

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

The Uneven City: Planning Insurgencies in Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero Triangle

THESIS

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by

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DEDICATION

To

My mother, father, sister, and the people of Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero Triangle

When a conflict goes on so long,
people develop a stake in its perpetuation.

Norman Finkelstein
“Approaching 60”

The course of revolution is 360 degrees.

The Last Poets
“When the Revolution Comes”

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The Uneven City: Planning Insurgencies in Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero Triangle

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Cairo, Egypt holds 4 of the 30 largest “mega-slums” in the world with nearly 60 percent of Cairo’s population inhabiting informal settlements (Davis, 2007; Khalifa, 2013). Two of these settlements, Ramlet Bulaq and the Maspero Triangle in West Cairo, consistently experience evictions inflicted by state and private developers since the mid-2000s. The central question orienting this research is: How do Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero inhabitants develop insurgent planning practices to resist state and private developer forced removals? The paper builds Beard’s (2003) nuanced model of radical planning to address “how citizens [under authoritarian contexts] acquire skills, experience and political consciousness necessary to bring about significant social and political change” (p.13) and Miraftab’s (2009) conceptualization of insurgent planning as “counter-hegemonic, transgressive, and imaginative” to explain for the different planning insurgencies under authoritarian contexts. The study shows how insurgents foment direct planning action through an “organizational infrastructure” to establish networks of collective actions and solidarity across the city; the factors that contribute to insurgencies and the degree of organizational formalization; and the factors responsible for derailing both insurgencies.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the past two decades, Cairo, Egypt, has become a city grounded in the creation of new privatized urban spaces on the fringes for the wealthy at the expense of the majority in informal settlements in the urban core (Mitchell, 1999; Adham, 2005; Denis, 2006; Sims, 2012; Singerman, 2009). Characterized by the influx of international capital flow in the beginning of the 1990s under the liberalization and deregulation of Egypt's economy, new urban spaces associated with Cairo's elite business class emerged in the form of gated communities. The development of spaces of privatized exclusivity coincides with the market-led mechanisms under neoliberalism, in which local and national planning agencies and global developers dedicate most of their urban planning visions in Cairo towards (Denis, 2006). Uneven development has exacerbated Cairo's urban segregation, displacement and gentrification primarily inflicted upon the inhabitants of '*ashwa'iyat* (informal settlements) in the urban core (Khalil, 2014; Hartmann 2013; Khalifa, 2009). Cairo's population lives in informal settlements state planning bodies deem "unsafe" and "unplanned" (Khalifa, 2013).

Ramlet Bulaq (RB) and Maspero Triangle, situated in the West Cairo Bulaq District overlooking the Nile River, suffer continued state and private developer forced removals and economic displacement aiming to transform neighborhoods into spaces of capital accumulation and central business districts. Both areas captured the Egyptian media's attention after a rise in violent evictions in Maspero in 2010 and the death of an RB community member named El Boni at the hands security guards in 2012 at the adjacent Nile City Towers (NCT) and Fairmont Hotel. Located along Ramlet Bulaq's border with the State's Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) building, the NCT incorporates two luxurious multi- faceted entertainment high rises with business offices, a 5-star hotel and a shopping mall (See Appendix B: Figure 13).

RB and Maspero evictions coincide with to the state's urban future vision of "rarefaction" under the Cairo 2050 Plan (Cairo 2050, 2008) (See Appendix B: Figure 16). The Cairo 2050 Plan represents the former administration's vision to neoliberalize urban development and decentralize the urban core—a manifestation of which includes an international competition that seeks to "re-design" the Maspero Triangle area through various eminent international architectural and planning firms (Fulcher, 2015).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to explain for the different planning insurgencies that arose in Maspero and RB despite geographical proximity (Appendix: Figure 13) and similar grievances over evictions. The study examines how oppositional planning practices materialized to forge networks across geographical boundaries, acquire resources, and implement mobilizations to translate grievances into political action. In RB, the study focuses on El Kafrawi settlements, the main residential area and the site of contention with the state and the NCT for more than two decades. The analytical value is to compare the emergence of Maspero and RB insurgencies different networking types, the degree of organizational formalization and its impact on insurgencies, and different ties to power elites. The development of different insurgencies in both neighborhoods impacted how insurgents from networks across the city and the ways in which the state and private developer deployed co-optation tactics.

1.2 Research Questions

The central question orienting this research is: How do RB and Maspero inhabitants develop insurgent planning practices to resist state and private developer forced removals? Three sub-questions emerge: (1) How do state and private developers economically exploit and displace

residents? (2) How do insurgents forge networks and acquire resources within their neighborhoods and across geographical and social boundaries? and (3) In what ways have state and private developers derailed these insurgencies?

1.3 Thesis Statement

The central argument of the study is that the degree of organizational formalization explains for the development of RB and Maspero's different planning insurgencies, influencing how networks and mobilizations unfold through an organizational infrastructure and its different ties to political elites. The study shows how RB's insurgencies were largely unsustainable due to diminished organizational efforts, while Maspero's formal organization the Maspero Youth Association (MTYA) sustained political pressure and presence in the urban political process. Furthermore, the study argues that along with state securitization and co-optation strategies, the rise of embedded structural hierarchies and an "insurgent elite" contributes to the derailing of insurgencies.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Insurgent planning builds on radical planning scholarship, challenging traditional conceptions of the planning as "professionalized" (Friedmann, 1987; Holston, 1995; Sandercock, 1998; Miraftab, 2009; Meth, 2010; Watson, 2013). In the 1960s, Davidoff (1965) developed the theory of advocacy planning to challenge a top-down model of rational planning, spurring the rise of participatory planning and communicative planning in the 1980s and 1990s (Miraftab, 2009). Insurgent planning departs from these perspectives, asserting that collective efforts emanate "from below" (Friedmann, 1987). Several scholars (Brownhill & Parker, 2010; Wastson, 2013) have argued that dominant discourses of planning have emerged primarily from experiences and contexts

situated in the Global North and has failed to address the contextual significance, or the “stubborn realities” (Sanyal, 2005 as quoted in Watson, 2013), of the Global South. Insurgent planning principally draws upon experiences from the Global South in places such as Brazil (Holston, 1999), South Africa (Miraftab, 2009; Meth, 2010), and Indonesia (Beard, 2003), among others.

The distinction between insurgent planning and the aforementioned critical perspectives lies in that insurgent planning is *oppositional* (Beard, 2003); seeks to attain *real inclusion and participation* while recognizing different co-optation strategies; contextualizes planning and embedded power hierarchies; and imagines an alternative future (Friedmann, 1987; Holston, 1995; Sandercock, 1998; Beard, 2003; Miraftab, 2009; Meth, 2010).

The study builds on Beard’s (2003) nuanced radical planning model using Indonesian grassroots movements as radical planning practices and Miraftab’s (2009) definition of insurgent planning and its application on South African planning insurgencies. Beard identifies a gap in the radical planning literature, namely its failure to account for how radical planning practices arise under authoritarian contexts. Beard examines an Indonesian urban settlement’s development of collective agency (or “political consciousness”) to implement direct planning actions against evictions and state authoritarianism. The significance of using Beard’s nuanced radical planning conception for Indonesia resides in its development of proximate mechanisms involved in shaping planning insurgencies under heavily repressive regimes, which mirrors the kind of repressive state strategies the Egyptian state practices against informal settlement insurgencies in Cairo.

Mirafatab sets forth three foundational elements of insurgent planning as counter-hegemonic, transgressive, and imaginative to “[disrupt] the attempts of neoliberal governance to stabilize oppressive relationships” (p.46). The definition diverges from a top-down conceptualization of planning and incorporates a set of practices for planning as a whole, not for a particular actor (insurgent planner) (*ibid*). Further, Miraftab’s definition recognizes the inherent

power struggles and hierarchies within insurgencies, or what Meth (2010) calls “repressive insurgencies”. Insurgent planning contextualizes planning practices, realizing the potential for co-optation strategies deployed by actors ranging from the state to insurgent elites to perpetuate neoliberal planning’s hollow participatory goals and urban restructuring according to market-led forces.

1.5 Literature Review

In the 1960s, Davidoff (1965) developed advocacy planning theory to challenge elitist, top-down planning’s contributing to segregation of cities based on income and race spurred by the Model Cities Program and urban renewal programs in the U.S. Davidoff argued that planners should act as advocates to articulate the rights and interests of marginalized populations by developing alternative plans and compelling local planning agencies to compete with “other planning groups to win political support” (1965, p.425). Advocacy planning gave rise to a series of different modes of planning in the 1970s and 1980s, namely equity planning, communicative planning, and community-based planning. However, advocacy planning and subsequent perspectives remain confined within the conceptualization that planning is professionalized. Under these critical perspectives, planners would reach out to the public for inclusion in the planning process primarily through communication and possibly redistribution (Miraftab, 2009).

In the late 1980s, Friedmann (1987) developed an inclusive radical planning model that critiques top-down level planning as a function of state crises and social oppression largely created by the market. Under Friedmann’s normative radical planning model, the planner becomes an actor through communicative action. Planners shape oppositional practices and open up opportunities for groups to appropriate and translate theory into practice. The organizational capacity of this radical practice incorporates a “large number of autonomous (or quasi-

autonomous) centers of decision and action whose coordination remains loose and informal” (Friedmann, 1987, p.66). As Freidmann (2011) explained, the foundation of radical planning rests on changing power relations exercised by various actors from the state or global corporations. The oppositional element of radical planning serves as an important distinction with other forms of planning, taking into account what Friedmann calls “conflict strategies” and can incorporate nonviolent or violent forms, reform or revolution, or political or extra-political struggles (Fridmann, 1987; Beard, 2003).

Beard (2003) identifies analytical gaps in the radical planning literature, namely its failure to address the initial steps of radical planning because they are not “overtly radical”; how a group obtains the skills and experience to organize in an authoritarian environment; and how radical planning exists with other modes of planning like rational planning, community-based and collaborative planning. Beard demonstrates three factors in her nuanced model of radical planning to explain how radical planning practices evolve in an urban settlement in Indonesia. First, the community under study moves from participation in state programs to community-based planning to implement a state-designed health care clinic. Second, the community moves from community-based planning to covert planning when it mobilizes behind “incremental physical improvements” amid constant denial of requests for land tenure. Third, insurgents move from covert planning to radical planning when a community youth group develops a local library, which is then used as a political forum when the state is weakened amid a political crisis. These processes illustrate how a marginalized urban community moves between different modes of planning to reach more overt radical and insurgent action. This, as will be demonstrated throughout the study, paves the way to analyze different modes of planning Maspero and RB residents undertake to implement insurgent planning tools and actions.

Insurgent planning builds on radical planning’s oppositional element, situating inclusion,

insurgent citizenship and historiographies as its core. We can trace the origins of insurgent planning to Holston's (1989) ethnographic study of Brasilia in the late 1980s, particularly in his examination of insurgent citizenship as a planning response to a city in the Global South (Watson, 2013). By the mid-1990s, the planning literature was introduced to "insurgent planning" through Holston (1995) and Sandercock (1995). Holston introduces insurgent citizenship (1995) in a critique of modernist planning, including cities' networks of migration, homeless populations, and informal settlements for the poor on the periphery in usually "illegal" contexts, squatter settlements, suburban migrant labor camps, and ganglands, among others. Holston labels these as "sites of insurgence" because they "disturb established histories" (1995, p.48). Insurgent citizenship thus challenges the very notion of "formal citizenship" as national identity since substantive citizenship (duties and rights) are often "inaccessible to formal citizens (e.g. native poor), yet available to those who are not (e.g. resident 'aliens')" (*ibid*). For planning purposes, insurgent citizenship is embedded in urban social movements concerning the poor's "right to the city" which force the state to address the impact of urban poverty on citizenship outside the "institutional definitions of state its legal codes", as Holston elucidates (p.52). Holston (2008) demonstrates how these insurgencies materialize through an examination of Sao Paulo resistance's using right-based language and discourse to force the state to implement urban services. Holston discusses how spaces of informal citizenship in Sao Paulo contain territorial power struggles which appropriate the rights-based discourse to justify the "illegality" of criminal activity and land squatting as legitimate, challenging the Brazilian state. Further, commenting on John Holston's definition of insurgent urbanism, Friedmann (2011) notes Holston avoids the usage of the word "resistance" to denote insurgents fighting against a "leviathan". Instead, Friedmann notes, insurgent urbanism does not only include civil society resisting and making demands, but is "simply engaged in being 'for itself'" (p.122). Holston's conceptualization of planning coincides

with Sandercock's emphasis on "insurgent planning practices [that are] instigated by mobilized communities acting as planners for themselves" (as quoted in Meth, 2010, p. 243).

Sandercock (1995, 1998) introduced insurgent planning to the planning literature as an emancipatory project that counter-acts modernist planning by focusing on the "histiographies" of marginalized communities to understand the past and imagine a different future for planning. Miraftab, more concretely, elaborates that insurgent planning's histiographies places "memory" at its core. For example, Miraftab's (2009) case study of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) in Cape Town, South Africa, shows how activists' display of sidewalk dwellers deliberately evokes memory of apartheid's violent removals. Sidewalk dwellers parallels South African state's current evictions and gentrification projects with the historical memory of apartheid in South Africa. Sandercock constitutes insurgency as a mobilization(s) against "one of the many faces of the state, the market or both" (p.41). Insurgent planning practices may constitute "stories of resistances, and not always successful of resilience or of reconstruction" (*ibid*). Sandercock's concept here serves as an important component to analyze how RB and Maspero residents' recount the historical memory of evictions, passed down through oral traditions and first-hand experience, and parallel memories of forced removals within the context of the 2011 thawra (revolution) that symbolically toppled the Mubarak regime.

Miraftab (2005; 2009) adds to Sandercock's framing of insurgent planning, conceiving it as contested space beyond "professionalized borders". Miraftab's work shows how insurgencies are made possible and translated from grievances to political actions. One of the foundations of insurgent practices, Miraftab argues, rests upon inventing new spaces, or re-appropriating old ones to "further [its] counter-hegemonic interests" (2008, p.35). As such, spatial imaginaries are linked both with insurgent planning's "imaginative" component and Sandercock's insurgent histories, which, she argues, "may be able to link it to a new set of public issues" (as quoted in

Meth, 2010, p.244). Miraftab demonstrates how anti-eviction campaigns in Western Cape, South Africa constitute oppositional practices spanning informal/formal political arena and invited/invented spaces. These oppositional practices range from informal negotiations with actors implementing forced evictions to delay its execution, creating own data involving evicted families, operating soup kitchens, relocation of evicted families, reconnecting disconnected urban services using local plumbers and electricians, staging mass mobilizations, and using courts to express legal claims.

Meth (2010) builds on insurgent planning literature using case studies of Cato Manor and Warwick Junction in Durban, South Africa, but brings attention to so-called *repressive insurgencies* embedded in insurgent planning practices. Meth challenges Holston and Sandercock's conceptualization of insurgent planning as inherently situated against the state, arguing for the consideration of vigilantism as an insurgent practice "can never entirely be separated from state practices by their very definition..." (p.246). "Insurgent" may bring forth paradoxical and "mutually constitutive" relations with the state (*ibid*).

Meth points to three specific factors that permit these insurgencies to materialize: claims to space and housing, insurgent entrepreneurialism, and vigilantism (p.250). In the urban settlements of Cato Manor and Warwick Junction in Durban, insurgent claims to space involved conflicts over housing access and informal employment. In Warwick, for example, female traders were part of the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) that focuses on skills development, while engaging with state authorities. In 1996, SEWU resisted Durban Metro Council's introduction of new street trading by-laws, issuing a memo to the City Police strongly condemning a raid in the area, securing market stall facilities (toilets and overhead covers), thus influencing planning in the inner city.

In Warwick and Cato Manor, women employed a set of practices to combat high crime rates which involved forming alliances with NGOs, reporting to the police, self-defense, and vigilantism.

Women reported to community policing forums, representing a combination of informal and formal strategies. In Cato Manor, residents formed more unconventional “peace committees” and “moral communities” in Cato Manor to fight murders and sexual violence in close cooperation with the police. The peace committee would conduct mock court-hearings and sometimes issued punishment before handing criminals over to the local authorities.

This vigilantism, however, projected and perpetuated certain forms of violence, which garnered state support. Meth shows that despite vigilantism’s resistance, it carried out state-like functions such as ostracizing criminal citizens, managing gendered politics of space, and protecting private property. Women continually mentioned the killing of suspects “quite casually” (Meth, 2010, p.258). Men and women in the insurgency dehumanized criminals, comparing them to dogs and emphasizing their lack of rights.

Therefore, merely conceptualizing insurgent citizens as either transformative or oppressive fails to illustrate the complex set of power relations embedded within insurgencies. “In these respects,” Meth argues, “[these insurgencies] differ very little from the more developmental and regulatory elements of formal planning” (p. 259). This illustrates one of the study’s main arguments, namely that marginalized women’s actions are often “assumed to be transformative” by virtue of being oppressed and excluded, however, the role of repressive insurgencies are largely left unquestioned. (p.243). The community subjected to oppression and marginalization rework these same repressive practices in their insurgencies, as illustrated through Meth’s study.

1.6 Planning Literature on Cairo’s Informal Settlements

Literature on the nature of Cairo’s informal settlements dissects the relational process between informal settlement design and civic participation, the re-conceptualization of settlements as unsafe or unplanned areas, and insurgent spatiality within “informal spaces” (Singerman 1995, 2009;

Khalifa 2013, Hartmann, 2013; Khalil, 2014; Zayed, 2014). One of the most western-produced extensive studies on informal networks in Cairo remains Singerman's (1995) ethnographic account of the complex systems of "avenues of participation" in Cairo's sha'abi (working class) quarters. Singerman argues that while Cairo elites succeeded in excluding the sha'abi class from the formal political arena, they repeatedly fail at preventing it "from forming alternative, informal political institutions to further their interests" (p.3). Singerman provides a detailed picture of how networks of resistance manifest within the informal, including through tight-knit economic associations and historical social and neighborhood relations, among other factors.

For instance, Singerman sheds light on informal *jami'yyat* (informal savings associations) as an important vehicle for savings and credit for the working class without resorting to formal banking systems. For instance, a 12-member *jam'iyya* in a sha'abi neighborhood involves all members contributing EGP 100 per month of the calendar year, which is then disbursed to an association member assigned to a specific month. Thus, each member would receive a total sum of EGP 500 to use for his or her own financial needs in their designated month. The associations are largely informal, not tied to a specific structure such as a bank, do not generate profit, and do not charge interest or fees. Members use the money from *jami'yyat* for housing renovations (quite common), wedding preparations, and various consumption needs. As such, *jami'yyat* operate outside of the purview of state power's banking system and develop of communal solidarity to meet the economic and social needs of its community members.

The planning literature on Maspero and RB remains scarce. The only comprehensive study on Maspero remains the extensive *Madd Platform* community organization report titled "Maspero Parallel Participatory Project" which devises a parallel re-design and renovation plan to the state in participation with residents (Madd, 2016). In Ramlet Bulaq, meanwhile, three main studies have addressed resistance in Ramlet Bulaq particularly through the lens of labor, "commoning",

“participatory planning” and “mobilizing dissent” (Khalil, 2014; Hartmann, 2013; Zayed, 2014).

There is no urban planning study that explicitly uses insurgent or radical planning as its theoretical lens to examine networks of urban mobilizations in informal settlements, especially in RB. Khalil’s study (2014) examines the relationship between labor and space in Ramlet Bulaq, but not how “resistances” are imagined and initially formed. Similarly, Zeyad’s (2014) work about solidarity and mobilizations in Ramlet Bulaq against evictions from 2010-2013 provides important insight into social movement formation, but heavily focuses on mobilizations initiated and implemented by insurgent actors outside RB, without giving similar attention to the role of residents in mobilizations.

Hartmann (2013) applies the theory of commoning to examine RB’s urban resistances strategies—pointing out that researchers often forget about hierarchies within informal spaces that marginalize and exclude individuals or groups of people. Hartmann briefly addresses how Ramlet Bulaq residents used social networking sites to get into contact with activists across the city to combat evictions. Commoning investigates how residents can mobilize resources, but does not elaborate further on how mobilizations are imagined within informal spaces and how spatial reconceptualizations emerge. Through this study, I attempt to make a modest contribution to the existing work on insurgent planning, while filling gaps in the informal settlement literature on Cairo and examining how these social networks and insurgent planning principles are applied, developed and most importantly, acquired.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

2.1 Methodology

The study measures how different insurgencies materialize under similar circumstances and grievances. The study employs semi-structured interviews, direct observation of public spaces, and analysis of state documents such as Cairo 2050 to adequately address the research questions. The research employed chain-referral sampling to collect and analyze data. Chain-referral sampling relies on a network-based approach that enables the researcher to recruit “hidden populations” otherwise not accessible through other sampling techniques (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Field research was undertaken for a period of nearly four weeks in December 2015.

Direct observation took place in public settings in RB and Maspero and included how residents interacted with one another and with the public space. Observations mainly pertained to how residents appropriate public space for social and economic uses such as street vending and entertainment activities. 14 interviews were conducted ranging from informal settlement residents, non-profit owners, state planning representatives, and community organizations within the settlements and other parts of Cairo. All interviews were conducted in person, except for two interviews involving community organization members conducted by phone and e-mail. For document analysis, the study utilized both primary and second source state documents to analyze the Cairo 2050 Plan and Egyptian state and private news sources of specific events published online.

2.2 Access and Direct Observations

Access to Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero occurred in three main ways: an ISDF representative, a state authority and researcher efforts. Due to volatile political changes, researchers seeking access to informal settlements are required to register with state authorities, particularly local security officials. To observe how insurgencies are derailed using securitization strategies, a low-ranking

security official connected the researcher with a few residents in an initial visit to RB. The local gatekeeper remains a long-time resident of the Bulaq District and possess extensive knowledge of the area's geographical and social makeup. Other visits to Ramlet Bulaq did not require the gatekeeper's assistance and/or presence and were conducted alone. Other connections and relationships with residents were established when one RB resident connected the researcher to a group of residents occupying different quarters of El Kafrawi settlement, the main site of this study in RB. In Maspero, an interview with an ISDF official led to a connection with an influential community organizer with a prominent organization called Maspero Triangle Youth Association (MTYA). MTYA members are all over 18 and consenting adults.

For the 10 Tooba and Madd Platform architects and researchers, and the ISDF official, contact was established through email and social media. Amal, the 10 Tooba co-founder working in Ramlet Bulaq, was first contacted through e-mail and connected the researcher to Rami, the Madd Platform co-founder involved in the Maspero. Contact with the ISDF official was established through e-mail. Contact with the charity in Maspero, the Karam Foundation, was established in person while conducting field research.

2.3 Interviews

Respondents were selected based on residency in RB and Maspero; involvement in three key local and city-wide associations and organizations (MTYA, 10 Tooba, and Madd Platform); state knowledge of Cairo master plans regarding both areas (ISDF official); and knowledge regarding state security practices in both areas (low-ranking security). As part of the criteria selection of respondents, residents were required to be residents of RB and Maspero, while local and city-wide community organizers, activists, and scholars were required to have been part of their respective organizations for at least one year. Both interviewed architects and community scholars were

involved at least two years conducting research and engaging in an insurgent renovation process along side residents in both areas. To extend and enrich the data, the ISDF official, charity owner, and low-ranking security officer offered the state's perspective on both areas.

In RB, nine interviews were conducted with residents and community activists, including an interview with co-founder of urban design organization 10 Tooba who has conducted ethnographic research in the area for three years. Moreover, a brief interview with low-ranking officer working in the local Bulaq Police Station was conducted as part of the Ramlet Bulaq case. In Maspero, five interviews were conducted with two MTYA organization leaders and residents, a co-founder of the urban design group Madd Platform who worked for two years in Maspero to devise an alternative renovation plan with residents, an ISDF official to devise an alternative renovation plan with residents, and a local member of parliament (MP) operating a charity organization in Maspero. Interviews with residents and local community organizers were conducted in public spaces in both settlements, while interviews with the charity and the ISDF planning official were conducted at their respective offices. Interviews lasted from 1-2 hours each and were conducted in colloquial Egyptian Arabic. Respondents provided oral consent before interviews transpired. The study uses aliases for all names of respondents to protect their identity, except for public officials and private developers. Names of organizations are used as is, except for the Karam Foundation. No assistance was provided in the translation and interview transcriptions interviews, field notes and observations.

Chapter 3: Conceiving the Uneven City

3.1 Envisioning Rarefaction: The Cairo 2050 Plan

Nothing more aptly captures the state's conception of Cairo's urban future than the Cairo 2050 Plan. The state uses Cairo 2050, introduced in 2008, as its urban masterplan to coerce RB, Maspero and other potentially lucrative informal settlements around Cairo using "rarefaction"—or reducing population density. Reading like a Richard Florida "creativity index," Cairo 2050 features western-inspired grandiose projects and remedies to "informality" with the goal of transforming Cairo into a modern global city. Cairo 2050 is spearheaded by globally renowned architects, the Egyptian General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP), the World Bank, United Nations Human Settlements Program, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The ISDF was formed as the implementing arm of the state's vision in 2008 to translate 2050 Cairo's vision into reality, starting with "renovation and upgrading" of low-income informal areas.

The 199-page document derives inspiration from a "world cities visions" displayed in master plans in cities, including: Paris 2020, Abu Dhabi 2030, Tokyo 2050 and London 2066 (Cairo 2050, 2008). Cairo 2050 is not only interested in a global city appeal, but a regional market approach which situates Cairo as the most populous Middle Eastern and North African urban center. Most evident in the plan remains the manifestation of interurban global competition marketed by the Egyptian state to transform Cairo into a "global city", while simultaneously emulating and competing with Dubai's recent fantastical urban development. Dubai's preeminence in Cairo's urban development in Cairo 2050 Plan cannot be understated, as evidenced by the proliferation of spectacular urbanism and its high-rises, mega-malls, and gated communities on the urban periphery. ElSheshtawy (2009) employs the term "Dubalization" to analyze Cairo's urban development, noting

that Dubai-based company *Emaar* has been at the forefront of Cairo's urban neoliberal turn—helping spawn gated communities, mega malls, and IT Villages. Both the Egyptian military and *Emaar* have partnered to implement the Dubai Model in the construction of the Smart Village City (mimicking Dubai's IT City) and mega-malls like City Stars Mall in Cairo mirroring the famous Dubai Mall. Instead of completely relying on the pervasive Gulf-Dubai Model, Cairo 2050 envisions project like the Khufu Plaza Plan near the Pyramids (mimicking the Champs Elysées) to serve as a significant tourist-hub accomplished through the eradication of a surrounding sha'abi district named Faisal. After pushing out informal settlement inhabitants to the periphery, Cairo 2050 envisions appropriating Cairo's densely populated urban core for privatized urban development projects such as “central business districts,” “tourism oases,” malls, corporate office zones, luxurious hotels, parks, and extravagant boulevards.

On a more local level, Cairo 2050 imposes different levels of division upon the city: formal areas, informal areas, and new towns. Informal areas are divided into two main types: unsecure and unplanned areas (Cairo 2050, 2008, p.50). Unsecure areas encompass “deteriorated areas” unsafe for living conditions due to collapsing housing, which the Cairo 2050 vision remedies by proposing the availability of “adequate houses” and “rehabilitation” (*ibid*). Meanwhile, unplanned areas require decentralization due to high population density. The plan seeks to preserve “planned areas” of Cairo, namely upper-middle class areas such as the Zamalek Island, Mohandessin, Maadi, Garden City, El Dokki, Heliopolis and Agouza. Foreign European immigrant communities generally tend to be located in these districts along with a concentration of foreign embassies, expat communities, international renowned businesses catered to Cairo's urban elite, and international schools and university dorms such as the famous American University of Cairo in Zamalek. Apparently, these areas of Cairo supplement the city's “global feel”.

Cairo 2050 repeatedly employs the term “rarefaction”—reducing population density—to alter Cairo’s undesirable “informal” demographics and relocate more than 11 million inhabitants of informal areas to “new towns” on the periphery of Cairo (Figure 1). Alternative state housing is found on the periphery of Cairo in 6th of October City, where supposed “new satellite towns” exist to accommodate informal area inhabitants, such as the Al Nahda housing complex where Maspero Triangle residents were being located to throughout the past two decades. Located approximately 40-70 kilometers in remote areas far from Cairo’s center, the state’s alternative housing contains poor basic services, poor transportation networks and highly-isolated commercial environments. The state deliberately places housing in the periphery as a publicity stunt to convince informal settlement residents that state housing is located proximate to Cairo’s elite and their gated communities. However, state housing alternatives are located far from gated communities in 6th of October City with names such as Dremland, Rehab City, Beverly Hills and Zayed, among others.

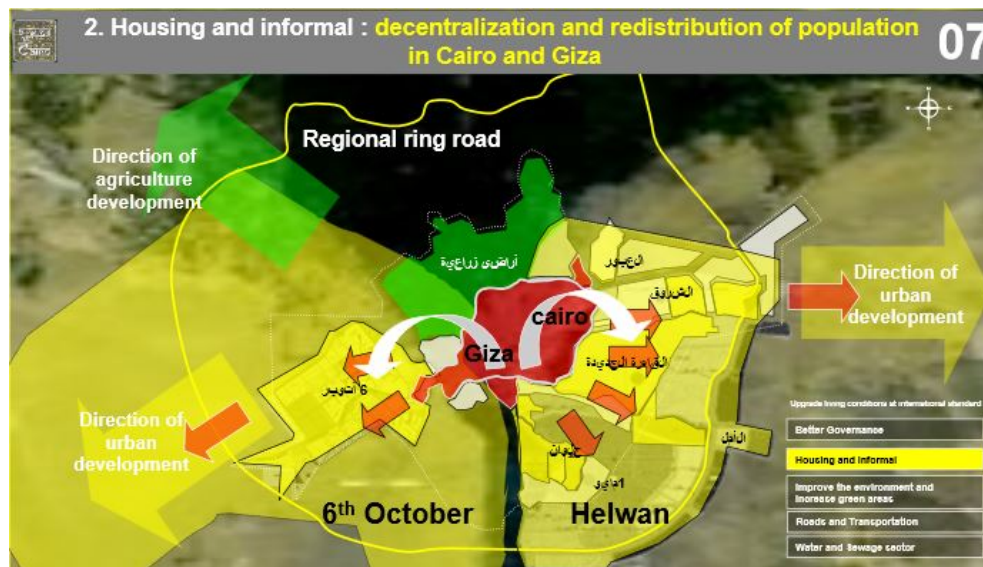


Figure 1: Cairo 2050 map indicating the state's vision for outward urban development

For the Bulaq Abu El Ella District, which houses Maspero and RB, forced removal is entrenched in the state’s historical fascination with commoditization and privatization of land in the district as a potential real estate gem. A 1979 planning scheme under former President Anwar El

Sadat's regime sought to reconstruct the District of Bulaq into a commercial center, indirectly inspiring the Cairo 2050 Plan (Selim, 2015). The state forcefully evicted nearly 1000 families in an informal settlement area in the Maspero Triangle named *Al-Turguman* under the scheme and relocated them to a peripheral city named *Al Zawya Al Hamra*. Although not named in the Cairo 2050 document by name, the state has targeted RB and Maspero for evictions. For example, it is no secret that Maspero's 2015 state-led international renovation competition project, in particular, is cited on the Cairo Governorate's website and an international competition in 2015 resulted in a globally renowned U.S. architectural firm, Fosters + Partners, winning a bid to "re-design" the area.

3.2 The "Sweep"

The manifestation of Cairo 2050 Plan for Maspero and RB was initiated with the construction of Naguib Sawiris' NCT in the mid-1990s, which coincided with a new urban vision of a "Maspero Central Business District" housing several extravagant gardens overseeing the Nile River. The Cairo Governorate's plan to upgrade Maspero Triangle encompasses "premier housing", entertainment and tourist attractions, administrative buildings, museums, gardens, pedestrian walkways and parking garages (Tadamun, 2014; Cairo Governorate, 2008). The Maspero Central District is enabled by an existing state and private businesses in RB and Maspero, including but not limited to: the ERTU building (Egyptian Radio Television Union, otherwise known as State TV building), the Foreign Affairs Ministry building, Hilton Ramses Hotel, Conrad Hotel, Fairmont Hotel, the NCT, Arcadia Mall, several regional and international newspaper headquarter offices, SODIC bank and a Qatar Investment Bank, among others. The creation of Maspero Central Business District thus entails the eradication of both areas to implement a business zone and façade for the Bulaq District..



Figure 2: Maspero Triangle completely redesigned under Cairo 2050 (left) and Fosters + Planning (right) project. Note the Nile frontage under Foster’s project incorporates State TV building (center), Foreign Affairs Ministry building (second from the left) and newly-added luxurious business towers.

‘Amm Saeed, a middle-aged male upholsterer and MTYA organizer, and Wael, an MTYA activist in his mid-20s, seemed more cognizant of the political and urban impact of Cairo 2050 would have on the Bulaq District. ‘Amm Saeed noted that Cairo 2050 seeks to physically separate Maspero Triangle and RB to imbue divisions among families. Existing corporate developments amplify this socio-geographical fragmentation. ‘Amm Saeed’s awareness surrounding the impact 2050 vision here reflects MTYA’s political consciousness:

[The government] wants to model the city like Dubai. They want to build luxury towers and such [in Maspero]. That was supposed to be the beginning. Sawiris began with the Nile Towers. Then came the National Bank of Egypt, Conrad, the Hilton Hotel, and Arcadia Mall. That was to suppose to be the façade [these elite businesses facing the Nile]. You have the Foreign Affairs Ministry building, the Maspero State TV building, and behind that...it’s us. The state said we’ll take Maspero as a starting point. They had towers, an investment zone, and the area that we are and it a park. So that they can separate between Bulaq and Maspero. The project was slightly modified. They said we’ll remove the park and put the housing complexes here [under the Cairo Governorate Plan and the Redesign Project] (‘Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

Furthermore, both ‘Amm Saeed and Wael displayed deep knowledge about the plan’s impact on informal settlements in Cairo. Wael defines Cairo 2050’s impact as the “sweep” – or the total eradication of the Cairo’s informal settlements in favor of business development:

They want to start sweeping (evicting and eradicating) starting from Abbasia (northeast Cairo). The sweep will go on for about 50-60 km, so that by 2050, the

whole city contains no *'ashwa'iyat*. They were trying to start from the Opera (on the other side of the island). Over here, there is no other well-known area except a neighborhood called Maroof and us (Maspero). Maroof will be easy for them. The problem with that is we have a sizeable population in Maspero, about 4000 to 5000 people. In Maroof, there's about 500-600 people. That's how they wanted to start (Wael, interview, December 21, 2015).

“Sweep” denotes insurgent place-making and language. First, “sweep” symbolizes shared politicized language which delinks itself from traditional planning terms such as *ekhlaa'* (eradication/eviction) to describe the impact of Cairo 2050. Second, “sweep” does not exclusively shed light on the plan's impact on Maspero, but rather generates both a geographical knowledge of the city and creates solidarity with other informal settlements. Third, “sweep” adequately represents the state's vision of the city, namely that inhabitants of informal settlements are “dangerous” and “uncivilized,” which renders these areas unprofitable.

Plans like the Cairo 2050 are a manifestation of the state's vision to institutionalize spatial interventions and impose discipline and control (Aalbers, 2014; Slater, 2015; Davis, 1993). Aalbers (2014) claims maps are tools of abstract space, consistently employed to reinforce socio-spatial control through the creation of district lines, transit lines, open space, density zoning, and special zoning codes and ordinances. Furthermore, these conceptualizations, leads to what Wacquant defines as “territorial stigmatization” of degraded areas of the city (as quoted in Slater, 2015). On May 15, 2016, Sawiris interview told private television channel “Dream TV”: “[Egypt] will not be clean without a law that requires the removal of informal settlements. Some people would rather not live in a clean apartment and are content with the ‘tents’ they live in.” (Al Shorouk, 2016). Wacquant discovered that, not only do public elites and officials speak with “disgust” about the urban periphery, but so do the citizenry.

The ISDF institutionalizes and normalizes problematic terminology such as *ashwai'yat* and “unsafe and unplanned areas” to classify urgency in state-led spatial interventions in informal

settlements. ISDF deployed these terms to classify urban areas according to degrees of risk (Khalifa, 2011). Unsafe areas rank high for ISDF spatial intervention strategies compared to unplanned areas. Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero are designated as unsafe for living conditions. An interview with an ISDF official revealed an indispensable element of ISDF surveys: “welcoming and unwelcoming areas” (ISDF, interview, December 12, 2015). Urban planners and practitioners covertly and overtly survey informal areas to measure inhabitants’ responsiveness to possible state interventions. Surveyors narrowly employ “welcoming and unwelcoming areas” to describe people’s responsiveness to state interventions of their urban spaces. Merged with problematic categories of “unsafe and unplanned areas”, “welcoming and unwelcoming areas” are diffused to further stigmatize unwanted populations inhabiting these “unsafe” areas and exclude their presence *within the city*. During interviews, respondents repeatedly challenged the notion that informal settlements residents are “thugs” and that “doctors and lawyers” reside in their areas. RB and Maspero are imagined as spatial abnormalities and anomalies because they are ripe with poverty and *ashwa’ya* (chaos). The informal settlements are an impediment for urban authorities’ utopian visions of Cairo and the result is a “Dubaiization” of Cairo’s urban future.

Chapter 4: Exploiting Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero and Points of Moral Outrage

Exploitation unfolds through economic displacement in RB and violent evictions in Maspero Triangle in the 1970s and 2010-2013. These exploitations work in tandem with events that triggered both insurgencies, including the evictions in Maspero and the death of Ramlet Bulaq community member at the hands of security officer of the Fairmont hotel. Beard (2003) shows how the radical planning literature fails to account for how insurgencies emerge because they are not “overtly radical”. The function of this chapter is to show how insurgencies are initially imagined and implemented through an examination of evictions, economic displacement, and points of moral outrage. The 2011 revolution, known as *al-thawra*, which symbolically toppled the former Mubarak regime, became a central component infused in the urban memory and insurgent practices of residents and community organizers.

4.1 Maspero’s Violent Evictions

Exploitation of Maspero occurred through violent evictions in the 1970s and from 2010-2013, before and after the 2011 revolution. In the 1970s, the state unleashed a wave of land grabs under eminent domain through the Foreign Ministry, the State TV building, and the Bulaq municipality. According to oral history traditions recounted by ‘Amm Saeed, in the early 1970s, Maspero’s population stood at around 40,000 – 50,000 inhabitants. Maspero’s population gradually dropped in 1970s when the state allocated land, formally known as the *Turguman Informal Settlement*, on Nile El Corniche St., (the business façade running parallel to Maspero and Bulaq) to construct the magnanimous 39-story Foreign Affairs Ministry skyscraper. Nearly 5,000 people were forcefully evicted relocated to *El Zawya Al Hamra* on the city’s periphery in 1979 under President Anwar El Sadat’s regime (Selim, 2015). The eviction embodied one of the first large-scale eminent domain practices in the neoliberal turn of urban politics in Cairo.

Similarly, the ERTU evicted 17 Maspero *hawary* (alleyways) and an entire street in the 1980s, seizing about 500 meters of Maspero's urban fabric ('Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015; Wael, interview, December 21, 2015). The state accomplished this task by coordinating between the district (universally loathed in Maspero for its role in directly evicting residents) and a local elected Member of Parliament (MP). The land grabs enabled a boost in private urban development surrounding Maspero. Several banks, including the largest state-owned bank, the National Bank of Egypt (NBE), activated investor relations with the state, with the attempt to reconstruct Maspero as a private-public development. The Nile Corniche St. would thus become a symbol of a confluence of state and private state interests and land prices would reach astronomical levels as the gentrification process unfolded.

These urban policies would trigger, nearly 35 years later, a wave of evictions, arrests and increased militarization of spaces. Maspero again experienced a more sustained wave of violent evictions throughout two phases: 2010-2011 and 2013. In December 2010, just three-four weeks before the January 25, 2011 uprising, 10 homes were targeted for evictions. The homes were raided from about 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. by the paramilitary Central Security Forces (CSF) under orders from the District municipality, according to Wael, who explained the circumstances and the eviction experience involving the CSF:

There we some people in our area who still had not received new homes after the uprising. [When the evictions used to happen] it was about the CSF coming down in the area. They would yell "Come down [from your apartments]! If you don't come down, we're coming up to kick you out!" This happened January 1 or January 2, 2011. (Wael, interview, December 21, 2015).

Neglect from the state over collapsing homes, deteriorating urban conditions, lack of public amenities, and the security raids were attributed as the "spark" of Maspero's outrage and resistance. 'Amm Saeed clarifies this here:

During the uprising, five houses collapsed in a whole hara (alleyway). After the 2011 uprising, a house collapsed on a group of friends. The spark began from here. People gathered and said ‘No, we don’t want to leave. We want to fix and renovate our homes’ (‘Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

Local District authorities made sure to intimidate the local population. “Not a single brick was supposed be in the Maspero Triangle,” said ‘Amm Saeed (*ibid*). To accommodate residents’ frustrations with collapsing housing, the Ministry of Housing and the Cairo Governorate provided apartments in 6th of October City in another area named Al Nahda on the fringes of the city—far away from their livelihoods, jobs, and families. Although the MTYA was founded in 2008, it’s on the ground activism increased as the evictions mounted. As such, a combination of evictions and poor alternative housing “sparked” Maspero’s resistance.

4.2 Point of Moral Outrage: El Boni’s Death

In RB, insurgencies were triggered over the death of 32-year-old resident and temporary NCT security guard named El Boni on August 2, 2012 at the hands of a police officer for protesting unpaid wages at the NCT and the adjacent Fairmont Hotel (Al-Jaberi, 2012). El Boni was first shot in his leg and then in the back after a verbal altercation with an officer (EIPR, 2012). Due to the close proximity of the hotel to Ramlet Bulaq, news traveled to residents after Anwar, one of the first RB residents to arrive to the scene, was shot in the leg after urging officers to carry El Boni’s body to the nearest hospital, which they refused. Male residents from all age groups stormed the Fairmont Hotel and set parked cars and motorcycles on fire and defaced the hotel’s façade (Figure 3). Later on August 2, 17 Ramlet Bulaq residents were arrested (all male), including a 14-year-old child, and sent to the Bulaq police station, where they faced charges ranging from carrying firearms, defacing a tourist facility, thuggery, and assault on Fairmont Hotel employees. The officer, meanwhile, was acquitted.



**Figure 3: A picture of Ramlet Bulaq clashes in front of the Fairmont Hotel entrance.
Source: Al Watan News, an Egyptian privately-owned newspaper**

The state accused residents and El Boni of “thuggery”. The Interior Ministry issued a statement calling Ramlet Bulaq “thugs,” while emphasizing El Boni’s criminal record to justify his death to public opinion and the media (Al-Jabri, 2012). Interior Minister at that time, hailed security forces’ successful diffusion of “the incident” that involved “delinquents,” while Fairmont Hotel was keen on launching a campaign against “thuggery”.

The most circulated state-owned newspaper in Egypt, Al Ahram (2012), described *all* residents of “possessing criminal records and normalized into thuggery”. Moreover, other reports stressed both El Boni and residents possessed in their assault on private property and state employees (officers). The diffusion of the term “thuggery” spatially criminalizes the entirety of Ramlet Bulaq, particularly the targeted population of El Kafrawi. Nearly four years after the incident, the narrative continues to flourish. On May 15, 2016, Sawiris told Dream TV channel once again that “most RB residents” are “professional criminals, drug dealers and thieves” (Cairo Portal, 2016). Criminalizing space in the media practically justifies its eradication. Spatial criminalization overlaps with territorial stigmatization: establishing and normalizing the narrative around Ramlet Bulaq’s “criminality” gives

leverage to the state to “sweep”. Wael’s “sweep” metaphor of the Cairo 2050 Plan not only entails physically eradicating informal settlements, but to instill morality and discipline. The narrative of thuggery impacts a small contingent of residents, who would rather confirm the media’s narrative than risk personal security excursions and arrest from local officers, such as Abu Ali, one of the oldest living residents in Ramlet Bulaq. Abu Ali denied El Boni’s story as recounted by EIPR and residents, thus proving how residents internalize official media narratives:

No, [El Boni] was not working as a security guard. I’ll tell you what, more importantly; he was an ex-convict. He’s the one who actually assaulted the officer in the first place. He assaulted the tourism police officers at that building of the Nile City (Abu Ali, interview, December 17, 2015).

The significance of El Boni’s death runs parallel with the story that galvanized the 2011 revolution: Khaled Saeed’s death. A male in his mid-20s, Saeed was beaten to death by two officers in 2010, with pictures of his brutally battered face going viral on social media. The Ministry of Interior described Saeed as a drug dealer; but activists later found out that Saeed used his camera phone to expose officers facilitating a drug transaction, which propelled officers to use force. Stark parallels exist between El Boni and Saeed’s death, further illustrating the embeddedness of the 2011 revolution in the narratives of resistance and insurgent practices of RB subjects. El Boni’s death is now entrenched in the permanent history of RB serves a microcosm of the 2011 uprising. The significance of such a distinction manifests in the narratives of RB subjects—continually citing the *thawra* in the context of the historical conceptualization of their neighborhood. Materially, the national mobilizations against centralized police power and privatized interests in 2011 contributed to the rise of insurgent practices in RB. While the 2011 revolution addressed grievances on the national stage surrounding Saeed’s death, El Boni enabled RB to perceive national plans (Cairo 2050), security excursions and private developments (Sawiris) as a threat to their collective interests.

4.3 Economic Displacement and the “Suffocation of Space” in Ramlet Bulaq

He entered a house like this one, purchased it, whoever was inside was evicted and displaced. He forced the issue and purchased another house. That’s how he made it to be. Every 10 meters you walk, you’ll find the same system. He wants to suffocate the space on us (‘Amm Ahmed, interview, December 16, 2015).

Exploitation of Ramlet Bulaq manifests primarily through state-supported private business development. Respondents hold Sawiris, the NCT’s Egyptian co-owner and one of the richest business tycoons in the Middle East, accountable for the majority of their grievances, underscoring the role of private interests in exploitation. Sawiris’ “suffocation” and economic displacement of Ramlet Bulaq manifests in three main ways: (1) economic processes of land control and exploitation of people’s socio-economic conditions; (2) influencing state decisions and altering space in Ramlet Bulaq; and (3) the production of new laboring subjectivities.

First, Sawiris exploited residents’ socio-economic conditions in the late 1990s and early 2000s to entice families to sell their property. Residents framed their predicament concerning Sawiris as a binary issue: renovate or sell i.e. let everybody renovate their homes, or allow Sawiris to come in and “finish” (buy) at fair market prices. ‘Amm Ahmed, a senior resident in Ramlet Bulaq, claimed Sawiris lured families with EGP 15,000-30,000 (\$2,500-\$3,000) in the late 1990s and early 2000s. EGP 15,000-30,000 was too alluring of an offer to turn down given scarce economic opportunities and several families sold their property. Following 2005, Sawiris adopted a “wait and see” policy in Ramlet Bulaq. Heedful of the dilapidated built environment in the slum, Sawiris waited for housing to simply collapse, knowing homes have not been renovated in little under half a century (Abu Ali, interview, December 17, 2015). This propelled locals in a legal process, where owners started to engage with state’s legal systems to prove valid ownership of their property. Salama, a male resident in his late 50s, for example, called several local legal rights organizations and was able to obtain legal documentation in a case that proved his rightful ownership of his

property (Interview, Salama, and December 15, 2015). Sawiris and the Cairo Governorate maintain none of the families own property.

As property prices have now reached astronomical prices in the surrounding Nile Corniche St. due to the concentration of entertainment hubs and state-owned buildings (Tamarai Night Club, Hilton Ramses Hotel, Conrad Hotel, Egyptian Radio Television Radio Building (ERTU) and the Foreign Affairs Ministry), families turned down Sawiris’ offer of EGP 3000-EGP 5000 (\$500-\$800) per square meter in the mid-2000s.



Figure 4: Nile Corniche St. with Foreign Affairs and ERTU buildings on the right.
Source: Shakran, 2015

Sawiris’ attempt to exploit Ramlet Bulaq inhabitants’ economic conditions to purchase properties at well-below market prices relative to the astronomical price on the Nile Corniche St. fueled outrage over what Morrison (1971) calls “group deprivation”. Individuals see themselves, as part of a group with legitimate expectations inhibited by “structural blockage” – or some aspect of a larger social structure outside the power of the group—and consequently mobilize against these grievances (*ibid*). People of Ramlet Bulaq were acutely aware of surrounding land prices on the Nile

Corniche St. housing all of the aforementioned luxury developments, such as Moe, a former taxi driver in his mid-30's, who said: "If we sell, we're going to sell at the highest price.

They said that property surrounding the State TV building sells for EGP 50,000 per meter. We're right there, so that's the least they can do" (Moe, interview, December 14, 2015). Residents named exact land prices per square meter within the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the State TV building areas, which, they implied, set the precedent for these skyrocketing real estate prices. For instance, Moe said property surrounding Foreign Affairs Ministry sells at EGP 90,000 per square meter (over \$10,000) (*ibid*). The political awareness of how these mega-state structures govern land pricing in the area and fuel outrage of group deprivation elucidates one of many components contributing to economic exploitation and the "suffocation" of Ramlet Bulaq by NCT.

Second, Sawiris contributes to the suffocation of El Ramla politically through his influence on state decisions with his growing elite networks of investors and local officials. Sawiris' economic displacement worked in tandem with local municipalities and local security tactics to pressure residents regarding the validity of their land ownership. According to an ISDF official, no assured method exists to confirm who exactly owns land in RB; a fact which residents vehemently reject (ISDF, interview, December 12, 2015). The ISDF claims the only confirmed fact remains: Sawiris and several investors own several plots of land in the area. This follows a problematic view the ISDF holds and perpetuates. This, according to Moe, demonstrates state and private developer confluence of power and Sawiris' rising networks of state power elites:

As we see, [Sawiris], every part he has acquired, the government sides with him. The whole government up top. All the ministers are all on his side. Every time we try to rebuild or renovate, the government comes down and takes down whatever is being built (Moe, interview, 2015).

‘Amm Ahmed, a senior male resident, echoed similar sentiments, revealing that Sawiris faced no opposition from the government during acquisition of land in Ramlet Bulaq, including some government-owned property:

We’ve been living here for 100 years. More than 100 years and we’ve been living comfortably. Once [Sawiris] came in, he came in and flipped everything upside down. This guy took all of the government’s land. Nobody opposed him. He took the endowments ministry land and public insurance property (‘Amm Ahmed, interview, December 16, 2015).

The material and social conceptualization of Ramlet Bulaq’s space has been altered through Sawiris’ exploitation. Besides their sharp awareness of physical and social segregation on a national level perpetuated by the media and state planning agencies, the people of Ramlet Bulaq conceptualize their built environment as demarcated and highly segmented. Many conceptualize the space they inhabit in terms of land plots owned by Sawiris and other powerful investors, which typically involves descriptions such as “Sawiris’ land down there”, or “Shabokshi’s [an investing partner with Sawiris] land up here”. During many of the interviews, residents continually pointed out pieces of land that were “finished” i.e. sold or forcefully seized. Current residents inhabiting the slum offer an unfavorable opinion of families who sold their property to Sawiris, which create further social and spatial divisions. ‘Amm Ahmed described families who sold the land as “fools”. This segmentation permeates the very conceptualization of space, inculcates discipline in the community, and strips the space of its place and time. Further, Sawiris, local investors, and Bulaq security deploy guards over vacant land plots. During the observation, entering from the east side of Ramlet Bulaq near employees’ entrance of the NCT, one could see men, dressed in traditional grey or brown *jalabiyas* (traditional garments), sitting beside land plots with collapsed housing. Investors and owners involved with Sawiris deployed guards over vacant land to prevent residents from squatting on land.

Third, Sawiris economically “suffocates” RB by altering laboring subjectivities. Sawiris and NCT operate within the dialectical neoliberal process of privatization that seeks to evict RB residents for capital accumulation purposes, while relying on them as a form of cheap labor. Sawiris employs El Kafrawi locals as security guards, housekeepers, and parking lot attendants, in the NCT and the Fairmont Hotel. While simultaneously facing constant threat of evictions and perpetual uncertainty over living conditions, RB’s NCT employees are driven to support “the boss”. Hamada, a middle-aged security guard at the NCT, donning a jacket with the NCT emblem, explains this dynamic:

At first, whoever sells, they take their money and just leave. For me to even come close to [Sawiris], he’s going to come and tell me “I’m providing your livelihood for you.” Basically, you’re forced to stand by him. He owns land here in our area [points at two different spots where there were two collapsed housing structures]. There’s one piece of land right, here, there’s another (Hamada, interview, December 17, 2015).

Starting from 2012, a majority of workers employed in Ramlet Bulaq have been “kept dormant,” or laid off, as Abu Ali explained (Abu Ali, interview, December 17, 2015). “The young women that work in NCT and Fairmont, as part of the cleaning services, they’re now have been kept dormant,” Abu Ali said. “[NCT] said that people from El Ramla (RB), especially, cannot work for us any longer” (*ibid*). This demonstrates the complex process between labor co-optation and spatial control. Realizing the potential for labor mobilizations against his prized luxury development when it was first built in 1996, Sawiris shrewdly elected to acquire major industries in the area. Sawiris purchased several active small-medium labor industries, most notably a cotton mill. These industries cease to exist due to rapid de-industrialization. In her study of laboring practices in Ramlet Bulaq, Khalil (2014) quotes a long-time resident of Ramlet Bulaq who vividly recalls Sawiris buying other industries such as a thermal brick company and several storage spaces (p.33). An integral component of “suffocating the space”, therefore, entails altering the existing dynamics of labor-space relations. Sawiris’ alliance with powerful government officials makes it clear that authoritarian regimes and

their counterparts “provide material benefits for workers in exchange for labor’s quiescence” (Kim and Gandhi, 2010).

An added layer of complexity unfolds to illustrate the dialectics of labor co-optation. During the 2011 revolution, the state remunerated several individuals, or *baltageya* (“thugs”) as the local media labels them, to destroy strategic private and state structures around Cairo to blame protestors in Tahrir Square. On January 28, 2011, the so-called “Friday of Rage”, several employees and residents from Ramlet Bulaq formed a cordon around the building to protect it from *baltageya* supposedly coming to destroy the NCT. Residents mimicked protestors’ cordon in Tahrir Square to protect the Ancient Egyptian Museum against state-hired *baltageya*, who were ordered to destroy ancient artifacts and inculcate protestors. To reward this gesture, Sawiris decided to employ several residents in NCT on a “temporary basis”. Despite Sawiris inflicting economic oppression on residents, inhabitants protected the building because it represented their sole source of income. The security cordon conveyed an inherent economic survival method, further complicating co-optation of labor. Co-optation is usually employed pejoratively to signify movements as “sell-outs”. However, as Lapegna (2014) argues, the negative connotations surrounding the term “cooptation” does not fully capture relational and interpretive processes. The term does not address the “political significance of the pressing survival needs of subordinated actors” (*ibid*). If *baltageya* ended up destroying the very structure which provides residents’ livelihood, what economic source exists for insurgents to survive in an area deliberately “suffocated”? These examples illustrate, not only the complex nature of co-optation, but the dialectical processes underlying insurgent planning and its contentious practices.

Chapter 5: Ramlet Bulaq Insurgencies and Spatial Re-Conceptualizations

The study adopts the concept of “organizational infrastructure” to show how networks, mobilizations and resources are acquired and implemented across this area of Cairo. Nicholls (2003) defines organizational infrastructure as a set of informal and formal networks of people and institutions which incorporate coordinating mechanisms to link different organizations into a “common contentious front; the coordinating mechanisms themselves being central components for the mobilization of collective resources toward loosely agreed upon goals” (p.882). The study adds an important component by examining the degree of organizational formalization of insurgencies.

RB insurgencies used informal networking building capacities, evident in the creation of a neighborhood popular committee tasked to form networks with organizations across the city and provide a forum for residents to formulate grievances. Maspero insurgencies primarily unfolded through MTYA’s organizational formalization with the aim of raising neighborhood awareness regarding state spatial interventions and plans and mobilizing with organizations and activists across the city. The longevity of RB’s informal mobilizations was scarce, however. At the time of this study, the RB popular committee mobilizations and other participating organizations activities’ significantly dropped due to hierarchical and structural divisions, state cooptation and security infiltration. Examining the differential types of insurgencies sheds light on how networks across this Cairo district unfolds and the activated organizational infrastructure across the city.

5.1 The Weakened State and Political Openings

Beard (2003) says citizens move from participatory planning and covert planning practices to insurgent or radical planning “when the repressive state is weakened” (p.14). Miraftab (2009) supplements Beard’s analysis, claiming insurgencies continually navigate between invited spaces (“grassroots actions by donors and government interventions”) and invented spaces (“collective

actions that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo”) to implement insurgent planning practices (p.38). Unlike Beard’s case study in Indonesia, citizens did not engage in participatory planning practices initially, as they were ostracized from formal participation in local urban administration politics prior and subsequent to the 2011 revolution. All residents were removed from participating in the Local People’s Councils (LPCs)—state-formed councils enabling citizens to participate and influence district authority decisions—which Mubarak’s National Democratic Party (NDP) exerted control over by handpicking committee members for their allegiance to the regime. Rather, insurgents applied covert planning practices, insurgent practices and then engaged with the state through participatory planning.

The 2011 revolution, a major political crisis for the state, created political openings on the local level that enabled insurgents to construct new networks, covert planning actions and tools, and counter-narratives. Residents activated an organizational infrastructure on city-wide level, expressing grievances through social and official media channels and locally formed councils and organizations. An organizational infrastructure ensued locally, consisting of: *Ramlet Bulaq’s popular committee*, the *Bulaq Abu El Ella District popular committee*, and the *MTYA*. Meanwhile, the city-wide organizational infrastructure consisted of: *Ahyaa’ Bel Esm Faqat (ABEF)*, *Madd Platform*, *10 Tooba*, *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)* and *Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR)*. These organizations introduced local insurgents to a host of state programs and negotiation sessions. For instance, 10 Tooba and Madd Platform members introduced citizens to MURIS Minister Laila Iskandar (now a dissolved ministry) in negotiations over a coherent re-design process for Maspero and Ramlet Bulaq. Several MTYA members and Maspero residents served on negotiation panels of the state-implemented 2015 Maspero Re-Design Project.

For RB, specifically, insurgencies materialized through: (1) Spatial re-conceptualizations; (2) Informal housing renovation (covert planning); (3) RB Popular Committee; and (4) activation of

city-wide organizational infrastructure which played a brokering role, produced insurgent knowledge, and organized demonstrations and sit-ins.

5.2 Spatial Re-Conceptualizations in Ramlet Bulaq

Re-conceptualizations of space become an important element explaining how both insurgencies are imagined and initiated. In RB, spatial re-conceptualizations unfold through (1) tight-knit familial associations; (2) adopting new names for different areas; (3) and connection sites enabling political actions. Residents reconstitute their space in a fluid sense, as opposed to what Boudreau (2007) designates as state-designated zones, grids, borders, and boundaries. Space is not relegated to a static entity, but rather a manifestation of spatial shifts in time and place, which engender counter-hegemonic spaces of identity and challenge the state as “the only legitimate source of citizenship, rights, meanings and practices” (Miraftab, 2009, p.36).

Challenging state-informed configurations of RB, families in El Kafrawi re-name different spaces and streets according to social ties, familial associations and neighborhood affinities. Moe and Kareem consistently referred to certain alleyways and quarters within El Kafrawi using different family names inhabiting the area, signifying the depth of historical and social relations. Interviewed residents did not use state-designated street names as well; rather, they associated spaces with the different families living inhabiting alleyways and quarters. For example, instead of referencing El Togary St., with its official name, residents label the street based on “Sayed’s shop on the corner,” or “Manal’s vegetable layout next to the kiosk”.

Embedded in the insurgent conceptualizations of Ramlet Bulaq is the notion of *manteqna* (our neighborhood) which challenges the state’s hegemony and invokes ownership. Moreover, it directly defies Sawiris’ claim of control over the area and the continued efforts to alter space through securitization and labor co-optation. The concept of “our neighborhood” goes beyond challenging

land ownership titles, and incorporates territoriality embedded in spatial practices. ‘Umm Mariam, a mother of two, poignantly describes how *manteqtna* is interwoven into the spatial conception of El Kafrawi:

When I’m here and I knock on my neighbor’s door, I’ll take whatever I need. But when I move outside, it’s not going to happen. How can they kick us out? I’m comfortable here. We don’t pay rent here. This is our neighborhood. I’m 43 and was born here. My mother is here too. My family is here. We’ve been married here (‘Umm Mariam, interview, December 17, 2015).

The nexus of family representation and spatial conceptualization conveniently overlaps with the physical space El Kafrawi. Certain homes display family names painted on walls across the slum as a display of power, pride and ownership and, as such, serve the function of official street names for the different tightly-knit quarters in El Kafrawi (Figure 5). Blue and red handprints are found on residential building entrances— a prevailing social and ritual practice in sha’abi quarters to thwart envy and jealousy (Figure 6).

Territoriality in Ramlet Bulaq supplements spatial practices that generate “political spaces” constituted by public spaces as connection sites where people gather, bond, and share information. The appropriation of public space here is connected to formation of political spaces. Women converse in front of homes sitting on blue and yellow plastic stools, others do laundry in public spaces behind the privacy of a clothesline, several group of men smoke sheesha in front of a small Pepsi fridge, a man punctures tires to later sell it as spare parts, and an elderly woman cuts up vegetables to sell it on a side street leading up to the NCT (Shakran, observation, 2015). These public connection sites are also sites of control and securitization strategies, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.



Figure 5: A family name painted in white on an entrance to a private quarter.



Figure 6: Hands printed on the entrance of a residential building to thwart envy.

The relational process between public space appropriation and political spaces manifests in the formation of Ramlet Bulaq’s popular committee—a small three-to-four-person representative body tasked to facilitate collective action, negotiate land rights, establish contacts with legal organizations, and speak on behalf of residents to the media. Popular committee members would hold public meetings at local *qahwas* (coffee shops) for instance. Local *qahwas* served a social function (of bonding and gathering) and politically (sharing grievances and information). Without the appropriation of public areas as political spaces, the popular committee’s outreach capacities would have considerably waned. The popular committee conducted public meetings in these spaces to activate discussions and translate grievances into concrete political actions. Insurgent places enabled insurgencies to materialize because it imagined space as inherent to the neighborhood and situated spatial practices as resistance to state conceptualizations of space.

5.3 Covert Planning: Ramlet Bulaq’s Informal Housing Renovations

To address decaying housing and water infrastructure, residents informally and covertly construct makeshift housing, install water pumps and install public lighting, among others. The state has neglected these two problems for decades—some would argue deliberately. Similarly, the ISDF, an agency created (on paper) to solve informal settlements’ tragic housing crisis, remains nonexistent in this process. Makeshift housing incorporated the collection and adjoining of scrap wooden material (usually large wooden boards) to institute housing renovations.



Figure 7: Makeshift housing in El Kafrawi with NCT in background. Source: Shakran, 2015

With limited financial resources to renovate homes using concrete, the most widely used (and costly) building material construct homes throughout the city, RB residents would, for example, compile wooden boards (including cardboard) from nearby industries on El Togyary St. (Commercial St.) and renovate and construct new housing.

The two homes pictured above (Figure 7) show how wooden makeshift housing acts both a roof and an independent living space (resembling another apartment) but connected to the overall

concrete housing structure. For others with concrete homes, wooden scrap material is used to fulfill the purpose of a home's door. It almost becomes a two-story home built with two different construction materials. However, these makeshift housing are sometimes unreliable, as Moe explains:

If you walked down here and walked through these narrow alleyways, your shoulder can accidentally touch the structure of a house and it could collapse. You know why? Because it's made out of wood. One of these structures fell on a child once, but thankfully we rescued him (Moe, interview, 2015).

With little money, RB residents have been able to proliferate this practice in El Kafrawi. Thus, these housing structures do only denote a coping mechanism, but inherently a covert planning tool. Without both governmental planning aid and/or civil society participation, residents are left not only to cope, but to challenge the very conception of traditional home building using concrete. These housing structures enable residents to remain in the area with limited financial resources. Additionally, makeshift housing enables residents to covertly challenge the inherent state planning bodies' policy of neglect.

This specific planning tool complements residents' water delivery service efforts. Utilizing the Egyptian media's presence since the 2012 Fairmont Hotel clashes, residents were able to form a community group and urge a famous charitable non-profit organization in Cairo named *Resala (Message)* to build a water tanks in the Eastern entrance of the slum, right in front of the NCT parking garage structure. In 2012, Resala and several other water volunteers constructed a water tank to serve the area's residents. 'Amm Saeed, 'Umm Mariam, and Moe all made sure to confirm Resala was the only organization to respond to their efforts. Furthermore, several volunteers from a sister organization of Resala were able to start an uncompleted elementary sewage system. Another organization headed by a former Member of Parliament (MP) named the Karam Foundation operating near Maspero installed some public taps, but that was essentially the extent of their aid.

Karam Foundation primarily operates as a charity organization providing residents throughout Bulaq with various needs and supplies with political objectives. Its political influence will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.4 Mobilizations: Counter Narratives and the Anti-Eviction Campaign

As the repressive state was weakened following the 2011 revolution, RB residents made the move from covert planning to insurgent planning practices by activating an organizational infrastructure in the likes of *10 Tooba*, the *ABEF*, and the *EIPR*. The production of counter narratives of El Boni's death and subsequent raids, establishing the Ramlet Bulaq popular committee and creation of a campaign against evictions all fall under informal organizing strategies.

EIPR published two extensive investigate reports on the raids and El Boni in August 2012. The first report documented residents' testimonies of the incident to challenge official state narratives, while the second report exposed the loopholes surrounding the justice system in Egypt—specifically involving the officer who allegedly shot El Boni. The report posed one of many important questions regarding investigation procedures: Why did camera footage from the Fairmont Hotel's external cameras mysteriously disappear following the incident? The question was not addressed at the hearings, and consequently, the officer was acquitted.

Collective efforts between EIPR, community organizers and residents signified linkages between counter memories, knowledge production and counter-narratives as a form of insurgent resistance. For one, local resident's testimonies functioned as counter-memories to challenge the Ministry of Interior and the media's attempt to inhibit memory of the event through false narratives of "thuggery". Second, the EIPR reports reversed narratives proliferated in major media outlets. Al Shorouk, one of Egypt's largest and most read privately-owned newspapers, re-published EIPR's detailed findings on the incident after spreading the official narrative of the story. Third, in exposing

loopholes in investigations, the EIPR created a new knowledge base among residents surrounding legal processes. Residents were now familiar with terms such as “prosecution” and “legal proceedings”. These insurgent practices in RB introduced residents to the public eye, while exposing the bankruptcy of judicial verdicts which repeatedly side with security forces in the post-revolution period.

Residents’ connection with EIPR surfaced again when former Cairo Governor issued a decree to “temporarily” confiscate RB land to build private development and “low-income housing” in 2012. Initial reports on raids and El Boni’s death enabled residents to establish contact with EIPR lawyers. Consequently, after reading of the Cairo Governor’s decision, residents mobilized and requested legal relief from EIPR’s lawyers. Lawyers at EIPR and ECESR filed a lawsuit on behalf of residents claiming the unconstitutionality of confiscating private land for development purposes. Lawyers and residents proved residents’ valid ownership of property. Lawyers argued that a “taking” promulgates direct presidential order of state control of private land. Lawyers successfully argued the taking of public was not for the purposes of a “public good” under the law (Cairo Observer, 2013). On August 20, 2013, a Cairo Administrative Court reversed the governor’s decision.

5.5 The Anti-Eviction Campaign

In 2012, residents established the Ramlet Bulaq Popular Committee, which functioned as part of a larger district committee called *Bulaq Abu Ela Committee*. This district coalition further absorbed the Maspero’s MTYA to forge wider district solidarity, enabling strong-tie relations on a district level. The committee mobilized a campaign to protest the security raids, arrests and evictions in both October 2012 and April 2013 with *Ahaya’ Bel Esm Faqat (ABEF)*, or “Neighborhoods Without Names”—an organization of campaigners and activists working in informal settlements in Cairo. The ABEF, along with other urban organizations such as 10 Tooba, utilized its social media

presence to announce and lead a walk-out and a demonstration on April 7, 2013 to the State TV building in Maspero. The campaign incorporated several demands, the most notable of which include: (1) Releasing those arrested since August 2012; (2) Refusing to depart RB; and (3) Demanding that the government implement basic services and renovate homes.



Figure 8: April 7 Demonstration. Source: ABEF



Figure 9: Protest Flyer reads: "No, no to evictions, the people of Ramlet Bulaq are not for sale." Source: ABEF

Several types of organizational network formations spanning differential spatial landscapes and frameworks can be located here. First, ABEF provided a platform for the popular committee to voice grievances on a city-wide level, while emphasizing their place-based solidarity with the Bulaq Abu El-Ella district popular committee. The campaign flyer, although published under the official ABEF page, emphasized the committee’s voice with declaration such as “We, the Ramlet Bulaq popular committee, demand the following...” A platform for the popular committee’s call for action drew a number of organizations operating on various fronts, including EIPR and 10 Tooba. EIPR, for example, published several of these statements to document and supplement its reports about Ramlet Bulaq conditions and simultaneously offer legal relief. EIPR’s legal networks added a growing network of organizations working on similar issues. According to Khalil (2014), it was not unusual

to see many RB residents carry phone numbers of EIPR and ECESR lawyers following the campaign.

Second, targeting the ERTU building signified participants' recognition that a concentration of media attention in the State TV building would publicize people's grievances on a national scale, invoking multiscale strategies. Formation of network and frames unfolded here on multiple geographical scales: local (popular committees), regional (Bulaq Abu El-Ella District Committee), city-wide (EIPR/ABEF), and national (national media outlets). Additionally, interactions with multiple actors solidified their grievances. Several major newspapers and nightly talk shows picked up on the protest and published their statements.

Third, the campaign strengthened the political consciousness of participants, particularly in constructing frames and common grievances surrounding "No to Evictions!" Nicholls (2009) writes that social capital stored in networks "functions as a bridge between specific campaigns and cycles of resistance" (p.84). Actors identified arbitrary arrests, evictions, and the state as primary causes for common grievances. Subsequently, repeated emphasis of these demands were picked up by national news outlets and subsequently spread to public opinion. The ABEF, for instance, through its media connections, organized a conference in Ramlet Bulaq with the attendance of media members and journalists. The conference aimed at introducing the area to the press in the eyes of the Ramlet Bulaq Popular Committee.

Fourth, some subtle and pronounced representations suggest internal hierarchies. In the aforementioned press conference on September 3, 2012, an ABEF representative and a lawyer assume a leadership role in organizing and answering journalists' questions, while two RB committee members intermittently speak (AJ Misr, 2012). The spotlight remains on the ABEF activist and the lawyer who become the center of attention. The ABEF representative starts out introducing the panel, which contains three popular committee members, by saying: "First, we'd like

to thank journalists for accepting our request to come here during these tumultuous times and to the area.... it's not the best place for filming" (Al Jazeera, 2012). Furthermore, the lawyer on the panel spoke for an extended period of time, allowing one middle-aged member of the committee to speak for a few minutes, as shown in the video aired on Al Jazeera (*ibid*). The press conference seemed controlled and organized by the ABEF member and the human rights lawyer, leaving popular committee members in secondary supportive roles (2012).

Another hierarchy occurs in the organized demonstrations on April 7. Figure 8 shows ABEF's emblem on the top right hand corner, without incorporating a symbol, or even a word, about the popular committee. For activists not well-versed in the organizational dynamics of RB, one might deduce that ABEF organized the demonstration alone. These internal hierarchies reflect and confirm the same hierarchies projected during the organization of the popular conference. Nicholls (2009) writes: "Mobilisations require formal divisions of labour, with some activists assuming leadership roles and others playing supportive roles. While such divisions make these collectives much more effective and powerful, they also introduce "important cleavages and antagonisms that threaten to destabilize them" (p.91).

Fifth, networks between the Bulaq Abu El Ella committee, the RB committee and the MTYA generate strong-tie relations that are emotional, symbolic and material, as Nicholls (2012) says. The district popular committee materialized prior to the inception of the Ramlet Bulaq and was focused on gathering the entirety of the area under a coalition of committees. While it has faced significant challenges accomplishing this task, the committee offers symbolic and material support to these organizations, including using social media to spread occasional updates about the committee's events. However, both committees' concrete political actions have decreased significantly since 2014 with the rise of the military to power. These insurgencies, however, were loosely formed and unsustainable. They occurred without much organization, particularly the RB popular committee.

5.6 10 Tooba Brokerage and Insurgent Knowledge Production in Ramlet Bulaq

10 Tooba remains one of the most active organizations in Ramlet Bulaq, implementing its three basic core principles within the scope of parallel/participatory practice: Mapping, Negotiation and Consensus. 10 Tooba's connection to RB chiefly emanates from Amal's three-year ethnographic research in the area. Amal acts as a broker between RB and the state, particularly between local municipalities and the former Informal Settlements Ministry. Since no public law exists (perhaps deliberately) to request public information from government institutions, 10 Tooba diffuses knowledge over RB to professional planners, architects, engineers and activists. Rami, the Madd Platform co-founder and architect, describes 10 Tooba's work as a "chess game"—navigating between different strategies involving research, negotiation, and implementation (2016).

First, 10 Tooba produces insurgent knowledge in the form of academic research, policy analysis, assessments, and mapping analysis. The organization issued a comprehensive February 2016 report titled *Ramlet Bulaq: Social and Urban Transformation* (2016) in collaboration with Amal and two other university researchers dissecting the historical, social and urban transformation of RB. The study employed ethnographic analysis, architectural redesigns, mapping representations, and historical documentation. The report is a representation of the planner as intellectual. These "specific intellectuals" take an active role in using theoretical and technical knowledge to produce knowledge. Furthermore, 10 Tooba, through Amal, was able to institute a 7-day official count of Ramlet Bulaq families with a state official. 10 Tooba was able to both document official counts of families and act as a watchdog during the state's count, so as to prevent miscounting and corruption prevalent during this process in Egypt.

Second, 10 Tooba's integrates participatory planning tools to map assets and needs; negotiate between stakeholders; and achieve consensus building among stakeholders. To achieve these three objectives, 10 Tooba's co-founder Amal acts as a broker with the state and city-wide actors across

the city. Brokers like Amal connect insurgents to other actors, institutions, and organizations in the system to “bridge capital” and connect insurgencies to other sources of power. 10 Tooba achieved this through organizing several demonstrations with Ramlet Bulaq insurgents, evident in the October 2012 and April 2013 sit-ins aforementioned. 10 Tooba introduced insurgents to a host of state networks, most notably former MURIS Minister Iskandar and municipal authorities. 10 Tooba integrated insurgents in negotiations with the state over land rights and possible renovations. For example, in 2013, 10 Tooba and Madd organized a negotiation session with the state, whereby notables from the Ramlet Bulaq popular committee, MTYA, and residents from both areas, expressed their personal frustrations, visions, and requests to the Housing Ministry and MURIS. The vision was not only to introduce residents to state processes and “invited spaces,” but to build solidarity between Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero residents.

Third, through an already existing insurgency, 10 Tooba formed networks with organizations across the city to channel passive resistance to active resistance. 10 Tooba’s co-founders Amal and Salem maintain a close relationship with Madd’s co-founder Rami, who works extensively in Maspero. Connecting these insurgent mobilizations between two areas is important in implementing change. Madd and 10 Tooba collaborate on different projects, not only in this area of Cairo, but throughout Egypt in other informal urban and rural settlements.

Given this, however, RB’s insurgencies were unorganized and largely unsustainable. For example, 10 Tooba devised the *Ramlet Bulaq Participatory Action* with residents and the state as a vision to upgrade and renovate Ramlet Bulaq in the past three years. A draft of the plan garnered MURIS support, but when a presidential decree dissolved the ministry in 2014, the plan was largely incomplete, or as Amal describes it, “an unaccomplished mission” (Amal, interview, January 3, 2016). Furthermore, most of the mobilizations were unsustainable due to unorganized networking, securitization efforts, and political divisions. National political divisions between different political

camps fragmented local mobilization efforts, as did a brutal crackdown on activists and organizations throughout the city and securitization policies carried out by local authorities. At the time of the study, the previously activated organizational infrastructure's mobilizations has considerably waned over the past two years with little-to-no presence in the current urban political climate. Residents continually perpetuate the narrative of "renovate or sell," which runs counter to their professed goals in the demonstrations and indicates a considerable decline in grassroots mobilizations. What remains important to RB's planning insurgencies is its potential for reactivation of the organizational infrastructure. Insurgents, however, facing state and private developer co-optation, still hold the values which initially sparked the planning insurgencies. Coy and Heeden (2005) write: "Even in the face of substantial degrees of overall movement cooptation, there will long remain exemplars of the values and ideals that originally drove a challenging movement" (p.426). Insurgents may then learn from these mobilizations and implement improvements which coincide and achieve their values and objectives.

Chapter 6: Maspero's Insurgencies and Organizational Formalization

Juxtaposed to RB mobilizations, Maspero insurgencies arose via MTYA's formal structure. How space is conceived, resources acquired, mobilizations activated and networks established among residents and with organizations across the city stems from MTYA. The MTYA increased its organizational capacities by forming a key and strategic alliance with the urban design organization Madd, which introduced a host of professional, state and activist networks to Maspero.

6.1 Covert Planning in Maspero: Public Electricity Appropriation

Maspero residents are unable to implement small physical improvement since they are strictly monitored and prohibited by local district authorities. With power outages posing an immediate grievance in Maspero, as does collapsing housing and water infrastructure, Maspero insurgents apply covert planning strategies through "illegally" appropriating public electricity sources from the adjacent State TV building. Mass power outages are a frequent occurrence across Cairo, but official state buildings rarely lose power. Maspero residents informally use these public electricity connections to supply homes and public spaces.

As Madd's Rami explained: "[The Maspero Triangle] has water. Power outages rarely happen occur because they're right behind State TV building. Power outages can occur throughout the city, but not there" (Interview, 2015). To address lack of lighting at night in public areas, residents were still able to use their strategic location to the ERTU to install street lighting. For example, in an Abu Talib alleyway in Maspero, several public light posts had self-installed white fluorescent light bulbs usually used in homes (Shakran, observation, 2015). Several locals purchased ready-to-install light bulbs from local electricians in the area and installed it themselves. As 'Amm Saeed confirmed, state authorities prohibit residents from improving and installing new electricity sources, building water infrastructure and renovating homes. This seemingly simple collective

planning action of providing public lighting not only signifies a coping mechanism, but challenges state and local authorities control over the area as a covert planning action.

6.2 Enabling Insurgencies through Maspero's Political Spaces

Political spaces represent a set of discursive practices and discourses which supersede dichotomies (state and security versus the people of Maspero) to foment different spatial considerations, place making, social relationships and future visions. Maspero's spatial conceptualizations are based on MTYA's political activism. Wael rejected the district's spatial grid-like map and claimed MTYA divides Maspero into four main areas: Zahret El Gamaal, Aramant, Haret el Nasra and Shafeen. Within each neighborhood, pockets of MTYA active members and residents spread awareness, educate residents, and proliferate information about the latest ministerial developments. The presence of two-three MTYA members in a particular neighborhood activates the area and members are responsible for networking and spreading awareness of state projects. These forged political spaces act as information and network proliferation hubs.

MTYA members serve as powerful neighborhood brokers, using scarce access to government sources to acquire information and reinforce local power. Mindful of the differential social fabric of Maspero's different neighborhoods, 'Amm Saeed strategically formed an informal network of contacts with employees in the ISDF and MURIS to receive regular information on the latest ministry meetings, plans, and decisions. 'Amm Saeed proliferates this news among neighborhood representatives, who then report it to residents in their respective neighborhoods. These insurgent spaces effectively employ multiscalar strategies (Nicholls, 2007), exploiting political openings and opportunities at a national scale (ministries and national organizations) to generate social change. 'Amm Saeed established contact with an independent urban and architectural organization named

Madd, which works with informal settlements all around the Cairo and Giza governorates and possess government contacts with ministries, which ‘Amm Saeed appropriates for MTYA:

Generally, 95 percent of the calls that come in from the government or any other implementing authority comes through me. There’s coordination between five or 6 members. I tell them whatever is going on and they start informing the rest of the group. If there’s a meeting in the Housing Ministry, and I know about it, we come and inform the families. Why did we divide it up in such a way? Because I can’t go to a neighborhood I don’t know. That’s the basis for how we divide it up. Everyone, after I inform of them of any meeting, everyone informs others in their own neighborhood. (‘Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

Local spatial conceptualizations enable practices of resistance, both against state and security incursions and as means of envisioning alternative spatial configurations. During the 2011 revolution, security forces deliberately abandoned its duties as it unleashed a wave of state-hired “thugs” (as it became known among Egyptians) to loot and destroy strategic buildings, such as the ERTU and Foreign Affairs Ministry buildings, and inculcate Jan. 25 protestors in the iconic Tahrir Square. State-hired “thugs” were in fact current and ex-convicts deliberately remunerated by Interior Ministry sources to wreak havoc in Cairo and blame the *thawra* and devastate neighborhood insurgencies. Wael and ‘Amm Saeed claimed these state-hired actors could not even set foot in Maspero due to forged connections and the extent of information sharing networks between different neighborhoods, organizers and families in Maspero:

During the uprising, Cairo was being looted and robbed, except our neighborhoods despite the presence of Hilton Ramses, the State TV building and the Foreign Affairs Ministry. There was no security presence around the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Security departed. But everybody was afraid of coming here. When [the thugs] came over to the Hilton to attempt to destroy it, our people came out and hit them back. It became such that the entire area was closed off to them (‘Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

The political nature of space impels MTYA and Maspero residents to re-imagine space for future uses according to the needs of the local population. Many residents continue to travel great lengths to obtain adequate healthcare. With a lack of nearby healthcare facilities and clinics, the

MTYA envisions constructing the Public Hospital of Bulaq to serve the entire Bulaq district by re-appropriating vacant lots in Maspero. Since many vacant spaces have been unused for years and usually contain collapsed homes, the association's leaders located vacant plots to transform visions into reality. However, district authorities prohibit housing renovations of collapsed housing, which usually fall under vacant lots. MTYA insurgent spatial imaginaries collectively confront state authoritarianism and spatial control through the re-imagination of space according to the collective needs of residents:

We agreed as an association that we need a hospital near us. We'll help [the government and the investor as part of the re-design project] with the building of the hospital so it can serve us here in the area. Over here we don't have space for a lot of services. Yeah, maybe a small clinic or something like that. But a sizeable place, not really. The investor will never create a hospital with free services, so we agree to allocate space here. Also, [we need] schools around us. All the families here send their children to schools on the other side, because we don't have much here. (Wael, interview, December 21, 2015).

As such, spatial re-conceptualization in Maspero enabled the ways in which the MTYA envisioned its planning insurgencies, demonstrating the importance of insurgent political spaces' confrontation of imposed spatial fixities and its emphasis on the fluidity and complexity of space. MTYA association leaders appropriate space as a tool of political and social agency; challenge state spatial control; and envision alternative spatial configurations. Maspero's political spaces highlight formal organizational networks, and a developing political consciousness.

6.3 The MTYA and Maspero's Organizational Formalization

The MTYA represented a more organized and formal structure which impacted the way mobilizations emerged. Founded in 2008 to air grievances around evictions and informal renovations, MTYA quickly became one of the most powerful insurgent organizations operating in the entire district of Bulaq (some would argue the entire city). MTYA's strength was and remains evident in its organizing power, despite scarce financial capabilities and security infiltration. The

MTYA deploys locally-based ties and diffuses it across Cairo's social and geographical boundaries, primarily through direct and virtual (social media) networks with more influential organizations across the city, such as Madd.

First, MTYA employs social media to spread awareness and establish networks with distant allies following the 2011 uprising. MTYA set up an official Facebook page, which posts updates, events, and occasional announcements regarding Maspero's recent conditions and developments. MTYA's social media presence reflects activists' use of virtual networking as a catalyst to mobilize numerous neighborhood for demonstrations and sit-ins throughout Cairo. Furthermore, the organization established a media committee, which, in turn, focused on reversing mainstream media's criminalization and stigmatization of Maspero.

Second, MTYA's repeated usages of frames such as "Renewal and Renovation" to resist evictions engender a sense collective identity around the cause. Furthermore, the association devised other frames which became a rallying point among its members and among families, including slogans such as: "No to evictions, Yes to Renovations. Danger: Don't come near our land".



Figure 10: A 2013 MTYA conference banner reads: "If the government and the Cairo Governor do not respond to our primary demand of renovation and renewal, we will proceed with an open sit-in until an official decision is issued". Source: MTYA FB page

Third, MTYA's administrative structure reflects this organizational formalization and the extent of its political consciousness to diffuse networks across the city. The organization encompasses five principal committees, each tasked with different responsibilities, including: (1) The People's Committee; (2) The Oversight Committee; (3) The Media Committee; (4) The

Organizational Committee; and (5) The Commission Committee. Accompanying the head of each committee was an assistant. MTYA refrained from using hierarchical terminology such as “president” to refer to heads of committees (all men), rather electing to use “General Coordinator” and “Assistant to General Coordinator”. These committees were able to convert their grievances into concrete political demands and actions, in partnership with urban organizations outside the area such as the aforementioned Madd Platform. With the political turmoil and openings following 2011, MTYA’s activities helped residents find alternative housing.

Fourth, MTYA was able to establish connections with organizations such as Madd across city. The Cairo Governor, former MURIS Minister Iskandar and former Prime Minister Mehleb met with MTYA members as a result via a Madd-MTYA joint conference with state officials to negotiate for new homes, as ‘Amm Saeed explains here:

The first meeting with Iskandar, she was sitting with us at our local café. She said, ‘well, the [MTYA might just be looking for money and purport to represent the families [in Maspero].’ In response, we suggested that we organize a public conference. We organized the conference right next on a large vacant land in the area. Around 2100 people attended. [Iskandar] probably delivered [Mehleb] the message after what she saw. He probably said ‘let me go down and see the people’. [Mehleb] said he’ll come down to the area for 10 minutes. He wanted to make sure that the MTYA is really an association that represents the families here. He came to the area and was here for two hours. He didn’t want to leave. There was no security. We secured everything (‘Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

Further, the MTYA members sustained a presence on the selection committee of the 2015 re-design competition of Maspero Triangle. MTYA members made a concerted effort, in conjunction with Madd Platform, to make their voice heard on the different panels and were, in the end, able to make a decision on the best-available re-design/renovation proposal for their neighborhood.

MTYA’s organizational power was once again on display when an explosion at the Italian Consulate occurred in August 2015 and destroyed the façade of about seven Maspero homes. The state assessed all houses and concluded it would renovate the houses on its expense, but that families

had to temporarily depart their homes ('Amm Saeed, interview, 2015). MTYA refused and MTYA and negotiated insisted families remain in homes amid renovations. The state approved the suggestion and Iskandar obtained an official authorization signed by the Cairo Governor. Mehleb commissioned the Arab Contractors Company, one of the largest contracting companies in Egypt and Mehleb's former workplace, to renovate the damaged houses. Arab Contractors ended up renovating 44 houses (Rami, interview, February 2, 2015). Though most of the renovating was only painting the facades of homes with a standard light orange hue, rather than structural renovations.

Moreover, the MTYA was able to increase monetary compensation for families that preferred compensation over renovation. The association proposed to create a short-term rental period for families, with compensation standing at EGP 300 per room. However, the MTYA insisted the state raise compensation to EGP 500 per room, as 'Amm Saeed elaborates:

We said we demand EGP 500. We located 72 families and 29 families of which went to the ministry and took the EGP 500. The families were somewhat skeptical at first, but now the remaining families are asking that we engaged more into this monetary compensation with the state step-by-step ('Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015).

MTYA's multiscalar insurgencies, its strong-tie relations, and its capability to deploy locally-based ties across geographical and social boundaries to acquire resources for mobilizations, translated political grievances to concrete political actions. The MTYA's formal structure enabled trust with Maspero's families, who remain their main source of power. MTYA's formal structure placed the organization on the radar of the state and city-wide organizations like Madd. As will be discussed later in the study, security infiltration specifically targeted MTYA to derail its organizational power. This does not mean internal hierarchies between members do not exist, but its formal structure, political consciousness, and organizational power instilled a discipline that enabled a sustained collective decision-making process with residents and organizations such as Madd.

6.4 Madd Platform and Maspero: Coordinating Mechanisms

Madd Platform plays a key brokering role between the state and Maspero residents (much like 10 Tooba) through different coordinating mechanisms, including: introducing organizational and state networks to Maspero and MTYA activists; influencing the 2015 Maspero Re-Design Competition through inclusive participation; and formulating the Maspero Parallel Participatory Project (MPPP).

Madd started to apply its participatory and advocacy principles in forging relationships and trust among Maspero residents. Due to the volatile political climate, building trust and solidarity with Maspero initially proved arduous. Madd, along with a local “notable”, organized a public conference to inform residents of renovation plans in Maspero (Rami, interview, February 2, 2015). Madd members were almost “beaten up,” according to Rami (*ibid*). Were it not for establishing trust with the notable, who urged people to “get their act together,” Madd members would have faced increased hostility. Madd members rented an apartment in Maspero and turned it into a local office, where they held organizational meetings. Gradually, locals started to accept them in the community and express less suspicion over their actions. The importance of renting a space in the area enabled Madd members to understand the complex social and economic relations governing Maspero. Rami explains:

At first, there were these looks of “Who are they?” “Are they spies?” Every day, 10-12 people would come in the office and we would just chat. They saw everything that was happening. It wasn’t just a participatory process that was superficial. If there was a fight in the street, we would see it. If there was a wedding, we would be there. If there was a funeral, we would go (Rami, interview, December 21, 2015).

Madd’s brokerage role, like 10 Tooba, passes through its co-founder, who not only serves as a connection between the state and Maspero, but between urban design organizations in the city like 10 Tooba and Megawra. Rami introduced a host of embedded networks from past professional occupations, which, in turn, develops social capital and strong-based ties. Since all urban design

organizations share participatory planning ideals, it makes articulating and actualizing planning goals and visions more coherent, especially when 10 Tooba and Madd work in the same district. This organizational infrastructure in Cairo contributes different resources, complementary interpretive frameworks under “participation”, and foments different specializations contributing to informal settlement upgrading.

For example, Madd tapped into its governmental networks to invite former MURIS Minister to Maspero. Madd members, including Rami, knew Iskandar quite well given her support for participatory planning and previous collaboration on multiple informal settlement projects in Cairo. Iskandar met with nearly 60 people from Maspero at a local *qahwa* and gained insight over local opinions and visions regarding upgrades. Moreover, Madd and the MTYA organized a public conference with Iskandar, the Deputy Cairo Governor, and later, with former Prime Minister Mehleb and the Cairo Governor. Trust between locals and Madd instantly changed. Rami explains: “Basically, [the people] said [Madd activists] were not a bunch of kids tricking us into something, or not one of the thousands of researchers that came here before. It was real” (interview, December, 21, 2015).

Madd worked with the state to devise and approve the MPPP, which proved to be a learning process. After 1.5 years of working solely with residents to devise the MPPP as a “parallel project” to the state, Madd members decided to introduce it to the state. The nearly 300-page MPPP document formulated coherent planning tools in partnership with the state to renovate Maspero, including a comprehensive zoning plan which detailed people’s allocation of land, the size of the area, and the relationship between investors and inhabitants. Madd members learned negotiation skills and carved out a role in the state’s “invited spaces” without compensating original objectives and plans. Madd met once a week for three consecutive months with a host of state officials,

including former Prime Minister Mehleb. Members soon realized the principles and practices they pledged to adhere by were simply “fading away”:

They were powerful people from the state. We found, in the beginning, our principles and process are fading away. Then we started to learn how to negotiate with them until we reached a zoning plan, without any compromises, to the one we had initially created. It was important for us to learn and understand it. (Rami, interview, February 2, 2015).

In the 2015 Maspero Re-Design Competition, the state refused Madd’s request to be on the final selection committee—a clear exclusionary measure based on the state’s awareness that Madd possess sufficient knowledge about Maspero’s built environment and its complex social makeup. Instead of succumbing to state pressure, Madd insisted Maspero residents are adequately represented on the Competition’s selection committees. Madd formally requested that Iskandar place 12 men and women from Maspero on the three selection committees, including those from the MTYA. Residents ended up giving Forester + Planning a complete 10/10 score.

Thus, Madd’s brokering roles stimulated negotiations with state around the Maspero Re-design Competition, which Fosters + Partners won the bid to implement the project. Madd infused participation of residents on the selection committees, thus introducing residents to the state’s “invited spaces”. Initially, the state desired to exclude any local organizations from participating in drafting specific selection criteria international and local architectural firms were required to abide by in submitting design proposals. Madd insisted on its inclusion and was able, through previous connection with Iskandar, to partially draft the competition’s selection criteria.

Chapter 7: Derailing Insurgencies

A significant component of planning insurgencies remains its different ties to power elites and derailing strategies imposed through state and private developer actors. This chapter addresses the way in which RB and Maspero are derailed through embedded spatial hierarchies (“repressive insurgencies”); state and private co-optation strategies using charity organizations; local securitization measures controlling socio-spatial functions; and the creation of an insurgent elite fixated on participatory planning ideals fragmenting insurgents’ original objectives

7.1 A New Insurgent Elite and Participatory Planning Advocacy

City-wide organizations’ enthusiasm for “participatory planning” have largely worked in favor of the state’s plan of “sweeping” both areas. Consequently, a new insurgent elite has been established with organizations such as Madd and 10 Tooba, who, despite noble intentions, are transformed into official spokespersons for both areas as expert planners, architects and activists. Miraftab (2012) claims insurgent planning radically departs from participatory planning principles due to the latter’s fixation on citizen participation and direct action:

Whereas participatory planning enlists citizens to participate in decisions through professional planners and formalized, often bureaucratized, structures of participation, insurgent planning occurs when citizens act directly through self-determined oppositional practices that constitute and claim urban spaces. Insurgent planning is a contested field of interaction among multiple actors including, but not confined to professional planners, who determine the arenas of action to address the specific forms of oppression (p.2).

The aforementioned organizations’ fixation with participatory planning as a globally marketed planning methodology complements participatory planning principles espoused by the World Bank, the United Nations, international planning agencies, and the state. It is no surprise that agencies, often responsible for installing debilitating austerity measures designed to dismantle developing countries’ national economies, are listed as partners on reports issued by Madd and 10

Tooba members. Participatory planning in this context depoliticizes collective actions in RB and Maspero because it privileges the role of professional planners and architects in the planning process, often supported by the state. Further, participation becomes enshrined as *the goal*, while local insurgencies often go overlooked.

This remains conspicuous in Maspero, where the state forced Madd to focus on monetary compensation as a viable means to resolve residents' urban plight. Knowing that urban segregation and the new fantastical images of new residential communities in 6th of October would impact Maspero residents, the state engaged in a pure numbers game centering Maspero's struggles around monetary compensation to indirectly entice residents to depart for new apartments. In 2012 and 2013, the Cairo Governor promised to construct 64 housing "towers" over 7 feddans in Maspero, requiring residents to temporarily depart homes. Residents and MTYA rejected the idea due to fear of never returning back to their neighborhoods. When Madd intervened, they deemed the proposed project a complete failure: seven feddans would never encompass 64 residential towers. Realizing the state would pursue its project regardless, Madd prepared a questionnaire for Maspero residents in which 92% expressed desire to remain in Maspero. The Housing and Informal Settlements Ministry provided monetary compensation packages after learning of residents' opposition. Madd, as a result, then offered residents three choices: to rent their housing units (for EGP 150, or \$16 per month); rent titles where residents would pay EGP 250-800 depending on unit size and will own their property after 20 years; or monetary compensation. The state initially offered residents a meagerly EGP 15,000 (\$1600) per room for apartments. Madd's negotiation with the state raised monetary compensation to EGP 50,000 per room (about \$5700) and EGP 25,000 for each additional room (about \$2900). Residents were generally content, as they now had the option to buy property outside the area with compensation packages. Following this, Madd conducted another questionnaire: only 60% wanted to remain in Maspero. (Rami, interview, February 2, 2016).

Madd discovered that the state deployed monetary compensation as an indispensable tool of eviction. The aforementioned ministries had no problem increasing monetary packages to Maspero residents to essentially rid themselves of a growing insurgent nuisance. Monetary compensation essentially meant residents receive a small sum of money to allow the state to restructure their living spaces. Some families accepted the packages, sold their property, and resettled in areas such as 6th of October and other geographically isolated towns in Cairo's periphery. Encouraging monetary compensation, however, meant families ran out of compensation money quickly and did not have the ability to pay their new apartment rents or mortgages. Compensation also fragmented residents and organizations' initial objectives from resisting evictions to a fixation on monetary compensation.

Negotiations with the state over the Maspero Re-Design Competition further diverged residents' narrative of resistance against evictions. The Competition was launched by MURIS' Iskandar and the Cairo Governorate in July 2015, with the winner announced in August 2015. Several international and local firms submitted bids, including Fosters + Partners, who eventually won the bid. Madd, through its connection with Iskandar, pushed for "resident committees" to become part of the competition's selection panels. Maspero residents would head three selection panels: stores, owners and renters. Residents demanded a renovation process which adequately compensated the three aforementioned groups. Fosters + Partners and the state shrewdly appealed to the residents in the final designs, largely preserving the urban fabric and encompassing pictures of Maspero residents on rooftops, cafes and in alleyways in the designs (Appendix: Figure 17). Additionally, Sir Norman Foster of Fosters + Planning, a global renowned architect, met with residents, including 'Amm Saeed and MTYA members. "It was a game well played by Fosters" (Rami, interview, February 2, 2016). During the Competition, Madd sent Fosters a comprehensive report of Maspero, urging the firm to respect the existing urban fabric and social relations. Although

not completely sold, Madd were satisfied with the initial design renderings, realizing other adjustments and workshops would take place in the future to improve the plan (*ibid*).

One of 10 Tooba's co-founders told English news source *Mada Masr* that Fosters + Planning's project "is not gentrification" because "the street fabric will be similar" (Magid, 2015). The masterplan suggests otherwise. The Fosters + Partners masterplan clearly bases its project on commodification of land and privatization. The plan clearly states commercial and residential projects are based on "estimated land values" along the Nile River and main streets, while mixed-use buildings and open community spaces will occupy the more private "central core of the theme" (Fosters + Partners, 2015). At the heart of Maspero, architects will create a "central open space" for community events and celebrations. The central place is connected to a food market which serves as the "retail spine" along with a hospital at the northern corner of Maspero, which appropriates MTYA members' vision. A "footbridge" will connect Maspero to the "exclusive" neighborhood of Zamalek with a "lagoon" lined with cafes, restaurants and shops at the end of the pedestrian structure to make it a "highly desirable location" (*ibid*).

First, the plan's most blatant aspect remains the footbridge to the affluent island of Zamalek to transform the area into a "leisure destination," while maintaining demographic heterogeneity. Connecting a footbridge to Zamalek opens the investing gates to Cairo's urban elite to purchase real-estate in the area. Since Zamalek hosts foreign embassies, it is considered a European and American hub, which ties the project indirectly with the Cairo's 2050 vision of a global city feel. Second, the project concentrates high-end real estate projects on the periphery of Maspero, while maintaining the hegemony of ERTU and Foreign Affairs Ministry buildings. Third, the masterplan seeks to rearrange spatial dynamics, creating a central food market which serves as a bonding and gathering site. This spatial intervention cuts through social and political spaces maintained by Maspero residents, especially impacting how residents appropriate public space and everyday spatial practices. The

central market gradually erodes hidden insurgent networks within private cul-de-sacs and narrow alleyways and gives security authorities spatial power to control potential insurgencies.

Madd's insistence on the presence of residents on the negotiation committees shifted MTYA and Maspero residents' resistance against on evictions. Residents became preoccupied with representation on the negotiation committees, which essentially entailed hollow political power sharing confined within privatized and bureaucratic state-controlled decision-making spaces. Although residents voted for Fosters + Partners design, resident's committees served as a pure public relations stunt, leading residents to believe input actually impacted the design. Madd's invitation to state officials in Maspero amplified its role in the project, which promptly allowed the state to formally redefine the movement's discourse. Rather than treading the path of communal renovations of Maspero's built environment and MTYA's concrete demands, residents and organizers alike in Maspero are now fixated on the re-design project and the possibility of increasing monetary compensation.

Moreover, state negotiations and meetings resulted in unfavorable views held by MTYA and Maspero residents towards RB residents. In 2015, Madd and 10 Tooba organized a joint meeting of RB and Maspero residents with state officials. During the meeting, Ramlet Bulaq representatives' questions primarily revolved around monetary compensation, which frustrated MTYA members and Maspero residents ('Amm Saeed, interview, December 21, 2015). Maspero residents grew frustrated over Ramlet Bulaq's fixation on monetary compensation, arguing that it diverged from original goals of renovation. "The problem is not with us," 'Amm Saeed explained. "It's with [Ramlet Bulaq] representatives. They wanted the money; it was clear from the beginning." Rami, who organized the meeting with the MTYA, affirmed this sentiment: "All of the Maspero team were leaving saying that the Ramlet Bulaq wanted to cash in. (Interview, February 2, 2016).

Not only did co-optation change Maspero's discourse, it altered the original vision of Madd itself. Initially an independent entity working outside the state, state officials forced Madd to enter into months of negotiations with officials, which resulted in the creation of new insurgent elite actors preoccupied with giving weight to "major stakeholders", including major foreign investors in the region and state planning agencies, to fulfill participatory planning principles without actualized political changes. New and existing language associated with participatory planning ideals was invoked in Madd's articulation: stakeholders, participation, and needs assessment. In tandem with endless securitization measures in Maspero, Madd's involvement with the state and its fixation on participatory planning ideals not only placated and fragmented residents through state power, but it divided their initial plan to engage in actualized insurgency and not a representative one built around formalized, bureaucratic structures dictated by private firms and state officials.

7.2 Parliamentary Influence

Securitization measures incorporate political suffocation for both Bulaq areas. The Karam Foundation, founded by a prominent former member of parliament (MP) located near Maspero, offers both areas some charity services, chief among them "aid with renovations and emergency situations (like fires)" (Karam, interview, December 17, 2015). Karam founded the charity after fellow parliamentary members personally witnessed the "horrific conditions" people in Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero experience in site visits in the early 2000's (interview, December 17, 2015). Sitting behind a paper-stacked desk and a computer in his private office, Karam criticized "those responsible" for the tragedies of Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero, hinting at Sawiris' development. Furthermore, he criticized "those affluent areas" that "have all of the resources" and leave informal settlements stranded with dilapidated services.

On the surface, Karam Foundation's work seems philanthropic, but it is inherently political. Karam Foundation is at the intersection of private, state and security interests. As with the low-ranking officers, Karam Foundation employs charity work and parliamentary influence to derail insurgencies. For instance, a 2012 fire erupted in Ramlet Bulaq killing a five-year old and destroying several homes. Ramlet Bulaq residents attempted to connect a fire-hose to a water supply in the NCT, but management and staff refused. Karam Foundation quickly intervened nearly a week later and provided necessary relief to families – hence, the “fire” provision in the foundation's objectives—while families planned mobilizations against the NCT. The charitable work of Karam effectively acquiesced the emergence of demonstrations. Karam managed to keep a potential mobilization targeting the NCT “dormant”.

The following is a brief heated exchange between ‘Amm Ahmed, ‘Umm Zizo, and ‘Umm Mariam, which reveals the kind of fragmentation Karam's charity ensued over the past 15 years in Ramlet Bulaq. People of RB will never forget how Karam provided relief in times of distress:

‘Amm Ahmed: Karam? He doesn't bring us anything! Karam does not have anything to do with [bringing in services]. He's done nothing in terms of development in El Ramla. He'll only be good to us when he's trying to win the parliamentary seat in the district.

‘Umm Zizo: What? No, Karam has been giving people help for the past 15 years. He comes here in the winter and gives out blankets. Before and after the fire, he used to donate stuff to us. He gave us food too.

‘Amm Ahmed: We're not looking for food right now. We're looking for somewhere to live. It does not pertain to us. We don't go hungry, do we?!

‘Umm Zizo: But if he provides us sustenance, then he has helped us.

‘Umm Mariam: You can't deny what the guy did as well, ‘Amm Ahmed.

‘Amm Ahmed: No, but we're asking you if Karam has done anything here in terms of development our area/land.

‘Umm Mariam: No, he didn't do anything in the land, you're right.

In Maspero, ‘Amm Saeed reveals how Karam pays lip services to equal rights to the city, but contributes to the political and physical suffocation of Maspero and Ramlet Bulaq by partnering up with Sawiris on business developments. Karam owns a small car dealership and showroom in the Maspero Triangle, just behind the Foreign Affairs Ministry building, but it remains unclear whether Karam actually collaborates with Sawiris on business developments. More importantly, Karam used the monetary compensation narrative to attempt to derail MTYA’s activities in Maspero. As such, monetary compensation solidifies the narrative and alters the people’s original objectives, as ‘Amm Saeed says:

Unfortunately, he’s a partner with Sawiris in many developments. You’ll see it Ramlet Bulaq. My personal impression is he pays in order to win the [parliament] seat. Once you take the seat, then the story begins to change. When he called us, he was talking about compensation and he told us to think about it. We flat out told him no. Just forget the story about compensation. We even reject it as an idea (‘Amm Saeed, interview, 2015).

Karam is not the only parliament member attempting to derail insurgencies. Sameh, an MP and a defense lawyer for several ex-ministers in the Mubarak regime, recently won a parliament seat in Bulaq District. During his election campaign, Sameh renovated and installed several collapsed roofs and connected several water and sewage pipes in several parts of El Kafrawi (Abu Ali, interview, December 17, 2015). In Maspero, Sameh met with several MTYA members and urged residents to “coordinate together” on matters relating to the area’s renovation. The defense lawyer used his state connections to appeal to Maspero residents to solely win their votes, as ‘Amm Saeed explains:

A recent parliament member here came and told us, “We want to coordinate with one another.” We told him no. He said he’ll call the Cairo Governor. We responded that we have already surpassed the governor and the district municipality [in state negotiations]. Both the governor and the district municipality are simply executive administrations (‘Amm Saeed, interview, 2015).

The parliamentary influence of the Karam Foundation and other MPs parallel Sawiris' co-optation of labor in Ramlet Bulaq. The Karam foundation supplants the state's role in persuading Maspero and RB residents to accept monetary compensation as a viable means to improve "horrific" living conditions. Karam, the charity head, for example, provides monthly financial aid to families ranging from EGP 15-25 (\$1.50 – \$2.50) per month (al-Jaberi, 2012). The narrative of monetary compensation saturates the urban fabric and suppresses insurgencies —effectively altering residents' narrative from "we will never leave this land" to "we'll never leave, but how much are we looking for?"

7.3 Securitization of Ramlet Bulaq and Infiltration of MTYA

Securitization of RB augments economic and political suffocation of Ramlet Bulaq, transpiring through: (1) security raids; (2) spatial control of public space; (3) projection of power through low-ranking officers.

Five days following El Boni's death, which became known as the "Nile City clashes", the CSF executed several security raids in the early morning hours of August 8 and 9, 2012, between approximately 4 a.m. to 8 a.m., resulting in the arrest of 75 residents, all male, over the span of two days by Bulaq security (EIPR, 2012). Officers were especially keen, according to residents, to deface and destroy on eradicating front doors. In some instances, homes were destroyed from the interior, with several reports indicating officers stole money and valuables from a number of homes (*ibid*). Security forces were dressed and masked in black so that residents could not identify them. 'Umm Zizo, a woman dressed in the traditional long-black *jalabiya* (garment), with a semi-tucked hijab, recounted her experience with the early morning raids:

Look, I'll never forget when the security forces came storming in [to our place] and what my son felt, okay? Zizo [her son], come here! They entered and said 'the toughest house and the toughest guy in this area can't do anything about it!' Right?

What did the large guy wearing black do that day, Zizo? [Zizo proceeds to shout “OPEN THE DOOR!” and mimics security forces kicking down doors of homes] (Umm Zizo, interview, December 16, 2015).

The ensuing effect of the securitization impacts people’s everyday interactions with public space. The control of public clotheslines best illustrates how securitization penetrates micro-spaces in RB. Clotheslines retain both a social and spatial function—a gathering space for women to do laundry, an opportunity to appropriate and interact with public space, and as a connection site between different homes. However, as Kareem noted, the relationship between space and the people were fundamentally altered when it came to such commonly used structures: “If people do not have a clothesline, for example, and they decide to hammer one in, the security forces will round them up and take them to the nearest police station” (Kareem, interview, December 16, 2015).



Figure 11: A clothesline connecting several homes in Ramlet Bulaq. Source: Shakran, 2015)

While security forces do not specifically monitor public clotheslines, low-ranking officers will occasionally order its removal to instill fear in the community. Some of the homes contained private clotheslines attached to balconies or windows, but were not shared between neighbors.

Officers did not seem to alter private clotheslines as much as they did with public ones, which suggest a clear motive not only to spread fear among residents, but to penetrate valued social-spatial relations.

Securitization extends spatially via networks of low-ranking officers in RB. Briefly interviewing a low-ranking officer, who has served in the Ramlet Bulaq area for five years and is a resident of Bulaq, it remains clear that the Bulaq station controls space through issuance of wedding permits, among other methods. Sha'abi weddings primarily occur in public spaces, and as such, permits must be issued from security authorities to prevent noise pollution and traffic jams at major streets. Weddings may host well over 200-300 people and function socially as a neighborhood feast. An integral part of the tradition and customs of many Egyptians, entire neighborhoods may be invited to sing sha'abi music, eat, drink and dance into the wee hours of the morning in public spaces. At the discretion of low ranking officers, permits are issued and revoked at any time. Low-ranking officers expect cooperation from residents over issues ranging from raids to routine intelligence area's hidden networks. Expected reciprocation is normalized; when residents cooperate with officers, they are at least partially guaranteed protection from personal security harassment. However, this dynamic would not occur without low-ranking officers' deep local knowledge of the area and its complex social relations— either as residents, or through having served in an adjacent precinct.

During the officer's visit to the area as part of the study, locals referred to the officer by his first name (rarely with a "Pasha" or "Sir") and did not hold back relaying stories of neighborhood and personal security excursions in his presence. Additionally, the officer elected not to wear the formal white uniforms attributed to security forces, but rather regular civilian clothing. The strategy transcends multiple scales. For one, selection of attire facilitates penetration of hidden insurgent networks with relative ease. Secondly, due to upbringing in Bulaq District, locals view officers as

part of the area's social fabric and authoritarian figures simultaneously. Consequently, the Bulaq station prefers hiring locals as low-ranking officers due to their deep knowledge of social and familial networks in the area, which usually entails forceful recruitment of locals as informants. As such, low-ranking officers use these spatial control tactics as a power leverage over the area, while simultaneously relaying information to their higher-ups – a captain, major, or lieutenant colonel, among others.

The function of the raids and securitization measures in Ramlet Bulaq is two-fold: (1) intimidation for the means of eviction and (2) regaining symbolic and actual power over the area after the Interior Ministry incurred significant losses following the 2011 uprising. A famous authoritarian expression in Egypt captures both functions well: “Pummel the shackled to strike fear into those who are free.” Increased securitization sought to show “who’s boss” after residents dispelled fear over the power of security officers following El Boni’s death. Furthermore, the creation of popular committee and the creation of organizations on a city-wide level, alarmed local security forces, who were under impression that they may be losing a security grip over the area. The authoritarian image of local Bulaq police took a hit among the people. To restore this authoritarian image, the raids, arrests and spatial control constituted directly served Sawiris’ evictions plans and re-establish the local police’s image as the chief source of authority. Some residents allege Sawiris pays off local security to infiltrate the area and gradually agitate through securitization and harassment to force residents to depart. As a result, a host of individuals and families departed the neighborhood to temporarily settle with family outside the area when CSF executed the raids. When they returned, their houses were either destroyed or their neighbors were arrested. This shows multi-faceted nature of security raids.

For Maspero, securitization took a slightly different turn. Local security targeted the MTYA through: infiltration and political divisions over the Maspero Re-Design Competition. MTYA’s

radical language and organized mobilizations posed as a threat to the state and security forces, as such, it was only logical for the state and local security to attempt to co-opt and infiltrate the organization, as Rami explains:

The problem with an association like the MTYA is that, in the past, it was very strong. Because it was strong, the state doesn't want any kind of popular organizing to rise, and they destroyed them internally. They divided them politically (Rami, interview, 2016).

Rami attributes this to what he labels as “political divisions” in the MTYA, especially following the military assuming political power in 2013. Reflecting Egypt's current political climate, MTYA members' political fragmentation reflected national divisions between brotherhood and military camps. A faction of Egyptians views the 2013 ouster of former president and brotherhood member Morsi by the military as a coup and vehemently oppose the military regime. Others support the military wholeheartedly and claim Egypt was drowning in the brotherhood's religious propaganda. The same type of divisions existed in the MTYA. Political affiliations were not entirely vivid during interviews with ‘Amm Saeed and Wael, but it was implied when one or the other would describe the 2013 ouster of Morsi as “an event”, as opposed to an “uprising”.

Local security infiltration accentuated these political divisions. The Interior Ministry continually recruited certain residents in Maspero to guard state buildings such as the State TV and Foreign Affairs Ministry buildings. In October of 2012, for example, several Coptic members and organizations staged protests and sit-ins in front of the State TV building citing discrimination practices after the demolition of a church in Upper Egypt. The military was deployed and a massacre ensued. Ministry of Interior recruited residents from Maspero Triangle to protect certain property and buildings during the demonstrations. These recruitments continued to grow over the next couple of years, eventually impacting the MTYA. Essentially, the Interior Ministry and local security stations strategically placed “backers” from Maspero to infiltrate MTYA's insurgent practices and

control future political mobilizations in Maspero (Rami, interview, 2016). These “backers” would relay information to authorities on mobilizations and protect state buildings.

Furthermore, divisions among MTYA members extend to the recent Maspero Re-Design Competition organized by the dissolved Ministry of Informal Settlements. Essentially, the Association was divided into groups in favor or against the project. Some brotherhood sympathizers wholeheartedly opposed the competition because they interpreted it as military-backed project. Many residents and MTYA members wanted to personally gain from the project via monetary compensation, while others truly desired the best possible outcome for their neighborhoods (Rami, interview, 2016).

In RB and Maspero, securitization employed similar spatial and material functions. In El Ramla, the Bulaq Station and the Ministry of Interior deployed low-ranking officers to inculcate spatial control and discipline. Low-ranking officers were part of the social and urban fabric of RB giving them spatial and social knowledge of Ramlet Bulaq’s population. Furthermore, security forces were able to spatially control connecting sites like public clotheslines where residents meet, interact and bond. For Maspero, MTYA’s potent organizing and mobilizations impelled local security infiltration.

7.4 Embedded Spatial Hierarchies: Gendered Space

The whole situation here is about what the people want [in Ramlet Bulaq]. Look, let’s leave us from what the women want right now, just focus on the men and the young men because they’re important. If it’s renovating, how will they do it? Give us our rights (Moe, interview, December 16, 2015).

The manifestation of public insurgent spaces in both areas is not removed from internal spatialized and structural gender hierarchies manifest in the public and private domains. The above quote was in response to a group of women who had come to express their visions for RB. Moe

framed “the rights” to RB in a patriarchal fashion, excluding women entirely from the collective decision-making process. This exclusion manifests within “gendered public spaces”. As Guru (2003) says: “When cultures feel under threat from more dominant or subordinate groups, it is women that become the target of control in order to mark political, religious and other boundaries” (p.19, as quoted in Smyth, 2008).

During an observation in a semi-enclosed public space in RB, a few women were seen conversing with hijabs (religious head covering) loosely tied. Traditionally, women completely cover hair with hijabs in public settings. Entering this space with the gatekeeper, we said “Al Salamo Alaykom,” a customary greeting re-appropriated from its traditional usage to indicate when men enter a space inhabited by women. As soon the greeting was heard, women fixed their hijabs and covered their hair. A public-private space dynamic unfolds here which affords women to appropriate public space in a manner that: (1) Protects them from the traditional male presence and gaze dominant in public spaces; (2) Enables women to assign ownership to a public space; and (3) Transforms public spaces from “spaces of discipline” to a “spaces of collective solidarity”. As breadwinners, men must depart the “domestic life” and make “the streets” their primary places of social and economic interaction. Public cafes, for example, are exclusively male-dominated gathering and bonding spaces.

Women’s spatial practices challenge these gendered configurations. Women sell vegetables and fruits in public spaces and head local candy and soda kiosks, usually as a form of vital income for the family. Some women cook and do laundry in public collectively, usually around public clotheslines or in front of apartment buildings. These public clotheslines, as will be seen in the subsequent section, are targeted for removal by local security. Furthermore, women show how public space simultaneously functions as a private space where women, who traditionally wear hijabs in public, were comfortable enough to remove hijabs, creating a collective identity among one another.

This suggests an intricate relationship with the space, as women attempt to redefine and challenge the concept of gendered spaces.

This gendered public-private space dynamic further exists in Maspero, according to Rami, an urban researcher at Madd organization. During his two-year field work in Maspero, Rami observed the existing dynamics between cul-de-sacs in Maspero and its impact on women's decisions in public:

We used to ask the women “Until what point are you comfortable not having the head covering on? The balcony [of your apartment] maybe?” They responded: “yeah”. We then asked: “What about the *hara*? They responded: “Yeah, maybe.” “What about the perpendicular main street?” They would say “no”. The cul-de-sac was a private space that women sit in comfortably. A sense of honorship. They gathered to cook, they gathered to wash clothes. (Rami, February 2, 2016).



Figure 12: A cul-de-sac hara in near Abu Talib in Maspero. Source: Shakran, 2015

This demonstrates the praxis between spatial practices and spatial imaginaries. The women of Maspero were able to continually shift the meaning of space according to their neighborhood

practices and challenge the idea of gendered spaces. Further, they were able to show their neighborhood's salient social and cultural fabric. Even though men were present in the *hawary* (alleyways), they were comfortable loosely tying the head covering or not donning at all. This suggests a deep sense of neighborhood trust. Moreover, women spatially bounded their cultural practices to preserve their identity by excluding a parallel street, either part of another Maspero neighborhood, or part of a traffic intersection, from their daily cultural practices. More importantly, both examples illustrate spaces as a reflection of the political. Women's continual challenge of gendered spaces was a political statement challenging both the patriarchal conception of public space and state-projected monolithic spatial representation.

Conclusion

This study aimed to show how degree of organizational formalization impacts the materialization of Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero planning insurgencies. Moreover, the study shows how, using Beard's nuanced model of radical planning, insurgents navigate between different types of planning such as covert planning, participatory planning, and insurgent planning. The study addressed the derailing of insurgencies through embedded hierarchies and state and private actor co-optation and securitization strategies. RB's planning insurgencies were unsustainable, evidenced by a significance decrease in mobilizations (courts cases, demonstrations and insurgent knowledge production) spearheaded by the local Ramlet Bulaq Popular Committee and the city-wide organizational infrastructure (ABEF, EIPR and 10 Tooba). RB's mobilizations have significantly waned in the past three years as state power increased due to unorganized efforts.

Despite facing similar grievances, Maspero's insurgencies followed a formal organizational structure through the MYTA, translating grievances over evictions into political actions by establishing strong-based ties with Madd, finding alternative housing for displaced families, re-conceptualizing space through MYTA's political activities, and establishing a sustained presence in the Maspero Re-Design Competition, among others. MYTA navigates between participatory planning (negotiations with the state), covert planning ("illegally" appropriating public electricity from the ERTU building) and insurgent planning (finding alternative housing for displaced families). However, insurgencies continue to be derailed via state and private actor co-optation, securitization strategies seeking to control space and infiltrate local networking capacities, and embedded hierarchies. Despite their good intentions, different ties to power elites created a new insurgent elite, which is fixated on participatory and professionalized planning ideals by introducing local insurgents to a highly professionalized and state-controlled negotiation process and infusing narratives of monetary compensation which fragmented narratives and resistance strategies.

Several key themes can be formulated to add to the understanding of insurgent planning in Cairo:

First, insurgencies *transgressed* geographical and social boundaries. Insurgencies established networks and acquired resources with city-wide level organizations such as ABEF, Madd 10 Tooba and EIPR; navigated between invited (state negotiations) and invented spaces (Ramlet Bulaq Popular Committee and MTYA); and provoked memories of violent security raids and deaths (El Boni).

Second, RB and Maspero insurgencies were *counter-hegemonic* because they navigated between participatory, covert and insurgent planning under an authoritarian context. Insurgents implemented small physical improvement such as installing makeshift housing and “illegally” appropriating public electricity from the ERTU building (Sections 5.5 and 6.1); established a presence on the Maspero Re-Design Competition selection panels (Section 6.4); and mobilized through demonstrations, the anti-eviction campaign, production of counter-narratives over evictions and the tragic death of El Boni, finding alternative housing for displaced families, and the production of insurgent knowledge in the *Maspero Parallel Participatory Project* and the *Ramlet Bulaq Social and Urban Transformations*. (Sections 5.3-5.6 and 6.2-6.4).

Third, city-wide and local insurgencies *imagined* new alternative future. Insurgents destabilized the state’s spatial conceptualization of their living spaces, re-imagining areas based on political activities and familial associations (Sections 5.2 and 6.2) and envisioned the construction of a new Bulaq District Hospital and schools in vacant lots for the entire Bulaq District (Section 6.2).

Fourth, insurgencies continued to be *derailed* through embedded hierarchies, state, and private actors, including: securitization of public space and infiltration of MTYA (Section 7.3), Sawiris’ labor co-optation (Section 4.3) and state cooptation through controlled negotiation processes and parliamentary charities (Sections 7.1 and 7.2). Further, the paper unpacked some of the structural hierarchies and paradoxes embedded in these insurgencies, namely gendered spatial

hierarchies and the rise of the “new insurgent elite”. Women challenge spatial hierarchies by engaging in specific spatial practices such as selling products in public spaces and creating a collective identity around shared connection sites (Section 7.4). Meanwhile, an insurgent elite adhered to participatory planning ideals which introduced invited spaces (Section 7.1) and infused narratives over monetary compensation, which fragmented residents and insurgencies’ original narratives and mobilizations against evictions.

The study sought to make a modest contribution to the existing body of literature and case studies in insurgent and radical planning literature. Ramlet Bulaq and Maspero remain amid a multiplicity of overlapping forces grappling over power. Instead of succumbing to state, private and market-led forces, both insurgencies demonstrated their counter-hegemonic, transgressive and imaginative criteria of insurgent planning. Sandercock (1999) claims insurgent practices may constitute stories and practices of resistance “not always “successful” (1999, p.41 as quoted in Meth, 2010). The very inception and implementation of these insurgencies, despite embedded hierarchies, heavy security crackdown, and co-optation tactics, captures the complexity behind insurgent planning practices in Ramlet Bulaq and the Maspero Triangle.

Appendix

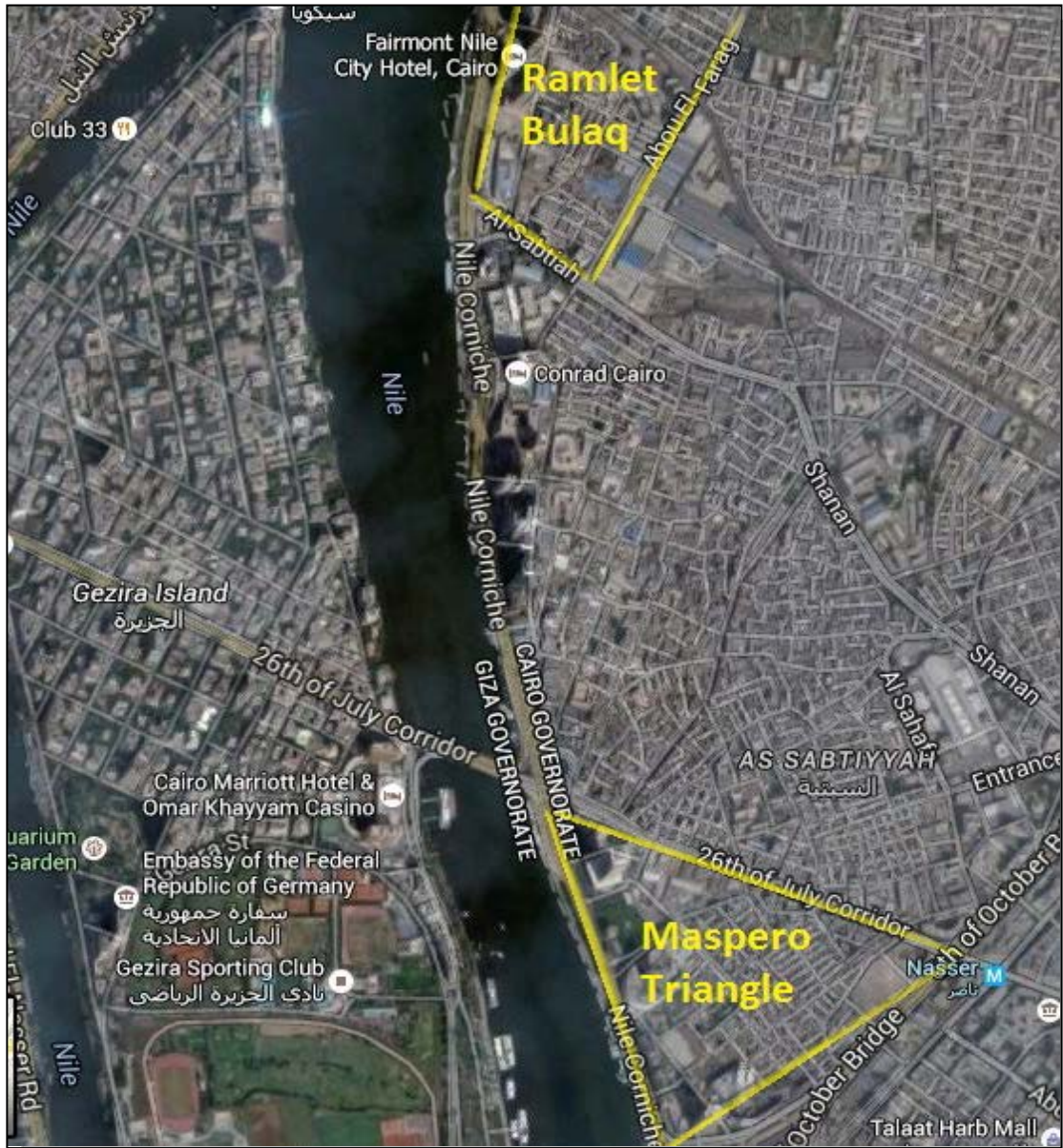


Figure 13: Overview of Maspero and Ramlet Bulaq. Both areas are within the Bulaq District and are nearly a mile apart. The Nile Corniche St. which contains all the major state and private business developments runs parallel to both Bulaq areas. Source: Google



Figure 14: Ramlet Bulaq close-up. Nile City Towers and Fairmont Hotel captured in red zone. Source: Google



Figure 15: Close up of Maspero. The Corniche Nile St. (labeled “Nile Corniche”) runs parallel to Maspero and is where all state buildings, offices, and luxurious hotels are located. Two largest state buildings in the area: Foreign Affairs Ministry Building and State TV Building. Source: Google

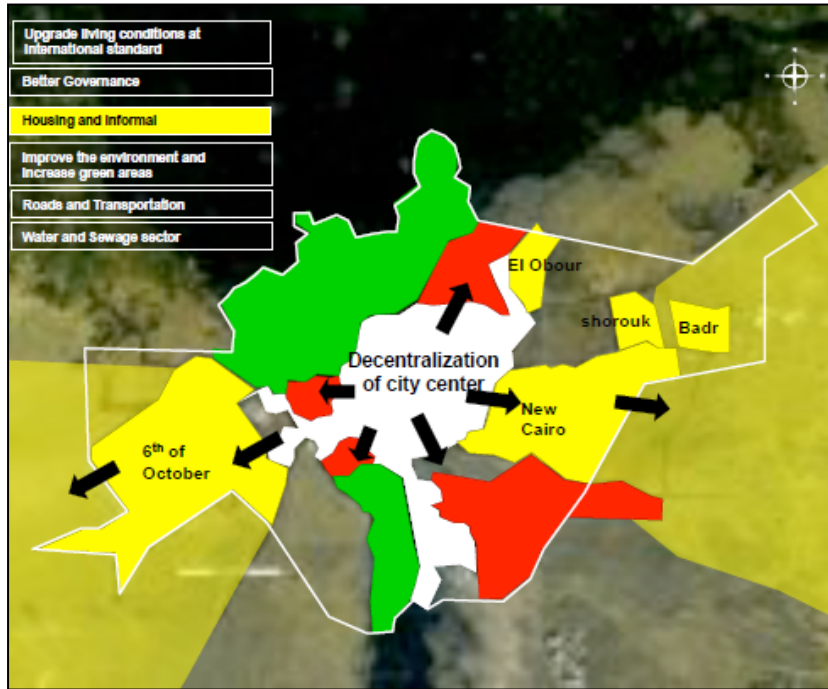


Figure 16: Cairo's 2050 Plan of Rarefaction. Source: Cairo 2050 Plan



Figure 17: Foster + Partners design panels. On a rooftop is a “traditional” man donning a jalabiya making tea. The State TV Building, several newly-added towers and the Foreign Affairs Ministry looms in the background. Source: Fosters + Planning

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