The City of the Dead as a place to live: unpacking the narratives about tomb communities

by

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Abstract

The housing crisis in Cairo, Egypt is a "wicked problem" that has stumped planners and built environment professionals for decades. Cairo's 20 million residents are engaged in an everyday struggle for space, particularly housing. The current housing stock does not respond to the residents' everyday needs. Overpopulation and lack of affordable housing has resulted in residents squatting and self-building housing. My research centers around one such "informal" settlement called the City of the Dead (COD). A series of cemeteries located in Cairo's city center, COD is home to many of Cairo's poor and rural migrants. Planning efforts such as the Masterplan Cairo 2050 outline intentions to evict these residents, without details on their rehabilitation. Standing between decision makers and new or modified development, are embedded place narratives that cannot be erased. Narratives hold power to shape, change, and ignore what already exists. This thesis explores the narratives about the City of the Dead that are ignored in Masterplan Cairo 2050. Using qualitative methods, I focus on unpacking these narratives about COD, held by major stakeholders such as government officials, urban planners, popular media, and other sources, in order to elucidate how these, determine the negative planning outcomes proposed in policy documents. Based in the analysis of primary and supplementary data, I unpack the dominant narrative based in themes around legality, relocation, services, historical and cultural aspects, urban fabric, planning and governance. Through this in-depth analysis of themes and terminology used by respondents, I show that the dominant narrative about COD imagines it to be a cemetery and not a residential settlement. Also, evident in the plans and policies pertaining to COD, and in the terminology used to describe those who live in COD, this dominant narrative ignores the value that COD brings as a place to live to its residents.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Problem

Cairo, Egypt is the largest city in the Middle East by population, and it is a notable cultural and political hub (Sims, 2003). Population rates have only increased in the last few decades causing continuous urbanization (Soliman & De Soto, 2003). It is admittedly difficult to make policies and plans that cater to the housing needs of the Greater Cairo Region's (GCR) 20 million inhabitants, but it is the state's responsibility no less. In GCR there exists both a surplus of vacant homes that were built for the wealthy[1] by the private sector and by individuals (Fahmi & Sutton, 2008) and a lack of affordable housing across multiple socio-economic levels, but particularly for middle to no-income residents. As a result, there is an ongoing need for informal housing in Cairo, Egypt. In other words, informal housing is needed because the formal housing stock in Cairo does not match the needs of those who live there. This work looks at one such housing settlement called The City of the Dead (COD). COD is made up of a series of cemeteries that serve as a formal[2] burial site for the dead and a fully functioning informal community for the living (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Cemeteries in COD are dissimilar to traditional cemeteries found in the United States, for example, in that they are not made up of burial plots six feet deep with grave markers surrounded by green space (Soliman, 2015). Rather, the majority of burial sites consist of permanent, above ground structures surrounded by courtyards. Many of the built structures in COD have become temporary or permanent homes for much of Cairo's urban poor and rural migrants (Nedoroscik, 1997). It is perceived by some that informal settlements are a result of the city being overpopulated by "peasants" (Bayat & Denis, 2000, p. 185). Partially in response to this narrative, Masterplan Cairo 2050 was drafted in 2007-08 (Tarbush, 2012). The plan proposed demolishing many places of informal housing including the City of the Dead (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). Demolition would first require eviction and relocation of informal residents to "new housing extensions" in the desert (Tarbush, 2012, p.176), yet Cairo 2050 is scant on details about this process. Though Cairo 2050 is no longer the "official" plan, much of the logic and intent behind it is evident in current planning documents (Tadamun, 2014). Because the narratives held by major stakeholders do not imagine COD to be a place to

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[1] It should be noted that vacant self-built informal housing units have emerged in Cairo, particularly in the last decade. This can be attributed to the building process becoming too expensive and/or an expectation that those living in the unit would pay a higher rent to the speculator-owners as time goes on (Fahmi & Sutton, 2008).

[2] The word formal here has a dual meaning. Formal as in the cemetery is a proper burial site for the dead and formal as in the cemetery was formally planned

live, the site is still up for demolition. This work will explore the narratives about the City of the Dead held by major stakeholders, popular media, and other sources that have led to negative planning outcomes, such as demolition, proposed in policy documents like Cairo 2050. Demolition for COD is problematic because it has served as a home for three generations of Egyptians (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). As Cairo's population continues to grow, there is need for an affordable housing stock to accommodate all residents, but this does not exist.

Research Question

How do particular narratives of the City of the Dead affect the current occupation[3] and the future planning surrounding this place?

Significance of Work

The scholarly intentions of this work closely align with the Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme study (Howeidy et al., 2009). The Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme study unpacks the complexities of informality by providing perspective from multiple stakeholders invested in the livelihood of multiple informal settlements in Egypt. My work focuses more narrowly on stakeholder narratives regarding only one informal settlement in Cairo: The City of the Dead. This contributes to the body of urban planning research because little is known about cemeteries as informal settlements globally. This research ties together the ideas of Robert A. Beauregard from his chapter in *Site Matters.* His chapter titled "From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity" reveals the powerful truth that before urban planners and designers take action, narratives on the sites in which they hope to act are embedded place narratives that cannot be erased. This thesis explores the narratives about the City of the Dead that will be ignored if the current plans for the site come to fruition. Narratives hold power - power to shape, change, and ignore what already exists. Any profession that deals with power structures will benefit from understanding how powerful interests can shape the way people see and understand a particular situation or place. Planning is a multi-faceted practice that leaves lasting social and physical impacts on communities. This work will inform my own profession and others' on how narratives ultimately lead to decision making. This work contemplates a series of questions to allow the reader to explore the larger social issues at hand that go beyond the topic of housing or narrative. Questions addressed in this work are:

[3] The word occupation here refers to people occupying, or living in, a space. This word is not intended to have a negative connotation or imply that people are 'invading' COD

Whose responsibility it is to provide affordable housing - the government or the resident? Why would someone willingly live in a cemetery? How does the presence of residents help the City of the Dead in terms of legality? How does terminology shape narrative? How do powerful interests shape narrative? How might planning for COD be reorganized to reduce power imbalances? Whose responsibility it is to provide infrastructure and urban services- the government or the resident?

Background

Urban Informality

Urban informality was first defined in literature in the 1970s (Perlman, 1976; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004) and is a term that encompasses many 'irregular' systems that enable communities to function. Subsets of an informal system include informal economies, services, social networks, and housing. This research focuses primarily on informal housing, or informal settlements. Formal housing is in most cases, characterized by legal methods of urbanization, whereas informal housing is created in a number of ways. In the Egyptian context, informal housing[4] is deemed as such if the government refuses to issue a building permit or there are no subdivision plans for a particular area (Sims, 2003). To put it plainly, informal settlements are any housing settlements that are not 'formal.' According to Ananya Roy, "Informal housing is a distinctive type of market where affordability accrues through the absence of formal planning and regulation" (Roy, 2005, p.149). Informal settlements have been constructed on agricultural lands, rural lands, urban areas, and in vacant development. During the beginning stages of informal settling, asphalt, road lighting, water, and sewage are completely missing (Osman, Divigalpitiya, Osman, Kenawy, Salem, & Hamdy, 2016). Over time, some of these necessities are added to the development to make it more livable (Osman, et al., 2016). There is a spectrum of variance between informal settlements (Abrams, 1966; Loftus-Farren, Z., 2011) and a squatter settlement or slum, is one type of informal settlement. The catch-all word 'slum' does not fully express the differences between one type of slum from another.

While slums are largely associated with the megacities of the global South, slums exist in both the global South and global North. There exists incredible variance among slums, as some slums are rented while others are owner-occupied. Some are legal while others are

[4]This definition has been narrowed by Egyptian lawmakers in recent years and will be discussed further in an upcoming section

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illegal. Some slums are in the middle of a city, and some are on agricultural lands. Slums vary in height, size, and livability (Abrams, 1966). Some slums are self-built while others are not. One area within a particular slum can have adequate access to urban services and infrastructure while an area within the same slum can be without. A city can have multiple slum areas that vary in desirability among low income residents. One slum in Cairo, for example, might be a 'better' or more socially acceptable place to live than the nearby slum neighborhood also in Cairo. Another type of informal settlement is the tent city - which exists in the United States (Loftus-Farren, Z., 2011). A tent city in Chicago, Illinois can be aided with support from nonprofit groups, churches, and schools while the same type of informal settlement, a tent city, in Portland, Oregon may not receive similar support (Loftus-Farren, Z., 2011).

Informal Housing as a Result of Lack of Affordable Housing

The reason informal housing exists in society is as nuanced as the settlements themselves. Informal housing as a subject, has been widely explored in academic literature (Moser, 1994) and researchers have different speculations on why informality exists based on their background or field of study. Poverty, lack of consistent income, rural to urban migration, and the lack of affordable housing options are some reasons for housing informality (Maher, 2017). In the case of Egypt, the lack of affordable housing stock is the biggest contributor to informal housing, though all of the reasons above intersect at some point. Even the cheapest place to live in the 'formal' sector is so expensive that low income urban residents have to find vacant land or underutilized development, in or around cities, to live in (Osman, et al., 2016; Perlman, 1976).

Housing affordability has two key components: the household's income and the housing cost (Ahmed, Khalifa, & Abdel, 2017). UN-Habitat defined affordable housing in 2010 as, "A housing expenditure that represents no more than 30 percent of the household income" (Ahmed et al., 2017, p.1). If the housing cost is greater than 30 percent, the household may not have enough money to spend on non-housing needs. Though 30 percent is widely accepted measurement, there is not a universally accepted method of calculating housing affordability (Ahmed et al., 2017). On a broader scale, housing affordability is affected by factors such as regional economic development, fiscal and monetary policies, and urban planning agendas, as well as quality, quantity and availability of housing stock (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013; Yates &

Milligan, 2007). All of these factors are ultimately regulated by the state[5] and should require proper attention. As countries continue to urbanize (Moser, 1994; Perlman, 1976) affordable housing provision has not kept pace with migration rates globally (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013). As a result, informal settlements are a current and future urban reality (Abrams, 1966; Billig, 2011). Migration rates directly affect the quantity of affordable housing necessary to service a particular area. Without access to affordable housing, migrants turn to informal housing to meet their needs. Asef Bayat, a prominent Iranian scholar who has written and taught extensively on informal urban space in the Middle East, gives the following account on why migrants found informal housing as their best option:

> "Since the 1950s hundreds of thousands of poor families have been part of a long and steady migration from Iran's villages and small towns to its big cities, some seeking to improve their lives, some simply trying to survive. Many of them settled quietly, individually or more often with their kin members, on unused urban lands or/and cheap purchased plots largely on the margin of urban centres. To escape from dealing with private landlords, unaffordable rent and overcrowding, they put up their shelters in illegally established sites with their own hands or with the help of relatives" (Bayat, 1997, p.53).

Though it was not listed as the sole reason, lack of affordable housing plays a role in migrants living informally in Iran. While Bayat, in this instance, focusses on Iran, the phenomena he describes is not unique to Iran. Across the world, rapid urbanization, and lack of affordable housing has pushed new migrants and low-income urban residents into informal housing which often involves self-construction on squatted land or adaptive reuse of existing disused structures.

Narratives of Informality

In the same way reasons for informality vary, so too do narratives about informal settlements. Generally speaking, the literature on informal settlements can be divided into two dominant narratives: problematic and hopeful. Scholars call out the fact that there are two dominating narratives of informal housing (Roy, 2005; O'Donnell, 2010).

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[5] The state is an institution where the powers of a city are concentrated, such as the military or police. There are two types of states: authoritarian and democratic (Chen, Orum, & Paulsen, 2018).

The problematic narrative imagines informal settlements as grim areas of concentrated poverty that must be eradicated. Slums of today are exclusively for the poorest and most vulnerable. Because of unanticipated economic change, slums exist (Davis, 2006). Davis acknowledges that others hold a narrative about slums that imagines them to be a result of "bad governance". Davis does not see this as a complete narrative because it does not take into account land use issues that arise from "super-urbanization" such as sprawl, urban hazards, and environmental degradation (2004). In short, Davis sees slums as both the result of economic crisis and as crises themselves. Along the lines of Davis's work, scholars Hall & Pfeiffer believe that informal settlers build their communities without any regard for laws or planning regulations. Additionally, these scholars do not hold the state responsible in any way for the development of and need for informal settlements (Hall & Pfeiffer, 2000). Charles Stokes sets up his 1962 article by "assuming that slums do have a function in the development of the city" (p. 187). However, that role is later described as possibly cancerous (Stokes, 1962). In the same way cancer cells reproduce and ultimately kill their host, so too do slums of cities. Stokes does acknowledge that the cancer analogy breaks down, as slums are sometimes necessary and even helpful components of cities. Nevertheless, Stokes states that slums are home to "the poor and the stranger" (1962, p.188). His ultimate desire for informal settlers is to see them formalized or integrated into the rest of formal city life. In other words, he sees slums as merely a helpful tool for social mobility. If slums are not being used for this purpose and eventually eradicated, he is anti-slums.

In a work that explores the narratives of two informal settlements in the megacity[6] Dhaka, Bangladesh, scholars Fattah and Walters carefully articulate how this narrative of grim, concentrated poverty regarding informal settlements creates a stigma against such settlements resulting in those residents becoming the "other" of society.

> "Discourses of vilification consisting of deeply discrediting narratives that circulate in political, bureaucratic and journalistic fields produce the dominant imaginings of urban poor neighbourhoods (Butler, 2019; Parker & Karner, 2010; Wacquant, 2008). Such narratives portray informal settlement residents as undesirable in the city, and systematically exclude them from essential urban amenities and opportunities including access to employment, education, and medical care (Keene & Padilla, 2014). Through

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[6] Megacities are thought to be large, chaotic cities located in the global South. Megacities are deemed essentially powerless in comparison to Global Cities found in the global North (Roy, 2005).

territorial stigmatisation informal settlement residents become an "obnoxious and repugnant other, always underserving and tainted" (Auyero, 1999, p. 65), an out-of-place population to be removed from the city" (Fattah & Walters, p. 55-56)

This type of discourse influences both policy makers and urban planners. This, in turn, affects ordinary people's narrative of 'informals' and their settlements.

A more hopeful narrative discusses informal settlements as an opportunity for both the city and informal residents (Abrams, 1966; Turner, 1968). Abrams underscores housing informality as a way to successfully accommodate the poor in the midst of formal housing pressures and instabilities (Abrams, 1996). Abrams and Turner are most notable for drawing this conclusion for counties in developing and industrializing countries (Billig, 2011). Hernando de Soto is perhaps best known for his opinion of slums being a form of "heroic entrepreneurship" (2000). He argues that 'informals' are making the best out of an economic system that excludes them by championing one of their very own. He draws attention to the fact that while informal settlers often avoid taxes and regulations that the formal market requires, they endure different hidden and hard-hitting costs. Unlike Hall & Pfeiffer, De Soto offers a narrative that informality is a response to inefficient state regulations pertaining to housing and economic markets. Scholar Ananya Roy remarks De Soto's neoliberal position regarding property rights in that De Soto believes 'informals' should be granted the *right* to property rights, but not property rights outright (Roy, 2004) Other scholars such as Ahmed Soliman and Hernando De Soto (2003) have pointed out that certain types of informality are more socially acceptable than others, while other scholars attempt to clear the myths of marginally regarding three different types of informal settlements in Brazil and the types of settlers within. Perlman's work even traces how the widely held myths helped produce government policies that were ill-fitting for both 'informals' and the nation at large (Perlman, 1976). Perhaps one of the most articulate narratives regarding urban informality points out that no matter which camp a scholar falls under (i.e a narrative of crisis or hope) he or she images the informal sector as one completely separate from the formal, and this is not accurate (Roy, 2005). Both are dependent upon the other.

My research focuses on the narrative of one particular informal settlement in Cairo, Egypt called the City of the Dead. For this research, narrative is defined as a story or representation of a particular place (Beauregard, 2005). Built environment professionals are interested in narrative as told by two authors: the place itself and the people who interact with it.

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In other words, they focus on two main questions: what does a place say it intrinsically is and what do people say a place intrinsically is? All places have numerous attached narratives. Those narratives compete for dominance surrounding the same place (Beauregard, 2005). People in positions of power such as decision makers, public officials, politicians, educators and the media, have the power to determine the dominant narrative about a place and in the process shape other people's narratives. Narratives shape understanding and discourse, which determine how we plan for something. As an example, if the dominant narrative surrounding a particular formal housing development is that it serves residents well and also contributes to create a cohesive urban fabric, this narrative will inform understanding of the development for the general public and the decision makers, as a desirable place to live. This will in turn incentivize as well as provide residents with the agency to ask for better service provision for the neighborhood. Broken infrastructure will be quickly repaired, and surrounding development will cater to the needs of this community. Ultimately, it will be treated as a place to live by all. Conversely, if the dominant narrative surrounding a particular informal housing settlement is that it is a health hazard occupied by criminals, this narrative will inform an understanding of the settlement as an undesirable place to live. Even worse, it could not be defined as a place to live at all. As is the case for the City of the Dead[7]. The City of the Dead is made up of multiple cemeteries that lie on the eastern side of the Greater Cairo Region (GCR). It is a formal burial site for the dead and a fully functioning informal community for the living (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). The City of the Dead is unique in that, in the Egyptian context, it does not fit under the new definition of informal housing. Informal housing, what has been commonly referred to as *ashwaiyyat*[8] in the literature, is now spilt into two categories: unplanned and unsafe. The definition of *ashwaiyyat* now includes only those settlements that are physically "unsafe" according to Egyptian law makers - specifically Egypt's Informal Settlements Development Fund (ISDF) (Shakran, 2016; Ezz, 2018). This change in definition is directly tied to funding, as the cabinet specified in 2008 that monetary support would only go to settlements that fit the new definition. Only a small percentage of the total informal settlements in Egypt are "unsafe" (Howeidy et al., 2009, p.180). It is important to note that while planning documents refer to COD

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[7] The City of the Dead is also called al-Qarafa or *Maqabar*, meaning 'cemetery' in Egyptian-Arabic (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011)

[8] Arabic word *Ashwaiyyat* - the plural for *ashwaiyya* literally meaning 'random' or 'haphazard' (Bayat & Denis, 2000)

as an "unplanned" informal area, powerful interests do not define the City of the Dead as informal housing because cemeteries are not inherently housing.

While I am aware of the distinction Egypt's government has made in terminology, I disagree with it - and so does the academic literature on informal housing. I argue in my conclusions that the Egyptian definition hinders the planning process for the City of the Dead. I use terms 'informal settlement' and 'informal housing settlement' when describing the COD. I say people 'live' 'reside' and are 'residents' of COD. Though COD is a slum according to literature, I choose not to use this word in my writing when describing the City of the Dead because of its ambiguity and negative connotations[9]. In short, it is my position that the City of the Dead is an informal settlement and a place to live.

In the following sections, I discuss other relevant topics such as: cemetery planning, Cairo's urban planning efforts, Egypt's government and affordable housing, "Solutions" for Upgrading Informal Housing, and Cairo's housing stock including the City of the Dead.

Cemetery Planning

The way society buries the deceased has historically been determined by religion, superstition, and a concern for public health (Lehrer, 1974). Though problems involving cemeteries are not common, the seemingly permanent nature of a cemetery makes decisions concerning it unusually weighty (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950; Goodman & Freund, 1968). Yet, few published planning documents include a separate section for cemetery land use (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950). For example, cemetery planning is not even mentioned in Egypt's official 2008 housing and construction law document (Soliman, 2015). The lack of cemetery planning is seen when families illegally create private family cemeteries instead of using public cemeteries in Egypt. Families also claim areas within public cemeteries and construct tombs to assert their ownership of a particular area. Lastly, government officials acquire plots using their family member's and children's names for the purpose of selling these at a higher price at a time when the plot is worth more money due to greater demand. This falsely creates a demand for more cemetery space in Egypt (Soliman, 2015). The urban planner will always be faced with challenges to find sufficient land to be allocated for the dead (Lehrer, 1974). Many writers on the subject have suggested residential areas are more suitable for

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[9] See Gilbert, 2007 for more on the negative connotations of the word 'slum'

cemetery development (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950; Bassett, 1937; Lehrer, 1974). However, this is not preferred in the Egyptian or Middle Eastern context (Soliman, 2015). It is common for cemeteries to be placed in areas that are considered to be too close to urban settlements (Soliman, 2015). While this might be true, not all cemeteries in Egypt were haphazardly built too close to urban settlements. "Older cemeteries were built on sites which were, at that time, on the outskirts of the metropolitan area, but now are within the inner core of the city" (Lehrer, 1974, p.188-189), as is the case for the City of the Dead.

Cemetery Removal

Planners are perhaps more troubled by pre-existing cemeteries than determining the location of new ones (Lehrer, 1974). This is because development continues to grow around a cemetery, making the cemetery no longer the 'highest and best use'[10] of that land. This is more likely to be the case for a cemetery that is old and neglected. Cemeteries can be rehabilitated, but if those efforts are not sustainable, cemeteries can be demolished or relocated (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950). In the United States specifically, cemetery removal can be justified if the site is legally considered to be a 'nuisance'[11] (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950; Lehrer, 1974).

After a series of court cases and fifty-year long debate, the city and county of San Francisco outlawed burial within city limits. Beginning in 1826, property rights to plots in San Francisco's public cemeteries are not given the same legal status as other forms of 'real property'[12], and burial grounds are subject to municipal police power[13] regulation (Muckey, 2015). Police power can be exercised by the state or delegated to local authorities such as a local police force (Lehrer, 1974). According to historian Lance Muckey, "After 1910, interments were legally prohibited within the County of San Francisco and the city's cemetery owners and associations moved the majority of their burial operations, but not all of the existing cemeteries, to the unincorporated village of Lawndale, California (renamed Colma in 1941)" (2015, p. 169).

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[10] Highest and best use is a real estate term defined as, "The reasonably probable and legal use of vacant land or an improved property that is physically possible, appropriately supported, and financially feasible and that results in the highest value" (Dunn, 2010)

[11] Nuisance is a legal term referring to unreasonable or unlawful use of property. Legal nuisances can cause inconvenience or danger for individuals and/or to the general public. Examples include smells, noise, burning, and other misuses of property (Hill & Hill, 2020)

[12] Real property is a term used in law and real estate typically used to describe land. Generally speaking, real property includes not only the face of the earth but everything of a permanent nature over or under it. This includes structures and graves (Cornell Law, 2020a)

[13] Police power is power granted to the state by the 10th amendment to establish and enforce laws protecting the welfare, safety, and health of the public (Cornell Law, 2020b)

Officials issued eviction notices on January 14, 1914 to San Francisco's "big four" cemeteries—Calvary, Odd Fellows, Masonic, and Laurel Hill (Muckey, 2015). However, this was a slow process because those who own burial rights could legally challenge the law prohibiting new and existing burial in San Francisco (Muckey, 2015). Someone who has buried a loved one does not own the land the person is buried on, but rather they own the burial rights. This means when a cemetery is taken, the owner of the burial rights is both emotionally and financially affected because it is expensive to rebury the dead. For example, in 1946-47 the city of Baltimore relocated 170 bodies for the sake of new development. The estimated cost for removal and re-burial in new cemetery lots was $58,850 USD, approximately $346 USD per grave (Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950). Considering inflation rates today, this would cost $780,676.94 USD total and $4,589.88 USD per grave.[14] Despite the expense, 122,000 bodies were reburied in cemeteries outside of San Francisco starting in 1937 (Muckey, 2015). By 1941, only two cemeteries remained from the dozens that once existed within city limits and neither accept new interments[15] today (Shelton, 2008). This made way for 162 acres of land in San Francisco to be reused (Muckey, 2015). San Francisco and Baltimore are not alone in their efforts to reuse land for more suitable purposes. Similar efforts were made by the Tennessee Valley Authority[16] to make room for new reservoirs. Similarly, the city council of Basel, Switzerland purchased 125 acres of land in 1919 on a wooded hill called Hörnli to serve as the only cemetery on the edge of the city. Burials in the four existing cemeteries would stop that same year. The council also agreed that after the year 1952, all bodies from the existing cemeteries were to be relocated to Hörnli (Soliman, 2015; Cemeteries in the City Plan, 1950; Lehrer, 1974). Cemetery removal is not only expensive, but it is also a lengthy process. Ultimately, cemetery removal involves rewriting or ignoring an existing narrative because a "better" narrative is thought to be had. It is often about the "unmaking of a place" (Shelton, 2008) i.e. the 'unmaking' of a cemetery, which results in the 'making' of a new place.

Cemeteries as Informal Settlements

Cemeteries as a place to live are not a common phenomenon. One of the few existing cemetery settlements, is the Manila North Cemetery in the Philippines. Manila North Cemetery

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[14] All 2020 calculations based on 1226.6% inflation rate. Inflation rates based on U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index (CPI)

[15] Interments is a term used to describe the burial of a corpse

[16] The Tennessee Valley Authority, or TVA, was created by President Roosevelt after the Great Depression to help America address issues in energy and promote economic development

is the largest cemetery in the Philippines, where 10,000 households live in the 135-acre graveyard (Liberman, 2009). People live in the cemetery rent-free and have limited access to water, electricity, and sewage (Liberman, 2009). The Pilipino government's efforts to eradicate informal housing have historically been sporadic and reactionary to specific crisis situations (Special Committee Report, 1968). Government officials, including policemen and city-hall workers, live in the necropolis[17] themselves (Liberman, 2009). Another cemetery settlement exists in Java, Indonesia. The cemetery itself arose in the early twentieth century, and it became a place to live in late 1984 when eleven dwellings were built. By 1993, there were eighty-one dwellings within the cemetery (Garr, 1995). Those who live in the cemetery do so primarily for its location in relation to employment opportunities (Garr, 1995). This cemetery is unique in that it is a Chinese cemetery that it is inhabited by Javanese. The Chinese minority in Indonesia have experienced constant social tensions for centuries, so it is unique to have the majority culture in Java, living in a cemetery for minority culture (Garr, 1995).

In the Middle East, there are examples of cemeteries becoming a place to live particularly after or during a war. For example, a BBC video report identified a Syrian woman and her son who moved to a cemetery in eastern Aleppo to seek refuge (Ali & Bitar, 2016). Similarly, as of 2012, twenty-five families lived in mud huts over buried bodies in the largest cemetery in Baquba, Iraq. Families from poor villages migrated to the cemetery to flee from hostile rebels in their places of origin. Unlike the City of the Dead and Manila North Cemetery, there is no running water or sewage system in Baquba Cemetery. As a result, those living in the Baquba Cemetery created small channels to carry dirty water away from their homes (Al Jawoshy, 2012).

As I will discuss later in detail, the City of the Dead (COD) is a series of cemeteries that have been adapted in creative ways to meet the housing needs of Cairo's urban poor and rural migrants (Nedoroscik, 1997). Some of the first tomb dwellers worked as tomb guardians for rich families (Davis, 2006). Within COD are tombs and monuments mostly of Islamic significance. Though the cemetery is being utilized for two necessary functions i.e as a place to live and a place to bury the dead, the site is contested and demolition has been discussed since the late 1960s (Abu-Lughod, J.,1971). In the rest of this section, I will discuss conditions and contexts specific to Egypt, where residents are predominantly Muslim.

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[17] A necropolis is a term meaning 'cemetery'

The Importance of the Residential Unit in Islam

Going back to the fundamentals of Islam is an important first step in understanding the role of housing in a predominantly Muslim country like Egypt. For Muslims, Islam is a not only a religion, but a complete way of life. It affects everyday tasks such as eating, shaking hands, and even using the restroom. As a result, housing is tied to their religion for Muslims. Stefano Bianca (2000, p. 72) writes in his book *Urban Form in the Arab World*, "[The residential unit] is probably the most complex of all elements of urban form", and this is particularly true in a Muslim country. Bianca underscores the significance of the residential unit by saying, "Private houses and clusters of houses are the determining component of the urban fabric in Muslim cities not only because of their sheer quantitative dominance but also because of the particular attitude of Islam towards formal civic institutions and its relatively low emphasis on monumental public buildings" (Bianca, 2000, p. 72). Good neighborly relations shape the social fabric[18] in Muslim cities because sacred Islamic texts address the importance of it. Islamic hadiths[19] note that a Muslim should not leave his or her neighbor in poverty if he or she has the means to help (Bianca, 2000). This information is relevant because poverty in the Greater Cairo Region exists, namely the nearly 60 percent of Cairo's population living in informal settlements, and 4 out of the 30 largest "mega-slums" in the world being in Cairo, the City of the Dead among them (Davis, 2006; Shakran, 2016). Not only is the residential unit important to the Islamic way of life, but the relationship that residents bear to each other, is also determined by their religion. Therefore, housing conditions of the poor in GCR stem from a complex history that the Islamic way of life is delicately intertwined with and determines.

Cairo's Urban Planning Efforts

Egypt's main planning organization called the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP), was established in 1973 and is state controlled at the national level. The GOPP as an organization focuses on physical planning issues "… is responsible for setting the overall policies of urban planning and sustainable urban development; as well as preparing strategic plans and programs on the national, regional and local levels" (GOPP Brochure, 2015). Under the GOPP, every major region of Egypt- including the Greater Cairo Region (GCR)- has its own Regional Center for Planning and Development (GOPP Brochure, 2015). The GCR

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[18] Social fabric is a term used to describe how people interact with one another – frequent and meaningful
   interactions among community members make a strong social fabric
[19] Hadiths are additional Islamic teachings outside of the Quran

encompasses both the city center of Cairo and surrounding desert areas where new development is taking place. This includes the entire Cairo Governate[20], the Giza Governate, and the Qaliubia Governate (Sims, 2010). Each governate has its own planning unit, albeit largely dependent on the GOPP. Governates are further broken down into districts (Cairo Governate alone has over thirty) that primarily handle minor planning functions such as building controls and permit distribution (Sims, 2010).

Though my research site is located in the Cairo Governate, throughout this work, I will refer to the Greater Cairo Region (GCR), as the policies and implementation is common to the region. Changes and development in the region determine and impact the smaller governates. Further, existing literature also addresses the region as a whole, rather than each governate individually. Governates depend on the central government for funding and budget allocations to implement plans (Sims, 2003). Urban planning in Cairo has historically followed three general planning goals: demarcate and determine the borders or boundary of the city and therefore the extent of development, make the city center a more accessible and desirable place to live, and create a "new Cairo" in the surrounding desert. The first goal stems from the need to control Cairo's overpopulation and subsequent overdevelopment problem, and it has been managed by hemming the city in through the building of surrounding walls and doors at the entrance of the city. The second goal was managed by building highways connecting popular destinations, namely the pyramids and the airport, to the city center. Lastly, the third goal called for creating a network of satellite cities intended to move urban growth away from Cairo proper, into the surrounding desert (Denis, 1996). The plan to expand Cairo began during the 1970's, around the same time the GOPP formed. People often critique Cairo's expansion model of satellite cities because they do not address overcrowding in Cairo proper, as the city itself is hemmed in (Kelly, 2010). Instead, the satellite cities around Cairo contribute to Cairo's housing crisis which has become a "wicked problem"[21]. This is because many of the satellite communities, which were planned and developed as large apartment complexes for wealthy Cairenes to escape from the noisy city center, lie vacant today (Denis, 1996). Much of this new housing stock does not match the needs of Cairo's 20 million residents.[22] This contributes to the majority of Cairo's population living in more affordable informal areas built in 1950 or later. The housing stock in

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[20] Governates are the main divisions of local administration in Egypt (Sims, 2003).

[21] Wicked problem is a term introduced in Planning literature by Rittel and Webber to describe the seemingly unsolvable nature of particularly social problems (Rittel & Horst, 1973)

[22] 18 million residents was the figure given for Cairo's population in 2011 (Sims, 2013). It is estimated to be at 20 million today in 2020

the satellite communities is too expensive for low income residents. The Egyptian Human Development Report (EHDR) estimated poverty lines in 1998 to be $0.83 per capita per day (Sims, 2003). According to the report, urban households making 4,438 Egyptian Pounds (LE) per year[23] and rural households making LE 3,963 per year[24] were considered to be impoverished (Sims, 2003). According to this study, 22.9 percent of households in Egypt are impoverished. (Sims, 2003). However, numerous independent studies on poverty in Egypt count up to 48 percent living in poverty (Sims, 2003). Independent studies show that up to 48% of Cairanes do not have enough money to live in market-rate housing and cannot afford their non-housing needs. The new apartments, due to their location further away from the city center, also necessitate the investment of more money by low income residents for their everyday commute to and from the city center, where jobs are located. Wealth and poverty noticeably coexist in GCR, as is the case in effectively all megacities (Sims, 2010).

Master Plan 2050

Cairo is perceived by some as a city dominated by overpopulation caused by an overflow of poor people (Bayat & Denis, 2000). Partially in response to this narrative, government officials drafted Masterplan Cairo 2050[25] (Tarbush, 2012). Cairo 2050 began in 2007-08 and was presented in 2010 as a series of mega-projects intended to modernize Cairo and counter the city's informal urbanization with planned development (Tarbush, 2012). The plan proposed displacing informal residents, including those in the City of the Dead (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011), by moving them to "new housing extensions" in the desert (Tarbush, 2012). This focus of Cairo 2050 helps us understand that powerful interests, such as the state and GOPP, are calling out informal housing as one of Cairo's biggest problems. Yet, Cairo 2050 does not provide details about the new housing extensions or the relocation process. Many scholars agree that the government's efforts should be shifted away from excessive building in the surrounding desert and instead focus on the needs of the majority of residents (Tarbush, 2012). But if informal housing is caused by a lack of affordability, then whose problem is it? As indicated in the section above, the state, which includes functions of the government, ultimately controls the factors that contribute to housing affordability. However even though the state makes overtures to address this housing affordability crisis, interventions are woefully

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[23] Equivalent to $1,268 USD
[24] Equivalent to $1,132 USD
[25] Masterplan Cairo 2050 is referred to as Cairo 2050 in this research. Sometimes referred to as Vision 2050 in literature or news articles. The plan is not officially published, but can be accessed online by the public

inconsistent, and do not address the problem at hand but rather address a different class of Cairo's residents. The following section will discuss the government's involvement in the provision of affordable housing in Egypt.

Egypt's Government and Affordable Housing

Between 1950-1973 Egypt's government took the lead on providing low-cost public housing through the building of publicly funded, subsidized housing. More specifically, the polices during this era prescribed the government as the primary provider of such units. It was during this era that the government built a significant amount of housing structures and subsidized the units within. (Chaarawi, Ally, Martins, Rodrigues, 2016). From 1973-1982 the Egyptian government shifted roles from sole provider to facilitator in affordable housing provision (Chaarawi et al., 2016). During the 1970s, new state-owned construction companies formed while the private sector was simultaneously encouraged to enter the housing market. This made way for additional housing providers such as private developers to enter in the housing market. It was during this time that the government established a rent control law that taxed owners and provided a subsidy to tenants. However, owners would get around this tax by charging tenants "key money" i.e a fee for the right to rent. This significantly increased the price of rent and many units remained vacant until a wealthier tenant could afford the key money (Feiler, 1992). During this period, no new subsidized affordable housing was built by the Egyptian government (Blunt, 1982). The role of the government again shifted from 1982-2005 to focus on attracting citizens to the new satellite communities (Chaarawi et al., 2016). Heavy investments were made by the government in road infrastructure to make satellite cities possible (Feiler, 1992). During this time, the government promised basic housing needs for low income residents at an affordable price in the desert, but the government did not deliver (Chaarawi et al., 2016). Instead, expensive housing units continued to be built in the sprawled desert by the government (Chaarawi et al., 2016). There was a lack of demand for this type of housing development in the desert. Private housing production for both affordable and market rate housing decreased during this era, leading to an increase in housing prices in Cairo (Chaarawi et al., 2016). The government hoped to deal with the economic loss of failed housing estates by passing a new law that allowed more autonomy between landlords and tenants to determine housing rates and eviction procedures (Chaarawi et al., 2016). Additionally, in order to privatize urban development, the government sold large portions of land to real estate developers in the mid-1990's (Almatarneh, 2013). Since 2005, the government has encouraged more stakeholders, such as international organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations

(NGO's), and citizens themselves, to play a role in formal housing provision (Chaarawi et al., 2016). In short, stakeholders now have power *in* the process to build where they want and how they want, while the central government has power *over* the process through a supervisory role. While allowing more stakeholders to be involved in the process has empowered stakeholders, it has also allowed opened the gates for more corrupt practices (Chaarawi et al., 2016). The government has transitioned into a more 'laissez faire'[26] real estate approach for affordable housing provision, but it still desires to eradicate informal settlements (Cairo 2050, 2008; Egypt 2052, 2014). Continuous illegal development on a mass scale indicates a lack of state response, even though the government says it is being proactive in counteracting it (Sims, 2013).

As in most countries, Arab states across the Middle East, have a large set of laws that oversee and control any and all development by private entities (Sims, 2013). Examples of these laws include building codes, subdivision laws, maximum building heights, and property tax laws. Furthermore, these laws specify the committees, agencies, and officials responsible for enforcing the laws (Sims, 2013). Local governments are entrusted with monitoring compliance of urban planning laws, but these offices are often understaffed with poorly paid, unexperienced workers (Sims, 2013). Furthermore, workers are seldom given proper vehicles to inspect their ever-growing territories. As a result, informal communities are rarely inspected (Sims, 2013). There is also evidence that in some cases, informal dwellers, bribe local officials to not enforce the laws (Sims, 2013). While the government claims to be responding to informal housing, there is very little evidence of concrete changes. The government has opted out of affordable housing provision, yet the government is tasked with responding to informal housing. More specifically, once Cairo 2050 was presented, the government assigned itself with the task of responding to informal housing. Generally speaking, neither the root of the problem (lack of affordable housing) nor the fruit of the problem (informal housing) are addressed in a substantive way by the government.

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[26] 'Laissez faire' is a term referring to an economic system that is "hands off" in nature. Meaning, the government does not interfere

"Solutions" for Upgrading Informal Housing

How Cairo has Previously Handled Informal Housing

The Egyptian government ignored informal settlements until the 1980s when plans to stop their growth were produced (Abdelhalim, 2014; Maher, 2017). The government's primary way of addressing informality settlements was demolition and relocation. Relocation displaces residents of a particular area, who are forcefully or willingly moved to another area (Maher, 2017). Forceful relocation typically involves government officials, and in some cases armed forces, vacating informal settlements to then demolish all existing structures. The construction of new houses and service provision are the governate's responsibility (Amnesty, 2011). These new places to live are usually in public housing with low rental rates. However, the new houses are usually in a remote location, at a substantial distance from their original community (Maher, 2017). Relocation therefore causes a break in existing social and economic networks of mutual aid that residents have formed. An example of a poorly handled relocation process is that of the informal settlement called *Duweiqa* in Cairo. While relocation was not initially prompted by the government, an appropriate relocation process was still the state's responsibility. During 2002-2008, a series of disasters such as fires, train crashes, and rockslides happened in Cairo and destroyed much of *Duweiqa* (Cook, 2011). The state's mishandling of the situation is evident when examining the aftermath of these disasters. The rockslide disaster destroyed dozens of homes and more than one hundred people died. It took hours for officials to respond. The officers who responded did not conduct search and rescue but rather "secured the area" (Cook, 2011). The Cairo Governorate bulldozed the areas in *Duweiqa* that were most damaged by rockslides. Some survivors in this area were relocated into nearby abandoned buildings with the promise of later being relocated to better housing. Later the government insisted that "scammers" who moved to *Duweiqa* after the rockslides were taking advantage of the government's offer for free housing and no housing was provided as a result. In the end, formal housing was never delivered, and a few officials were required to pay a small fine for how the situation in *Duweiqa* was improperly handled (Cook, 2011). Had this been a formal housing area perhaps the aftermath would have been handled differently.

Formalizing Settlements

Formalizing settlements is seen as a keyway to integrate the informal into the formal. Formalizing informal settlements is the process of transforming the legal status of an informal settlement from illegal to legal. "Addressing the informal urbanization challenge can be a win–

win situation for everyone as improvement programs not only benefit the urban poor, but the city as a whole," (Khalifa, 2015, p.1158). This thought, while altruistic, is often romanticized by scholars and planners. Upgrading informal housing by providing quick fixes is similar to rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic (Roy, 2005). It doesn't work because this "solution" imagines formal and informal sectors to be perfectly separated and easily identifiable. Though some literature does advocate for formalizing settlements, the limitations of this process are readily expressed. Formalizing settlements is complex because there are many stakeholders in the housing market (Soliman, 2002). The success or failure of formalizing efforts depends on the conditions under which land is occupied, otherwise known as land tenure. The landlord's assertiveness, or lack thereof, plays a significant role in the ability to formalize property. The attitudes of both the landlord and involved stakeholders can make or break an attempt to formalize (Soliman, 2002). There is not an existing step by step guide for formalizing areas because every informal settlement is different. Instead of formalizing settlements through upgrades or transforming the legal status of settlements, Egypt typically handles informality by evicting and demolishing settlements to build something new. This was the case for Maspero Triangle, an informal settlement that faces ongoing violent demolitions in an effort to formalize the urban fabric of Cairo (Shakran, 2016). Much of the literature concerning "ideal" settlement formalization approaches the subject from a community participation angle. One rare Egyptian example of participatory upgrading will be discussed further in the following section.

Community Participation Approach

Built environments are designed by a minority but affect the majority (Eldemery, 2002). Some believe that the solution for formalizing illegal settlements lies with the people who live in them because of their motivation to change their circumstances (Boonyabancha, 2012). Lack of public participation, ineffective governmental institutions, and deficient regulations are the reasons for the low levels of community satisfaction (Shalaby & Shalaby, 2018). Many poor Cairenes feel that the government is "against their existence," so transitioning from a top-down planning approach to a bottom-up planning approach may be helpful (El Shahat & El Khateeb, 2013, p. 8). Top-down planning prioritizes decision making at the highest government level, and input is generally not welcome from citizens or lower forms of government. Bottom-up planning prioritizes incorporating citizens in the decision-making process, and specialists and professionals give feedback on those ideas to make plans (El Shahat, et al., 2013, p. 8). However, if this approach is used simply to formalize the informal, it is still incorrectly viewing the sectors as perfectly separate from one another. The Community Participation Approach is

better than exclusively formalizing settlements because this approach should address community integration by focusing on community needs rather than the needs of those who control the formal sector.

The User-Controlled Approach

A step even further in the right direction is the User-Controlled Approach, which allows residents to guide their housing process by selecting the size, location, and design of their home. According to researcher Khaled Galal Ahmed, "It is an approach aimed at achieving a more relevant housing product for low- income people" (Ahmed, 2015, p.204). This process could be used for relocation, as informal residents must not be relocated from their environment and placed into an area that does not resemble their culture or preferences. (Ahmed, 2015). It can also be used when developing a new community. Though this is a bottom-up process, authorities should not be left out of the process, and professionals should aid residents in this approach (Ahmed, 2015). One could argue that informal homes were already designed and built by the users, and that is what led them to be illegal. However, Khaled Ahmed suggests implementing the User-Controlled Approach goes beyond that because it incorporates individual participation and government regulation (Ahmed, 2015).

One Settlement in Egypt: A True Success

The upgrading project for the Hai al-Salam settlement in Ismailia, Egypt ran from the mid-1970s until 1983 (Howeidy et al., 2009). It is considered to be a success in upgrading projects as it used the User-Controlled Approach to allow people to build their own homes on plots of land that had access to state provided infrastructure (Howeidy et al., 2009) According to a report regarding Egyptian informal housing, "Most of the land was subdivided into small plots of 100 square meters, which were then sold for very low prices to the people of Ismailia. Then, 10% of the land on the best streets was kept off the market and eventually sold by auction. That 10% brought in money to finance the project" (Howeidy et al., 2009, p.181). Upgrading this area of Ismailia was necessary because after the Six Day War[27] ended in 1967, the residents of Ismailia were evacuated. After the 1973 War[28], residents were allowed back only to find six

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[27] The Six Day War was a brief but deadly conflict in 1967 between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Syria and Jordan

[28] The 1973 War known to Israelis as the Yom Kippur War. In the Six Day War the Israelis captured the Sinai Desert from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank of the River Jordan and the eastern part of Jerusalem from the Jordanians. The 1973 war was Egypt's attempt to gain back the Sinai. Egypt got back the

years' worth of damage and neglect. Migrants from Sinai[29], during this time, began to squat on vacant land around Hai el Salam. The User-Controlled Approach was necessary because "with the rapid re-occupation and expansion of the city, it was clear that the Government's traditional approach to housing - namely, that of the Governate and other public agencies providing subsidized rented accommodation - was insufficient to meet the growing and varying needs of the population (Blunt, 1982). Low income groups were affected the most, as the only available places to live were in informal settlements or in expensive market rate rentals (Blunt, 1982). The User- Controlled Approach guaranteed security of tenure to the residents, allowed residents to build a place to live, and provided basic services for residents (Maher, 2017). Throughout his 30 years as a consultant in Egypt, David Sims singles out this upgrading project as a true success story though it never had an impact on government policy, as it has never been duplicated (Howeidy et al., 2009). These different types of participatory upgrading approaches are underutilized in Egypt's planning for informal settlements, particularly the user-controlled approach. Though not a perfect solution, it is a step in the right direction compared to commonly used top-down eviction and demolition approaches.

Types of Housing in GCR

Cairo's housing stock is made up of different types of formal and informal housing. There are stark differences not only noticeable when comparing formal and informal housing but also when comparing different types of formal housing. Gated communities are just one type of formal housing, but a type that draws the most attention to the gap between the wealthy and the poor of Cairo.

Gated Communities

Among the various types of formal settlements in Cairo are gated communities. Gated communities are planned residential areas that are intentionally developed, outside Cairo, in the desert, as part of new satellite cities (Kuppninger, 2004). Characteristics of such communities vary from extravagant villas enclosed with greenery to smaller apartment buildings positioned next to a park (Kuppninger, 2004). Developers advertise these communities as luxurious neighborhoods offering safety, seclusion, and social status (Almatarneh, 2013). Gated

Sinai with help of foreign diplomacy, not war (Connolly, 2013)

[29] The Sinai Peninsula lies on the Eastern side of Egypt. It is divided into two Governates: North Sinai and South Sinai

communities are often seen as a solution for present-day issues; however, gates function as a barrier between the outside and inside world (Ghonimi, Zaly, & Khairy, 2011). Though gates can be a tool used to prevent crime, scholars have debated their impact because they are seen as a symbol of exclusivity (Ghonimi et al., 2011). Gates leave insiders to invest solely in their community while leaving outsiders to make assumptions about what goes on within (Ghonimi et al, 2011). One might argue that adjacent areas are more negatively impacted than the gated communities because gates do not promote movement and interactions between community members, nor do they connect the urban fabric (Ghonimi et al., 2011). Communities with a strong social fabric typically have low crime rates, better health, significant economic growth, and well- educated citizens (Ghonimi et al., 2011). Mixed- use development[30] is uncommon within gated communities. Gated neighborhoods in GCR take on foreign names such as Hyde Park and Beverly Hills, solidifying the desire for grandiosity and Western-inspired development (Almatarneh, 2013). Advertisements for gated communities depict foreign, white men and women laughing in open green spaces (Almatarneh, 2013). See Figure 1 for examples of advertisements for gated communities.

Figure 1: Photographs taken from advertisements for two gated communities in the Greater Cairo Region: Allegria and Grand Hills neighborhood. The photo advertising Grand Hills (far left) depicts the Grand Zone Park, located in the gated community. The advertisement features a barbecue pit and inviting green space. The photos from the Allegria brochure (center and right) depict smiling well-dressed families and couples (Almatarneh, 2013, p. 569, 570).

The housing crisis is partially caused by the number of vacant dwellings in gated communities. Research varies on the number of vacant dwellings, as some literature says there are as many as 2 million vacant homes while other works say only 467,000 are vacant (Fahmi &

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[30] Mixed-use development is a type of development that mixes residential, commercial, historical, or office uses by incorporating these types of development into one area

Sutton, 2008). Despite varying figures, Cairo displays an anomaly in high levels of vacant residences. Greater rates of vacancy exist in higher income districts (Fahmi & Sutton, 2008). The literature describes different reasons why vacant dwellings exist. One being many developments remain unfinished; therefore, they are unoccupied. Another is that plots are often left finished but unoccupied due to location or price. It is important to note that gated communities are not the only type of formal housing. However, gated communities are a type of formal housing in Cairo that is not meeting current resident's needs.

Ashwaiyyat

Literature refers to informal settlements as *ashwaiyyat* (Bayat & Denis, 2000; Kelly, 2010). Various types of illegal settlements are necessary to satisfy basic housing needs for low-income residents in Cairo. These developments are affordable because construction costs are lower compared to formal areas. Builders of *ashwaiyyat* do not pay for government permits or professional housing construction (Soliman, 2002). All types of informal settlements are lacking basic services in various ways, such as sewage and trash services, as well as social and public services (Soliman, 2002). Because these lands are not managed properly, there are significant environmental effects that lead to its deterioration (Soliman, 2002). Tall structures often block fresh air and sunlight from the interior (Tarbush 2012). Plots for illegal development are small and overcrowded because landlords subdivide their land in order to make more money (Soliman, 2002). There are different types of *ashwaiyyat* in Egypt. *Ashwaiyyat* can look like illegal additions made to a formal home, such as adding an additional floor without permission, or entire housing units illegally built on agricultural lands, particularly along the Nile. By definition, *ashwaiyyat* means random or haphazard, but as indicated above, the Egyptian government has narrowed the definition of *ashwaiyyat* to no longer include the City of the Dead, yet it continues to be a place to live somewhat haphazardly. Asef Bayat confirms that those who have quietly claimed cemetery space as a place to live have indeed created *ashwaiyyat* (Bayat, 1997).

The City of the Dead

The history of how and when the City of the Dead was developed can be found in the Legality section in Chapter 4. This section will describe the cemeteries as they sit today and as a place to live. The 300-acre cemetery is a made up of a series of cemeteries that lie on the eastern side of GCR as a fully functioning neighborhood and burial site (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). There are three major sections of COD: the Eastern Cemetery (sometimes called the Northern

Cemetery), the Southern Cemetery, and the Bab el-Nasr Cemetery. See Figure 2 for a map of the main areas of the City of the Dead in context with the city of Cairo. The latter is unique because of its wooden mausoleums (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014) COD lies between Old Cairo and the Muqattam Hills (Elmessiri & Ryan, 2001; Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). The cemeteries are considered to be 'open' because of the tombs' low density, showing everything that lies within to the outside world. Most of the tombs sit along a gridded street pattern (Elmessiri & Ryan, 2001). The City of the Dead is as old as Islam is to Cairo (Nedoroscik, 1997). Some of the most historical and impressive monuments of the Muslim world remain in the City of the Dead (Nedoroscik, 1997). Cemeteries in COD are dissimilar to traditional cemeteries found in the United States, for example, in that they are not made up of burial plots six feet deep with grave markers surrounded by green space (Soliman, 2015). Rather, the majority of burial sites consist of permanent, above ground structures surrounded by courtyards (Nedoroscik, 1997). See Figures 3 and 4 for reference. The need for built structures in a cemetery goes back to the Egyptian's traditional mourning period lasting about forty days. During this time, the family of the deceased would live in the rooms built around the tomb to mourn and celebrate the life of the deceased (Nedoroscik, 1997). Many of these built structures have become temporary or permanent homes for much of the urban poor (Nedoroscik, 1997).
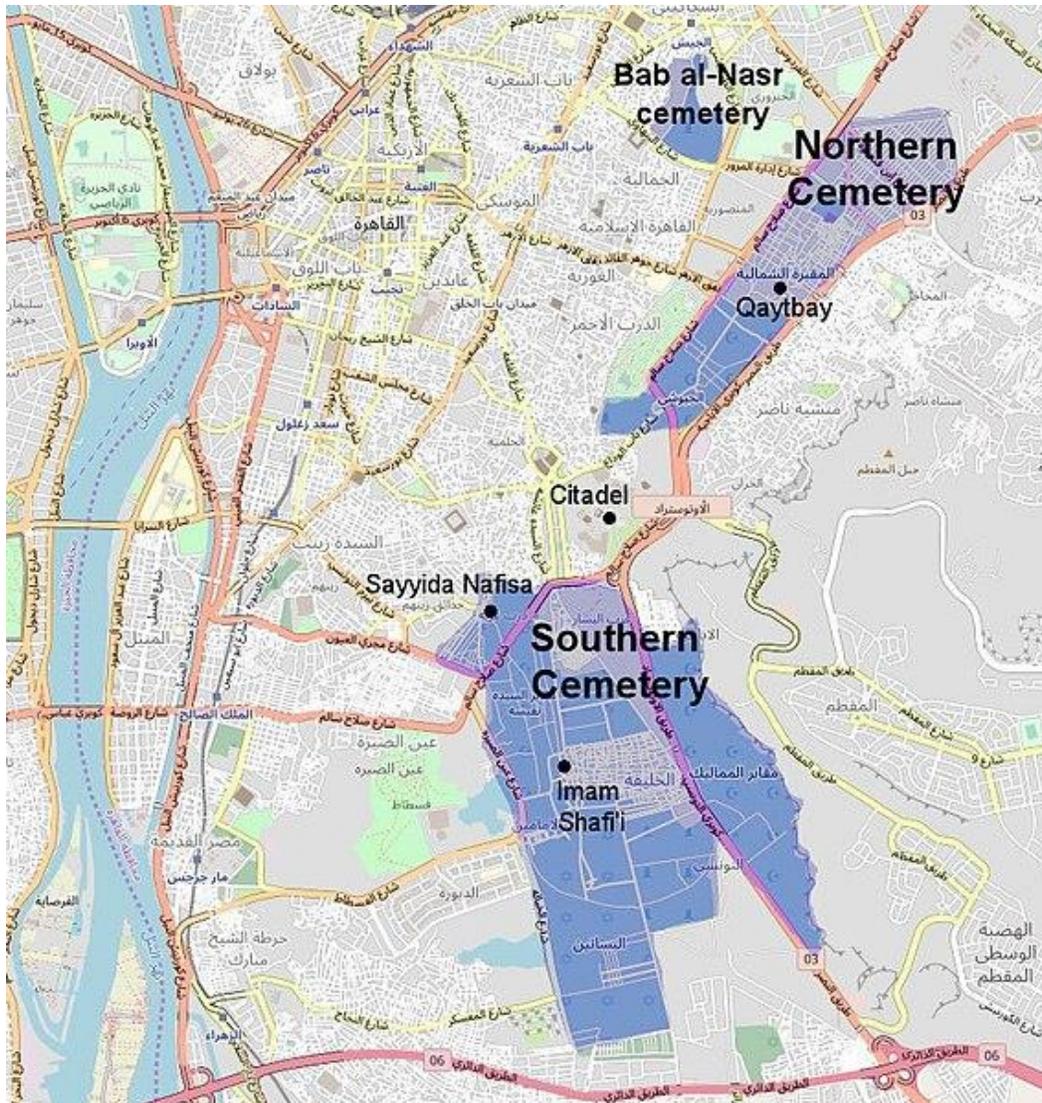
Figure 2: A map of the City of the Dead in the context of the city of Cairo. The map highlights the Northern Cemetery, the Southern Cemetery, and the Bab al- Nasr section of the City of the Dead (Prazeres, 2019).

Figure 3: An image of the permanent, above ground structures surrounded by courtyards located in the City of the Dead. The built structures are homes for residents in the necropolis (Half-Day Tour to the City of the Dead Necropolis from Cairo, 2020).
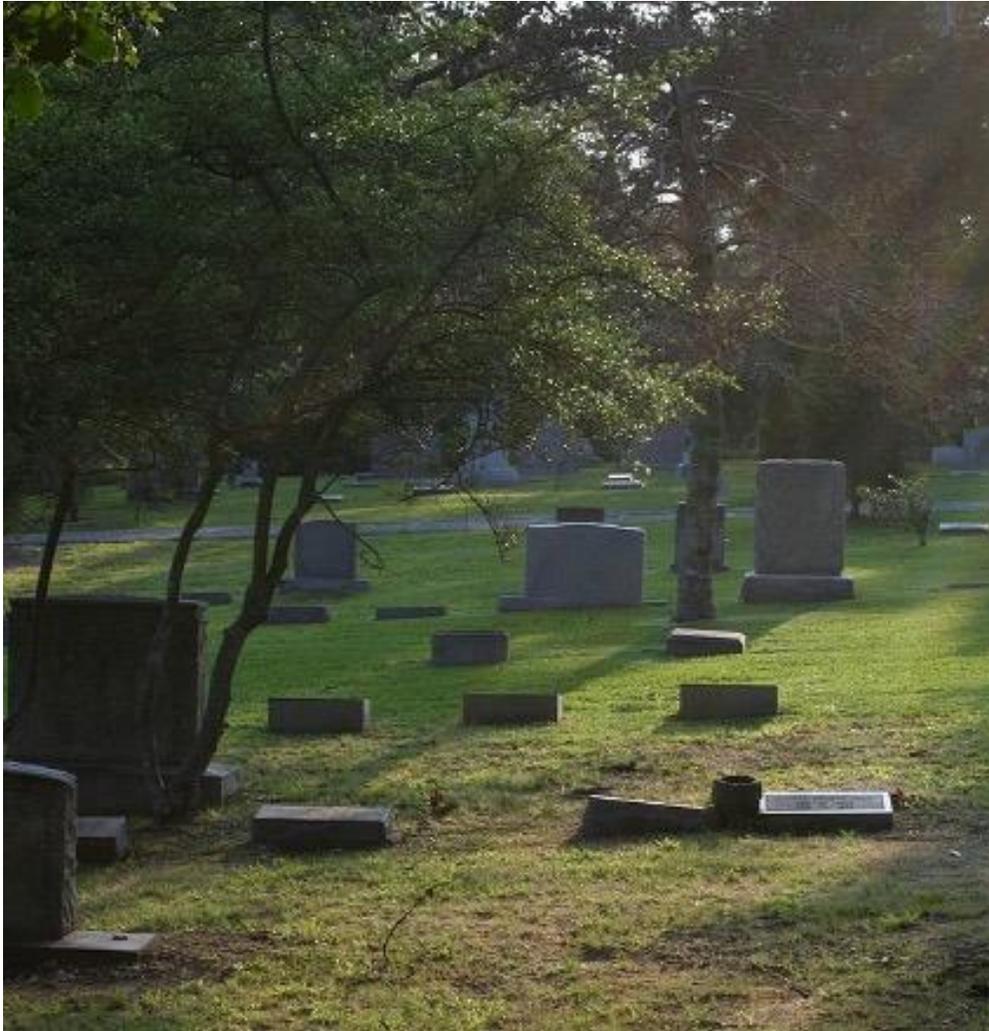
Figure 4: A traditional western cemetery found in North Carolina in the United States (Sagdejev, 2008)

Who Lives in The City of the Dead?

The exact number of residents in the City of the Dead is unknown despite researchers attempting to expose discrepancies in previous population counts (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Further research is needed to validate population counts, but estimates range from 50,000 to two million (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). According to Egypt Data Portal, an open source for census data that has been collected primarily from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), in 2017 there were only 1,805 individuals living in cemeteries in Cairo governate (Central Agency of Public Mobilization, 2017). Based on data collection for this work, 200,000-250,000 people living in COD is a more acceptable estimate. May al- Ibrashy (2005)

gives a close estimate of 300,000 people living in Al-Qarafa. Some of the first communities of the City of the Dead were made up of tomb keepers and watchmen, along with their families (Nedoroscik, 1997). As time went on, rural migrants to Cairo became the primary residents of the City of the Dead. Generally speaking, rural migrants saw the City of the Dead as a temporary solution until they could save enough money to afford market-rate housing. Up to third generation tomb dwellers are now living in COD (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Rural migrants from the countryside typically stick together in COD and have called it a village without fields (Nedoroscik, 1997). Other types of tomb dwellers include owners of small workshops or businesses, gravediggers, the elderly, and the unemployed. There are also middle-class residents living in COD because of unexpected problems with their previous living situation (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). It is rare that someone willingly chooses to live in the City of the Dead without needing to, though some have intentionally sought out COD to live near deceased relatives (Nedoroscik, 1997). Nevertheless, all of these groups live in COD. The way people live in COD evident in how portions of the necropolis, for example, turn into a market, or *souq,* on certain days of the week (Elmessiri & Ryan, 2001). Selling goods is not the main feature of the market but rather passing time is. Those who go to the market to sell goods actually go to loiter and simply be present in the area. Authors Elmessiri and Ryan (2001) explain that sellers are sometimes surprised when a buyer comes along and expresses interest in an item. Sometimes a seller is hesitant to part ways with the for-sale item because if all items are sold, the seller would no longer have an official loitering spot at the market. Another example of the living culture in COD are those working as caretakers of graveyards who live where they work and work where they live (al- Ibrashy, 2005). The funerary business has brought life to a dead space. Some of the daily tasks a caretaker might do are raking gravel around a tomb area and watering flowers. Caretakers also act as guards by sitting in front of a tomb for much of the night to make sure it does not get vandalized (Howeidy et al., 2009). While mourners of dead loved ones come and go, those who work in the funerary business and other residents remain in the cemetery and offer a constant presence that only their living there could provide (al- Ibrashy, 2005). Perhaps similar to a neighborhood coffee shop or café, neighborhood regulars make a coffee shop a place because of their constancy in going there or sitting at the same table. While the community inside COD do everyday tasks and build relationships with one another, those who do not live in COD misunderstand the way it functions. The community of COD is marginalized because it is perceived by outsiders as a place of shame for poor people. It has been described as a cancerous growth in the city that represents Cairo's urban and economic problems (al-Ibrashy, 2013; Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). Children and young adult residents of COD

feel this acutely when venturing out of the tomb communities for school or other needs. Mona, a nineteen-year-old resident of COD, keeps a journal about the discrimination she has experienced in the school she attends in a nearby district. Mona, unlike both of her parents, can read and write Arabic. In her journal she describes school kids yanking her hair and throwing her schoolbooks out of a window because of where she calls home (Howeidy et al., 2009). The discrimination Mona faces outside COD surely affects her daily live in the necropolis, as this is evident in the way she keeps a journal about such events.

Demolition and Future Planning for City of the Dead

Planners and government officials have objected COD as a place to live due to its inefficient land use for modern day Cairo (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Demolition and redevelopment have officially been discussed since the late 1960s (Abu-Lughod, J., 1971). In 1984, a decision was formally made to demolish the cemetery and replace it with a public garden. This did not happen of course, though a partial demolition occurred in 1989 which destroyed several important graves. Several small demolition and relocation instances followed. Some residents in the Bab el-Nasr portion of the cemetery were relocated in 1987 because of anticipated redevelopment plans by the GOPP. Another partial demolition followed in 2001 in the same area which forcibly relocated nearly 100 households (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Both the GOPP and government officials have recommended that residents of COD be relocated to new housing areas and that the plots also be relocated. Though these plans and recommendations exist, government has been relatively slow to take action (al-Ibrashy, 2005; Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Literature speaks to several potential scenarios for COD other than relocating residents and redeveloping the site to match surrounding development. The following is not an exhaustive list, but rather a snapshot of mentioned solutions. One is that COD would function exclusively as a burial ground, preserving the historical monuments and mausoleums. Another is that COD would function as a center for cultural and religious tourism (al-Ibrashy, 2013). An unconventional solution is that the funerary function of the site ends, and the structures are embraced as an affordable housing solution (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). It is my position that this is the best solution for COD because there is a need for affordable housing to accommodate low income residents. Cemetery dwellers have already created functional places to live in the cemetery at the risk of eviction (though the government has been slow to act). This was not an intentional act of defiance, but rather a response to a wider systemic breakdown in the formal housing market and the state (Nedoroscik, 1997; Soliman, 2002). Perhaps this unconventional

solution would officially recognize and respond to the needs of those who already have a home there.

Chapter 2 - How I Answered My Question

Methods

Qualitative research, by nature, explores the complexities of humanity (Kim, 2015). In this work, I use qualitative methods to unpack the narratives of tomb communities within the City of the Dead (COD). I do this through the narrative analysis of 5 interviews with experts on Cairo's current urbanism. I supplement this analysis with data from 10 supplemental sources such as planning reports, photo-essays and documentaries about the COD.

"Narrative is from Latin *narrat* ("related" "told"), *narrare* (to tell), or late Latin *narrativus* ("telling a story"), all of which are akin to Latin *gnārus* ("knowing")" (Kim, 2015, p.6). In other words, narrative is a form of knowledge that involves both telling and knowing. Additionally, narrative does not leave us, nor is it confined by time and space. Narrative is everywhere as we dream it, remember it, construct it, and plan around and with it (Kim, 2015). Scholars such as Gerald Prince (2003) define narrative as the remembered and repeated recitation of real and fictional events. Narratives are ultimately stories that connect a set of past events or personal experiences (Cortazzi,1994). Narratives often support a particular viewpoint held by the person sharing the narrative. For this work, narrative is specifically defined as a story or representation of a particular place. Robert Beauregard (2005) explains, "before places become objects of urban planning and design, they exist in personal experience, hearsay, and collective memories. Standing between planners and designers and the sites on which they hope to act are socially embedded narratives. And, while these place narratives can be ignored, they cannot be wholly erased" (p. 39). All places exist in space, as well as in narrative. Socially embedded narrative defines a place and planners and design professionals, interact with the place first and foremost through this narrative. Narrative, particularly narrative of place, is deeply intertwined with how planning decisions are made and with who makes them.

In recent times, planning scholarship has witnessed a paradigm shift towards a more participatory form of planning which also includes a move towards acknowledging and engaging with diverse place-based narratives (Ameel 2017). Planning theorists such as Leonie Sandercock (2010), argue that this "story turn" in planning theory and practice comes from a need to account for the "…diverse kinds of ways of knowing that exist apart from technical knowledge" (Ameel 2017, p.319). Further, planning practice today envisions the planner as a

moderator of competing narratives. Beauregard (2005, p.47) claims that, "we know little about how urban planners and designers actually go about the deconstruction of place and the narrative construction of site. We do know that intervention cannot occur, development cannot happen, until that site is brought under control, situated in a professional discourse. To arrive there, prior narratives are reduced in number or, in some instances, totally eliminated". However, newer scholarship in planning tackles how planners deconstruct and construct existing and new narratives. Ameel (2017) for example explains that planners through the writing and creation of planning documents create new narratives. Planners as narrators "..recount a *story*, usually aimed at the inhabitants of the area affected by planning…most of the recounted events will be real enough, but planning documents tend to involve also conjectured elements, such as claims about what an area will look and feel like in the future" (Ameel 2017, p.321). Rarely are sites 'undeveloped' before a new narrative is given to it, and investment for a new development requires support of the new narrative (Beauregard, 2005). Further, planners' narratives of a place are part of a large variety of narratives about that place that exist including those by inhabitants, those by the press, those by other interested parties, and those by politicians. However, Beauregard is correct in claiming that in order for planners to intervene, certain narratives are privileged over others. This work intervenes at this juncture and tries to unpack the various narratives of the COD that exist. Through the narrative analysis of primary and secondary data, this work tries to reconstruct the various narratives of the COD, particularly those that construct it as a place to live.

Primary Data

I conducted semi-structured interviews to reveal how individuals perceive and give meaning to their understandings of the City of the Dead (Kim, 2015). My initial source for participants was my friend and professor Amir Gohar. I used snowball sampling to find additional willing participants.

The questions asked were pre-determined and open-ended. As a result, I was able to ask follow-up questions. The pre-determined questions were categorized into three groups: embedded/historical narratives, daily narratives, and future narratives. The following is a list of the pre-determined questions in their respective categories:

> *The embedded/ historical narratives*

−   Can you tell me the history of the City of the Dead?

- Why do people live in the City of the Dead today?
- In what ways do you value the historical qualities in the City of the Dead? Such as important tombs, the citadel, etc.

Daily narratives

- How is the City of the Dead different from other informal settlements?
- What do residents of the City of the Dead not understand about the City of the Dead?
- How does the City of the Dead affect how outsiders perceive the city of Cairo?

Future narrative

- How are planners addressing the City of the Dead?
- How likely is it that the tombs will be demolished? If so, how long might that take?
- What do you hope the City of the Dead looks like in 5 years?
- What do you hope the City of the Dead looks like in 30 years?

I recorded 5 interviews on a GoPro camera. 4 interviews were conducted in person in Cairo, and 1 interview was conducted via phone while I was in Cairo. The 5 participants spoke English as a second or third language. A translator was present at every in-person interview and was needed occasionally throughout the interview. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. After I returned to the United States with my recorded interviews, I manually transcribed each interview by listening to it and typing out both questions and answers.

Participants

My first interview was with Abdullah Al-Attar. Abdullah is a faculty member in the Urban and Regional Planning department at Cairo University where he primarily teaches urban design courses. Abdullah is also a co-founder of GATEWAY for Urban Development (GWUD), a consulting firm that specializes in urban planning, site engineering, and landscape architecture. He currently serves as the design manager for GWUD. In my work, he is addressed by his real name and is categorized as a planner or an urbanist.

My second interview was with Samir Mahmoud. Samir works in Egypt's General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP). He is formally educated as an urban planner. Samir is a pseudonym, as he instructed me to keep his official title confidential. In my work, he is categorized as a government official.

My third interview was with Khalil Shaat. Khalil is the senior advisor to the Cairo Governate on informal areas. Khalil has a background in business administration. Much of his work experience is related to conflict resolution and mediation. Khalil does not have a formal background in urban planning. In my work, he is addressed by his real name and categorized as a government official.

My fourth interview was with David Sims. David is an American economist and planner who has worked in developing countries for nearly 50 years. Sims studied economics at Yale University and city planning at Harvard University. Sims has worked as an advisor and consultant on issues pertaining to housing, land management, finance, and community development, and he currently resides in Cairo. In my work, he is addressed by his real name and is categorized as a planner or an urbanist.

My final interview was with Amir Gohar. Amir is an urban and landscape planner. Amir earned a PhD from UC Berkeley in Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning. His research interests and specialization are in urban development, land use, eco-tourism, and public participation. Amir has worked extensively in developing counties with municipal governments, private sector consulting firms, and international development agencies, specifically the World Bank. Amir currently works as a Senior Lecturer and Course Leader in the School of Art Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom. In my work, he is addressed by his real name and is categorized as a planner or an urbanist.

Supplemental Data

During the interviews, I asked about supplemental data sources that are related to my research. After my interviews, I searched for books, articles, videos, interviews, and planning documents pertaining to the City of the Dead on the internet to serve as secondary data. I compiled all of the information about each source on an Excel Spreadsheet to determine which sources would be best for this research. See Table 1 for a list of supplemental sources used in this work. Details on how I analyzed both primary and secondary data can be found in the following section.

Category	Author	Type	Title	Date
Popular Media	Zeina Elcheikh on Cairo Observer	Egyptian Blog	Where Life and Death Share a Space	2014

Popular Media	Tadamun	Egyptian Blog	Cairo 2050 Revisited: Where is the Cairo Strategic Development Vision?	2014
Popular Media	Christopher Reeve on Egypt Independent	Egyptian News	What Ever Happened to Cairo 2050?	2011
Popular Media	Sarah El-Rashdi on Abram Online	Egyptian News	Tales from Cairo's living City of the Dead	2013
Popular Media	Alexander Nesbitt	Photographs	City of the Dead, Cairo	2000
Popular Media	Tamara Abdul Handi	Photographs	City of the Dead	2009
Popular Media	Asmaa Waguih	Photographs	Living in the City of the Dead	2015
Popular Media	Ahmed Yehia	Film	*Karakon fe al-sharea*	1886
Popular Media	Alessandro Molatorre on Al Jazeera	Film	City of the Dead	2012
Academic	May Al Ibrashy	PhD Dissertation	The History of the Southern Cemetery of Cairo from the 14th Century to Present: An urban study of a living cemetery	2005
Academic	May Al Ibrashy	Study	Historic Cemeteries Component of the Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo	2013
Academic	Amira Howeidy et al.	Study	Informal Areas: Between urban challenges and hidden potentials	2009

Academic*	Charles Abrams	Book	Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World	1966
Academic	David Sims	Book	Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City out of Control	2010
Academic	Nezar AlSayyad	Book	Cairo	2011
Academic	Wael Salah Fahmi & Keith Sutton	Journal Article	Living with the Dead: Contested spaces and the right to Cairo's inner-city cemeteries	2014
Academic	Anna Tozzi Di Marco	Journal Article	The Reshaping of Cairo's City of the Dead	2011
Academic*	Erhard Berner	Journal Article	Learning from Informal Markets: Innovative approaches to land and housing provision	2001
Academic*	Piyush Tiwari & Pritika Hingorani	Journal Article	An Institutional Analysis of Housing and Basic Infrastructure Services for all	2013
Academic	Housam Darwisheh	Journal Article	Egypt Under Sisi: From an authoritarian dominant party system to strongman politics	2019
Official Document	General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP)	Planning Document	Cairo 2050	2008
Official Document	Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities	Planning Document	Egypt 2052	2014
Official Document	Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and	Planning Document	Vision 2030	2016

	Administrative Reform			

Table 1: List of supplemental data sources. An asterisk indicates that the content in the supplemental data is not about Cairo, Egypt or the City of the Dead but rather a similar place or a relevant topic helpful for this discussion on COD as a place to live.

Analysis

Primary Data

In order to analyze the data collected from the interviews, I coded using the 'In Vivo' method. In Vivo coding focuses on coding by pulling out exact quotes from the data (Saldaña, 2016). "In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or "translates" data" (Saldaña, 2016, p.4). In my case, I am using a researcher-generated code, but it is as close to what the respondent would generate because my codes are exact quotes taken directly from the interview. I coded my interviews by hand. I did not code the things I said, only what the respondent says. By using intuition and keeping in mind my research question, I coded key words or phrases by underlining them in the transcripts and also writing the code word-for-word in the margin. The text on every interview transcript was double spaced and each page had three-inch margins to write codes out to the side. After coding each interview, I wrote a memo to help identify themes. A theme is a repetitive or consistent occurrence of data that appears more than once (Saldaña, 2016). If codes from multiple respondents were similar or repetitive, those codes then fit under a theme. For example, when asked 'How is the City of the Dead different from other informal settlements?' Most respondent applauded the grid system that is in the COD. The code 'grid system' would fit under the theme 'urban fabric.' The codes from each interview fit under 8 themes that I have identified from the interviews. These themes emerged through memo writing, re-listening to interviews, and reading the interview transcripts multiple times. The themes in this work are services, legality, planning, community, historical/ cultural, urban fabric, relocation, and governance. I assigned each theme a color. As codes became themes, I color coded the code to match the assigned color for the theme it fit under. For example, the theme 'urban fabric' was color coded blue. On my paper interview transcripts, I would highlight the code 'grid system' or any word or phrase that meant the same thing blue. This helped me keep organized as I analyzed the narratives through this coding process. See Figure 5 for an example of how I coded one of my paper interview transcripts.

A- I think it is less likely for lots of cultural reasons. There will be lots of

resistance from the people. However, the near [similar?] experiences with

other informal areas shows that they only have the guts and the strength

and don't care about the social costs... if there is a developer or investor

who is willing to improve the area.

Q- What do you hope the City of the Dead looks like in 5 years?

A- I hope people find better livelihood... a better quality of urban areas

and just move out. And it stays a City of the Dead maybe a little more

greenery and it becomes what it should be and what it was originally

planned and designed for.. just the city of [for] the dead (19:30:

Q- What about in 30 years? Long term vision – thinking through the scope

of planning as a whole for Cairo.

A- I think in 30 years the hopes doesn't change things as much as the

market value. So in 30 years this piece of land will be very, very

expensive. A lot more expensive. There will be a lot more demand on it.

Everything surrounding this area and the Nile will be highly developed. In

a high-rise Dubai-sized urban. That will increase its value to the extent

that will make the government interfere or real estate developers to take it

an build to transfer it to something else. So I don't think it will last another

30 years. They are already demolishing our cultural heritage. Imagine the

City of the Dead.

Figure 5: Example pulled from an interview with one respondent to show In Vivo coding system and highlighting for themes (Author's photo).

The following is the list of themes found in this work and examples of what might be coded under that theme:

- **services**: water, sewage, electricity, schools, religious learning centers such as *madrassas*[31], mosques, religious centers, the ability to secure a job
- **legality:** encroachment housing tenure, terminology used to describe those who live in COD, reasons people live in COD, migration
- **planning:** current planning, future planning, specific plans and policies, development, type of planning practices, the monetary value of the site, tomb demolition
- **community**: community, relationships among residents, relationships between tomb dwellers and outsiders, the relationship between tomb dwellers and the deceased
- **historical/ cultural**: architecture, famous burial sites, historical and cultural monuments, art
- **urban fabric:** grid system, low density, location in Cairo, courtyards
- **relocation:** moving tomb dwellers to a different location, self-relocation
- **governance:** specific leaders, type of government, the state

I ultimately wanted to understand how the respondent qualified the themes and how these themes do two things:

1. Form the narrative of the City of the Dead
2. Heavily influence negative planning outcomes proposed in policy documents

Supplemental Data

After coding the 5 interviews, I analyzed 10 pieces of supplemental data. I obtained these pieces from both American and Egyptian news outlets, online freelance writing, professional photographs, and official planning documents about Cairo's current planning and/or the City of the Dead. I analyzed all written material by reading each piece multiple times. I underlined key words or phrases by using intuition and keeping in mind my research question. I did not use In Vivo coding to do this because of time as a limitation. Additionally, I already had a specific set of themes that emerged from the analyzing primary data sources. The supplemental data is used to enhance or complete the narratives respondents shared during interviews. The underlined key words and phrases identified in the supplemental data sources were placed in my work to have a conversation with the primary data. The supplemental data will either support or counter the narratives respondents hold about any given theme (i.e services, planning, relocation, etc.) in this work. For example, if one respondent says infrastructure provision in the

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[31] A madrassa is an Islamic religious school

City of the Dead adequately supports those who live there and a supplemental news source interviewing resident about infrastructure provision takes the opposite position - my work will highlight these differences and allow the narratives to sit conflicting on the same page. I also introduce my positions about the various narratives that have emerged in this work. Another reason for adding supplemental data to my work is to provide a wider variety of narrative than what only five interviews could offer. For example, several sources from my supplemental data set directly quote respondents who were interviewed for this work. Not all of the supplemental data used for this work was in written form; much of it was visual, including videos and photographs. I included this type of data because visual information can add to a narrative in a way that text alone cannot.

The following is an example of how I analyzed photographs in my dataset: I analyzed 3 photographers' work on the City of the Dead. In order to determine the photographers' narratives about the COD, I took into consideration the photographers' descriptions about each photo if a description was provided. I looked at each photo individually and I also compared each photo to the other photos from that particular collection. For example, I took note of how many photos depicted people on their own, away from other community member. I looked for evidence of poverty and wealth. I wanted to see if the photographers focused more on the dead than the living. One limitation with analyzing photographs to determine narrative is that I do not know how much knowledge the photographer has about Cairo's current planning agenda. However, I do know that how we see or understand a site determines how we plan for it. Essentially, how these photographers see the site is translated into their work. Photographers, writers, media, etc. are contributing to the narrative of this place. Whether the sources of my selected supplemental data are aware of it or not, they are contributing to the narrative of this place. Those interviewed have some power in controlling the future narrative of the City of the Dead. The people I interviewed have probably not interacted with every piece of supplemental data I analyzed, but they are surely interacting with similar sources.

Limitations

This study was limited by several factors. Initially I intended to learn the narratives about the City of the Dead from the tomb dwellers themselves, but due to a crime that took place in the Bab al Wazir section of the cemetery involving a foreigner, I was unable to interview residents in that particular section. I hoped to interview residents from this section of COD because data on it is limited. Because the nature of my research shifted after I arrived in Cairo,

it was difficult to find willing participants to interview during my stay. I also want to acknowledge the lack of diversity in interview respondents as a limitation. For example, I did not interview women or professionals who were young in their planning career. Four out of five respondents are Egyptian, and all of them are males. Another limitation is that I do not speak fluent Arabic. It is likely that interviewees could not communicate their ideas and thoughts fully because I do not speak their native tongue. Lastly, time was a limiting factor for this study, as I only spent three weeks in Cairo to collect data for this research.

Chapter 3 - What I Found

For the City of the Dead, services, legality, planning, community, historical/cultural, urban fabric, relocation, and governance are urban planning characteristics that contribute to the site's ability to be a place to live. These characteristics emerged as themes while coding primary data (interviews). Secondary data is used alongside the primary data to strengthen this analysis. This section will analyze each theme found my coding process.

Legality

It Was Always the City of the Living

What is known as the City of the Dead today was planned and developed for funerary purposes on the periphery of what is now Cairo, Egypt (formerly the city of Fustat). The development of the City of the Dead began in 640 A.D., the second year of the Muslim Conquest in Egypt (Elcheikh, 2014; Tozzi Di Marco, 2013). Several dynasties and conquerors of Cairo including the *Abbasids*, *Fatimids*, the *Ayyubids*, the *Mamlukes*, the Ottomans, and the French, left their mark on the cemetery. More specifically, several of these dynasties made way for people to live in the City of the Dead.

The Abbasid period started in 750AD (2003, Timeline of Egypt, University College London). According to May Al-Ibrashy (2005, p.33), "Archaeological evidence has shown that the tradition of building a structure that provides accommodation of sorts for the visitor or the caretaker of a family graveyard dates back to the Abbasid period".[32] The Fatimids ruled in 969 AD- the same year the city of Cairo was founded- and placed important structures such as mosques and mausoleums into the cemetery (Nedoroscik, 1997). The Fatimids also built structures around tomb sites for families to pay respects to the deceased. By this time, the structures accompanying the graves were being used as living quarter, with documented evidence that Fatimids "took up residence" in the cemetery (Al Ibrashy, 2005). Italian Anthropologist Anna Tozzi Di Marco, has lived in COD since 1998 and writes that some of the first residents of COD consisted of custodians, or guardians, who maintained important graves

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[32] The archaeological evidence found by excavation efforts led by the French Archaeological Institute included built structures from the Abbasid period used for shelter, small gardens, water provision, and storage (Al Ibrashy, 2005).

(Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). By 1000 A.D, the majority of the inhabitants in Egypt were Muslim (Nedoroscik, 1997). Ibn Jubayr, a traveler who visited Cairo during the Ayyubid dynasty in 1183 AD, recorded that the cemetery was inhibited by "strangers, learned men, the good, and the poor (or Sufis)" (Al-Ibrashy, 2005). The Mamlukes ruled in 1250 AD and expanded the cemetery by constructing residences, schools, sporting venues, and areas for trade (Nedoroscik, 1997). It was during the Ottoman era that the first wave of rural to urban migration to the cemeteries began (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). The construction of all current cemeteries was completed by the beginning of the 15th century (Al Ibrashy, 2013). The French Occupation, which lasted from 1798 to 1801, is significant for Egyptians because it is used to mark the start of modern Egypt (Al Ibrashy, 2005), so it is no surprise that today's planners give this timeframe as a potential starting point for the City of the Dead. It is also during the French Occupation that there was a shift towards a more western understanding of land-use and planning emerged in Cairo. This shift deemed the proximity of cemeteries to other land-uses unhealthy. As a result, an effort to ban all non-funerary activities in the cemetery gained a lot of support during the 1920s (Al Ibrashy, 2005).

Nezar AlSayyad (2011), in his book *Cairo* documents that the transformation of COD "into a residential area" was one of the ways that Cairo absorbed great numbers of rural migrants in the 1960s when migration was at a peak and Cairo was at its most populous at 6.1 million people.

> Its [COD] elaborate courtyard structures, and the tombs and funerary complexes of Mamluk and Ottoman nobility, were taken over by squatters. Living in the cemetery [COD] was not a new phenomenon; since the Mamluk times, tomb custodians had offered shelter to pilgrims and Sufi mystics. And in the early twentieth century, the tombs in northern Cairo were occupied by men who worked in the limekilns, while quarry workers occupied the tombs in the city's southern areas. Prior to World War II, Cairo's cemeteries housed a population of more than fifty thousand. Despite efforts by the regime to resettle and relocate these people, the number of cemetery residents grew to more than one hundred thousand before the end of Nasser's two decades in power. Many of those squatter families lived in mud huts in the courtyards of the historic tombs. – AlSayyad 2011 p. 246

Interview respondents explained that the history of COD is complex and that it is impossible to pinpoint when people began to live in the space.

Some people say that it didn't show in the old maps in the French Occupation. Others say these cemeteries, the City of the Dead, has been there before the French Occupation maps. You can't just determine what year it started. -Abdullah

You won't be able to find the exact answer to this because it's an intermittent issue...but it is safe to say that maybe after 1960, or the beginning of the war in Egypt, between 1960-1970, this problem is clearer in this period because after the war immigration increased, so maybe we can say around 1960-1970. -Samir

While respondents disagreed on the exact date people began to inhibit COD, both academic evidence and respondent knowledge evidenced here underscores the fact that COD has long been a place for people to live. The date of physical construction of the cemetery is not disputed among planners and government officials, but the idea that the cemetery has almost always had people living in it is either not known or not acknowledged and reflected in planning decisions. Here is evidence of certain narratives being privileged in planning decisions and documents over other narratives. It is clear in academic literature that COD has long been a place to live, it is also clear from archeological evidence, when it became a place to live. However, planning decisions and documents are seemingly premised on COD being only a cemetery and not a place to live. A question to consider here is how does the presence of residents help the City of the Dead in terms of legality? Once the cemetery was filled by the living, it became a place to live. However, it is clearly problematic that the date COD became a place is unclear in colloquial understandings of COD, as that makes it easier for planning to focus on it being a place for the dead.

People's Presence and the Evolution of Legality

During the seventeenth century, population in COD declined. However, by the end of the century, the first wave of migration of Islamic scholars from rural Upper Egypt grew the population (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). The second wave of rural to urban migration to the cemeteries began around the First and Second World Wars and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. As a result, COD's resident population grew and diversified. One of the major differences between the first and second wave of rural to urban migration is that the second migration consisted mostly of families (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). Migrants came to Cairo seeking new opportunities but found housing options were limited and unaffordable. Nezar AlSayyad (2011, p. 247) writes that during this second wave "...cemetery population came to consist of migrants from rural Egypt who could not afford to live elsewhere in Cairo."

Many people come for jobs without having sufficient and affordable housing. And this definitely affects urbanization because you have a huge number of people living without suitable housing. So, this is one of the reasons for the slums of Cairo -Samir

Samir Mahmoud, a high-ranking government official who works in Egypt's General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP), gives some insight on the official narrative about which should come first - secured housing then migration or migration then securing housing. In other words, should the migrant know that he or she will surely be able to secure affordable housing *before* coming to Cairo? Or should it be assumed that the government will have already ensured an affordable housing stock exists for migrants? Samir suggests that it is the migrant's responsibly to secure housing before moving. This is significant because his thoughts directly affect decisions to supply affordable housing for residents in Cairo. Others such as Khalil acknowledge that the government has failed to provide housing to migrants.

The government due to many reasons, some of which were the many regional wars[33] and the different issues going on, regarding the housing issue the government was doing its best to provide housing, but these were not enough to accommodate everyone migrating from different parts of Cairo. So, people took it into their own hands, and some of them built *ashwaiyyat*, encroaching on government-owned land, and some of them took things in their own hands and opened the burial site and started to live there. -Khalil

I mean people live in the City of the Dead, people that basically have no places to live... If you look at Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, that's safety and shelter. So, they're not thinking or understanding or believing basically anything but that they need a ceiling to live under, a shelter to live under. Whether this is right, whether this is wrong, whether they are encroaching on someone's privacy, whether they are tampering with a place that is owned by someone else, that's not a concern to them. Is it right or wrong? Again, I cannot say it is right, and I cannot say it is wrong. People need to live, so they took it into their own hands, and they are encroaching on their burial site. -Khalil

Both these quotes- from Samir and Khalil- make it apparent that the current narrative around housing provision is not clear. Whose responsibility it is to provide housing – the government or is it the resident? If it is the latter, residents in COD certainly did provide their

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[33] Particularly the 1967 Arab-Israeli War

own housing. But why would they intentionally do so in a cemetery? And why do people remain in COD today? In order to fully understand this, we need to zoom out and get a better understanding of the current housing stock in Cairo. The housing problem in Cairo is not one of availability, it is one of affordability.

The Narrative of Legality and Demolition

Though Khalil says that he cannot say if it is right or wrong that people live in COD, it is clear from his interview the he is unhappy with the current state that COD is in.

> If there is a chance to improve the area in accordance with the rules and regulations of religious guidelines, maybe to widen a road or to make a park next to the area, that's up to the planner of that area. I'm not aware—I'm sure that it's not a part of their plan to demolish the religious sites[34]. But to leave them the way they are, this is not acceptable to anyone. For me as a resident of Cairo, as someone that is in love with Cairo, deep love by the way, I think that I will support and agree and do whatever it takes to see improvement to these sites in a proper manner -Khalil

While government officials acknowledge the difficult circumstances that led many to live in COD, both government officials, Khalil and Samir, do not recognize this as a viable housing option because cemeteries are not inherently housing. In other words, their narrative imagines the City of the Dead as not being able to be a housing settlement because of its funerary function. As a result, there are plans to "upgrade" the site.

> I cannot accept this is a housing option. Not from the professional point of view, even from the personal point of view. This is an option they took on their own, and it's not a housing option. -Khalil

The government's plans to demolish, relocate, and develop the City of the Dead will be explained in the Relocation and Planning sections of this chapter. For now, it is important to determine if relocating tomb dwellers on the basis of legality is even possible. One of the key justifications for relocating tomb dwellers is because COD was not planned for people to live in it. It is acknowledged by all respondents that the spatial component of COD is legal because the cemeteries were formally planned, but according to government officials, the social uses of this

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[34] It is important to note here that Khalil first begins this sentence with "I am not aware..." Almost all plans for COD involve demolishing the tombs. This will be further discussed in the Planning section of this analysis

site were not. As stated above, this idea can be challenged by examining how dynasties and rulers encouraged residential uses in the cemetery. Another way to determine if relocating tomb dwellers on the basis of legality is possible is by understanding who owns the tombs and the land. Generally speaking, the tombs are privately owned but the land is publicly owned. Occasionally, the owner of the tomb is the one who lives in the space around it. If the owner does not live in the space, they pay guards to maintain the plots or open the gate for visitation purposes. If the owner of the tomb does not frequent the site, it is common for the tomb guard to rent the tomb area to a different family though he does not have the legal right to do so. As a result, most residents of COD are paying into an informal economic system. One respondent confirms that the tomb guard is profiting off of renting tombs.

> He is [the tomb guard] likely benefiting from any transactions or renting because he's just there -Amir

Another respondent confirms that these rental transactions are benefiting the informal economy.

> There is an informal system of paying someone, I'm not sure who. But definitely they are not paying the government -Khalil

The National Population Council (NPC) study from the 1990s which sampled 1500 households in the cemeteries also confirms this. The survey revealed 12% of households pay rent. Over half of those paying rent paid the tomb guard (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Residents who do not pay rent typically help the tomb guard with his work (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014; Howeidy et al., 2009). It is not clear in literature if owners of tombs are renting out areas to make money, though David Sims says this does happen sometimes.

> If it got sort of taken over by the guardian then he rents it out, or the owner himself makes a little money by renting it out -Sims

One respondent passionately disagrees by saying:

> That's outrageous- definitely not! If I have some loved one that's buried in a place and I go and get paid to have someone live in that burial site, no - this is not the case -Khalil

It is clear there are a variety of ways people are paying or not paying to live in COD. The owner of the tomb, whether they are making money are not, surely has to be aware that

someone is living in that space. David Sims, an American economist and planner currently residing in Cairo, does not consider it illegal for people to live in the City of the Dead because either the owner of the tomb allows their presence, or the owner passively turns a blind eye regarding unwanted occupants. To make his point, Sims describes the Arabic phrase *amory waaka*,[35] meaning what is, is. This phrase is often used in legal settings by judges in Egyptian courts when there is not a solution other than keeping something the way it is. To take his point a step further, the owner of the land (i.e the government) is very much aware that people are living in the cemetery. One could argue that because the government has yet to change the status quo of the cemetery, it should continue to be a place to live. After all, what is, is.

Urbanization

Sims certainly makes a case for residents of COD to be considered legal. Another case can be made by examining CODs urbanization over time. It is important to note here that urbanization is a process. Informal housing is characterized by illegal methods of urbanization (Tarbush, 2012). Initially, those controlling COD's urbanization encouraged people to live in the cemetery. Until the Ottoman rule, there was no distinction between people who lived in COD and those who did not because COD was widely considered to be a pleasant place to live (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011). It was socially acceptable to live in COD or have mixed land uses that involved a cemetery, particularly before the French Occupation. How might this call attention to its legitimacy as a (legal) place to live today? We know that those controlling COD's current urbanization consider it illegal for people to live in the City of the Dead (this is how we can justify that the City of the Dead is an informal settlement today), but if it was initially acceptable (and legal) for people to live in COD, shouldn't that be considered when addressing the current occupation and the future planning surrounding this place?

Narrative of Spirituality and Encroachment

Though my position towards COD is that it is a place to live, I would be remiss if I did not mention the spirituality and importance of this burial site. COD is home to invaluable Islamic graves, mosques, monuments, and other impressive religious and funerary buildings (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). According to respondents, residents are not concerned about encroaching and tampering with the burial grounds.

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[35] This Arabic phrase can also mean 'current state' or 'existing situation' امر واقع

It is encroaching on the spirituality and the sacredness of the place. It is a sacred place. People are being buried there. Though it is a deserted place, and people are not going there, the family maybe is not living in Cairo they are not living there, but in a way you are tampering with this place. -Khalil

It is important to note that most families are not living underground with the deceased. They live in above ground structures and courtyards. This clarification helps us shift our mindset to a more positive one in terms of legality. Interestingly, the same respondent who mentioned people encroaching on the site also shared the following when asked if residents are adding on to the tombs:

They are careful not to do that... It is a financial cost they don't want to get involved in so they were very selective in going to places that were very convenient to them and its already furnished in a way that they do the minimum for this place to be inhabitable - Khalil

Another respondent adds that residents do, however, make minor changes to make their tomb structures feel more like a home.

They are definitely changing the windows, creating spaces to sit, some shades. The changes are minor to accommodate people without creating massive urban change -Amir

If a stakeholder's narrative is that people are encroaching on the cemetery and tampering with the burial site, naturally their solution to this would be to evict and relocate those responsible. But if a stakeholder's narrative is that people are using the space to create a place to live without creating massive urban change, the idea of eviction and relocation might seem a bit extreme. So which narrative prevails?

Relocation

We know that informal housing emerges primarily because of lack of affordable housing caused by state and market failures (Berner, 2001). But this does not tell us why informal housing is often demolished and residents are relocated. One way to get a better understanding of demolition and relocation as a way of addressing housing informality is to unpack the commonly held narrative about *where* and *how* informal housing emerges. Erhard Berner is a lecturer at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands and has written extensively on communities' responses to urban poverty. He says there is a misconception

about the haphazard nature of informal settlements and as a result, demolition seems like the obvious "solution" to powerful interests and even to the public.

> "The terms 'spontaneous settlements' and 'clandestine subdivision' suggest that urban land is just there for the taking by enterprising individuals and families. This picture is misleading" -Berner, 2001, p.297

> "Most illegal settlements are merely seen as a violation of private or public property rights, and this leads formal settlers and government officials to believe the obvious solution is demolition and relocation" -Berner, 2001, p.295

Berner expresses here that the process informal settlers undergo to create a home is nuanced. This is because two conditions must be met on the land before it becomes an informal settlement. First, the land must be well located. Second, the land must have access to a water source. COD is unique in that though it is a burial site, it does meet both of these necessary conditions. It is centrally located in Cairo (to be discussed further in the Urban Fabric section of this chapter), and it does have access to water sources (to be discussed further in the Services section of this chapter). These conditions in addition to people's physical presence in the cemeteries helps legitimize the site as a place to live. But because cemeteries are not inherently housing, government officials hold the narrative that COD is not a legitimate place to live. Plans for demolition are birthed out of this narrative and often justified as a city improvement plan.

> Massive demolitions and evictions are justified on the grounds of improvement and beautification of the city, removal of centres of crime and health hazards, and more intensive and lucrative use of land in strategic locations" -Berner, 2001, p.295

While these justifications may seem logical from a physical land-use perspective, demolition and relocation rarely have substantial benefits for the city, the economy, or informal settlers.

Relocation Location

Relocation sites are rarely provided to all who have been evicted. If new residences are provided, they are often located in an undesirable location. Respondent Amir Gohar sheds light on this by focusing on the economic disadvantages informal settlers face when relocated.

Most of the alternatives of discussion that happens with them [residents in COD] is about relocating them on the other side of Cairo which takes away their sources of income and jobs -Amir

Relocation sites for Cairo's informal settlers are typically in the surrounding desert of Greater Cairo. Christopher Reeve, a writer for an Egyptian news source called Egypt Independent, confirms informal residents are typically moved to desert cities that are undergoing construction. He discusses the brief mention in masterplan Cairo 2050 to relocate informal residents to "new housing extensions" in the desert. He elaborates on how the government does not have the capacity to do this properly (if there were a "proper" way to do such a thing).

"Controversy has surrounded the government's capacity to fairly compensate displaced families, as well as its desire to move families into desert cities such as 6th of October and New Cairo, which are still quite vacant. Some consider those areas undesirable due to a lack of transport options and general isolation" -Reeve, 2011

Journalist Christopher Reeve and urbanist Amir Gohar agree that relocating informal residents to a location that limits their ability to have a secure job or get to that job is not ideal.

They often lose one or more sources of livelihood as they are forced to move away from the area where they had jobs or sources of income. Where provision is made for resettlement, this is almost always at a distant site where the people are expected to build, once again, their homes but on land with little or no provision for Infrastructure and services. Those evicted rarely receive any financial support for rebuilding. The land site on which they are relocated is also very often of poor quality -Fahmi & Sutton, 2014, p.24

Authors Fahmi and Sutton reveal through survey data that the majority of residents who were affected by the 2001 partial demolition in the Bab El-Nasr section of the cemetery agree that relocation affects economic stability. 100 households were relocated by these efforts. 40 relocated heads-of-households (or 40%) were surveyed. 32 people (80% of those surveyed) give the disruption of economic structures as a negative outcome of relocation. This was especially true among tomb guards (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). A response given by a female tomb dweller who was relocated from her home in 2001 to a desert community portrays appreciation for her former access to services and economic opportunities.

"In Bab El-Nasr Cemetery at least we were in the centre of the city, we could get Jobs.
The men could earn some money to feed their families. Out here there is nothing. Some
of us had shops, or a tea cabin, while most of the women like me worked in different
areas nearby doing housework. We earned about (125-150 LE) Now, this place is so far
from the city that we have to spend (5LE) a day on transportation" -Fahmi & Sutton,
2014, p.23

Fahmi and Sutton are researchers who have collaborated on several writings regarding
Cairo's current urbanism and contested spaces. Their study provides a residential narrative that
validates the often poorly located relocation site and inability to financially carry-on as some of
the biggest downfalls with relocation. Berner says the evicted feel more comfortable seeking out
other informal housing in the city than living far away from their old settlement, and those who
have a little bit of financial means make the choice not to live in relocation housing (Berner,
2001). One resident's commentary from the survey collected by Fahmi and Sutton confirms that
Berner is correct to say that those who can somehow afford not to relocate far away from their
former settlement do not.

"Only the poorest came out here. Those who had a little money did not shift here. They
rented a place in Manshiet Nasser36 or somewhere else nearby. They said that at least
they were close to their source of livelihood. If we had some money, maybe we would
also move somewhere close to our workplace. Nobody cares for us and nobody will do
anything for us. We will just have to slowly rebuild our homes all over again" -Fahmi &
Sutton, 2014, p.23

Globally, most informal relocation efforts are carried out in peripheral locations
(approximately 30-40km) away from the city centers (Berner, 2001). Government official, Khalil
Shaat, says that this is not Egypt's way of handling informality.

The Egyptian government, for what I've seen regarding upgrading the *ashwaiyyat* part,
the informal sites, they don't upgrade and relocate people 40 miles away from their
original destination. Actually, this is part of the guidelines that we have to work with in
ashwaiyyat. The new location has to be within 3-5 kilometers (1-3 miles) -Khalil

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36 Manshiet Nasser is an informal settlement located close to the City of the Dead

When asked where relocate tomb dwellers might be relocated to, should that plan happen, government official Samir Mahmoud explains that the government can offer land in Cairo or in areas in the Greater Cairo Region. Interestingly, as Samir shared that there is plenty of land to offer evicted tomb dwellers, he did not talk about the social and psychological impacts relocation might have on residents.

A Traumatizing Process

Relocation is traumatizing, particularly for tomb dwellers, as small pockets of communities from the cemetery have in the past been forced to leave the home in which they have lived for decades (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Watching the home, they have created be bulldozed to the ground is unsettling and emotionally trying. Fahmi and Sutton write that sometimes no warning is given before bulldozers destroy a settlement (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014), but government official Khalil Shaat disagrees with this claim.

> So basically, the government will not say, "Ok guys get out of here in 2 or 3 hours." No, it will be a working program, cooperative efforts between and within the government with the people to do such a transformation -Khalil

However, respondent Amir Gohar explains that offering new housing after an eviction may not be what informal settlers truly need. He believes that economic stability may be more important.

> I had a walk with one of the informal settlers and I said, "How much money do you want to get to go to work on a micro bus in Saudi?" He had no skills except driving. I said, "Would you go for 1800 Riads per month?" He said, "No, that's too small." So, I kept pushing it up... 1900, 2000. And when I hit 2100, he said, "Yea, I might go." He kept keeping the math and transferring it to Egyptian Pounds. Then. I said, "Will you take your family?" He said, "No way! I'm going to leave them here." So, I kept pushing the number up until we reached 2400, and he said, "Yes now I can take my family." So apparently there is a financial model or threshold which makes them move. But what the government offers them is an alternative house. But what they want is an alternative job and income and livelihood, and that is not offered. - Amir

It is impossible to pinpoint economic stability as the solution for all informal settlers because economic stability cannot be considered in isolation. It must be considered in the

context of housing. The conversation above regarding the need for residents to live close in proximity to economic opportunities must stand. Location, after all, is one of the two conditions that must be considered before land becomes an informal settlement. Informal settlers value not only having economic opportunities but living next to them. Along these lines, informal settlers have additional needs that should be met where they live. These will be discussed in the following section.

Services

Services and Infrastructure Systems

A service is a broad term for something that is necessary to live a safe, healthy, and ideal quality of life. In most cases, services are either provided solely by the municipal government or provided by government approved contractors. In this work, services include: electricity, water systems, sewage systems, economic opportunities, medical facilities, mailing facilities, and educational facilities. In this section, I focus more specifically on provision of, and access to physical services in COD i.e. electricity, water systems, and sewage systems and refer to those as 'infrastructure'. In earlier times, when COD was accepted as a place to live and later as it became a place to absorb rural migrants, services were absent. Nezar AlSayyad (2011), documents that while during the 1960s COD and other cemeteries came to be dominated by a population of rural migrants "who could not afford to live elsewhere", services were missing.

> Many of the squatter families lived in mud huts in the courtyards of the historic tombs. Such dwellings had no connection to municipal utilities such as water, sewers, or electricity, although some resourceful residents connected illegally to electrical lines. - AlSayyad, 2011, p. 246-247

In contemporary times, resident access to infrastructure in COD depends on many factors such as their location of residence within COD, the resident's ability to either formally or informally obtain infrastructure, and the economic status of the legal owner of the tomb (from whom residents rent the space). The wealthier the legal owner of the tomb is, the more likely that the built structures will have access to electricity, water, and sewage.

Infrastructure Systems and Services Necessary for a Place to Live

The topic of infrastructure is unfortunately overlooked in the debate on housing. Without basic infrastructure, the concept of housing is incomplete (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013). This is because without water, sewer, and power, residents might not feel dignified or comfortable interacting with other people. Someone might be less likely to build community if he or she cannot bathe regularly with clean water or use a toilet in a private place that is connected to a sewer system. Someone might also be less likely to connect with someone over a meal if he or she does not have electricity to cook or refrigerate food. Infrastructure contributes to one's ability or inability to form and maintain a healthy community. Housing as a stand-alone structure shares the same definition as the word 'shelter'. Shelter protects from the elements, but it does not offer access to opportunities, community, or an identity. Only after shelter is supported by urban services and basic infrastructure can it add value to someone's well-being. The same is true for the City of the Dead. Not all structures in the cemetery have access to basic infrastructure. However, some structures do have access to it, and that is what makes those particular structures adequate places to live. Infrastructure alone does not transform a site into a place to live, but it is a necessary, and often overlooked component.

Narrative of Limitation vs. Adequacy

According to the already mentioned study by the National Population Council (NPC) which sampled 1500 households from 17 different areas within COD, 53% of residents were linked to piped water networks and 26.2% to electricity services, but only 3.8% to a sanitation system (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). It is important to note that this study was conducted in the 1990s. This reveals a need to collect contemporary data about the current status of infrastructure in COD. According to the NPC study, nearly half of the households in COD do not have basic infrastructure. This negatively affects the health, safety, and well-being of both residents and nonresidents. For example, communities without proper solid waste[37] management openly burn garbage, causing residents to experience respiratory heath issues, heart disease, and headaches. This also contributes to overall air pollution, as toxic chemicals are released from burning (The World Bank, 2019). Lack of proper sanitation systems for human waste[38] also negatively affects residents and nonresidents as untreated sewage can intercept freshwater systems. Additionally, electricity is needed for productivity in work and

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[37] Solid waste, also referred to as trash or garbage, is everyday items that are discarded by a community
[38] Human waste is sewage

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educational purposes (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013). Without it, these efforts suffer and sometimes become impossible to do.

Cairobserver is an online place (website) where specialists and non-specialists can contribute their thoughts and research on Cairo's urban planning, architecture, and history. The aim of this site is to start conversations about how urbanists analyze places in Cairo and the policies that shape them. Content on Cairobserver is published in both Arabic and English. Zeina Elcheikh is a Syrian architect sharing her perspective of COD during her stay in Cairo studying informality. Her narrative offers perspective from a built environment specialist observing how people live in the City of the Dead.

> "water comes mostly from a public tap on the street, electricity through illegal connections, and septic tanks instead of sewage networks (in order not to damage the deceased)" –Elcheikh, 2014

Her short yet descriptive analysis of infrastructure in COD helps us understand that electricity in this particular part of COD was illegally self-provided. This also helps us understand that septic tanks are a better sanitation system option than traditional sewage networks if the funerary function of COD should be preserved. Her analysis of COD focuses on the unfortunate wealth disparity between residents in COD and outsiders. She also notes the observable wealth disparity between the plots of wealthy deceased verses poorer deceased. One of her closing remarks highlights some of the reasons people are living in COD and also how difficult living circumstances (i.e. not having proper services and infrastructure) affects their quality of life.

> "Whether it is a failure of housing policy, uncontrolled population growth, or just a search for a cheap (free) accommodation, living among the Dead has become a (sad) reality. I understood the state of being alive as more than breathing and having vital parts still functional" –Elcheikh, 2014

Other supplementary sources such as photographs present visual examples that aid in forming a more in-depth understanding of the mechanics of informal living that authors such as Zeina Elcheikh present. Photographer Alexander Nesbitt is known for capturing moments that "define the spirit of being in a place". He has been a professional photographer since 1997 and collaborated with accomplished photographer Mary Ellen Mark in 1998. His series on COD was his launch into a photojournalism career (Alexander Nesbitt, 2000). In the following photograph,

we witness the mechanics of informal living evidenced by a temporary water main, giving good insight on how water is provided in one particular area of COD.

Figure 6: A teenage girl living in COD next to an above-ground water main (Nesbitt, 2000).

Alexander Nesbitt's narrative is also revealed in the way he describes his work as a photographer and his work in COD. The photo of the girl next to the water main has several searchable tags associated with it. Some of the tags read: 'Cairo', 'People', 'Home', and 'Poverty.' He acknowledges the inadequate infrastructure in COD, and he acknowledges that he photographs "junky urban atmospheres" (Alexander Nesbitt, 2000). In short, his narrative is that COD has inadequate urban features but is still a place, more importantly, a place to live.

Tamara Abdul Hadi is a photographer born to Iraqi parents in the UAE and raised in Canada. Her work focuses on the "the complexity and idiosyncrasy of minority communities that are often subjected to stereotyping and underrepresentation interchangeably (Abdul-Handi, 2009). Meaning, her work focuses on groups of people with commonalities and atypical behaviors that are subject to negative labeling and misrepresentation. In her descriptions of COD, she uses phrases like 'cemetery of the living' and 'home'. Though the particular images shared in this section showcase poor circumstances due to overcrowded living conditions in

COD, her narrative is that the community of COD is misrepresented. She documented the Bab al Nasr section of COD in 2009 and again in 2015. The following photograph from her collection, illustrates the small amount of space available to residents in tomb dwellings. This visual example allows us to understand how overcrowding in spaces lacking infrastructure may contribute to poor hygiene, a higher chance of becoming ill, the inability to work or study properly, and poor sleep habits (Solari, & Mare, 2012).

Figure 7: A family in COD living in close quarters (Abdul-Hadi, 2009).

Figure 8**:** Boys in COD living in close quarters playing video games (Abdul-Hadi, 2009).

It is likely that the family captured in Figures 7 and 8 by Tamara Abdul Hadi lives in a 1-2-bedroom dwelling, as is common in COD. Most tomb quarters people live in are overcrowded. 88% of the 1500 households sampled in 1998 lived in units made up of 2 room units, with 2-3 people living in each room (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014).

Both visual sources reveal poverty and inadequate services in COD, yet they portray COD as a place to live. This lies in the same realm as the "academic narrative" partially provided by authors Fahmi and Sutton. Fahmi and Sutton are researchers who have collaborated on several writings regarding Cairo's current urbanism and contested spaces. In their analysis of COD, they explain that the combination of poor public services and infrastructure mixed with overcrowding in tombs reveals the need for a "major service and upgrading program" (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). In this work, Fahmi and Sutton reveal that structures where people have already created a place to live through other means (i.e. community, length of occupancy, personal additions to dwelling, etc.) are lacking basic infrastructure. This largely academic narrative focusses on COD lacking physical services and

suggests a need to expand infrastructure provision in COD, while at the same time understanding COD as a place where people have created a place to live.

The primary data collected for this work reveals that both urban planners and government officials agree that living in a burial site has limitations. One informant named Abdullah admits that services and infrastructure systems are lacking in COD and play a role in why some residents chose to move out, if able. Abdullah is a lecturer in urban planning at Cairo University and teaches courses on urban design. He is also a co-founder of GATEWAY for Urban Development (GWUD), a consulting firm that specializes in urban planning, site engineering, and landscape architecture. Overall, his responses during the interview indicate that he is a proponent of bottom-up planning processes and generally supports people living in COD. At various points in the interview he explained that Egypt has operated for many years using a product-oriented planning process and that it should be changed.

> "I hope we can re-orient our development plans from bottom to top. Hearing what people need" -Abdullah

He hopes that planning upgrades can improve urban services for the area. This view is however not necessarily shared by others in positions that shape public policy and narrative. Khalil is the senior advisor to the Cairo Governate on informal areas. Khalil has a background in business administration. Much of his work experience is related to conflict resolution and mediation.

> "Living in a burial site has its limitation, so people start to move out. Also, the government is encouraging such moving out". -Khalil

As exemplified by the quote above, Khalil does not approve of people living in COD. While Khalil does not have a formal background in urban planning, he is in a position of power in the government as the senior advisor. He advises planners and policy makers on how to plan for informal areas. Because Egypt's new definition for informal settlements excludes COD, the cemetery is not his responsibility. However, Khalil's comments are important because his opinions and suggestions regarding the current occupation and future planning of the site are recognized and respected by other government officials. Khalil also attends meetings with government officials who are directly responsible for making decisions regarding COD. Some residents of COD also agree that living in a burial site has limitations. In a 4-minute video tour of the City of the Dead produced by Al Jazeera in 2012, two residents were interviewed about their

living conditions, and their responses were overwhelmingly negative. One woman says it is a struggle to "live normally." She wants a proper house with water (Molatorre, 2012). Conversely, in an article written by Sarah El-Rashdi on Abram Online- an online Egyptian news outlet- a family living in tombs respond more positively by saying:

> "We are better educated than many Egyptians and as you can see, we have higher living standards. The revolution didn't change our lives, we remain content and proud" -El Rashdi, 2013

According to the article, this family's home in COD has a sink, a gas cooker, a television, a tiny bathroom, and lights in the two bedrooms. Through a discussion around how "living standards have recently improved" and that "many graves now have electricity and running water" this article provides a justification for understanding COD as a place to live (El Rashdi, 2013). These two sources in no way represent a holistic view of what life is like in COD, but present important opposing positions and descriptions of the same area when discussing services, infrastructure, and livability. These two data sources reveal two conflicting narratives among residents. The 2012 interview from Al Jazeera gives a voice to residents who do not feel they have adequate infrastructure and would prefer to live elsewhere. The 2013 article from Abram Online gives a voice to residents who feel infrastructure provision has recently improved. It is impossible to know exactly where in COD these two groups of residents live, but perhaps services upgrades in COD affected the residents interviewed in the Al Jazeera interview. If this were somehow the case, it would be an example of how personal narratives can change and evolve based on circumstances. In other words, provision of better services could help make COD more livable than it currently is. While residents continue to live in the tombs, and build a life there, additional service provision could aid in making life easier.

Narrative Regarding Infrastructure Provision

During the interviews I did not ask any direct questions about services or infrastructure, however, all respondents brought up both in their responses. I did ask follow-up questions about infrastructure provision after a respondent brought up the topic. Some specifically used the words 'services' and 'infrastructure' whereas others simply listed examples found in or around COD.

Respondents, particularly government officials, commented on the legality of infrastructure provision. Khalil explained that residents of COD can get water and electricity both legally and illegally.

> Most of the burial sites who are being occupied by the inhabitants, they are burial sites for rich families. Within the Egyptian context, if you have a burial site for a rich family, you have a little bathroom and a little kitchenette and a place when you visit your loved one you can basically spend half a day. Thus, you have bathroom that is linked to public sewage and they have water accessibility, electric, etc. -Khalil

> Most people in this area are not paying for electricity or paying for water -Samir

> In terms of the water, in terms of electricity, in terms of other utilities it is a formal area - Samir

Khalil's response explains how a resident of COD has the ability to move into a tomb area that is already connected to infrastructure due to the economic status of the legal owner of the tomb. Both he and Samir agree that this scenario is most often how a resident's dwelling has access to running water, electricity, and sewage. However, they both confirmed that a resident in COD can formally ask for an electric or water meter to be installed by going to particular ministry building and paying for the service. Samir's confirmation of this is important because he is a high-ranking government official who works in Egypt's General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP). The fact that the government is willing to formally provide infrastructure is a step in the right direction because this validates that COD is a place to live. The narrative government officials give us is that infrastructure such as electricity, water, and sewage help formalize this area. According to the government officials, the government is not withholding services from those seeking them out formally. Perhaps, though, there is a disconnect in how easy government officials assume the process of going to a government ministry building to pay for service installation is for residents of COD and the reality of that process. It is important to bring out a conflicting narrative that academic writers Fahmi and Sutton hold about infrastructure provision. Their narrative is that government authorities are unwilling or unable to ensure infrastructure provision and urban services. As a result, Cairo's poor do not have adequate or secure places to live (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014).

Narrative Regarding Services and Location

One key aspect of urban services is location. Location alone can make the difference for a housing development being good or great. Housing should be located near convenient transit options, diverse job opportunities, and social facilities, medical facilities, and sufficient schools. Portions of COD are well serviced while others are not. Sarah El-Rashdi also notes in her Abram Online article that, "In some parts of the neighbourhood there are apartment blocks. A medical centre, a post office and two schools were built for the community under Hosni Mubarak's government," (El Rashdi, 2013). An extensive study by the Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP) on Cairo's informal areas confirms that there is a post office in COD with limited services as well as apartment blocks, schools, and hospitals built in abandoned tombs and on empty land in COD (Howeidy et al., 2009). It is unclear if these apartment buildings have better access to services and infrastructure than the tombs in COD. One out of the five respondents confirm that apartment blocks have been built within COD:

> But in some of the areas around the burial sites they have like empty pieces of land... this
> is not a burial site, so people will start to build their own houses. In the middle it is like a
> building that is four to five or six stories -Khalil

Along those lines, the Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme study (Howeidy et al., 2009) shows that informality cannot be classified as one single thing. It unpacks the complexities of informality by providing perspective from residents, governors, ministers, academics, and consultants invested in the livelihood of these areas. The intentions of this study closely align with my research; however, it focuses on three different areas of informality in Cairo. One of those areas is the City of the Dead. This study gives a voice to two members of the COD community named Am Mohammed and Umm Khaled. Am Mohmmed has been living in COD since he was a teenager, and he is now in his 60s. He mentions the place he sleeps has electricity, running water, and a toilet. Umm Khaled was born in COD, and her residence has a gas stove. She has access to a dirt road and a nearby makeshift shop that sells tea, coffee, and cookies. Further down the road, she notes, there is an auto mechanic and tiny supermarket (Howeidy et al., 2009). The location of COD is beneficial for both residents and nonresidents. For example, driving schools bring their students to practice in the side roads of the cemetery. Construction supply shops sell goods near major roads. Such shops utilize yards around tombs to display products. The area is also known for dependable car maintenance

service, as auto mechanics from other parts of Cairo come to COD to wash cars and change oil (Howeidy et al., 2009). Two out of the five people I interviewed mention that children can go to nearby schools in Mashinat Nasr (a nearby informal area), but they also mention children learn to read in COD by preforming religious ceremonies. Fahmi and Sutton confirm there are a few primary schools that are centrally located in the cemetery (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014).

The narrative according to Abram Online and multiple academic sources is that the location of COD enhances the lives of residents and nonresidents. Additionally, a limited amount of urban services such as schools, medical facilities, a post office, and a police facility exist in COD. Long-time residents of COD tell a descriptive narrative about the services and infrastructure they have access to. Umm Khaled and Am Mohammed both enjoy the area they live in. They express their narrative by sharing, "I like my area" and "We are a nice little community (Howeidy et al., 2009, p.67)." Urban services and infrastructure alone are not what led these residents to feel the way they do about their community. However, the narrative they hold is a positive one partially because of their access to infrastructure and services. Am Mohammed and Umm Khaled have lived in COD their entire life, and the services they have access to in COD has allowed them to do so. Having access to urban services depends on both the location of the service and the resident. Though urban services have the ability to improve one's quality of life, they often require money to utilize. Having the ability to make money is unique in that it can be classified as an urban service because it is the state's responsibility to provide economic opportunity.

Narrative Regarding Economic Opportunity as a Service

In my research, I discuss economic opportunity as a service. The availability of jobs, the location of jobs, and ability for a person to support him or herself monetarily contributes to livability. Both planners and government officials' narrative are that COD is located in an area that is beneficial for residents to seek employment opportunities. Both government officials, Khalil and Samir, and one planner, David Sims, draw attention to the two major roads located around COD. David Sims is an American economist and planner who has worked in developing countries for nearly 50 years. Sims has worked as an advisor and consultant on issues pertaining to housing, land management, finance, and community development. He currently resides in Cairo. These respondents see these roads as access to opportunity. However, this narrative implies that residents in COD already have the resources and means, such as a personal vehicle or taxi, to utilize them.

It is very clean, big, in the heart of Cairo -Khalil

It's located in between two major roads of Cairo -Samir

It is well located. As we know, poor people need to be near multiple possibilities of
employment and petty trade. So, location, location, location -Sims

One planner revealed a gap in some residents' ability to make a sufficient income.

When they see a visitor coming to visit to bury dead one, and when they come, he is
always asking for charity -Abdullah

Abdullah is drawing attention to the lack of economic stability some residents in COD
face. Conversely, Amir, an urban and landscape planner, believes that business in COD is one
of the main reasons people still live in the site today. One way that COD's residents are able to
economically provide for themselves is by using tombs and empty spaces to store products that
are for sale. The tomb areas serve as a free storehouse, which helps residents make a larger
profit by not paying rent to use the space. However, the government does not support this and
is actively trying to prohibit this.

COD is the perfect place to distribute products because many store their products for free
within -Khalil

The government is in the process of prohibiting this -Khalil

Overall, there are two prevailing narratives regarding tomb dweller's economic
opportunity. One is that residents have a sufficient way to make a living and the other is that
they do not. Government officials point to the prime location of COD and the surrounding major
roads as a way for making a living. However, they frown upon the way current residents are
making a living *within* COD.

This section establishes that infrastructure and services give structures the ability to be a
place for someone to live. Service provision is ultimately the state's responsibility. We know that
the government has provided service upgrades to the area. However, half have access to
running water within their dwelling, only one quarter of residents have electricity, and fewer have
access to a sanitation system (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014). Some families are using these services
illegally, while some have legally obtained them. Respondents have established COD is well
located and that residents could seek opportunities outside of the cemeteries. But what about

inside COD? Literature and news articles describe isolated areas where one or two schools are located, one post office, a couple of schools and medical facilities are located. This is not enough to serve the entire tomb community. The role urban planners can play in bridging the gap between housing and service provision is vital (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013). The government in Cairo currently allows residents to formally obtain water, electricity, and sewage by going to a ministry building and requesting it. However, the initials fees may be too expensive for COD's residents. Residents typically inhabit tombs that are already serviced. However, the lack of services limit newcomers. Perhaps this is the government's intention, due to the gap in understanding that COD can be an option for affordable living. Housing and service provision must be integrated (Tiwari & Hingorani, 2013). Cairo's government has provided some infrastructure but has not altered their view, or narrative, surrounding this site as housing. It is my position that the existence of services elevates a space into a place to live, and COD has such services. Though it can be argued that the intention behind initially installing infrastructure in COD was to serve those mourning their loved ones for a short period of time, the use has evolved. The infrastructure now serves a community that is constantly present.

Community

"A large group of houses can make a "neighborhood" if the people who live there bring to it the elements of intimate association and a unity of interest" -Abrams, 1966, p.9

This quote pulled from *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* written by Charles Abrams points out how people are a necessary component in making something a place to live. He specifies that a cluster of houses transform into a community with people who interact with one another and have unifying commonalities (Abrams, 1966). A community is made up of residents who help residents experience a feeling of belonging. This is fostered through gatherings, celebrations, mealtimes, recreation, or other organic meet ups. For the urban poor, social ties and community networks are especially important (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014).

While discussing the difficulties that come with upgrading an informal housing site, one government official admits that there is a society of people in COD who are well-connected and established in the area.

People grow up living there and they do not own the land, but they are existing there. They are a society there. They are very connected to there -Samir

Samir's acknowledgment of this is significant because he is a high-ranking government official who deals with plans concerning whether or not informal residents are evicted and relocated. Such decisions ultimately affect a community's collective happiness. Yet the strong social patterns in COD are not easily understood by outsiders, including policy makers. This is in part to the wall between Al-Azhar Park and the Bab al-Wazir section of the cemetery that acts as a physical barrier between COD and the rest of Cairo. Additionally, there is a police force within the cemetery that monitors interaction between residents and foreigners. There are also prejudices and misconceptions that outsiders hold towards those living in COD that keep outsiders from really understanding the social dynamics. Academic and consultant May al-Ibrashy believes that one of the biggest threats to COD is "the stigma attached to the cemetery due to its perception as a place of shame and as a manifestation of Cairo's economic and urban problems" (2013, p.66). Anna Tozzi Di Marco explains this is especially true for rural migrants who now call the City of the Dead home.

> "It is worthwhile to note how the dominant language of political power has confined all the poor immigrants to the cemetery and how it has manipulated the relationship between rurality and urbanity by dichotomizing them. The negative cable attached to the rural people - as being poor, ignorant, superstitious, straying from the true religion and so on - is intended to marginalize the City of the Dead's community." -Tozzi Di Marco, 2011, p.39

Sarah El-Rashdi's Abram Online article gives voice to a political sociologist at the American University in Cairo named Said Sadek who affirms that resident's stuffer from the stigma outsiders, particularly middle- and upper-class Cairenes, attach to living in the cemetery. The same article shares an anecdote from a tomb dweller who explains that a relative's engagement ended once her soon-to-be spouse learned she lived in the City of the Dead.

> "My sister's ex-fiancé broke off their engagement once he found out where we live" - Khaloud, a resident in COD from source El Rashdi, 2013

Additionally, one of the stronger and more commonly held narratives by outsiders about COD is that only criminals and mentally ill people live there.

> "It has been described as a cancerous growth in the body of the city and its residents are stigmatized as outlaws and degenerates" -al Ibrashy, 2013, p.66

These sources here confirm that because interactions between tomb dwellers and outsiders is somewhat limited, the negative narrative about who lives in COD persists. This frays the community that could be had between those who live in the cemetery and those who do not. We know that outsiders utilize the space within COD for economic gain (i.e driving schools, construction supply shops, and car maintenance services), but are these people also coming to get to know the people who make up the tomb communities? It is doubtful.

Not only should outsiders attempt to understand the social dynamics of COD but so too should planners and researchers. Masterplan Cairo 2050 is criticized for not focusing on the social costs of bulldozing informal housing. Demolishing physical structures also ends the social ties that tomb dwellers have made. David Sims is quoted in the Egypt Independent article written by Christopher Reeve regarding the criticism about Cairo 2050's proposal to relocate informal settlers.

> "The main critique is the huge amount of displacement involved," Sims says, "but also a complete unconcern for the majority of poor existing and future inhabitants." -David Sims from source Reeve, 2011

Communal Relationship Between the Living and the Dead and Spiritual Practices

Another interesting aspect of community that most are unconcerned about is the living's relationship with the dead. This relationship is evident even in the name the *City* (a word representing life) of the *Dead (death)*. Some Egyptians do believe that living close to the dead will bring blessings in the afterlife. Other choose to live in COD to be near their deceased family members (El Rashdi, 2013). As a planner, I value the needs of the living more than I do the dead, as you will read in my planning suggestions for this site. But perhaps what is needed by the living is to feel closer to family members who have departed.

A 47-year-old woman living in COD was quoted in a Reuters article by journalist and photographer Asmaa Waguih published in 2015. The woman explains that the communal relationship between those who are living in the necropolis and those who are buried there is less burdensome than communing with the living.

> "Living with the dead is very easy and comfortable - It's the people who are living who harm you" - Nassra Muhamed Ali, a resident in COD from source Waguih, 2015

According to the quote, Nassra Muhamed Ali finds a sense of comfort from living among the departed. This resident's positive feelings about living in close proximity with the dead should not be placed on all residents, as some are uncomfortable with "sleeping with the dead beneath (their) feet" (al-Ibrashy, 2005, p. 227). Regardless of feelings, there is a spiritual relationship between the living and the dead that is present at all times.

In the City of the Dead there exists a small sect of women, mostly rural migrants, who practice magic-religious rituals associated with the *zar* cult. *Zar* rituals are intended to cure illnesses caused by supernatural spirits, or demons, that are said to control someone's body. *Zar* rituals are different than an exorcism because the spirit is not commanded to leave by *zar* leaders but rather the ritual is preformed to ensure a favorable relationship between the sprit and its host body. Private *zar* rituals are sometimes held in the homes of tomb dwellers. It should be noted that the practices of the *zar* cult are not exclusive to residents in the City of the Dead. *Zar* rituals have also been practiced elsewhere in Egypt and also in Sudan (Tozzi di Marco, 2011). It is unclear exactly how many residents in COD partake in *zar* rituals, but it is clear that the presence of such practices adds a spiritual component to the cemetery that is not necessarily associated with the bodies buried below them.

Family Became Community

Family dynamics are important in all of the Muslim world, but it seems to run even deeper among tomb dwellers. The social dynamics of COD are the most documented in the context of family, particularly in interviews with tomb dwellers produced by news outlets. Many young wives followed their husbands to COD thinking their living situation would be temporary until they were still living in the same tomb area after their children had children (Nedoroscik, 1997). To briefly continue the point of COD being seen as a temporary housing solution, in the film *Karakon fe al-sharea* (الشارع فى كراكون), a family loses their home, and the husband struggles to provide shelter for his family. In the midst of that struggle, the family lives in the City of the Dead temporarily. The film is mostly lighthearted, but it showcases the family impatiently hoping to leave. Eventually they make their way out. For the characters in the movie, COD was a temporary solution. But for third generation tomb dwellers now living in COD (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014), the cemetery became a community through the growing of families. Urban planners and government respondents for this research underscore this point.

> Maybe a citizen in this area becomes familiar with the area because they become
> established in these areas and have their family in this area -Samir

These guards with their families are settled in there. So, these guards have evolved and made families and did their living there -Abdullah

The City of the Dead has been perceived as "symbolic internal otherness" and this is evident in the way the public continues to stigmatize tomb dwellers (Tozzi Di Marco, 2011, p.49). As a result, powerful interests still want to destroy this site and are using historical monuments and cultural aspects as a gateway to do so.

Historical/Cultural

The City of the Dead has been around since the start of Cairo and is revered for its impressive monuments and graves which shape the urban fabric (Nedoroscik, 1997). The religious value of particular shrines and sites of visitation is 'unparalleled in Egypt' (al Ibrashy, 2013). Sites of significance honor religious figures, Sufi masters, political rulers, and local influencers (al Ibrashy, 2013). Government official Khalil adds that there are official sites for martyrs, the armed forces, and for the royal family. Because of these significant sites, Khalil sees how turning COD into a sort of Islamic tourist site would be beneficial.

These places could be used as an Islamic tourist site. Hopefully this particular development in these particular burial sites will have an impact on the surrounding sections -Khalil

Religious Tourism

Upgrading the site for religious tourism is an option that is talked about frequently. A study by academic and planning consultant May al- Ibrashy advocates preservation and minor upgrades for COD as an urban regeneration strategy in Cairo. May al-Ibrashy recognizes there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for the cemeteries, especially for preventing decay of the historic urban fabric and for enhancing the socio-economic conditions in this area. One way to achieve both of these goals for COD, however, could be to focus on its usage as a religious and cultural destination for local and international tourists (al Ibrashy, 2013). Through conversations with respondents, I learned that Cairo's government is interested in upgrading the site for religious tourism.

The Egyptian government has taken a new approach to historical sites - instead of deserting them they are using them -Khalil

Recently, the Egyptian government is planning seriously to improve and upgrade the City of the Dead, and the entry point of such is to look at the sacred places and historical places -Khalil

However, the government's intentions do not stop there. Upgrading COD as a religious and cultural destination is merely a stepping stone in a larger plan to create a business park. In order to fully understand how the historical narrative is being used at the expense of the planning narrative, we must take a look at what is known of the long-term plan implementation goals for COD. Samir Mahmoud, a high-ranking government official in Egypt's General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP) shared:

The first plan for five and ten years is that this would be a public park. And bit by bit we would try to move the remainder of the bodies of the families would be translated [meaning transferred] to another area. So, this will take time. During this time, we can say that this is a historical garden, and after those ten years we can try to invest in the areas that are suitable for investment. It is not an easy task... This is because the first five years you are not allowed to use this area again because of the negative connotations for the people. So, we can try to convert this area to small gardens - over time into a larger garden, so it's a long-term plan -Samir

Samir shares also that during this long period of development, the cemetery will become an extension of Al Azhar Park before it becomes a business park.

And because we have a successful model [referring to Al Azhar Park], we want to extend this model.... In terms of the vision of this area to convert this area into a park, it is not only for the public, it is also a business park -Samir

Samir says that development will initially be done in the name of historic preservation because COD will start out as a "historical garden" after the bodies have been transferred to another area. Once the social stigma of relocating the dead goes away (a minimum of five years according to Samir), development will proceed. Upgrading the site to make it more welcoming and suitable for religious tourists is one thing but using that to kick start a ten-year development plan for a business park is taking advantage of the historical and cultural narrative. Either way, narratives that exist for the City of the Dead are being ignored. Planners were criticized for Masterplan 2050 because of the way it did not fully disclose demolition and relocation details for both residents and the deceased. If high-rise development is the goal, planners must be clear

about it. It is important to note that the same respondent who described the business park plans does acknowledge the challenges that come with planning for a site with deep cultural and religious value.

> We face a problem that this area has a scatter of buildings that have deep culture and value. But this is a problem because it's not only a cemetery it's a complex: a cemetery, housing, and also mosques and other cultural sites. -Samir

> You have different culture and historical sites, and if we try to change this area we should care about those things. -Samir

Though the complexities are acknowledged, plans are being drafted. The entry point for upgrading this site is through its historical features. The cultural and historical sites in the City of the Dead are not as important to planners as the other economic activities that could be capitalized on surrounding the site. When asked how likely is it that these plans will come to fruition in the next five years Amir Gohar gives a mixed message.

> I think it is less likely for lots of cultural reasons. There will be lots of resistance from the people. However, the near [meaning similar] experiences with other informal areas shows that they only have the guts and the strength and don't care about the social costs if there is a developer or investor who is willing to improve the area -Amir

Amir is saying that the social cost of going against what the public wants does not concern powerful interests if there is money to be made. While Amir is not currently located in Cairo, nor is he a decision-maker for the site, his insight is keen because he understands the nuances that come with planning in Egypt, and he has witnessed profit oriented development prescribed by Egypt's government while growing up in the Greater Cairo Region. When asked what the City of the Dead might look like in 30 years, Amir gave a more straightforward answer.

> I think in 30 years the hope doesn't change things as much as the market value. So in 30 years this piece of land will be very, very expensive. A lot more expensive. There will be a lot more demand on it. Everything surrounding this area and the Nile will be highly developed. In a high-rise Dubai-sized urban. That will increase its value to the extent that will make the government interfere or real estate developers to take it and build to transfer it to something else. So, I don't think it will last another 30 years. They are already demolishing our cultural heritage. Imagine the City of the Dead -Amir

Ultimately, Amir hopes that people living in COD find a better livelihood and a better urban area to live in and move out. Amir hopes that the function for COD becomes exclusively a cemetery with more green space around the historic monuments. He hopes that it becomes "*just* the City of the Dead" *emphasis added. While this narrative does not honor COD as a place to live, it does honor the historical narrative. Most respondent's knee-jerk reaction about the history and culture in COD is one of praise and admiration.

> Some is really interesting and really beautiful. -Abdullah

> The ancient aspect and point of view is really amazing. -Abdullah

Not only planners and historic preservationists but everyday citizens are also concerned about preserving the historic narrative of COD.

> "People interested in the Islamic architectural heritage revealed their concern about
> preserving the historical monuments, particularly within Bab El-Nasr Cemetery, for both
> Cairo's residents and for tourists... Generally, for them the demolition of the cemeteries
> will destroy part of Cairo's historic past" (Fahmi & Sutton, 2014).

While this may disappoint residents and those hoping to preserve the historic narrative of this site, based on my interview with Samir Mahmoud, the demolition of tomb structures and relocating the deceased is part of the plan for upgrading the City of the Dead.

Urban Fabric

Low Density and Gridded Streets

Unlike most informal settlements across the globe (Berner, 2001), the City of the Dead has a low density. The City of the Dead is not overly crowded or congested. Because this informal settlement is also a cemetery, it sits on a gridded street pattern, unlike other informal areas in the Greater Cairo Region. Respondent Amir Gohar underscores the differences between the City of the Dead and other informal settlements in Cairo based on their urban fabrics.

> There are streets. Yes, they're not asphalt, and they are not paved, but there is layout.
> There is a grid pattern... the informal areas, are what is called *ashwaiyya*t, doesn't have
> that clear pattern of street network or movement. It follows the navigation system that it
> was built on initially. So, there is a big difference in the urban fabric, even if there are

similarities in people's adjustments of the space and in the social behavior in both. But
the urban morphology is very different -Amir

The open spaces in the cemetery allow for sunlight and airflow, which contributes to a better quality of living and better health conditions, according to one contributor for the Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme study. This study provides perspective from multiple stakeholders invested in the livelihood of informal settlements in Egypt. One such stakeholder works at a small medical center near COD and shares that residents in COD may be healthier than those in other poor areas in GCR because it is less crowded and less polluted.

"People here may be poorer than in other popular areas, but in fact they seem to be
healthier," she explains. The reason might be that the area is less crowded, and the level
of stress, pollution, and noise is not as high as in other poor areas." -Howeidy et al., 2009,
p.68

Urban planner Abdullah and government official Khalil rightly understand how CODs urban fabric acts similar to an urban growth boundary, preserving low density inside the city.

In a way it is very ironic, it is helping regulate Cairo in a way. If it was an empty piece of
land, we would have much more crowded Cairo. But now with downtown, Islamic Cairo,
it is a buffer zone rather than another urban area. In a way, it is governing the growth of
Cairo. -Khalil

The most intrinsic value of these sites is the very low density -Abdullah

Adding Major Connecting Roads Seen as a Disruption

Roads inside the cemeteries forming a grid pattern are valued by Amir, Khalil and David Sims. However, one planner brings up that while the gridded street system inside COD is noteworthy, building roads, such as Selah Salem Highway, that lead into the cemetery disrupts the lives of tomb dwellers.

I hope to stop cars going into this place because it is really having a bad effect. This is the
way that when you introduce cars to these areas you are making road facilities and
enforcing these areas and lands to change. I think we should not enforce the change. -
Abdullah

These roads connect COD to the rest of Cairo. While some might say this is beneficial for tomb dwellers because of access to economic and educational opportunities among other needs, they are primarily utilized by Egyptians who do not live in the cemetery.

> It has so many roads in it. It is a daily route for so many Egyptians. They go to their work or go back to their homes they have to drive by the City of the Dead -Khalil

Abdullah adds that the roads also make a way for outsiders to come into the cemetery to mourn their loved ones and also because the open spaces provide an experience that is difficult to find elsewhere.

> Some people go there to have some memories. Going for an open space because they have small densities. A lot of people have their memories with their relatives. It is a really nice and remarkable thing to have these areas and within the city -Abdullah

Courtyards

The private courtyards next to tombs are what make the urban fabric so distinct. Private, unroofed space is a luxury that is almost exclusively enjoyed by the wealthy in the Greater Cairo Region. Courtyards are seen as an amenity among residents because they provide a space for gathering, work, and leisure. The following supplementary sources present visual snapshots of residents doing simple, ordinary activities such as housework and playing board games in the courtyards. Figures 9 and 10 were taken by Asmaa Waguih while working for Reuters, an international news organization. The series of images were posted in an article titled "Living in the City of the Dead" (Waguih, 2015). Figure 9 depicts a woman washing clothes near her home in the Necropolis, and Figure 10 depicts a barber giving a man a shave next to someone's burial site.

Figure 9: A woman washing her clothes (Asmaa Waguih, 2015).

Figure 10: A man getting a shave from a barber in the open space of COD (Asmaa Waguih, 2015).

Figures 9 and 10 do a good job of showing us the proximity in which the living do daily life next to the dead. This photo shows the open-air space that the courtyard provides next to the built structure intended for families to come mourn the life of a loved one yet used for everyday activities.

Figure 11: Children using the courtyard for recreation (Abdul- Hadi, 2009).

Figure 12: Two men playing chess in the open courtyard (Nesbitt, 2000).

Figures 11 and 12 depict people having fun in their community by playing ball games and dominos. The courtyards in Figures 11 and 12 look clean and well-kept. The urban fabric of this space allows residents the opportunity to enjoy everyday tasks outside, which may be helpful considering many informal dwellings are overcrowded.

A Quiet Space and Prime Location

Amir Gohar and David Sims agree the one minor upgrade COD could use is adding more green space, particularly trees. Sims says COD is quieter than other districts in Cairo like Zamalek[39], for example. Julia Gerlach, a contributor to the Egyptian-German Participatory

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[39] Zamalek is an affluent district in Western Cairo, separating downtown Cairo from Giza

Development Programme study also empathizes that this city within the city is one of the only places someone can truly enjoy the feeling of being alone.

> "Cairo is a noisy, crowded city. Being alone is therefore a rare occurrence, and one of the very few places where one can enjoy this feeling is in the City of the Dead" -Julia Gerlach from source Howeidy et al., 2009, p.67

Umm Khaled, the same resident who was referenced in the Services section of this paper for approving of her infrastructure and service provision in the cemetery also agrees that the quietness is an asset to her community.

> "We are a nice little community, and we know that people like the silence and serenity of our area" -Umm Khaled, a resident in COD from source Howeidy et al., 2009, p.67-68

More specifically, she confirms respondent Abdullah's comment that people from other parts of Cairo take advantage of this, too. She does not find it odd that people come to the COD not only for holidays but also just to walk around (Howeidy et al., 2009) One resident interviewed in the already mentioned Reuters article by Asmaa Waguih points out one downside to the quietness. The resident believes that people take advantage of the area by going into the City of the Dead to do illegal activities.

> "Some from outside the neighborhood use the graves to deal drugs, with theft also an issue" -Nassra Muhamed Ali, a resident in COD from source Waguih, 2015

This same article gives a different, unnamed woman's narrative about the peaceful open space of her residence in COD. When she visits her two daughters who live in a different informal settlement in Greater Cairo, the woman is reminded of her appreciation for the "space and tranquility" of her tomb dwelling (Waguih, 2015) Quiet goes a long way in a city inhibited by 20 million, especially when you can find it in the city center. This is one of the reasons residents continue to live in the cemeteries today. Government official Khalil Shaat believes CODs prime location is an asset.

> The City of the Dead is located in a prime location in the heart of Cairo -Khalil

CODs location in the heart of Cairo is an asset for informal dwellers, however, this asset could be the reason residents are forced to relocate, with or without a relocation package from the government. Should the monuments be demolished for the sake of development, the urban

fabric will evolve into a dense urban area that matches the loud and tall structures that exist in the city center.

Planning

Cairo 2050

In 2007-08, Cairo 2050 was published in the form of a PowerPoint presentation containing 199 slides. It was produced by Egypt's General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP). Cairo 2050 called for making the city less crowded by redistributing citizens into the surrounding desert. It essentially saw urban sprawl as the solution. The vision also called for creating grand boulevards, adding more green space, and building large gated communities. Those projects would require displacing millions of residents, and the plan did not include details on what that process might look like. Cost estimates were also left out of the vision. Many plans were set to be complete by 2020, including plans to alter COD. By 2010, information about Cairo 2050 became more accessible online. Planners, researchers, activists, and residents became disappointed because of its failure to elaborate on details. By the following year, Cairo 2050 was dismissed as only a "dream" or "vision" by the government. Respondent David Sims confirms this.

> What you know about 2050 is only a PowerPoint. As a matter of fact, it is not referred to by the government -Sims

Egypt 2052

It is important to note that the Arab Spring, a series of uprisings and anti-government protests, took place from 2010 to 2012. In 2012, a revised plan called Egypt 2052 was in the works and was published in 2014 by the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities. Egypt 2052 called for upgrading slums and other informal areas to "develop these settlements and improve the quality of life of the residents" (2052 Plan, 2014, p, 42). Egypt 2052 goes on to say that upgrading informal areas has a number of positive impacts including "efficient use of resources, particularly land; decreasing the percent of deprived population; and environmental conservation and regeneration" (2052 Plan, 2014, p, 42). The following bit from the 2052 plan discusses the amount of informal areas within GCR and the intentions to upgrade or demolish them.

"There are about 1,171 informal areas within and around Egyptian cities. An estimated 17

percent are upgraded, and another 58 percent are currently under upgrading processes.

Another 22 percent will be upgraded within the current fiscal five-year plan. Areas that

upgrading seems to be an unfeasible solution are, or will be, cleared to avail areas for

open green areas to serve members of the community" -2052 Plan, 2014, p.42

More specific percentages are given in a chart in the planning document. According to the chart, 17.40% of 1,171 informal areas have already been upgraded. 58.30% of 1,171 informal areas were in the upgrading stage as of 2014 with 21.80% to be upgraded within the next five-year fiscal plan, meaning upgrades should be complete already. The remaining ~3% of the 1,171 areas have either been demolished, are currently under demolition, or have not been accounted for. From interviews presented by government official Samir Mahmoud in the Historical/Culture section of this paper, we know that the plans for COD involve clearing the cemetery for "open green areas."

The plan briefly qualifies an informal area as either unsafe or unplanned (2052 Plan, 2014). A map is provided to show where the informal areas are in the Greater Cairo Region. Unsafe areas in the map are color-coded red and unplanned areas are brown. According to the map which is shown in Figure 13, the City of the Dead is "unplanned."
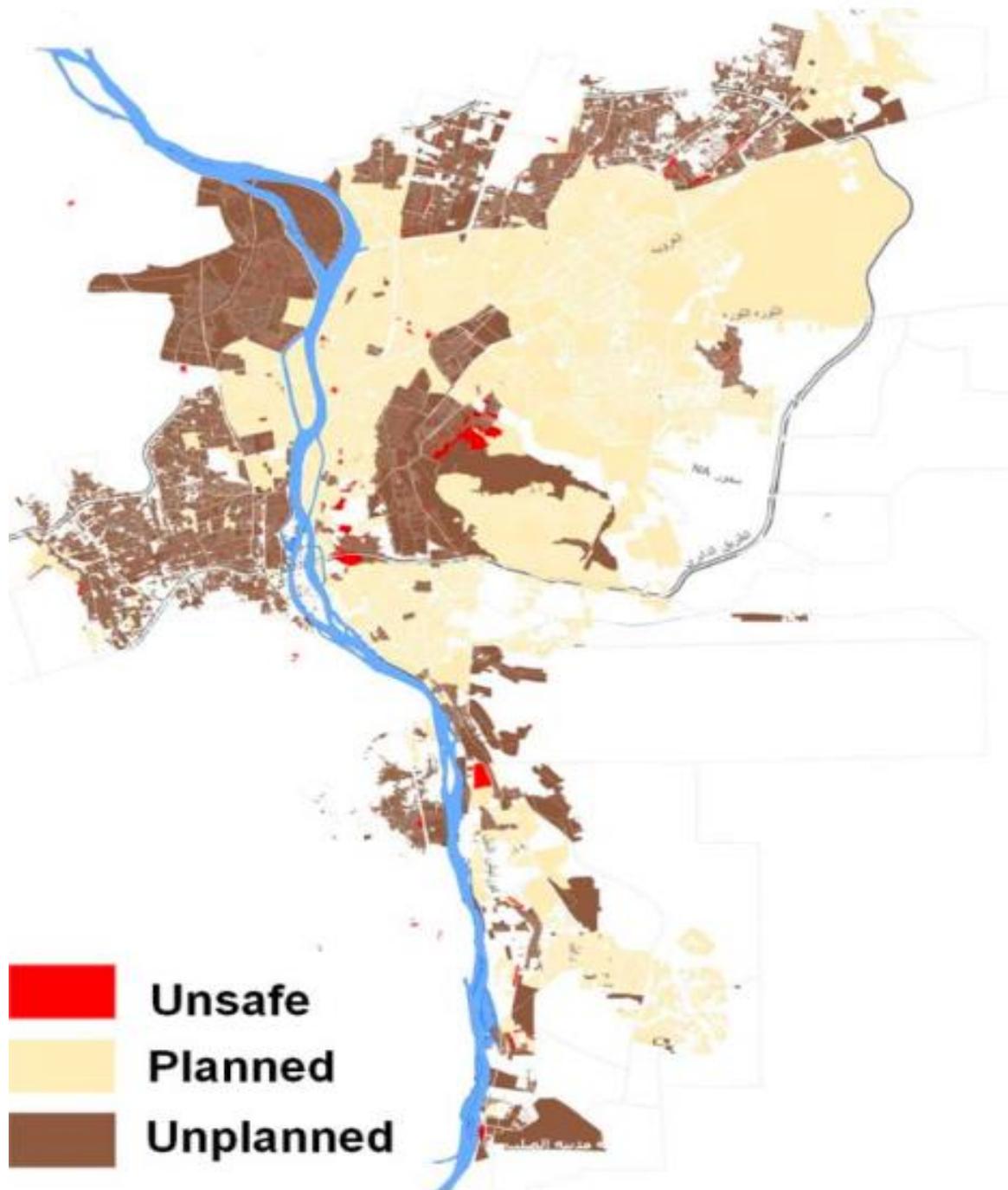
Figure 13: A map from Cairo 2052 plan highlighting urban informality in Cairo. COD is the large brown cluster in the middle of the map, and it is considered "unplanned" (2052 Plan, 2014, p. 42).

Unplanned areas, according to the Egypt 2052, are "illegally planned by inhabitants and suffer from very high density, and lack of basic urban services and accessibility or connectivity with formal fabric" (2052 Plan, 2014, p.43). This work has established that the history of inhabitants and structures built for uses other than funerary functions within the cemeteries suggests that COD was not illegally planned by inhabitants. The previous section regarding CODs urban fabric discusses the low density and health benefits that residents enjoy because of that. We know that some residents feel like they have adequate service provision, but this study does acknowledge that service upgrades would make COD more livable. Finally, COD is in the heart of Cairo. It is accessible and connected to the "formal" fabric. Not only does this description of "unplanned" areas assume that formal and informal areas are entirely separate from one another, it places COD in a box it does not belong in. Egypt 2052 does provide a list of strategies to upgrade unplanned areas.

> "The strategy towards these areas is to increase their accessibility through opening main roads and corridors with minimum demolition; provide alternative housing units for affected groups from opening roads within the same area or nearby or direct compensation based on consultation; no eviction for affected groups before providing alternatives; Regularizing properties and enabling security of tenure within these areas based on detailed development plan; Provide basic services on vacant plots/pockets within the areas" -2052 Plan, 2014, p.43

These suggested strategies read as a one-size-fits-all solution. It is safe to assume that this list of strategies may not be tailored for the specific needs of the different types of informal settlements in GCR either, but fully unpacking that is beyond the scope of this study. It should be mentioned that the 2052 plan does allocate one page to describe a housing self-help program that the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development (MHUUD) formulated, though it does not say how this program might be applied to informal areas moving forward. The plan also speaks of participatory practices but is still missing key action steps or details on what type of particularly planning might occur. There are levels of effectiveness to participatory planning. On a spectrum regarding the most successful participatory planning practices is what Sherry Arnstein, one of the most influential writers on planning participation, calls "citizen power". "It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future" (Arnstein, 1969, p.216). On the opposite end is the most unhelpful form which involves powerful interests manipulating vulnerable populations by "informing" them that they are both the problem and

responsible for the problem. This is essentially a form of "non-participation." Somewhere in the middle of the spectrum is when powerful interests claim that all sides, including those from vulnerable populations, are heard but their words and suggestions are not heeded (Arnstein, 1969). This practice checks all of the "responsible planner" boxes but maintains the status quo.

There exists commentary, or narrative, regarding the effectiveness of Egypt 2052 in a report published in 2017 by lecturer and academic Akram Youssef. His report concludes by calling for stakeholders to update the 2052 plan because of the unlikelihood that it can be implemented in a sustainable way (Youssef, 2017). Youssef presents a brief list of suggestions for an updated plan that might make it more achievable. One such suggestion is to improve the gap between the action plans and strategies given in the plan by being clearer about stakeholders' roles for the development process. He also suggests that implementation must be monitored and evaluated in order to know what was achieved (Youssef, 2017). In short, Youssef's narrative regarding Egypt 2052 is that it is not detailed, and the lack of follow-up ensures that implementation will be unsuccessful.

Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030

A separate plan was launched in 2016 called The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030. It is nearly 400 pages long and promotes itself as a guide to help Egypt become a more advanced and prosperous nation that is economically and socially just (2030 Vision, 2016). The plan's vision statement reads:

> "By 2030, Egypt will be a country with a competitive, balanced, and diversified economy, depending on knowledge and creativity, and based on justice, social integration, and participation, with a balanced and varied ecosystem, a country that uses the genius of the place and the citizens in order to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of the life for all. Moreover, the government looks forward to lifting Egypt, through this strategy, to a position among the top 30 countries in the world, in terms of economic development indicators, fighting corruption, human development, market competitiveness, and the quality of life." (2030 Vision, 2016, p.3).

The plan outlines the challenges Egypt faces regarding housing:

- Expanding gap between population needs and the available supply of housing

- High housing prices for middle-income households, especially with their slight increase in incomes and the increasing number of homeless people
- The relative increase in the cost of building housing
- Slow-moving procedures and their complexity to obtain licenses from specific authorities
- Low incentives to rent unused units
- The poor condition of housing units that are rented according to the old rent system
- Increasing phenomenon of slums and the lack of a comprehensive and effective solution to address slums
- Obstacles preventing growth of the mortgage market
- Continuous decrease in land suitable for building, which led to a significant increase

  in the price of land and expansion onto agricultural areas
- Migration of the population, especially young people, to the capital and major cities

  (2030 Vision, 2016, p.35).

Plans for housing provision are specified for many of the newly sprawled cities extending into the deserts of GCR; however, there is little mention about what might happen to existing informal settlements in this particular plan. Neither plans for unsafe or unplanned housing are mentioned in the document. This plan is more focused on the informal economy than it is informal housing. In May 2019, the planning ministry held a workshop to discuss ways to update the 2030 plan. Participants were divided into five groups and each group discussed solutions and recommendations for a new, updated plan. Some of the recommendations for the updated plan were to add information about increasing investments in railway and river transport, making better use of vacant lands, boosting education, and offering more job opportunities (el Bakry, 2019), most of which continue the focus on economic development. The minister of planning is quoted in an article by the Brussels Research Group, a research firm that focuses on foreign policy and global economies, for saying that Egypt is "on track" for implementing Vision 2030. In fact, the minister says progress is ahead of schedule specifically regarding social housing projects and the new city extensions (Brussels Research Group, 2019). Many have criticized the housing extensions because the difficulties of housing provision and issues surrounding social justice for informal residents are being ignored.

New Plans, Same Motives

Out of the many visions that Egypt and Cairo have produced in the last decade, Cairo 2050 is the most discussed in academic literature and media outlets. Perhaps this is because the logic and intent behind it permeates current planning process, according to secondary source Tadamun (2014). I want to explore this claim in terms of what the plans for the City of the Dead are today. On pages 35 and 36 of the Cairo 2050 PowerPoint, there are a list of basic principles that guide the vision. I have pulled out four principles relevant to this research that still apply. After each principle, I have included quotes from my primary data interviews that reinforce the goals of 2050, though 2050 is dismissed as only a "dream" for Cairo today.

#6. "upgrade poor, deteriorate and informal existing areas, provide new adequate residential areas compatible with government plans to limit informal zones in order to create good and health society" -2050 Masterplan, 2008

> So hopefully when they [tomb dwellers and those living in ashwayaat] are relocated to a proper housing site where they have proper schooling, proper facility, proper youth center, property cultural sites, proper garden where they can go and spend some time I believe that this will impact their life definitely in a positive manner -Khalil

#10. "create green grid from green areas and parks to upgrade living condition" -2050 Masterplan, 2008

> So in terms of the green corridor network, there is a proposal to link Fustat[40] with Al-Azhar Park -Samir

#12. "identify and create a network of investment projects (culture, administration, tourism, religious, social) in order to attract investors and implement projects of 2050 Vision with their participation and integration" -2050 Masterplan, 2008

> In Egypt next year we will have two major events: we will have the integration of the Great Museum in the Pyramids and the Culture Museum. The government is taking serious actions within the urban planning context and within the tourism and culture context and to the transportation roles and new tunnels and entrances to the pyramids and

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[40] Fustat is an area in Cairo close to the Nile River. This area was the first capital of Egypt under Muslim rule. Cairo eventually replaced Fustat as the capital of Egypt. Fustat is located within what is now Cairo, only 4 miles from Al Azhar Park and the Bab al Wazir portion of COD

new upgrading some of the informal area.... Part of the issue is basically the City of the Dead around the Culture Museum. That's basically the first geographic zone that they are working on -Khalil

#13. "implement existing and approved mega projects as priority projects due to their regional and national importance such as relocation of ministries and public intuitions outside the core of the city" - 2050 Masterplan, 2008

> The real estate industry, GOPP, and the new urban communities authority all feel like the future of Cairo is out in the desert -Sims

> One of the reasons for building a new administration in the desert is to improve the heart of Cairo. Improve on to try to demolish most of the unsuitable uses in Cairo such as the ministries, ...the cemetery, all of these unsuitable places -Samir

The fact that the logic and intent behind Cairo 2050 is still present in upcoming plans is evident in the way planners and government officials explain Cairo's current plans (though specific plans such as Egypt 2052 or Vision 2030 are rarely mentioned in my interviews with respondents). Figures 14 and 15 show two images from Cairo 2050 depicting the proposed development for the cemetery area near Al Azhar Park.
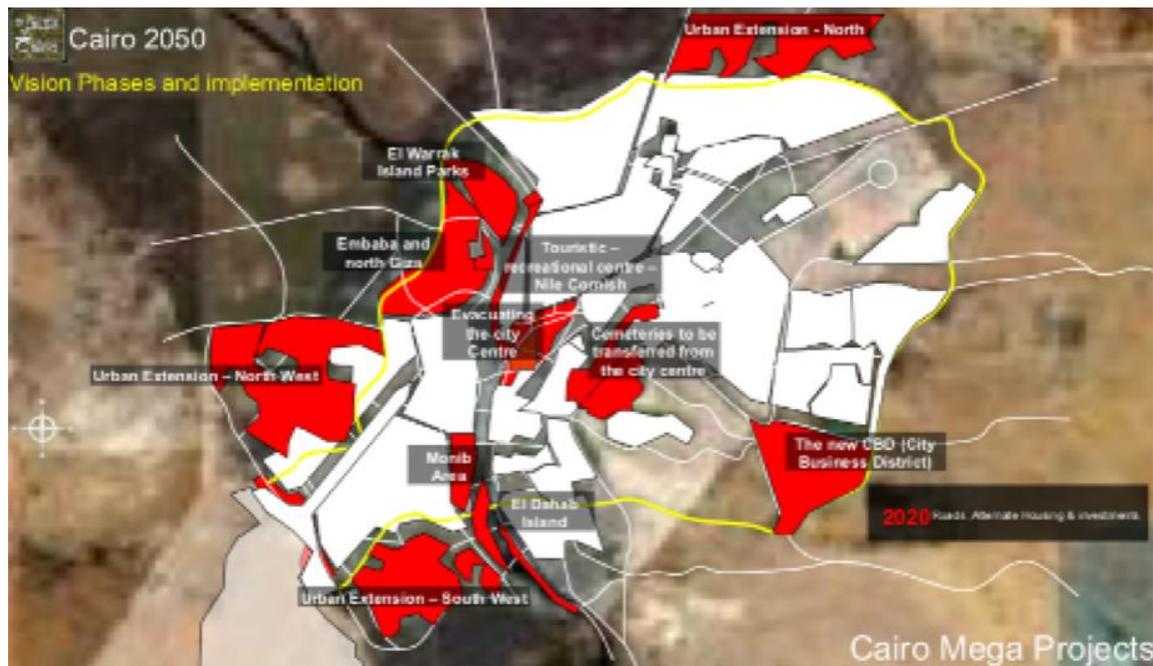
Figure 14: Map of plans to transfer tombs out of COD reads "cemeteries to be transferred from the city centre' and "the date this project will be complete is 2020" (2050 Masterplan, 2008, p.194).

Figure 15: Map of plans to create a green corridor network connecting Fustat to Al Azhar Park in place of COD outlined in green (2050 Masterplan, 2008, p.123).

According to Samir's interview, this is still Cairo's vision. These figures taken from Cairo 2050 give visual context to where urban transformation is (still) intended to take place. Figure 15 reads, "Grand Azhar Parks (Previously Salah Salem Cemeteries)" in that are that COD is today. Aside from these graphics and a few brief descriptions, 2050 offered little insight on how these plans would happen. This was one of the biggest critiques of the plan. Page 116 of Cairo 2050 gives a bulleted list of upgrades and plans for the cemetery area near Al Azhar Park. It begins by proposing the creation of new cemeteries east and west of Cairo to relocate tombs to. It says it will compensate the owners of existing tombs. It does not indicate that all tombs and monuments would be removed because it suggests preserving some historical buildings and monuments inside the cemetery. One bullet point is given to describe the relocation process for residents. It reads, "Upgrading the existing housing area and construction of alternate housing for residents of cemetery area." This bullet point fails to describe the process of relocation, the social and financial cost for residents, the logistics for moving the deceased, and the timeline of proposed events. The last bullet point on page 116 of the plan gives insight on why removal efforts are proposed for the tombs and places to live in COD.

"The transferred cemeteries areas are to be renovated as public open spaces, parks and gardens with the addition of some recreational activities (restaurants, cafeterias, small size hotels)." -2050 Masterplan, 2008, p.116

Respondents had conflicting things to say about tomb demolition and relocation. When asked how likely it is that the tombs would be demolished the two government officials interviewed had conflicting thoughts.

Most of the proposals in this area are based on demolishing the tombs, and integrating Al Azar Park with another park, maybe like a business park -Samir

We will not go on to demolish [them]. But if there's a chance to improve the area in accordance with the rules and regulations of religious guidelines, maybe to widen a road or to make a park next to the area, that's up to the planner of that area. I'm not aware- I'm sure that it's not part of their plan to demolish the religious sites. But to leave them the way they are - this is not acceptable for anyone -Khalil

Samir is a stakeholder working for a sector of government making direct decisions about both formal and informal housing. His insight on the future plans for the site is because he is both a decision maker and an advisor to other high-ranking decision makers. Khalil certainly has insight on the future plans for Cairo, especially regarding *ashwaiyyat*, however, in this particular instance his response is based on his uncertainty and hopefulness rather than fact.

All three of the urbanists agreed that tomb demolition was unlikely, particularly for the next five years.

"Very unlikely. Extremely unlikely... There's too many people with interest. There's a lot of people who have family graves and some of them are middle class or professional class - old, old families. They're not going to like it. But some of them have moved" - Sims

"I think it is less likely for lots of cultural reasons. There will be lots of resistance from the people" -Amir

"With ordinary cemeteries, it is really hard to remove it. Because it is a sacred place, I think the tombs... will be reserved" -Abdullah

However, Amir and Abdullah share that they believe the tombs will be gone in the next 30 years due to the government's desire for profitable development. When I asked David Sims what he hopes the City of the Dead will look like in 30 years he said:

"The same! Without any illegal high-rise that grew up due to bribery" -Sims

All of the plans discussed in this section call for altering informal areas. While the details on how and when that might happen are not always spelled out in the plans, the fact that informality persists as a problem for both Cairo's housing and economic sectors is evident. Powerful interests do not imagine informal housing as a sustainable solution. Powerful interests also do not categorize COD in such a way that would allow for the narrative about it to change. Because COD is officially considered "unplanned" in the Egyptian context, it is lumped in with strategies for truly unplanned areas that would not make sense for the City of the Dead even if implemented. For example, one strategy in Cairo 2052 for unplanned areas is to "increase their accessibility through opening main roads and corridors" (p. 43), yet COD is in a desirable location for residents because of its centrality in the city. The City of the Dead is currently categorized in such a way that makes it easier for powerful interests to act on a constructed negative narrative that can only be dealt with by top-down decision makers. To that end, it is interesting that Sims added that he does not want to see COD filled with high-rise development due to bribery in 30 years. He would not have added that to his response if it weren't a legitimate possibility.

Governance

From Mubarak to Sisi

Giving a complete overview of Egypt's system of government is beyond the scope of this work. For the purpose of this study, I will discuss Egypt's leadership beginning with Muhammad Hosni Mubarak who was president from 1981 to 2011 under an authoritarian, claimed to be republic, regime (Darwisheh, 2019). Month-long mass demonstrations beginning on January 25, 2011 in Cairo's Tahrir Square led to Mubarak's removal from office as a result of abuse of power (Darwisheh, 2019). The first democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi, took office after Mubarak in 2012 but was ousted in a coup just one year later. Morsi was affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood[41], and though he was elected president by the people, many

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41 The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is a missionary movement that was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna.

feared Morsi's initial attempts to grant himself legislative and executive authority. Additionally, the people of Egypt saw the shaky aftermath of Arab Spring demonstrations in neighboring countries (such as Libya and Syria) and feared a similar outcome (Tahhan, 2018). Housam Darwisheh carefully articulates the political climate at the time of Morsi's coup and the military's involvement by saying, "The military in 2011 helped a popular uprising by a highly unified opposition to oust a dictator whereas the military in 2013 ousted a democratically elected president in a highly polarized political environment" (Darwisheh, 2019, p.11). Abdel Fattah al Sisi, Egypt's current president, took office in 2014. Egypt's newest constitution, adopted when Sisi became president, has essentially constitutionalized authoritarianism. Sisi became president under unique and polarized circumstances. At the time the Egyptian military was seen as more legitimate than ever before, while democratic institutions in Egypt were at their weakest (Darwisheh, 2019). Today there is little pressure for accountability and transparency in how the government operates. Additionally, President Sisi holds unprecedented authority over Egypt as a society and a nation (Darwisheh, 2019). For example, he has called the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization and outlawed it as a political party, he has sought out an extension on his presidential term until 2030, he has outlawed demonstrations without prior police approval, and he has jailed journalists who have spoken against his presidency (Tahhan, 2018).

Authoritarian Governance and Urban Planning

Authoritarian governance in Egypt has only evolved since Mubarak was in office, and this affects the practice of urban planning in Cairo. The president of Egypt is responsible for appointing the governor of each governorate. The governor has executive authority over his or her jurisdiction and employs many to govern urban functions like public housing, street improvements, permit controls, cemeteries, and upkeep of public spaces (Sims, 2010). Planning functions of the governorate are largely dependent upon the GOPP's discretion and budget. The GOPP is regulated and influenced by the central government. Respondent Amir Gohar shares candidly about how the City of the Dead is a reflection of the nature of the Egyptian government.

"[COD] tells a lot about the Egyptian government. I'd like to borrow the quote I admire from David Sims which says, "Egypt has a strong government and weak state." I think that is very articulate and very powerful ... Egypt can't control their people. They can't

MB challenges authoritarian governments in MENA by advocating for democracy. They also oppose militant Islamist groups. The current president of Egypt has labeled the MB as a terrorist group (Kirkpatrick, 2019)

control some land use zoning. They can't clean the streets. They are very weak as a state. But as a government they are powerful. Anyone who is anti-government gets published. But anyone who is damaging the state by corruption or not respecting the zoning - they don't care about it" -Amir

Amir is referring to a chapter in David Sims' book *Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City Out of Control* - The following is David Sims' narrative regarding the actions of the government.

"It should be apparent that some government actions have had an important impact on the city, but also that for every effective action or policy there has been a host of inactions, false starts, suspended initiatives, and pure negligence" -Sims, 2010, p.251

When asked what Cairo's biggest urban planning problem is, Sims responded with:

The government of course! -Sims

It is important to note that while Sims unashamedly points to the government as Cairo's biggest urban planning problem, the crux of his book is about considering the way Cairo continues to function relatively well despite the un-organization, corruption, and lack of transparency from the government. With this we should return to the question who is responsible for providing housing- the government or the resident? During my interview with Samir he shared that he would like to see the government take the role as organizer rather than sole provider of affordable housing.

We need to think about how to provide affordable housing without a huge intervention of government because government should be related as just an organizer in the process - Samir

Some claim that the government and GOPP are more interested in monetary or political gain rather than addressing real issues:

Planning authorities do not address important issues. They rather follow opportunities and investments -Amir

There is an underlying desire to put Egypt to progress and look like it is progressing. - Sims

The visual aspect sometimes takes over and you see it all the time. If we have a problem, we can just build something nice - the problem will go away. Well it's going to go somewhere else. -Sims

Government and the Current Occupation and Future Planning of COD

This section has presented a mixture of narratives that acknowledge Egypt's government as ineffective yet somehow holding things together. In terms of how this is tied to COD, Khalil Shaat helps us understand his narrative on the government's current planning efforts for COD.

In this particular issue you have a formula and you have many factors [to make it] formal. So what the government is trying to do hopefully is to take over every single issue. They want to the over the urban sovereignty of Cairo... They are trying to tackle the religious historical sites, they are trying to tackle the reviving the housing option, they are trying to tackle the securing and respecting the dead who are buried there, and they are trying to tackle and secure a decent housing solution for the people that live there illegally and in an improper manner -Khalil

Though this is a description of the government tirelessly attempting to solve CODs "problems," we know that ultimately it is not the vision of the government that people should live in COD. Yet, state corruption and lack of accountability have contributed to the current occupation of the COD.

Chapter 4 - Conclusion

Cairo's 20 million residents are engaged in an everyday struggle for housing that meets their everyday needs. Overpopulation, lack of affordable housing, and a surplus of vacant homes that were built for the wealthy has resulted in residents informally squatting and self-building housing. In order to understand how particular narratives of the City of the Dead affect the current occupation and the future planning surrounding the site, I conducted a narrative analysis by interviewing 5 experts on Cairo's current urbanism and analyzed related information from 23 supplemental data sources. I used a coding process for my primary interview data which revealed 8 themes that were repeatedly discussed during interviews among all 5 participants. Based on those themes, I used the supplemental data to enhance or complete the narratives respondents shared during interviews. The supplemental data either supported or countered the narratives respondents held about any given theme in this work. The 8 themes that were explored in this work are: legality, relocation, services, community, historical/cultural, urban fabric, planning, and governance.

I want to set up this final discussion by reiterating that it is my position that the City of the Dead is an informal settlement and a place to live. This conclusion will briefly revisit each theme to answer the research question posed in this work. I will also briefly discuss the importance of terminology for planning narratives in particular and pose an unconventional planning solution for COD.

Legality

The past and present reality that people are living in COD makes the cemetery a more legitimate, or legal, housing settlement. It is problematic that both planners and government officials either do not know or do not acknowledge the residential history of COD because this makes the narrative more susceptible to change. Once the cemetery was filled by the living, it became a place to live and at one time, this was the widely accepted narrative (Tozzi Di Marco, 2013). That narrative changed over time as mixed land-uses that incorporated cemeteries became frowned upon. COD then became an example of how people can change land use and zoning codes to create housing that better meets their needs. The cemetery met the housing needs for rural migrants and the urban poor. Owners of the plots either allowed their presence or passively dismissed it. Generally speaking, the government has passively dismissed people

living in the cemetery though small demolitions have been carried out. Affirming that residents have, and have almost always had, a legitimate presence in COD would better honor the narrative of COD as a place to live.

Relocation

Relocation happens because a housing settlement is not seen as a place to live. Demolition and relocation typically happen officially on the basis of city beautification efforts (Berner, 2001). Across the globe, relocation settlements are too far away from original housing sites. This furthers issues of instability for already vulnerable populations. Because of uprooted economic networks, newly relocated informal residents find it difficult to get to and from a job. Those that have some financial means typically re-enter a sort of informal settlement. Berner stresses "If demolitions are unavoidable, it is crucial to have an adequate relocation site" (Berner, 2001, p.303). Government officials share somewhat different things about relocating residents. If informal settlements are built on the basis of the land's location, why have informal residents in Cairo historically been relocated to a neighborhood over an hour away (driving distance) that requires money to get to and from sources of income?

Services

It is recognized by all narrative-creators considered in this work (i.e planners, government officials, photographers, and residents) that COD is lacking sufficient services and infrastructure. Some planners validate COD as a place to live despite not having adequate services, but these planners call for upgrades. Some residents also agree that provision of better services could help make COD more livable than it currently is. Government officials believe that infrastructure such as electricity, water, and sewage would help formalize this area. The government also claims it is not withholding services from those seeking them out formally. The question to consider here is how can urban planners improve services to make COD more livable? The survey data used to gage service provision for this section was published before the revolution/Arab spring. To get more insight on how planners can provide service upgrades, more contemporary survey data is needed to get a truer picture of how lacking some areas potentially are.

Community

People are a necessary component in making something a place to live. For the urban poor, social ties and community networks are especially important. These networks certainly exist In COD and make it more livable. Unfortunately, there exists a stigma towards those who live in the cemetery. Outsiders have prejudices and misconceptions about tomb dwellers such as they are all criminals and mentally ill, particularly for rural dwellers. The current occupation of this site is misunderstood because it is easy to generalize something that is not familiar to us. Planners in Cairo must spread knowledge and awareness about who lives in COD. The social dynamics of COD should be explored by planners and researchers in a genuine way. Though not exclusively- community in COD happens through growing families. Families are a tight knit group amongst themselves (also due to tight living quarters) but also families interacting with other families creates strong social ties as neighbors. Additionally, there is a communal aspect among residents and the deceased, especially for those who intentionally sought out the cemetery to be near departed loved ones. The current occupation of this site is misunderstood by those planning for the site today. As a result, powerful interests still want to destroy this site and are using historical monuments and cultural aspects as a gateway to do so.

Historical/ Cultural

Short-term plans for COD require that the site becomes a historical garden during the time it would take to relocate the deceased to a new cemetery area. After the pressure and disapproval from the public weans, long-term plans will begin, and the site will become an extension of Al-Azhar Park and business park. The entry point for upgrading this site is through its historical features. It is ironic that the initial development will be done in the name of preserving historical sites and promoting tourism when one of the major criticisms with people living in COD is that they are tampering with important monuments. Yet residents are careful not to tamper with or make additions to their homes due to lack of money to do so. There are two dominant narratives being ignored here: the narrative of COD as a place to live and the history/culture of the site.

Urban Fabric

Unlike most informal settlements across the globe, the City of the Dead has a low density and a gridded street pattern. As a result, there are added health benefits for tomb dwellers because there is significant sunlight and airflow in the cemetery. This is especially true

in comparison to other informal settlements in Cairo. If planners were to legally establish this urban fabric as a sort of urban growth boundary for Cairo, the low density could be regulated to allow for continued views of the city from the opposite end as well as ensure those living in COD reap the health benefits. COD has private, unroofed courtyards that provide open space for residents to do everyday tasks and build community. The cemetery is also enjoyed for its quietness by residents and nonresidents alike. The urban fabric of COD is proof that the definition given to the cemetery as "unplanned" is not suitable. The cemetery is not "illegally planned by inhabitants and suffer[ing] from very high density, and lack of basic urban services and accessibility or connectivity with formal fabric" (Cairo 2052, 2014, p.43).

Planning

Planning is a multi-faceted practice that leaves lasting social and physical impacts on communities. Masterplan Cairo 2050 released as a PowerPoint in 2007-08 briefly mentions plans to destroy the necropolis without providing details about what that relocation process might look like. After receiving criticism for multiple groups, authorities dismissed Cairo 2050 as only a "dream" or "vision'. Subsequent plans such as Egypt 2052 and the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 do surpass Cairo 2050 in length and in some ways detail, but the end goal in terms of housing for all three of these plans is eradicate informality. For the cemetery, this has meant being lumped in with the plans for "unplanned" areas that are not similar to COD. Planning is often driven by a singular understanding of uses which is particularly unhelpful for a community like COD. Additionally, one could question if it is realistic to plan to eradicate all informal areas in a region that is make up of more than half of the housing stock is informal. "Planning standards for upgrading are often unrealistically high," says Berner, "this leads in turn to rising living costs and the uprooting of considerable parts of the population" (Berner, 2001, 296).

Governance

The key question to be asked here is how might COD be organized to reduce power imbalances? Out of all of the stakeholders, Egypt's government has the most power to shape the future narrative of COD, but that does not have the be the case. Citizen power (Arnstein, 1969) is a participatory planning option that is not bound by geography or formality. Planning functions are largely dependent upon the state's budget and discretion. Egypt's product-oriented planning processes showcase who is guiding and altering the narrative. It also reveals the motive of that process (i.e money). A bottom-up planning process, while not a magic wand,

would go a long way for a site like COD that is already established as a community and has been since arguably 969 A.D.

Narrative Based on Terminology Used by Respondents

One of the most important ways to understand someone's narrative about a group of people or a place is to examine the words used to describe it. Here is how each respondent discussed those who live in COD:

- Planner and urban consultant Abdullah Al- Attar uses words like 'residents' and 'people with intrinsic worth' to describe those who live in COD. In my conversations with Abdullah, he talks about residents with compassion and says they are people with 'dignity' and 'self-esteem' and should be treated as such.
- Urbanist and professor Amir Gohar also uses the word 'residents' to describe those who live in COD.
- Economist and planner David Sims says that 'poor people' need to be able to access employment and other resources, and he says this is a reason people live in COD today. However, he also says that they are not 'any different than any other people.'
- Government official Khalil Shaat who is the advisor to the government on informal housing uses the term 'inhabitants.' Khalil does use the word 'resident' a couple of times in the interview, but he uses the term 'inhabitants' more frequently.
- High-ranking government official Samir Mahmoud refers to those that live in COD as 'citizens' only one time during his interview. Otherwise he used the terms 'people' and 'they'.

Here is how each respondent discussed what people were doing in COD and the terminology used:

- Planner and urban consultant Abdullah Al- Attar says that people are 'living' in the City of the Dead. He also refers to the ways that COD helps residents 'make their living' meaning how it provides a way for residents to earn an income.
- Urbanist and professor Amir Gohar says that COD is an example of how people can 'invade' a site to illegally change its land uses though this is not the predominant way Amir talks about how the informal settlement is used. He says people 'live' in COD.
- Economist and planner David Sims says people 'live' in the City of the Dead, but he did not say this often nor talk about it passionately.

- Government official Khalil Shaat who is the advisor to the government on informal housing describes people as 'encroaching on' and 'tampering with' a burial site.
- High-ranking government official Samir Mahmoud discusses how people are 'living' in COD but always in a negative context. He stresses that COD is a place for burial and not a place to live. He says that 'living' with the dead is a problem. This is much different than the way Abdullah Al- Attar talks about how people in COD are 'living' there and 'making their living.'

Overall, both government officials spoke about people living in the City of the Dead as a problem needing to be solved. All three planners have differing opinions, but generally speaking do not view the housing function of this site as a problem needing to be solved. Abdullah Al-Attar holds a narrative that most closely aligns with this work. He would be interested in seeing minor upgrades to make COD more livable than it already is. He believes bottom-up planning processes would be helpful when moving forward with any plans for COD. David Sims wants to see the status quo stay the same in COD. Sims admits both the advantages and setbacks for those living in COD. He is not alarmed that hundreds of thousands live in the site today. Amir Gohar wants to see the site become a cemetery exclusively for the dead. Perhaps his thoughts align more with government officials than with Sims and Abdullah. However, it is important to note that Amir does not value development for the sake of making money at the expense of displacing residents. He values the residents of COD but values the cemetery land use more.

The terminology used by respondents when describing COD both confirms their narrative about it and also shapes others' narrative. Language is persuasive. Saying that 'poor people' are 'encroaching' on the City of the Dead indicates a completely different narrative from 'people with intrinsic worth' are 'living' in the City of the Dead. Evaluating terminology used by major stakeholders is critical when considering the legality of a place to live because those stakeholders are ultimately the ones determining the legal status of that community. It is important to circle back to how powerful interests have tried to shape this narrative by changing the Egyptian definition of informal settlements, or *ashwaiyyat*, to no longer include the City of the Dead. By narrowing the definition, COD is not getting proper planning attention and it is not being acknowledged as a place to live. The problematic change in definition affects self-reporting housing statistics because people may be confused about the official classification of their housing or people may be unaware of the changes made to the definition. This also affects planning policies and decisions based around these inadequate statistics.

Unconventional Solution

I propose that the site should function exclusively as a community for the living, meaning the funerary function of this site would end and the deceased should be relocated to a new cemetery. It is important to note that I did not come up with ending the cemetery function of the site all of my own. Scholars Fahmi & Sutton (2014) have named this as a possibility. However, as far as I can tell, this is the first time this idea has been suggested as the primary way to move forward for the cemeteries. COD would become an affordable housing option without the stigma of living in a cemetery. The urban fabric and sound structure conditions make this a legitimate option. Existing infrastructure makes this a seamless and relatively cheap transition, particularly for the government. However, the cost of relocating tombs and who should be responsible for such work is difficult to say. One limitation with this solution is that some families purposely live on top of loved one's gravesites. While this is likely not the sole reason a family lives on the plot, there is a relational connectedness there that cannot be overlooked. Never should a plan be implemented for a site such as this one without heeding the opinions and suggestions from residents. This can happen only after sufficient time and effort has been put in to better understand the needs, wants, and social dynamics of such as place as COD.

Today's planners must account for the "diverse kinds of ways of knowing that exist apart from technical knowledge" (Ameel, 2017, p.219). Treating narrative of place as a legitimate way of knowing could transform the way planners go about plan implementation. To take that a step further, what if the profession of planning, instead of focusing on the dominant narrative of place, focused on a non-dominate narrative? For the City of the Dead, the unconventional solution proposed here could be the result of that.

Narrative and Power

"Narrative thinking helps us understand how past events led to past outcomes and helps us imagine what actions to carry out to achieve future ends" (Kim, 2015, p. 156). This idea is certainly true for the City of the Dead and potential planning outcomes. So how do particular narratives of the City of the Dead affect the current occupation and the future planning surrounding this place? The overall findings for this work are that the dominant narrative about the City of the Dead imagines it to be a cemetery and not a residential settlement. This is evident in the plans and policies regarding the site as well as in the terminology used to describe those who live in COD. The most powerful interests have the power to determine the dominant narrative about a place and shape other people's narratives in the process. The most

powerful interests shape which interpretation of fact prevails. Ultimately, this means knowledge for the common man is shaped by powerful interests (Forester, 1982). Power effects both spatial and social outcomes by affecting knowledge. Powerful interests in Cairo do not call COD an informal housing settlement because that would require treating it as such. Meaning, the state and government would become responsible for making it more inhabitable than it currently is. Powerful interests are narrowing their responsibilities for COD by changing the knowledge, or narrative, of this site. Flyvbjerg articulates this well by saying, "power often ignores or designs knowledge at its convenience" (Flyvbjerg, 2002, p.355). Planners must figure out the phenomenon that allows powerful figures and entities to shape knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2002). Planners cannot ignore power, nor can they wish it away (Forester, 1982). Instead, planners should unpack and understand existing power structures so that power imbalances affecting COD might be reduced. Anna Tozzi Di Marco says it best: The City of the Dead is a "living culture" (p. 48), and it must be treated as such.

Ideas for Future Study

There are innumerable unanswered questions about informal settlements in the Greater Cairo Region, and they merit explanation. Each section of this literature review and analysis could be explored further. The following is a brief list of questions to ponder related to this work:

1.   How can the state make housing more affordable? This question would require interdisciplinary exploration.
2.   How might the already built (but still vacant) housing on the periphery of Cairo be made available for low-income residents?
3.   How can the definition of informal settlements in the Egyptian context be better suited to realistically and honestly address the needs of the current housing stock, particularly in the Greater Cairo Region?

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Appendix A - Interview Questions

The embedded/ historical narratives

•Can you tell me the history of the City of the Dead?

•Why do people live in the City of the Dead today?

•In what ways do you value the historical qualities in the City of the Dead? Such as important tombs, the citadel, etc.

Daily narratives

•How is the City of the Dead, specifically the *makaber* area, different from other informal settlements?

•What do residents of the City of the Dead not understand about the City of the Dead?

•How does the City of the Dead affect how outsiders perceive the city of Cairo?

Future narrative

•How are planners addressing the City of the Dead?

•How likely is it that the tombs will be demolished? If so, how long might that take?

•What do you hope the City of the Dead looks like in 5 years?

•What do you hope the City of the Dead looks like in 30 years?

Appendix B - Interview Questions in Arabic

هيكل الأسئله - المسؤولون الحكوميون

الروايات التاريخية
هل يمكن أن تخبرني بتاريخ منطقة المقابر؟
لماذا يعيش الناس في المقابر اليوم؟
ما مدى تقديرك للصفات والقيم التاريخية في المقابر؟ مثل المقابر المهمة والقلعة وما إلى ذلك

الروايات اليومية
كيف تختلف، وتحديداً منطقة (.............)، عن غيرها من المستوطنات غير الرسمية؟
ما الذي لا يفهمه سكان المقابر عن منطقتهم؟
كيف تؤثر المقابر على تصور ورؤية الزائرين لمدينة القاهرة؟

سرد المستقبل
كيف يتعامل المخططون منطقة المقابر؟
ما مدى احتمال هدم المقابر؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك ، كم من الوقت قد يستغرق ذلك؟
ما الذي تأمل أن تبدو عليه مدينة الموتى خلال 5 اعوام؟
ما الذي تأمل أن تبدو عليه مدينة الموتى خلال 30 عامًا؟

Appendix C - Research Consent Form

Informal Housing in Cairo: Unpacking the narrative of the tomb communities

The purpose of this study is to conduct research about the City of the Dead. Participants will be asked a series of questions in order to understand the story behind the tomb communities. Questions about what it is like to live there and the history of the area will be asked.

All interview questions you answer will be video recorded for reference during my research process and eventually transcribed into paper format. Photos and videos will be used for the report, but your face will not be recognizable. All records will be kept on my secured computer system with access only by the research team. The answers and advice you provide will be summarized into a set of policy recommendations published in a report that will be available for reference for other researchers interested in Cairo's urbanism. However, no names or contact information you provide will be released or published and will be kept in strict confidentiality between my research team, you, and myself unless otherwise requested by you.

You may feel uncomfortable talking to an outsider about your community. Your community members may not understand why you chose to participate in my research.

However, the benefit to you participating in this study is that you can help others understand your narrative of the City of the Dead. This helps planners and outsiders know how they should view this area. Decisions are often based on the narrative, or story, that surrounds an area. Your viewpoint, experiences, and opinions matter.

If you have questions about your rights as an interviewee or questions about the final research report please contact Susmita Rishi, Professor at Kansas State University via email: srishi@ksu.edu or phone 785-532-5961. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at Kansas State via email: comply@k-state.edu or phone 785-532-3224.

Additionally, if you have questions or wish to discuss on any aspect of the research with an official of the university or the Institutional Review Board, you may contact Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785- 532-3224.

Researchers: Susmita Rishi & Lindsey Logan
Please read the following points and sign below if you agree:

1. I understand that the purpose of this study and that an interview will be conducted. The interview will last approximately 1 hour.
2. I understand that my participation will remain anonymous. I understand I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. I understand my face will not be shown in the final product of this study.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I will not be penalized for doing this.
4. I agree to take part in this study. I acknowledge that I will be asked a series of questions about my community, and they will be translated from English to Arabic and vice versa. The conversation will be filmed and recorded.

Name:
Date:

Appendix D - Research Consent Form in Arabic

بحث الدراسات العليا في الإسكان غير الرسمى فى القاهرة
تفريغ قصة مجتمعات المقابر

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو إجراء بحث حول منطقة المقابر في القاهرة .سيُطلب منك الإجابة على سلسلة من الأسئلة من أجل فهم القصة وراء مجتمعات المقابر .سيتم طرح أسئلة حول تاريخ المنطقة وما يعنيه العيش هناك.

سيتم تسجيل فيديو لجميع أسئلة المقابلة التي ستجيب عليها كمرجع أثناء عملية البحث ثم سيتم تفريغها في النهاية إلى وثيقة مكتوبة .سيتم استخدام الصور ومقاطع الفيديو للتقرير .سيتم الاحتفاظ بجميع السجلات على نظام الكمبيوتر الآمن الخاص بي مع الوصول فقط من قبل فريق البحث.

سيتم تلخيص الإجابات والنصائح التي تقدمها الى مجموعة من التوصيات المتعلقة بالسياسة العامة والتي سيتم نشرها في تقرير سيكون متاحًا كمرجع لباحثين آخرين مهتمين بالعمران في القاهرة .ومع ذلك ، لن يتم نشر أي أسماء أو معلومات اتصال تقدمها ، وسيتم الاحتفاظ بها في سرية تامة مع فريق البحث الخاص بي في الجامعة مع نسخة لك فقط ما لم تطلب أنت خلاف ذلك.

قد تشعر بعدم الارتياح عند التحدث إلى شخص غريب عن مجتمعك .قد لا يفهم أفراد مجتمعك سبب اختيارك المشاركة في بحثي .الفائدة لك من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هو أنه يمكنك مساعدة الآخرين على فهم قصة سكان المقابر مما يساعد المخططين والباحثين على صياغة رؤيتهم بخصوص هذه المنطقة .غالبًا ما تستند القرارات إلى القصة التي تحيط بالمنطقة، كذلك وجهة نظرك والخبرات والآراء مهمة.

إذا كانت لديك أسئلة حول حقوقك كمحاور أو أسئلة حول تقرير البحث النهائي ، فيرجى الاتصال بـ سوسميتا ريشي الأستاذة بجامعة ولاية كانساس عبر البريد الإلكتروني srishi@ksu.edu :أو عبر التليفون ٠٠١٧٨٥٥٣٢٥٩٦١ يمكنك أيضًا الاتصال بلجنة المراجعة المؤسسية في ولاية كانساس عبر البريد الإلكتروني comply@k-state.edu :أو عبر التليفون ٠٠١٧٨٥٥٣٢٣٢٢٤ يمكنك أيضًا الاتصال ريك شيدت رئيس لجنة البحوث التي تشمل البشر- عبر التليفون ٠٠١٧٨٥٥٣٢٣٢٢٤ .أو يرجى الكتابة إلى

203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, 66506

الباحثتان :سوسميتا ريشي وليندسي لوغان

الرجاء التكرم بقراءة النقاط التالية والتوقيع أدناه

١   (أؤكد أنني أفهم الغرض من هذه الدراسة وأنه سيتم إجراء مقابلة سوف تستمر حوالي ساعة واحدة.
٢   (أفهم أن مشاركتي ستبقى مجهولة .أفهم أنه لن يتم ذكر اسمي في أي عمل مكتوب بخصوص هذه الدراسة .أفهم أن وجهي لن يظهر في المنتج النهائي لهذه الدراسة.
٣   (أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية ، وأنا حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء أي سبب .لن أعاقب على ذلك.
٤   (أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة .أقر بأنه سيتم طرح سلسلة من الأسئلة حول مجتمعي ، وسيتم ترجمتها من الإنجليزية إلى العربية والعكس .سيتم تصوير المحادثة وتسجيلها .

الاسم   :
التاريخ   :

Appendix E - IRB Approval

KANSAS STATE | University Research Compliance Office
U N I V E R S I T Y

TO: Dr. Susmita Rishi   Proposal Number: 9768
        Landscape Architecture/Regional and Community Planning
        2096 Seaton Hall

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
        Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 05/31/2019

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Informal Housing in Cairo: Unpacking the Narrative of
        Tomb Communities."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full
approval. This proposal is **approved for <u>three years</u> from the date of this correspondence.**

APPROVAL DATE: 05/31/2019

EXPIRATION DATE: 05/31/2022

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

☒   There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
☐   There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification
affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are
subject to continuing review, which may include the examination of records connected with the project.
Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by
URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must
be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine, 1601 Vattier St., Manhattan, KS 66506-1103 | 785-532-3224 | fax: 785-532-3278
comply@k-state.edu | k-state.edu/comply

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