a mediator in between, both spatially and culturally.

3.4. Summary and Conclusion

The above-identified patterns of spatial conflict can be summarized into three main public domains with varying relationships between the private and the public realms, as follows:



3.50, 3.51. Two views of microbus terminals in the western city

Domestic (individual level): These are domains that involve the informal outdoor extension of an indoor private property. Their spatial patterns include examples such as the occupation of both sidewalks and portions of roadway - particularly the local and narrow streets having light traffic and where the impact of such intervention does not impair major traffic movements (as in the case of arterial streets, collectors, etc.). In terms of activities, these patterns are characterized by daily or more regular use, permanent features of demarcation, direct individual maintenance and exchangeability of claimed spaces by different groups of immediate adjacency.

Local (neighborhood community level): On an intermediate level of public space, these areas are not necessarily a direct extension of private properties, but rather include domains of both small scale pockets as well as large urban left-over grounds. They all share a potential of being informally reused for more responsive functions. Street medians, major nodes around bridges and access points, local streets and *maydans* that are not part of a heavy traffic networks are among these quasi public spaces, semi attached to private grounds. Activities are not permanent, but rather periodical, such as seasonal events, weekly market places, annual religious festivities, etc. Spatial measures also are not fixed. Mobile or temporary structures are common features of such tentativeness. Finally, their maintenance and operation are organized through local (informal or, when acknowledged, partly formal) groups. They are rarely carried out through individual efforts.



3.52, 3.53. Open spaces on the district scale are being informally used for religious events

Urban (district community level): This group of patterns includes, among other activities, the informal traffic organization. Spatially, it comprises mostly public domains, within which permanent intervention is almost non-existent for both practical and regulatory reasons. The need to maintain the traffic flow on the non-local level necessitates the clearance of any impeding intervention. Cultural conflict on this level is manifested in the informal traffic norms rather than permanent spatial features. These norms however create informal spatial domains that are not planned nor desired by formal institutions, yet established and successfully operated by local user groups of the traffic networks. The informal Microbus terminals are one example which includes all supporting activities and public facilities created and organized informally.

In terms of spatial claims, demarcation tools and exchange mechanisms, these measures decrease when moving from the individual to the urban level. As discussed above, the ability to both claim and maintain fixed spatial boundaries dissipates on larger scales due to the more complex economic, legal and institutional mechanisms involved in establishing such boundaries on both the neighborhood and city scales.



3.54. An example of fencing the building premise as a response to informal encroachment



3.55. A mode of confrontation between two cultural models manifested in the demolition of an informal structure, seen as illegal intervention, by a government bulldozer



3.56. A mode of denial manifested in the fencing of a green median in a 'Westernized' district in response to its use by residents of the adjacent informal neighborhoods

The confrontation arising from spatial (hence cultural) conflict on the other hand follows a non-linear pattern of change from one scale to the other. On the individual's scale, the confrontation is apparent on a regular basis and is manifested whenever the users and residents belong to different cultural (not necessarily social) groups. It is also, understandably, highly manifested on the urban level, as described within the informal traffic systems. This is due to the necessity to maintain the formal systems intact and active. The 'violation' of the formal regulations is more conspicuous to the public. The adaptation also involves changes in regulations, and probably economic investment, which requires approval, hence a more complex administrative process, on the behalf of the formal/institutional groups. On the intermediate level of the neighborhood, where informal mechanisms are being undertaken by groups (communities), common cultural grounds usually serve as a safety-valve against conflicts on both the smaller and larger scales. Neighborhoods of more or less homogeneous cultural groups maintain a mutual system of social behavior. There exists not only an acceptance of the neighbors' right to (informally) use the street

level in case of social events (as well as daily patterns, such as children's play field, or for raising poultry, washing or drying, etc.), but also an acknowledgment and a sense of social obligation to participate in these activities. In short, except in cases of the immediate adjacency of (culturally) conflicting groups residing in a single neighborhood, confrontation is unlikely to occur in the same measure as it does on an individual or an urban level. Even in cases of dispute, it is rarely taken to official (institutional) arbitration.

In each of the above groups of spatial and cultural conflict, two modes of perceiving realities and socio-cultural values are operating. The conflict, in other words, is a result of a duality that is yet to be acknowledged rather than a violation or a non-order. The constant attempts by one group (the formal in this case) to subdue the other, compelling it to operate according to its values and through its mechanisms have proved to be in vain. The following chapters seek to understand the bases and historic roots of this cultural conflict; its dynamics and operating agents, and most importantly, to reach a model for future action, a reconciliation of this conflict.

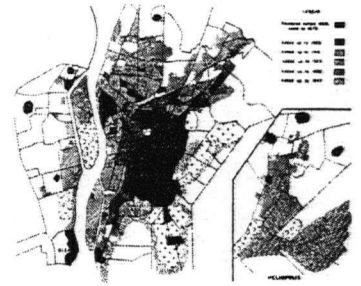
PART II: HISTORICAL SURVEY:

Three Stages of Transition

The following is an analysis and a survey of selected phases of the history of Cairo. It portrays precedents of and historical evidence for the study's main arguments. These being, first, that there existed a rupture of an indigenous cultural model as a result of the introduction of a foreign one. Secondly, that an extended process of assimilation and reconciliation subsequently generated a *new indigenous* cultural model. The latter evolved a synthesis of indigenous and foreign models.

Societies undertaking such a process of reconciliation encounter different stages of transition. They not only witness periods of chaos and cultural turmoil, but they also experience states of 'identity crisis'. In the case of the city of Cairo, the current phase is such a transitional stage, giving birth to a 'new indigenous' model. Both culturally and spatially, the city is in the gradual process of indigenous modernization. This hypothesis will be discussed in detail in Part III of this study.

Here, the time span of the historical survey is bounded by what I propose as three 'domains' of changing paradigms. One domain starts with a period that preceded the advent of modernity at the end of eighteenth century, described here as the Islamic phase, and which stretches as far back as the seventh century AD. A second domain entails the early modern period spanning from the end of the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, described here as



4.1. Cairo map showing the different layers of urban developments (Abu-Lughod 1971)

the Colonial phase. Finally, there is the period since the foundation of the national state in 1952 until today, described as the Contemporary phase.

The analysis involves both social and urban dimensions associated with each phase with an emphasis on the Popular and the Ruling cultural groups.

A chapter is designated for each phase. Each begins with the historical context of the major political, social and economic events during this phase before proceeding to a cultural and urban analysis. Sources which were used to outline the history of each phase are limited, and selection was based on their comprehensive approach. The brief historical narrative is meant to serve as an introduction and should not be considered as a particular framework for the analysis to follow.

The remainder of each chapter takes up discussion and analysis based on the study's main argument -- that there exist two societal groups embracing different cultural models. The materials and literature in use were selected to support this argument. At the end of each phase, a summary of findings is restated, concluding with what is regarded as essential to the third part of the study, the theoretical model.

4. THE ISLAMIC (MEDIEVAL) CITY: The Pre-Modern Phase

4.1. Introduction

For the purpose of this study, the beginning date of the medieval phase is not as important as its ending. This is due to my interest in the 'shift' that took place at the end of this phase--a shift in the cultural model and its urban manifestation. Also, I will argue that the classical dichotomy of Traditional vs. Modern is not adequate to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the transition between the medieval and the colonial city²⁴. It is thus most useful to follow a chronological approach, until we discuss different historical readings of cultural transformation.

The advent of modernity, which is argued to have resulted in a rupture of a continuous, and hitherto intact process of indigenous cultural and urban growth, was but a recurrence of preceding cultural invasions. In early Islamic expansion, for example, a similar process of confrontation and reconciliation between 'local' and 'foreign' cultures characterized early Muslim towns. Indigenous cultures before the advent of a new cultural model thus witness as a shifting event associated with each new cultural paradigm. In this chapter and the one to follow I will discuss the qualitative change that occurred while passing from the stage prior to the one after this event. Before proceeding into historical events, I will briefly

²⁴ For further discussion of the different dichotomies that attempt to explain both the historical and structural duality in the last two centuries, see below Part III: "Hypothesis and Conceptual Model."

elaborate on this argument.

In the case of 'shift' that took place in Cairo with the introduction of modernity in the late eighteenth century, for example, the ruler/subject sociopolitical relationship did not dramatically change in both phases, the one prior and the one after this shift. The Mamluks²⁵ and the *Tujjar/Ulama* strata in the medieval phase were replaced by the Pasha or Khedive, his colonial patrons, and the intermediate strata of the elite and other minorities. What did change, however, were the modes of living both groups embraced -- the paradigm that governs both their epistemological frameworks, their world view so to speak. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the rulers and the subjects shared one common cultural paradigm, one which was developed during eleven centuries, despite their sociopolitical tension, hence they were both operating within one indigenous *cultural* model.²⁶ By the beginning of the nineteenth century, each group operated within a different paradigm. The ruling and upper classes, in collaboration with or under the hegemony of the colonial power, first, adopted for themselves, and then imposed on other groups, a Western model of modernity. The society at large, however, continued to operate (although gradually being modernized at a slower pace) within its indigenous paradigm. This

²⁵ Although still nominally the province's ruler, the Ottoman *Wali* (governor) had lost by the end of the eighteenth century most of his power which was virtually in the hand of the rival Mamluks. They were able to replace him if he did not conform to their interest. See Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), Chapter 4: "Decline and Fall," 37-55.

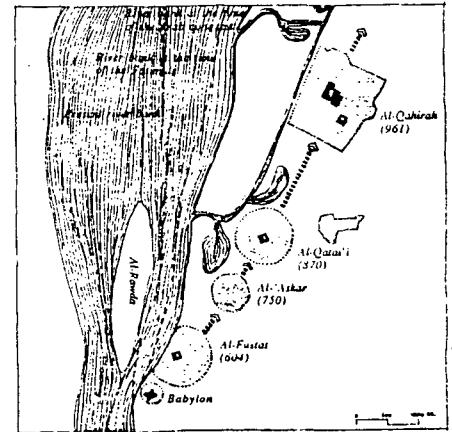
²⁶ The most basic difference between the Mamluk and the European alien elites is that the former, although socially, racially, and linguistically segregated from the mass, did consider themselves part of the Islamic community, within which some measures of social control existed. The European elite on the other hand shared no moral bond with the indigenous population that might have transcended their alien identity and limited the full exercise of their power. Ibid. Chapter 5: "Heritage from the Medieval City," 70.

moment of rupture marked a split of one model into two was the starting point of their conflict, which is still tangible today.

From that perspective it is essential to look at both cultural and urban developments in the medieval city, and to identify the paradigm that governed the production of both their values and forms.

4.2. Historical Overview²⁷

In 639 AD the city of *al-Fustat* was founded as a provincial capital on the east side of the Nile, inaugurating a new phase in the Egyptian medieval history. The site of the army's encampment was selected adjacent to the existing city of Babylon, a Roman garrison city predominantly inhabited by Copts (Egyptian Orthodox Christians).²⁸ Located at the southern edge of *al-Qahirah* (Cairo) built three centuries later, the new town was established as the seat of the governor, the Arab army's leader, and his accompanying troops consisting of different tribes.²⁹ It was not until the year 969 AD that the city of Cairo was founded as a royal city for the Fatimid caliph, succeeding two other provincial capitals of the semi-autonomous states founded by previous powerful governors and their dynasties. *al-Askar* (the Troops) in 750 AD, and *al-Qatai* (the Wards) in 868 AD in addition to the original capital of *al-Fustat* were eventually incorporated in the city of Cairo's walls extended during the Ayyubid dynasty (1171-1250 AD) to defend the metropolis against the crusaders' invasion from the east. Following the



4.2. Arab-Islamic capitals that preceded Cairo along the eastern bank of the Nile (AlSayyad 1991)

²⁷ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Chapter I: "The Arab Conquest of Egypt," 1- 25.

²⁸ Ibid., 1-3.

²⁹ Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City* A Mimar Book (Singapore: Concept Media Pte Ltd., 1988), 86-88.

destruction of Baghdad under the Mongols in the year 1258 AD, and after the fall of the last Abbasid caliph, Cairo, then one of the largest Metropolises in the Middle East, established itself as the sole political and cultural capital in the world of Islam. This in turn coincided with the city's apogee during the Mamluk period which lasted until its fall under the Ottoman conquest in the year 1516 AD. During this era Cairo acquired its ultimate urban expansion until the nineteenth century's modern urbanization. Following the city's golden age under the Mamluks, Cairo lost its role as an imperial capital and became reduced to a merely provincial one once again under the Turkish rule, which lasted for almost three centuries. During that period the city witnessed a gradual decline in size and further deterioration of its infrastructure.

Almost three hundred years later, in 1798 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte leading a French expedition, conquered Egypt. By introducing modernity to medieval Cairo, he inaugurated a new phase of the city's as well as the nation's history. This event, as presented in the following sections, is of much significance to this study as it marks the end of one civilizational stage and the beginning of a new one.

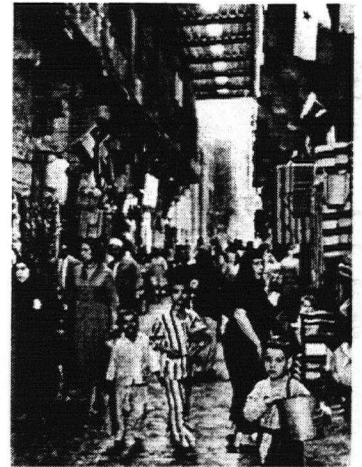
4.2. Cultural Manifestation of Two Models

According to Lapidus,³⁰ the population of medieval Muslim cities "fell into three broad classes: the Mamluk military elite which commanded the armies and administered the state; the local nobility

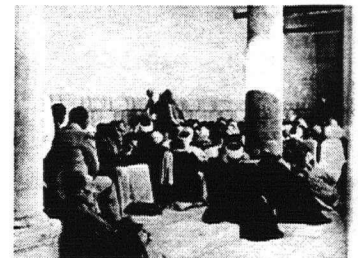
³⁰ Ira M. Lapidus, "Muslim Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," in *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*, eds. A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer Ltd., 1970), 195-205. Although Lapidus in this article refers to the Syrian cities of Damascus and Aleppo, his classification could also be applied on the city of Cairo in the same period. For more general discussions of his study of medieval Muslim cities see Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, Student edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

distinguished by some measure of political power, religious learning, and wealth included the '*Ulama*', merchants and professionals; and the majority of the populace who possessed none of the crucial values."³¹

In support of the same classification, Shoshan, in a study of the popular culture of medieval Cairo suggests that Cairenes were divided into four social strata: the Mamluk elite, the scholars ('*Ulama*'), the economic bourgeoisie, and the commoners.³² The first three and the fourth did not function in isolation from one another. "They were bound to exert an "osmotic" influence on each other and to interact in a variety of ways."³³ In other words, despite the existence of the division between "high" and "low" cultures, a main emphasis of his study is drawn upon a common cultural domain consisting of shared practices and meanings: the very links between high and low cultures.³⁴ Conversely, Abu-Lughod in her study of the socio-urban history of Cairo argues for a "vast and originally unbridgeable ethnic, economic and social cleavage between the ruling class on the one hand and the masses and bourgeoisie on the other ..."³⁵ This gap, she continues, was even wider than other pre-industrial cities.³⁶ Despite the reasons one can



4.3. Popular culture in a *Suk* of the medieval city



4.4. The *Ulama* (scholars) in a learning circle in Al-Azhar mosque

³¹ The '*amma* or common people, according to Lapidus, "included shopkeepers, artisans and social workers with diverse situations and interests." What made this group of the population an identifiable entity, he adds, "was the contrast with the notables..." See Ibid. 195-196.

³² Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.

³³ Ibid., 67.

³⁴ Ibid., 77-78.

³⁵ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, 69.

³⁶ Abu-Lughod argues that "While in most preindustrial cities there was a similar wide gap between the elite and the masses, the situation in Mamluk Cairo differed in two important respects from the more typical case. First, the elite was not merely different in degree but in kind: ethnically, linguistically, racially, and culturally. Furthermore, for hundreds of years it remained a caste rather than a class, because entry was close to indigenous people. Second, whereas in most preindustrial cities the religious and the secular hierarchies were intimately combined, this was only superficially true in the Mamluk state where religious offices were either subordinated to the military or exploited as 'patronage' and a means of secular control". Ibid., 70.

find for the validity of both arguments, it remains my interest to investigate the measures of closeness and shared values between the two groups according to the views of Lapidus and Shoshan rather than their animosity and further segregation according to the Abu Lughod's.

In order to substantiate his argument, Shoshan discusses the various rituals, festivities and ceremonies in Medieval Cairo (approx. from the early Fatimid period at the end of the tenth century until the end of the Mamluk around the middle of the sixteenth century). As manifestations of both cultures, he recognizes a distinction between two types of festivals: one generated and (primarily) performed by the commoners, the sub-cultures, and the second initiated by the elite, be they ruling strata or other intermediate classes. There existed, however, points of 'cultural intersections', as he puts it. Moreover, the common culture eventually had the 'upper-hand' in "a process of cultural flow from the bottom upward" at some point incorporating the culture of the common into that of the elite.³⁷ The culture of the learned and the rulers not only had to take into consideration the culture of the commoners, they sometimes even "succumbed, unconsciously or even eagerly, to elements of popular culture."³⁸

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all of these festivals, I will briefly list both categories as classified by Shoshan.

³⁷ Boaz Shoshan, Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo, 76.

³⁸ Ibid., 70.

It should also be noted that some of these social and/or religious festivals are still being celebrated today, for example *al-Id* prayer discussed in Part I of this study.³⁹

4.2.1. Examples of the popular culture in medieval Cairo:

- The Sufi cults and its associated practices were confined to the 'unlearned' commoners, and condemned by the 'learned' ('*ulama*'), notably among these practices were the *Mulid* (a sufi *Shaykh*'s birthday) and the grave visit.⁴⁰
- The *Nawruz* annual festival is the day of the spring equinox on 21 March. Though possibly in its origin a pagan pastoral festival marking the transition from winter to summer, it is still being celebrated in modern Iran. Primeval rites of fertility and renewal can be easily recognized in some of its customs.⁴¹
- The grain riots occurred on some occasions of shortage and excessively high prices. Plundering and looting royal granaries or Grain Docks were associated with other measures of violence⁴²

4.2.2. Festivals initiated by the ruler and elite

- The 'procession of the Palanquin' or *al-Mahmal* was celebrated by a camel carrying a richly decorated, normally empty, litter as part of Egyptian Pilgrimage caravan to Mecca. Street decorations and folk songs were also part of the ceremony.⁴³



4.5, 4.6. Two manifestations of spatial patterns of Popular culture in medieval Cairo which are still taking place today in the public space. The *Mulid*, above, is a religious procession; and weddings, below, are one example of social events

³⁹ See above 3.2. "Informal Reuse of Open Space,"; and 3.2.2. "Religious Festivities in City's Squares."

⁴⁰ Sufi *Shaykhs*, having established their communal authority as religious leaders, felt responsible to mediate between Egyptian subjects and the Mamluk regime. They were in that respect at least as significant as orthodox scholars ('*ulama*'). Boaz Shoshan, Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo, 21.

⁴¹ Ibid., 40-51.

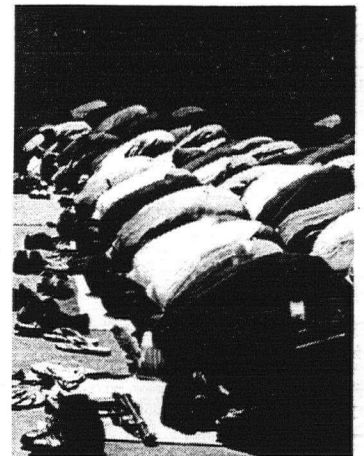
⁴² Ibid., 58-66.

⁴³ Ibid., 70-73.

- The Plenitude of the Nile ceremonies consisted of two parts. The first was the perfuming with saffron of the Nilometer, in what appears to have been a ritual of good omen or gratitude. This was followed by the second part, that is the 'breaking of the dam', the opening of the earthen dam which was annually constructed at the mouth of the canal to prevent the water from subsiding before the Nile attained the level of plenitude.⁴⁴

- The triumphant procession represented the royal entry of a sultan or a leading emir or dignitary. Such processions followed successful campaigns, in which hundreds of heads and slain soldiers or prisoners in chains could be seen on display in the main streets.⁴⁵

- *Id al-Fitr*, the holiday which broke the fast of Ramadan commenced by a banquet organized by the sultan's son, during which he bestowed robes of honor on his personal servants. A procession through the city gate followed with spectators carrying candles crowding decorated streets.⁴⁶



4.7. The outdoor extension of prayer outside mosques is a recurring spatial pattern in both the medieval and contemporary cities

Shoshan concludes "[these] festivals would be turned into an encounter between rulers and their subjects, and in a more extended sense, between the culture of the elite and the culture of the people. This encounter helped to create new cultural processes."⁴⁷ Each of these pageants and ceremonial processions, he explains, which took place in open in the spaces of the city of Cairo,⁴⁸ provided the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 73-74.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁸ For examples, *Midan Arremilah* (or *Qara midan*) at the foot hill of the Citadel, the place in front of *Al-Hakim* mosque, outside of the succor (*al-Nasr*) gate, in market places, or at (*Meqyass*) by the mouth of the canal (*Al-Khalij*). For further description of these events see Ibid., Chapter 5: "Popular culture and high culture in medieval Cairo," 67-78.

spectators (the commoners) with a 'text' for 'reading', and for their own interpretation and response.⁴⁹ Such events, in short, "served as microcosms of both diversity and unity in cultural terms. The elite--the producers of the events--and the people, their consumers, must have had different points of view. Yet they were participants in something which, for a moment, united the city of Cairo."⁵⁰

In summary, "while there were cultural products which ceased to have high cultural value and were appropriated by the popular culture, becoming transformed in the process, there also were popular forms which became enhanced in cultural value, went up in the cultural escalator, and found themselves on the opposite side. The result was a cultural 'dialectic of change'; though the distinction popular/elite remained, the inventories of each of these two subcultures did alter the process."⁵¹ This synthesizing cultural process was also physically manifest. The popular/ruling duality, although apparent while new cities were founded, evolved through an indigenous process of urban growth that engulfed the two opposites.

4.3. Physical Manifestation

It is common to occasionally encounter an account by a Western visitor to post-colonial cities in the developing world (such as Cairo or New Delhi) describing them as being in a state of 'chaos' or, in a more diplomatic way, as having an 'informal' pattern or order.⁵² A

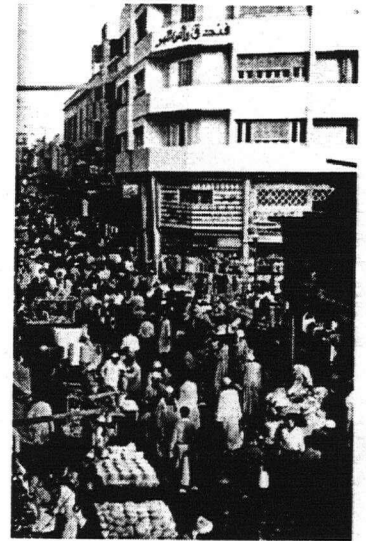
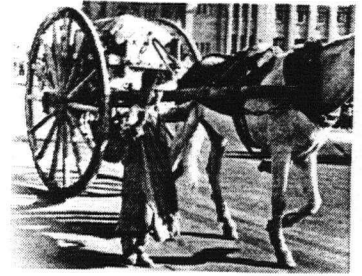
⁴⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Anthony McDermott, for example, argues that "[t]raffic jams--not helped by a local innate propensity towards

pattern that is constantly encroaching upon the existing 'formal' fabric, hence is causing an alleged deterioration. It is no surprise to find that the Western 'formal' legacy in urban centers of developing countries is being nowadays encroached upon by popular forces in the same manner as the early Muslim towns, founded on antiquity (Graeco-Roman) models, had encroached upon their 'regular' plans converting them into the 'tortuous' streets and organic urban fabric.⁵³ In this section I will argue that it is true on the physical level, as it was culturally, that two processes of urban growth were originally separate. Each, following its different mechanisms and governing patterns of growth, had begun in one end of an urban dichotomy before they were synthesized. These two patterns were the formal (royal) fabric, and the spontaneous (indigenous) one.



Based on a preconceived plan, the royal city was socially exclusive, probably walled, and closed to public activities.⁵⁴ It followed formal regular plans and included designated urban quarters for the ruler's entourage as well as the army's constituent tribes. In addition to its walls and gates, some urban elements were also common to royal cities such as the palace, the congregational mosque, *Kuttahs* (urban

4.8, 4.9. Examples of the encroachment of informal patterns upon formal urban fabric

anarchy and indiscipline whereby traffic lights and signs are the best viewed as being of an advisory nature--are legendary. Some have argued this *Informal approach* towards driving has also developed a natural instinct for self preservation." Anthony McDermott, Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 204-205. Emphasis is added.

⁵³ "J. Sauvaget has contrasted the regular plan of the ancient cities and the tortuous streets of their Islamic successors, and showed by suggestive examples how the straight, porticoed streets of antiquity were gradually encroached upon by shops and houses in the Islamic period, resulting in a new townscape." S. M. Stern, "The Constitution of the Islamic City," in The Islamic City: A Colloquium, 25., quoting J. Sauvaget, "Le plan de Laodicee-sur-Mer", *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 1934, 88-102, reprinted in *Memorial Jean Sauvaget*, i, Damascus 1954, 124-5; idem, *Alep*, 78-9, 104-5. For the transformation of Roman grid-cities into Islamic organic fabric, see also, Nezar AlSayyad, Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991)

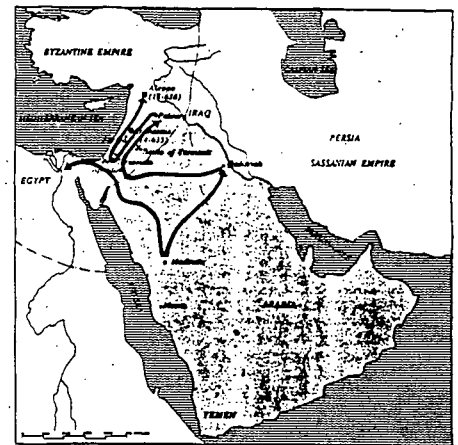
⁵⁴ Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250 (Penguin Books Ltd, 1987; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 78.

quarters), and open spaces or *maydans*.⁵⁵ Spontaneous urban growth, on the other hand, is a gradual, incremental, small-action process governed by the neighboring residents' values, and with no written (although agreed upon) civic regulations.⁵⁶

In order to follow how the city was transformed from on ‘formal’, geometric or planned urban pattern, to an organic pattern through an ‘informal’ process, I will first discuss different theories of the origins of Islamic cities. Then, I will present some of the attempts to decode the process generating the organic fabric, and its underlying structure. Finally, I will present few examples of political measures that, through the city’s history, helped accelerate the urban synthesis of both an imposed fabric and a spontaneous one.

4.4. The Origin of Muslim Cities

According to Akbar,⁵⁷ the process of formation of Muslim towns in the early period of Islamic expansion can be classified in terms of their evolution into two types: "spontaneous" and "created". The first type, such as Karbala', Aleppo, was developed without centralized planning or governmental intervention, while the other includes cities and towns which are founded by the state. The latter type includes military town camps such as al-Kufah, al-Basrah, al-Fustat; fortress towns such as al-Rabat; capitals or political towns such as Baghdad and Cairo; or princely towns, satisfying the ruler's



4.10. Early Muslim expansion, and the location of newly founded provincial capitals in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, (AlSayyad 1991)

⁵⁵ Nezar AlSayyad, Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), Chapter V: "Planned Capital Cities," 113-158.

⁵⁶ On the spontaneous process of urban growth see Jamel Akbar, Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City, Chapter 4: "Growth and Formation of Towns," 71-92.

⁵⁷ Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City*, 82.

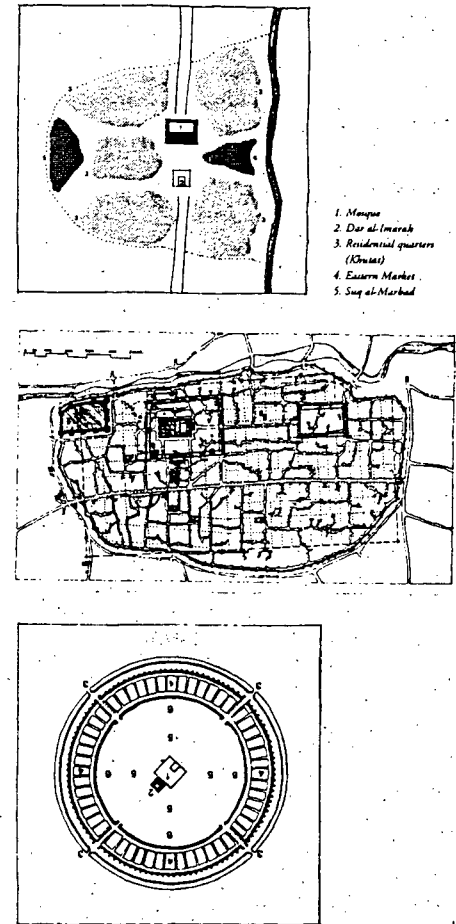
desire to remove his residence from the capital to a nearby site, such as Samarra.⁵⁸

AlSayyad's study of Early Islamic cities, identifies three different types, or topologies, according to their origins. The first type is the early Muslim towns during the reign of Rightly-guided caliphs till the middle of the seventh century. Those were garrison towns evolved around military encampments and therefore follow the same morphology. Basrah, Kufah in Iraq and Fustat in Egypt are examples of the first type. During the early Imperial expansion, namely under the Umayyad, existing Roman cities were established as provincial capitals. Their centers (namely the church and palace) were remodeled and the residential and commercial fabric was gradually transformed. Damascus is the model of that type. The third type are the royal cities that were founded during the Abbasid starting the second half of the eighth century. Newly founded cities, such as Baghdad and Samarra in Iraq, and later al-Qahirah (Cairo) in Egypt were characterized by their strictly geometrical plans and royal, exclusive nature.⁵⁹

From the perspective of this study, I will adopt the dual classification of planned vs. organic, also adopted by Morris, and look at the internal logic and underlying structure of each type.⁶⁰

4.4.1. The Royal Type

Cairo and Baghdad came into existence as a result of a prior



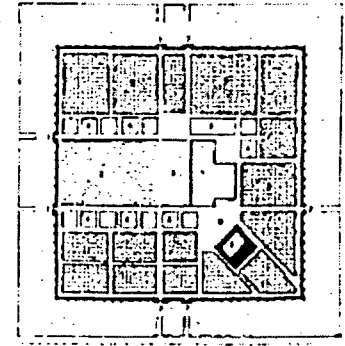
4.11, 4.12, 4.13. Three identified types of Muslim cities: a) garrison towns, top, such as Basrah, Kufah and Fustat; b) Roman cities, above, such as Damascus; and planned cities, bottom, such as Baghdad, Samarra, and, later Cairo, (AlSayyad 1991)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Nezar AlSayyad, Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991)

⁶⁰ See A.E. J. Morris, History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolutions (England: Longman, 1994), Chapter 1: "The early Cities," 1-34; Chapter 3: "Rome and the Empire," 55-91; and Chapter 11: Islamic Cities of the Middle East," 365-401.

conception and the individual will of their creators, the caliphs. The models upon which they were established were by no means indigenous to the rising culture.⁶¹ Arabia, where Islam originated had no significant urban legacy that could be adopted or even developed in early Muslim towns.⁶² In accordance with this view, Stern suggests that early Muslim towns were planned based on ancient cities having regular, formal plans. Byzantine, and to a lesser extent Persian cities, which inherited the Hellenistic then the Roman legacy were the only models that Arabs found when they conquered their territories.⁶³



4.14. One of the early conceived schemes of the Royal city of Cairo, (AlSayyad 1991)

Garrison towns that were founded as provincial capitals in the first century of Islamic expansion were originally established as army encampments.⁶⁴ Consisting of different tribes, the main planning configuration of these towns was basically an open central space for troops-gathering, and where the central mosques and governor's palace was to be located. Around this central space (*Maydan*), each tribe was allocated a certain allotment of land (*Khuttah*). Both the size and location of each segment were proportional to the tribe's number and significance respectively. Whereas the location and

⁶¹ In this context AlSayyad argues that "[i]f Islam is defined as a comprehensive cultural system based on religious principles, then the physical forms of these cities were not representative of any Islamic building or planning ideals. This is particularly true if we reject the alleged divine authority claimed by some caliphs. Cities planned by caliphs for themselves instead of their people should not be considered a proper representation of Islam as a religious or cultural system. In this sense, the symbolism in the physical form of Cairo or Baghdad is not Islamic and possibly not Arabic." Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism*, 150.

⁶² Richard Ettinghuasen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*, Chapter 1: "The Rise of Islam and the Artistic Climate of this Period," 17-25.

⁶³ S. M. Stern, "The Constitution of the Islamic City," in *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*, eds. A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, 25-50.

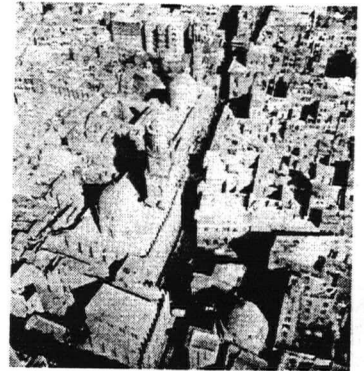
⁶⁴ Garrison towns, according to Al-Sayyad, were of two main types. "Some like Kufah in Iraq, Fustat in Egypt, and Qairawan in Tunisia, were *Fustats*, or mass encampments of makeshift tent settlements that in time grew into permanent cities as Arab immigration to them was encouraged." Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism*, 45.

boundaries of each *Khuttah* were assigned by the city founder (the army leader and his entourage), its inner planning was up to the residing tribe and based on an incremental process of growth as discussed below.⁶⁵

Palatial cities were not to be founded in Muslim states until the emergence of the first dynastic empire, the Umayyad (650-750 AD). Establishing its imperial seat in Damascus, the Byzantine influence in Umayyad new cities was not surprising. In addition to provincial capitals, other resort towns were built during this phase, in which they maintained this exclusive model. The legacy of royal cities continued through the subsequent dynasties in different parts of the Muslim world.⁶⁶

In addition to their formal plan, the features that remained constant in these cities were the city walls and gates, the caliph's palace(s), the congregational mosque and the central open space (*Maydan*).

Although the arrangement and geometrical plan varied, their urban elements continued.



4.15. City-scale open spaces in medieval Cairo are a result of a multiple process of urban growth, (Abu-Lughod, 1971)

The similarities between garrison towns such as Kufah and Basrah on the one hand and capital cities like Cairo and Baghdad, as AlSayyad argues, suggest that the former may have been the prototype of the latter. In terms of their planning, the central location of the congregational mosque gave way to the royal palace, whereas the disregard of the stability of the market place and the desire to

⁶⁵ In the case of *al-Kufah*, as Akabar discusses, The authority did not intervene in assigning the *Kittahs* or deciding their boundaries, it would not intervene in the tribe's internal territorializations. A situation of large *Khittahs* with no intervention means complete autonomy for each tribe. Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City*, 88.

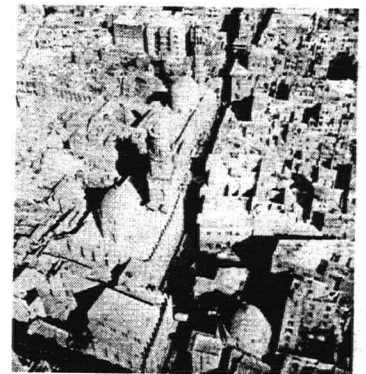
⁶⁶ This is true in the Muslim East, such as in Mesopotamia, Persia and Central Asia; and in the West, such as in Egypt, North Africa and Spain.

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limit the general public's access to the city continued to be evident in both types.⁶⁷

4.5. The Organic City and the Process of Incremental Urban Growth

Either in the originally formal cities, or in cities that were entirely products of informal forces, this incremental process of urban growth has always been active in Muslim cities. In fact, as Akbar argues, it is the true indigenous process of producing their built environment.⁶⁸ As an example of the former case, Baghdad like other royal Islamic city, gradually changed as a result of the actions of its residents. Kufah, as an example of the latter, was developed mainly by residents, not by a centralized authority.⁶⁹ In order to understand how this process operated I will dwell on Akbar's extensive study of the informal mechanisms that govern the physical environment in Muslim cities. I will borrow many of his terms and use them freely to structure my argument.

According to Akbar, the morphology of towns in the early Islamic period was formed by small-scale decisions of the residents. The users occupied properties that formed lanes and dead-end streets; the streets were formed by quarters, boundaries, and so on.⁷⁰

Intervention by authority was minimal, and the town's growth was managed by expanding parties, who, in the case of dispute, were



4.16. A typical example of the urban fabric in an Arab-Islamic city as a result of an incremental process of urban growth, (Hakim 1986)

⁶⁷ Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism*, 150-151.

⁶⁸ Akbar argues that "The organic fabric of the Muslim traditional environment is the outcome of many small decisions made by nigh parties which used, controlled and owned properties". Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City*, 92.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 92.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 89.

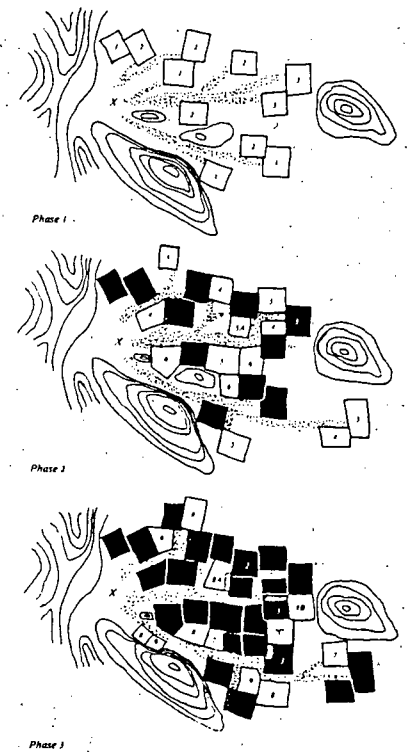
forced to communicate. The principles were *not codified* and were open to interpretation. Privately owned properties were totally autonomous with respect to other private properties. As with interventions against publicly owned property, the same can be said, with few exceptions, in cases of public need with compensation.

The principles of damage demonstrate that property rights were not violated, and concerned parties were not subject to regulations. The traditional principles resulted in autonomous synthesis.⁷¹

It is perhaps ironic that Roman law, which emphasized private property rights, should have been so much more successful in preserving the sanctity of the public ways than Islamic law which emphasized the public and communal rights over land and state domains and trusteeship over freehold tenure. Whereas Western law sought to prohibit all encroachments upon public ways, except where specifically exempted, the law in Islamic cities tended to permit encroachments, except when these were judged to interfere with the rights of others.⁷²

4.6.1. The Cellular Unit *Khuttah/Harah*

One important term of planning in Muslim cities is the *Khuttah* as the main urban unit. It could be defined as a quarter or a sector allocated to and inhabited by a group with common tribal, religious, ethnic, occupational characteristics, or a combination of them. Akbar defines it as is the territorialization of a segment of the city fabric,⁷³ either allocated by the founder of the city in the created type or



4.17. One of the attempts to decode the process of incremental urban growth in Islamic cities, (Akbar 1988)

⁷¹ Ibid., 106.

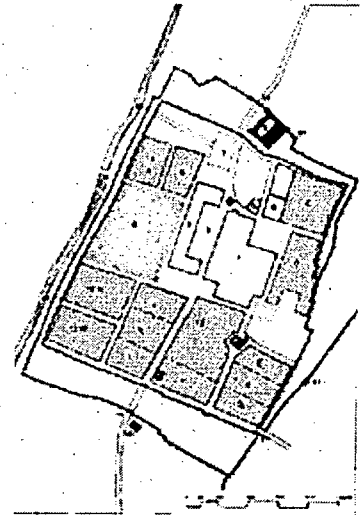
⁷² Ibid., 68.

⁷³ For different terminologies and linguistic origins of the *Khittah* on the one hand, and the difference between what *khittah* is (territorializing) and what *iqta* is (allotment), see Ibid., 82-84.

claimed by one group in the spontaneous one.

Khuttah is defined as a constituent urban unit while the city is evolving, the *harah*, on the other hand, can be identified as a physical, social and economic unit. The affinity between both terms suggests their connotation of the same cellular unit. Physically, a *harah* (sing.) is a subsection of a city. Having only limited access, usually through a street terminating in an open square, it is equipped with walls and gates, which can be closed at night and barricaded completely during times of crisis. Socially, the *harah* is a group of persons usually defined by ethnic and/or occupational characteristics as well as by vicinal ties, and segregated physically and socially from other subgroups of the city. Politically, it is often a unit of administration and control.⁷⁴

By using either terms, *Khuttah* or *Harah*, Muslim cities were founded, and continued to operate through a cellular-unit system. This applies to not only the physical fabric of the city but the social and administrative ones as well. Each cellular unit was inhabited by individuals having certain measures of commonalty, a community. They shared cultural and economic bases, physical boundaries and were administered by an appointed member, or *shaykh al-harah*. In cases of civic, economic and legal disputes, he was responsible for mediating between the authority and its subject, in both directions.⁷⁵ To a large extent one sees a parallel between the decline of the *shaykh* of the guilds and the *shaykh al-harah*. Each played an essential role in the cellular social system. But, as this cellular



4.18. Residential quarters, *Khuttahs*, were initially allocated to different tribal and ethnic groups. The central space was reserved to the Caliph's palace, military plaza and the congregational mosque, (AlSayyad 1991)

⁷⁴ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, 24.

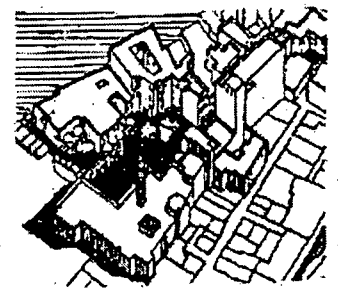
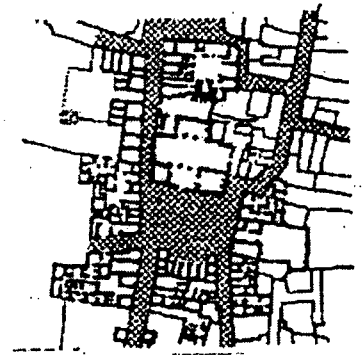
⁷⁵ The masculine pronoun is consciously employed here, for *Shaykh* in Arabic means an elderly man, and, in other contexts, a pious person, a religious leader, and a chief (of a guild, a gang, or a group of scholars). All definitions in Arabic are associated with the masculine gender.

organization of the pre-modern period gradually gave way to a widening network of direct municipal administration, their functional value declined. They had formerly been indispensable middlemen; their role became less and less crucial as the city changed from an organization of communal cells to an organization of individual cells.⁷⁶

4.6.2. Elements of Built Environment

Such complex urban fabric is a result of the concept of damage, according to Akbar, among neighboring parties. In the public realm within each residential quarter (*Khuttah*), the interaction between community members took place in particular spatial domains. They are on the one hand a product of the incremental process of growth, and on the other the arena in which these 'informal' measures took place. Akbar identifies four major spatial elements. "The *Fina*, the public space, the *Hima* and the dead-end street are elements of the built environment resulting from an autonomous synthesis", or from a spontaneous process of development.⁷⁷ A brief description of each is presented below.

The *Fina* is defined as the space on the street abutting a property, used exclusively by the residents of that abutting property. The resident of the property does not own the *Fina*, although s/he controls it, uses it, and on it may establish elements for demarcation (sitting benches or sheds etc.). As long as it does not cause any harm to passers-by or determinant to public benefit, and s/he may



4.19, 4.20. Examples of neighborhood-scale open spaces medieval Cairo that survived today

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: The Case of the Muslim City*, 128.

also prevent others from using it.⁷⁸

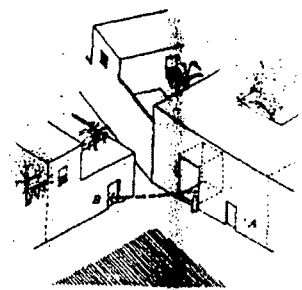
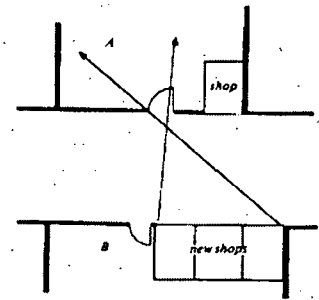
Public spaces were owned by Muslims collectively and controlled by them according to certain principles. The principle of objection and passers-by, in practice, implies that control is limited to those who use such paths constantly. The susceptibility of such spaces meant that the morphology was basically determined by resolutions between the actions and the objections. The street changed over time through users' action from an ill-defined to a well-defined form. Decisions regarding public spaces were made from the bottom up. Public spaces were basically the result of an accretion of decisions determined by priorityship, which regulated and ordered the relationship between parties.⁷⁹

Hima is an urban element defined as the protection of a piece of land from being revived or owned exclusively by individuals so that it can be owned and used collectively by a group of people.⁸⁰

Dead-end street, regardless of its evolution, was regarded as a private property shared by abutting residents who had access to it. Any action within the dead-end street was judged through the agreements and not on the principle of damage.⁸¹

4.7. Political Decisions helping Urban Synthesis

As historical evidence illustrates, the initial duality of formal vs. spontaneous processes of urban growth has given way to an eventual submission of the former to the latter. Rather than a mere replacement of a geometric by an organic form, the two opposed



4.21. The principle of damage between neighbors as a social measure shaping the physical environment in the medieval city, (Akbar 1988)

⁷⁸ Ibid., 107.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 123-124.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 127.

patterns of urban growth had reached a 'point of intersection' at which the popular process prevailed.⁸² In addition to founding new cities or quarters, some political decisions have also motivated the above synthesis, and contributed to an evolving indigenous fabric, which engulfed both its constituents. Some measures were initiated by the state, while others were responses by the public. If the presented models of the origin of Islamic cities establish the two ends of the medieval city's dual urban structure, the following measures may provide some insights as how urban policies could help attain an urban synthesis. I will briefly summarize some of these measures.

- State intervention in the urban fabric, by either demolishing or relocating parts of the city, was a major stimulus. Some rulers desired to establish their own architectural or urban clusters as a means to assert their authority. As in the coinage or the mentioning of the caliph's name in the Friday sermon, architectural complexes were definite signs of political authority. These complexes included public buildings such as *Madrasah*, *Khanqah*, *Sabil-Kuttab*, *Bimaristan* or *Wikalah*, and were either separate entities or attached to the Friday mosques. Their location and construction, as part of urban renewal programs, required surgical incisions in the city's evolving fabric, hence a direct confrontation between the two models.

- The rise of population within the city was another factor accelerating change, which resulted from either an increase of

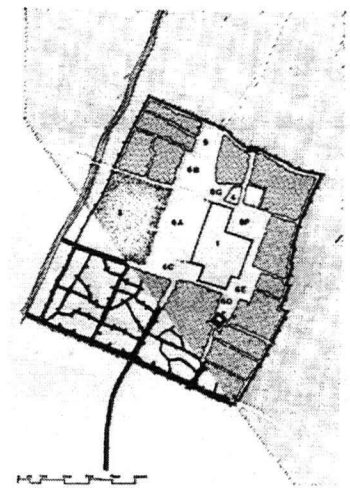
⁸² Borrowing the term from Boaz Shoshan, Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo, 76.

immigration or a decrease in the death rate. Both were direct consequences of the city's wealth, yet caused a pressing need for housing and urban densification. In the case of Cairo, the city's population continued to increase during the Ayyubid and early Mamluk reaching its apogee during the rein of al-Nasir Mohammed Ibn Qalawun.⁸³

- Opening of the city to the public usually resulted from a constant expansion beyond its existing walls and/or emerging needs for defense. In addition to its immediate effects on the city's image, this political decision led to cultural and urban consequences that surpassed its pragmatic functions. It resulted in breaking the cultural and physical exclusiveness of the different societal groups, and in the long-term identity of the city. In Cairo, responding to the need to consolidate the city's as well as its suburbs' defense, the Ayyubid dynasty decided to open the Fatimid gates and incorporate the expanding Cairo into one large walled metropolis. An act that for the first time allowed the populace and its culture to participate in the hitherto royal city.

4.8. Conclusion

This part of the study begins with two different processes of urban growth and concludes at a synthesis of both. The configuration of the formal planning process, although varied in different of Muslim cities, their common *raison d'être* could still be identified as a physical manifestation of political authority. These formal plans



4.22. Medieval Cairo, the overall urban fabric and street network in the process of transformation from a royal, formal, city to an organic one, (AlSayyad 1991)

⁸³ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, Chapter 3: "Ascent to Medieval Capital, 1170-1340," 27-36.

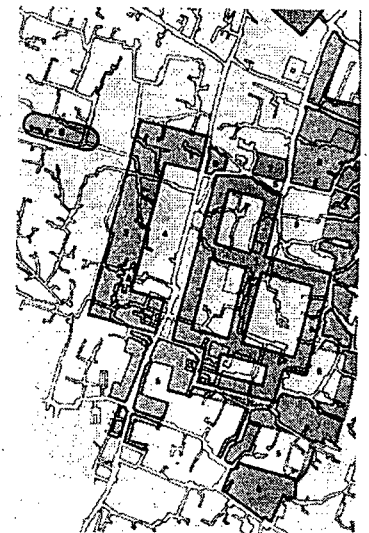
proceeded through either extending an existing city, remodeling parts of it to build a new royal urban complex, or by simply abandoning the existed city and founding a new one. This process continued to be active so long as the successive rulers were able (in terms of both financial capacity of the state as well as of the duration of their reigns) to establish new formal plans.

The informal process of urban growth on the other hand, although it occasionally resulted in creating new towns, has constantly transformed the structure of royal cities through a gradual encroachment upon the formal fabric. The minor-decision process of development within both residential and commercial parts of the city is based on the autonomous synthesis of private property. Entirely independent of central regulations by the civic authority, this process is controlled by the neighbors for benefit and damage compensation. The public domain was thus a result of the constant encroachments by private actions and, except for occasional authority intervention, was determined by the public right of way.

Of the above processes of urban growth, one could reflect on the city today through two main points. First, the forces by which the built environment was created or transformed are still active in the modern city of Cairo. Today, however, these forces are operating within different political, municipal and juridical mechanisms. The principle of damage, *al-muhtasib*, and *Shaykh al-harah*, for example, which had once governed encroachment upon public spaces are now being controlled by modern civic regulations. The informal, un-codified, principles are today being replaced by an institutional framework for urban regulation, resulting in a

confrontation and frustration of both parties: the local indigenous forces and the institutional formal ones. It may not be difficult for a passer-by in today's Cairo to identify the patterns of appropriating the public, or semi-public, space by users in almost the same structure described by Akbar in the medieval city. For example, outdoor extensions of shops and coffee-places, described in the Part I, bear, an astonishing resemblance to the concept of *Fina* in terms of control, tools of demarcation, sense of responsibility and principle of damage.

The second relevant point to planners today is the concept of the neighborhood community as an active socioeconomic unit living within a particular physical boundary in the city. This notion of a cellular urban unit, traditionally called the *Harah* or the *Khuttah*, is not remote to current neighborhoods, even in some 'modern' parts of Cairo. The previous discussion of the social and religious events in the street,⁸⁴ namely weddings and funeral tents, supports my argument of a continuous tradition of participation and shared responsibilities among neighbors, despite their living in a rather alienating physical environment. While the cellular unit in the medieval city reflected and responded to the economic, social, administrative needs of the community, the introduction of the modern framework has not only fragmented these different facets, but also reduced this unit from the neighborhood (community) level to the individual (citizen) one.



4.23. The formal plan superimposed on the later developed organic fabric Caliph's palace and central space, (AlSayyad 1991)

⁸⁴ See above Part I of this study: 3.2. Informal Reuse of Open Space.

⁸⁵ As concluded from the previous chapter, the apparent duality of ruler/popular cultures in the beginning of the Islamic phase was eventually merged together developing a 'new indigenous' model embraced by the whole society at the end of this phase. See above Chapter 4: "The Islamic City."

The medieval history of Cairo presents evidence that the informal gradual encroachment upon formal fabric has always prevailed. Political decisions and institutional regulations may help or hinder the acceleration of an urban synthesis, but they have always provided frameworks for interaction between the two processes. The lessons to be learned from medieval Cairo will be further discussed in the conceptual model, part III of this study.

5. THE COLONIAL CITY: The Early Modern Phase

5.1. Introduction

In the last chapter I identified the origin of the indigenous process of urban growth, which, despite the original formal plans of the city and until the advent of the modernity, had predominantly generated the city's fabric.⁸⁵ Similarly, in this chapter I will explore the origin of the European model of urban development which was introduced into the city of Cairo in the nineteenth century, yet had evolved in Europe in the preceding centuries. I will confine my study to eighteenth and the nineteenth century Paris in addition to a few modern planning theories from England that were implemented in Cairo, such as the Garden City model.

Despite their elusiveness, some controversial terms such as Colonialism and Cultural Imperialism are essential for this study, and their definitions must be examined. References used here are not comprehensive. They should not be considered as the only interpretations of such terms. Through the study of the varying colonial policies, both culturally and physically, I will emphasize the inconsistent approaches involved in these policies to acquiring their cultural dominance. Approaches that have both reflected the varying political (strategic) priorities, and corresponded to the changing perceptions of how to best exploit their colonies.

Finally, this part concludes by identifying two distinct societal

⁸⁵ As concluded from the previous chapter, the apparent duality of ruler/popular cultures in the beginning of the Islamic phase was eventually merged together developing a 'new indigenous' model embraced by the whole society at the end of this phase. See above Chapter 4: "The Islamic City."

groups, their respective cultural models and consequent urban schemes. The apparent polarization concluded from this section is deliberately emphasized, and is seen as necessary to substantiate the theoretical model of cultural change in Part III of this study.

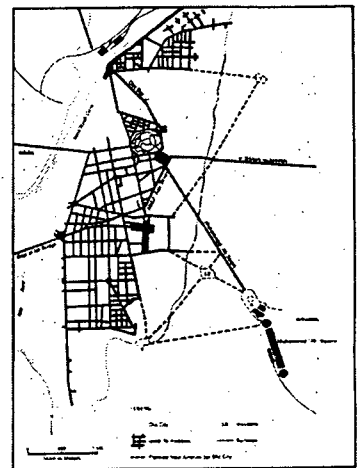
Before starting my analysis, a brief historic review will outline the scope and chronological boundaries of this phase.

5.2. Historic Overview

In the year 1798 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte led a campaign to Egypt aiming to control the trade route to the Orient through the blocking up of the Middle Eastern connection against his colonial rival at that time, the British Empire. It is true that the French arrived in Egypt as conquerors and colonizers, but they also brought with them enlightenment thoughts, sciences and technology of the Modern world developed in Europe during the preceding few centuries.

They also came, as Said argues,⁸⁶ with preconceived ideas and a pre-constructed image about the Orient. Sources behind this construct were primarily textual, and were derived from either classical literature about the Orient, or European travelers' accounts.

Such encounter between both cultures, the Egyptian and the French, or in a general sense the 'local' and the 'foreign' was documented in several accounts. Chiefly among them is the *Al-Jabarti* Chronicle, an Egyptian historian who witnessed this event and provided, from a local perspective, a descriptive testimony of how the two worlds, or



5.1. The European city built to the west of the existing medieval core in 1867, (Abu-Lughod 1971)

⁸⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), chapter 1: "The Scope of Orientalism," 31-110.

paradigms, had collided, and received each other.⁸⁷ This encounter, as we will see, was not just a mingling between--or hybridization of--two 'different' civilizations as it would have occurred through a cultural exchange process accompanying trade caravans for example. It was an encounter between two 'unbalanced' cultural models. The first model was in its zenith present to politically rule and culturally dominate, mobilized however with rhetorical justifications of colonization as expressed in its missionary role to 'civilize'. Meanwhile, the other, accordingly subordinate, model was in a state of decay after at least three centuries of economic and political deterioration.⁸⁸ A civilizational and a cultural, hierarchy was therefore established that the economic, technological and military gaps had by this moment reached their highest manifestation. The superior/inferior structure suddenly became a culturally constructed reality causing the newly arrived (imported) model to be considered by the local one as the 'only' ideal in order to overcome its perceived inferiority.⁸⁹

The disastrous destruction of Napoleon's fleet in Alexandria marked the end of the brief, yet extremely significant, French expedition.

⁸⁷ Some historians argue that the French expedition was not an encounter of two worlds unfamiliar with each others as usually described. The trade between the *tujjar* in Cairo and Alexandria from the one hand and other European ports from the other has been for a long time established. In fact, as others argue, it is the protection of the French merchants, and other European minorities, that the French found their excuse to inaugurate their campaign. For such argument see Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and also Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁸⁸ By 'decay' I refer to the economic and technological, rather than the cultural conditions at the end of the eighteenth century. The Portuguese navigation around Africa had, since three centuries before, drastically reduced the importance of Egypt as trade cross-route between the East and Europe.

⁸⁹ For the responses to this perceived inferiority or, and the initial attempts of modernization in early nineteenth-century Cairo, see for example Henry Dodwell, The Founder of Modern Egypt: A study of Muhammad 'Ali, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); and Pierre Crabitte, Ismail: The Malignant Khedive (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1933).

Shortly after his defeat, and following the desperate attempts to negotiate with the British and the Ottoman empires, pleading for a non humiliating retreat of his troops, Napoleon, disguised, went back to France leaving behind the whole campaign, led by two of his successors.⁹⁰

The void left after the expedition had ended was soon filled up by an intelligent and most powerful Mumluk of that time, Mohammed Ali. Soon receiving the Ottoman sultan's acknowledgment, the new *Wali* and his offspring established a dynasty that was to rule for the coming century and half. Under the reign of this monarchy, Egypt witnessed both implicit and the explicit colonial phases, varying from nominal (protectorate) to virtual colonization. Despite the constant tension between the British, the monarchy and the frequent nationalists' movements, Mohammed Ali's dynasty continued to rule, embracing the European model as 'the' way to modernize the country.⁹¹ We will confine our historical boundaries to the reign of Mohammed Ali's dynasty, which was terminated by the national revolution and the collapse of monarchy in the year 1952, where this chapter ends and the next one will start.

5.3. Characteristics of French Colonial Cities:

⁹⁰ Kleper, the first successor, an aggressive firm ruler who was resented by the Cairene, did not last for long, and was assassinated by a local after a brief reign. Mino was a milder leader who had a sympathy for Egyptians, and, as a means to become closer to the Cairenes, according to some amounts, he married an Egyptian woman and converted to Islam. For detailed events of during both their ruling periods, see Samuel Moreh, Trans., Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁹¹ The plans of Khedive Ismail, the grandson of Muhammad Ali, to modernize Egypt is extensively described in many sources. For the general history of his reign, see Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, A Short History of Modern Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter 4: "The beginning of the state system," 54-81; for the purpose of urban transformation and cultural change, see Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), Part II: "The Modern Era"; and for the institutional change in the same period, see Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989).

Motives behind colonization are not hidden and needs perhaps, no space in this study. The colonial urbanism was only one device among others to consolidate colonial power on the one hand and to represent its dominance on the other. The colonial policies were nevertheless inconsistent and thus their associated urbanization schemes varied as well. In the following section I will discuss the different motivations, hence policies behind colonial urbanism. My goal is to show that the colonial phase had created a two-world legacy on both the urban and the cultural levels.

5.3.1. The Colonial World Order

In AlSayyad's study of colonial urbanism, two general motivations for colonialism are identified, one self-seeking, and the other liberal and beneficent. The former is concerned with the extraction of resources to improve one's own condition at the expense of others; the latter operates on the premise that there is an ethical responsibility to dominate in order to assist.⁹²

Said's classical definition of Orientalism is perhaps in this context unavoidable. His study of Gustave von Grunbaum,⁹³ the father of Orientalism, reveals the European tendency to assign meanings based not on study but on 'inherent bases' between a rich, complex, human Christianity and a holistic, anti-human, and uncreative 'other'.⁹⁴

⁹² Nezar AlSayyad, "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflection on Colonialism and National Equation," in *Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Aldershot; Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury, 1992), 6.

⁹³ The Orientalist stage, Said argues, "becomes a system of moral and epistemological rigor. As a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient, Orientalism thus comes to exert a three-way force, on the Orient, on the Orientalist, and on the Western 'consumers' of Orientalism." Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 67.

⁹⁴ It is also important to note here that this established dichotomy between the 'self and the 'other', which we have already mentioned before, is one of the fundamental bases of the Modern paradigm.

The notion was that the people of the colonies were at an early stage of historical development, hence the need for dominance to wipe out and rewrite history.⁹⁵ Dominance, in the sphere of urban form as “the establishment and maintenance, for an extended time, of rule over an alien people that is separate and subordinate to the ruling power.”⁹⁶

King identifies three main characteristics of colonial cities: 1) that power (economic, political and social) is principally on the hand of a non-indigenous minority; 2) that this minority is superior in terms of military, technological and economic resources; and 3) that the colonized majority are racially (or ethnically), culturally, and religiously different from the colonizers.⁹⁷

5.3.2. Two Phases of Colonial Policies

In her study of ‘traditional’ cities under French Colonial dominance, Hamadeh argues that one can distinguish two different policies of colonial ruling. These two political ruling strategies of power were reflected in the urbanization of colonial capitals (state and provincial): the one of assimilation and the other of association.⁹⁸

Based on Hamadeh’s view as well as on Wright’s study of the policies of French Colonial urbanism,⁹⁹ I will discuss the two colonial policies in context of my main structural relationship

⁹⁵ Nezar AlSayyad, “Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflection on Colonialism and National Equation,” in Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, 3.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 4. Quoting Emerson (1968)

⁹⁷ Ibid. Quoting King in Anthony King, Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1976).

⁹⁸ Shirine Hamadeh, “Creating the Traditional City: A French Project,” in Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Aldershot; Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury, 1992), 241-259.

⁹⁹ Gwendolyn Wright, The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 301-313.

between two cultural groups, the Ruling and the Popular.

The process of assimilation, Hamadeh explains, was a colonial ideal that the colonies were an integral part of the imperial state and their subjects were its citizens. After the French revolution, eighteenth-century enlightenment thought and the principles of human equality and freedom were established, and the colonization was justified as a mission to civilize and thus to assimilate the backward Orient.

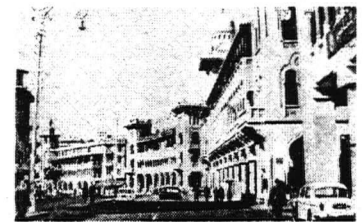
In terms of urbanization, assimilation meant eradicating the existed 'non-functional' socio-physical environment and implanting a new and modern society. 'Haussmannization' was undertaken by widening streets, demolition of buildings to create thoroughfares for reasons of health, traffic, and military control. This process, not particular to Cairo, involved radical intervention in the medieval city that it could be described as a 'surgical incision'. In terms of the architecture of the newly constructed official buildings in the colonies, the principles of monumentality and axuality, which were dominant at that time in the Ecole de Beaux Art in Paris, were adopted in the so called 'style of the Conqueror'.¹⁰⁰

The second phase of colonization, which is of association, was characterized by the sophisticated rhetoric of protection, cooperation, and preservation. It required instead that the social and cultural identity of the indigenous population be acknowledged. A new style was introduced, 'the style of the Protector', which called for the preservation of native identity from foreign intrusion, or even

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 244-245.

influence.¹⁰¹ These new values of architecture and planning were meant to be understood as preserving the natives' cultural identity. In reality, what was achieved is a change in the colonizing image. According to Hamadeh, "[t]he three fundamental policies of the association phase were a) the preservation of the existing quarters of the medieval city, b) the reconstruction of its architecture patrimony, and c) the Arabization of the new architecture."¹⁰²

The need to defuse the rise of local opposition was the main motive behind the change in policy from the one of assimilation to that of association. And because the "visual culture (hence architecture and urbanism) was ...the most accessible signs of the colonial policies. It thus became essential to change into a more indirect and invisible form of dominance."¹⁰³ I should emphasize here that the policy of association on urban level provides an evidence of effect from the 'local', culturally subordinate Popular group on the colonial power, and hence the 'high' culture of Ruling group.



5.2. An 'Arabized' architectural character was developed in the newly founded European districts, (Abu-Lughod 1971)

5.3.3. Two Cities, Two Worlds

The above process resulted in a dual situation culminating in a doctrine of two separate urban forms: the one indigenous, traditional and frozen, and the other Western (colonial), modern and ever-

¹⁰¹ Ibid., quoting Beguin, 1983, 11.

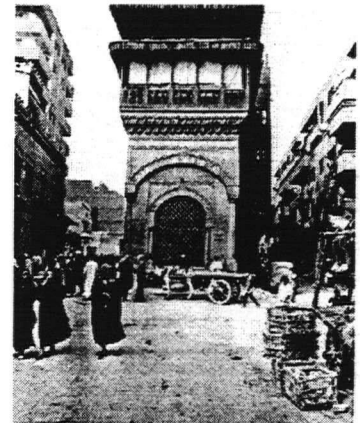
¹⁰² Ibid. 246-249.

¹⁰³ The logic behind the change in the colonial policy from the one of assimilation to the one of association around the mid nineteenth century can be explained through Pierre Bordieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1989). According to Bordieu, two modes of domination can be defined: the direct domination of one group by another, and the mode of domination that consists of a system of strategies (consciously produced by the dominant group) to ensure reproduction of an established order. The first mode of direct domination is so visible, and may create obvious imbalance of power among the two groups, and therefore lead to the rise of opposition. The direct authority must be diffused through a class of intermediaries. Shirine Hamadeh, "Creating the Traditional City: A French Project," in *Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, 1992, 246-249.

developing. As for the latter, the programs of urban development emphasized the problems of circulation, hygiene and architectural anesthetics. For the medieval city, no provision was made for its growth. This program established the distinction between the two cities, and accelerated the process of urban deterioration of the old city after it had quickly lost its role. Representing the old city by preserving it, Arabizing its architecture, or besieging it and preventing it from further growth all contributed equally to the creation of the image of an immobile and ahistorical Orient. The liberal policy of association turned the culture of the Other into a timeless tradition.¹⁰⁴

The new policy somehow served its purpose in that it resulted in a shift in the colonized (local) elite's view to their culture. During the 1920s and 1930s, as Wright argues, colonial cities provided important settings where the colonized intelligentsia could form a new vision of the future; a possibility of combining modernism and tradition. Western and indigenous culture could coexist under autonomous governments, far better than they had under imperialism. New technology, health care, education, productivity, and other improvements did not require colonial auspices. Benefits had accrued primarily to Europeans and a small segment of the colonial bourgeoisie, but they could have been allocated more equitably.¹⁰⁵

Paradoxically, the colonizers had created a demand for the modern



5.3. Except for few straight streets that were cut through the medieval fabric, the old city at large was left with no attempt to modernize it

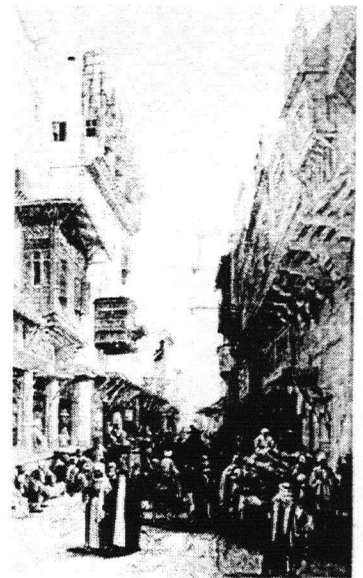
¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 257.

¹⁰⁵ Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, 303.

amenities they had brought, a desire that fueled demands for independence. By the 1930's it was clear that associationism could no longer curtail the resistance to the colonial power. The shift can be readily seen in the Colonial Exposition of 1931 from the associationalist approach to colonial urbanism, which had held sway for two decades.¹⁰⁶

Wright summarizes the legacy of the colonial urbanization during the shifting policies in the following main points¹⁰⁷.

- Historic preservation by entire districts which could romantically capture the past in certain neighborhoods, making them alluring to tourists, while leaving other parts of the city to modernize dramatically.
- Residential segregation carried out by restricting modern improvements to certain districts.
- Rationalized streets systems and zoning plans encouraging economic growth in certain districts.
- Centralized governmental complexes accentuating the authority of the state.
- Public institutions and public spaces serving as a stage for new kind of interaction.
- Maintaining or recreating certain traditional public settings to help sustain a hierarchical order.



5.4. The medieval city represented a romantic image of an immobile and ahistorical Orient

¹⁰⁶ The recurrence of strikes and urban violence made the opposition evident. It was also difficult to argue the economic benefit for most colonial businessmen, farmers and workers--or for an unchanging "native" economy. International economy interests determined the policy in the colonies. The colonial enterprises had no use for the myths of association. Ibid., 303-5.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 306.

Such strategies of colonial urbanization produced the two-world legacy I argue for here. For the colonial cultural model, these colonial cities provided more than the ideal laboratory setting so often invoked, and more than the 'mirror' we might refer to today. They functioned like a magnifying glass, revealing with startling clarity the ambitions and fears, the techniques and policies that pertained at home, here carried out almost without restraints.¹⁰⁸ For the local, colonized cultural model, on the other hand, these strategies of colonial urbanism made the remedy for the cultural gap, and 'constructed' inferiority, crystal-clear. To abandon the old city, the past, and to embrace modern urbanization was the message. Health, efficient transportation, prosperity, and most of all, power were all associated with the 'new' city.

5.4. Paris as a Model

In the last chapter I discussed how the indigenous process of urban growth evolved during early Muslim cities. Similarly, in this section, and before proceeding with further discussion of the colonial urban legacy in the city of Cairo, I will dwell briefly on how the 'foreign' model of urbanization had evolved in its homeland. What is mostly relevant here is the parallel between the urban changes that Paris experienced, prior to and during the nineteenth century, and that which took place in the colonial city of Cairo in the same period. By juxtaposing the two, one could realize the bases and symptoms of the schizophrenic identity of the city at the time, between its aspirations, hence image, and its reality.



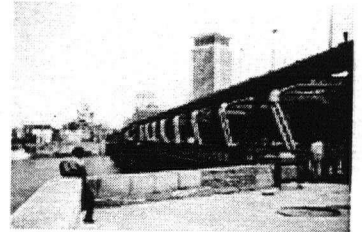
5.5. A view from the center of the European city, where models of architecture and urbanism were imported, primarily from Paris, and designed by French and Italian architects, (Abu-Lughod 1971)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 306.

5.4.1. A Cultural 'Mecca'

Although Egypt was to become a British colony by the end of the century, Paris was adopted as 'the' model for the new urban schemes in Cairo at that time. Behind this fact two main reasons can be identified. First, as the European center of art, Paris was seen by the emerging elite and intellectuals as a locus for new ideas in the different fields of art and culture. And secondly, because of the overwhelming French cultural influence in the early decades of the nineteenth century following Napoleon's expedition,¹⁰⁹ the French system was already established in many aspects of the rising culture.¹¹⁰ It was even still administered or supervised by French officers in many fields.

During the nineteenth century successive groups of Egyptian scholars and civil servants were sent to Paris, and to a less extent to other European capitals in search of knowledge.¹¹¹ These missions were financed by the Khedives,¹¹² who, along with their giant schemes of modernization, were interested in establishing a local



5.6. Abu al-Ila bridge, designed by Gustav Eiffel, connecting Zamalek to downtown Cairo

¹⁰⁹ Napoleon was accompanied by a large number of scholars, scientists, engineers and artists who embarked on the monumental work, *Description d'Egypte*, recording and documenting every aspect of Egyptian, both Ancient and contemporary, life. Once established as monarch, one of the early institutions that Bonaparte founded was *l'Institut d'Egypte*, which was an arena for early cultural encounter between local scholars, the *Ulama*, and the French scientists. See Samuel Moreh, Trans., *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁰ Among these established French models were educational, jurisdictional, military, and urban planning systems. The French expertise has initiated many of the engineering schemes in roadways, irrigation and others. This influence continued to be present towards the end of the nineteenth century, although replaced in many fields by the British who dominated the ruling strata. By the first half of the twentieth century, the French domain shrank and was primarily concentrated in the financial institutions.

¹¹¹ For detailed account of these missions to Paris and the civilizational encounter of their members see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*.

¹¹² The first of these groups were sent by Mohammed Ali (1805-49), then by his two successors Abbas (1849-54) and Said (1854-63), and reached its apogee during Ismail's (1863-79). For general episodes during their reigns, see Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, Chapter 4: "The beginning of the state system, 1805-1922," 54-81.

administrative and political system constituted of Egyptian candidates. Once they were back, members of these groups were recruited in high positions in the newly created 'modern' institutions.

In his study of this period of colonial policy in Egypt, Mitchell's thesis is relevant to my argument. According to Mitchell, Egyptians in this period "wrote books, built schools, enacted regulations, and pulled down and rebuilt cities".¹¹³ Such activities, as he argues, "were not new 'stages' in the development of something preexisting, such as 'traditional education' or pre-modern 'politics', but new practices".¹¹⁴ A new model emerged to replace a non-functional one. "Streets now appeared to be 'disordered' and suddenly filled with the crowd. At the same moment individuals became similarly material, in need of discipline and instruction". In urban planning as in education and other cultural institutions, new 'policies' were introduced. He concludes that these "other" practices constructed, in bricks, words, desks and walls, the boundaries of a new world."¹¹⁵

What was the urban and cultural environment in Paris that overwhelmed Egyptian delegates and convinced them to abandon their civilizational package to embrace 'the' new model?

5.4.2. Paris Urbanization in Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

¹¹³ Timothy Mitchell, "As If The World Were Divided in Two: The Birth of Politics in Turn-of-the-Century Cairo" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1984).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Without considering the cultural environment that prevailed in France during this period as well as its sociopolitical context, it will be hard to grasp the whole picture of urbanization in Paris. The following brief introduction was thus seen, although not comprehensive, as necessary.

General Context¹¹⁶

Culturally speaking, the eighteenth century was marked by the rise of enlightenment thoughts in Europe in general and in post-revolution France in particular. Reasoning, equality, freedom were among these principles. In terms of sociopolitical conditions, The French Revolution was certainly the major event that had shaken Europe before the end of the century and threatened its centuries-long monarchies. Napoleon's first empire had also spread the new spirit of the French Revolution all over Europe. It had also inaugurated a new phase of the French colonial rivalry with Britain in different regions of the globe. The Middle East was certainly one of the battlefields. The Revolution was also associated with the emergence of a new Bourgeois class, which, replacing the aristocrats, had different needs and aspirations. During the nineteenth century, France, and despite the recurrent sociopolitical turmoil, Napoleon III of the Second Empire, continued the ambitious programs of urban transformation in Paris.

¹¹⁶ The historical context is based on both studies of Keneth Frampton, "Cultural Transformation: Neoclassical Architecture 1750 - 1900," *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1980; 1985; reprint, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1990), 12-20; and Anthony Sutcliffe, *Paris: An Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), chapters 4: 48-66, chapter 5: 67-82, and chapter 6: 83-104.

The Industrial Revolution was already under way, affecting various living conditions in Europe.¹¹⁷ Among its major achievements that directly contributed in both the urban and architectural faces of European capitals was the introduction of steel structures.¹¹⁸ The golden age of European colonialism was celebrated by the Exposition International in Paris 1867, 1900, parallel to the Haussmannization of Paris, which was then in its highest manifestation.

In terms of the artistic and architectural styles that prevailed in this period, the Baroque and Rococo styles were giving way to the Neo Classic and Romantic movements. Both the 'Ecole de Beaux Art' and the 'Ecole de Polytechnique' led the urbanization process in Paris, as well as in other colonized capitals, during the nineteenth century. European districts in those colonies were often an experimental field for both French Classicism, manifested in Haussmannized Paris style, and the English Picturesque movements represented in the Garden City model. Neither the origins of neoclassicism nor its principles is within the scope of this study.

Finally, there is the scientific revolution at the end of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Bacon, Descartes, Newton).¹¹⁹ An underlying

¹¹⁷ Industrialization did not bring much mechanized manufacturing to the city of Paris. Most of the large-scale industry was to be found outside the city in the industrial suburbs. The architects of Paris were very remote both physically and conceptually. Industrial design was a matter for engineers, surveyors or the industrialists themselves. Anthony Sutcliffe, *Paris: An Architectural History*, 95.

¹¹⁸ The use of steel and glass in Architecture of whole markets and railway stations was first introduced by engineers (as in Gare de l'Est and gare du Nord), then by architects (such as Labrouste's Biblioteque Nationale).

¹¹⁹ Alberto Perez-Gomez, "Symbolic Geometry in French Architecture in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (1983; reprint, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992), chapter 4, 130-161.

base that started by this time and continued to affect the modernization process in Europe and its colonies was the separation of Man from Nature--the condition of being an observer to an outside reality. This concept of representation, a construct that simulates reality was a direct consequence from the detachment between the observer of an exhibit the one hand, and between the exhibit and the external reality on the other. During the Exposition International in Paris, 1867, this concept was manifested in both the colonies' pavilions that were miniatures of the 'real' world; and the city of Paris beyond the Exposition ground itself.¹²⁰

Urban Legacy 1789- 1870

This short discussion of some of the urbanization principles in Paris during this period is seen here as relevant to understand the European city of Cairo, founded on such principles. It was based on the following urban model, which had evolved in response to European cultural and technological conditions, the planning schemes of Cairo were principally modeled. I will briefly summarize some of the political, economic and technological forces that shaped these principles.

From the Empire onwards, on both the architectural and urban levels, practical considerations began to play a bigger part in planning Paris. Civic schemes to transform Paris were developed in the interests of public health, traffic flow and public facilities such as markets. At the same time, Bonaparte was keen to build massive,

¹²⁰ Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, chapter 1: "Egypt at the exhibition," 1-33.

symbolic monuments.¹²¹ The emperor's tastes were strongly neoclassical, as befitted his imperial conception of France's role in Europe. The Neoclassical portico of the Palais Bourbon, the church of the Madeleine, the Arc de Triomphe, the Rue de Rivoli, the Arc du Carrousel were among the examples. On the other hand, the apartment house was introduced as an urban unit with a potential regularity. Maintaining a uniform street facade was achieved by the spacing of the windows, which became regular irrespective of the interior arrangement of the rooms.¹²²

The Second Empire did not adopt a radically new aesthetic. Its new streets were wider and longer, and its buildings were a little taller and a lot bulkier. However, the principles perfected in Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were adapted on a new scale. Classicism, far from being more undermined, became a unifying force on a gigantic scale.¹²³ The basic building unit was the apartment house, which now acquired a standardized form and architectural treatment from one end of the city to the other. In the new arterial streets, more than just a terminal point was needed to create coherence; the frontages themselves had to follow a formula. The result was a city-wide visual unity which went far beyond anything achieved or even envisaged before 1848. This formula was not legally imposed in most cases, however, It represented a consensus of architects and clients. Participation, rather than direction, shaped the new Paris.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Anthony Sutcliffe, Paris: An Architectural History, 69.

¹²² Ibid., 78.

¹²³ Ibid. 83.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Modernization and industrialization were not a threat to the French classical tradition, even when their physical impact was at its peak. Napoleon III was interested in new building techniques, such as the use of wrought iron, and in practical design where this was appropriate. He wanted his buildings to be recognized as 'modern'. However, these aspirations rarely detached him from the classical style. Haussmann, for his part, gave a higher priority to aesthetic, and sometimes feared that his efforts to embellish Paris lacked the emperor's full support. Striving to secure monumental structures to enhance the world's biggest system of urban perspectives, he was naturally faithful to classical design. Much more than the emperor, he was prepared to give precise instructions to architects on the size, planning and visual highlights of new public buildings. New streets were wider than most of their predecessors, for reasons of public order, public health and traffic engineering.¹²⁵

Haussmann was not rigidly wedded to classical architecture, nor to the First Empire, which had some appeal in the court circles. He wanted, however, to see strong relief on the facades of major buildings, which tended in consequence to stand out from domestic facades. His commitment to over long, street perspectives led him to seek qualities of strength, mass and outline in the terminal buildings rather than obedience to classical norms of proportion.¹²⁶

5.5. Colonial Cairo

The above principles and features of Paris' urbanization, as already

¹²⁵ Ibid. 86.

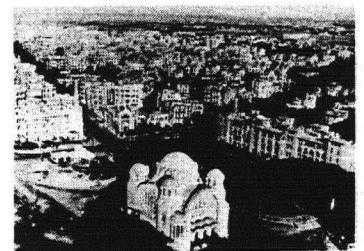
¹²⁶ Ibid. 88.

mentioned, were implanted in colonial Cairo. By either creating new districts or cutting straight streets through the medieval fabric, nineteenth century planning schemes were meant to turn the 'traditional' city into a 'modern' one, in the European sense of the word, to be modeled after Paris. Extensively borrowing from Abu-Lughod's study of Cairo socio-urban history,¹²⁷ the following is a summary of the major features of the newly established city, its driving forces of expansion, and its urban problems inherited from the medieval city.

5.5.1. General Features of Colonial Cairo Urbanism

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the urban agglomeration of medieval Cairo was expanding on a modest level. On the one hand urban sprawl was concentrated around three major directions in the western and northwestern sides. On the other hand, new districts were founded in the available urban pockets (in-filled ponds) on the city's western fringes and where foreign communities were concentrated. Although these new districts were influenced by architectural European models, in terms of urban planning no comprehensive scheme or a master plan had been conceived till the middle of the century.

After his visit to the Paris International Exposition, 1867 (where he was received personally by Haussmann), Ismail returned with both a sense of humiliation, from the way the Egyptian pavilion was constructed, and a vision for a city that could be compared to Paris



5.7. An aerial view of Heliopolis, a newly developed suburb to the northeast. An example of the newly imported model of architecture and urbanism, (Abu-Lughod 1971)

¹²⁷ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, Part II. "The Modern Era: A Tale of Two Cities," 83-166.

and other European cities.¹²⁸ The legendary celebration for the opening of the Suez Canal, which Ismail conceived, required the accommodation of his imperial guests. He wanted to show them a city that he could be proud of, not only a modern one, but also a copy of Paris.

Munbarak's plan¹²⁹ that had been developed two decades before and never materialized, finally found its realization. The newly acquired territory between the existed city to the East and the river to the West was planned, copying Haussmann's Paris. Streets were laid out in a radial pattern, and numbers of *Maydans* (squares) were located at the intersection. A plan for development was established for the new city to be constructed during the coming decade. Land was sold to princes, aristocrats and wealthy businessmen at very low prices as an incentive for its rapid development.

Further north, the introduction of electric street cars provided two major spines for urban expansion. The first running to the North East while the second ran to Bulak, the city's port and then an industrial satellite, connecting the new city center to the rapidly developing suburbs. During the opening two decades of the twentieth century, 1897-1917, giants civic and engineering schemes achieved a mastery on natural forces that have always hindered the city's expansion during the past centuries, namely distance, drought, flood, and the river. Without the new urban framework

¹²⁸ See Ibid., 104-105; and for detailed account of Ismail visit to Paris Exposition, and a critical view of the representation of the Egyptian pavilion, see also Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, chapter 1: "Egypt at the exhibition," 1-33.

¹²⁹ Ali Mubarak was appointed as a chief engineer, a minister of Public Work, and of Education during the successive reigns of several Khedevies. He was sent to Paris in 1867 to study both education and sewerage system. His giant engineering schemes in irrigation, road and rail networks could only be compared to his undertaking of the development of the first Master Plan of Cairo. This plan however was not to be conceived until Ismail ambitious scheme for planning new Cairo began, upon his return from Paris, in 1867.

established during these two decades, Abu-Lughod argues, none of the development in the century to come could have taken place. For the importance of these schemes, I will briefly present some of the forces and problems that both helped and hindered the urban expansion respectively.

5.5.2. Urban Expansion

According to Abu-Lughod driving forces of Cairo urban expansion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be categorized in three interrelated groups: demographic, economic and transportation technology.¹³⁰

First, the population increase during this period is ascribed both to the natural increase resulting from epidemic control and decrease of death rate and to the urban migration due to drainage and irrigation projects and the expansion in arable land. In terms of urban expansion, both causes resulted in the incorporation of surrounding settlements within the metropolis domain.

Secondly, the nation witnessed a considerable economic boom as a result of the jump (quadruple increase) in cotton prices affected by the American Civil War. Furthermore, the capitalization laws, which provided opportunities for European investors and cash flow, enabled the city to embark on big civic schemes, such as sanitation and transportation, which helped transforming the city's urban profile.

Thirdly, is the transportation technology, which began with the tram



5.8. Cairo urban expansion from the early twentieth century, (The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1984)

¹³⁰ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, chapter 8: "The Exploding Demand for Capital City Residence," 118-131; and chapter 9: "The Increased Supply of Urban Land," 134-143.

lines, and metros, and, later, roads for automobiles. Reducing the time required to travel between the center and the newly planned suburbs to less than an hour, the transportation networks established a framework for urban expansion in the northern and northeastern directions. The construction of the Aswan dam (built in 1900), on the other hand, allowed for stabilizing the Nile edges, and therefore for the construction of bridges and the development of riverine fronts on both sides of the river as well as the islands. To this advancement in irrigation technology Abu-Lughod credits the urban expansion on the west side.

5.5.2. Urban Problems

As there were reasons that motivated the city's urban expansion in an unprecedented rate, there were factors that impeded this boom, paralyzed further development, and sometimes terminated the sprawl in certain directions. Some of these problems were a legacy of the medieval city while others had newly emerged.¹³¹

Until the middle of the twentieth century the city of Cairo lacked a central municipal authority, hence no institutional mechanism of coordination and urban control. Local financial bodies were also almost non-existent, and thus any response to indigenous community interest. Urban development was based on speculation and anticipation rather than to demand.

From the medieval city, Cairo inherited complex property laws under the *Waqf* condition. The latter is a religiously-based endowment system, which operates through either a *Waqf ahli*

¹³¹ Ibid., chapter 10: "Urban Problems: Old, Persistent, and New," 144-166.

(private or family), or a *Waqf khayri* (charitable). By freezing the property condition, and requiring an extremely complicated system of legalization, the *Waqf* hindered urban expansion in many areas.

5.5.3. Spatial Devices of Cultural Dynamics

The dual structure of the city perpetuated the segregation of foreign communities and other subgroups from the indigenous mass. In addition to the colonial policies of 'association' in architecture and urbanism, those that indicate a first step in rapprochement between the two models, the modernization of the city also involved pragmatic functions that were to shake the exclusiveness of this duality, although in top-down processes. Among others, the car and the factory reflect two manifestations of these dynamics. By either pulling together or spreading apart, each challenged the conscious political schemes for spatial segregation and their associated sociocultural boundaries. The automobile required the restructuring and constant urban intervention to provide for sufficient vehicular roads, thus creating *spatial* devices for *cultural* interchange. One could argue that a similar process, although on a social level, was taking place in Paris Boulevards, where streets as new public spaces served as an arena for sociocultural encounter between the bourgeoisie and the urban poor.¹³² The factory, on the other hand, resulted in the change of the historical modes of production and their accompanied mixed land use. The development of new industrial



5.9. An example of the traffic-oriented open spaces in front of the main railway station

¹³² For an excellent example of this argument see Baudelaire's description of Paris Boulevards in Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Chapter III: "Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets," 131-172, (New York: Penguin Books, 1988)

¹³³ Anthony McDermott, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 6., emphasis added.

suburbs required the provision of both mass transportation and laborer housing within their vicinity. It thus motivated the creation of spatial settings and linkages. Although could be seen as destructive to traditional socioeconomic structures, this element necessitated the break in the perpetuated urban duality.

5.6. Conclusion

Undertaken from two directions and for different motives or intentions, the colonial phase in Cairo marked the creation of a dual urban structure, and in a two-world order. While the first goal was carried out by a cultural model established by the colonial power, the second direction was pursued by the rising local intelligentsia and within the same framework established by the former -- although not merely an extension.

The colonizing culture shifted its policy from the one of 'assimilation' to that of 'association' in order to absorb the rising local opposition. In urbanization, as it was in other cultural aspects, the change of policy resulted in a juxtaposition of two models. The indigenous were left to romantically capture the past. Their physical environment was portrayed as stagnant and ahistoric and left to deterioration. Next to it, a modern model was established calling for a civilized way of living, in terms of both physical and mental health. As a means to exert power, the indigenous model had to be discredited and replaced by a contemporary, active one.

Being caught in such a hierarchical structure, local intellectuals who sought education and exposure to 'the civilized world', traveled to Paris and other imperial capitals to acquire the means of 'progress'.

This acquisition, however, was conditional, according to the above culturally constructed hierarchy, on abandoning their past and by embracing what they considered 'the' cultural ideal. In the absence of the virtual colonial presence, the new upper classes and local cultural elite that emerged in this period (as opposed to the *Ulama* discussed in the previous chapter) continued to play the same role as cultural leaders. Their leadership was in and of itself a representation of the torn identity and cultural duality. On the one hand they followed the cultural model of their colonial patrons, on the other hand, they were themselves a model for other groups in the society at large. Their cultural position, and therefore the cultural gap in general, should not be seen as fixed or essential. In contrast to this view, I suggest a state of flux and continuous interchange. Yet, this phase of the city's history represents a moment where a certain measure of cultural alienation between two societal groups could be identified at its heights. This measured gap should only be considered in relation to what was previously apparent in medieval Cairo, and what is going to change -- the post-colonial phase in the chapter to follow.

6. THE POST-REVOLUTION CITY: The Late Modern Phase

6.1. Introduction

In the year 639 AD, "the Arab invasion did much to establish the framework from which modern Egypt eventually emerged. In the following centuries, the country sustained a series of rulers. some local and some imposed from outside, depending on the balance of power between Damascus and Baghdad and the ability of the governors in Cairo to assert independence. Former slaves, the Mamluks, ruled between 1250 and 1516, when the country was taken into the Ottoman Empire, but it enjoyed considerable autonomy for long periods. By the time of Napoleon's invasion in 1798, Egypt was in reduced economic circumstances and ripe for change, but unprepared and unable to resist Anglo-French rivalry over the preservation of their empires in Asia and Europe. Mohammed Ali, made governor of Egypt in 1805, following his defeat of the Mamluks, founded a dynasty which lasted until 1952, much of it under Britain's 'veiled protectorate', a euphemism for occupation. *Thereafter came what was the first period for centuries during which Egypt was ruled by a genuinely Egyptian national government.*"¹³³

Since then the country has witnessed two different stages of political, socioeconomic and cultural experience. The first, was a socialist state during Nasser's regime, during the 1950s and 1960s. Through a centralized approach, he undertook enormous social and economic reforms, without comparable cultural change that existed prior to the revolution. The second stage was introduced by Sadat in the mid-seventies. His strategy encouraged privatization and free-market economic policy, yet it has also inaugurated an unprecedented process of cultural transformation. By enabling the unprivileged classes of society to rapidly acquire wealth and power, this stage in turn gave rise to popular cultural movements that are still condemned by the cultural elite representing both colonial and post-colonial legacies. I will discuss each stage separately so as to

¹³³ Anthony McDermott, Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 6., emphasis added.

post-colonial legacies. I will discuss each stage separately so as to elucidate this argument and in light of the larger hypothesis of cultural change to be discussed in Part III of this study.

6.2. The Revolution and the Socialist State, 1952-70

The loss of the Monarchy and the advent of the nationalists led many to believe that this meant a purely Egyptian government operating for the well-being of Egyptians had finally been established.¹³⁴ The Free Officers, a young military group who led the *Coup d'état*, had no intention of assuming power after overthrowing the monarch and evacuating the British. For lack of political leaders who were able to take charge of the political vacuum, Nasser, the leader of the Free Officers, found himself on top of the events. Having no prior political agenda, the military *coup* had to establish its own framework. In both his foreign policy and internal affairs, Nasser chose to move to the political Left. So, in asserting control and development at home, he looked at Eastern Europe for inspiration.¹³⁵ A single-party socialist state was then established. Massive programs of social and land reforms were developed, with the purpose of changing the centuries-long feudal system of landlords and aristocrats to an industrial, socialist nation.

Politically and economically, Nasser managed to change the face of the country in two decades. With his ambitious programs of

¹³⁴ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 107. Marsot also argues that it was the first time in over two thousands years, since the days of the Pharaohs (Ancient Egyptian Kings), that Egypt was ruled by Egyptians. For her argument see Ibid. Chapter 6, 'The Nasser years, 1952-70', 107-131.

¹³⁵ Anthony McDermott, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution*, 25.

industrialization and social welfare, he not only brought the country to one of the leading Third World economic growth rates, but also allowed citizens to share the pride of being both an Egyptian and an Arab. In short, he created a national identity, shared by each individual. Furthermore, he was honest in his endeavor. His social and economic reform programs were, however, based on models developed and adopted by postwar modern world. In other words, institutions, programs and general frameworks of development were borrowed from Western or Eastern blocks. Inherently non-indigenous, they were a mere continuation of the pre-revolution legacy of modernization. The basic difference was a replacement of the foreign administration of such programs by local ones. Yet, in their essence, they remained unchanged. Reflecting on cultural facets, such as education, art and literature for example, the culture of elite, i.e. the 'High' culture persisted during the post-colonial state, although the elite group may have changed.¹³⁶



6.1, 6.2. The architecture and urbanism of the post revolution state: The *Maydan al-Tahrir* square down town Cairo.

Economically, Nasser promised Egypt a bright future, when political independence freed the country from foreign exploitation. In reality, he faced problems that seemed almost insuperable; an increasing population together with a lack of resources tended to negate all economic progress. Despite the achievements of the High Dam, the paramount irrigation project that focused national mobilization for over a decade; the running of the Suez Canal; some

¹³⁶ According to Marsot, "under Nasser a new elite had arisen to displace the *ancient regime* that came from among the most unprivileged classes of society." The regime, as she argues, "though it did not allow the population a share in the government, allowed them the semblance of participation. Claiming to act in the name of the people while directing policies hatched by a small group of bureaucrats, it nonetheless allowed the people to believe they were participating in decision-making." Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 129.

industrialization and land reclamation, he left Egypt a country struggling with chronic poverty and under-development.¹³⁷

Succeeding him, and having no less great ambitions, Sadat however chose a different path, and radically changed the economy between 1974-81 in a policy known as *Infitah*, or open-door policy.

6.3. Open-door Policy, 1974

An additional dimension of modern Egypt was the growing extent of her economic problems. These reached a level of crisis in the early 1960's. Successive wars with Israel helped to conceal and disguise the problems. After 1973, the last war fought with Israel, the policy of *Infitah* was introduced, which was designed both to liberate the economy, and to encourage the private sector and foreign investment. It coincided with a massive rise of earnings, particularly from oil and remittances from Egyptians working abroad.¹³⁸ As was Nasser accused of throwing the country's fate entirely towards of the East, Sadat, his successor, was to switch 180 degrees to the West. Unprepared for such abrupt change, Egypt, once again, found itself torn between a legacy of socialist institutions and welfare programs on the one hand, and the new free-market policy which was intended to dismantle those institutions and abolish their programs.¹³⁹

The open-door policy had brought rampant inflation and consequent hardship to those among the population who lived on fixed incomes,



6.3. An example of consumerism which prevailed as a culture during the *infitah* period

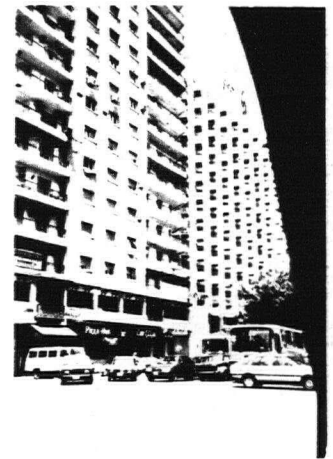
¹³⁷ Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 135.

¹³⁸ This was, as McDermott argues, "a new phenomenon for Egyptians who are basically and economically closely tied to their own land." Anthony McDermott, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution*, 12.

¹³⁹ "Nevertheless, it would be difficult to argue that the handling of the economy has changed fundamentally. There have been fluctuations between centralization and the freer market ..." Ibid., 120-121.

such as the mass of the bureaucracy and the military. It had also brought to prominence a new compradorial class which thrived, creating immense wealth, which it spent on conspicuous consumption. After years of austerity under Nasser, consumerism went wild with Paris models and electronic toys filling shop-windows. On one hand, it allowed large numbers of blue-collar workers to emigrate to oil-rich countries and enabled. On the other, those who were left behind to make higher wages as a result of the scarcity of craftsmen and artisans.¹⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, as affluence existed side by side with abject poverty, "religious groups were expressing rejection of Westernization, though not of modernization; they were expressing their rejection of the open-door policy and its consequences, and of the results of peace with Israel, and above all deploring the corruption that had invaded the government at all levels, especially the highest."¹⁴¹

In terms of the cultural consequences of this stage, the legacy of the *Infitah* policy -- within which Egyptian society is still living -- could be summarized in three major phenomena: the new social class of rapid wealth; the returning laborers from oil states; and the Islamic fundamentalist movements. It is necessary, before delving into the urban implication of such phenomena, to introduce in more detail some of the socioeconomic, cultural problems that faced the city as well as the country as a whole.



6.4, 6.5. Increasing social gap during the 1970's and 1980's was manifested in the adjacency of two contrasted communities in the western side of the city. *Al-Dokki al-Qadim*, below, is rural enclave surrounded by affluent neighborhoods in *al-Muhandisin* district, above

¹⁴⁰ There was a growing gap between the new rich, said to number 27,000 millionaires, and the poor. Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 136-37. Having a different estimate, McDermott also agrees that the transitional stage from a centralized to a free-market economy "has led to the emergence of several thousands 'fat cats' or millionaires". Anthony McDermott, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution*, 121.

¹⁴¹ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 139.

6.4. Socioeconomic Aspects

According to Hopwood, during the colonial phase Egyptian society ranged from the utter poverty of the landless laborers to the wealth of the large landowners and businessmen. If the revolution changed this system, he argues, "it did so by slightly closing the gap between the extremes--the laborers became a little better off, the top layer of the very rich was eliminated by land reform, sequestration and nationalization."¹⁴² With the aristocracy virtually eliminated, those at the top constituted an upper middle-class or state bourgeoisie made up of senior bureaucrats, prosperous lawyers, doctors, army officers and managers of industry. Many of this group profited from the revolution. Yet, with the liberation of the economy in 1974 "a middle class reemerged consisting both of prorevolutionary businessmen and others who received back property and land and moved back into business, and newcomers to the group who exploit, some would say corruptly, the new opportunities."¹⁴³ As mentioned above, the economic liberalization policy, which was meant to encourage the local, much-neglected private sector and to utter a positive welcome for foreign investment was accompanied by the rise in oil prices. This in turn, following Egypt's changing policy towards emigration,¹⁴⁴ led to the flooding of millions of Egyptian workers to the neighboring oil-states in the Arabian peninsula and North Africa.¹⁴⁵



6.6, 6.7. Another sharp contrast between upper class residential towers, above, overlooking a physically deteriorated neighborhood of *Izbit Awlad Allam*, below

¹⁴² Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981, 165.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁴⁴ There have been four discernible stages in Egypt's emigration policies since 1952, which started from government antagonism until the end of the 1960's, till the adoption of what was called an 'export policy' starting 1971. Anthony McDermott, Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution, 136.

¹⁴⁵ To portray the magnitude of this phenomenon, by 1985, something like one-quarter of the work force resided

The overwhelming social effect of the *Infitah* urged the government, hand in hand with other foreign and international funding agencies, to establish programs for job-creation and small loans that were intended to relieve some of the pressure and resentment among the majority during the severe transitional stage of economic reform. The divisive social effects of creating literally thousands of millionaires, however, has made these programs only a superficial contribution.¹⁴⁶ It was not a surprise, therefore, that while Nasser's supporters had been the working classes and intellectuals; Sadat turned to the bourgeoisie, who responded with alacrity. The bourgeoisie was encouraged to expand private enterprises and rapidly developed a class of entrepreneurs and compradors.¹⁴⁷ By the end of Sadat's economic adventure, the country was left once again with an increasing social split and with a diminishing middle class. This situation, however, can by no means be compared with the pre-revolution social map. The emerging wealthy classes during the *Infitah* policy were not confined to the aristocrats or landlords of the colonial phase. Many under-privileged groups who came from modest socioeconomic conditions and who had 'traditional' backgrounds managed to achieve a significant economic leap forward during this phase. This change in the dynamics between socioeconomic conditions on the one hand and the cultural values on the other is, from my view, the major contribution of the *Infitah*. The ruling classes became no longer exclusive, and their 'High'



6.8, 6.9. During the 1970's and 1980's the rapid wealth was accompanied by social and physical mobility, and was associated by symbols of status such as moving to wealthy, 'modern', neighborhoods and the acquisition of fancy automobiles

abroad-- between three and four million people. Ibid., 137.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 145.

¹⁴⁷ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 129.

cultural boundaries began to dissolve. It was a mark, as I argue, for a transition towards cultural synthesis, characterized by a state of turmoil.

6.5. Cultural Aspects

Although considered by many cultural critics as an event of more disruption of life, albeit a potentially productive one, the 1952 effort was to move the artistic and cultural movements out of the hands of the elite to create an attractive mass culture. Yet the handling of this matter, despite its sincere political and social commitment, was culturally unsuccessful. The creation of a ministry supporting the newly established national cultural institutions was to provide opportunities for the mass population to participate in these public programs.¹⁴⁸ Yet, except for the nationalization of their foreign or private management and ownership, the framework of such programs and institutions was not much different in essence from the ones that preceded the revolution. In other words the interpretation of 'mass culture' was still within a modern framework. Popular culture, art and taste were seen as in need of being refined (modernized) through these newly created national institutions which were spread country-wide.¹⁴⁹

Ruling culture dominance

The ruling culture pursued its programs of 'elevating' popular taste

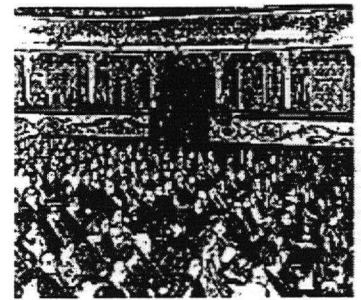
¹⁴⁸ Among the newly established cultural institutions were two national theaters (two in Cairo and one in Alexandria), an experimental theater, and a puppet theater, as well as folk dance and ballet troupes, an opera chorus and orchestra, an operetta group, a circus, and related training institutes. The cinema also received increasing state support. Ibid., 229-234.

¹⁴⁹ One of the major contribution of the created Department of Culture was the establishment of hundreds of 'Palace of Cultures' in towns and urban centers all over Egypt.

and 'refining' its cultural awareness in two directions. On the one hand its attempts to bring Western musical forms to Egypt was a more elitist undertaking and of more limited appeal despite the fact that ballet, opera and symphony orchestras have been introduced and there were native Egyptians performing in all three spheres.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand it supported local cultural models in music and art by encouraging attempts to 'modernize' traditional forms. Yet, experiments to combine both native and modern forms in the intent of a national artistic identity was another elitist approach. Their objective was yet to 'enhance' popular art.

In music, as in other cultural realms, one can identify an example of such attempt. Hopwood argues that Umm Kulthum, a female classical singer who is considered one of the national icons and whose career stretched from the 1920's to the 1970's, represented popular culture and native Arab music which appealed to thousands of listeners. Her contribution to contemporary Egyptian music, although unquestionable, is derived from a 'high' cultural foundation. Despite her rural origin and authentic artistic talent, her concerts were held in exclusive halls and attended by the upper middle classes who could afford it. Moreover, the development of her songs in terms of melody and lyrics represented the ultimate of elitist cultural values. In short, while the state's first approach was to bring Western artistic forms, its second approach was to support classical Arabic artistic models, which in turn were also far from being popular in the cultural sense.

As in the case of music and performing arts, in drama, poetry and



6.10, 6.11, Cairo opera house is one manifestation of the High culture dominance that continued to prevail after the revolution

¹⁵⁰ Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981, 159.

prose writing, the legacy of the pre-revolution phase in terms of high-culture style and taste remained unchanged. Although new topics and themes were introduced, and new forms were developed to cope with the emerging political environment of socialism and national esteem, the century-long debate over modernism and its relationship to tradition was sustained,¹⁵¹ only from the perspective of 'Western-educated' cultural groups. The question of whether the popular culture could take the initiative of a such process of 'fusion' was never raised.

Eruption of Popular culture, 1974

Meanwhile, Popular culture was developing in two different directions: the one a continuation of indigenous models, expressed in rituals and social events; the other a contemporary emerging popular culture, assimilating two centuries of exposure to modernization. The former pattern, which has already been presented while discussing the two cultural models in medieval Cairo, involves the encounter between both models in public spaces. Some of the surviving rituals and religious festivities that were celebrated in medieval Cairo still take place in the streets and *Maydans* (squares) of contemporary Cairo.¹⁵² In Part I of this study I briefly portrayed some of these activities and their spatial



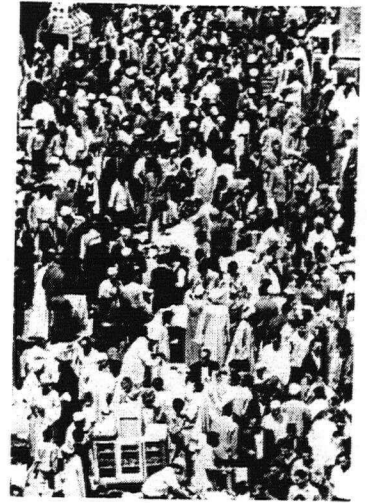
6.12. Popular culture started to remerge during the mid 1970's

¹⁵¹ Anthony McDermott, Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution, 229.

¹⁵² The two major events of authentic origins are The *Mulid* and the *al-Id* prayer. The first, the celebration of the birthday of a *sufi* saint, can be an occasion for a great popular festival. In almost each city, town and some villages, the saint's shrine becomes the center of a popular celebration and fair. Many people visit the tomb to get blessings, watch *sufi* procession, and perhaps most of all participate in the fair, which includes food stalls, game booths, coffee-places, fireworks display and music and dancing groups. The other major event, which takes place twice a year, is the celebration of the *al-Id* (Feast), once after the Ramadan fasting holy month, and the second time during the (time of) pilgrimage to Mecca. Large squares in Cairo and other cities are normally full with thousands of believers kneeling at the streets on specially laid carpets at dawn time. Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981, 162-163.

manifestations.

The second pursuit of informal culture is essential, and needs to be emphasized here. A phenomenal eruption of popular culture was manifested in different areas of Art from the mid seventies. 'New waves' of films, theater plays and songs were (and are still) disdained, and constantly condemned by cultural critics. During the 1960s, for example, popular culture used to be portrayed in movies and theatrical plays in a romantic manner. These productions addressed the cultural elite and appealed to their values. The values of the populous, on the other hand, received a detached acknowledgment, without a willingness to identify with the 'other'. The latter was merely an entertaining folklore, a romantic past, but not part 'our' real modern culture. By the second half of the following decade, i.e. 1970's, the same manifestations of popular culture began to be portrayed from different view. Not only they became no longer 'detached' from the 'us', the intellectuals and upper middle classes, some popular personified symbols, such as movies and pop stars, were being elevated to a heroic status. In other words, some of them became cultural 'ideals', eventually forcing institutional media that had initially boycotted them to acknowledge their popularity. Understandably, popular culture symbols were being reproached for presenting 'degrading values' and promoting a regression in the cultural upheaval developed (by the elite) during the sixties. The resentment and relentless attacks by proponents of 'high' culture however have had nevertheless minimal, if any, tangible effect on these new trends of pop-art. The



6.13, 6.14. In the public space both the pedestrian and vehicular patterns of use reflect the new rise of popular culture

tone of condemnation during the late 1970's and early 1980's, i.e. initial response, was changed to a milder tone of reserved acceptance, then acknowledgment in the following decades. Today (1998), for example, one finds members of 1960's cultural elite, who kept aloof from participating in the cultural arenas, now are 'compromising' and developing a reconciliatory approach towards what they had formerly rejected. The point I am trying to make here is that the phenomenal spread of these popular culture movements and their penetration of the 'high' culture's former boundaries could only be explained by their intrinsic values. Proponents of 'high' culture, in other words, being overwhelmed by the rising tide, had no choice but rework their cultural positions in relation to the 'other'. The tremendous success and appeal of popular values, as I argue here, are an expression of erupting indigenous models, and not merely a cultural interaction. Since the early nineteenth century public manifestations of 'popular' culture have been suppressed for centuries by a ruling 'high' culture.¹⁵³

Moving to the public realm, the noisy and extravagant expression in art could by all means be visually measured in the streets of Cairo through shop signs, displays, colors and general artistic taste. It could also be experienced while walking or driving through the city's busy and (formally) uncontrolled traffic. The dominance of popular culture by the elite is now being reversed. Because of the importance of the above statement to my central argument of a spatial conflict, I will elaborate in detail on this brief summary in a

¹⁵³ See above Part II, Chapter 5: "The Colonial City."

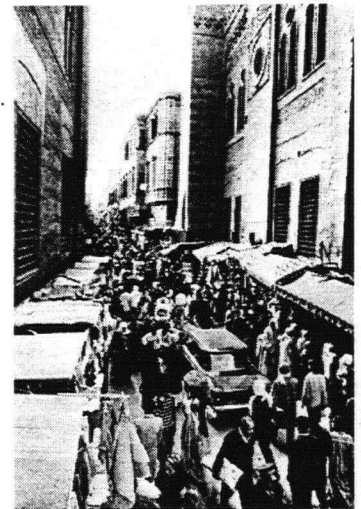
separate chapter to follow, with an emphasis on the spatial and physical manifestation of the rise of popular culture.

6.6. Conclusion

In summary, *Infitah* was associated with three major phenomena which the city of Cairo as well as the society at large experienced. They could be defined as both results of and stimulating forces to this political decision of economic restructuring. These three forces are the emerging of a rapidly wealthy class, the returning laborers from oil states and the rise of Islamist movements.

First, was the fact that Sadat's economic experiment of *Infitah* appealed to those sectors of the middle classes for whom the adoption of the extreme outward trappings of bourgeois life is a special talent. In part, cultural manifestations of the rise of new social classes can be seen in the extraordinary furnishing of houses; the purchase of electric appliances and other luxurious household which do not reflect their real material wealth; the acquisition of a private car; and extravagant spending on social celebrations. The second was Egyptian work-force abroad, which was estimated to remit some two billion dollars every year. "Much of that money was not invested productively, but was spent on luxury products or on consumer goods. The number of high-rise apartments grew rapidly, while middle and lower income housing was totally neglected."¹⁵⁴

Finally, the social disruption caused by some classes making vast



6.15. The mix of use and informal regulations that had once governed the use of the medieval public spaces have encroached upon the 'modern' parts of the city

¹⁵⁴ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 137.

sums as a result of this economic policy strengthened another extra-governmental force -- that of religion.¹⁵⁵ Both cultural and militant religious movements could be ascribed to two sets of socioeconomic and political conditions. The first is a set of local conditions while the other is a group of regional forces.¹⁵⁶

The three above phenomena have indeed shaken the socioeconomic bases of the city, but more importantly started a process of redefining its cultural boundaries. What the 'High' culture and what the 'Popular' one are once again is to be acknowledged. Ironically, while Nasser's attempted to bring the foreign 'rule' to an end and to deliver the country back to its natives, he did not succeed in eliminating the foreign model of institutional dominance. Sadat's economic policy on the other hand, although severely widening the social gap and increasing economic pressure on the lower classes, gave rise to the popular culture for the first time. Sadat unintentionally accomplished what Nasser failed to do.

¹⁵⁵ Anthony McDermott, Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution, 278-279.

¹⁵⁶ On the national scale, it is partly a result of the economic pressure during the privatization of public service and the associated cut of subsidies. On the larger level, it was affected by the collapse of the socialist model world-wide on the one hand, and the rise of oil prices and its associated more orthodox Muslim culture in neighboring state on the other. The latter brought home--in addition to material goods imported with the work force--a cultural model that provide for a framework of a socio-cultural movements that stood against the government's corruption and military dominance. Other regional events, such as the Iranian revolution and the Afghan war helped accelerating and inspiring the local Muslim groups both ideologically and organizationally.

PART III : HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL: Two Processes of Change

7. THREE CITIES IN ONE: Parallels and Juxtapositions

7.1. Introduction

Through the historical survey in the preceding three chapters, and the analysis of the cultural and the physical context of each phase, I have portrayed a change in the governing cultural model. During the Islamic phase, I identified an indigenous civilizational framework that governed different groups of the city of Cairo regardless of their sociopolitical split. In the Colonial phase, I argued for a divergence in the cultural model as a result of the introduction of the modern framework. It remained, however, exclusive to the institutional and 'High' cultural level. The rest of the society was still operating within the pre-Colonial legacy, although it was gradually changing. During the Post-colonial phase, the 'Western' cultural model continued to dominate despite the political and socioeconomic changes. It was not until the introduction of the *Infitah* policy in the mid-seventies that the cultural exclusiveness was undone and its boundaries were dissolved as a result of the rise of the popular culture. This dissolution, as presented in Part I of this study, is manifested in the current state of cultural turmoil. And, in part, represents a current process of indigenous modernization, which is being undertaken by the society as a whole rather than a culturally ruling minority.

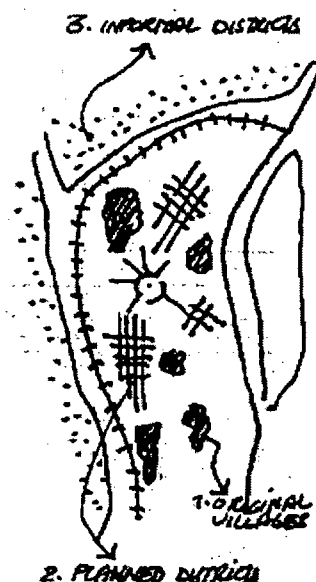
In the following section, I will attempt to put these fragments of

history together in a larger picture. Proposing a possible interpretation of the cultural and urban change in the city of Cairo, I will conclude at an understanding of the planner's position in this transitional phase.

7.2. Revisiting the Present - Spatial Conflict

In part I of this study I discussed some of the current urban patterns in the contemporary city of Cairo.¹⁵⁷ The observations made were confined geographically to the western side of the metropolis and focused on spatial patterns at a micro scale. To avoid repetition, I will limit my discussion here to the larger scale of urban expansion of the contemporary city as a whole. The social and economic disruptions, which took place in the past few decades¹⁵⁸ could be measured through a description of physical change in three areas, or urban patterns. The first entails parts of the city established during the Colonial phase and that underwent a process of physical 'dilution' through the Post-revolution phase. An example is downtown Cairo, founded by Ismail, 1867 as a European city, based on the principles outlined in chapter 5.¹⁵⁹ The second refers to the city mostly developed by the state during the Post-revolution phase, during the development discussed in chapter 6. The western city experienced one of the largest urban expansions in that period.

In fact, it underwent the largest developments in the western



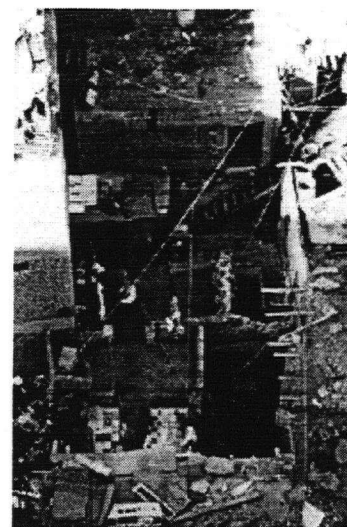
7.1. In the western side of Cairo three patterns of urban development are identified in this study: a) The original villages, now being rural, organic, enclaves; b) the formal, planned districts; and c) the informal settlements behind the railroad to the west and north

¹⁵⁷ See above Part I: "Background, Observation and Problem Statement."

¹⁵⁸ "In the towns and cities there is the mass of the urban poor, doing menial jobs, if employed, as unskilled workers or trying to scratch a living by other means. Economically above these are those regularly employed, such as industrial workers, taxi drivers and minor government employees. Between a quarter and a third of the urban population constitute the lower middle classes of the petty bourgeoisie, school teachers and small-scale traders, perhaps together with less successful professionals such as doctors and lawyers. Most of this group would aspire to move up the social scale" Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981*, 166.

¹⁵⁹ See above Chapter 5: "The Colonial City."

direction during the 1950's and the 1960's.¹⁶⁰ In such areas, one witnesses an encounter between two modes of physical development. The informal model of urban growth continues to encroach upon these districts as it does upon the Colonial city. The third urban pattern of this period includes the informal districts around the city fringe, the where physical environment is not entirely a product of either cultural model, hence involves different dynamics in the public space. It would exceed the scope of this study to describe each of the above macro-scale urban patterns in the contemporary city of Cairo separately. I have already presented in Part I an extensive description of spatial patterns that reflect modes of cultural conflict, either of confrontation or denial. I will use some of these examples here to compare it to the adjacent informal settlements. Then, I will portray some manifestations of the informal modes of regulations that encroach upon the Colonial city.



7.2. An example of the urban form evolved in the informal districts

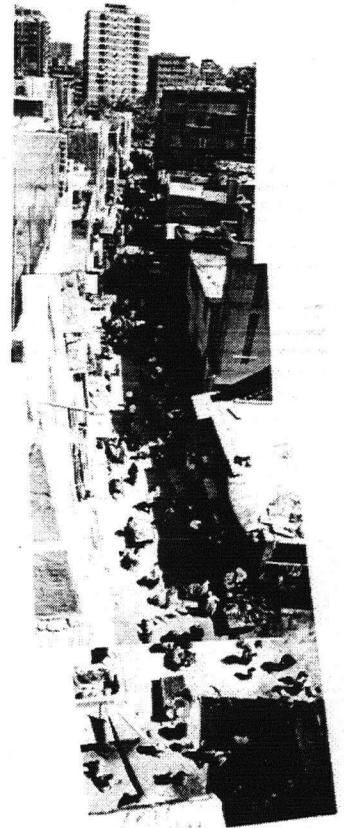
Informal settlements were predominantly developed as a result of the rural migration to the formerly semi-urban settlements that extended from the urban peripheries to the heart of arable land.¹⁶¹ In most cases, elements of the urban infrastructure such as railways and freeways, and/or natural elements, such as hills or canals, once segregated these informal settlements from the adjacent formal city.

¹⁶⁰ To the East, "Nasr City" was probably the largest scheme of urban (formal) expansion during this phase. The "Madinat al-Muhadin" on the other hand was the western district meant to accommodate the newly emerging technocrats and high civil servants.

¹⁶¹ I have made the decision to omit all the numbers and rates of rural migration during the post-colonial phase as I consider them, although partially relevant, not central to my argument above. For a comprehensive reference of the impact of rural migration on the city's urban expansion in that period see The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, The Expanding Metropolis Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo, Proceedings of Seminar Nine in the Series Architectural Transformation in the Islamic World, Held in Cairo, Egypt. November 11-15, 1984, (Singapore: Concept Media Pte Ltd., 1984)

The physical environment of these settlements is partly a product of processes that inherited the indigenous mechanisms of urban growth.¹⁶² Their fabric, it follows, is a better reflection of the cultural values of its residents than the fabric of the adjacent formal districts. This argument, however, does not imply a pure similarity to, nor a mere extension of the medieval urban fabric and its underlying structure. A gradual process of modernization was -- and still is -- involved in generating these contemporary informal settlements. Nevertheless, one could still experience a relative compatibility between a cultural and a physical products in the informal settlements. On the micro-scale at least, one finds the encounter of two cultural and spatial spheres is minimal compared to that taking place in the Colonial and the Post-revolution cities.

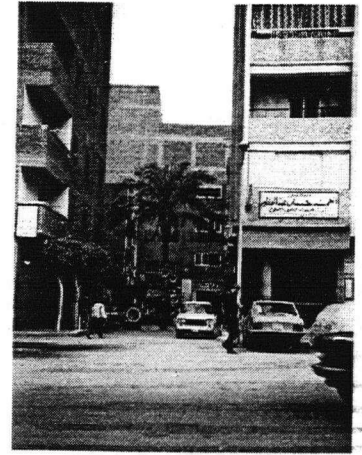
To make this comparison clear, I will refer to some examples which were discussed in the documentation and analysis of the western city of Cairo on the three levels: the individual, the neighborhood and the district spatial domains. The first level involves examples of the outdoor extension of shops/workshops as well as the reservation of parking spaces for residential units, although the latter is less pressing in low-income communities. The mutual understanding of the 'informal' modes of regulation on this level guarantees minimal spatial conflict regardless of the shape of the physical container. The absence of strict formal regulation in these neighborhoods also provides relative freedom to occupy the sidewalk and to adjust the spatial boundaries of each individual domain. These adjustments are



7.3. The use of streets as marketplaces in the informal districts

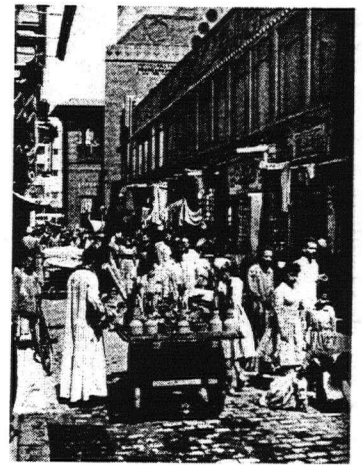
¹⁶² See above Chapter 4: "The Islamic city."

restricted by the neighboring rights, which is part of the same cultural model, and which resemble the process that had generated the medieval fabric centuries before. On the next level, the neighborhood community still uses the street as an open living room, a children's play field, and a space for communal social events. Spatial conflicts in the formal districts, which were discussed in Part I, are almost absent in informal settlements. On one hand, vehicular traffic requirements are less pressing and less formally imposed. In terms of control, neighbors have almost an absolute freedom to configure their public, or in this case semi-public, domain. Except for infrastructure lines and, in some areas, although not exclusively, enforced building lines/regulations, the way open spaces are defined is determined solely by the neighboring groups. Thirdly, the traffic regulations, especially in regard to the previously discussed point of microbus system, have almost no formal intervention. Vehicles have to be licensed, but not necessarily the drivers. One often finds 15-year old boys driving these minibuses. This freedom, however, is curtailed once this transportation network crosses the boundaries between the informal and formal districts, such as a railway line. In short, within the informal settlements, spatial conflict is minimal, and is often *informally* resolved by the conflicting parties. The physical configurations on the macro scale are subject to institutional interventions, in the form of new roads, sewerage lines, etc. On the micro scale, however, residents have a relatively free hand to determine their spatial domain, in coordination with each other.



7.4. Neighbors' control of open spaces on the micro scale in the residential neighborhoods

encroachment upon the Colonial city is therefore seen as complementary. Streets and boulevards of the Colonial city that once resembled Paris, as discussed in chapter 5, are now being transformed into a condition of rural-like trails. The nineteenth century street-long facades can hardly be noticed as a result of the commercial 'chaos' expressed in signs, awnings, displays and outdoor extension on the ground levels. The sidewalks/roadway distinction is becoming a myth. Peddlers and beggars are constantly roaming around the slowly moving vehicles, which are already being impeded by two-to-three rows of parallel parking. The increasingly diminishing role of institutional regulations is asserted by the decline of the representatives formal authority (traffic policemen), and balanced by the rise of informal groups who ingeniously tackle traffic blocks and parking spaces shortages. Such decline in formal regulations, and the rise of informal rules and its proved success in various fields has led to a limited acknowledgment of its agents and mechanisms by various administrative institutions. Yet, planners, trained in European order, still consider such encroachment as an 'informal aggression' that needs to be tamed in order to restore 'order'. Existing patterns of informal reuse of sidewalks, streets, urban pockets and open spaces are never considered as an input for future plans of urban upgrading. Modern plans are still being forcibly imposed, even though it is known by everyone that they will eventually be encroached upon. The cultural rapprochement that started two decades before awaits a similar acknowledgment on the physical level to attain a spatial reconciliation.



7.5, 7.6. Radical changes are taking place in the imagery and use of architecture and open spaces in the former European districts

7.3. Historical Parallels and Spatial Juxtapositions

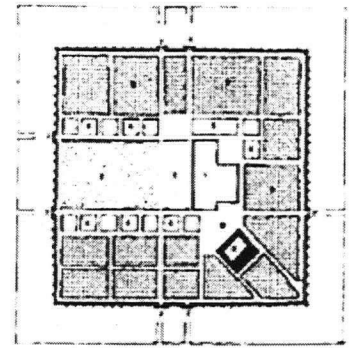
The second part of this chapter shows that the current cultural conflict illustrated in Part I is neither irresolvable nor unique in Cairo today. Other phases in the city's history, which were also discussed in the preceding chapters, demonstrate similar conflicted models. Yet, the city has eventually managed to attain a mode of cultural reconciliation. The purpose of this section is to briefly highlight some key moments of this healing process. I will principally depend on visual materials, maps, photos and diagrams to point out to, what I see as, striking similarities in context of my larger argument of conflict and reconciliation. I will alternate between different phases and different physical settings regardless of the chronological sequence of development or geographical locations. Finally, in this preview I will rely heavily on other scholars' historic documentation and analysis in a diagram form. I have chosen to interpret these diagrams in the way that will fit my argument, and regardless of the original purposes, or hypotheses of their authors. I am indebted to those scholars for the use of these diagrams, yet the responsibility of their interpretation here is all mine.

7.3.1. Medieval-Contemporary Juxtaposition

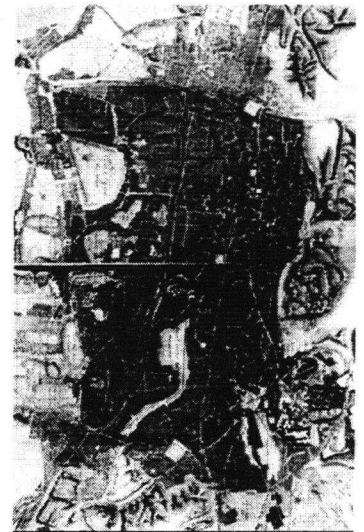
As discussed in chapter 5, rapidly rising Islam in the Arab peninsula soon expanded to areas that required new provincial capitals as ruling centers. Lacking substantial urban heritage, early Muslims built new towns in the seventh and eighth centuries that were based

on plans borrowed from Graece-Roman or Byzantine models. The ideology behind, and the process of formation of these models were discussed before and need no further elaboration. However, their alien origin is instructive. The opposite plan (fig. 7.7) is a reconstruction of one of the early conceived schemes for the city of Cairo towards the end of the tenth century. It is true that different urban elements, such as the Caliph's palace, the congregational mosque, main plaza, residential wards for the army's tribal constituents as well as the walls and gates, were all generic features. They have indeed reflected the functional, religious and symbolic needs of these towns. Yet, the overall structure was not indigenous to their culture. In support of this argument, the opposite map (fig. 7.8) illustrates how the city has evolved towards the end of the eighteenth century. Different attempts have been made to understand, or decode, the dynamics behind the process of urban growth through which this organic fabric was generated, (fig. 4.17, 4.21). These attempts are irrelevant to my argument, which is primarily concerned with the relationship between the two models rather than how either has developed.

It is hard to dispute the fact there has been two different processes which produced the two forms: the one is a top-down (master) planned scheme, while the other is a process of incremental (multiple-decision) growth encroaching upon the original plan. To make the contrast even clearer, a juxtaposition of the two models is instructive, (fig. 7.9). Here, I would like to draw a parallel to an image of Cairo's contemporary public space condition (fig. 7.10), and argue for the similarity of two the juxtapositions. Although the



7.7. One of the early conceived plans of Cairo by the end of the Tenth century AD, (AlSayyad 1991)



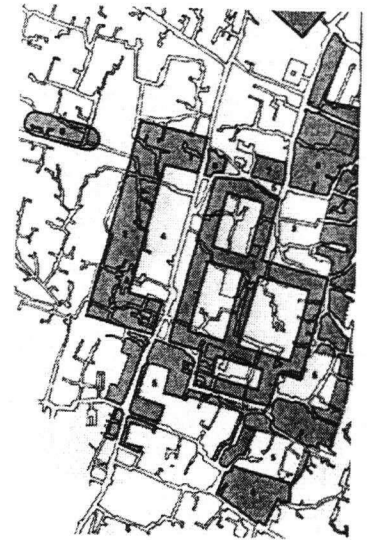
7.8. The medieval city by the end of the Eighteenth century before its European encounter (Abu-Lughod 1971)

former juxtaposition represents different time-space conditions, while the latter is a simultaneous juxtaposition, the structural relationship between their two cultural models is essentially similar. The image I am using to represent contemporary public spaces is rather an exaggeration of what could be described as 'traditional', or indigenous norms taking place in a 'modern', or foreign physical setting. Nonetheless, it captures the contrast between the two conflicting models simultaneously operating in contemporary Cairo.

The point I am trying to make here is that, culturally speaking, and the urban form is being a material manifestation of culture, the medieval city of the Arab-Islamic phase had started with, and underwent two different conflicting cultural realms, yet, concluded with a common ground. This process of assimilation, or reconciliation took the city eight centuries of cultural struggle and negotiation. It also required political and economic measures in order to dissolve the cultural exclusiveness and to allow for mutual interchange. In short, the medieval city underwent a process of initial duality, or divergence, followed by another of reconciliation or convergence, until it attained this rather organic stage - a stage which European travelers in the seventeenth and eighteenth century described as a labyrinth, and to which the modern geometric city was contrasted in the early nineteenth century.

7.3.2. Colonial Juxtaposition

This brings me to another moment in the city's history, another break, or rupture of a hitherto indigenous process. (fig. 7.11)

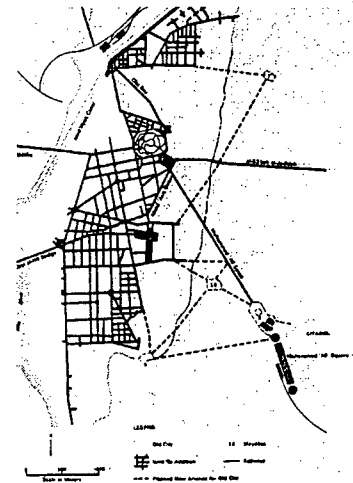


7.9. A juxtaposition of the formal (planned), and informal (organic) fabrics/processes in the medieval city, (AlSayyad 1991)



7.10. A juxtaposition of a formal (planned) physical environment, and an informal use of the public space in contemporary Cairo

break, or rupture of a hitherto indigenous process. (fig. 7.11) illustrates another juxtaposition of two models. The opposite map represents Cairo in 1869, almost fifty years after the modernization efforts have started in the aftermath of European cultural encounter at the turn of the nineteenth century. Here, Haussmann's model was physically juxtaposed to the medieval city. A new city, a product of a new cultural paradigm, was founded right next to the old city, a product of indigenous paradigm. The latter was considered as ahistoric, unable to evolve, and hence was left to decay. The new urban form - and here the comparison to New Delhi or Algiers is legitimate - was realized as 'the' city, having wide, lit streets according to military necessities and hygiene requirements, within which, infrastructure networks were laid out and public transit lines where constructed. The nineteenth century colonial city of Cairo has resulted in a dual physical form, as most urban historians agree upon. But, more importantly, it resulted in a more profound chasm in the city's cultural identity -- a chasm from which contemporary Cairo is still suffering till today. Neither the complex, heterogeneous urban form that contemporary Cairo encompasses today, nor the different political and socioeconomic measures throughout the past century and half -- including the national revolution as I have discussed in chapter 6 -- managed to bridge this dual cultural identity.¹⁶³ Two cultural realms have persisted, their exclusiveness has just started to dissolve during the past twenty years, and their confrontation is apparent in the public space.



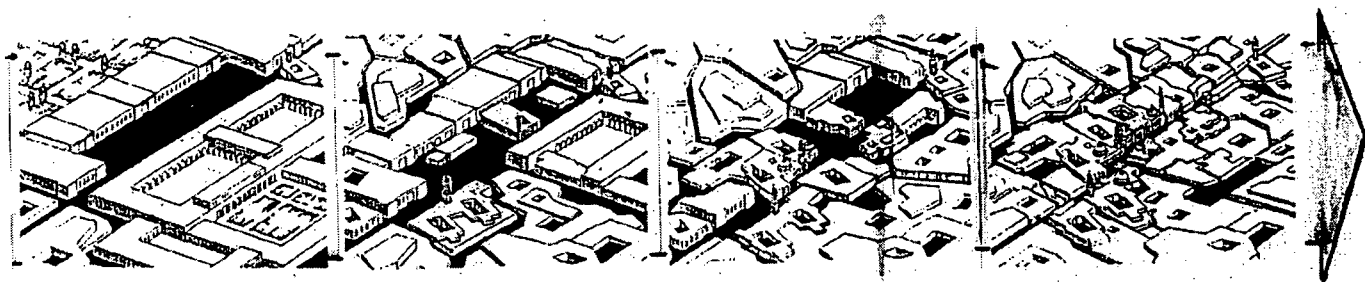
7.11. A juxtaposition of the medieval and colonial cities in the middle of the Nineteenth century, (Abu-Lughod 1971)

¹⁶³ Al-Shaks argues that today, Cairo, as many other cities both economic and cultural globalization, is suffering from a polarization between those oriented towards the West and those upholding traditional and religious norms and values. Salah El-Shakhs, "Globalization and African Cities: The Case of Cairo." *APA* 57, Sep. (1997): 1, 6-7.

7.4. Two Reversed Processes of Urban Transformation

By comparing the two phases described above, one can discern two reversed processes of cultural/physical transformation. Following the city's urban growth, the two processes could be epitomized by employing two urban spaces, the *Bayn al-Qasrayn* and *Midan al-Rimilah*.

The first space (fig. 7.12) represents the process through which the medieval city has evolved, while the second (fig. 7.13) demonstrates how the modern city has started and how it still exists today.¹⁶⁴ The one is, as I will discuss presently, a convergence of initially dual models, and the other is a divergence of a hitherto coherent indigenous process.



7.12. *Bayn al-Qasrayn* urban space: a process of transformation from 969 AD till 1798 AD; a convergence of two initially conflicting models, (AlSayyad 1994)

Bayn al-Qasrayn, initially a royal plaza, and literally means “the space between the two palaces”, was founded as part of the Fatimid royal city of Cairo in 969 AD. It had followed, as AlSayyad illustrates, a series of morphological changes before it attained the organic form it reflects today.¹⁶⁵ AlSayyad’s argument for the cause

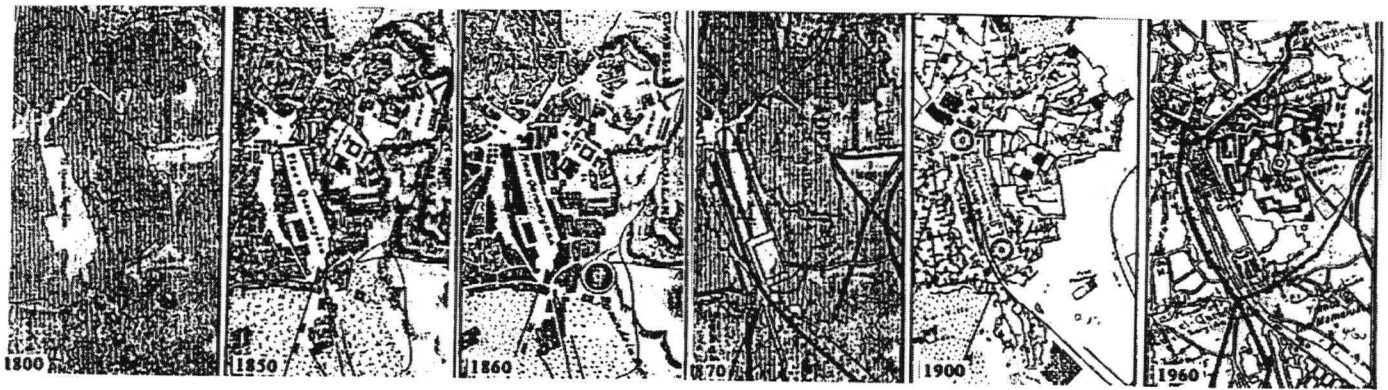
¹⁶⁴ The first diagram of urban transformation is developed by Al-Sayyad in his study of medieval Cairo, the other space was part of a master thesis by Ahmad among her documentation and analysis of other urban spaces in Cairo. Neither of the scholars starts with the same premise I have here, and the responsibility of using their models to support my argument is all mine.

¹⁶⁵ Nezar AlSayyad, “Bayn al-Qasrayn: The Street between the Two Palaces”, in Celik, Favro, Ingersoll, eds., *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 71-82.

organic form it reflects today.¹⁶⁵ AlSayyad's argument for the cause of this metamorphosis is the shift that took place in this period from the Fatimid dynasty, *Shiiti*, to the Ayyubids, *Sunni*. More important is the decision to open the hitherto exclusive city to the public, hence allowing for the popular culture to *participate* in the shaping of the city, both physically and culturally. This process of urban/cultural synthesis resulted eventually in the popular culture to *dominate* the formal order, but not to replace it. In other words, the product that we witness today reflects an organic form, as an evidence of a spontaneous process of growth, rather than a rectilinear geometry, which represents the formal plan.

One needs here to distinguish the individual (architecture) buildings, from that of the overall fabric. Buildings, clusters and royal complexes that surround the *Maydan* are predominantly a product of the High culture, i.e. royal decisions. Yet, the manner in which they cluster -- each built in different period, responds to the previous context and creates a new setting for the one to follow. Each new addition reflects a spatial pattern which resembles, or is part of, the larger context of the residential/commercial districts, hence the city fabric at large. This should not be seen as evidence against my argument of High/Popular duality. Rather, it supports the dynamic nature of their relationship. Despite the initial duality of the two cultural/physical duality, the two models, through a process of negotiation, have reached a reconciliatory model. The gap has been reduced to the point that one could hardly discern, when looking at

¹⁶⁵ Nezar AlSayyad, "Bayn al-Qasrayn: The Street between the Two Palaces", in Celik, Favro, Ingersoll, eds., Streets: Critical Perspectives o Public Space, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 71-82.



7.13. *Maydan al-Rimilah* urban space: a process of transformation from 1798 AD till today; a divergence of an initially coherent model, (Ahmed 1993)

Midan al-Rimilah is another initially formal plaza, which was used for military training and royal processions. In contrast to *Bayn al-Qasrayn*, this space had developed as a result of a sequence of urban developments until it was spatially defined. This fact was in part due to its location outside of the Fatimid's walls, and it was not until the Ayyubid's Citadel was built that this space, at the Citadel's foothill, gained its importance. From the perspective of this study, the relevant starting point of urban transformation is when this *Maydan* has reached its complete spatial coherence, regardless of the process that had shaped before. My point of departure is when it began to be transformed from an organic (or a synthesis of both cultural models as in the case of *Bayn al-Qasrayn*), into a formal plan according to traffic requirements, and visual axes based on European principles. The gradual transformation illustrated in the diagram (fig 7.13) represents another cycle of the dynamics between two cultural models; in this case, a phase of divergence. Here, the two frameworks, the popular and the institutional, although starting from one single meeting point, that is the *Maydan*, went for almost a century and a half in two different directions. The gap between the

two models, manifested in a formal urban setting and popular patterns of using its spaces, is apparent today and is very similar to the ones described above in the colonial city and that in the western part of Cairo. Whether this apparent divergence will change its course towards another synthesis or not is my main hypothesis that I will discuss presently.

7.5. Two Processes of Cultural Change

Moving to a more abstract level, one can represent the two processes of divergence and convergence in context of cultural change as shown in the opposite graph (fig. 7.14). The use of this diagram here is perhaps premature as I will discuss it in detail in the following chapter. Yet, for the purpose of the structure of my argument presented here, I have chosen to present a brief summary of this model, risking the reader's temporary confusion, in the hope of a coherent structure.

First, this diagram represents *a* possible interpretation of how a process of change could be portrayed in context of two cultural models embraced by two cultural groups. Here, I should make the point that it was necessary while building this model to develop, or adopt, a set of polarities in order to establish the two cultural extremes. This, however, should not be regarded as an acknowledgment, nor an attempt to perpetuate, these dichotomies. A whole range of grades naturally exist in any society. Yet, as it was clear in the urban form, one can still recognize the contrast between two extreme cultural models. The terms High vs. Popular cultures,

Ruling vs. Populous cultural groups; Imported or Alien vs.

Indigenous models are merely extensions of already existing set of cultural and urban duality in the academic discourse.

Secondly, this diagram, or model, describes three phases of cultural transitions that a society may undergo whenever it faces a paradigm shift or a civilizational change. Such shift, as presented in the case of Cairo, is not necessarily coincided with political or economic change, nor is a result of minor cultural transformations. It is primarily associated with a turning point of how the world is conceived and, accordingly, with a set of values involved. The Renaissance is a good example in the history of Europe, while the colonial encounter was the most recent paradigm shift in the case in Cairo.

Thirdly, by looking at moments prior and after such a shift, one could recognize an existing indigenous cultural model operating in a state of 'coherence' or 'harmony' before the advent of a new foreign model.¹⁶⁶ Along the historical line, the cultural change could be configured through the dynamics between two cultural groups; the Ruling and the Popular¹⁶⁷ -- each has a different pattern of change, and a different response to the external cultural forces. The first group, a culturally-ruling minority, embraces foreign models, and is characterized by rapid change and abrupt transition. The Popular group, on the other hand, is constituted by the society at large, usually follows a slower pace and having a gradual pattern of

¹⁶⁶ The terms 'coherence' and 'harmony' are employed here, despite their deficiency and loaded meaning, for lack of better terms. What is alluded to here is a common ground, or a shared world view among different societal groups, with considerable generalization, regardless their economic or political status.

¹⁶⁷ I am borrowing those terms, Popular and Ruling, from Shoshan's study of the two cultural groups in medieval Cairo. Boaz Shoshan, Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

change.¹⁶⁸

Finally, the initially foreign cultural models are externally imposed and internally embraced by local ruling elite, an empowered cultural group. This alien model, however, filters through other societal groups which in turn start to assimilate in a gradual process of indigenization, or reconciliation. This first phase is referred to as 'divergence', while the second as that of 'convergence', reaching a 'new' indigenous model, a marriage between the initial cultural duality. Another external cultural force may cause another rupture and divergence. At any given moment, the two groups are in different stages of transition from one cultural mode to another, and here is where a conflict arises.¹⁶⁹

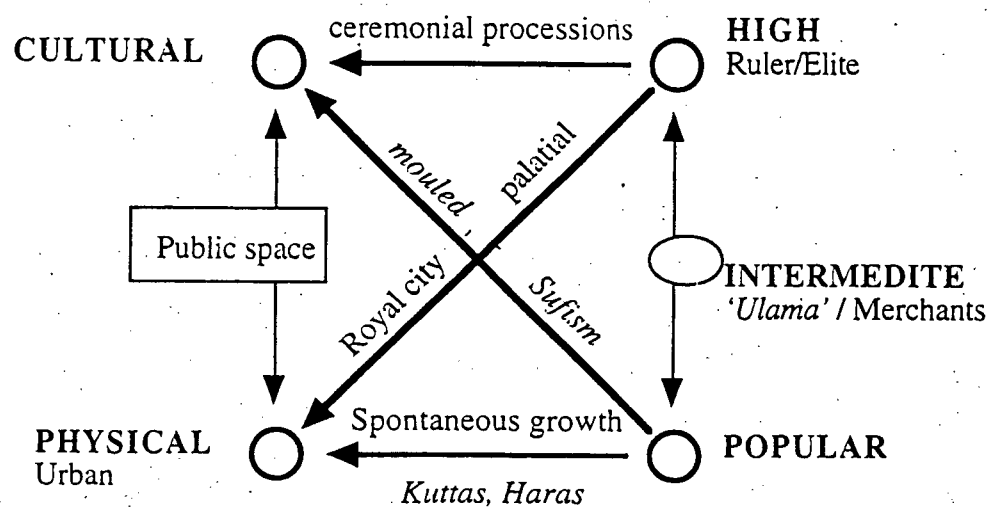
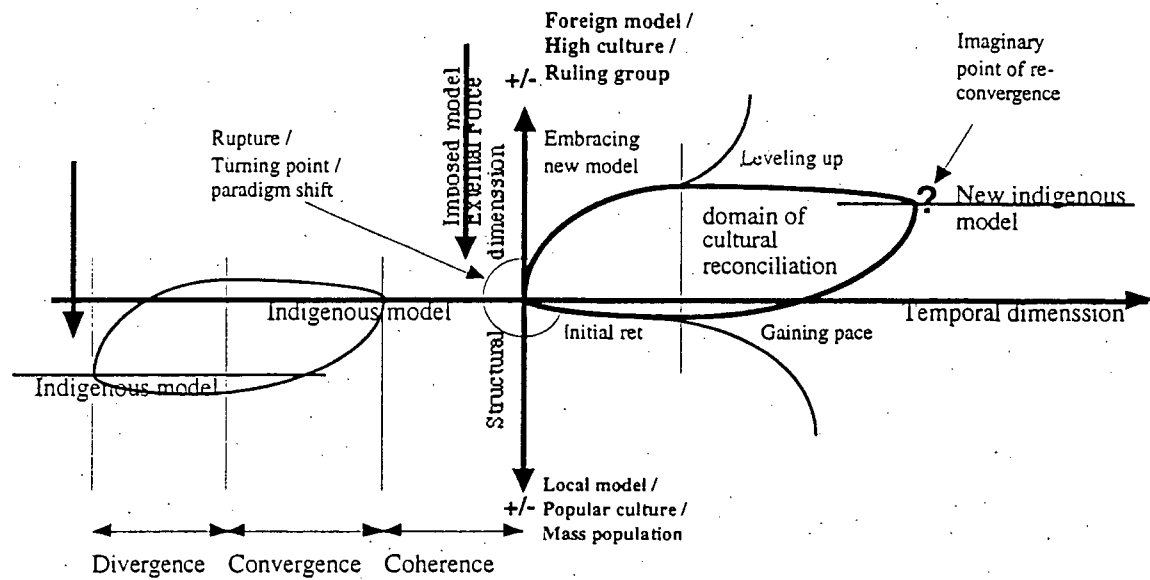
7.6. Urban/Cultural Dynamics

This rather sketchy outline might be clarified by introducing one further detail. Through a cross-section of these phases, one can understand the role of cultural groups and their inter-dynamics manifested in their cultural and urban interaction. One example, and here I refer to the Arab-Islamic period of the medieval city, represents the two cultural groups at a certain moment, both their cultural and physical products, and their involved dynamics, (fig. 7.14).¹⁷⁰ In this example, the first identified group is the ruling elite.

¹⁶⁸ It is important to mention here that cultural groups defined in this context do not necessarily coincide with social strata or political divisions, although they usually run parallel to each other. In other words, at any given moment, a society may be divided into upper and lower classes, and between ruling and ruled groups, yet, culturally speaking, in terms of indigenous vs. foreign, the division should not run through the same line.

¹⁶⁹ The description of the process of change in this model seems rather unsatisfactory brief. My further investigation of that model, however, involves other layers such as interchangeable polarities, definition of cultural groups and their patterns of change, as well as different views of looking at historical change in terms of progressional or regressional linear change, cyclical or spiral accelerating mode, etc. For more detailed investigation see below Chapter 8: "Theoretical Model of Cultural Change".

¹⁷⁰ Shoshan's analysis of the two cultural productions, in this graph representing the cultural-urban profile of that



phase, is complemented by my addition of the two physical forms or products.

Its cultural product is manifested in events initiated by the rulers such as triumphant processions, the plenitude of the Nile ceremony and the *Id al-Fitr* festivity; while the exclusive palatial city is a manifestation of the physical product undertaken by this group. On the popular level, the other cultural group practices of *Sufi* cults such as *al-Mulid*, the *Nawrouz* annual festival or the grain riots are different manifestations of popular culture (not initiated by the state). The spontaneous process of urban growth is a physical product of the same group. Other intermediate groups are also identified, such as the *Ulama* (scholars) and *Tujjar* (merchants), whose role swings as both a medium of transmission and a tension lubricator between the two ends of the polarity.¹⁷¹

By cutting other sections along the course of the city's history, I argue, we can reflect on today's conflict in public space, its underlying cultural dynamics and the different agents involved in the process of interchange. Among those agents are indeed the architects/planners and cultural leaders - those who should not only be aware of and acknowledge their cultural position in each phase of transition, but also operate within a mode of cultural reconciliation that would help accelerating an eventual coherence. This role will further discussed in chapter 9.

7.7. Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to assemble some critical ideas

¹⁷¹ Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

discussed in detail in the preceding chapters. I have also introduced a framework for my general conceptual model of cultural change that I will discuss in the following chapters. The extensive use of diagrams and other visual material was purposely emphasized to balance the rather descriptive narrative during both the documentation of exiting patterns and historical analysis. It also serves to contextualize some of the abstract ideas through the use of photos and maps; and to link the rather fragmented pieces of history into a more coherent structure through the use of diagrams. This method was chosen in the hope of breaking the monotony of the descriptive narrative before moving to the following abstract model.

8. THEORETICAL MODEL OF CULTURAL CHANGE:

A Possible Interpretation

In the preceding parts I have, first, identified the current conflict taking place in the Cairene public space through the documentation of both its physical manifestation and the analysis of some of its underlying cultural values. In part II, I have traced the historical roots of such conflict in each of the city's consecutive urban phases. What follows in this concluding part is intended, by discussing the patterns of change in societies from one cultural paradigm to another, to pose a theoretical model of historical interpretation.

As this study argues, there have been two parallel processes and non-comparable degrees of change occurring in each of the transitional stages from one cultural paradigm to another. Each of the two processes has a different pace and pattern of transformation. In order to clarify this argument one needs first to establish some definitions of terms that will be used through this study. What kind of change we mean? Which mode of living is associated with each phase and societal group? And who are the two parties pursuing the different processes of change?

8.1. Established Dichotomies

The seemingly Hegelian approach of historical explanation undertaken in this part of the study was necessary to establish the two ends of cultural conflict. This dialectic model of evolution is certainly only one possible way among many of explaining history.

Yet, starting from this study's perspective, its attempt to understand the apparent conflict and expanding to existing realities, it seems appropriate to follow this synthesizing approach. The choice to adopt this framework was intended to resolve the conflict by developing a reconciliatory model rather than perpetuating the classical dichotomies described in detail in this study.

It is almost impossible, in cultural studies dealing with such conflict, not to get trapped in the classical dichotomies: Traditional vs.

Modern, Developing vs. Developed, Third World vs. First World and so forth. One of the well-known dichotomies in societal change is the one developed by Toennies at the turn of the century.¹⁷² The Traditional/Modern relationship was further analyzed in terms of modes of life, emphasizing the Individual/Group differences.

Toennies' thesis, although it did not really bring about a new definition of opposing societal groups, had further pursued and deeply perpetuated the two topologies of social relationship, the *Gemeinschaft* or Community, and the *Gesellschaft* or Society. The first, according to this model, refers to the 'Traditional' way of life, while the latter was developed during the industrial revolution and as part of the Enlightenment thoughts, namely that of emancipation from tradition, and hence the 'Modern'. Abu-Lughod argues that classical dichotomies that prevailed before the Second World War, the ones primarily established during the Colonial phase (colonized/colonizers) were replaced by more economic (developing/developed) and geographic terms (South/North), yet

¹⁷² Ferdinand Toennies, Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft) (1957; 1988; reprint, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publisher, 1993).

without a fundamental change in their structural relationship.¹⁷³

This study starts from the premise that there exists a conflict between two 'Parties',¹⁷⁴ two initially operating agents, yet looks to avoid their fixed and self-perpetuating positions. Moreover, it argues that political and economic dichotomies have been for a long time mistakenly associated with cultural realms. I suggest that cultural dynamics are more independent from social, economic and political factors than the traditional dichotomies would allow, although not entirely separate. In other words, it could be argued, there exists a certain measure of cultural interchangeability between the two 'ends' of these dichotomies.

The classical dichotomy of Traditional vs. Modern implies an unspoken historical evolution from one mode to another, a uni-directional temporal dimension, and hence bears a suggestive historic inevitability. The two 'ends' adopted in this study however are operating in a two-directional structural relationship within each historical epoch, and hence no historic inevitability is implied.

In summary, the Ruling and Popular parties and their associated High and Popular cultures could be easily assumed to be equivalent to the classical Modern vs. Traditional. Yet, as I have just mentioned, they operate within a vertical axis that represents a structural (synchronic) relationship rather than a horizontal axis of a

¹⁷³ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "Disappearing Dichotomies: First World-Third World; Traditional-Modern," TDSR Vol. III No. II (1992): 7-12.

¹⁷⁴ The term 'Party' will be used through the rest of this to describe each of the two identified "cultural" groups. Despite its apparent political association, this term was selected with no intended political or socioeconomic (in terms of class) implications. The lack of another equivalent and less indicative term was the only reason to employ it.

temporal (diachronic) evolution. I shall return to this point in detail when discussing the two parties and their dynamics.¹⁷⁵ (fig. 8.1)

8.2. Two Processes of Change, Gradual vs. Abrupt

Another key idea to this conceptual model is the non-parallel processes of change. Although my interest of this study is primarily focused on the societal level, one could draw an analogy from a similar situation of two non-parallel processes of change in human psychology. It is important to note here that insights derived from this parallel are nothing but an instrument to test our hypothesis rather than applying another discipline's model on the one of societal and cultural change.

Sennet's argument in that context is invaluable.¹⁷⁶ According to Sennet, three patterns of personal behavior mark what he calls 'Purified Identity', the making of a choice without being involved in a 'true' experience, and the constant desire to be 'on top of things'.¹⁷⁷ These patterns result from a "voluntary limitation on the individual's freedom, in order to evade the very fact of growth--the emergence of the unknown". The most intriguing model though is the personal stage of adolescence "in which the time scales of growth are not in harmony. Sexual, intellectual, and perceptual powers grow at rate far in advance of the fund of experiences the individual possesses"¹⁷⁸ causing a 'crisis of identity'. This model is very important to the following discussion of the two processes of cultural transformation with their different rates of change: the one is

¹⁷⁵ See 8.9. of this study: 'Three Phases of Transition'.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Sennett, The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970).

¹⁷⁷ For the three behavioral patterns see Ibid., 12-16.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

gradual while the other is abrupt. Finally, borrowing another model from Sennet, this act of 'isolation, of oneself from actual experience will be further employed in the discussion of the Modern paradigm within the early Colonial phase. Interestingly enough, Sennet's discussion of this idea involved the practice of young professionals (doctors and planners, among his examples) who, out of the fear of involvement in their 'patients', and their 'search for purity', tended to make themselves fixed objects rather than open persons. This objectification process is quite similar to what Mitchell called 'the world-as-an-exhibition' experience, the main characteristic governing the Modern politics and institutional (educational, military and urban) structures during the nineteenth century in Cairo¹⁷⁹.

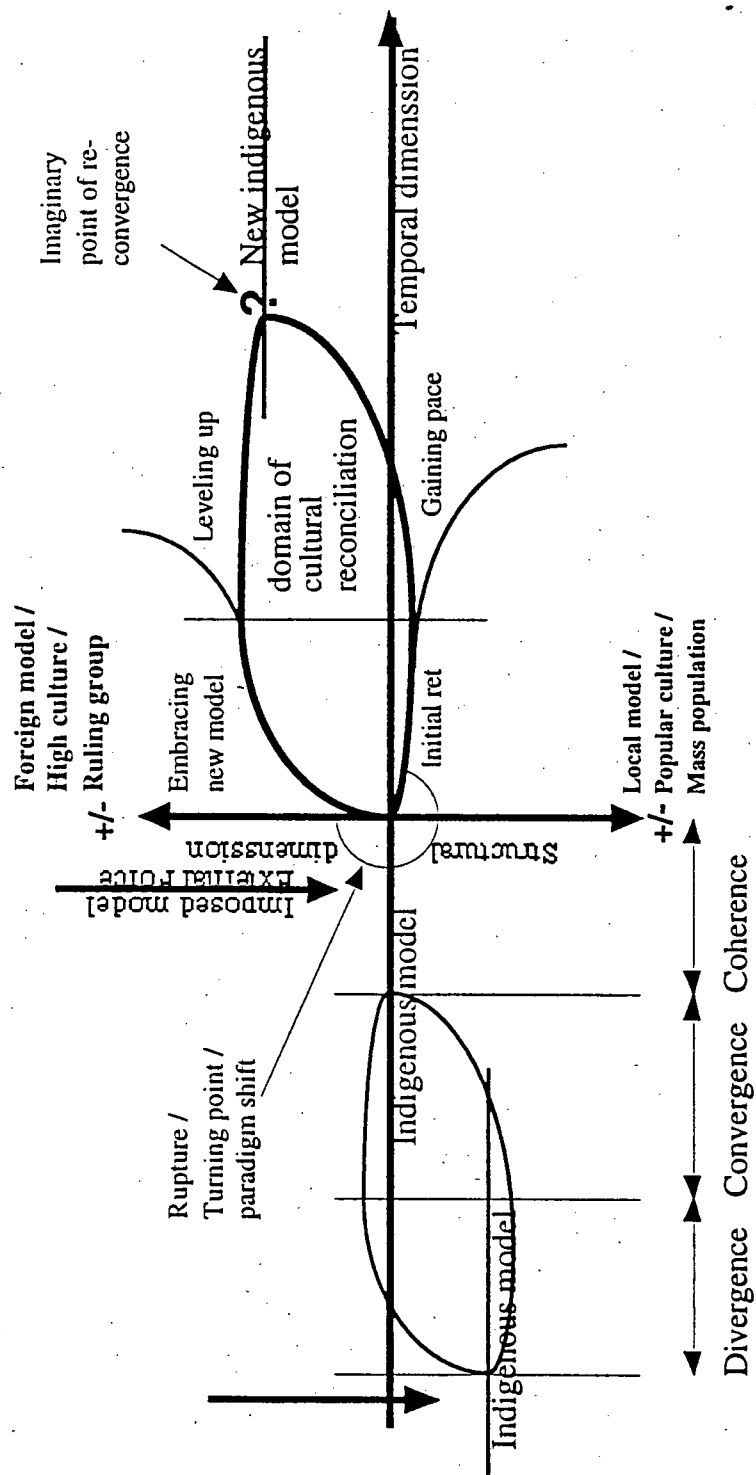
These two 'parallel' worlds, of the two societal 'parties' are, as this study argues, a product of the same attempt to maintain a 'Purified Identity', a characteristic associated with the Modern paradigm and its colonial agents. Mitchell's thesis in that respect has already been presented in detail while discussing the Islamic and Colonial cities of Cairo.¹⁸⁰

8.3. A Model

Before pursuing this exploration further, it is worth mentioning that the term 'Model' may not be what I really mean when trying to analyze the cultural process of change as it bears a certain dogmatic implication as well a deterministic approach to the reading of history. In contrast, the intention here is to provide for a possible

¹⁷⁹ Timothy Mitchell, "As If The World Were Divided in Two: The Birth of Politics in Turn-of-the-Century Cairo" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1984).

¹⁸⁰ See Part II of this studies, Chapter 4: "The medieval City"; and Chapter 5: "The Colonial City".



8.1. A conceptual model representing the process of cultural/urban change

explanation of the processes of cultural and civilizational changes that are already evident in Cairene history. This could lead to a framework of operation for intellectuals, planners and cultural leaders within the existing apparent "time of conflict". The term Model is therefore a possible future 'framework' for action rather than a 'frame' in which the reading of history should be molded.

8.4. Ruling vs. Popular Parties

The first argument in this model is that there exists a societal split in terms of action and response to the forces of cultural change in each phase of civilizational evolution. This horizontal split produces and results from formal and informal actions and their agents (parties) in society. The formal party is associated with the ruling class, aristocracy, and the elite in addition to the upper middle classes and bourgeoisie. Its realm of operation lies within the institutional frameworks. It consists, accordingly, of a minority that holds the power, and has the ability to introduce and impose changes. The informal party comprises the rest of the society, the mass population, and is usually associated with the middle and lower classes (i.e. the common people). The reason I refer to the latter group as 'informal' is the fact that its mode of operation lies predominantly outside 'formal', or institutional frameworks. This definition could be applied on both the cultural and spatial domains as I will discuss presently. Avoiding the confusion with the formal and informal settlements, I have been referring to the former as the 'Ruling party', and to the latter as the 'Popular party'. Both meant to be cultural, rather than political, entities.

In order to contextualize my proposed classification, we need to briefly look at the current debate of post-colonial studies. Attempts have been made to review cultural discourses developed within the colonial political framework and to challenge its associated power structure (Asad, 1973). Efforts to develop an alternative reading of those decolonized cultures, however, have been discredited as being no less biased than the ones they had deconstructed.¹⁸¹ In the field of urbanism, post-colonial studies generally follow two main directions. Studies on colonial urbanism (al-Sayyad, 1992) and its cultural misinterpretation (Said, 1979, and Mitchell, 1989) on the one hand, are complemented by attempts to decode the indigenous processes of urban growth (Hakim, 1986 and Akbar, 1988) on the other. The structural relationship between the two models, dominant vs. dominated, on both the urban and cultural levels is the general focus of this following part, and defines its scope. My main concern is to understand the interrelationship between a 'Ruling' cultural model, and a 'Popular' one, two terms that I will attempt to define, in the realm of public space in the aftermath of the colonial encounter.

According to Anthony King,¹⁸² to cite one example of the above discourse, "under the Western colonial paradigm the world was divided into two categories of societies: the colonizers and the natives. The former are the powerful, administratively advanced,

¹⁸¹ For a comprehensive reading of post-colonial studies see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., The Post-Colonial Studies Reader (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)

¹⁸² Anthony King, "Introduction: Spaces of Culture, Spaces of Knowledge" in Culture, Globalization and the World Economy, ed. Anthony King (Macmillan, Houndmills, 1991)

racially Caucasoid, nominally Christian, mainly European, dominant nations, while the latter are the powerless, organizationally backward, traditionally rooted, dominated societies. A constructed image, totalizing the native, controlled the interaction between the two in administrative policies, literary discourse, and in architecture and urban form."¹⁸³

Boaz Shoshan's definition of popular culture in medieval Cairo¹⁸⁴ is relevant to my argument. Historically, the term "popular culture" has been used as an elusive concept whose boundaries shift in response to different circumstances. Whether the term is associated with the oppressed class (Marxist interpretation) or with the illiterate, as a result of political or educational conditions, is only one question. The second question, as Shoshan argues, would be whether this 'popular culture' was created *by* the people or *for* them, or perhaps both possibilities apply as he concludes.¹⁸⁵ The term 'popular' itself, including its expression of 'cultural practices', suffers a definition problematic of an ideological structure. The very concept inevitably implies an 'inferior status' of a separate entity revealed and (historically) rejected by the learned.¹⁸⁶ It is noteworthy here to assert the intention of this study, inevitably part of the academic discourse which in turn is a key institution of the 'Modern' framework of knowledge is to avoid such an implication.

¹⁸³ Nezar AlSayyad, "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflection on Colonialism and National Equation," in Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Aldershot; Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury, 1992), 1-26., quoting Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Boaz Shoshan, Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 67.

During the discussion of different stages of cultural change, the term 'High' culture will be occasionally used to describe the cultural values embraced and adopted by the Ruling party. And because the Ruling/Ruled opposition implies certain passivity ascribed to the second party, the term Popular will be used to refer both to the party (the agent) as well as to its culture. In other words, whereas the Ruling party embraces a 'High' culture, the Popular party possesses 'Popular' cultural values.

Finally, the two identified parties, the Ruling and the Popular, although distinct and operating on different levels and within different patterns of transition, sometimes create an intermediate party at some stage of transition and for different reasons. Most prominent among these conditions is a mediating role to bridge the huge gap that arises during particular phases of transition. This mediating role, as will be argued later, is employed to alleviate the pressure, ease the control and overcome the rise of opposition by one party to the other.¹⁸⁷ Important as it is, this intermediate party will not be the focus of my analysis while discussing the patterns governing the transitional phases for each of the two main parties. However, it shares a major role, and hence is a major part of my concern, when discussing the mechanisms between the two parties at a certain stage of the modern history of Cairo.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ For the setting up of indigenous elites as a colonial protégé, and mediating between colonial rule and local subjects, see Edward Goldsmith, "Development as Colonialism," *The Ecologist*, Vol. 27. No. 2 (March-April, 1997): 69.

¹⁸⁸ For the role these intermediate strata had played during the Islamic phase see Chapter 4; and for the Colonial phase see Chapter 5 of this study.

8.5. From one Paradigm to Another

When one mentions the term 'paradigm shift' a whole set of assumptions jumps to mind. Does it refer to cultural values or modes of relationship? Is it the scientific revolution and the use of knowledge to subdue Nature? Or is it the economic and industrial revolution that brought about all of the above? Hard as it is to determine which is the cause and which is the effect, it is also beyond the scope of this study to try to answer any of these questions.¹⁸⁹ However, it is absolutely central to the understanding of the process of societal change to address the issue of a 'shift' as opposed to a 'change'. While the latter might not cause a fundamental transformation of an existing (active) model, the former implies the introduction of a completely alien, yet coherent model that is intended to 'replace' the exiting one, hence causing a rupture, in the continuation of the exiting model.

It is also important to note that when discussing this concept of rupture, it not only describes a change in a ruling system (political change), an economic base, or even a minor cultural transformation (from Catholicism to Protestantism or from Sunni to Shi'i for example). It rather refers to a 'civilizational' change.¹⁹⁰ Not only that, it is a change that 'breaks' with the continuity of an existing valid model. In other words, the two civilizations, the one prior to

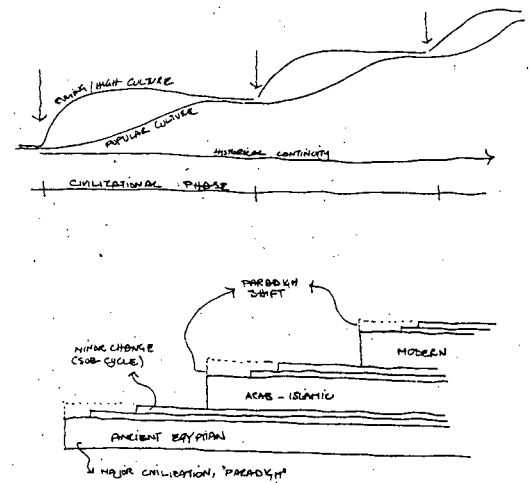
¹⁸⁹ For further discussion on the notion of a paradigm shift see for example Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolution (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1962); and Fritjof Capra, The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture (New York: Bantam books, 1982)

¹⁹⁰ For further discussion on the scope of the term 'civilization' in history, and its distinction from the term 'culture' see Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 40-44.

and the one after this specific break, have opposing models or are in 'conflict' with each other. They could not coexist. Rather, one will dominate, and eventually replace the other. In that case it is safe to assume that the one in its zenith will be likely to win the battle.

8.6. The Case of Egyptian History

In order to clarify both concepts of 'change' and 'shift', I will apply them on our case of Egyptian history. Among others, two arguments of historical interpretation are presented below, each attempting to reach a classification of civilizational phases from a different perspective. What is relevant to our study is neither interpretation, but rather when does the Modern phase started in context of each of them, and, more importantly, what measures of rupture it had caused to the 'paradigm' that preceded it.



8.2, 8.3. Major cycles of 'civilizational' shifts vis a vis minor cultural change in the case of Egyptian history

Culturally speaking, some historians¹⁹¹ agree that the long Egyptian history, although characterized by a multiplicity of ruling powers, could be epitomized in three major phases. The first is the ancient Egyptian (popularly known as the Pharaonic) stretching from the pre-dynastic age (approx. 5000 BC) till the advent of Islam 641 AD. This includes both the Greek and the Roman political dominium, and culturally embodies the Christian (or Coptic) era. The second is the Arab-Islamic phase starting the seventh century and ending in the late eighteenth century, including the different dynasties that ruled either autonomously or as a provincial state of an external Caliph. It

¹⁹¹ Fearing that it might exceed the scope of this study, I chose not to give space to present any of these theories in this context.

also includes the Sunni-Shi'i-Sunni changes. And finally, we have the 'Modern' phase from the early nineteenth century until today.

This last (relatively very short) phase includes also the colonial (either nominally or virtually) period, the post-nationalization socialist state, and the current open market state.

Although this quick overview might seem unfair for such a long period of time, it is essential to my proposed definitions of 'change' and 'shift'. While the term 'change' depicts an internal transition from one sub-phase to another, the term 'shift' will be used to describe the transformation from one phase of civilization to another (for example, from pre-Islamic to Islamic, or from pre-Modern to Modern). As mentioned above, this shift includes a break from the existing, and the introduction of new, modes of living - a shift in the paradigm governing them. (fig. 8.2, 8.3)

In light of this interpretation, the scope of this study is limited to the second 'shift' in Egyptian history: the one from the medieval, Islamic or pre-Modern (major) phase to the Modern one, stretching from the colonial sub-phase till today.

The above classification of civilizational phases, the products of shifts in Egyptian history, should not be adopted as the only historical interpretation. Different theses have concluded at what is regarded as a common, continuous phase; and when and why a rupture had taken place. These are other models of historical change. Chiefly among these interpretations is the one based on the evolution of religion. According to this view, the introduction of monotheism by Ikhneton and Moses during the fourteenth century BC was a

major break of the hitherto polytheistic religion.¹⁹² The Graeco-Roman sub-phases according to this view are still unresolved, as it had involved regression from a monotheistic to a pagan religion. Judaism, Christianity and Islam constitute one continuous religious paradigm that remained active and intact until, and here is the point of my concern, the advent of the Modern secular paradigm causing another rupture of a hitherto continuous model. In short, based on this interpretation, religion is the definitive criterion in classifying historical phases.

To briefly summarize this part, the point that I have trying to emphasize is neither the civilizational nor the religious interpretation, but rather that the Modern paradigm has caused a severe rupture of what was previously a valid model, either culturally or religiously speaking. The following patterns of change will start from this premise.

8.7. Patterns of Change

So far I have attempted to develop a definition for both parties, i.e. the Ruling and the Popular, and also to establish an understanding of what I mean by a civilizational change in both the general and Egyptian historical contexts. Building on that, in this section I will analyze the two different processes carried out by the two different parties as a response to major shifts in the civilizational continuity. First, to understand the nature of each party, I will start by

¹⁹² There are different theories regarding the identity of both religious reformers. The most famous is Freud's hypothesis that both men were but one person. For more about this theory see Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism (New York: Vintage Books, 1955).

discussing its characteristics in terms of a) its ability to accept cultural change, b) its rate of cultural transformation, and finally c) how deep this change penetrates into its societal layers. As explained in my above discussion of the different stages of the Cairene history (Part II of this study), the two parallel forces of historical continuity do not necessarily imply an equal capacity, flexibility or depth of response to the cultural change (fig. 8.4, 8.5). The following characteristics of each party, however, are not essential or 'given' to the Egyptian history - rather they are historically produced and culturally accumulated.

The Ruling party is, as I argue, more receptive, with a tendency to accept (sometimes to welcome) the new, 'alien' model, or imported one. It also takes shorter time to absorb the change. In other words its pattern of change has a rapid pace. By looking at the period prior and the one just after the introduction of the new model, one could recognize that the Ruling party has already taken the initiative to adopt this model. It is as if the first manifestation of the new model occurs predominantly within the Ruling party's cultural domain - causing therefore an abrupt transition. Finally, given the size and number of this party (a minority as noted above) compared to the Popular one, its ability to maneuver, and change its cultural values is easily measured by cultural analysts and highly admired by renewalists.¹⁹³ This ability is related to its cultural dominance, economic advantage as well as its technical convenience. The Ruling

¹⁹³ I perhaps need not to mention that avant-gard and "progressive" movements are predominantly developed from within the cultural elite. Those who believe in their role to lead the society at large towards change, and to break with tradition.

party's values, manifested in the institutional structure, are therefore more likely to be able to adapt more easily in response to cultural changes. To conclude, the rapid pace, abrupt transition, and ability to adapt all characterize the Ruling party's pattern of change.

The Popular party, in contrast, displays the extreme opposite characteristics with respect to its patterns of change. It takes generations to transform its cultural values, a change that involved only few years on the institutional level.¹⁹⁴ It is also engaged in a more gradual transition. Even when associated with an abrupt political event such as a national revolution¹⁹⁵ (a radical change from imperialism to socialism for example), culture takes time to absorb it. This party also acquires, and is framed within a deeper cultural platform, or collective unconsciousness, which is a result of its cumulative civilizational layers. Cultural values and social structures hinder individual initiatives that might take place in the Ruling party through institutional change. It is therefore not as flexible and ready to adapt its values and customs by adopting new ones as in the case of the Ruling party, which in turn has its political obligation lacking in the Popular party. Finally, the Ruling party is obviously more exposed to new currents of cultural change compared to the Popular one. The geographical as well as its technological privileges, such as residing in urban centers, having larger access to global media, and possessing means of cultural communication, can explain this. The Popular party's pattern of change is thus slower, gradual in transition and less capable to sudden adaptation.

¹⁹⁴ See for example my discussion of the institutional programs during the early Colonial phase, Chapter 5 of this study. For more details about the encounter between the institutional and the popular changes, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁵ See 'The Post-revolution City', Chapter 6 of this study: 6.2. The Revolution and the Socialist State 1952-70.

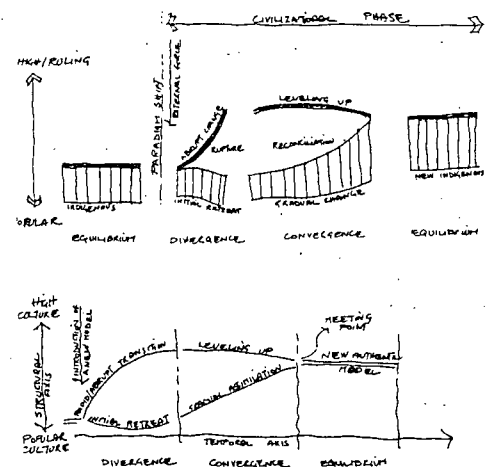
8.8. Three Phases of Transition

Having identified the characteristics of both patterns of change, I will present an explanation of three phases of transition using a basic diagram, and by giving a historic example whenever possible.

Based on the previous historical analysis, the cultural model prior to the advent of the new one is in a state of 'equilibrium' (fig. 8.4, 8.5).¹⁹⁶ The term 'equilibrium' however should not be understood as a condition of stagnation or inability to evolve. One has to distinguish the horizontal axis of historical continuity (i.e. the temporal dimension), from the vertical axis which governs the relationship between the two parties (i.e. the structural dimension).

'Equilibrium' is used here to describe the vertical axis, the Ruling/Popular duality in a cultural sense. In other words, the parties are operating within the 'same' civilizational model or paradigm. They might be a political tension, a severe cast or a class split, but they are both in 'cultural harmony'. There exists a common understanding and acceptance of their perception of the world (including the other party, and of course for the concern of this study, the physical manifestation of such understanding). This 'equilibrium' or harmony on the vertical axis is a resultant of a cumulative historical process, almost identical, as this study argues, to the one that will eventually -- hypothetically -- be attained.

Theoretically speaking, one could imagine that a full-cycle of



8.4, 8.5. Three phase of cultural change: divergence, convergence and equilibrium, carried out by two identified societal groups Ruling and Popular parties

¹⁹⁶ The terms equilibrium, stability, harmony or coherence are all problematic definitions to the state I am depicting here. They imply by definition a rather "static" understanding not intended in my approach. Equilibrium, the term I chose for the lack of better definition, is also associated with Anthropologist and Sociologist Functional Theory at the turn of the century, namely Durkheim's organic and mechanical models. It thus bears an *ahistoric* connotation that I insist to avoid.

evolution in terms of the civilizational change will have to undergo the three following phases. The state of harmony will be therefore, as it was the last phase prior to the shifting point (or moment), the last phase of the emerging civilizational era.

After the moment of change takes place, the 'divergence' of the two horizontal processes of historical continuity is apparent. While the Ruling party, with its ability of a prompt response will passionately embrace the new model, the Popular party will not only be less responsive but, in most cases, more reserved and/or repulsed. Moreover, it often resorts to, or takes refuge in, its 'original' model¹⁹⁷ as manifested, for example, in the Fundamentalist Movements associated with the political and economic, but basically the cultural 'invasion' by, and the hegemony of, an alien model.¹⁹⁸ The rest of this phase is characterized by an accelerated process of change by the Ruling party and a gradual process (after the first negative reaction) by the Popular party. It is clear, as shown in the diagram (fig. 8.1, 8.4), that by the end of this phase the gap between the two parties will have grown to its largest extent, and that the state of harmony between them will have given way to a state of division. The shared understanding of realities is replaced by opposing ones. The paradigm shift has already begun and is in its highest manifestation. To illustrate this abstract model, the early stage of colonialism serves as a good example of the confrontation and frustration of each party - as they are both operating in two

¹⁹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 109-120.

¹⁹⁸ These episodes are further discussed in Part II of this study, chapter 6: The Post-revolution City.

different and (still) exclusive paradigms or modes of living.¹⁹⁹

The second phase, the one of reconciliation, has almost a reverse nature. It is a phase of 'convergence'. While the Ruling party's pattern of change starts to level off, losing the rapid pace and frenzied acceleration of the initial stage, the gradual change of the Popular party's pattern is by now considerably steeper. It is as if the two parties have realized that the gap in-between is not an advantage to either of them, and have therefore agreed to compromise and seek a meeting point. This meeting point however is never midway; it is always closer to the more powerful and dominant model, the one that has initiated the change, the originally alien one. This seemingly reconciliatory process is not as promising as it sounds, as it implies an excessive loss of the authentic model (hitherto adopted by the Popular party), and to a less extent a compromise on the behalf of the alien model embraced primarily by the Ruling party.²⁰⁰ This phenomenon can be explained in several ways. First is that the power (and hence the higher social status) is associated with the embracing of the alien model - a motive, strong enough to encourage the Popular party, and its new generations in particular, to give up their authentic model in favor to the alien one. To make their choice

¹⁹⁹ For the first encounter between the two models, see Samuel Moreh, Trans., Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 19-108; for the encounter during the early Colonial phase see Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989), 34-128; and for the urban manifestation of such encounter, see Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), Part II, "The Modern Era: A Tale of Two Cities," 83-168.

²⁰⁰ By using the two terms "authentic" and "alien" I risk an essentialist connotation or an ahistoric misinterpretation. In contrast, my argument is based on the premise that cultural identity is in state of constant flow - of flux rather than fixation. Yet, in order to measure a certain cultural phenomenon, one needs to look at the process of change in a specific "frozen" moment, in whose boundaries relativistic cultural positions could be recognized, hence indigenous/alien temporary polarity.

even more difficult, all institutions (by nature part of the Ruling party) are modeled after the alien paradigm. The educational, political, legal, and most of the cultural institutions have since an early stage of transformation 'blindly' embraced the alien powerful model, considered as the 'ideal'. Finally, and perhaps the most critical aspect of this massive migration from the one side to the other is the inability, or the unconscious denial, of the Popular party to realize that it is losing its authentic model. This state of illusion or numbness creates a deception that one is able to embrace the new values without giving up his or her own identity. This is the most dangerous cause of the increasing pace of "degradation" of the authentic model, its rupture, and its replacement by the alien one.

This tendency of the Popular party to gradually adopt the alien model, which in turn will eventually shape the identity of the society, however, is never an entire drainage of one side to the other or never a complete capitulation of the authentic model. In other words, the point of re-convergence of both parties although closer to the alien model's end and hence seemingly represents its overwhelming triumph, is not a complete transformation from an authentic to an alien model. One would rather describe it as a transformation from the 'originally' authentic to the 'newly' authentic, an argument that has two possible implications: first, the Popular Party has more influence than is previously proposed, and secondly is that 'authenticity' is not essential. This means that the process of gradual transition and assimilation of the alien model on the behalf of the Popular party eventually creates a model that is as

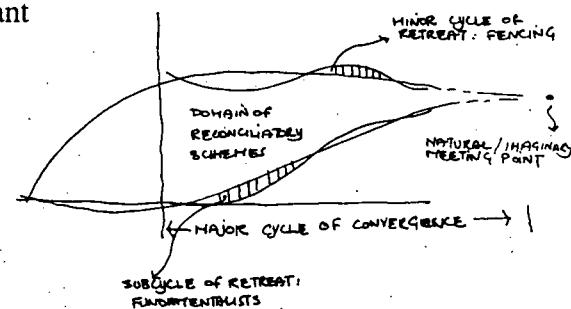
valid and authentic as the one prior to the 'foreign' intrusion. In other words, the indigenous process of change will result in an indigenous model, which is a result of the two (previously) separate models.

As has been explained in analyzing the historical stages, and as it is illustrated in the diagram (fig. 8.1), this last phase of transition will eventually lead to the joined-state that was prevalent prior to the advent of the at-that-time alien, i.e. a state of harmony. The process goes full circle in terms of the vertical axis, the two parties' structural relationship, while moving to another civilizational model along the horizontal phase of historical continuity.

One more thing remains to be mentioned in that respect. Within each of the transitional phases the dynamics between the two parties provide a certain framework for action. For example, within a phase of harmony, attempts of cultural reconciliation between the two parties are irrelevant - for societal gaps are not *culturally* manifest. During phases of division and cultural gap, whether in a state of divergence (phase one) or of convergence (phase two), strategies searching for coherence and those addressing issues of authenticity and alienation, or the inherent and the acquired, are not only relevant and essential but, one would argue, the only valid framework for any successful action.

8.9. A Cycle within Another:

Borrowed from natural sciences, the concept of fractals²⁰¹ can help



8.6. Major and minor cycles of cultural change

²⁰¹ On the concept of Fractals, see T. J. Catwright, "Planning and Chaos Theory," APA Journal, Winter (1991): 44-

illustrate the major cycles of change and the minor ones within, each having the same model of the three patterns of transition. The tree structure (or the coral reef) for example, has the characteristic of sameness on both the macro and the micro levels. The more one zooms in; s/he will recognize the same structure in a smaller scale. How that reflects on the already described historical model is what I will discuss in this section. I further argue here that, the structure of transitional phases and sub-phases follow, to a certain extent, a similar model (of Microcosm/Macrocosm) and thus each historical moment can be seen in context of either the minor or the major cycle.

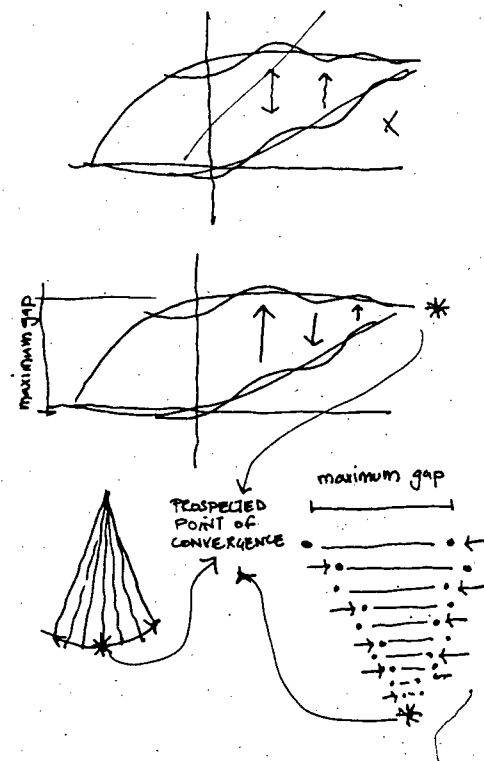
Within one particular paradigm, so to speak, some political, economic or cultural forces result in changes in the structural relationship between the two parties (the vertical axis in fig. 8.1) without causing a change in the paradigm itself. The rise of Islam, for example, brought about a change in the paradigm of the pre-Islamic civilizations in the lands in which it expanded. Within this paradigm many changes in the political and sectarian structures, although they did not cause a paradigm shift, or rupture, followed the same transitional phases and patterns. Or, to put it another way, one facet of society could change without affecting all facets, and therefore the whole paradigm.

This means that one could apply on the micro level the same model used on the macro scale. It also implies that the basic diagram that represents the different stages of civilizational change contains

within itself a more intricate and complex structure of sub-cycles including economic, political and cultural changes that do not attain the level of a civilizational shift.

From that perspective, the current phase we are witnessing, which will be detailed below, contains sub-cycles and hence sub-phases and their governing patterns of transition. This is a very key point to my assumption of the patterns of transition because what we might be witnessing is not necessarily a major cycle, but rather a minor one. Therefore, one should be careful analyzing the dynamics between the two parties in the current condition as they might not be in accord with 'the' major cycle, but rather with 'a' minor one.

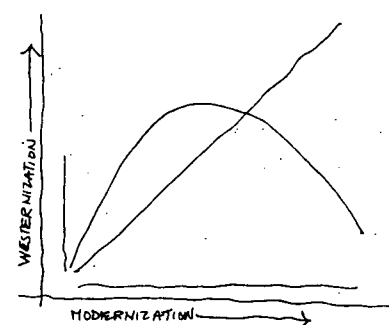
If the civilizational phase suggests a mode of 'convergence' between the two models, the authentic and the alien, while current events suggest a mode of 'divergence' between both, this does not necessarily mean that either the model is wrong or our observation is false. It could simply be that another sub-cycle of change has been over looked. In the case of recent Egyptian history, for example, the model suggests a state of 'convergence' characterized by a faster pace towards a reconciliation after passing the first phase of abrupt change and of colonial/local (hence Ruling/Popular) enmity. The current situation however does not really confirm this assumption. This conflict, as the concept of fractles or sub-cycles suggests, is justified by a resentment towards the alien model (being the Western in this case); a fact causing the state of retreat to Fundamentalism that is prevalent. The two modes are thus operating within a sub-cycle of confrontation and apparent divergence. This phenomenon in



8.7. The convergence dynamics accelerated by minor cycles of cultural change

the contemporary history of Egypt,²⁰² as already described, started during the post-1973 economic reform and oil boom in neighboring states. Both brought about a minor cycle of confrontation between the two parties, the Ruling and the Popular. The former opened the door to Western culture in a blunt manner, and threatened local cultural boundaries. This in turn caused the Popular party to consolidate and encourage its self-assertive tendency,²⁰³ being one, and of course not the only, cause of the new Islamist movements.²⁰⁴

These sub-cycles however are as not long-lasting as the major ones. Their ramifications are less permanent although considerably effective. Any framework for action should therefore be sensitive to those sub-cycles and their immediate implications. It is imperative, however, to be aware of the major cycle and its patterns of change as the main framework governing the relationship between the two



8.8. Westernization vis a vis modernization and alternative responses to the impact of the West, (Huntington 1996)

²⁰² Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, A Short History of Modern Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter 7: "From Sadat to Mubarak, 1970 to the present day," 132-145.

²⁰³ For more discussion on the reaction of Islamist movements (or local cultures in general) towards Western modernization, see Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 109-120.

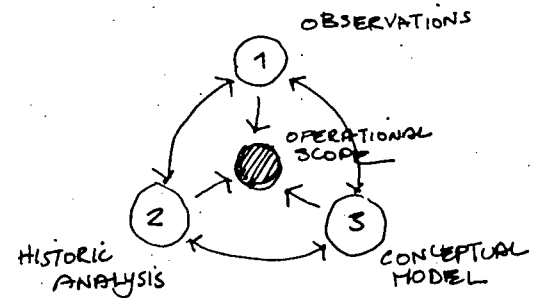
²⁰⁴ The origin of the recent Islamist movements, some argue, goes back to the early twentieth century 'Muslim Brethren' groups, which at that time coincided with other nationalist movements with either renewalist or conservative outlook. Our argument of cultural retreat should not be considered as the only cause of the recent phenomenon. More complex political economic and social circumstances on both the local and the regional levels are involved. This, however, does not imply that cultural bases of such a recent phenomenon are less prominent among other factors.

parties. Going back to the Egyptian examples, although the apparent animosity and conflict between the two parties and their adopted models seem prevalent, one should be operating within a framework that is primarily based on the major cycle (the pre-colonial, colonial, post war so to speak) and its governing patterns of change.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that the two parties must be seen, and approached, as being in a reconciliatory mode (a state of convergence) on the macro scale rather than in a severe conflict (a state of divergence) on the micro scale.

9. CONCLUSION: Some Insights for Architects/Planners

In this concluding chapter I will, first, present some counter-arguments to my hypothesis by challenging some of its premises, and critically apply it to the current situation in the city of Cairo. In so doing, I will return to my observations, in the first part of this study, merging the rather abstract model with current contextual conditions. The observations, the historic analysis, and the conceptual model will, together, contribute to a more coherent operational scope. In order to make this thesis more conclusive, I will then an outline of the role of the architect/planner, as well as of other agents involved in the targeted reconciliatory scheme.



9.1. The three research components of this study leading to an operational model

In the previous discussion of the model of cultural change, a certain abstractness and theoretical vagueness was maintained. Using graphical diagrams, such abstract discussion will continue in this part while describing the rest of the process. Some concrete examples will provide, I hope, a break in this rigidity.

In order to avoid the confusion that might arise as a result of the apparent similarity between the presented model and other participatory approaches, some efforts will be exerted to clarify the difference between them. This section will conclude with an attempt to highlight the positive and encouraging side of our seemingly helpless or submissive approach, and the gloomy vision it projects.

9.1. From Pre-modern to Modern: Is It Another Cycle?

Having presented one possible interpretation of change, it is necessary for both this research methodology and to the validity of its conceptual model to explore the counter argument in regard to the shift caused by the Modern paradigm and in context of the process of civilizational change as a whole. The following question thus emerges as a challenge to my assumption. Is the Modern paradigm just another major cycle that will inevitably be merged with the 'originally' authentic model synthesizing a 'new' authentic one? In other words, the question is whether a converging point between the Modern cultural paradigm embraced by the High culture, and the less-modernized Popular culture is to be anticipated. Two possibilities can perhaps address this question.

The first argument, as described above, is that a major cycle of cultural change including phases of harmony, divergence and convergence, has shaped, is shaping and will continue to shape the patterns of cultural transition. Accordingly, the current Modern paradigm is nothing but another cycle. And that the confusion and lack of bases we currently experience are just the result of the state of the 'pre-harmony' which had preceded all other paradigms' equilibrium, i.e. their last phases of cultural 'harmony'.

The counter-argument is based on the premise that while these cycles of change could variably be applied on most of the 'pre-Modern' civilizational changes, the Modern paradigm itself has not only introduced a change in measure but in principle as well. By this I mean that the patterns of change governing the pace and nature of

the institutional transformation have followed a path of unprecedented acceleration and frenzied development in the last few hundred years.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the Popular culture, predominantly operating within a pre-Modern paradigm, still follows the cycles of cultural change described in the above model. The prospected meeting point in this scenario, will never occur (fig. 9.2, 9.3). The Modern paradigm, in other words, has not only introduced a change in modes of life preceding it, but, and this is the key issue, has caused a rupture in the (pre-Modern) historical patterns of cultural change, i.e. the first model.

In short, while the first argument suggests a 'natural' convergence or a meeting point, the second argument denies such possibility due to the exponential divergence between the 'local' and the 'Modern' cultural models. The rupture is thus seen as too cataclysmic to ever be healed.

Although it is irrelevant here to prove any of these two arguments, one of my concerns is to identify the implications of each to the current situation. If there exists a promising meeting point between the institutional (or High) and the Popular cultures, how will that contribute to a framework of action for intellectuals and planners?

The following part attempts to identify what 'a' conscious meeting

²⁰⁵ It is hard to discuss the nature and pace of development for the Modern paradigm in such a limited study. For further discussions supporting the argument that the Modern paradigm is exclusive by nature and could not be universalized, the following references are suggested: For the Environmental impact in terms of energy consumption and waste production see Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees, Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on Earth (New Society Publisher, 1996); for the invalidity of the economic model, see Clifford Cobb, Ted Halstead and Jonathan Rowe, "If the GDP is up, Why is America down?," The Atlantic Monthly October (1995): 59-78; for the scientific framework see Fritjof Capra, The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture (New York: Bantam books, 1982); and for its social and cultural ramifications, see Morris Berman, The Reenchantment of the World (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981).

point signifies; where any deliberate (or planned) scheme of reconciliation is located between the two cultural modes, the 'High' and the 'Popular'; and whether such scheme takes place within a 'natural' state of convergence according to the first argument, or within an unexpected one according to the second.

Furthermore, in this reconciliatory scheme it is essential to understand who the agents are and within which dynamics they operate. What would this scheme (an urban project for example) symbolize? Does it merely help accelerating an inevitable natural convergence, or could this scheme help maintain some of the values that might be lost if left to the spontaneous process of change? If the two cultures were not in a state of convergence but rather in an increasing rate of (exponential) divergence, what would a reconciliatory scheme in that case represent? These are some of the questions that I will try to address in the following part.

9.2. Different Players within Each Party

According to the above model there exists two participating parties, the 'Ruling' and the 'Popular', between both three phases of cultural dynamics take place: a) divergence, b)convergence, and c) equilibrium. The one of debate -- in which we are currently experiencing a condition of cultural turmoil -- is the second phase, the state of convergence. If we accept the argument that the Modern paradigm has caused a rupture in the indigenous process hitherto operating on different cultural levels of society, and that this resulting split between the Modern and the pre-Modern is not anticipated to be reunited, then there will be no third phase, the one

of harmony. But is it so simple having only two possibilities? Certainly not, there probably exist more complex cultural tendencies between the two extreme, 'either-or' scenarios. I will attempt to explore the nature of such tendencies.

Consisting of many layers and cultural groups, hence measures of cultural tendencies, the Ruling party as a whole should not be considered as necessarily following either of the paths: one converging with 'Popular', or the other (of infinitesimal growth) diverging from it (fig. 9.3). Particular groups from within, it is argued, are likely to follow one way or another. In between the two extremes, however, one should expect different measures of compromising tendencies.

For example, groups having 'Western' education and life style,²⁰⁶ so to speak, will opt to follow more of the diverging tendency. These groups are, and will constantly be, in a state of further separation from the 'local' culture and moving toward the 'global' one, or according to our definition from the 'indigenous' toward the 'alien'. They could be described as *cultural* extremists among the 'Ruling' party's other groups, adopting and implanting the 'Western' model of modernity as an ideal in their homes, work, education, leisure, and above all, their direct connectedness to global media and networks of communication, (Satellite dishes, Internet, etc.). Their cultural relationship to the other, Popular, party is one of

²⁰⁶ The distinction between what is modern and what is Western in terms of civilizational models was thoroughly examined by Huntington in Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 68. He also makes the point that the collapse or decline of some contemporary cultures or ideologies does not necessarily mean that these societies will import the other Western ideology. To become modern in other words does not imply become Western. See *Ibid.*, 50-55.

'outsiders'.

During the early post-colonial phase, local governments were ironically described as 'local colonizers' because they, although politically have overthrown the foreign rule, were still operating within its institutional framework, i.e. an alien cultural model. By the same token, these 'High' culture extremists, although religiously and linguistically (to a certain extent) still part of a local society, they are becoming increasingly culturally alienated. One could similarly describe their relationship to the Popular party as 'local tourists'. In their standpoint to traditional values, as well as to the Popular cultural and its physical artifacts,²⁰⁷ they share a romantic attitude of conservatism and of musefication rather than their acceptance of an active, and interactive participation.²⁰⁸

Between these 'High' culture extremists and the closest groups to the convergence point, a whole range of gray zones can be identified. This domain includes groups whose relationship to the two cultural models varies. In terms of their education, their upbringing, their urban/rural origin, etc., the blend of both 'local' and 'Western' ingredients determine the cultural identity of each group and its position on the vertical scale signifying the dynamics between the two cultural models.

The layer most important to my concern is the one at the very edge of the Ruling party's range of cultural tendencies. Its apparent closeness to the 'Popular' party is due to either a cultural affinity or

²⁰⁷ See Hamadeh's view of the two policies of colonial ruling of traditional cities discussed in Part II, Chapter 5 of this study.

²⁰⁸ See my above discussion of Sennet's argument of the 'Purified Identity', 8.2. "Two Processes of Change: Gradual vs. Abrupt".

an intellectual (educational) awareness, or both. It is also characterized by a readiness and/or willingness to reach out and develop cultural compromises with the Popular party's agents. Among this group as previously mentioned are intellectuals, cultural leaders and architects/planners who are aware of the cultural chasm, and constantly trying to bridge it. Such a group, despite its promising role in the proposed reconciliatory scheme, is by nature trapped in the 'Ruling' party's (cultural) boundaries.²⁰⁹ This can be explained by the hegemonic presence of the 'Western' institutional framework, in which not only this group's education but also the various aspects of its cultural exposure have been shaped. If some members of this group have escaped, or were excluded from, such framework, then they are no longer part of the Ruling party's cultural realm as it is defined above. They will share however roles in the reconciliatory process from the Popular party's cultural realm. To summarize this point, whereas the 'High culture extremists' are already excluded from the reconciliatory process, the architects/planners and cultural leaders are among its major players.

At the other end of the cultural dichotomy lies the Popular party. Because of its larger numbers and deeper (cumulative) cultural layers, it naturally consists of a wider spectrum of groups in regard to their cultural affiliation to the 'Ruling' party. Two patterns of response characterize an initial retreat by some groups of this party; first, as a reaction to an external cultural invasion; and, secondly, as

²⁰⁹ This argument is further explained when discussing the role of the planner. See 9.4. of this study "The Planner's Position".

a result of an internal break of cultural boundaries. Although the former pattern is further discussed below,²¹⁰ the latter is worth highlighting here. The Popular cultural 'extremists' is the other group excluded from the process of cultural reconciliation.²¹¹

Resorting to their traditional values (religious beliefs among them), zealous groups that immerse themselves in extreme interpretation of religious textual codes often develop an orthodox, and hence a conservative attitude. This attitude is materialized in a perpetual animosity towards any new, alien model, and in a refusal to negotiate or even to (culturally) participate in any of its manifestations. Hippocratic as they may sound,²¹² the 'extremists' of these groups, while persisting in separating themselves from the other cultural end are doomed to historical extinction in the same manner as the 'High culture extremists' are. In their rejection to participate in the inevitable evolution of a 'new indigenous' model, they voluntarily exclude themselves from any active role in such process of reconciliation. Going back to the graphical representation, because their curve is at the very edge in the apparent cultural dichotomy, with no possible convergence, the 'Popular culture extremists' also have no place in the reconciliatory process we are concerned with. The cultural spectrum of the Popular party nevertheless includes many other layers, i.e. groups, who are willing to negotiate, or already in a state of gradual convergence

²¹⁰ See above 9.3. "The Break of Cultural Exclusiveness".

²¹¹ For further discussion of the argument that Islamic Resurgence was a reaction to Western cultural hegemony see Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order, 109-120.

²¹² Avoiding being judgmental, the apparent withdrawal from 'Modern' cultural lifestyle, called upon by religious extremists, does not prevent them from using 'modern' products (including microphones, print shops, vehicles, etc.) to pursue their propaganda.

with the 'Ruling' party. The most promising group among them, from the perspective of this reconciliatory scheme, are those aware of the cultural chasm, and constantly trying to bridge it. The community leaders, as I will now describe them, are the other major players of the reconciliatory scheme initiated by architects/planners and cultural leaders operating from the Ruling party's realm.

9.3. The Break of Cultural Exclusiveness

Before discussing the role of both of the planners and the community leaders and their interactive dynamics, one important aspect in the current state of interchange between the 'High' culture and the 'Popular' culture is the phenomenon of cultural boundaries and their apparent dissolution. They need to be further highlighted. As mentioned before, the political change, radical as it may be, does not necessarily result in a comparable measure of cultural change. In the case of contemporary Egyptian history, discussed in more details in the preceding chapters,²¹³ the *Coup d'état* in 1952, replaced the monarchy and its colonial patrons by a local government with native members. But it did not really bring about a major change in the cultural duality that had prevailed prior to this event. In other words, the local government was still operating within the cultural and institutional framework established hundred and fifty years before, the one that had been promoted during the colonial era. The High and Popular (exclusive) cultural realms, persisted despite the enormous schemes of social and political reform. This situation continued to be valid until this cultural 'exclusiveness' started to

²¹³ See above Part II, Chapter 6: "The Post-Colonial City".

dissolve in the mid-seventies and is still being undone today.²¹⁴ The break of cultural boundaries due to socioeconomic circumstances in the last two decades was so dramatically manifested that one could argue that it was at this moment that the true process of cultural convergence was inaugurated. The manifestation of this dissolution of boundaries and the dilution of two exclusive cultural modes are what I am interested in exploring in this study as whole.

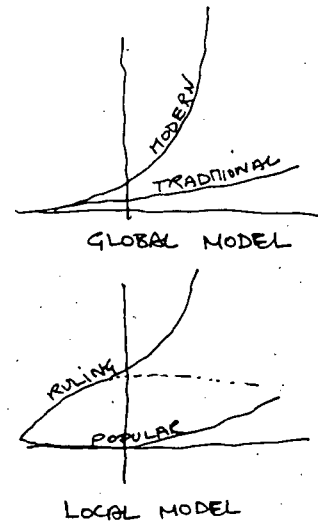
Building on the assumptions developed in the above model, during the first phase of cultural change, i.e. of divergence, the break of cultural boundaries brings about a state of initial repulsion toward the alien model. In the case of Cairo, this repulsive attitude occurred in both ways. The hegemony of the Western political and economic models, accompanied by a penetration of 'Western' cultural values, were a major cause for Fundamentalist movements to aggressively respond. The latter is thus a manifestation of self-assertion tendency by the Popular culture through an initial cultural retreat as part of the sub-cycle of divergence.²¹⁵ On the other hand, the High culture groups, the elite and remnants of the aristocracy were in turn offended by the break of their cultural exclusiveness. During the late 1970s and the 1980s, changes in the economic structure of the society helped accelerate such dissolution of boundaries, which was accompanied by a confrontation between two cultural realms; apparent in various aspects of societal life; and expressed by both cultural groups. The repulsive reaction of the High culture was

²¹⁴ Ibid.

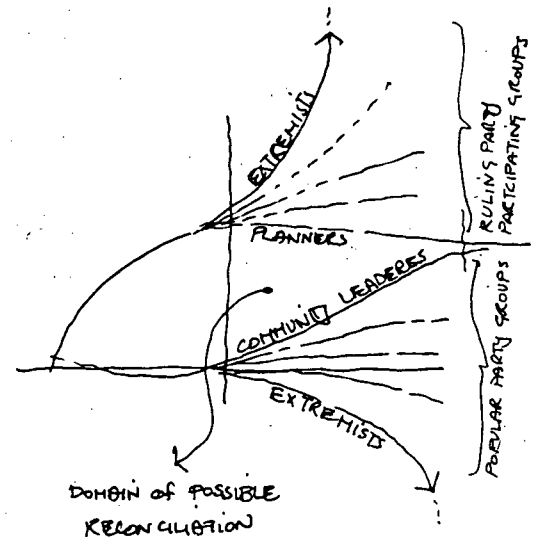
²¹⁵ See above 8.9. "A Cycle within Another".

mainly rhetorical. 'The loss of descent values', 'the deterioration of ethics' and 'the rise of the culture of the commoners', etc. were not uncommon phrases in both letters-to-the-editor in newspapers and in *Salons*' discourses. In the intellectual realm, one could not miss the critiques of art, literature, music in this period, all speak with the same abhorrence and in the same tone of condemnation. In public space,²¹⁶ one of the major arenas of confrontation, the break of cultural boundaries was manifested in traffic 'chaos', the mix and mingle of pedestrian, carts and different types of vehicles. In response, more restrictive regulations were imposed and more sidewalks were fenced. The use of originally aesthetic streetscape elements, such as fountains and ornamental gardens or green medians, by Popular party's groups as recreational zones was again denied by more fences to protect such domains and maintain its exclusiveness.²¹⁷ In short, the reaction of the High culture was manifested on both the cultural (discourse) and urban (fencing) levels. Whereas the self-defense, cultural retreat on the Popular party's side manifested itself through a fundamentalist attitude, the Ruling party on the other hand, to assert its identity and separate itself from the 'Popular' culture, constructed new walls, and created new boundaries. The new defense lines were absolutely necessary, following the break of the original ones.

These manifestations should not be interpreted as a class conflict or confrontation. We need to bring back the original dichotomy. The



9.2. Cultural trends on both the local and global levels



9.3. Different groups within each identified cultural party undertaking different trajectories in response to each other. The cultural extremists are excluded from the process of reconciliation, while the intellectuals and community leaders are among the major players

²¹⁶ See Part I of this study, "Patterns of Spatial Conflict"

²¹⁷ Ibid., 2.2. "Informal Reuse of Open Space".

'High' culture, although historically comprised of the ruling class, the aristocrats and military leaders (as well as the upper middle classes of merchants and intellectuals),²¹⁸ it is now being more inclusive. The acquisition of a social mobility as a result of rapid political and economic changes, has brought about constant migration from the Popular party's side to the Ruling party's. In the physical realm, one could translate this spatially through the move from the 'more-traditional' neighborhoods the 'modernized' parts of the city. The *Nouveau Riche* is one group that was able to abruptly leap from one party's cultural realm to the other. For this group, now being part of the Ruling party, it was necessary to embrace its 'High' cultural model, the Western one in this case. Although such cultural embracing and its physical manifestations remained for a while superficial, many members of this group often deny their origins, and operate within the High culture realm. This attitude, ironically, includes its defense of exclusiveness against the other, being the Popular, in this case. The cultural chasm on the macro scale, or the society as a whole, is also evident in one social group (*Nouveau Riche* for example) as well as within its members on a micro scale. The two non-paralleled processes of cultural change, gradual vs. abrupt, are causing the same torn identity on the personal (psychological) level as it does for the whole culture.

9.4. The Planner's Position

Having presented one possible reading of the cultural change and its urban manifestation in the city of Cairo during the last two centuries,

²¹⁸ See above 8.4. "Ruling vs. Popular Parties".

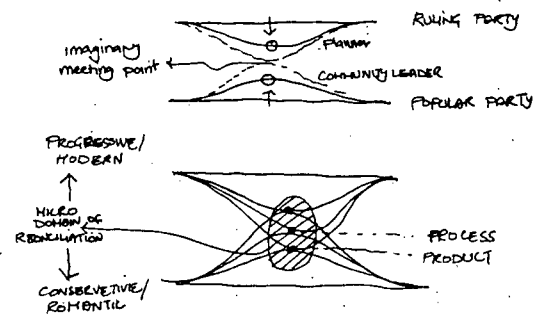
my study concludes with a framework for action for architects and planners. This framework, as presented below, is an incomplete model, a non-coherent picture, a process of reconciliation that provides no solutions, nor guidelines, but is, rather an attempt at understanding and acknowledgment. In the following I will describe this process, involved parties as well as the in-between dynamics.

Ulama or Azharites in medieval Cairo and now academic graduates, intellectuals, planners and cultural leaders among them, belong by nature of their education to the institutional cultural realm.²¹⁹ This group is thus inevitably part of the 'High' culture and operates through its mechanisms. Yet, because of both accumulated cultural exposure and acquired educational knowledge, some of its members have developed an awareness that makes them the most capable group of their party to take the initiative for any scheme of reconciliation. Its members are considered from that perspective as the vanguard in all attempts to a coherent 'inclusive' cultural model. At the other end of the cultural duality, community leaders belong to the least disjoined part of the Popular party. They are also aware of the cultural polarity, and able to informally, as opposed to institutionally, bridge the gap between their communities from the one side and the 'High' culture's agencies from the other. These agencies include government bodies and bureaucrats as well as different educational and professional institutions, such as

²¹⁹ The colonized institutions of the Western world in its scholars define the agenda for research for the colonized world. The Orientalist process was to create image and declare it to be the reality. Nezar AlSayyad, "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflection on Colonialism and National Equation," in Forms of Dominance: On Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Aldershot; Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury, 1992), 2.

universities and research centers that are involved in any process of development in their communities. On the community side, however, (i.e. the Popular party), community leaders are conscious of the needs, aspirations and constant migration towards the 'High' culture model.

Culturally speaking, both the architect/planner on the behalf of his²²⁰ party and the community leader representing his are aware of the cultural split, have visions of a possible reconciliation and are determined to bridge the in-between gap. Each, is culturally pulling his party towards the other, and is trying to reach a compromise or a meeting point. Each has his own agenda and priorities, principles and values he is unwilling to compromise, and tools and mechanisms that are part of his own cultural model. The position of this prospective meeting point will be determined according to the power structure governing the two members, representing their two parties, at the particular moment when a scheme is being developed.(fig. 9.4)



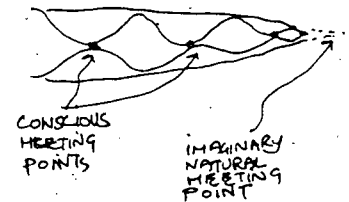
9.4. A diagrammatic representation of a possible reconciliatory scheme, both its product and process, and its two participating groups

Between the two curves of cultural convergence there exists a domain of non-fixed boundaries (fig. 9.6), within which reconciliatory schemes could evolve. Their proximity to one side or another is dependent on the dynamics between the two parties at each particular moment. During phases of High culture's dominance the location of a meeting point tends to lean towards the Ruling

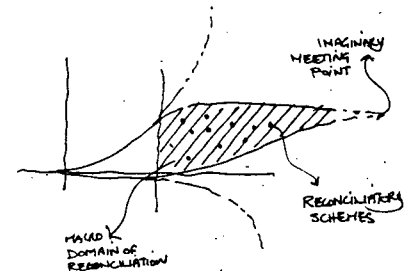
²²⁰ The masculine pronoun is used here as a general reference of the individual including both men and women, without referring to a particular gender, and avoiding being either sexist or awkward.

party's side, while in times of Popular culture's upheaval, it will probably be more attracted to the other side. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the High culture is by definition dominant and has (temporarily) the upper hand. It will not therefore be surprising to find most of these schemes rallying towards the High culture end. Consequently, the new indigenous model, although is a combination of both the Popular and the Ruling cultural models, bears both genetic features, tends to resemble the latter more than the former. Constrained by their cultural models, the two parties' members might get as close as they can without really reaching a meeting point. In such a case, an imaginary location remains a vision for each member representing each party and its cultural paradigm as a whole.

Through different attempts to reach (real or imaginary) reconciliatory schemes, be they cultural or physical (urban), a web of multiple meeting points is created (fig. 9.5, 9.6). This web of connectedness between the two cultural models helps attain 'the' natural process of convergence. Yet, conscious convergence schemes might entail less sacrifice by preventing the increasingly degrading values, upon which both parties agree, than in the case of the natural convergence process. Such web of conscious schemes of reconciliation, in other words, results in a less dramatic effect anticipated during the prospected collision. It may ease such transition by providing individual models of reconciliation (as well as processes of negotiation) to the two cultural parties as a whole. An urban project, for example, developed through the community participatory process and conceived in a compromising scheme provides a model



9.5. A network of conscious reconciliatory schemes help attain a point of cultural convergence



9.6. The identified domain of reconciliation and the excluded cultural groups

for similar attempts of reconciliation as well as being another point on the web of convergence.

Each attempt for a meeting point, however, engages in a stretch of varying degrees of compromises. Whereas the 'process' of negotiation might be located in a more intermediate, or culturally balanced position, the 'product' itself tends to shift more towards one side or another. Our example of an urban project could help clarify this abstract idea. The building (participatory) process on the one hand could provide for a more (culturally) balanced scheme by engaging the community needs and socioeconomic mechanisms in the implementation of the scheme. The architectural character or the physical product on the other hand is more likely to lean towards either the Popular culture end (described thence as either a conservative or a romantic approach), or towards the High culture side (considered in that case as progressive or modern, etc.). The *image* of the scheme, in other words, may serve as a negotiating strategy, against larger societal pressure, and which conceals a more balanced, hence coherent, process of reconciliation.

9.5. An Incomplete Model

The study's very argument itself implies its inability to reach a coherent model as it is by definition part of the Ruling culture, and therefore lacks a predictable framework of the Popular party's mechanism, hence, its incompleteness.

This thesis suggests a submissive approach. It acknowledges its lack of control on the current situation, and the necessity to being integrated in 'unknown' realities of the cultural counterpart. An

essential unitive fusion with such unknown counterpart to reestablish a 'whole' is, as my argument concludes, a means to overcome the existing split, which originated during the early Modern paradigm.

If we accept such premise of incompleteness, then the conclusion could be to a certain extent disappointing to most academics and practitioners as well. The study does not reach a model for implementation, nor even guidelines or strategies to be adopted. Yet understanding and acknowledging the dual cultural nature, and the acceptance of its dynamics are what this study aspires to have achieved. The question of what is to be done and how it is to be implemented is left unanswered. What I hope to have contributed is *where* the process of reconciliation takes place, and, perhaps, some insights of *how* it operates in very particular examples.

In short, the following three areas are of my concern in this study. First is defining the domain of prospected schemes of cultural (and hence physical) coherence; second is identifying their agents or active members; and third is understanding the rules governing their dynamics. These are the issues that I have been trying to highlight. Each particular situation however could lead to a plan, and provide for actions and guidelines.

9.6. A Participatory Approach?

The above described process of reconciliation between architects/planners and community leaders may sound identical to

the so-called a 'citizen participatory' process of development. It is therefore important to clarify what distinguishes the model proposed in this study from a conventional participatory approach.

First we need to establish the difference between a participatory approach in industrial countries and that in developing ones. As for the former, both parties including planners, professionals and politicians and the public, although may have different perspectives, programs and agendas, are operating within the same cultural paradigm. They both agree to the same means of achieving their established compromise, or their synthesized goals. In the case of an urban project, for example, a set of construction drawings, a bidding scheme and a contractor would be the means of implementation. Between the two participating groups there appears no conflict or opposed conceptions regarding the implementation process. It will be therefore planned and implemented based on their 'agreed-upon' perception. This seemingly intelligible process should not be taken for granted when dealing with traditional communities in developing countries. It is entirely different, especially when addressing illiterate citizens with rather 'traditional' values. Not only the planning scheme has to be tackled from a different approach, but the process itself might involve informal mechanisms of implementation as well. An open-ended set of drawings, a modeling stage to facilitate its necessarily professional abstractness, and, in some cases, the incorporation of traditional building processes, such as master-builder and apprentices model, are among such informal mechanisms.

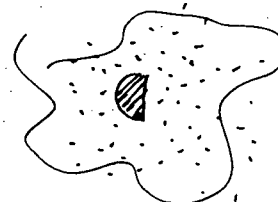
Is this the only difference between the conventional model and the



1. BOUNDARIES AND ROLES ARE PREDETERMINED



2. THE ROLE OF THE 'OTHER' IS OUTLINED, THE GAP IS TO BE FILLED



3. UNDEFINED ROLE OF THE OTHER. UNCERTAINTY, NONCONTROLLED PROCESS

9.7. Three models of participatory processes: a) in the 'developed' world; b) in 'developing' societies; and c) the one proposed in this study

more culturally-sensitive approach in developing countries? Even the second approach, as my argument continues, still predetermines the outcome of the planning process. Despite its incorporation of informal mechanisms, this approach is hinged upon outlining (hence predicting) how these traditional processes are operating. So long as it is possible to sketch the counterpart's (informal) role, be it extremely different from the formal one, the fact remains that architects/planners will have the upper hand.

Based on our perception of coherence, as professionals, which belongs to a 'High' cultural model, we have already predetermined a framework of action, despite the fact that some gaps in between are left to be filled by the informal counterpart. The deception of a participatory process arises for the presupposed role *designated* to the 'Popular' cultural model. This makes it yet another false participatory approach (fig. 9.7)

In short, as regards 'community participatory' approaches, three measures of participation are identified. The first is the 'citizen participation' model adopted in industrial societies, one that addresses the need of the community yet operates within the same framework of implementation from both sides, i.e. no conflicting cultural models exist. The second is being favored in developing societies. It possesses more loosened boundaries to allow traditional mechanisms contribute in the final scheme as well as its undertaking. It still determines, however, the nature and goals of its intended scheme, and outlines the role anticipated by the community side. The third level of participation is the one I am arguing for; one

that implies no predetermined frame for action. Its non-fixed boundaries not only suggests a non-deterministic approach, an open-ended strategy, but also acknowledges its inability to operate solely from one side. Measures of coherence become part of the process (fig. 9.9).

This study's approach therefore starts from a premise of submission. A position that we, intellectuals and professionals, are -- and will always be -- unable to reach only by ourselves a frame within which both cultural models can coexist. We can not set the limits of negotiation before starting it. This transient and fluid state, I argue, contains what is fearful to the 'planning' concept as what the most responsive and fruitful one is.

9.7. How to Rescue such Helplessness

One need not panic about such a submissive approach. The whole city has evolved through the interaction between the formal and the informal, incremental process of urban growth. Planners' actions, wherever their position between these two extremes is, will eventually be engulfed within the natural process of growth. What we need to acknowledge is the *scale* of planning interventions, as it will determine the magnitude of the damage (incoherence), and therefore the time it takes to heal (reach coherence) through the informal or natural process.

In order to clarify this argument, and in the same manner I have started this study, it is probably helpful to end it using concrete

examples from the Cairene context. Let us consider a neighborhood which houses a more 'traditional' community, or, to be consistent, a Popular cultural group, and which is planned through an imposed (formal) grid pattern for its street network. On the micro level, a single street scale, despite the geometrical configuration of the original plan, this scale does to a large extent allow for spatial informal interventions to encroach. These actions are physically manifest throughout the street's different elements, such as sidewalk levels, paving materials, outdoor extension, street furniture, sheds and light structures, etc. The incremental *informal* responses by the street's users defy the *formal* planning scheme through a multiple-decision process, yet, they allow for planning requirements which generated this scheme, such as vehicular traffic, utility lines, building lines, etc., to be accommodated. In other words, the conflict between the formal and informal actions, hence Popular vs. Ruling cultural models on the micro level, is minimal. Therefore, there exists the potential for a co-presence between both the formal and informal processes.

On the Macro level, as in the case of a Master Plan of a whole district or neighborhood, difficulties arising from the required institutional approvals as well as economic factors hinder such collaboration between both models. The grid plan, except perhaps in the case of demolition or collapse of an existing building, does not permit for an urban open space accommodating social and recreational activities in the same manner that they have been traditionally held. Economic, legal and technical capacities needed

for such an incision in the urban *formal* fabric are lacking in the community *informal* side. It is more likely therefore that a formal plan on the macro scale, of either benign or disastrous consequences, will be perpetuated, and that the informal response will have a lesser impact throughout time compared to the case on the micro scale. In other words, the informal encroachment on the macro scale is less effective than it is on the micro scale. It will therefore involve more time to overcome the formal intervention on larger scales.

It remains to be mentioned that, even on the macro level of planning, and that has always been evident in the medieval city, the long process of incremental growth is still capable of engulfing all formal plans subduing them to informal needs and through their forces of change. In the case of the royal city of Cairo for example,²²¹ it took the palatial walled city including its different institutional buildings centuries to attain this organic fabric it reveals today - a product which is a direct response of the 'informal' process of growth incorporating existing 'formal' configuration.

This is the bright side of the above gloomy picture. Confidence in the informal process of urban growth on both the micro and macro levels enforces the idea that, no matter what planning schemes involve (whether in accord with or against the spontaneous growth), they will eventually give way to an indigenous composite structure

²²¹ See above Chapter 4: "The Islamic City".

of both physical and cultural models.

Conscious schemes of reconciliation not only shorten the time needed for reaching coherence, but also help attain compromises and ease the transitional stage by preventing some damages or degradation on both sides during this phase. In short, conscious reconciliatory schemes are tools to reach coherence in shorter time and, by learning from others' lessons, with less sacrifice.

10. EPILOGUE

"One nation can and should learn from others. An even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement ... it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactment, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. *But it can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs.*"

Marx, *Capital*, Pref. o 1st Ed. Emphasis added.

One of the central issues of the philosophy of history concerns the patterns of change that have occurred in human affairs in the course of time. According to one view, the pattern is cyclical. The point is not simply that history repeats itself, but that the whole sequence of historical development endlessly repeats itself. According to another view, history manifests a regression, a falling away from a golden age. According to still another view, history advances from age to age, either in a line of steady and uninterrupted progress or with intervals of stability or even in regression.²²² Whether we accept either of the above evolutionary views or adopt a structural approach of historic interpretation, the attempt of this study was to understand the forces governing the changes between two identified cultural groups.

Cairo as an example of post-colonial metropolis presents on the one hand to students of modern urbanism primarily urban problems and enormous challenge, it offers on the other hand a rich and complex research field that encompasses both East and West, old and new, formal and informal blends.²²³ Starting with existing patterns of informal use of public space, a spatial, and a cultural conflict was identified. In order to trace the origins and causes of such conflict, three phases of the

²²² Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, "Progress, Regress, and Cycles of History" in Great Treasury of Western Thought, comps. and eds. Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1977), 969.

²²³ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

city's history were discussed. In each, an emphasis was drawn on the two interacting urban schemes, and on their underlying cultural models. By the end of the survey it was concluded that the current phase we are witnessing, which reveals a state of chaos had precedents in other stages of the city's history. Such a chaotic state is argued to be a result of a cultural conflict between two paradigms governing their different perceptions and rules, and operating within different dynamics. Yet, a natural process of indigenous modernization, as the argument continues, is taking its course of time accommodating both adverse models in search for coherence. This view is in sharp contrast to the prevalent notion of a degradation, or a disintegration of an existing order, hence the chaos or disorder.

What I have sought to contribute in such a transient realm of cultural reconciliation is to define a role for planners, urban designers or cultural leaders in general. This definition, first, is based on an awareness of the current chasm and the possibility for reconciliation; and, second, allows for an operational framework in collaboration with other agents who will be involved in such a reconciliatory scheme.

On both the intellectual and operational levels, their role to propose reconciliatory schemes in concordance with natural processes of indigenous modernization is yet to be complemented by their cultural counterparts in the communities they are working with. People without whom, not only their schemes could not be successfully realized, but also without whom no coherent vision is to be anticipated. An understanding and acknowledgment of this mutual undertaking rather than providing remedies is what I have ventured to contribute in this study. It is perhaps a non-conclusive model, yet, as I have been persistently trying to make the point, it is part of my very argument. This piece of work, in other words should be seen as offering only one side of the story - the one developed in academic halls and its governing frameworks of thought.

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