

A House of No Importance

The rise and fall of Nasr City's middle class extended family houses

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Since its urban boom around the mid 1980s, the Cairene residential district of Nasr City has been the hub for a unique housing phenomenon. It has seen middle class professionals appropriating its apartment building typologies into households for their extended families. Over the past ten years, however, many of those families have been aiming to relocate their households to the emerging suburban developments on Cairo's periphery. This desire seems to be driven by nothing more than their aspiration for the simulacrum of luxury and social status associated with suburban living. Apart from superficial stylistic variations in architectural expression, the housing typologies in these suburbs offer the same functional arrangements as those in Nasr City; and as per their building bylaws they accommodate the co-existence of fewer extended family generations. These facts, coupled with the increased financial hardships involved in acquiring a new suburban dwelling, highlight the absurdity of the middle class professionals' desire for such relocation. Not only does it deplete their monetary standing in an Egyptian society that now recognizes size of income and wealth as the only measures of social status, but it also debases the solidarity inherent in their characteristic intergenerational living. That is to say, it compromises the basis of the very social status they are aiming to preserve.

This thesis tracks the history of 11 El-Insha Street, an apartment building—extended family household in Nasr City, as well as the history of the street it stands on, over the span of 30 years. That narrative serves as the basis for a discussion of the evolution of the Egyptian middle class, Nasr City, and the apartment building – extended family house typology. Through an extensive analytical framework of demographic and urban data, the discourse of this thesis tracks the link between middle class professionals and that particular housing typology; its particular prevalence in Nasr City once upon time; and the current trend of its extinction as its inhabitants relocate to the suburbs.

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In loving memory of AbdelAziz Abouzeid and Amaal alSharqawy.

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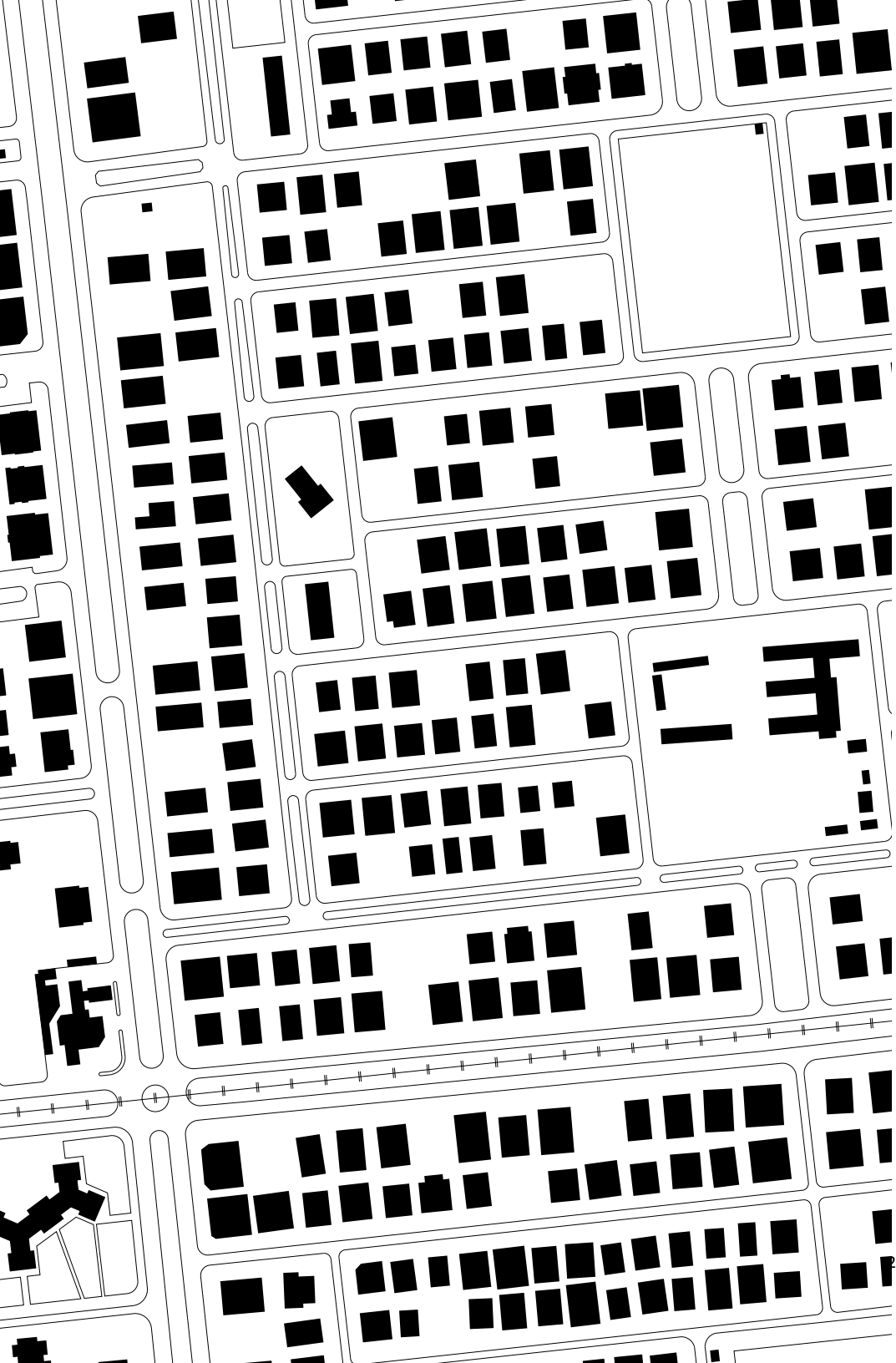
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A House of No Importance

*The rise and fall of Nasr City's middle class
extended family houses*

Prologue

There's a certain box-like apartment building that stands on a street. It's a building that is no different from twelve other box-like apartment buildings down the street upon which it stands. And for that matter, that certain street with its buildings isn't any different from the two streets at its ends nor the two branching off of it. It is but a generic segment of an extensive orthogonal network of numerous similar streets weaving the urban fabric of a certain Cairene residential district. That certain building, on that certain street, within that certain district, is my home. It has been the household of two extended families for almost twenty years: my grandparents and the families of their son and daughter – my mother; and my grandfather's life long friend and the families of his three sons and daughter. That certain building holds the number 11 on El-Insha Street in the district of Nasr City.

*fig.1.a.1 [previous page] Entrance to
11 El-Insha Street; the Arabic on the
marble plaque reads: "El-Insha Street,
Al-Nasr Building".*

At first glance, 11 El-Insha Street seems to be of no importance indeed; the generic quality and abundance of its architectural typology deems it insignificant. This in turn translates into a common notion among Cairenes that, within the context of Cairo, Nasr City exhibits a similar insignificance in terms of urban quality. The only significance this building, or any of the many buildings similar to it, might bear is that of a sentimental quality. It's a significance specific to its inhabitants; one that derives from their family ties for which this building serves as a physical realm. However, the profound sense of belonging I have towards 11 El-Insha Street as the household of my extended family is not the only reason I've selected it to be the centerpiece of this thesis.

My main concern here is how Cairenes' aspiration towards establishing or maintaining a relative position within the societal structure translates into the architecture and urban situation of their residential dwellings. This particular dynamic seems to have always been at play throughout the course of development of almost any given Cairene residential district. Its effect is most evident at the times of intense social mobility that paralleled key political, economic and cultural shifts throughout Egyptian history. And while I acknowledge – and aim to verify – this dynamic as an incidental aspect to the realization of social potential, I am certainly against the consequences of its escalating magnitude during the latter decades of the 20th century and the early decades of the 21st century.

The early 1970s saw a drastic ideological shift for Capitalism in Egypt gravitating the basis of Cairene social hierarchy towards wealth rather than genuine social achievement. This manifested in the emergence of a new elite class as well as the introduction of new social groups to the demography of the Cairene middle class. Simultaneously, residential architecture and its urban situation were brought forth as a rather convenient realm for validating a newly acquired social status. However, the contemporary zeitgeist reduced this validation to an ostentatious display of the monetary capacity to obtain a residence in districts that were previously exclusive to classes of a genuinely realized status. As a result, these districts were ushered into an urban transformation of a

degrading quality as residential structures housing a new social breed were inflicted around and within their existing fabrics. The propagation of this pattern through the remainder of the century culminated in cuing an exodus of their original inhabitants towards emerging suburban settlements that are now the new synonym of social status within the Cairene domain.

Given the ongoing urban degradation and what original inhabitants perceive as the decline of the social demographic profile of their districts, the motives behind this urban relocation are quite excusable. Nevertheless, my contention is that, in the case of middle class professional families, it is rather unreasonable. The attempt to sustain their social status through establishing a relation to social elites by means of urban proximity and architectural reference quite ironically defies its own purpose. Other than their simulacrum of luxury, the architectural typologies offered in these districts and the economic pressures involved in acquiring them clearly compromise the social attributes and financial assets of Cairene middle class families; that is to say, the basis of the social status they originally set to maintain.

As I traced this phenomenon I kept being drawn back to 11 El-Insha Street and Nasr City. My personal experiences regarding my household, the street it stands on, and the district of Nasr city as a whole, identified seamlessly with its every aspect. The story of the insignificant building on the generic street was presenting itself as a microcosm for the social and urban evolution of Nasr City that in turn served as a paradigm for the dynamics of this phenomenon in action. Coupled with the contending suburbs of New Cairo growing to its east, it only seemed fitting that I would employ Nasr City, as the realm of the household on 11 El-Insha Street, to demonstrate my argument. Accordingly, the structure of this thesis revolves around a series of personal narratives of my household's development history and my observations of certain happenings within its social and urban vicinity. Each of these narratives lays ground for an objective analysis of the aspect of the phenomenon implied within its events as it unfolds onto the larger scale of Nasr City's development.

Using 11 El-Insha Street as a template, the discourse of this thesis identifies and explores the adaptable nature of a certain socio-spatial arrangement in which an extended family household is cloaked in a typical-floor-plan apartment building typology. It then goes on to highlight that this apartment building–extended family house typology is rather exclusive to the multi-generational families of middle class professionals; and that, more than anywhere else in Cairo, it constitutes a substantial portion of Nasr City’s core urban fabric. Pertaining to its highly adaptable character, the point is made that, in the particular case of Nasr City and its middle class professionals’ extended families, this typology holds a wealth of latent potential to counter Nasr City’s social and urban degradation that is now being imposed by the phenomenon around which this thesis revolves. Not only does this typology accommodate more family generations than the typologies being offered in the New Cairo suburbs, but it also has the capacity to adapt and change, like it always has, to have the same stylistic attributes of those suburban typologies with all their simulacrum of luxury and status. In other words, Nasr City’s apartment building–extended family houses have the potential to neutralize the need of their middle class inhabitants for an urban relocation since, and in turn, the capacity to hinder the propagation of Nasr City’s social and urban demise that prompted such relocation in the first place.

However, there was yet another crucial factor involved in my choice of topic for this thesis, and that was what seemed to me as a collective neglect of Nasr City and the inherent potential of its apartment building–extended family house typology. Throughout the course of my research, obtaining any kind of data specific to Nasr City was a rather difficult and, more often than not, unsuccessful task. On a governmental level, statistical censuses, building bylaws, and maps were either inaccessible, missing or altogether nonexistent. And even on an academic level, publications were rather scarce and quite generic. This lack of resources was personally provocative for it seemed to highlight a strong bias against Nasr City; and in many ways, it directed the methodology of

this thesis towards empiricism and fieldwork. I essentially had to piece together the greater majority of the maps and documents that were used to demonstrate the argument of this thesis from various fragmented sources; raw, unprocessed data; or urban surveys that I conducted personally. In a sense, I believe that, if not for anything else, this thesis has its value in those mapping sets that I have produced in their capacity as an original record of Nasr City’s architectural and urban evolution, and more importantly, as a research tool for anybody who might be interested in the district as a whole and would come to face the same difficulties finding resources pertaining to it like I did.

This bias was also rather evident in the swift dismissal of any possible value to my work once I voiced my interest in Nasr City as a research focus to Cairene architects, urbanists, or any cultured Cairene individual for that matter. This dismissal, however, was never aimed towards the validity of my argument regarding the negative architectural and urban impacts of contemporary social transformations in Cairo. On the contrary, these impacts have been of major concern within the Cairene domain lately. Nevertheless, this concern has been primarily directed towards the older districts of the city for the historic and aesthetic value of their architectural typologies. On the other hand, given Nasr City’s relatively recent inception and the contemporary zeitgeist of its development that favored quantity to aesthetic quality, it seemed to me that, collectively, the architecture and urban disciplines in Egypt had deemed it devoid of any architectural or urban value worth preserving from the get-go. And that in itself was yet another reason for me to pursue highlighting the latent potential of Nasr City’s extended family house typology.

I believe that the cynical gist implied in the title of this thesis is now quite clear. However, this treatise is not based in sympathy for the underdog. I did not produce this work out of a pure interest in the understated architecture and urbanism of 11 El-Insha Street and Nasr city per se. My concern for the apartment building–extended family household typology and this district pertains to their nature being the

characteristic dwelling and the major urban hub for Cairene middle class professionals, whom I perceive as one of the very few, if not the only, social group in Egypt that still lives by a higher moral standard. I believe that the mutual preservation of Nasr City and its extended family house typology, in essence, preserves this middle class, and in turn the integrity of society as a whole. Having said that, the only two questions left here are: How so, and why bother? And to answer both those questions, I'll leave you with this quote from a recently published dystopian novel that extrapolates Cairene society into a near future:

“In the beginnings of the 21st Century, the last statistical census that could be conducted showed [...] the dissipation of the middle class, which plays in any given society the role of graphite rods in a nuclear reactor; it slows down the reaction and without it the reactor would explode. A society without a middle class is a society deemed for explosion.”

(Tawfik 2008, 137)

Chapter One

**1.A The House
Aziz and Gerges Built**



In late 1969, my grandfather's best friend, Gerges Fahim, purchased a piece of land in Nasr City; a then new suburban development on the eastern outskirts of Cairo. Mr. Fahim, who was a mathematics teacher and a school principal, acquired the land through the Egyptian Teachers' Syndicate which was offering its members facilitated payment arrangements for buying land lots in the new suburb. He purchased the 525 square meter land lot holding the number 11 on El-Insha Street in Nasr City's First Zone at a convenient cost of 5 Egyptian Pounds per square meter which he paid in installments. However, and in spite of such facilitations, many of Mr. Fahim's peers and family members disapproved of this purchase, contending that the desolate desert plains Nasr City was at the time would never be populated neither in the near nor far future. They perceived the purchase as a rather bad venture and repeatedly advised him to sell the land at the first chance he gets, although many doubted that such chance would ever come along.

Nevertheless, by the mid 70s Mr. Fahim was receiving offers to sell his land lot for four times its original price at 20 Egyptian pounds per square meter. But just as he didn't succumb to the grim expectations of Nasr City's urban future, Mr. Fahim didn't accept any of those generous offers either. He was determined to provide a household for the future families of his three sons and daughter on this land lot once he had the financial capacity to do so. Mr. Fahim saw this land lot as a future asset for his children rather than a mere investment opportunity.

*fig.1.a.1 [previous page] Entrance to
11 El-Insha Street; the Arabic on the
marble plaque reads: "El-Insha Street,
Al-Nasr Building".*

However, by the end of 1980, and as the price of a square meter of land in Nasr City quadrupled once more to 80 Egyptian pounds, Mr. Fahim was facing a pressing dilemma. The Teachers' Syndicate notified him that if he didn't start building a residential structure on his land lot right away, the syndicate would withdraw it and refund him the *original* price he paid minus a fine of 10% of that price. Lacking the financial assets needed for undertaking the building process, Mr. Fahim turned to his friend Abd-alAziz Abouzeid – my grandfather – for help. A doctor of Internal Medicine and the director of Abbasiya Hospital for Tropical Diseases at the time, my grandfather was also searching to purchase a piece of land in order to build a household for the future families of his son and daughter. So Mr. Fahim approached him with a proposal to use the assets he allocated for buying his own land lot to build an apartment building on Mr. Fahim's instead, and consequently hold an equal share in the ownership of both the land lot and the building. Given the rising land and building costs at the time, Dr. Abouzeid agreed to his friend's convenient proposal.

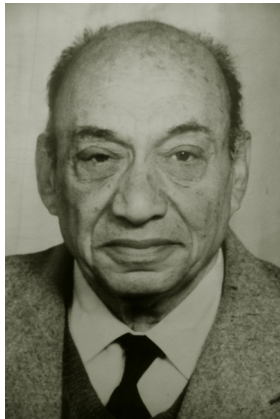


fig.1.a.2 [left] Mr. Geroges Fahim.

fig.1.a.3 [right] Dr. Abd-alAziz Abouzeid.

Mr. Fahim then commissioned both the design and construction of 11 El-Insha Street to an acquaintance of his by the name of Alfonse – an architect and an experienced construction site manager. His design approach was more of a technical exercise primarily aimed at achieving the maximum permissible floor area as per Nasr City's building bylaws. It was well received by both Mr. Fahim and Dr. Abouzeid who were preoccupied with making the most out of their lot in terms of size and number of apartments rather than functional and stylistic preferences. Given his knowledge of how to manipulate those bylaws and the bureaucratic loopholes of the system, Alfonse suggested to his clients exceeding the stipulated maximum footprint for the building, which he argued would make its apartments considerably larger in area, and assured them that

even though such a violation would entail a fine after the building had been constructed, a building permit would still be issued. He explained that he would intentionally mislabel the setbacks on 11 El-Insha Street's permit drawings so that its footprint would come out to the maximum percentage stipulated in the bylaw; and informed them that the officials who review the drawings submitted for obtaining building permits do not actually verify the measurements on those drawings, but rather they just use the dimensions written down on them to calculate whether or not the building adheres to the stipulated footprint percentage. Mr. Fahim and Dr. Abouzeid agreed to Alfonso's proposition, and the mislabeled drawings of his "*design*" – which was hardly an outcome of an actual creative process – was then submitted to the Nasr City District Authority for obtaining a building permit. Shortly after it was issued, the construction of 11 El-Insha Street commenced in early 1981 and was completed three years later.

In 1984, the structure which then stood as 11 El-Insha Street was a three-storey high apartment building of a rather generic typical floor plan that reflected the simple grid of its post-and-beam concrete structure. With two apartments on each of its three floors, it was comprised of six apartments in total. Those on the first and second floors were symmetrical around the building's central east-west axis with an area of 125 square meters each. On the ground floor however, due to a non-axial building entrance and in order to meet the stipulated building footprint, the apartments were asymmetrical and slightly smaller in area. The south apartment on the ground floor had an area of 100 square meters, while the north apartment had an area of 80 square meters rendering it the smallest in the building. Mr. Fahim and Dr. Abouzeid split the building's ownership vertically right through its central axis; Mr. Fahim was allocated the three apartments on the building's south side, while Dr. Abouzeid was allocated those on the north.

Having more children than Dr. Abouzeid, it only seemed fair that Mr. Fahim would own the building half with the larger apartment on the ground floor so that he could entitle his three sons to equally sized apartments. Mr. Fahim, however, was still short of an apartment to entitle to his daughter. He was quite disappointed with this shortcoming even though, according to the norms of Egyptian society, it wasn't the father's obligation to provide the dwelling of his daughter's future family. But then again, it wasn't the norms of society that prompted his desire to endow her with a property in the building; it was rather a personal preference for the future family of his daughter to reside with those of her brothers'. Moreover, his wish to be just among his children also prompted such desire. Mr. Fahim wanted to equally provide to his daughter what he had to provide to her brothers regardless whether or not such property came to be her family's residence. Be that as it may, Mr. Fahim had to reluctantly accept such shortcoming since there wasn't much he could have done about it at the time. Although Nasr City's building bylaws would have allowed for the addition of one more storey to 11 El-Insha Street, Mr. Fahim was out of options as how to finance it. He still lacked sufficient funds and Dr. Abouzeid had already fulfilled his commitment to him as per their agreement; paying for the construction of the building as it stood at a height of three storeys had fully compensated for Dr. Abouzeid's share in the land lot.

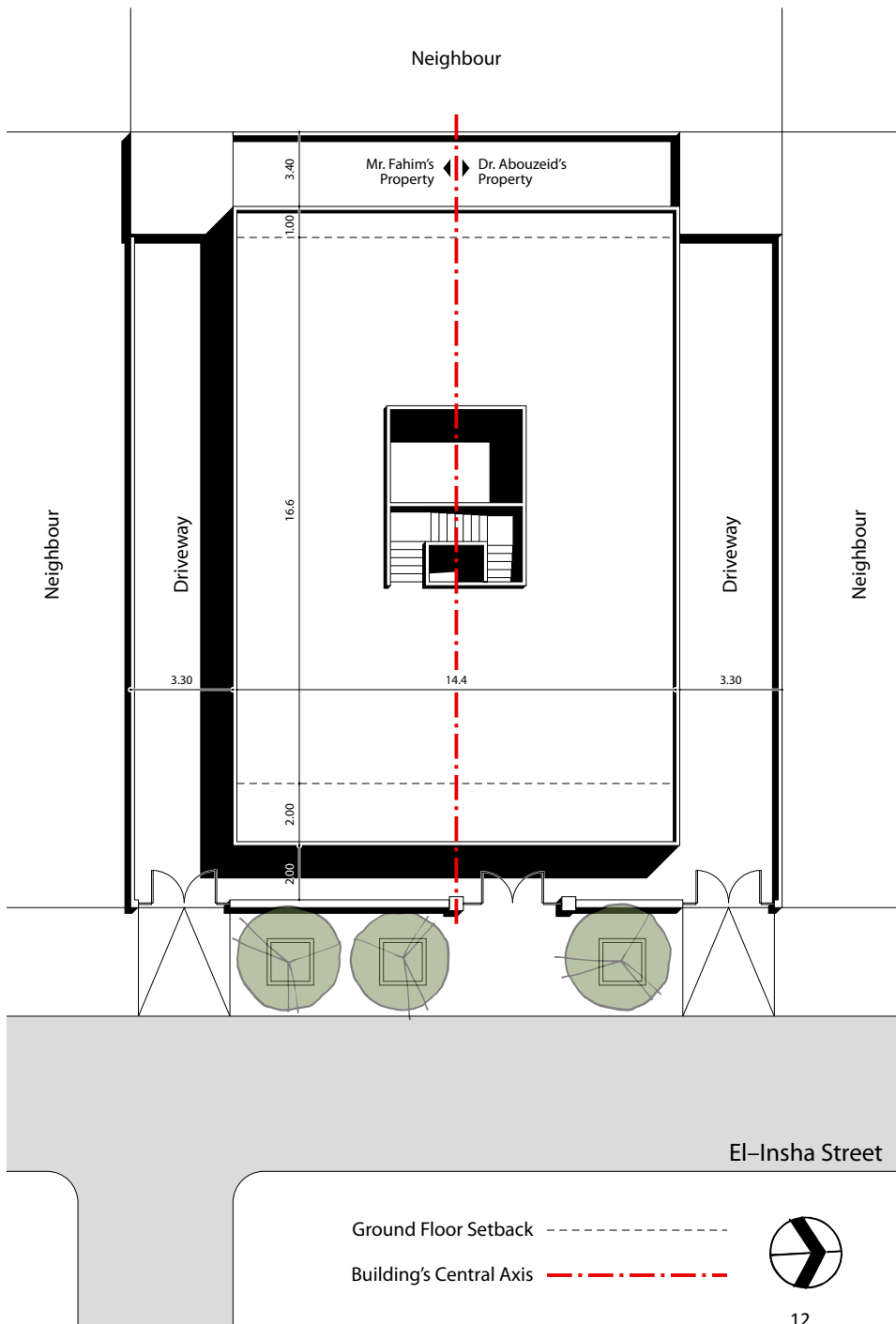
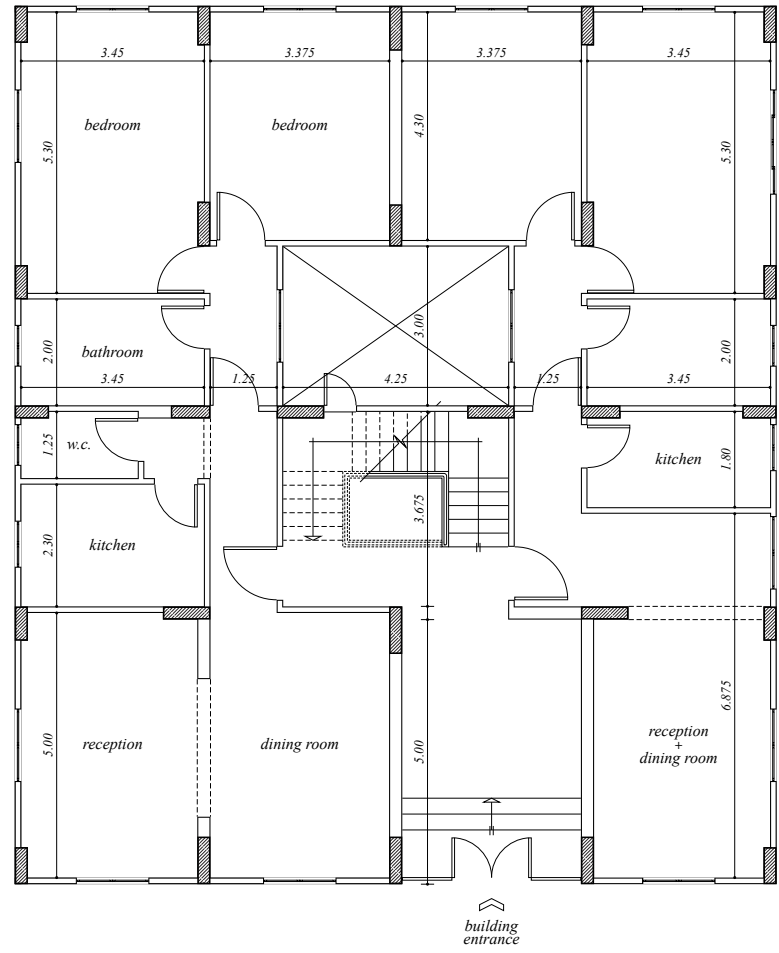


fig.1.a.4 11 El-Insha Street's site plan c.1984; the front setback was the only one that adhered to Nasr City's building bylaws at the time. The side setbacks exceeded the maximum allowable dimension by 0.70 meters, and the rear setback exceeded the maximum allowable dimension by 2.60 meters. The building footprint stood at 43% of the lot area; 10% over the maximum stipulated footprint at the time. Dr. Abouzeid and Mr. Fahim paid a fine of 2,800 Egyptian Pounds for this "commonplace" and "passable" bylaw violation.



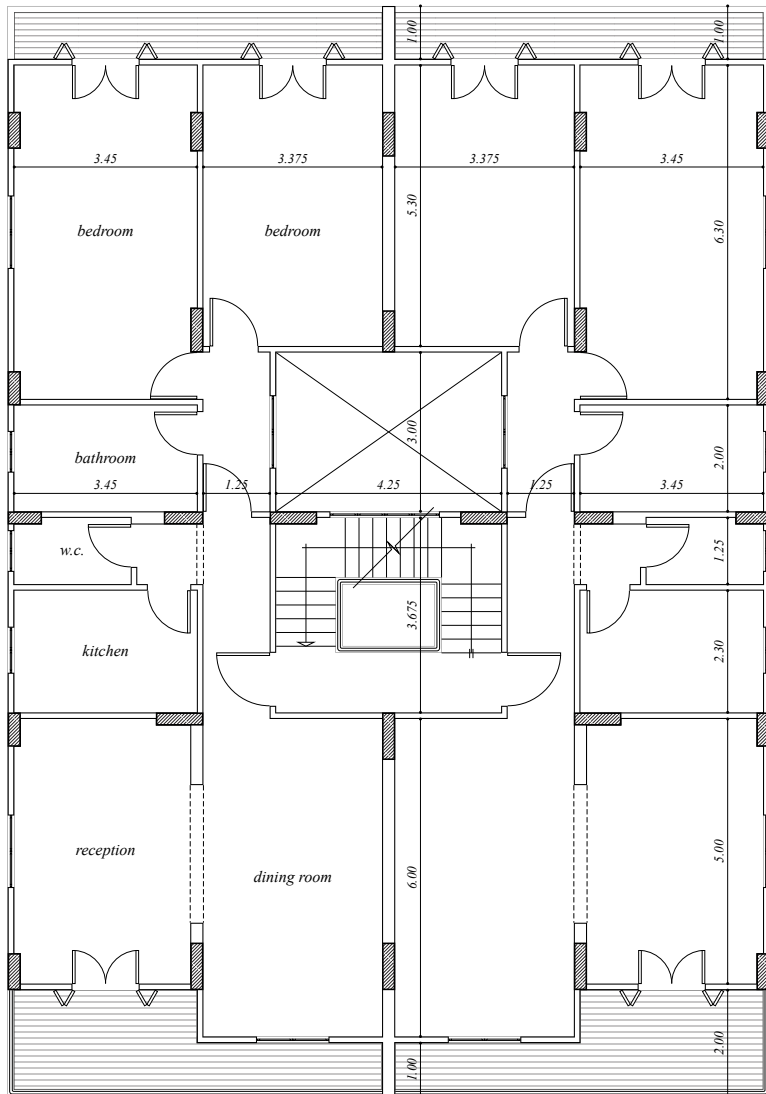


fig.1.a.5 Ground [opposite page] and typical floor plans of 11 El-Insha Street; Alfonse's original design that hardly involved any input from the building's intended inhabitants.

On his north half of the building, Dr. Abouzeid entitled his son to the apartment on the second floor, and driven by the same inclinations as Mr. Fahim, he entitled his daughter to the apartment on the first floor. He reserved the smaller apartment on the ground floor for his wife and himself with the intention to spend the latter years of their lives residing among their children and grandchildren. In late 1984, Dr. Abouzeid's newly wed son and daughter-in-law, Ahmed and Azza, moved into their apartment becoming the first residents of 11 El-Insha Street. Both my uncle and his wife were freshly graduated medical students at the time; he was embarking on both an academic and practicing career in surgery while she was embarking on a similar dual career in pathology. Almost two years later, they were followed by Dr. Abouzeid's daughter, son-in-law and grandson: Ola, Aly and myself. My mother and father had just returned from Canada after being awarded their doctorates in Political Science and Civil Engineering respectively and were set to assume their teaching posts in university. Upon their return, my grandfather insisted that they reside in the apartment he had entitled to my mother rather than the one my father had already provided as her suitor seven years earlier. My parents honored his will, and in early 1987 we moved into our apartment in 11 El-Insha Street.



fig.1.a.7 [left] Ahmed Abouzeid and Azza elDinasoury; first residents of 11 El-Insha street.



fig.1.a.6 [right] Ola Abouzeid and Aly elBahrawy; they followed in 1987.

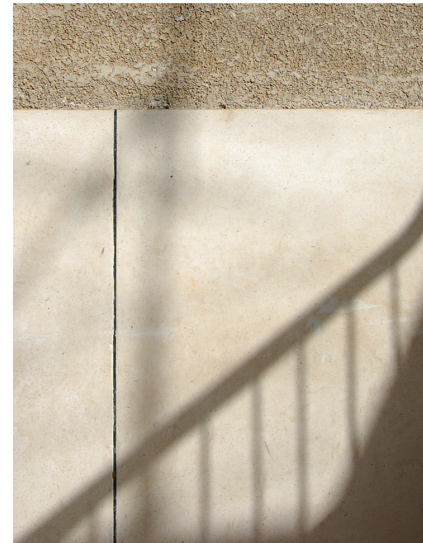


fig.1.a.8 The texture and color of 11 El-Insha Street's facade and staircase finishings; the Royal Poincianas in front of the building; and the lotus pattern of the building gates.

I was only four years old at the time, but I can still remember a lot about 11 El-Insha Street and its surrounding context back then. The building had a rather boxy volume; its almost flat facades were spray plastered in shades of ochre and had wooden window shutters of a deep green color. The building gates were ornamented in a lotus floral pattern, and the main staircase was finished in white terrazzo that contrasted its black metal railing. A low wall marked the perimeter of the land lot, and on the sidewalk beyond it, three Royal Poincianas stood blooming in front of the building. Collectively, these seemingly mundane features rendered 11 El-Insha Street with a warm homely feel; an impression that was further accentuated by what I recall to be a considerably empty and alienating context.



fig.1.a.9 11 El-Insha Street's main facade, as it briefly looked like c. 1984, and a north-south section through it; the facade is recreated from Alfonse's original design and my memories of the building at the time me and my parents moved in.

Driving in and out of Nasr City with my parents, I remember that almost all the buildings I saw around looked a lot like ours. But I also remember that there were way more empty land lots than there were buildings, and that more often than not buildings didn't seem to have any occupants. Also, it seemed to me that there were much fewer buildings on main and wider streets than on narrower streets like El-Insha Street. There were hardly any cars driving or people walking down the streets during the day, and by nightfall the whole area lapsed into a haunting silence. I can recall all of that because those trips with my parents were quite frequent; we had to do all our shopping, seek services, and carry out almost any other everyday activity outside Nasr City since it clearly lacked the adequate facilities.

By that time in 1987, Nasr City had definitely come a long way from being the bleak wasteland it was when Mr. Fahim bought his land lot on El-Insha Street almost twenty years earlier. Nevertheless, it was obviously still underdeveloped; Nasr City was not picking up the pace of development one would have expected after such a long period of time. This, however, was about to drastically change over the course of the following few years.



جمهورية العربية المتحدة الجريدة الرسمية

الجريدة الرسمية - العدد ١٠٤ في ٢١ مايو سنة ١٩٥٩

نسر:

مادة ١ - تتأهله مؤسسة ما تتبع وزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية بالإقليم المصري تسمى (مؤسسة مدينة نصر بالبيانية) ويكون مقرها مدينة القاهرة، ويكون لها الشخصية الاعتبارية وتعتبر أموالها من جمع الوجوه أموالا عامة.

مادة ٢ - تتولى المؤسسة الإشراف على تسيير منطقة مدينة نصر وفقا للمرسوم المرفق لهذا القرار ويؤيد تسييره بقرار من رئيس الجمهورية.

مادة ٣ - تكون مؤسسة ثنائية مستقلة وتتكون من: (١) ثلث الأراضى الميعة المأخوذة من نطاق (مدينة نصر بالبيانية). (٢) المبالغ التي تصام بها الحكومة لتدقيق 'غراس المؤسسة'. (٣) الإمكانات والائبات التي يقرر مجلس إدارة المؤسسة قريبا. (٤) القروض التي يتخذها المؤسسة بغير أن الحكومة.

وتخصيص لإعدادات المؤسسة لمصروفاتها وثلث الأراضى المأخوذة من نطاق الجيش واستملاكه لتدويره من ممتلكات.

وتبدأ مؤسسة المالية لؤسسة في أول يوليو وتنتهي في آخره من كل سنة.

مادة ٤ - يتولى إدارة المؤسسة مجلس إدارة ومدير.

ويؤلف مجلس الإدارة من:

- وزير الشؤون البلدية والقروية بالإقليم المصري
- رئيس هيئة إمدادات وتكوين الجيش
- مدير عام لدية القاهرة
- ممثل لوزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية والإقليم المصري بقراره
- ممثل لوزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية بالإقليم المصري بقراره
- مستشار إدارة القنصلية والتشريع لوزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية
- مقرونين أمددهما من المهندسين المسكونين يصدر بتعيينهما قرار من رئيس الجمهورية بناء على ترشيح وزير الشؤون البلدية والقروية ويكون تعيينهما لمدة سنتين قابلة للتجديد

وعند غياب الرئيس تكون الرئاسة لرئيس هيئة إمدادات وتكوين الجيش.

ويصدر بتعيين مدير عام المؤسسة وتحديد مرتبه ووده عمله قرار من رئيس الجمهورية بناء على ترشيح وزير الشؤون البلدية والقروية بالإقليم المصري

قرار رئيس الجمهورية العربية المتحدة

رقم ٨١٢ لسنة ١٩٥٩

بشأن إحالة كل من السيدين أحمد عبد الحكيم وبرجس بطرس بكية لادب بجامعة عين شمس الى المناش

رئيس الجمهورية

بعد الاطلاع على الدستور المؤقت

وبعد الاطلاع على قرار وزير التعليم العالي في الجمهورية العربية المتحدة

نسر:

مادة ١ - ينال السيد / أحمد عبد الحكيم ، والسيد / برجس بطرس الأستاذين المساعدين بكية الطب بجامعة عين شمس أن المناش مع ضم سنين إلى مدة خدمة كل منهما.

مادة ٢ - على وزير التربية والتعليم تنفيذ هذا القرار ، وبسبله من تاريخ نشره.

مدير عام الجمهورية في ٢١ من شهر مايو سنة ١٩٥٩ (١٠ شارة ١٩٥٩)

جمال عبد الناصر

قرار رئيس الجمهورية العربية المتحدة

رقم ٨١٥ لسنة ١٩٥٩

بشأن مؤسسة عامة لمدينة نصر بالبيانية بمدينة القاهرة

رئيس الجمهورية

بعد الاطلاع على الدستور المؤقت

وبعد الاطلاع على قرار وزير التعليم العالي في الجمهورية العربية المتحدة

وبعد الاطلاع على القرار

الجريدة الرسمية - العدد ١٠٤ في ٢١ مايو سنة ١٩٥٩

مادة ٥ - مجلس إدارة المؤسسة هو اللجنة العليا المهتمة على شئونها وتصريف أمورها وله بوجه خاص:

(١) وضع السياسة العامة لؤسسة وبراغ الشروعات الخاصة بالأعمال البلدية.

(٢) متابعة سير تنفيذ المشروع في مراحلها المختلفة.

(٣) تقديم التقارير ونشاطات اللجنة عن إخلاء مسئلة تصدير من تكات الجيش.

(٤) الموافقة على مشروع الميزانية السنوية لؤسسة وتعديله.

(٥) تكوين السال الاصيلي.

(٦) الموافقة على الحساب الخاص.

(٧) الموافقة على دفع القروض.

(٨) تحديد شروط وشروط بيع الأراضى.

(٩) البت في المزايدات والمناقصات التي تزيد قيمتها على خمسة آلاف جنيه.

(١٠) تعيين وتزكية الموظفين ونفا النظام العمومي للخدمة المدنية.

(١١) وضع الناحية الداخلية لؤسسة وبين ثبها بوجه خاص اختصاصات مدير المؤسسة والنظم الخاصة بالموظفين والمثل والشؤون المالية والإدارية والفنية لؤسسة دون التقييد بالقواعد الحكومية.

مادة ٦ - يتتبع مجلس الإدارة بدعوة من رئيسه مرة كل ثلاثة شهور على الأقل وكذا رأى الرئيس ضرورية لذلك ولا يكون اجتماع المجلس صحيا إلا بحضور خمسة من أعضائه على الأقل ويصدر القرارات بالحلية بأغلبية الأصوات من ثلثي الأصوات في حال غياب الرئيس وتكون المناقشات التي تدور في الجلسة وأقرارات التي تصدر في حضره يرقره الرئيس.

مادة ٧ - لا تكون قرارات مجلس الإدارة في المسائل المالية في الجنتين ١١ و ٧ من المادة (٥) نافذة إلا بعد التصديق عليها من رئيس الجمهورية ولا تكون قراراته في المسائل المالية في الجند ١ ، ٣ ، ٤ ، ٥ من المادة المذكورة نافذة إلا بعد تصديقها من وزير الشؤون البلدية والقروية وموافقة المجلس التنفيذي للإقليم المصري.

مادة ٨ - يشرف على المؤسسة مديرا العام وهو الذى يتتبعها أمام القضاء فى حالها بالخير وتكون له الاختصاصات المنصوص عليها في القانون رقم ٢٢ لسنة ١٩٥٧ المشار إليه.

ويقدم المدير العام إلى مجلس الإدارة كل ثلاثة أشهر تقريرا دوريا عن سير العمل بالمؤسسة وعن حالتها المالية ويؤمده بأعداد مشروع الميزانية ويرصد على مجلس الإدارة قبل انتهاء السنة المالية بثلاثة أشهر على الأقل كما يقدم خلال الثلاثة أشهر التالية لأغضاه السنة المالية الحساب التالى مشفوا بتقرير المراتب المال لؤسسة.

ويجلى على الإدارة وزير الشؤون البلدية والقروية بالإقليم المصري

بشأن إحالة كل من السيدين أحمد عبد الحكيم وبرجس بطرس بكية لادب بجامعة عين شمس الى المناش

رئيس الجمهورية

بعد الاطلاع على الدستور المؤقت

fig.1.1.1 Decree of the President of the United Arab Republic #815 for the year 1959 as published in the Official Newspaper (issue #104, May 21st, 1959); the original decree of President Gamal Abd-alNaser for the establishment of the public sector 'Institution of Nasr City in Abbaseyya'.

The Cairene residential district of Nasr City originated in 1959 when the public sector 'Institution of Nasr City in Abbasiya' was established by decree of the President of the United Arab Republic. The decree granted the institution the full rights to 6,540 acres on the eastern desert plains outside Cairo, and assigned it with removing the army barracks in that area and developing it into a fully-fledged residential settlement with adequate infrastructure and services.¹ That suburban settlement, given the name 'Nasr City', was meant to serve four primary objectives. The first of which was to direct the urban growth of Cairo towards the desert terrains to its east, and away from the agricultural lands to its north and west. The second was to provide sufficient areas for accommodating a series of large-scale national projects and government organizations' headquarters. The third was to provide lots for developing middle class housing complexes, which were to be commissioned to the Institution of Nasr City and other public sector developers. And the fourth and final objective was to offer the public individual land lots at convenient prices for the construction of private residences.²

Despite how uneventful and generic they might seem, the launch of Nasr City and its prescribed objectives – especially the latter two – were unprecedented in modern Egyptian history. The stimulus behind that occurrence and its significance would only come into perspective in light of the evolution of the Egyptian middle class and how it related to the prevalent political and economic ideologies in Egypt during the 1950s and 60s.

1.1 The Egyptian Middle Class [1800s-1960s] *The origins and evolution of a homogeneous social stratum*



fig.1.1.2 Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769-1849), viceroy of Egypt (1805-1848); founder of 'Modern Egypt' and a Dynasty that ruled the country as late as the mid 20th century. His reform efforts spawned the seed of the Egyptian middle class.

The failure of Napoleon's campaign in Egypt at the turn of the 18th century set the stage for the inception of a modern middle class in Egypt. The power vacuum it left behind saw Muhammad Ali, an Albanian high-ranking officer in the Ottoman army sent to regain control of Egypt, rise to power and eventually be appointed viceroy of Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan in 1805. Widely regarded as the founder of Modern Egypt, he practiced an almost autonomous rule over the country and pursued reforming it into a regional power through two main ventures. The first was establishing a sound economy based mainly on agriculture as the source of national revenue, and the second was building a modern military. In order to run the industries and administrative bodies associated with those two ventures, Muhammad Ali established a number of modern European-style schools and colleges in Egypt as well as sponsored educational missions to Europe to train professionals and a bureaucracy capable of such a task. That group of educated nationals was the seed of the Egyptian middle class.³

It's quite crucial to make the distinction that the emergence of that social group was not an outcome of a genuine effort for social reform on Muhammad Ali's part. It was but a byproduct of an endeavor aimed at centralizing power and wealth. The matter of the fact is, Muhammad Ali was determined to establish a monarchic rule over Egypt by passing his reign to his bloodline – a determination that spawned a dynasty which ruled Egypt for almost 150 years. During the course of his venture to establish the economy, Muhammad Ali, and subsequently his heirs and the aristocracy in general, came to be the sole proprietors of all of Egypt's agricultural lands concentrating the capital wealth of the country in the hands of an elite few. Also, the key positions in the modern army he built were almost reserved for that same group.⁴ In other words, Muhammad Ali's endeavor for a Modern Egypt culminated into a socioeconomic system that allowed minimal to no chances of social mobility and catered primarily to the interest of an elite class. That in turn kept the emerging Egyptian middle class at bay in terms of size and economic privileges throughout the reign of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty.

Within the context of that system, *education* was accentuated as the defining characteristic of the middle class by way of being the primary asset for generating its income. The further modernization of Egypt under Khedive Isma'il, Muhammad Ali's fourth successor who reined between 1863 and 1879, brought significant advancements to the Egyptian modern education system. The quality education that system offered was the steppingstone to public sector employment which had become the fundamental source of middle class earnings by the turn of the 20th century. Land concessions that were occasionally granted by the monarchy to certain members of the public – primarily during the reign of Isma'il predecessor, Sa'eed Pasha – introduced small agricultural property as an alternate stream of middle class revenue as well. Nevertheless, it was insufficient as an only income source and hence remained subsidiary to public sector employment. More often than not, middle class individuals who owned agricultural property were also working in the government.⁵

Acquiring the kind of education needed for public sector employment however was a rather expensive undertaking, not to mention that it required a high level of competence. And while this was not much of an issue for the elite class, it presented a challenge for the middle class which was naturally concerned with investing in education for the sake of self-sustenance.⁶ Moreover, it made it virtually impossible for individuals of the peasant lower class to obtain such an education prior to the early 1900s, save for the rare cases when they showed extraordinary potential within the traditional Islamic education system to earn them scholarships or monarchy patronage for receiving modern schooling. The extent of that impossibility was relatively reduced at the turn of the 20th century when the accumulation of foreign debt by the end of Isma'il's reign brought about the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and a subsequent period of financial restoration that concluded in 1904. One of the outcomes of that restoration was a slight improvement to the monetary standing of peasant farmers. Many lower class individuals were then able to obtain the modern secondary education

required for a bureaucratic job placement, and, in some cases, pursue an even higher education at college level for a professional degree.⁷ Nevertheless, the pursuit of a modern education still entailed a great deal of financial hardship for the lower class.

That is to say, attaining or maintaining middle class status at the time was a rather difficult process that involved hard-earned genuine achievement. That, coupled with the fact that the Egyptian economy didn't experience any major introduction of new modes of production or runaway inflation, added to the restrictions on social mobility. As a result, the middle class did not exhibit any exponential growth and retained a homogeneous makeup over a long period of time. Those attributes were quite evident in the stratification of the Egyptian population according to income during the years that led up to World War I.

Almost 100 years after its inception, the Egyptian middle class was still a considerably subdued social stratum.⁸ Out of Egypt's population of roughly 12 million at the time, the middle class constituted a little under 10 percent. The rest of the population was polarized between a lower class of peasants that amounted to 90 percent and an upper class of aristocratic landowners that didn't exceed 1 percent.⁹ Among those accounted for in that stratification were a lot of foreigners who had settled in Egypt due to the ample consultancy and investment opportunities associated with the European-inclined reforms of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty, as well as the British intervention in government, economic, and army affairs since the 1882 occupation. They were mainly agricultural landowners, bankers, commercial & industrial entrepreneurs, and professionals. The majority of them fell within the upper class percentile, while those who didn't constituted a rather small portion of the middle class percentile. The bulk of the middle class however were well-educated Egyptian bureaucrats and professionals chiefly employed in the public sector departments of education, justice, health, taxation, agricultural supervision and irrigation, transportation, and public utilities.¹⁰

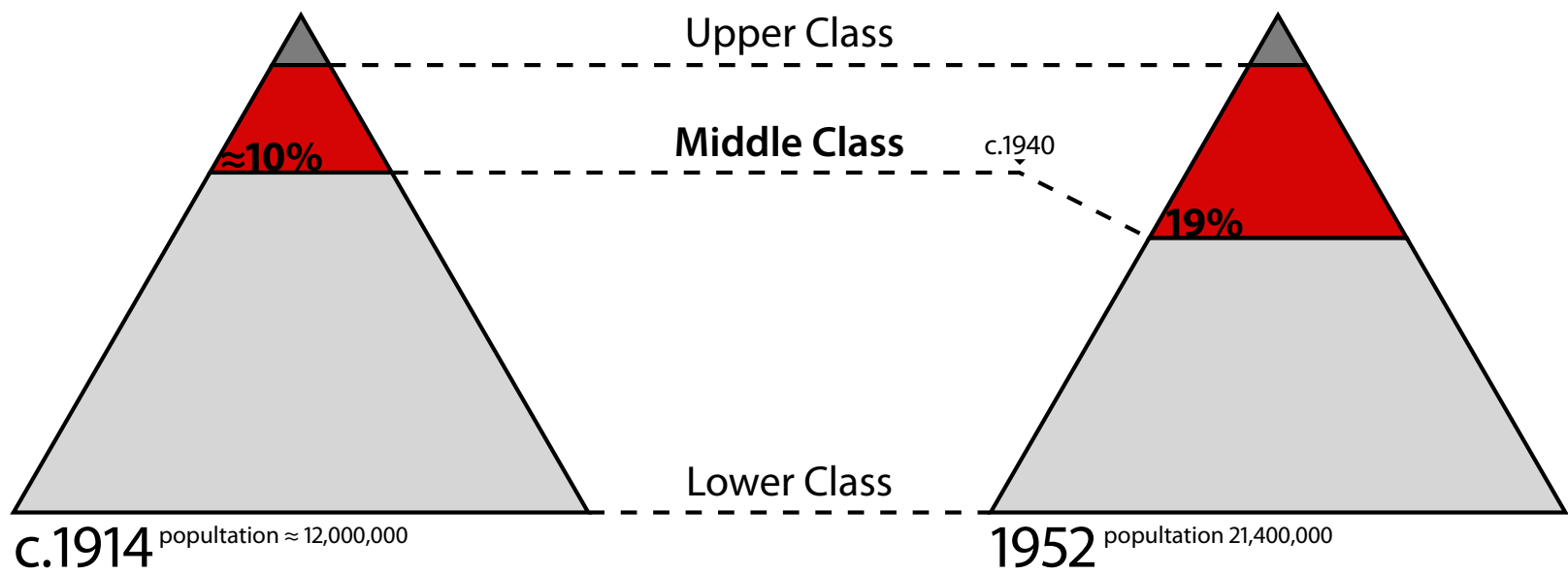


fig.1.1.3 The stratification of the Egyptian population according to income prior to WWI and in 1952; a comparison showing the growth of the relative size of the middle class.

That structure of the middle class remained, to a great extent, unchanged as it continued to slowly grow during the decades following World War I.¹¹ Over that period, however, the restrictions on social mobility within the rigid hierarchy of the Egyptian society were weakened as a result of two main factors. The first was the efforts of middle class intellectual and political figures since the 1920s to make the modern education system accessible to all Egyptians regardless of financial capability. By 1950, those efforts culminated in decreeing free education across all the stages of the system preceding higher education at university level. And the second was the alleviation of social class related restrictions on the admission to the military academy in 1937.¹² Consequently, the Egyptian middle class started to show a trend of rapid growth in the years between the beginning of World War II and the early 1950s; an increasing number of lower class individuals were attaining middle class status through public sector employment and military ranks. Also, those years saw a substantial growth in the population of professionals within the middle class. Moreover, and notwithstanding that government-employed professionals were still the dominant percentile, the percentage of self-employed doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other professionals within such a population increased considerably as well.¹³

By 1952, that trend of growth was, once again, quite evident in the stratification of the Egyptian population according to income. The relative volume of the middle class almost doubled since before World War I to 19 percent of some 21.4 million Egyptians. The relative volume of the upper class remained at 1 percent, while that of the peasant lower class dropped to 80 percent,¹⁴ clearly compensating for the middle class increase. As mentioned earlier, such an influx of lower class individuals into the middle class was still fundamentally based upon achievement in education which had then become less financially demanding than it was before. Nevertheless, during the span of World War II, and due to the associated high rates of inflation, a number of individuals rapidly ascended through the social hierarchy by way of making easy profit off stock speculation. Those, however, constituted a rather marginal portion

of that influx and did not affect the homogeneity of the middle class or the qualities of sincerity and hard work associated with its status.¹⁵

In July of the same year, the 'Free Officers' movement, a group of young army officers who had attained middle class status through military ranks during the 1940s, staged a coup d'état that later came to be known as the July 23 Revolution of 1952. The agenda of that revolution was comprised of six principles: eradicating the British colonialism in Egypt and all its agents; eradicating feudalism; eradicating economic monopolies and the capital proprietors' domination of key government positions; establishing a strong national army; establishing a system of government that promotes proper democracy; and fostering social justice.¹⁶ Almost a year after its outbreak, the monarchy was overthrown and Egypt was declared a republic in 1953. In the years that followed, the newly installed regime, under the presidency of the Free Officers' key figure – Gamal Abd-alNaser, worked determinedly towards achieving the social and economic reforms prescribed by the revolution's agenda. The outcome was an unprecedented era of government-sponsored growth and prosperity for the formerly disadvantaged Egyptian middle class.

The reform efforts of the new regime throughout the 1950s and 60s involved the redistribution of wealth, the redefinition of the national economic structure and the patterns of its activity, and the improvement of the standard of living. To those ends, the regime implemented a number of socialist-inclined policies that centralized all aspects of the economy under the control of the state. It enacted agrarian reform laws that stipulated a fixed ceiling for the size of private agricultural property, and rearranged the parameters of agricultural land tenancy to favor tenants over their landlords. By the decree of those laws, the mass agricultural holdings of the former aristocracy and social elites were confiscated and redistributed in small parcels among the vast base of landless and near-landless peasant farmers. Moreover, the amount of rent for leasing agricultural land was no longer determined by landlords but by the state instead, and was in turn reduced and fixed at convenient rates; and tenants were given the right to perpetually



fig.1.1.4 Members of the Revolutionary Command Council: the July '52 Revolution's junta. Nine of them were the founders of the 'Free Officers' movement. The head of the movement, Colonel Gamal Abd-alNaser [front row, second from the left], became president after the council was dissolved in 1956. The reforms of the revolution's regime brought forth unprecedented benefits to the middle class during the 1950s and 60s.

pass on leases to their heirs. The regime also nationalized all major industries; commercial & service businesses; insurance companies; and banks, including those under European ownership. As a result, the private and foreign sectors' control over the means of production, distribution, and exchange was neutralized, and instead the public sector was installed as the predominant economic agent in Egypt. To consolidate that position, the regime brought the private sector under extensive regulations which limited its share in domestic investment, and enforced an embargo on foreign investment altogether.

The regime then augmented the public sector not only in terms of the size and number of its establishments, but also in terms of the scope of its activities. In addition to those of the education, health, transportation, and public utilities sectors, the government also came to own and operate virtually all the establishments of the finance, communications, wholesale, and housing sectors, as well as major retailers and construction firms. Moreover, the regime directed domestic investment towards productive economic activities to ensure an increased rate of national economic growth. It vested the state with the authority to restrict the limited private investments to such activities, and allocated a substantial portion of state investment to establish a national industrial sector. The latter measure was also meant to instill manufacturing as a new mainstay of Egyptian economy so as to balance its excessive dependency on the agricultural sector. Notwithstanding that however, the regime still directed large portions of state investment towards revamping the agricultural sector and its infrastructure. In parallel to those economic policies, and as early as one year after coming into power, the regime extended the scope of free education to university level in 1954. It also put into effect employment policies which obligated the government to provide job opportunities for all university graduates.¹⁷

Those factors combined stimulated a rapid rate of social mobility during the two decades following the revolution which even surpassed that of the 1940s. With the financial hardships associated with education

totally abolished, and the peasant farmers enjoying a significantly better economic status due to agrarian reforms and the state's special attention to the agricultural sector, exponential numbers of the lower class were then flocking into the education system in pursuit of the conventional means for attaining middle class status. The resultant influx of professionals and bureaucrats was accommodated by way of the government's new employment policies. They were offered well-paid job placements in the various branches of the rapidly growing public sector, as well as in the recently established industrial sector. As a result, the middle class exhibited its highest growth rate to date while still retaining its long-standing homogeneous structure.¹⁸

The pivotal distinction in that case though was that such a trend of middle class growth was fully endorsed, if not induced, by the governing regime. Moreover, the qualities of academic competence and genuine accomplishment associated with its status were not only preserved but were also brought through as the only measures of social stature. During that period, professionals in the fields of engineering, medicine, education, law and agriculture were highly sought after in order to attend to the regime's massive reforms; a task that was promoted as an honorable participation in a national cause. That demand was reflected in the prominent employment positions and the corresponding large salaries that the government offered to those professionals. That is to say, with the former elite class of aristocrats and foreigners effectively dismantled by way of the regime's reforms, engineers, doctors, university professors, teachers, judges, lawyers and many other professionals were then being revered as an upper stratum of the Egyptian social hierarchy.

Accordingly, earning a university placement to receive a specialized training and eventually a degree in one of those fields almost guaranteed attaining economic and social high-standings. However, as late as the mid 60s there were only four public universities in Egypt whose student bodies were being kept at a limit so as not to compromise the quality of education they offered. Coupled with the fact that every individual was then provided an equal chance to an education, that limitation

stipulated the level of excellence within the schooling system as the sole determinant for earning such promising placements. Academic competence had hence become of the utmost social consequence across the full spectrum of Egyptian society, replacing hereditary titles and property as *the* source of wealth and status.¹⁹

Apart from instating its hallmark as the new standard for social hierarchy, the regime's regard for the middle class was most evident in its commitment to the economic well-being of middle class individuals. For the sake of improving the standard of living for society as a whole, the regime adopted more policies that extended the state's control over the economy. Those entailed the government heavily subsidizing the prices of goods and service offered through the public sector; regulating the prices of those not offered through it; and determining patterns of domestic production and foreign trade. In practice, however, such policies were of the greatest benefit to the middle class in particular. With the government already securing high-paying jobs for the middle class, subsidized and regulated prices allowed its individuals to afford comfortable lifestyles and commodities that were previously beyond their financial capabilities. Needless to say, universal free education was a major contributor to such prosperity since it alleviated the financial worries of sustaining their status. In addition to that, the government was clearly biased towards manufacturing and importing goods that were specifically meant for middle class consumption. Those were mainly luxury and accessory items such as automobiles and modern household appliances.²⁰

Facilitating opportunities to own private residential property was yet another notable aspect of the unprecedented economic privileges granted to the middle class. The government's primary concern within the housing sector at the time was to provide middle class individuals with quality residential units and land lots at considerably subsidized costs – which came, to a certain extent, at the expense of a more pressing need for providing low-income housing. In view of that concern, the government established a number of housing and urban

development agencies to develop new high-end residential settlements, as well as nationalized the foreign companies which managed already existing ones.²¹ The first and most significant of the former group was the 'Institution of Nasr City in Abbasiya' with its assignment to develop the suburb of Nasr City.

That significance did not only show in the institution's conception by direct decree of the highest authority at the time, but also in the name 'Nasr City' itself. The word "nasr", which means victory in Arabic, was then the regime's preferred label for many of the contemporary reform ventures. It was part of its propaganda to indicate the "triumph" of the 1952 Revolution and its ideologies in bringing about pioneering national reforms. Designating the prospective settlement with the name 'Nasr City' was essentially a proclamation of its stature as an urban venture meant to embody a particular aspect of those revered reform efforts. Given that the settlement was to cater exclusively to the middle class, such a name specifically implied the rise of the just social order advocated by the revolution – one that, in effect, championed a middle class which had been unprivileged since its inception.

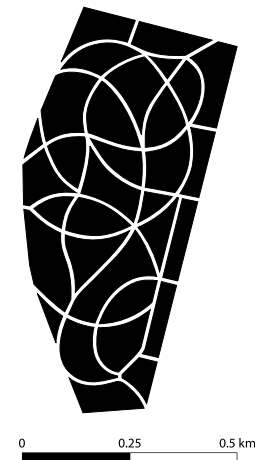
Nasr City was indeed the legitimate urban-child of the Egyptian zeitgeist during the 1950s and 60s. It was unique in every possible aspect in correlation with the unprecedented favoritism towards the middle class at the time. Out of the five Cairene high-end residential neighborhoods during the latter half of the 20th century, Nasr City was the only one purposefully directed towards a middle class clientele at its outset. The other four neighborhoods – Zamalek, Garden City, Ma'adi, and Heliopolis, which all predated the 52 revolution – originated as suburban settlements for the social elite and foreigners. Those were also originally planned and developed by foreign entrepreneurs and private companies.¹ Nasr City, on the other hand, was the first to be fully developed by a national public sector body – the 'Institution of Nasr City in Abbasiya'.

Moreover, Sayyed Karim – the architect commissioned for planning Nasr City – was the quintessential middle-class professional who had deservedly attained such status during the years that led up to the 52 revolution. He was born in 1911 to a typical pre World War I middle class

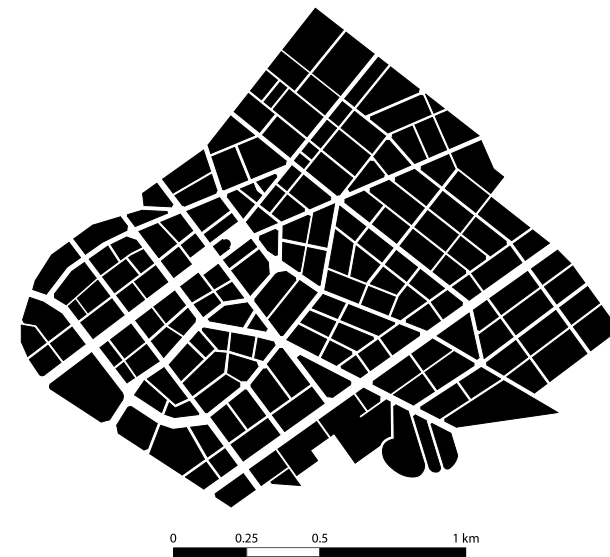
1.2 Nasr City [1960s] *Prospects of a middle class Utopia*

family; his father was then a government-employed civil engineer. In the late 20s he enrolled in Cairo University where he studied Architecture and was later awarded a scholarship to continue his graduate studies in ETH Zurich. There he specialized in Urban Planning and received his doctorate in 1938 becoming the first Egyptian to ever hold a doctoral degree in Architecture. Upon his return to Egypt, he assumed a faculty position in Cairo University's Department of Architecture as well as founded the first architectural consulting firm in Egypt and the Middle East.² Throughout the 40s and 50s he became a highly sought after practitioner. He was frequently commissioned to design public buildings, plan new urban projects, and devise development schemes for existing urban sites in Egypt and the Arab countries.³

Karim's planning of Nasr City was by far the epitome of its distinction. It was a departure from the late 19th century planning trends of its precedent high-end residential settlements. In a clear reflection of his Modernist inclinations, he based the design of 1,525 acres designated for residential land use on a simple grid scheme that was intended to facilitate any future extension of the settlement. Those were bordered by desert plains to the east and south as venues for such an extension. In compliance with its prescribed objectives, the rest of Nasr City's area was reserved for miscellaneous large-scale national projects that were meant to render it as a Utopia incorporating all the aspects of its contemporary national reforms. The most significant of those were an Olympic park; an exhibition & fair grounds; an international convention centre; the Azhar University new campus; the headquarters for a number of key government departments and organizations; and a strip of factories, warehouses, and bus depots for several state-owned industrial, commercial, and service enterprises. That multitude of land uses, together with areas retained by the military at the north of the settlement, constituted a buffer between Nasr City's residential areas and the neighborhoods of Masr Al-Gadeeda district to the north, the neighborhoods of Waili district to the north west, and an area of steep limestone plateaus to the west.



Garden City [1892]



Heliopolis [1905]

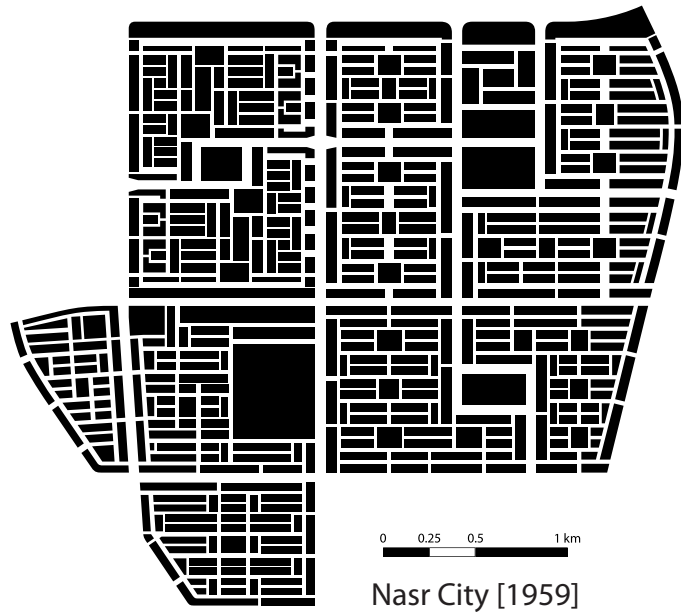
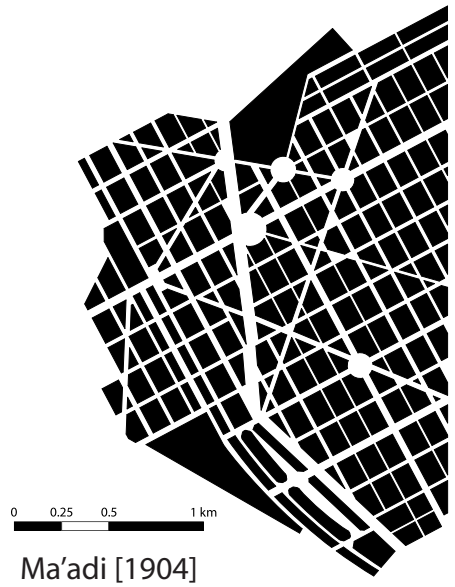
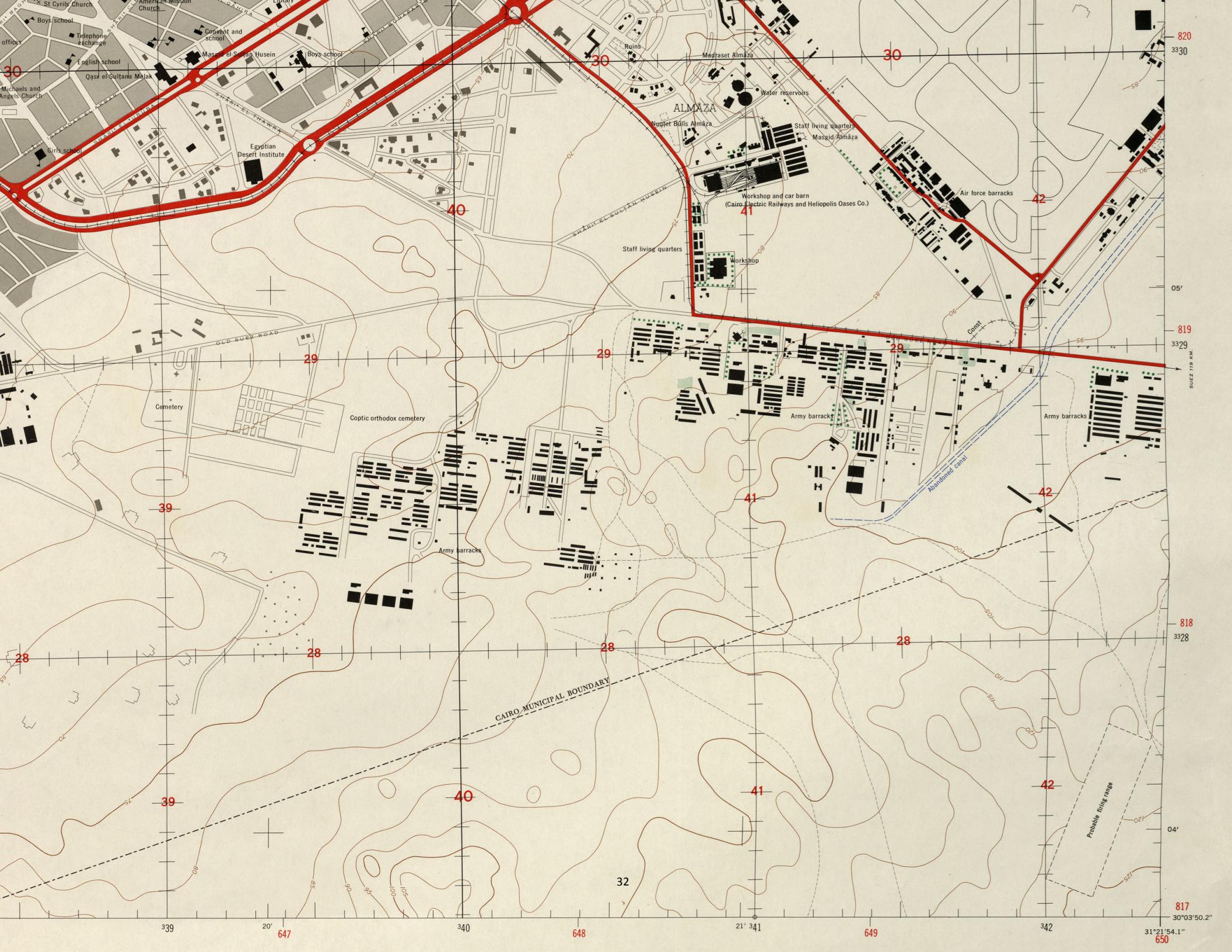


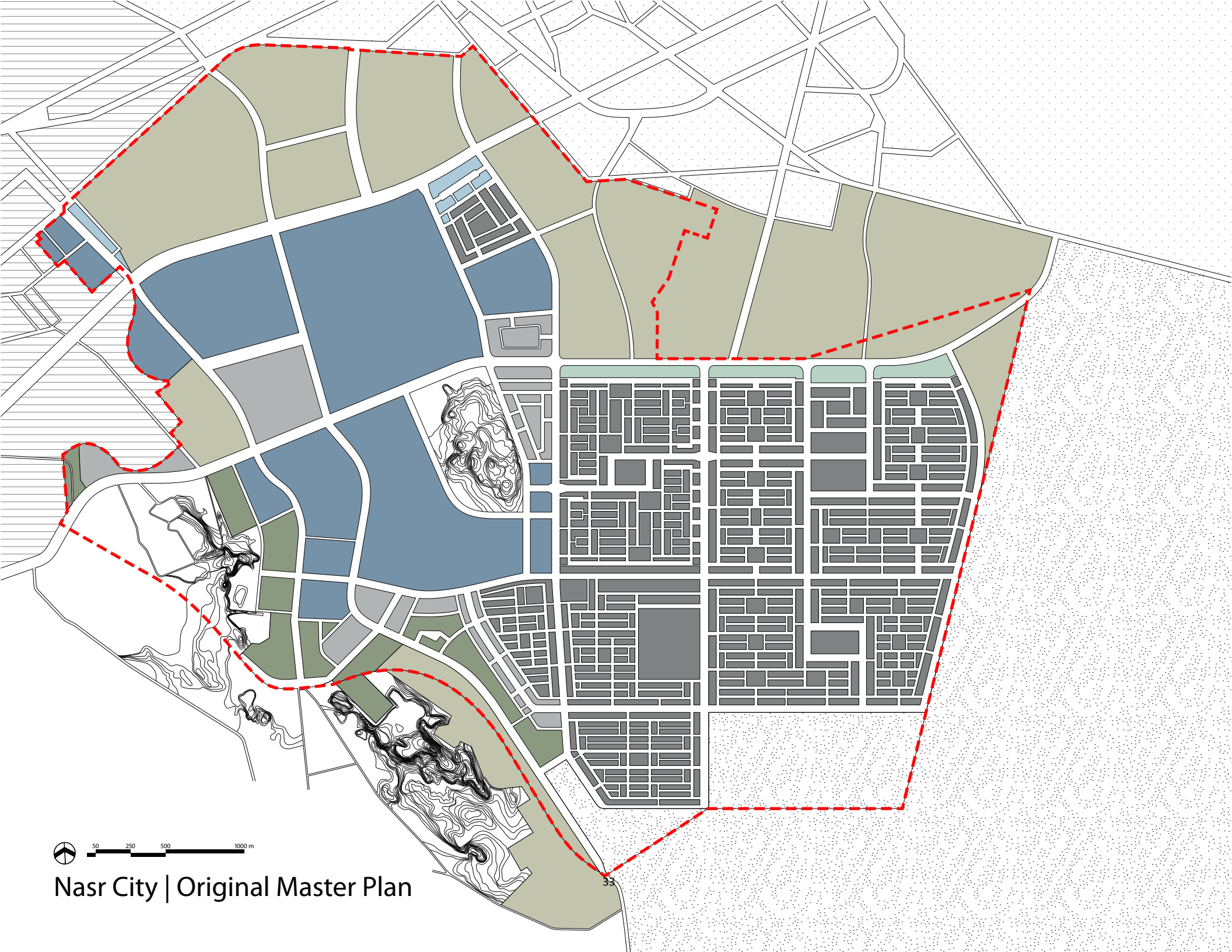
fig.1.2.1 A comparison of the planning schemes of Cairene high-end residential neighborhoods; Nasr City's purely orthogonal scheme set it apart from its precedents.

fig.1.2.2 [next spread] An excerpt from a 1958 map showing the army barracks scattered across the desert plains east and south of the neighborhoods of Waili and Masr Al-Gadeeda districts. In 1959, the shown area became the northwest portion of the 6,540 acres assigned to the Institution of Nasr City. In the settlement's master plan, most of that portion was divided between large-scale national projects and army property; the 1,525 acres designated for residential land use spread across the shallow slopes south of the Cairo Municipal Boundary [bottom right corner].



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Nasr City | Original Master Plan

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fig.1.2.4 The location of Nasr City in relation to the 21 administrative districts of Cairo in 1966; The settlement was yet to be its own administrative district and encompassed areas that were technically under the jurisdictions of Waili and Masr Al-Gadeeda districts within its vicinity. [for reference, the administrative boundaries of Waili and Masr Al-Gadeeda running horizontally across Nasr City are represented as Cairo Municipal Boundary in fig.1.2.2]

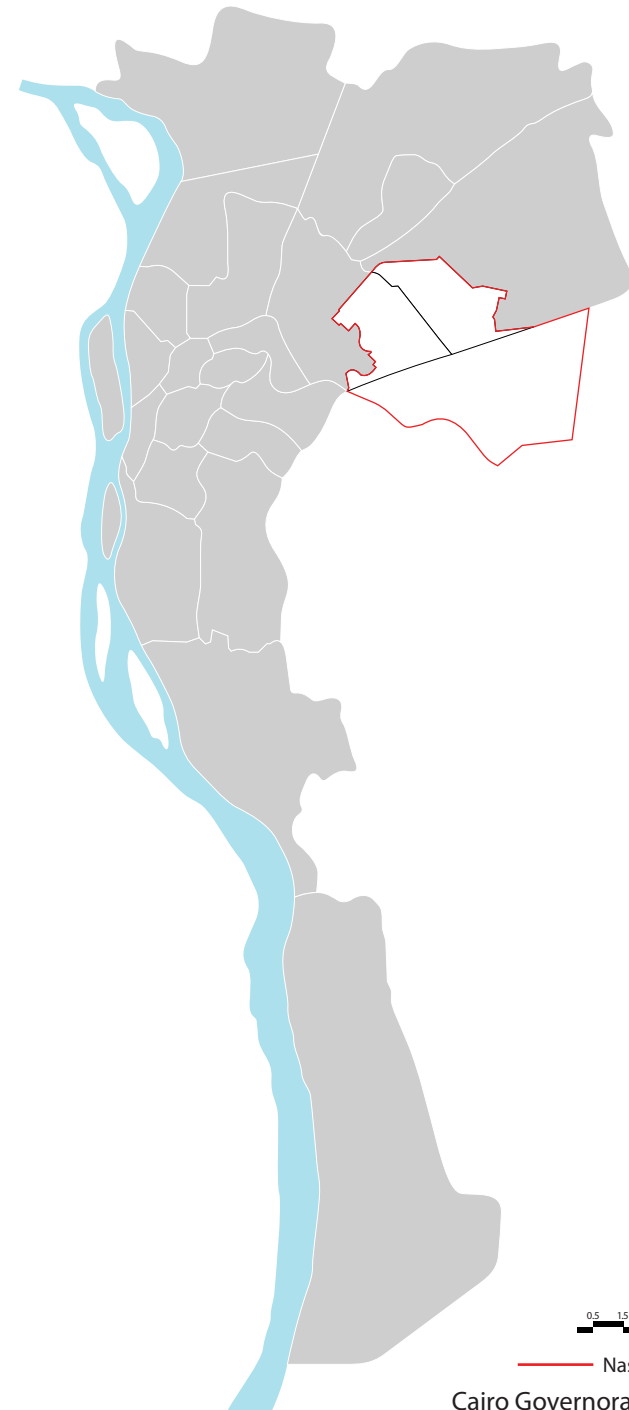
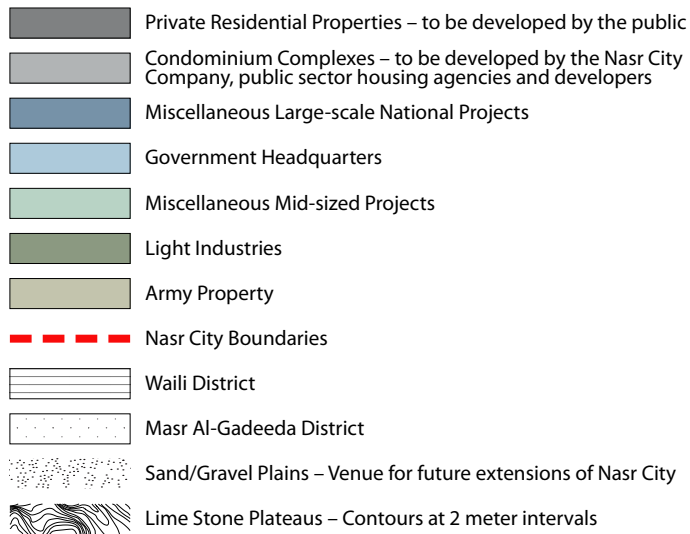


fig.1.2.3 Nasr City's master plan; the settlement's zoning arrangement was greatly affected by its urban and topographic surroundings. The industrial strip was meant as a buffer against the steep limestone plateaus; the lands retained by the army as a buffer against the neighborhoods of Masr Al-Gadeeda and Waili districts; and the large-scale projects and condominium complexes as a transitional buffer into the bulk of private residential properties. The 1,525 acres of residential land use were specifically left with free ends towards the manageable flat topography to the east and west to facilitate possible extensions.



Karim's last contribution to the planning of Nasr City came in 1961 when he devised a detailed design for the Second Zone – a small residential neighborhood in the north of Nasr City – as a prototype for the rest of the residential areas of the settlement. Five years later in 1966, the detailed urban design of those areas was completed by architects Gamal Fahim and Kamal Shohaib.⁴ The 1,525 acres were divided into four zones – the First, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth – with an intended density of about 70 to 100 persons per acre for each zone. On average, 30% of that area was assigned to residential land use; 20% for services and commercial land use; 10% for government buildings; and 40% for roads and green areas.⁵

The arrangement of those land uses followed a systematic pattern in all four zones; a feature mostly attributed to the orthogonal nature of their planning. Each zone was comprised of two pairs of residential neighborhoods surrounding a service nucleus designated for large-scale commercial, administrative, healthcare, and religious facilities. Similarly, the neighborhoods had smaller nuclei featuring parks, schools, and small markets. Such an arrangement was specifically designed to reduce vehicular traffic within the neighborhoods by providing basic day-to-day services at a walking distance from any residential unit.⁶

The areas of the residential lots within the neighborhoods ranged between 400 and 700 square meters. A number of building bylaws were stipulated for those lots in order to achieve the intended density and to maintain a uniform urban character throughout the settlement. Only one apartment building was allowed per lot with a footprint that didn't exceed one third of the lot's area. Building footprints were restricted to a minimum 7-meter setback from rear property lines and a minimum 4-meter setback from side and street-facing property lines. Building heights were limited to four storeys at a maximum of 13 meters on streets with widths less than 50 meters, and five storeys at a maximum of 16 meters on streets with widths equal or greater than 50 meters.⁷ And while those lots were directed towards a clientele of private individuals, a few large lots were reserved for public sector developers and housing agencies for developing condominium complexes. Those were situated

on wider main streets and had their own sets of regulations concerning building heights and footprints.

During the formulation of that detailed urban design, the 'Institution of Nasr City in Abbaseyya' was restructured into a state-run joint stock company in 1964 while retaining its original mission statement.⁸ It was renamed the 'Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development' and assumed its role as the regulator of all building processes in Nasr City to ensure their compliance with the stipulated bylaws. Shortly after approving the design in mid 1966, the company and public sector contractors started realizing the settlement's infrastructure systems, as well as a number of the proposed state projects and condominium complexes.

As the proprietor of all the land within Nasr City's vicinity, the company also started selling the private residential lots to the public at subsidized prices. Some of those lots were allocated to syndicates of professional practices which in turn offered their members the lots with convenient payment arrangements. In essence, the company was promoting a novel mode of residential property ownership to the middle class. It presented them with an easy opportunity to own private residences as opposed to rental which had been the prevalent mode of ownership to date.

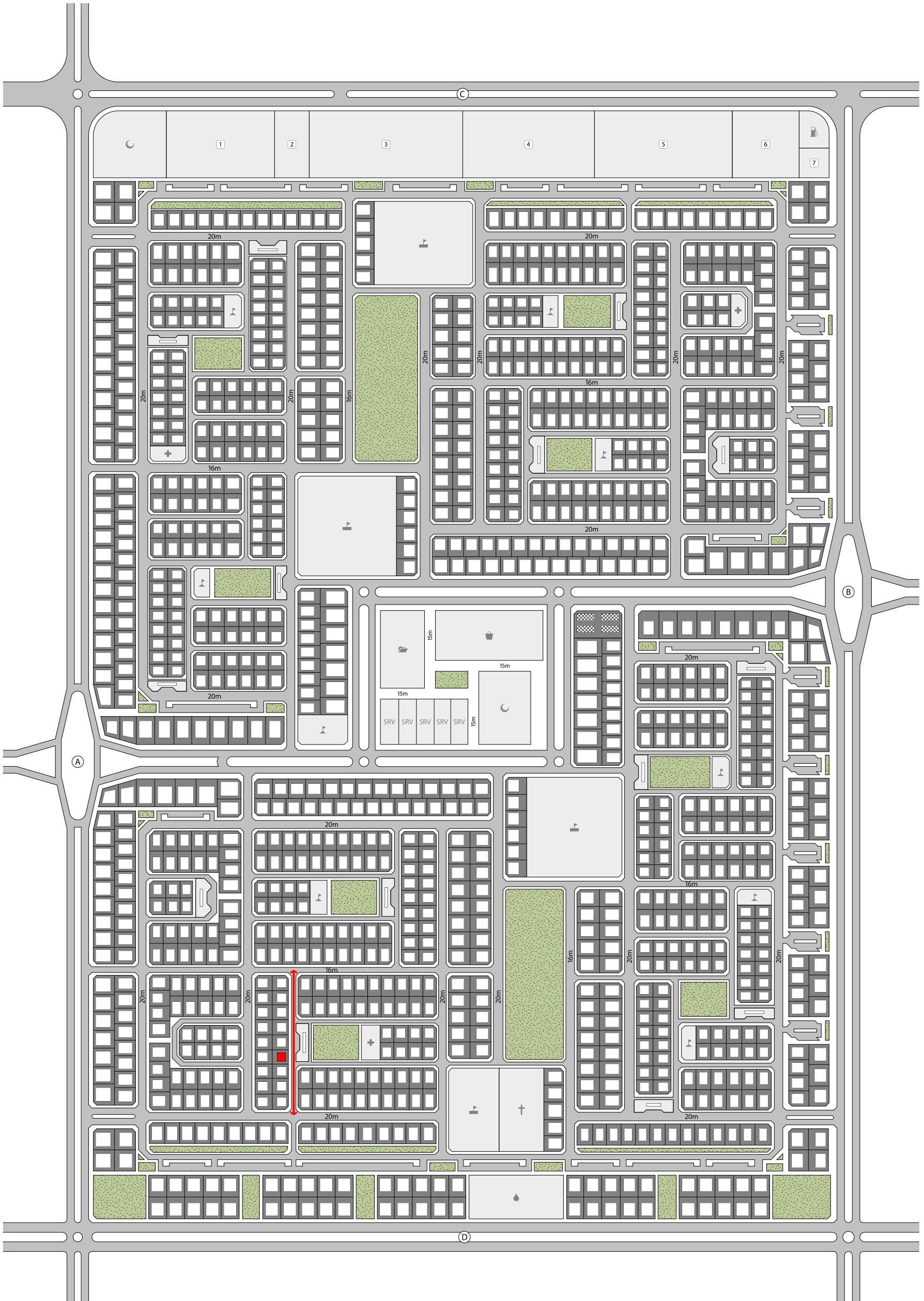
fig.1.2.5 Nasr City's residential zones and main street network [for reference, as Salah Salem road continues east, it becomes Al-Uruba street in fig.1.2.2]. Salah Salem and Al-Nasr roads were designed as two of Cairo's major vehicular arteries. They were intended to constitute a barrier between Cairo's periphery and Nasr City's residential areas in order to highlight their suburban character. Al-Tayaran and Youssef Abbas streets were meant to be the main entry routes into those areas.



- Second Zone [planned 1961]
- - - - Residential Zones planned in 1966
- (A) First Zone
- (B) Sixth Zone
- (C) Seventh Zone
- (D) Eighth Zone
- ↔ 60-meter Streets
- 1 Salah Salem Road
- ↔ 50-meter Streets
- 2 Al-Tayaran Street
- 3 Youssef Abbas Street
- 4 Al-Nasr Road



36



Nasr City | First Zone | Detailed Urban Design '66

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------|--|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Private Residential Lot - showing min. permissible setbacks for building footprint | | School | | Commercial | | A Al-Tayaran Street | | 2 Property of the Egyptian Postal Service |
| | Condominium Complex | | Preschool | | Administrative | | B Abbas El-Akkad Street | | 3 Property of Cairo Governorate |
| | Park | | Hospital | | SRV Unassigned Service Facility | | C Al-Nasr Road | | 4 7 Property of Nasr City Company |
| | Market | | Church | | Gas Station | | D Ali Ameen Street | | 5 Property of the Industrial Fixations Company |
| | | | Mosque | | Water Tower | | 1 Residential-Administrative mixed use project | | 6 Property of the Sorting and Microfilm Company [Al-Ahram Institution] |

* Street widths measured from lot lines. All inner street widths at 12 meters.



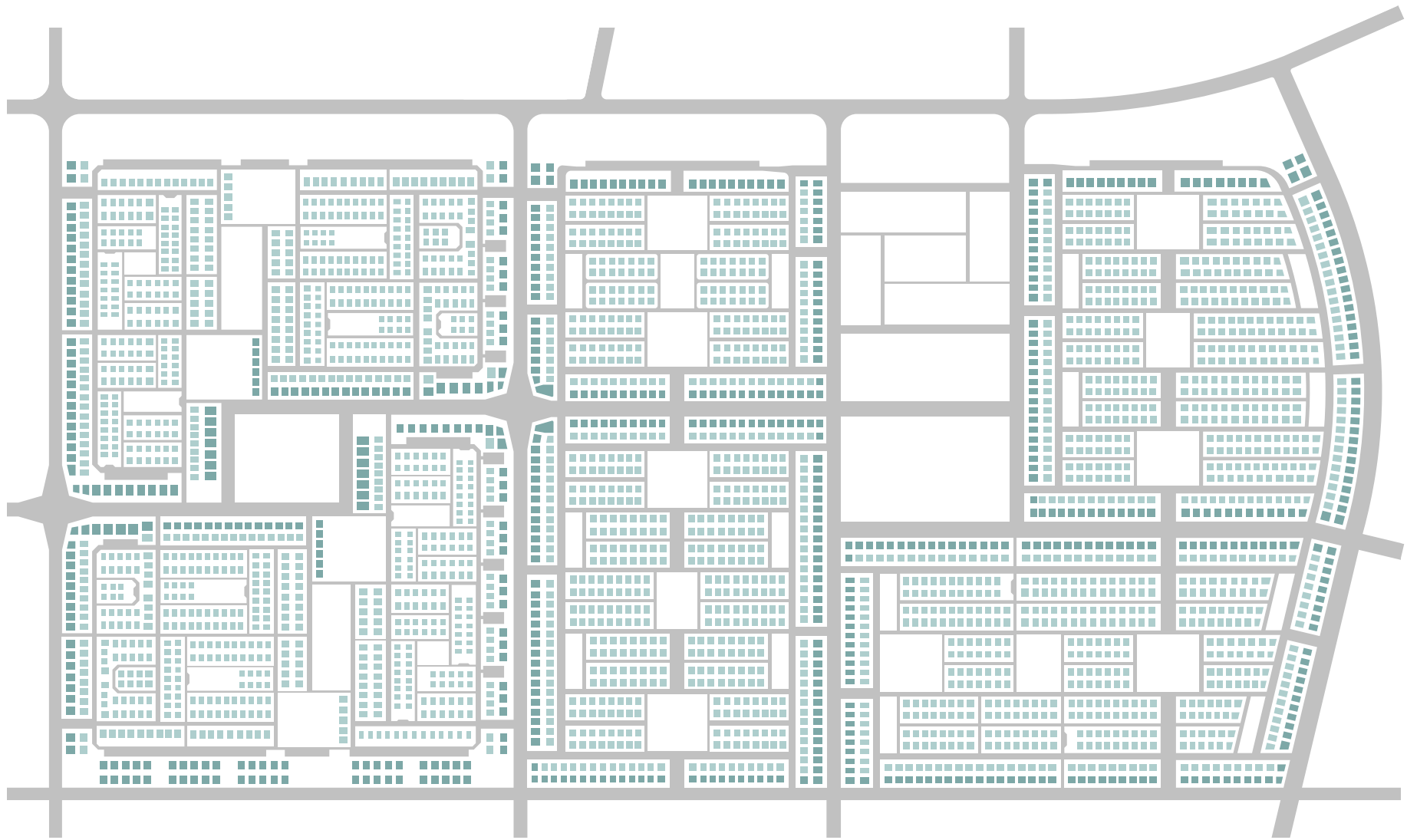


fig 1.2.6 The original detailed urban design of Nasr City's First [opposite page] and Sixth Zones; El-Insha Street and lot no.11 marked in red. The First Zone had a more intricate design and a wider variety of small-scale services within its neighborhoods. The Sixth Zone with its simpler design and wider inner street widths served as a template for the Seventh and Eighth zones. The strip of larger lots at the north of both zones was designated for miscellaneous mid-sized projects that were meant to act as a buffer between the zones' residential lots and Al-Nasr Road.

Nasr City | Sixth Zone | Detailed Urban Design '66

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Private Residential Lot - showing min. permissible setbacks for building footprint | Market | Police Station and Emergency Services | Ahmed Fakhry Street |
| Condominium Complex | School | Hassan Ma'moon Street | Makram Ebied Street |
| Park | SRV Unassigned Service Facility | Abbas El-Akkad Street | Property of the Institution of Labour Education |
| | | Al-Nasr Road | Al-Nasr Automobile Company |
| | | Mustafa El-Nahas Street | Misr Company for Automobile Trade |

* Street widths measured from lot lines. All inner street widths at 16 meters.



- 4 storey apartment buildings | max. height: 13 meters
- 5 storey apartment buildings | max. height: 16 meters

First & Sixth Zones | Height Limits for Private Residential Properties '66

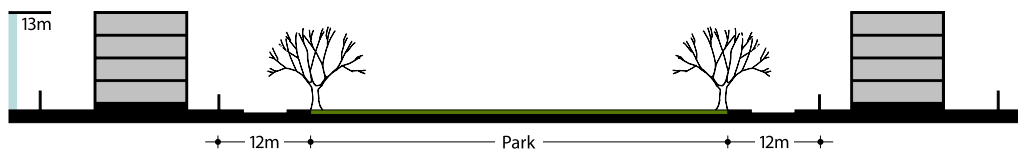
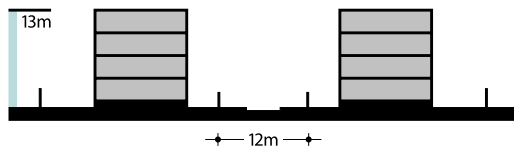
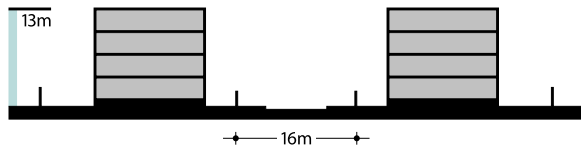
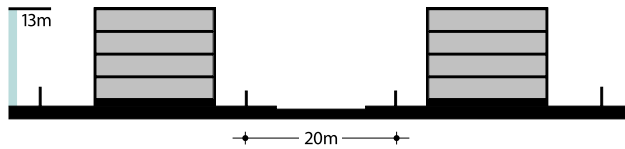
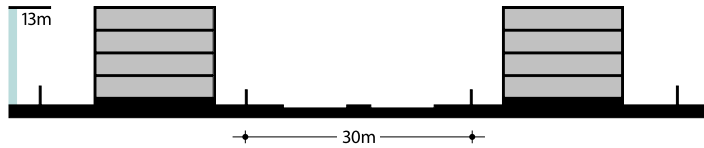
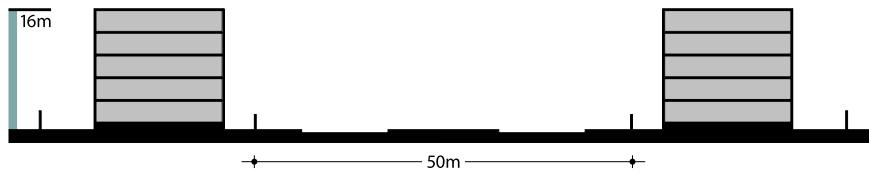
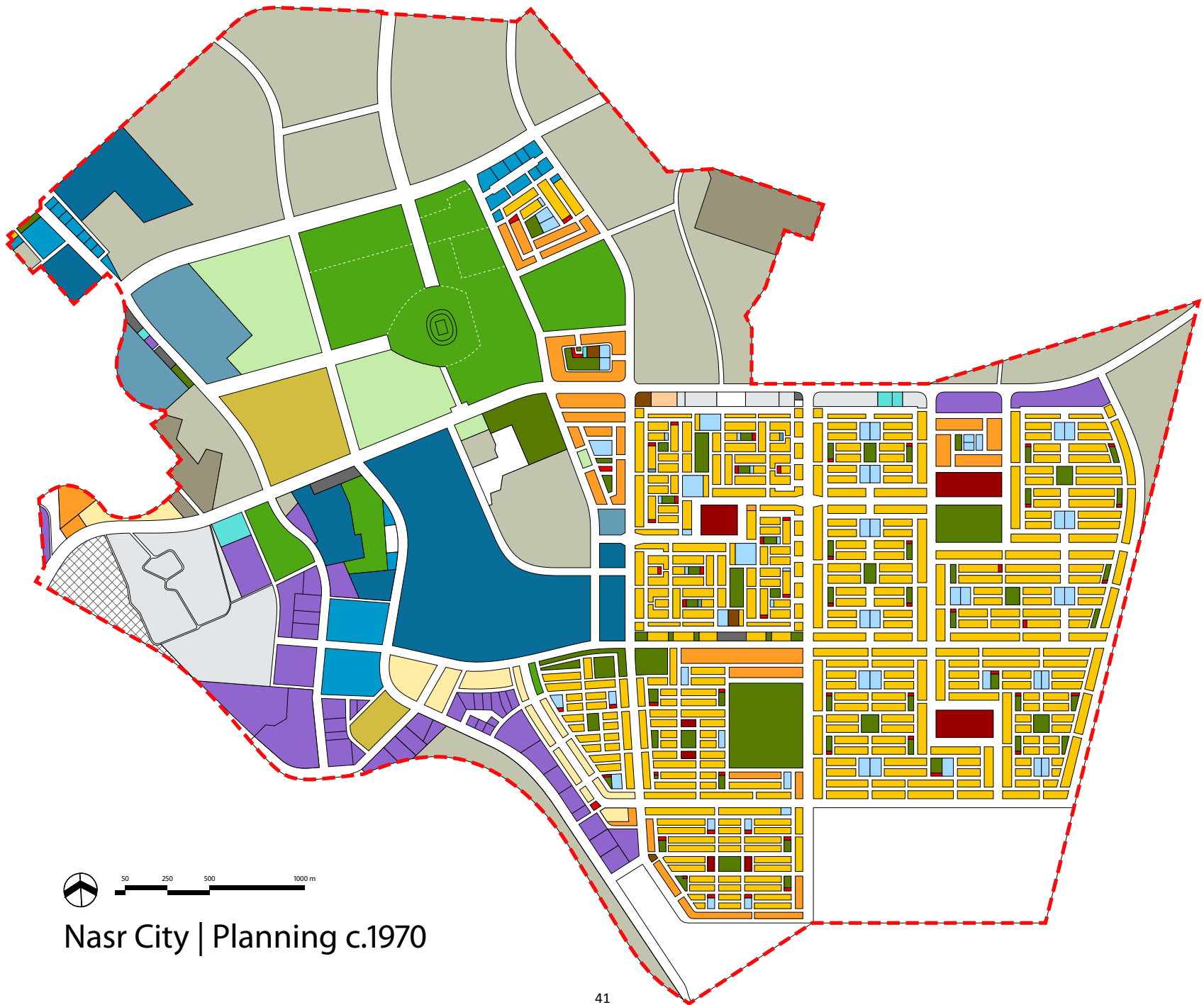


fig.1.2.7 [opposite page] An example of the configuration of maximum building heights for private residential properties as per Nasr City's original building bylaws; buildings with the higher maximum limit lined the perimeters of Zones and neighborhoods. Condominium complexes and non-residential facilities had their own building height regulations.

fig.1.2.8 Street sections showing the relation between the maximum building heights stipulated for private residential properties and the range of Nasr City's street widths. The 4-storey/13-meter limit applied to all properties facing streets with widths less than 50 meters regardless of the considerable differences between street widths encompassed within such range. As shown in the bottom section, the limit still applied if the street paralleled an open green space exceeding 50 meters in width.



Nasr City | Planning c.1970



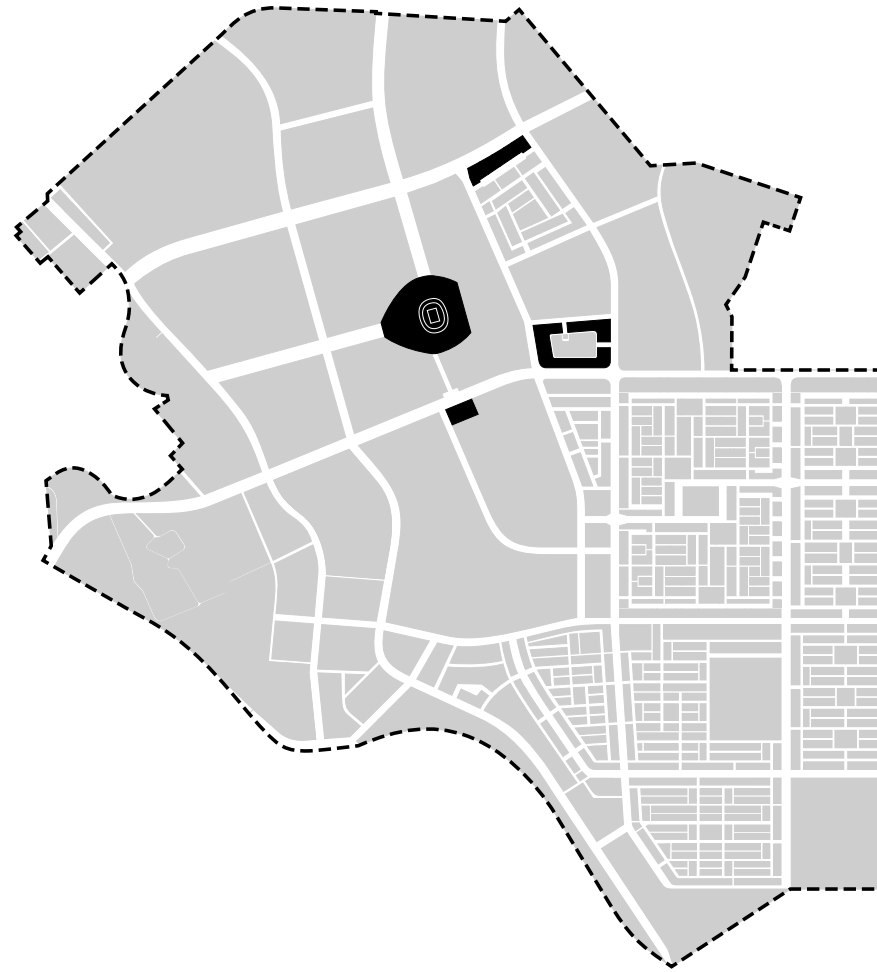
One year later however, Nasr City's development came to an abrupt stop due to the outbreak of the Six-Day War in June 1967. In the years that followed, the government's military spending to rebuild the army and maintain attrition warfare, as well as the loss of two main sources of national revenue – the Suez Canal and the Sinai oil reserves, flung the Egyptian economy into stagnancy.⁹ As a result, the pace of all public sector works of construction and infrastructure in Nasr City dropped drastically. Also, middle class individuals who had purchased lots in the settlement were facing difficulties building their residences, and those who hadn't were either reluctant or unable to buy property there altogether.

And so by the early 70s, Nasr City was far from being the Utopian suburban community it was meant to be. Karim's model Second Zone was the only neighborhood close to completion with a few governmental organizations' headquarters and condominium complexes developed by the company standing there. Apart from that, the majority of settlement was nothing more than desert landscapes with empty road networks cutting through. Such grim character didn't change much over the following ten years. However, a number of socioeconomic changes in Egypt during that same period sparked an exponential trend of development in Nasr City in the mid 80s.

fig.1.2.9 Nasr City's official land use configuration in the early 70s. The largest and most significant of the assigned land uses were the Olympic Park [sports, dashed white subdivisions – Cairo International Stadium in the centre] and the Azhar University Campus [post-secondary education, south side of Al-Nasr road]. Also, to the west of the Olympic park, the Cairo International Fair Grounds [cultural]; to its southwest, the Cairo International Convention and Exhibition Centre [cultural]; to its south, the Military Parade Square [cultural]; and to its east, the courts of the Armed Forces Federation [sports]. The isolation hospital, mental hospital, and police college at the north west corner of the settlement predated the inception of Nasr City [see fig.1.2.2 bottom left corner for reference].



fig.1.2.10 Aerial photo of the Cairo International Stadium and the Military Parade Square on Al-Nasr road; those were among a sparse number of projects realized by the early 70s. The majority of Nasr City's public sector projects and residential areas were still pending development at the time due to the economic aftermath of the Six-Day War.



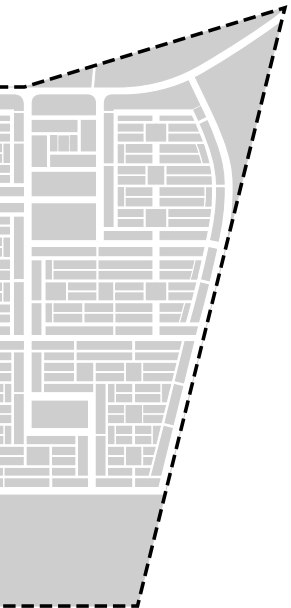


fig.1.2.11 The governmental organizations' headquarters on Salah Salem road c. 1970; the Central Auditing Organization [far right], the Central Agency for Public Mobilization And Statistics, and the Ministry of Planning. Another example of the few projects that were fully developed at the time.

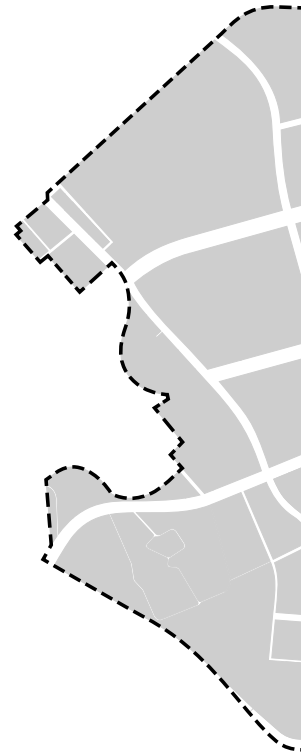


fig.1.2.12 Rab'a Al-Adawiya Complex in 1968 [northwest corner of Al-Nasr and Al-Tayaran intersection]; one of the first condominium complexes developed by the Nasr City Company. The special bylaws fashioned for condominium complexes are quite evident in the buildings' 11-stories – more than double the maximum height stipulated for private residential properties. The complex was one of very few standing residential structures in Nasr City during the 70s.

fig.1.2.13 A view of an inner street in the Second Zone c.1970 depicting the Utopian character intended for Nasr City's neighborhoods. The Second Zone was meant as an urban prototype for the rest of the residential areas in the settlement; it was mostly developed by the public sector into condominium complexes that conformed to the building bylaws of private residential properties.



fig.1.2.14 The condominiums on Youssef Abbas street in 1969; another example of the complexes developed early on by the company. The headquarters of the 'Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development' appears in the far left. The majority of completed structures at the time were centralized in and around the Second Zone.



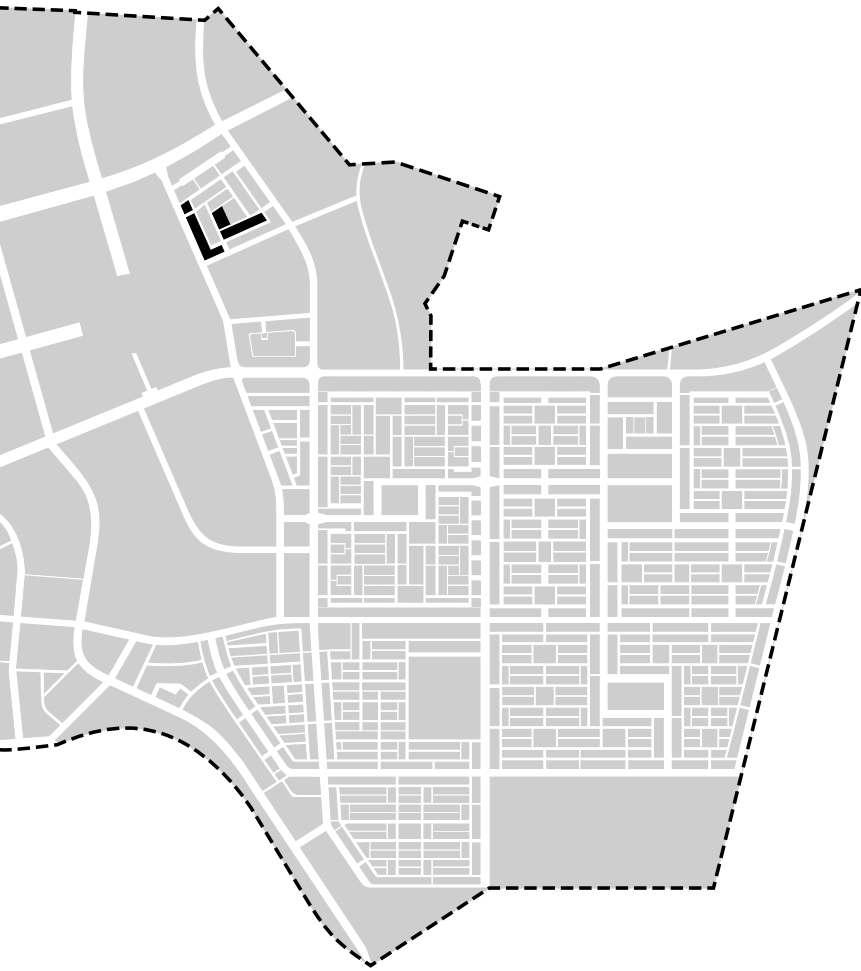


fig.1.2.15 The typical landscape throughout the First, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth zones in the early 70s; the majority of Nasr City's residential areas were hardly living up to their Utopian expectations. That bleak vastness lingered on for another decade of hindered development.

1.3 The Egyptian Middle Class [1970s-1990s]

A transformation into a divided social stratum

During the 1970s and 80s, the Egyptian society continued to exhibit rapid social mobility, arguably at a much higher rate than the 1950s and 60s. And while the trends of social mobility during both periods manifested mainly in a considerable growth of the middle class, they were however hardly induced by the same factors. The 70s and 80s saw a radical change to the socio-economic system that was established during the 50s and 60s, and the middle class that emerged by the end of 80s as result was far from the homogeneous class which had endured for almost a 160 years.

The change of the social landscape in Egypt during that period was brought about by three interrelated factors, all of which came into effect roughly around 1974. Those were the ruling regime's adoption of the Open-Door Policy; the migration of Egyptians to work in Arab Gulf States; and runaway inflation. Out of the three, the most important of those factors was the adoption of the Open-Door Policy – an economic platform which sought to shift the 50s and 60s' state-controlled economy towards free market capitalism.¹

The Open-Door policy was introduced by President Anwar alSadat, Abd-alNaser's successor, shortly after the October War of 1973. Despite being a member of the Free Officers movement and its political establishment during the 50s and 60s, Sadat did not share his peers' socialist conviction that maintaining an economy dominated by the public sector was the best way to address the economic stagnancy that had befallen Egypt since the Six-Day War. He instead was of the opinion that a capitalist economic model which relied primarily on the foreign and private sectors had the better potential to jump-start the war-crippled Egyptian economy and bring prosperity to society as a whole. He also saw in reorienting the economy towards such a model an opportunity for political alignment with the United States, which at the time played a chief role in the peace process with Israel. So in early 1974, Sadat announced the launch of an *Infitah* or *Open-Door* policy that would "open up" the Egyptian economy to the foreign and private sectors in hopes that they would displace the public sector as its primary engines. That policy, he decreed, was to involve three main courses of action: gradually relaxing the state's universal control over the economy; encouraging the private sector to increase its share in domestic investment; and stimulating an inflow of foreign funds and investments into the economy.

Over the following two decades, the Sadat regime overturned many of the economic policies that were enacted during the 50s and 60s in order to effectuate the mandate of the Open-Door policy. The restrictions that had previously limited the share of the private sector in domestic investment were alleviated; the state's authority to direct private investment and restrict it to productive economic activities was rescinded; and the tax rates on private income and wealth were reduced significantly. The embargo on foreign investment was not only lifted, but foreign investors were also provided with ample incentives and granted exclusive economic privileges such as further tax cuts and exemptions and immunity from nationalization. And for the benefit of both private and foreign sectors, the state's authority to regulate the prices of the

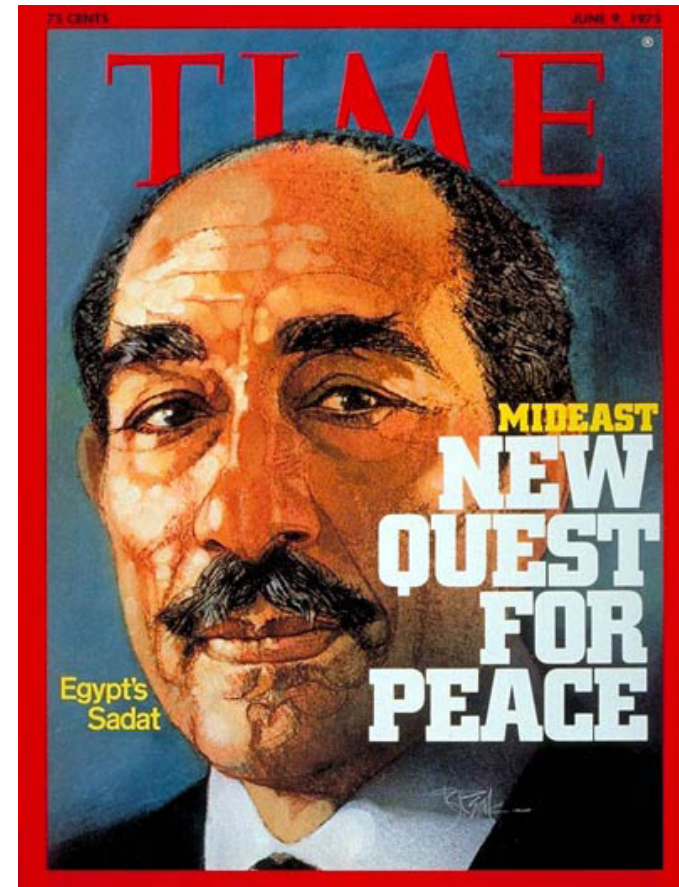


fig.1.3.1 Anwar alSadat, President of Egypt (1970-1981). Sadat introduced the Open-Door Policy in 1974; an economic platform that brought about a number of fundamental socioeconomic changes throughout the 70s and 80s.

goods and services that they offered was diminished considerably, and imports were liberalized from state control.

With those measures in place, many foreign corporations, banks, hotels, consultancy firms, and international institutions established their practices in Egypt marking the return of a foreign sector that had been eradicated twenty years earlier. Those measures also saw the private sector grow and its activity increase considerably in comparison to the 50s and 60s. But since the state no longer dictated the patterns of its activity, the private sector's thriving investments were predominantly directed towards lucrative, yet less productive, economic activities that did not contribute much to national economic development – activities such as stock and real-estate speculation, brokerage, importing foreign goods, luxury housing, and tourism. The foreign and private sector's upswing however did not live up to the expectations of the Sadat regime and the public sector continued to dominate the Egyptian economy throughout the 70s and 80s. But then again, in yet another break with the economic principles of the 50s and 60s, state investments during that period were predominantly directed towards less productive economic activities as well. As per the Open-Door policy's agenda of providing incentives to the foreign and private sectors, the majority of state investments went to works of infrastructure, and especially in cities, which came at the expense of investing in the development of the more productive industrial and agricultural sectors.

Despite the strong overtones of Capitalism inherent within the Open-Door policy however, the Sadat regime retained some of the 50s and 60s' socialist policies – most notably the subsidization of basic goods and services provided through the public sector, universal free education, and the employment policies obligating the government to provide job placements to all university graduates. Those policies were essentially kept in place in order to avert social unrest. And while they might have served such purpose, the state's otherwise full compliance with the Open-Door policy rendered them far less reliable than they were during the 50s and 60s.

Owing to the newly adopted patterns of state investment for instance, the state spent less on maintaining, improving, and adequately increasing its production and service facilities. As a result, the quotas of subsidized goods and services provided by the government barely met the demand of the rapidly growing population, and their quality had become quite inferior – especially when compared to the wider variety of goods and services that had flooded the market thanks to the liberalization of imports from state control and the economic freedoms that were granted to the foreign and private sectors. Moreover, the various tax cuts and exemptions that were awarded to the forging and private sectors, as well as the decline that beset the country's productive sectors due to the new patterns of state investment, seriously undermined some of the main sources of state revenue. Consequently, government spending, including its sizable expenditure on subsidies, came to rely heavily on a number of unsecured and external sources instead. Chief among those were the revenues from the Suez Canal duties and the Sinai oil exports that were restored to Egypt after the War of October '73, and which – in the case of the Sinai Oil exports – were quite high thanks to the 1970s energy crisis; and the inflow of loans and aid that Egypt received from foreign creditor governments and international financial organizations in the wake of adopting the Open-Door policy and reorienting the country's economy. Needless to say, that wasn't a very sustainable approach as it became quite evident by the mid 80s when the drop in oil prices dealt a heavy blow to Egypt's oil revenues, and the country's growing external debts prompted foreign creditors and financial organizations to withhold any further loans or aid to Egypt until the government took serious steps towards curtailing its spending in order to relief those debts. Given such considerable loss of state revenue, the government began to gradually reduce subsidies on the goods and services it offered towards the end of the 80s, and stopped subsidizing a number of those goods and services altogether.²

Universal free education and government employment were both in a general state of decline as well. As the government continued to provide

universal free education for all, it perpetually increased the maximum quotas of students admitted into university each year. Although the government paralleled such increase with establishing new universities, the resultant influx of university admissions still overwhelmed the student capacity of universities, and it was hardly matched with a corresponding increase in faculties or adequate maintenance and upgrade of educational facilities.³ A similar, if not worse, imbalance burdened the public school system since the government exerted less effort building new schools and maintaining existing ones while allowing more and more students to enroll in the system.⁴ Those discrepancies led to the degradation of the quality education that was once offered through the public education system. Nevertheless, that system yielded exponential numbers of new university graduates each year all the same.

Due to the newly adopted patterns of state investment on the other hand, the growth of the industrial and agricultural sectors had slumped to a very slow rate, and there were hardly any new major government projects; which in turn meant that there weren't enough new jobs within the public sector to absorb the full influx of new university graduates. Regardless of that shortage however, the government continued to offer jobs to all university graduates, mainly in its administrative sector. As a result, the public sector in general, and the bureaucracy in particular, had become vastly overmanned which had its negative effects on a number of different fronts. For one thing, an overmanned and therefore inefficient bureaucracy stood in sharp contrast to the regime's proclaimed commitment to liberalizing the economy from state controls, and was arguably one of the main reasons why the Open-Door policy had failed to attract the desired volume of productive foreign and private investments. But most importantly, overmanning the public sector in general led to the detriment of the once prestigious institution of government employment. It limited career advancement opportunities within the public sector; and coupled with the slumping state revenues, it took a heavy toll on public sector salaries as the government was left with an extensive payroll and no adequate means

to keep paying public sector employees the same sort of decent salaries it had offered them during the 50s and 60s. And even though in its superficial adherence to the socialist principles of that time period, the government continued to hand out annual bonuses and raises to public sector employees, such increments were rather miniscule and did not help much – public sector salaries became quite meager all the same, and were surpassed by their correspondent foreign and private sector salaries at any given employment field or station.⁵

All in all, the repercussions of adopting the Open-Door policy put large portions of the Egyptian society in considerable economic hardship. Professionals for instance no longer had easy access to the comfortable lifestyles and the decent economic standings they had enjoyed during the 50s and 60s. Between the inadequacy of government subsidies and the declining quality of all what the public sector had to offer, foreign and private sector goods and services had become their only option for maintaining an acceptable standard of living. But thanks to the state's diminished authority to regulate their prices, those goods and services were far too expensive for the public sector-employed majority of professionals to afford on their meager government salaries. Many of those professionals therefore had to explore other career options besides, or instead of, their public sector jobs in order to make ends meet. They either became self-employed or sought better-paying jobs in the foreign and private sectors – which were quite hard to get considering that, due to their relatively small size, those sectors only offered a limited number of jobs. The high cost of foreign and private sector goods and services was also a burden to professionals who did not work for the government. Although they were better off than their public sector-employed counterparts, it was still rather difficult for them to afford those goods and services; and they were consequently caught in a constant financial struggle to provide a decent life for their families.

However, things were even more difficult for newly graduated professionals. They were no longer guaranteed a good start in life since the public sector jobs offered to them by the government weren't

exactly their best option for a promising career;⁶ and unlike older, more accomplished public sector professionals, they neither had the experience nor the means to start successful private practices of their own. Their lack of experience also left them with a severe disadvantage when it came to getting jobs in the foreign and private sectors as they were up against strong competition from all the older, more experienced public sector professionals who were going after those limited jobs as well in their search for better career options; not to mention that the exponential number of professionals that graduated university each year made for an even more competitive job market. But then again, matters were even worse still for small-time government bureaucrats and clerks. Given their mid-level education, they had the most limited career options of all. They were essentially stuck in their government jobs, and more often than not, they also had to work one or more after-hours jobs just to get by.

The repercussions of adopting the Open-Door policy had far-reaching negative effects on the poorer, less educated masses as well. The impeded growth of the national industrial sector for example undermined the government's ability to employ labor from among those masses, which meant that more and more of them were out of a steady job and thus a secure source of income. Similarly, peasant farmers found themselves in a dire economic state due to the overall decline of the agricultural sector, and its infrastructure in particular, which was brought about by the state's diminishing investments in agriculture. The plight of those farmers was compounded even further by the government's failure to follow up on – let alone properly manage – the agrarian reforms of the 50s and 60s, in what was yet another instance of working against the socialist policies of that era while upholding them only in name.⁷

Those economic hardships in turn prompted scores of Egyptians to temporarily migrate to the Arab Gulf States during the 70s and 80s in pursuit of high-paying jobs. At the time, those states' new and thriving oil economies had a high demand for professionals, and an even higher demand for labor of all sorts. Moreover, they offered hefty salaries

and wages that by far trumped those offered by any of the domestic sectors in Egypt. Given the multitude of difficulties they were facing at home, many Egyptian professionals therefore opted to leave the country altogether and migrate to work in the Arab Gulf States for a number of years in order to support their families back in Egypt and amass enough savings to secure their futures; or – in the case of newly graduated professionals – to make enough money that would help them start a family and a career once they returned to Egypt. However, the greater majority of Egyptian temporary migrants were semi-skilled & unskilled workers, craftsmen, and peasants who hailed from the poorer, less educated masses. They were essentially hired as cheap labor; nevertheless, the wages that they were offered in the Arab Gulf States were still quite high by Egyptian standards. Consequently, working in those states was a real game changer for those disadvantaged individuals and their families back in Egypt to whom they sent their earnings. It granted them access to relatively large incomes and better lifestyles which they couldn't have possibly come by otherwise considering their low or non-existent education and limited skill-sets.⁸

Although migrating to work in the Arab Gulf States offered a lot of Egyptians a way out of their economic and career troubles, such a trend had quite the adverse side effect on Egypt's economy. The sizable remittances of Egyptians working in those states to their families back home was chief among a number of factors which brought about a rampant rate of inflation that burdened the Egyptian economy for the better part of the 70s and 80s. On the one hand, those remittances, along with the foreign aid & loans granted to Egypt; the revenues of the Sinai oil exports; and the Suez Canal duties, introduced a large money supply into the Egyptian economy. On the other hand however, the diminished productive capacity of Egypt's domestic sectors, which was precipitated by the patterns of state and private investment during the 70s and 80s, meant that such inflow was hardly matched by a comparable increase in products. As a result of that discrepancy, market prices skyrocketed taking inflation rates through the roof.⁹ Over the fifteen years since the

adoption of the Open-Door had brought the aforementioned factors into play – namely between 1975 and 1990, the cost of acquiring a market basket of goods and services increased by 775% at an average annual rate of 15.5%. Those figures were astronomical to say the least, especially when considering that over the previous fifteen years that cost had only increased by 81% at an average annual rate of 4%.¹⁰

Needles to say, such runaway inflation made the already strenuous economic hardships of a great many Egyptians even more difficult. Small-time government bureaucrats & clerks, as well as professionals who still depended solely on their public sector jobs, were among those whom it hit the hardest. The very slow rate at which their government salaries increased through meager annual bonuses & raises was nowhere near the rate at which the cost of living was surging as a result of inflation. Newly graduated professionals also reeled from the surging cost of living which was not at all conducive to them starting a family or a career. But at the same time though, the high rates of inflation during the 70s and 80s benefited a lot of other Egyptians. Reputable professionals who had their well-established private practices for instance profited from the rapidly rising cost of services as it brought in a substantial increase to their earnings. Likewise, craftsmen and workers also capitalized on the rising cost of services, if not more, considering that they were in such high demand as a result of the shortage of labor caused by the migration of large portions of the Egyptian workforce to the Arab Gulf States. Such shortage allowed them to ask for much more than what they would have typically charged for their services even after factoring in inflation, which in turn enabled them to significantly increase their profit margins.¹¹

However, it was the multitude of entrepreneurs who dealt in and took advantage of the surging market value of highly sought-after items – such as imported consumer goods; foreign currency; land property; and housing – that by far benefited the most from the 70s and 80s' rampant inflation. During that period, many Egyptians were able to make fortunes virtually overnight by anticipating the price fluctuations of those items;

and accordingly knowing when to buy them at a relatively cheap cost and when to sell them for a sizable return once their value had surcharged. Interestingly though, not all of those Egyptians were originally tradesmen or businessmen by profession. As a matter of fact, that sort of opportunistic entrepreneurial activity was particularly common among the Egyptian workforce returning from the Arab Gulf States, as well as the aforementioned craftsmen and workers who capitalized on the rising cost of services and shortage of labor. It was a relatively fast and rather easy way for the former group to invest and multiply their savings, and for the latter group to do the same with their increasing profit margins – one that did not require either group to develop any significant skills, save for an ability to read and play the market. The 70s and 80s therefore saw a significant portion of both such groups adopt those entrepreneurial activities as a source of income; and in turn accumulate considerable wealth that they – once again – couldn't have garnered under any other circumstances given their limited or lack of education and skills. It goes without saying here that such a trend was one of the main reasons why private domestic investment during that period was predominantly directed towards lucrative, yet less productive, economic activities. Not to mention that the prevalence of those entrepreneurial activities made for a very volatile market which further discouraged earnest investors from committing capital to long-term investments in Egypt's more productive economic sectors despite of all the incentives offered to them by the Open-Door Policy.¹²

Ultimately, the adoption of the Open-Door Policy; the migration of the Egyptian workforce to the Arab Gulf States; and runaway inflation, along with their various effects throughout the 70s and 80s, had a number of significant social outcomes. For one thing, the introduction of new veins of generating income, and the subversion of others, induced very high rates of both upward and downward social mobility, which – much like the social mobility of the 50s and 60s – translated mainly in an exponential growth of the Egyptian middle class. By end of the 80s, namely in 1991, such growth was quite evident in the stratification of the Egyptian population according to income. Over the span of almost 40 years since the July Revolution of 1952, the relative volume of Egyptians receiving a middle class income more than doubled from 19% to 45% of the

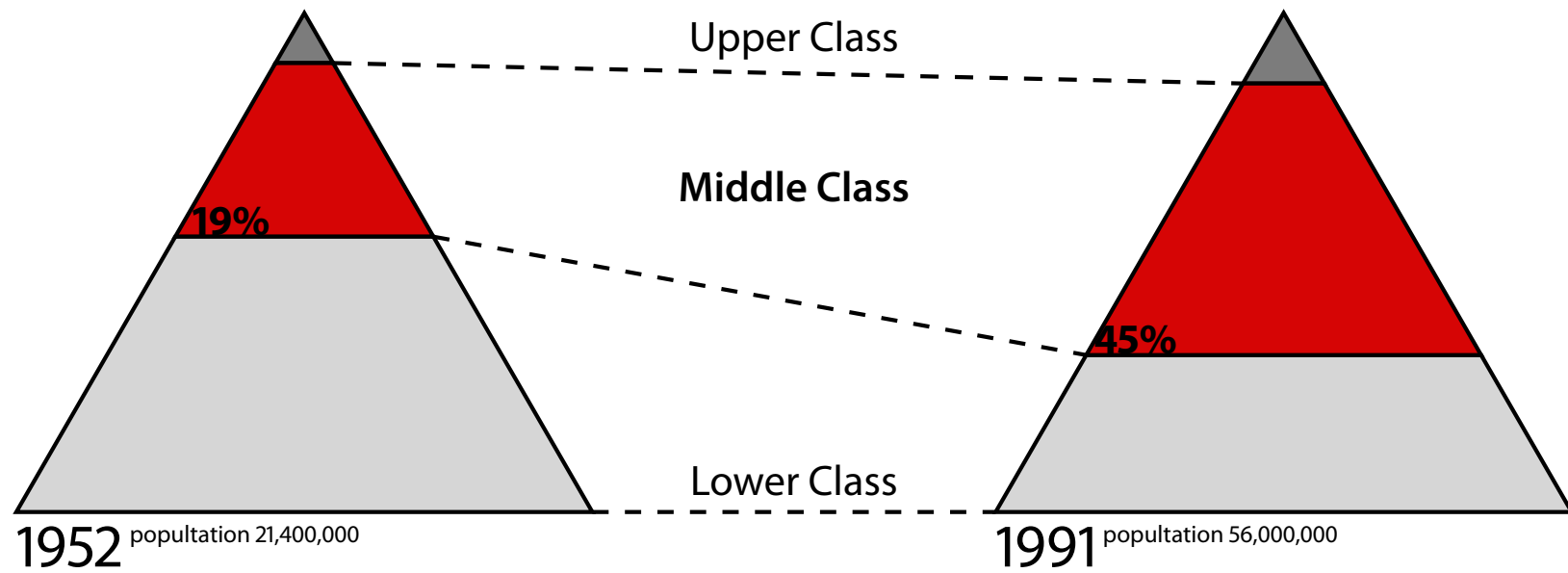


fig.1.3.2 The stratification of the Egyptian population according to income in 1952 and in 1991; a comparison showing the growth of the relative size of the middle class over the span of 40 years. Gala Amin argues that, although the middle class grew significantly during the 50s and 60s, much of the growth of the middle class during those 40 years occurred during the 70s and 80s.

country's total population.¹³ Admittedly, such a time span encompassed two very distinct periods of social mobility that were brought on by two fundamentally different sets of ideology and economic policy. However, based on his observations and the strong impressions they've left him, prominent Egyptian economist Galal Amin argues that – despite the lack of hard data to support his claim – social mobility during the 70s and 80s was much higher than it was during the 50s and 60s; and that in turn, a much bigger portion of the middle class growth throughout those 40 years or so occurred during the 70s and 80s rather than 50s and 60s.¹⁴

Unlike the 50s and 60s though, the social mobility during the 70s and 80s deeply altered the long-standing homogeneous makeup of the Egyptian middle class; and as a result, by the early 90s the middle class had become hardly the same harmonious stratum of well-educated, public sector-employed bureaucrats and professionals that it had always been ever since its genesis in the early 1800s. Among those involved in that drastic social transformation were small-time public sector bureaucrats and clerks, who found themselves up against insurmountable odds starting in the mid 70s. Between the overall decline of the public sector; the multitude of economic challenges they were facing; and their extremely limited career options, they were soon caught in a downward social mobility that eradicated their middle class status; and they quickly fell down the social ladder to effectively become part of the lower class instead.¹⁵

With the bureaucracy out of the mix, the middle class that emerged by the early 90s consisted of two very distinct groups. Professionals – such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, university professors, and teachers – accounted for one of those two groups, and as such, they were essentially the only remnant of the original middle class structure that survived the socio-economic upheaval of the 70s and 80s. But although professionals had managed to retain their long-standing middle class status, their modes of employment and sources of income, as well as their relative position within the middle class itself, were still the subject of considerable change during the 70s and

80s. By the end of those twenty years, and for the first time in the history of modern Egyptian society, middle class professionals were no longer predominantly employed in the public sector, or primarily dependent on a government job for their income. Instead, the greater majority of them were either self-employed, held jobs in the private or foreign sectors, or worked in the Arab Gulf States. Moreover, and most importantly, professionals lost their rank as an upper echelon of the middle class. As opposed to the ideologies and economic policies of the Nasser Regime during the 50s and 60s, which worked to their benefit and helped them attain such rank, the ideological and economic platforms adopted by the Sadat Regime in the mid 70s put professionals under a lot of financial strain; and in turn made it exceedingly difficult for them to maintain their status as members of the middle class, let alone hold a position at its top tier.

Alternately, professionals were displaced by an influx of entrepreneurs who hailed from the lower classes and quickly ascended through the social hierarchy during the 70s and 80s to become the uppermost tier, as well as the other major component of the Egyptian middle class. That social group was basically comprised of all the craftsmen, workers, and peasants who amassed considerable financial gains by capitalizing on the unstable economic circumstances in Egypt at the time and adopting the aforementioned opportunistic entrepreneurial activities as occupations and primary sources of income. Their newly found large incomes in turn saw them attain middle class status, and in some cases even upper class status, accounting for the majority of the increase in the relative size of both those classes between 1952 and 1991.¹⁶ Such social placement made entrepreneurs the first new major addition to the structure of the Egyptian middle class in the entirety of its history; however, as a social group, they were widely regarded as a parasitic class that did not contribute much to society as a whole.¹⁷

But perhaps the most significant social outcome of the 70s and 80s was the drastic change in the values of Egyptian society. With the rapid social rise of the entrepreneur class, academic competence and

excelling in the realm of education, as well as the sincere handwork associated with both those aspects, were no longer the hallmarks of the Egyptian middle class or the main methods of attaining a higher status within Egypt's social hierarchy. Instead, starting in the mid 70s, size of income and wealth – regardless of their source – became the main criteria for societal stratification in Egypt, and the most common means of climbing the social ladder.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, middle class professionals were the only social group who, since then, remained keen on pursuing a good education, excelling at it, and making a living using it. It was essentially their way of self-preservation, their way of perpetuating their social species. That is to say, the majority of upward social mobility in Egypt since the mid 70s was mainly the byproduct of chasing monetary gain by whatever means possible no matter how unscrupulous they might be, rather than what had become the less “conventional” pursuit of education.

Also starting in the mid 70s, the Egyptian society was beset with widespread corruption in yet another instance of major change in its value system. As mentioned earlier, the Egyptian government retained an extensive bureaucratic apparatus despite of its proclaimed commitment to a more liberal, private sector-driven economy that is free of state controls. That basically resulted in a situation in which a vast body of grossly underpaid government officials, inspectors, and civil servants, who held the authority to issue legal permits and oversee compliance with regulations and bylaws, was put in direct contact with a host of morally lax entrepreneurs who were willing to do almost anything to maximize returns on their investments. Consequently, bribery soon became a rather commonplace occurrence in the interactions between those two groups as entrepreneurs almost always paid off bureaucrats to issue permits for ventures that did not meet stipulated regulations, or to overlook certain violations of official bylaws. Those entrepreneurs regarded such bribes as an integral and a totally justifiable part of any investment – and a very feasible one at that considering that it was such a small price to pay for a measure of leniency towards transgressions

that would help them garner astronomical profits in comparison. On the other hand, many of those who accepted such bribes, particularly small-time bureaucrats and clerks, were driven to do so by a desperate need to keep their heads above the rising social tide rather than by an inherent flaw in their moral compass. Those bribes were essentially a lifeline that helped them cope with the rising cost of living. And so, not before long bribery also became a staple in even the simplest dealings between the bureaucracy and the general public as the former group – albeit not explicitly – usually asked for such payments, not to violate any bylaws or regulations per se, but to expedite the latter group's requests and paperwork through the endless red tape of the government's bureaucratic apparatus.¹⁹

In conclusion, the Egyptian middle class that emerged by the end of the 70s and 80s, and which is largely the same stratum that still exists today, was a class divided. On the one hand, professionals constituted a more moral, older middle class; and on the other hand, entrepreneurs constituted a new middle class that was morally lax in comparison. Neither of those two factions shared the same values or sources of income, and they were basically lumped together as one class solely on the basis of an abstract range of how much income they generated annually.²⁰

In the context of such divide, a phenomenon that could be best described as *social emulation* became rather prevalent within the Egyptian middle class as its newer members resorted to imitating almost every aspect of its older members' lifestyles, often in an ostentatious manner, in order to assert their newly attained middle class status. This peculiar phenomenon manifested itself across a number of different domains. For instance, members of the new middle class were preoccupied with acquiring the same grade of goods and products typically consumed by the old middle class. They also sought the same level of education as the old middle class regardless of the fact that it didn't have any bearing on what they did for a living. Moreover, and most importantly, they were also quite keen on situating their

residences in the same neighborhoods where large populations of the old middle class were known to dwell. In a sense, such behavior was essentially a social form of a compensation mechanism. At that time, and despite the relative decline of their economic status, members of the old middle class – namely professionals – were still considered to be a social ideal to aspire to in the collective consciousness of Egyptian society. The members of the new middle class on the other hand had just attained their middle class status; and they had done so over a very short time span and not through the long-standing tradition of excelling in the realm of education, but rather by accumulating wealth through practices that were then widely regarded as unscrupulous. It was therefore only natural for them to feel the need to associate themselves with that old, revered, and more established faction of the middle class. From their standpoint, a visible display of their ability to match the material attributes of the old middle class using their newly found wealth served such purpose; and proved to themselves, as well as to the rest of society, that they had indeed become part of the middle class.²¹

The main argument here is that this notion of social emulation, as it was outlined above, played *the* central role in the urban boom of Nasr City which began towards the end of the 80s. Both this argument, as well as the outlined understanding of why and how social emulation operates, draw primarily on the works of Abraham Maslow and Jean Baudrillard.

Maslow's 1943 paper entitled "A Theory of Human Motivation" holds the key to comprehending the psychological drive behind the tendency of the members of a rising class to imitate the archetype of the class into which they have been newly introduced. In this paper, Maslow identifies five basic human needs and arranges them in an ascending order of satisfaction priority as follows: the physiological needs; the safety needs; the love and belonging needs; the esteem needs; and finally the need for self-actualization. Basically, he argues that an individual is typically preoccupied with satisfying the needs found at the lowermost tier of this hierarchy; and that once such goal is reached,

he or she then moves on to the next, higher tier and seeks satisfying the needs it entails, and so on (375). This hierarchy of human needs is a rather popular concept, and its tiers are self-explanatory for the most part. An in depth discussion of each one of these needs is therefore not all that pertinent to the discourse of this thesis. What is of particular relevance here is the third and fourth tiers of this hierarchy; namely the belonging needs and the esteem needs.

The belonging needs are defined by Maslow simply as a condition wherein "[a person] will hunger for . . . a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal" (381). His definition of the esteem needs, however, is a bit more elaborate:

"All people in our society . . . have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. By firmly based self-esteem, we mean that which is soundly based upon real capacity, achievement and respect from others. These needs may be classified into two subsidiary sets. These are, first, the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Secondly, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance or appreciation." (381-382)

In the same paper, Maslow also points out that the hierarchal arrangement of the five basic human needs is not all that rigid; and identifies satisfying the esteem needs before the belonging needs as the most common reversal within the hierarchy (386). To paraphrase, he argues that, for some people, satisfying the esteem needs takes precedence over satisfying their need to belong mainly due to the notion that a person who is most likely to be considered as part of a certain group is one who inspires the same kind of respect reserved for the members of such group. These people therefore seek "self-esteem

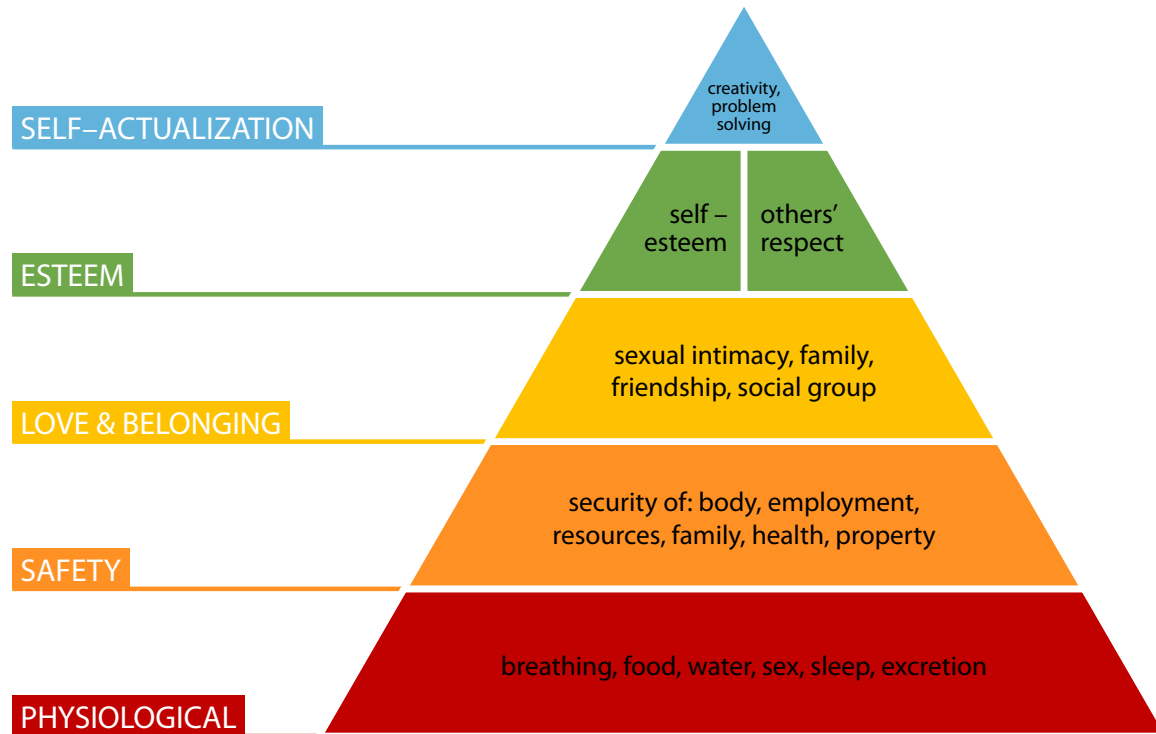
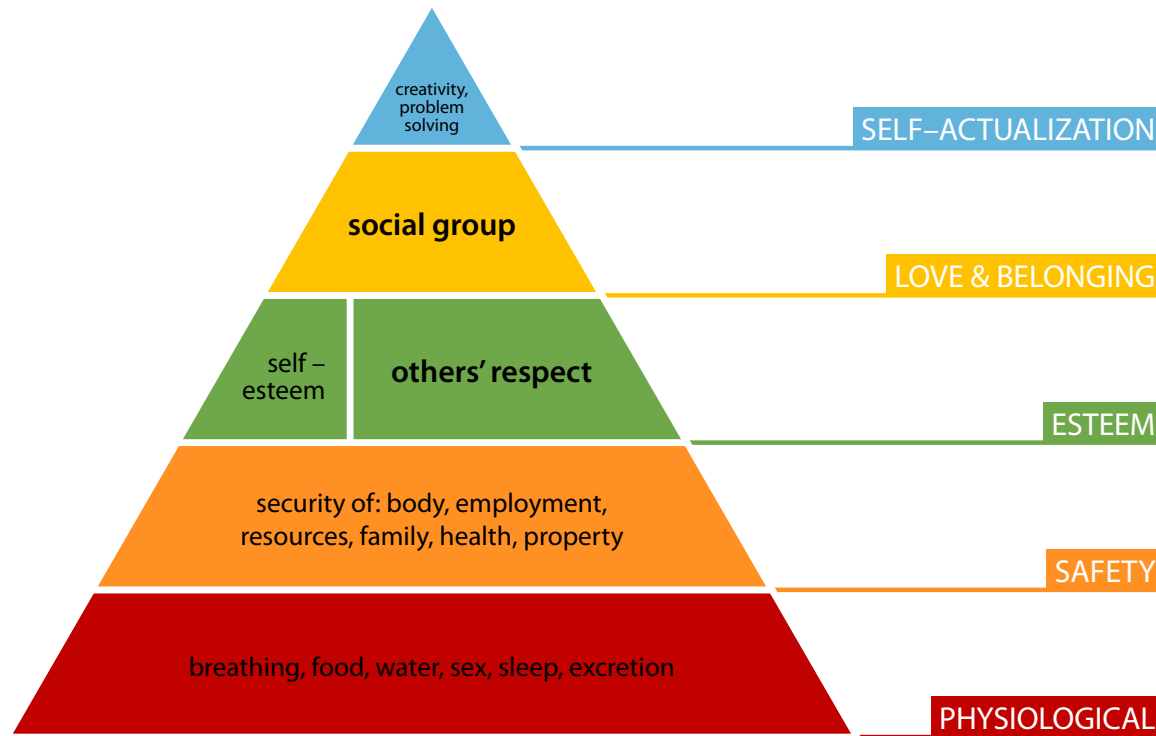


fig.1.3.3 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human needs, and the most common reversal in that hierarchy [opposite page] as it relates to the societal flux in Egypt during the 70s and 80s.

and its behavior expressions more as a means-to-an-end than for its own sake". That is to say, they seek respect for the sake of belonging rather than for sake of esteem itself.

Although Maslow's arguments deal primarily with abstracts and the realm of human psychology, extrapolating them to the social context in Egypt during the 70s and 80s explains why social emulation was such a prevalent phenomenon at the time. By imitating their old middle class counterparts, members of the new middle class were, albeit indirectly,

satisfying an innate human need to belong. As discussed earlier, despite the fact that their newly found wealth categorized them as members of the middle class, the then unconventional means by which they came to possess it casted doubts on their status as such. Acquiring and exhibiting the same material attributes as the old middle class was essentially their way of commanding the same kind of respect and prestige that society reserved for its members; which in turn gratified their desire to feel and be recognized as true members of the Egyptian middle



class themselves. In Maslow's terms, members of the new middle class sought out satisfying their esteem needs as a means of gratifying their belonging needs; and in doing so, they were particularly focused on satisfying their need for respect from others rather than their need for self-esteem that is based on real capacity and achievement.

It is worth noting here that this imbalance in how members of the new middle class went about satisfying their esteem needs was yet another aspect that set them further apart from their old middle class

counterparts. Given that their sense of self-worth was almost entirely dependant on external input – namely other people's respect, and that they relied on nothing but their monetary ability for projecting a sophisticated social front in order to elicit that respect; the members of the new middle class clearly neither possessed the healthiest of character traits, nor shared the best of social values. On the other hand, and within the same social context, the members of the old middle class derived their sense of self-worth from their hard-earned achievements

throughout their education and subsequent professional careers, which *then* earned them other people's respect. In other words, unlike members of the new middle class, their sense of self-worth did not hinge on other people's opinion of them, but was rather the product of a more balanced, and thus healthier, process. Needless to say, this stark contrast made the failings of both the value system and the collective psychological disposition of the new middle class all the more evident.

Moving on from the realm of Human psychology and onto the field of sociology, Jean Baudrillard's 1970 book "The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures" offers a material understanding of how social emulation takes effect in a modern consumer society – which is precisely the sort of social structure that the Egyptian society was developing into during the 70s and 80s. In the section entitled "The Social Logic of Consumption", Baudrillard states that in a consumer society "you never consume the object in itself (in its use-value); you are always manipulating objects (in the broadest sense) as signs which distinguish you either by affiliating you to your own group taken as an ideal reference or by marking you off from your group by reference to a group of higher status" (61). This explains why the members of the new middle class developed such a voracious appetite for acquiring the same goods and services as their old middle class counterparts. Their visible consumption of such "objects" was basically a "social signifier" that distanced them from the lower classes they had risen from, and associated them with the members of the old middle class who were the ideal reference of the higher-status group they had recently become part of.

In that same section however, Baudrillard also argues that given the very nature of manufactured goods and services, the visible act of consuming them is bound to become the least effective of social signifiers (57). His argument is this: because those consumer objects are by definition mass-produced, they are therefore abundant and readily available to all. This in turn will make them "less and less expressive of social rank", and instead of being a means of social distinction, they will eventually have a completely opposite "homogenizing" social effect.

From there, Baudrillard then postulates that "consumption (taken in the sense of expenditure, of the purchase and possession of visible objects) will gradually concede to other criteria and other types of behavior the preeminent role it currently plays in the variable geometry of status"; meaning that it will be replaced by new, more effective social signifiers. In that respect, he identifies level of **education** and **habitat** – among others – as the most important emergent means of social distinction in consumer societies.

Baudrillard's notion of level of education as a means of marking one's status within the social hierarchy holds the key to understanding why the regime in Egypt exponentially increased the student capacities of public universities during the 70s and 80s; as well as why it was particularly committed to establishing new universities as opposed to new schools. Prominent Egyptian scholar Galal Amin argues that the regime did not take those steps out of its genuine desire to make higher education accessible to larger portions of the Egyptian society. He was rather of the opinion that those steps were merely the regime's response to an overwhelming public demand for the type of higher degrees those universities offered – a demand that was primarily driven by the rising new middle class.²² Much like their visible consumption of the goods and services typically used by their old middle class counterparts, members of the new middle class did not seek university degrees for their use-value since their education hardly ever had a bearing on how they earned their income. Instead, they sought university degrees strictly for their function as a symbol of social distinction. As discussed earlier, a university degree was the hallmark of a middle class professional; and at the time professionals were the ideal reference for what it is to be a member of the Egyptian middle class. Therefore, by Baudrillard's logic, obtaining the same sort of degrees as those professionals was yet another means for the members of the new middle class to set themselves apart from the lower classes and register their newly attained higher status.

That is to say, university degrees ultimately had a "homogenizing" social effect within the context of the Egyptian middle class despite of

the many differences between the members of its two factions. This is exactly the reason why **occupation**, rather than **level of education**, will be used as the primary criteria for identifying members of the old middle class throughout the demographic and statistical analyses of this thesis, even though they were the only members of the middle class that actually made use of their formal education. On a somewhat relative note, it is also worth mentioning here that the status-driven demand for education and the regime's response to it were, in some sense, major contributors to the financial woes that beset middle class professionals since the mid 70s. As it was outlined before, the government-sanctioned exponential increase in the student capacities of public schools and universities had a very adverse effect on the quality of education that those institutions offered. Middle class professionals therefore had to find a better alternative to the declining public education system given that their livelihoods depended on getting a good education. To that end, they turned to private education institutions with their well-maintained facilities and limited student capacities. But like all that was offered through the private sector, getting a private education proved to be a rather costly undertaking for most middle class professionals, and soon they found themselves in a very similar situation to the one that previous generations of professionals were in before the introduction of universal free education in Egypt.

However, it is Baudrillard's observations regarding **habitat** as one of the more effective means of social distinction in consumer societies that are of the most relevance here. He states:

“Segregation by place of residence is not new, but, being increasingly linked to consciously induced shortage and chronic speculation, it is tending to become decisive, in terms of both geographical segregation (town centers and outskirts, residential zones, rich ghettos, dormitory suburbs, etc.) and habitable space (the inside and outside of the dwelling, the addition of a ‘second home’, etc.). Objects are less important

today than space and the social marking of space. Habitat thus perhaps has an opposite function to that of other consumables. The latter have a homogenizing function, the former a differentiating function in terms of space and location.” (57)

In light of this statement, it is easy to understand why members of the new middle class fervently pursued residing among their old middle class counterparts. It was mainly because a **dwelling** and its **urban context** are by far the most visible, and least accessible, of consumer objects; and therefore the most expressive of social signifiers. That is to say, in comparison to obtaining the same level of education or acquiring the same grade of goods and services as their old middle class counterparts, members of new middle class were able to communicate their association to the middle class ideal in a far more conspicuous manner by situating their residences in the same neighborhoods where their old middle class counterparts were known to dwell. Such an act amounted to putting up a literal social façade that concealed their lower class origins and showcased their new, higher status against a comparable middle class backdrop – **it basically assimilated them into the social milieu of the middle class by helping them physically blend in a middle class urban environment**. Moreover, the relative scarcity and high cost of “middle class” residential property in Egypt at the time added to the effectiveness of this particular means of social distinction. Compared to the innately abundant manufactured goods and services or the accessible universal free education, a dwelling in a middle class urban context was a far less obtainable commodity, which – according to Baudrillard – made it far more indicative of social rank.

Of all the residential neighborhoods in Cairo at the time, the use of a **dwelling** and its **urban context** as a tool of **social emulation** was the most prevalent in Nasr City – and it was such prevalence that fueled Nasr City's rapid urban development towards the end of the 80s. This raises two very important questions: Why Nasr City in particular, and why the end of 80s? As it was discussed earlier in this chapter, Nasr

City was the only Cairene residential settlement that was conceived as a middle class neighborhood from the outset; and it continued to live as such in the collective consciousness of Egyptian society even after its development came to an abrupt stop with the outbreak of the Six-Day war in 1967, and as it remained mostly undeveloped throughout the following twenty years or so. The status of Nasr City as the quintessential middle class neighborhood, along with its underdeveloped character, were essentially what made it the most fertile urban medium for the manifestation of the abovementioned variant of social emulation when the demand for “middle class” residential property surged around the mid 80s.

That upswing was brought on by a number of different factors. For one thing, owing to the drop in oil prices since 1986, and the subsequent decline in the economic boom of the Arab Gulf States, scores of the Egyptian professionals and labor who were working there at the time were dismissed and sent back home. Moreover, the escalation of the Persian Gulf war from the mid 80s onwards, and later the outbreak of the Gulf War in the early 90s, prompted many more of those Egyptians to return back home as well.²³ Also, the mid 80s was roughly the time when many members of the rising entrepreneur class had effectively attained middle class status after they had accumulated enough wealth from their ventures over the previous decade – that is to say, it was the time when the new middle class had grown into a social force to be reckoned with.

Naturally, Nasr City was a very fitting urban environment for many of the returning Egyptian professionals to settle with their families. They either purchased single-family apartments there, or built their own apartment-building houses on residential properties that they had either already owned or acquired upon returning from the Gulf States. Likewise, Nasr City was also a very fitting urban environment for new middle class entrepreneurs to situate their homes – one that perfectly met their criteria for a place of residence that would liken them to the middle class ideal and, in turn, assert their newly attained status. That

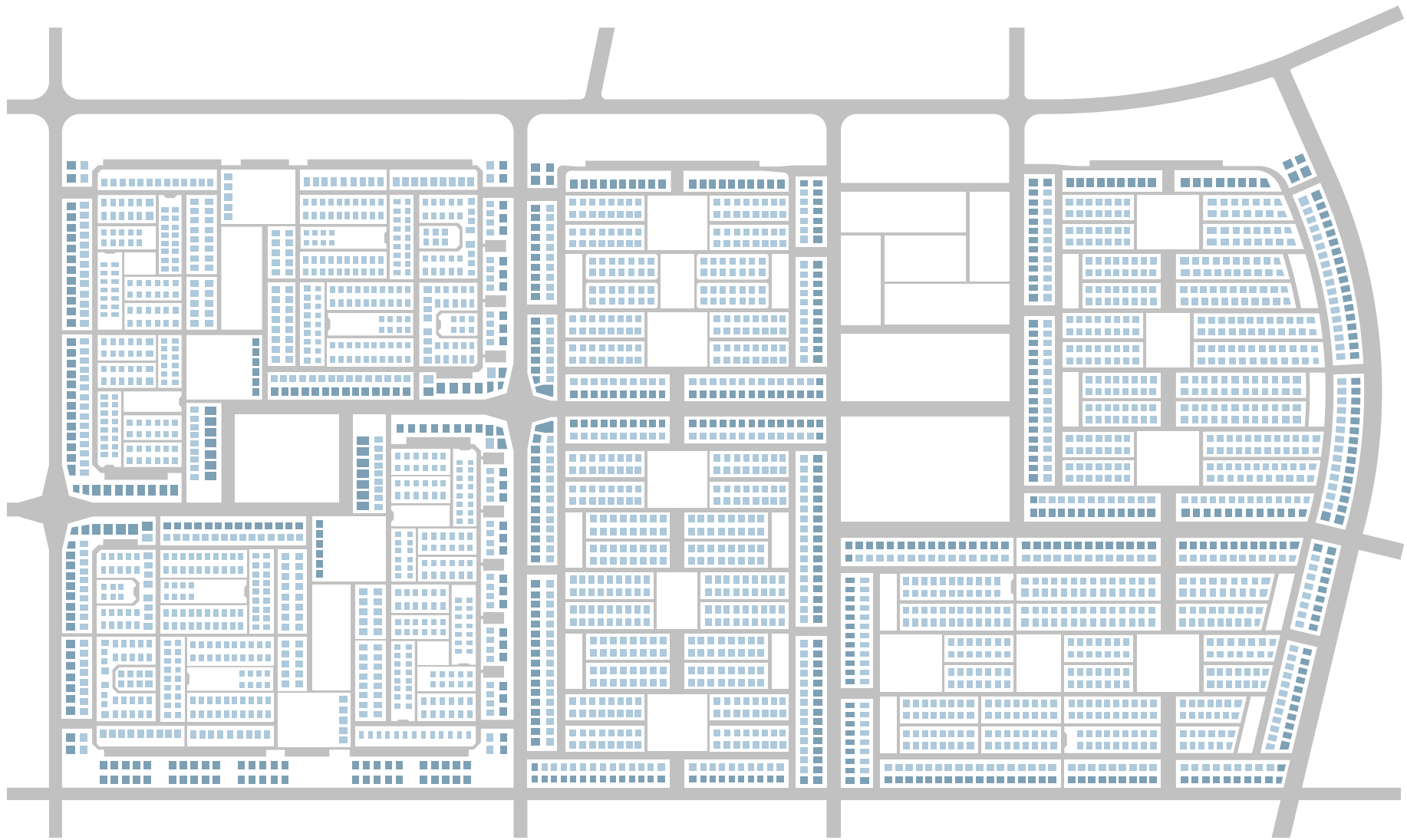
was mainly because the influx of returning middle class professionals who were settling in Nasr City back then served to further highlight its status as the quintessential middle class neighborhood. But more importantly, it was also because, owing to its underdeveloped character, Nasr City had a relative abundance of available residential property in comparison to other Cairene neighborhoods, such as Heliopolis and Ma’adi, which had substantial middle class populations but were already fully developed at the time. Ultimately, that made Nasr City a far more convenient middle class neighborhood to settle in.

By the mid 80s, Nasr City had thus become one of the most sought-after housing markets in all of Cairo, which in turn made it also one of the most sought-after markets for private investment. Thanks to the surging demand for middle class residential property during the 80s, real estate prices in middle class neighborhoods were increasing at exponential rates that exceeded even the rampant rates of inflation that beset the Egyptian economy back then. Consequently, investment in middle class, or “luxury”, housing became one of the most profitable, and thereby one of the most popular, quick-return entrepreneurial activities in Egypt at the time – as evident by the fact that 57% of all private investment in Egypt went to the housing sector in the five years between the beginning of 1982 and the end of 1986.²⁴ In comparison to other middle class neighborhoods, the exceptionally high demand for residential property in Nasr City saw real estate there register some of the highest rates of price-increase. Between 1980 and 1987, the price of land in Nasr City surged from 80 pounds per square meter to about 450 pounds per square meter; that is a 460% increase at an annual rate of 28% when the consumer price index during that same period increased by only 186% at an annual rate of 16%.²⁵ Needless to say, such skyrocketing rates made Nasr City a particularly lucrative quick-return investment market, and as a result, it became the focus of yet another type of demand that was driven by a multitude of aspiring individuals of lower societal origins who saw in Nasr City a golden opportunity for accumulating wealth and subsequent social advancement.

As it was discussed earlier, a lot of the Egyptian laborers who had returned from the Gulf Region in the mid 80s were looking to multiply the savings they had amassed while working there. Likewise, and around the same time, a lot of the craftsmen and workers who did not migrate to the Arab Gulf States were also looking to multiply the financial gains they had amassed due to the shortage of labor in Egypt during the 70s and 80s. With its emergence as one of the most lucrative quick-return investment markets at the time, many of those aspiring individuals turned to Nasr City in order to achieve their goals. They most commonly purchased land there, kept it off the market for some time until its value multiplied, and then sold it to the highest bidder, garnering substantial returns on their initial investments in the process. Another very common practice for them was to exploit loopholes in the system, bribe officials, or both, in order to construct apartment buildings that violated Nasr City's building bylaws and which thus had largest possible number of units.²⁶ Given the surging demand for residential property in Nasr City, they then sold those units at a very high asking price, once again garnering substantial returns on their initial investments in land and construction costs. Eventually, those individuals accumulated enough wealth from such ventures that effectively elevated them to middle class status. Needless to say, once they had attained such status, they too sought situating their residences in Nasr City in order to assert it.

In response to such overwhelming demand for Nasr City, the Egyptian government took a number of key steps with regard to the neighborhood's building bylaws and the extents of its area. Around the mid 80s, the government amended Nasr City's building bylaws increasing the maximum allowable residential building footprint from one third to one half of the lot's area. It also increased the maximum height of all residential buildings by one storey. That is to say, residential buildings overlooking streets with widths less than 50 meters were allowed a height of five storeys at a maximum of 16 meters, while residential buildings overlooking streets with widths equal or greater than 50 meters were allowed a height of six storeys at a maximum of 19

meters. Moreover, in the two decades between the early 70s and the early 90s, the government extended Nasr City's limits increasing its area by about five times, and sanctioned the planning of a number of new neighborhoods within those extended limits.²⁷



- 5 storey apartment buildings | max. height: 16 meters
- 6 storey apartment buildings | max. height: 19 meters

First & Sixth Zones | Height Limits for Private Residential Properties '85

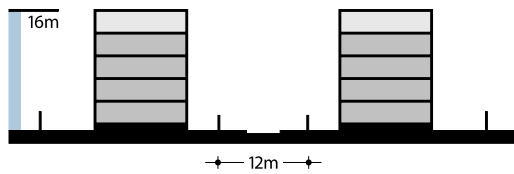
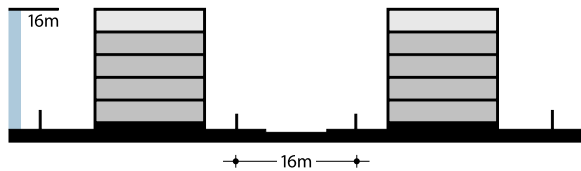
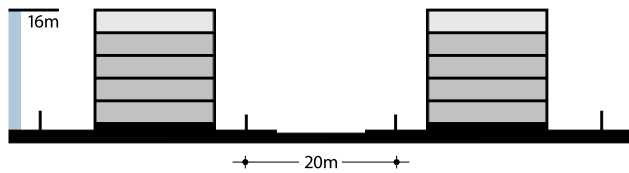
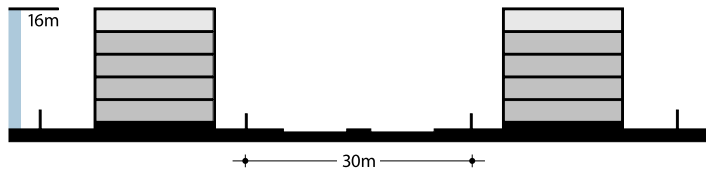
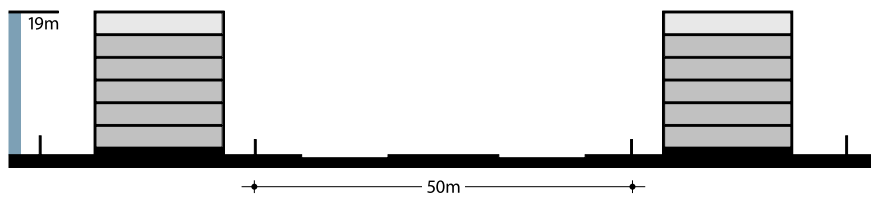
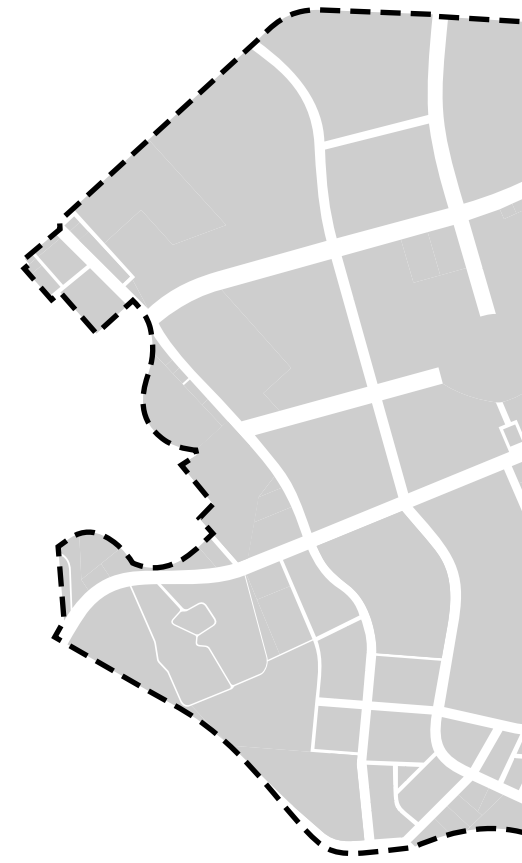


fig.1.3.4 [opposite page] An example of the configuration of maximum building heights for private residential properties after Nasr City's building bylaws were amended in 1985. An extra floor was added to the maximum height for all private residential buildings, but the configuration remained the same – buildings with the higher maximum limit still lined the perimeters of Zones and neighborhoods.

fig.1.3.5 Street sections showing the relation between the maximum building heights stipulated for private residential properties and the range of Nasr City's street widths after amending the settlements building bylaws in 1985. The addition of the extra floor, as per that amendment, had little effect on the urban sections and character of Nasr City's streets.

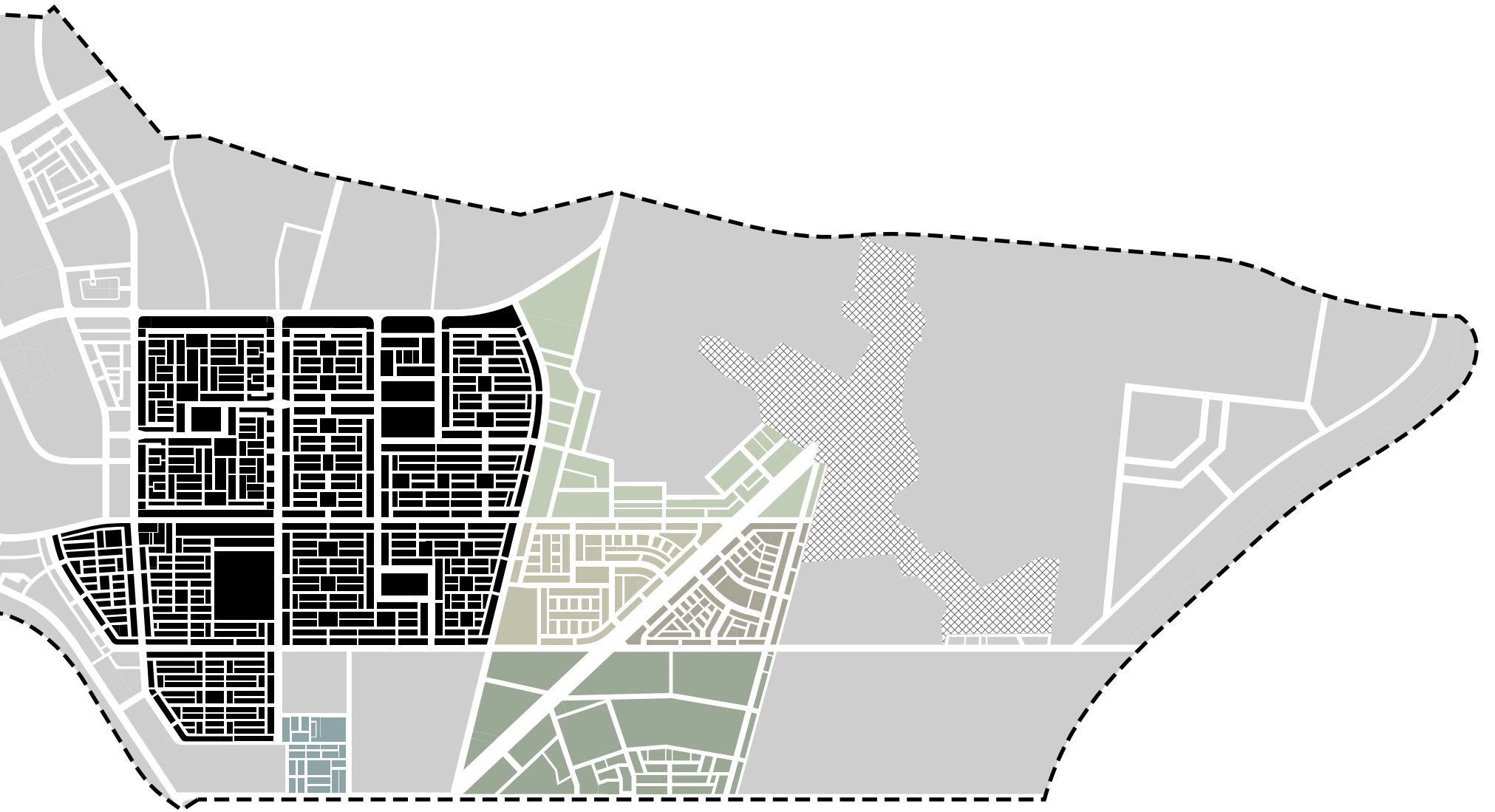
It is worth noting here that those steps were essentially what Baudrillard (1970, 57) referred to as a “consciously induced shortage” on the government’s part. The incremental increase to the maximum allowable residential building heights in Nasr City did not really allow for a substantial increase in its population density, at least not on an official level since, in practice, Nasr City’s building bylaws were quite often violated by all the profit-seeking real estate investors. Also, owing to their smaller sizes; dissimilar planning; and peripheral character, the newer neighborhoods that were added to Nasr City from the early 70s onwards only served to highlight the higher quality of its four original neighborhoods and the social weight that they carried. That is to say, the prime real estate in Nasr City remained concentrated in the first, sixth, seventh, and eighth zones.

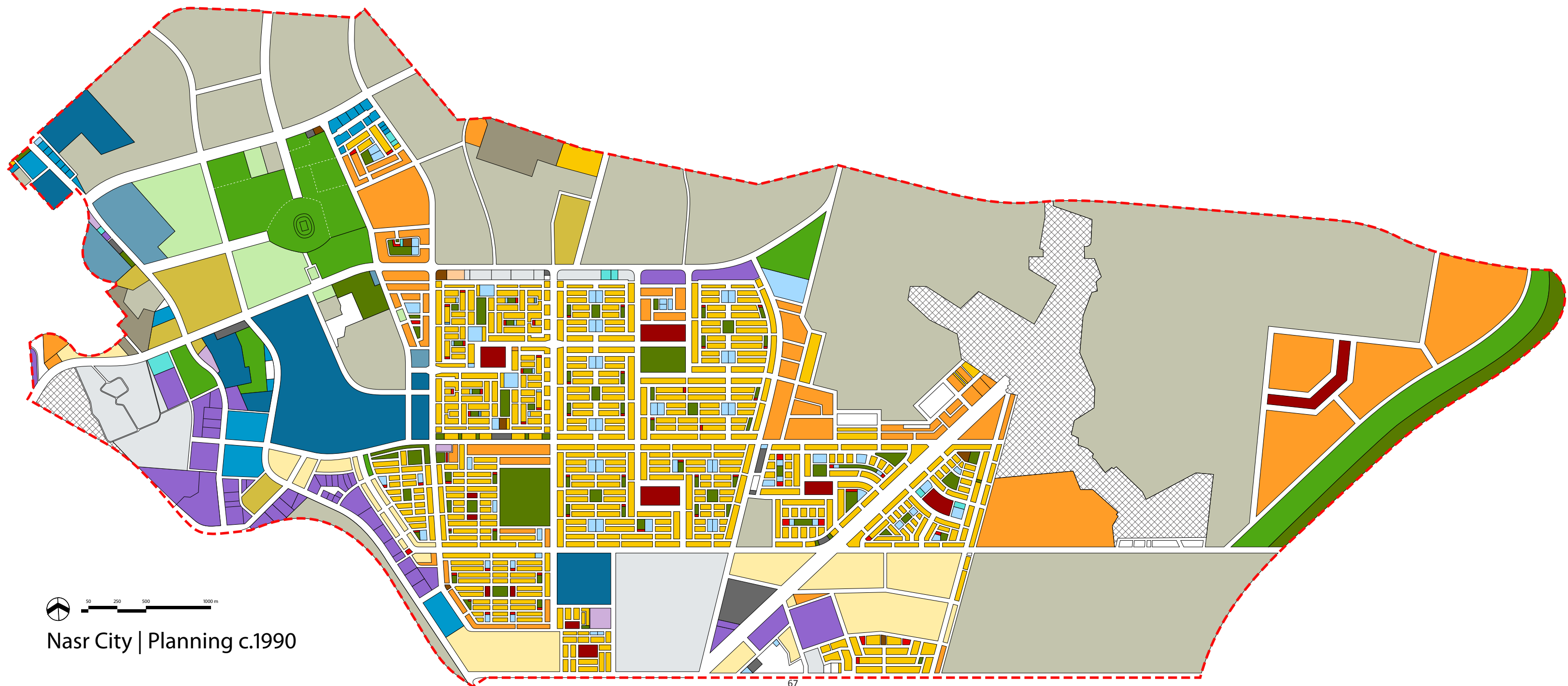


- ninth zone – planned in 1974
- tenth zone – planned in 1974
- eleventh zone – planned in 1985
- sefarat neighborhood – planned in 1992
- twelfth zone – planned in 1993
- first, sixth, seventh & eighth zones

fig.1.3.6 Between 1974 and 1993, the area of Nasr City was increased by about five times, and five new neighborhoods of varying sizes were planned.

Nasr City | 1974 – 1993 New Residential Neighborhoods





Nasr City | Planning c.1990

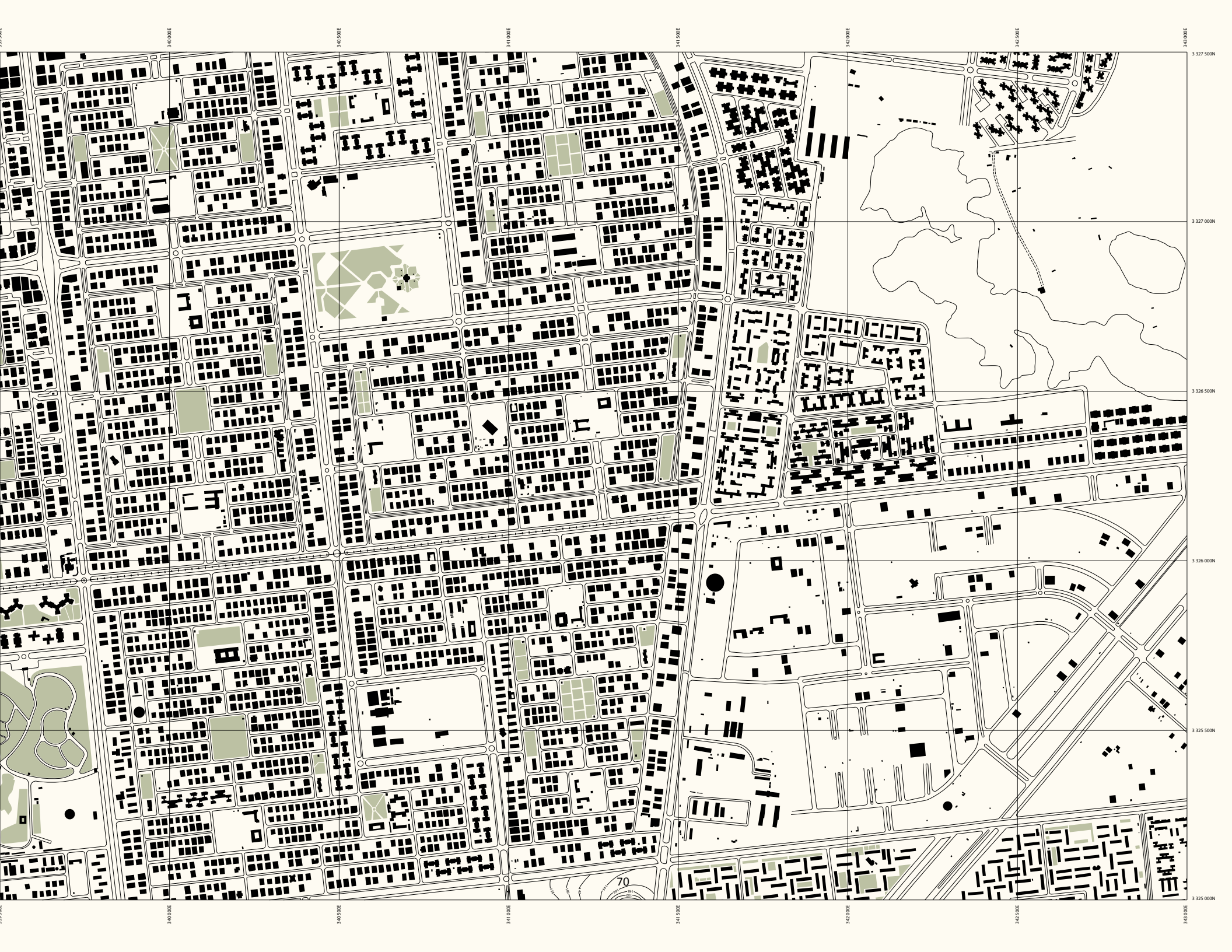


fig.1.3.7 Nasr City's land use patterns in the early 90s. The only major change to the Nasr City's original core was the conversion of the large military sports courts area to the south of the Second Zone into condominium complexes. Out of the five new neighborhoods added between the 70s and 90s, three, the Ninth and Tenth Zone, and Sefarat Neighborhood, were primarily intended to a middle class clientele; the other two, the Eleventh and Twelfth Zones, comprised an assortment of low cost housing and condominium complexes. The extended limits of Nasr City came to include 'Ezbet elHaggana; a large squatter settlement. The rest of the area added to Nasr City remained largely unplanned, as evident by the very general planning scheme of the area on its eastern boundary.

fig.1.3.8 [next spread] A map of Nasr City's core residential neighborhoods in the mid 90s. In ten years, Nasr City has come a long way from the desolate, underdeveloped suburban settlement that it was up until the mid 80s.

And so, by the early 90s, Nasr City had grown into one of the biggest middle class habitats in all of Cairo. However, as it shall be demonstrated in the next chapter, both the urban and architectural characters of Nasr City closely mirrored the deep social differences that divided the Egyptian middle class.





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344 000E

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3327 000N

3326 500N

3326 000N

3325 500N

3325 000N

70

Chapter Two

2.A A Street of
Extended Family Houses



fig.2.a.1 [previous page] El-Insha Street's sign on the outer wall of building no.15.

The late 80s was a very interesting time for the household of 11 El-Insha Street. In 1988, my sister Abla was born, and shortly afterwards, my grandparents moved into their apartment on the building's ground floor. Also In 1988, my uncle Ahmad, his wife, and his 2-year old daughter Samar, returned from the United Kingdom after he had finished his graduate studies there; and they were back into their apartment on the buildings second floor. In other words, 1988 was the year that 11 El-Insha Street became an extended family household.

In addition to myself and my cousin Samar, the arrival of my sister Abla gave my grandfather, Dr. Abouzeid, three grandchildren in total. He accordingly had a mind to provide each of us, his grandchildren, with our own apartments in 11 El-Insha Street. So, shortly after Nasr City's building height bylaws were amended to allow for an extra storey, Dr. Abouzeid approached Mr. Fahim with the proposition of adding two more floors to El-Insha Street's three floors and bringing it to the maximum allowable height of 5 storeys. His idea was to grant the two new apartments on his side of the property that such an addition would leave him with to myself and Samar, and to grant Abla with his own apartment on the ground floor since she was the youngest of his grandchildren, and therefore would most likely have no use for her apartment until after both him and my grandmother would have passed away and vacated the apartment.

Mr. Fahim was quick to agree to his friend's proposition because he was still looking to provide his daughter and her future family with their own apartment in 11 El-Insha Street. But since he only really needed one more unit to do that, and did not have that much liquidity on hand, Mr. Fahim sold one of the apartments on his side of the property to one of my grandfather's younger acquaintances, Dr. Hatem elHabiby, in order to front his share of the construction costs of adding the two extra storeys to 11 El-Insha street. However, when Dr. Abouzeid and Mr. Fahim went to issue a permit for adding those two extra storeys, they were informed that although Nasr City's amended building bylaws technically allowed a maximum height of five storeys on their property, the original permit for 11 El-Insha Street was issued before the passing of those amendments and therefore they technically do not apply to their already constructed apartment building. Instead, they were told that in order to have a building of 5 storeys on their property, they had to knock down 11 El-Insha Street, issue a new permit as per Nasr City's amended building bylaws, and then rebuild it to that height. Needless to say that was a rather ludicrous stipulation, and it was suggest to Dr. Abouzeid and Mr. Fahim that they should just follow the then conventional practice of adding the two extra storeys without an official permit and later exploit the system loopholes to deem them legal after the fact. Left with no other feasible choice, Dr. Abouzeid and Mr. Fahim elected to do so and the addition of two extra storeys comprising four new apartments to El-Insha Street started in 1989, and was completed by 1990.

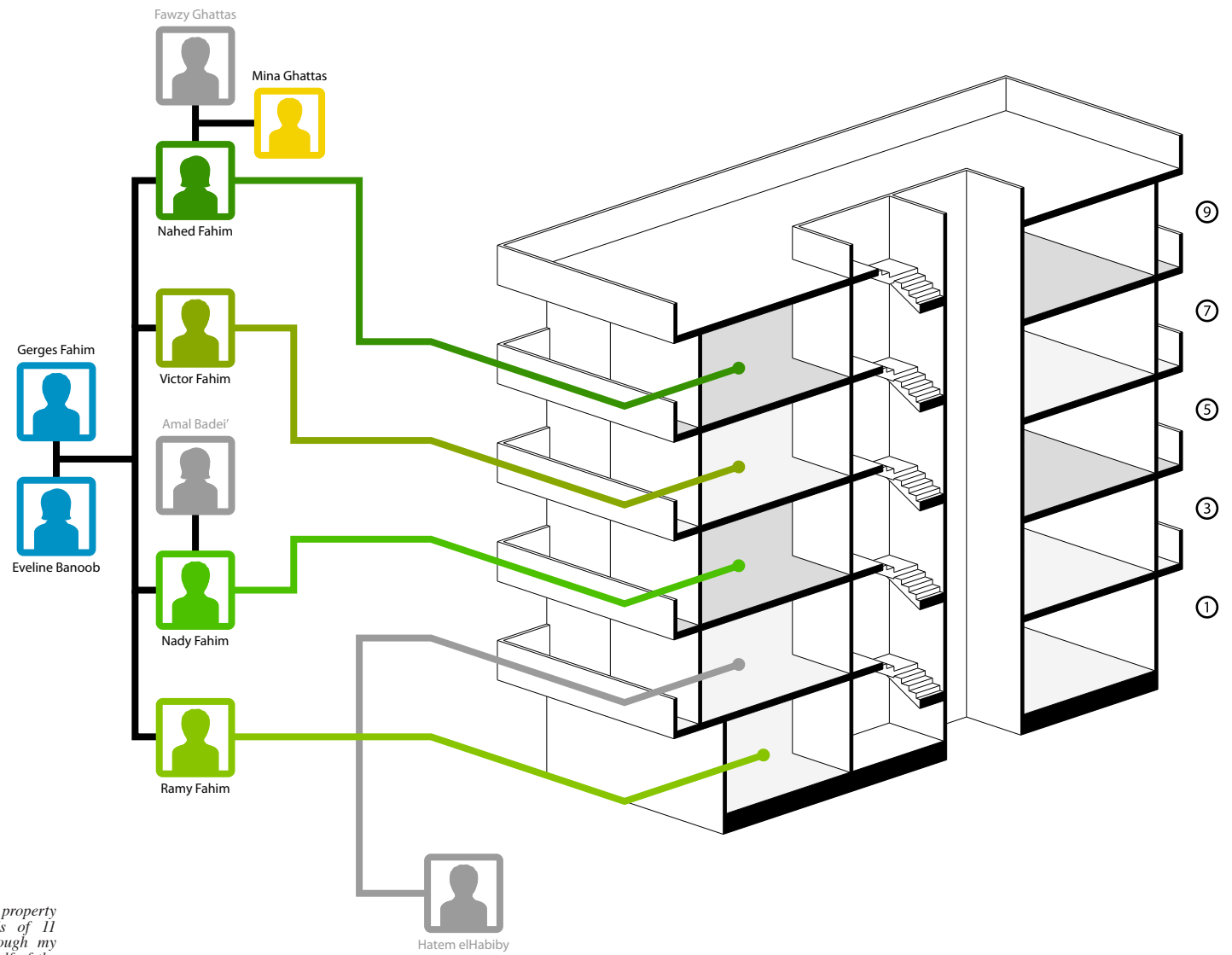
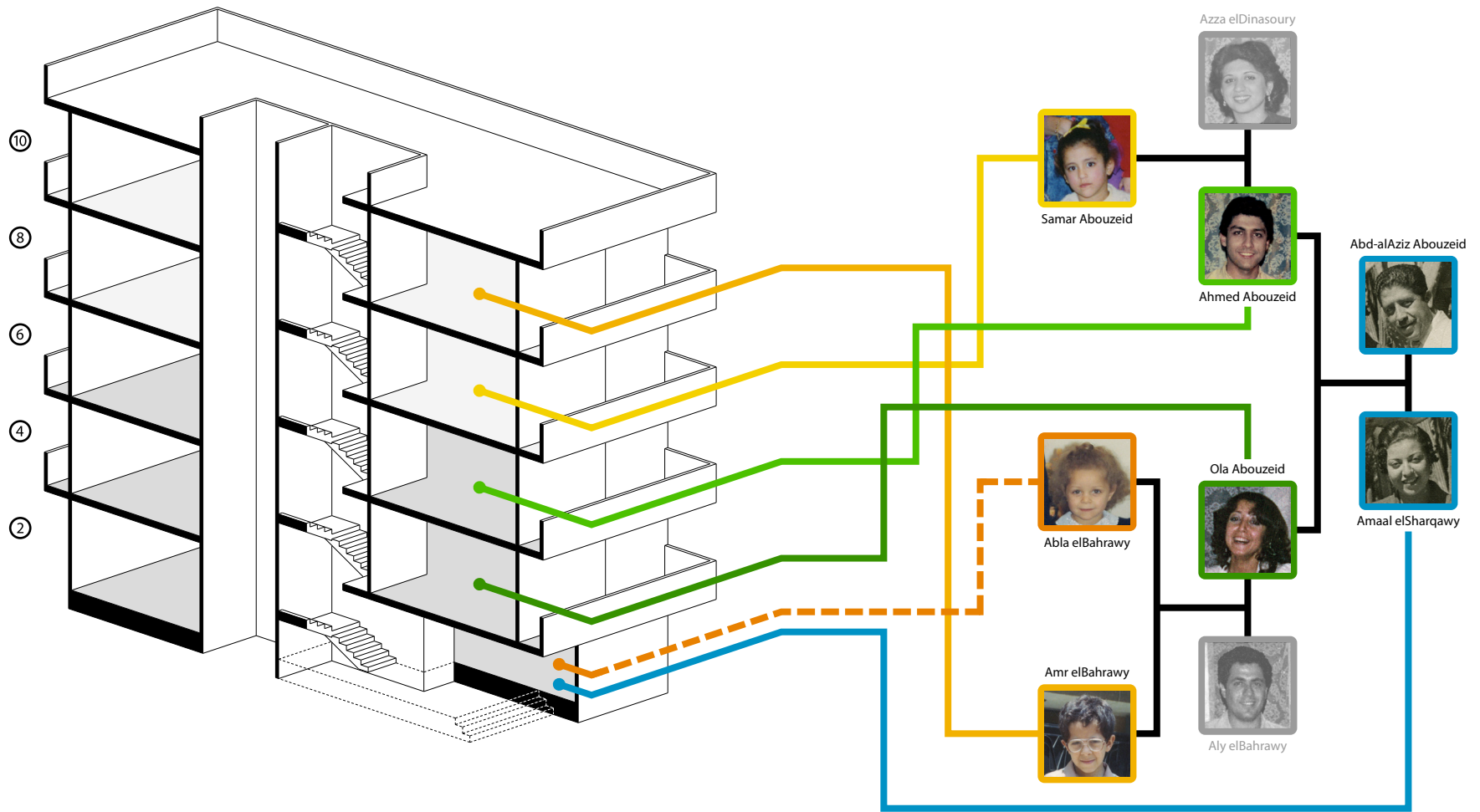
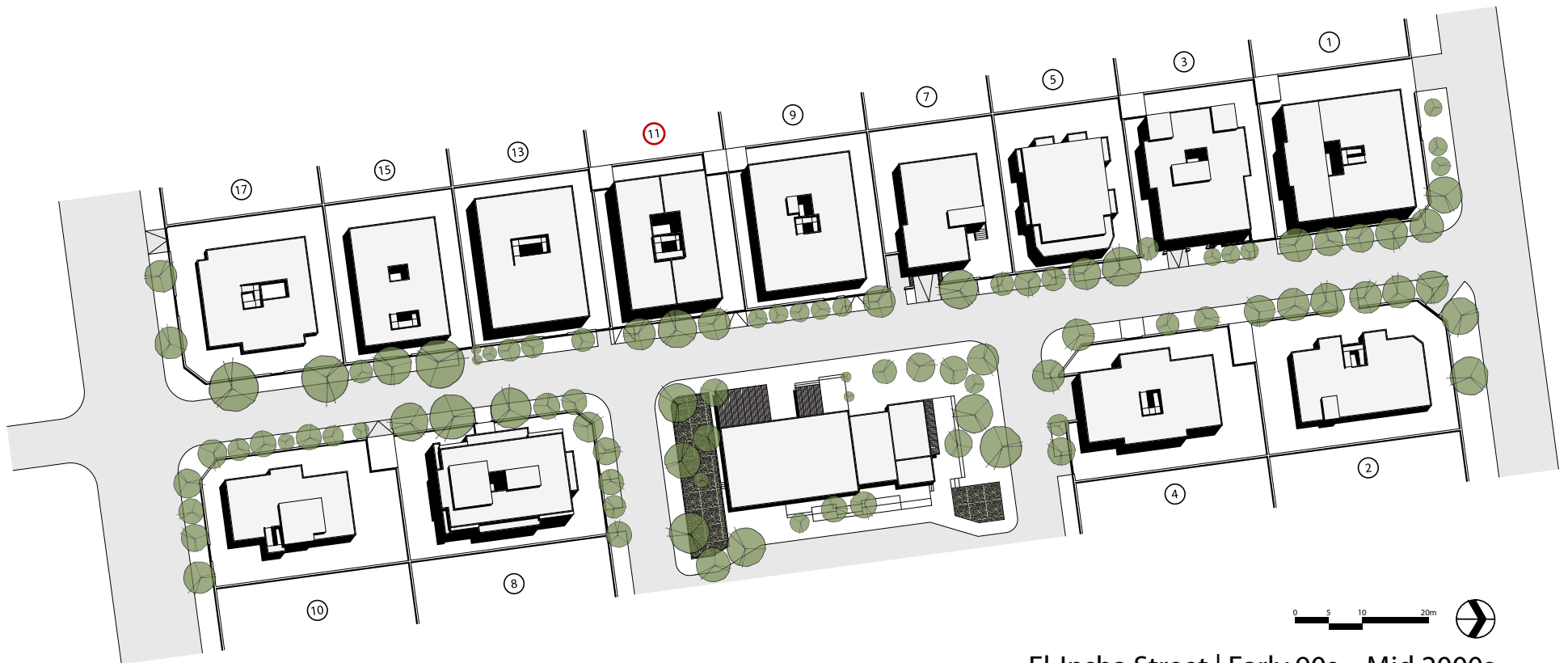


fig.2.a.2 The generational allocation of property among the extended family households of 11 El-Insha Street in the early 90s. Although my grandfather, Dr. Abouzeid, only owned half of the building, he was still able to endow each of his children, and grandchildren at the time, with their own apartments.



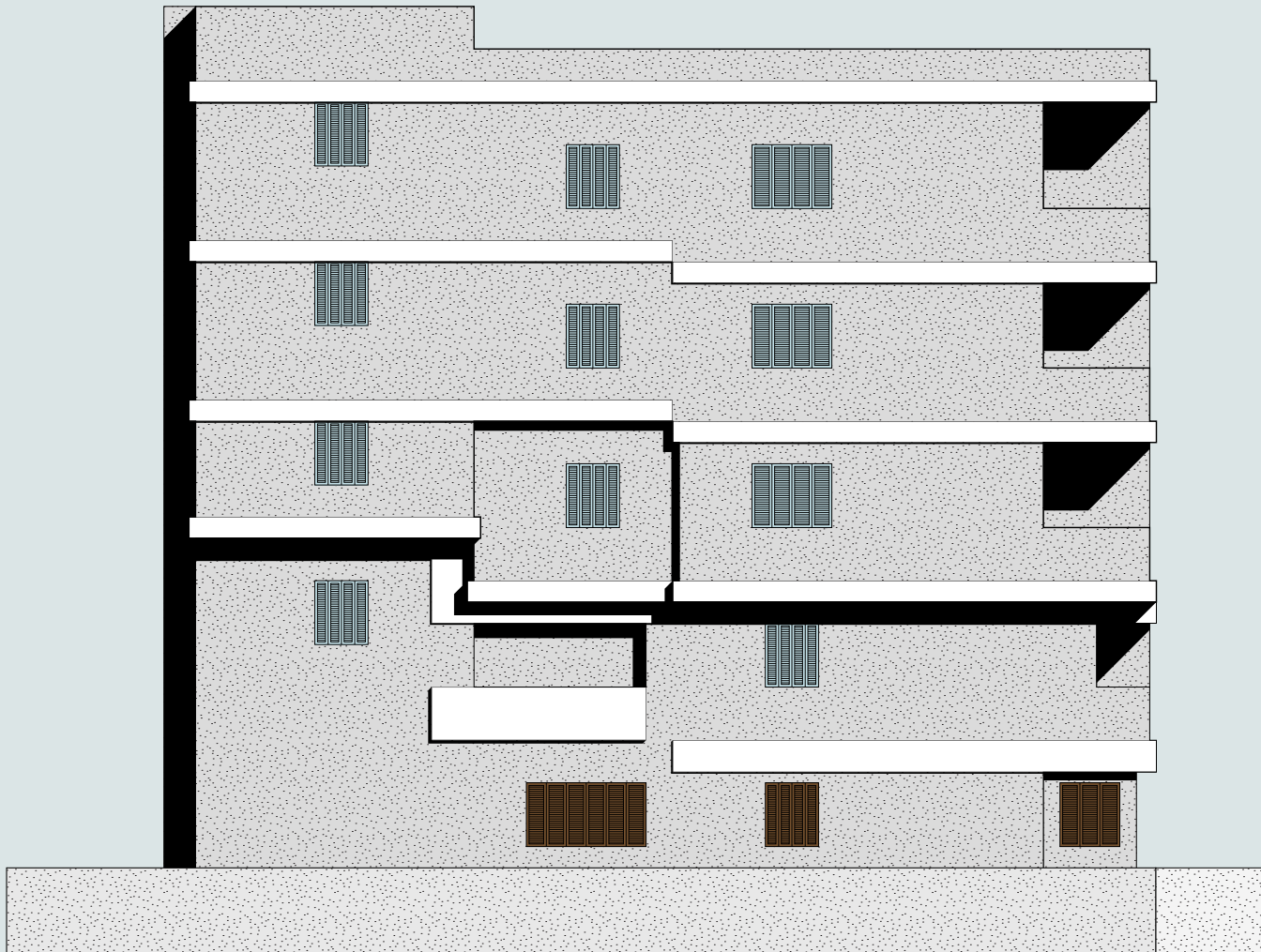
I was only a child of seven when 11 El-Insha Street became a 5-storey extended family household in 1990. At such a young age I genuinely thought that its social configuration was the standard template for all residential buildings, and I had every good reason to believe so. For one thing, most of the relatives that I visited with my family back then, who many of which also dwelled in Nasr City, lived with their extended families in their own apartment buildings that resembled 11 El-Insha Street. Also, on my daily bus ride back from school, it was more often than not a group of cousins that got off the bus when it made stops at apartment buildings that looked a lot like 11 El-Insha Street. As for those who were on the bus alone, or just with their brothers and sisters, they still usually spoke of their grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins who lived with them in the same house if, once again, they were dropped off at buildings that were quite similar to 11 El-Insha Street. And then there was El-Insha Street itself where every single building on it had pretty much the same height, feel, and look as my extended family's apartment building. For the longest time, I was only aware that the apartment building to the left of ours, that is 9 El-Insha Street, and the one other apartment building at the end of the street, 10 El-Insha Street, were in fact extended family houses like 11 El-Insha Street, simply because my sister and myself went to the same schools as the youngest generations of both households. It must have been that awareness, along with the strong resemblance between my extended family's apartment building and the rest of the buildings down El-Insha Street, that left me with the impression that each of those apartment buildings was a multi-generational family household as well. And it wasn't until I started working on this thesis that I came to learn that this was in fact the case – El-Insha Street was indeed a street of apartment building–extended family houses.



El-Insha Street | Early 90s – Mid 2000s

fig.2.a.3 El-Insha Street between the early 90s and mid 2000s. Throughout that period, every single apartment building on the street was in fact an extended family household.

fig.2.a.4 [opposite page] 1 El-Insha Street; or Bayt alReda, houses an extended family of three generations. The second generation – the main inhabitants of the building – consists of three siblings, two sisters and a brother, each with their own apartment for their respective nuclear families. One of the sisters, however, lives in the states. The family rents out the unoccupied apartments in the building.



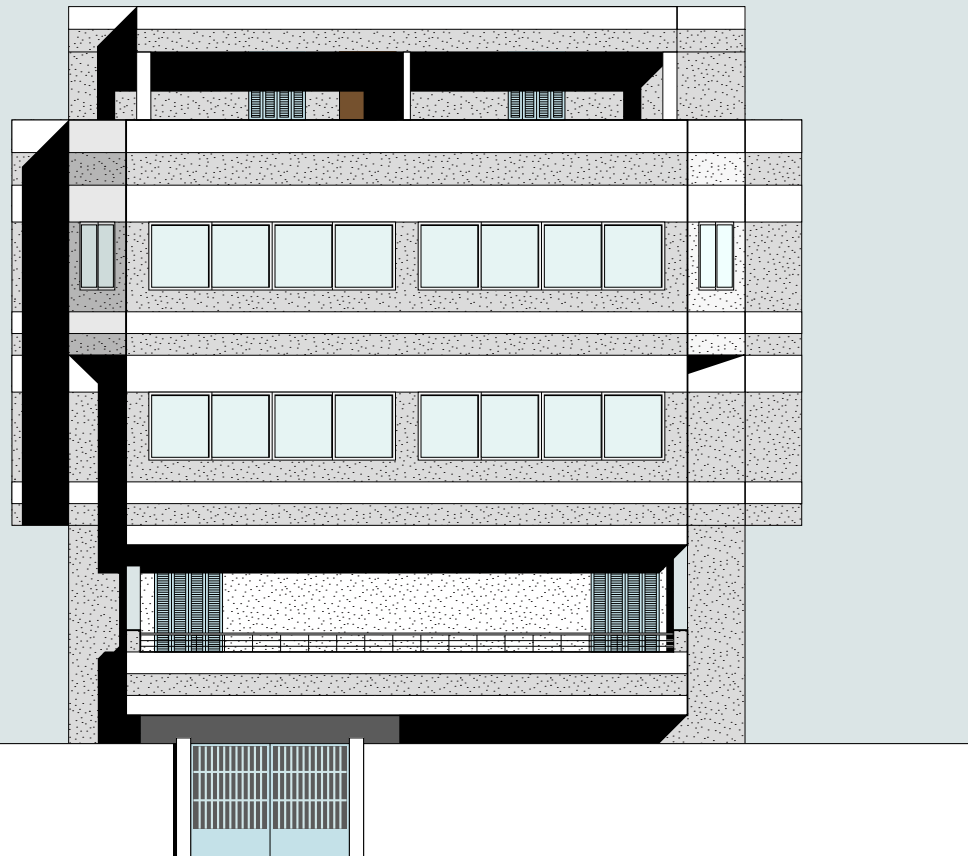


fig.2.a.5 5 El-Insha Street; a very secretive extended family lives in that apartment building. Not much is known about the household.

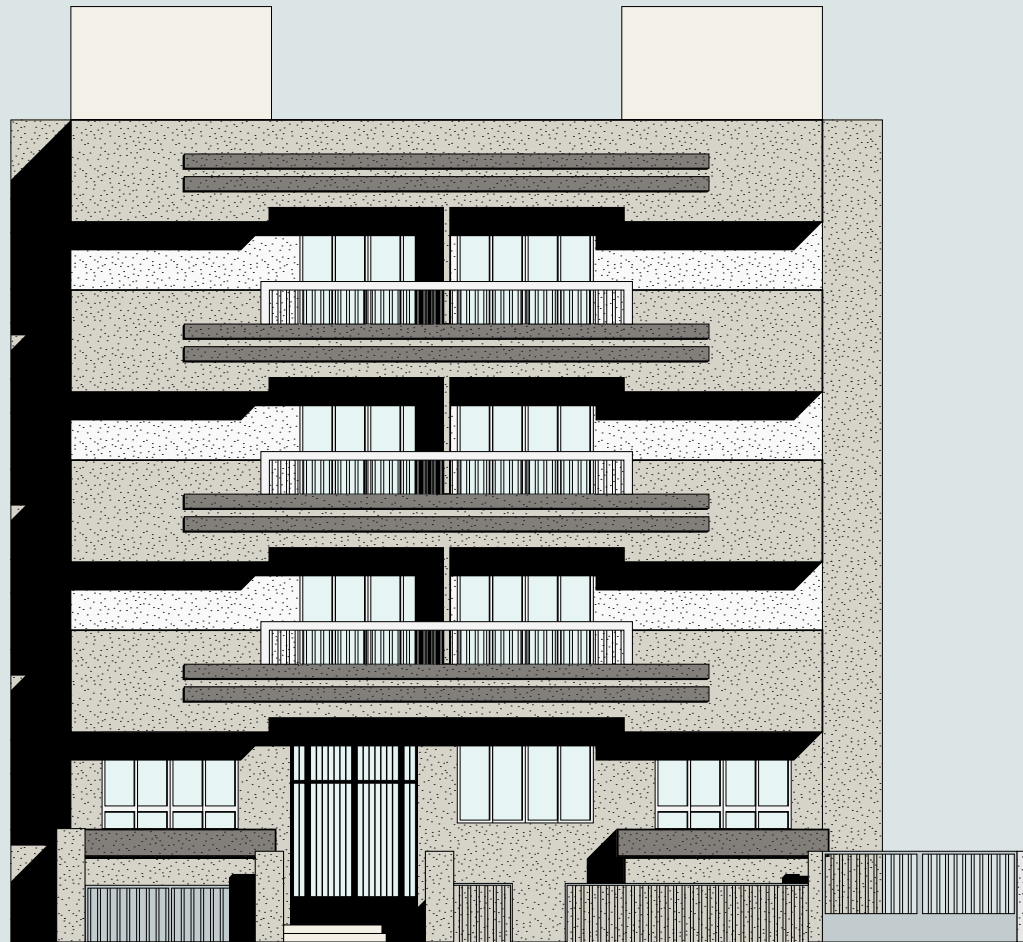
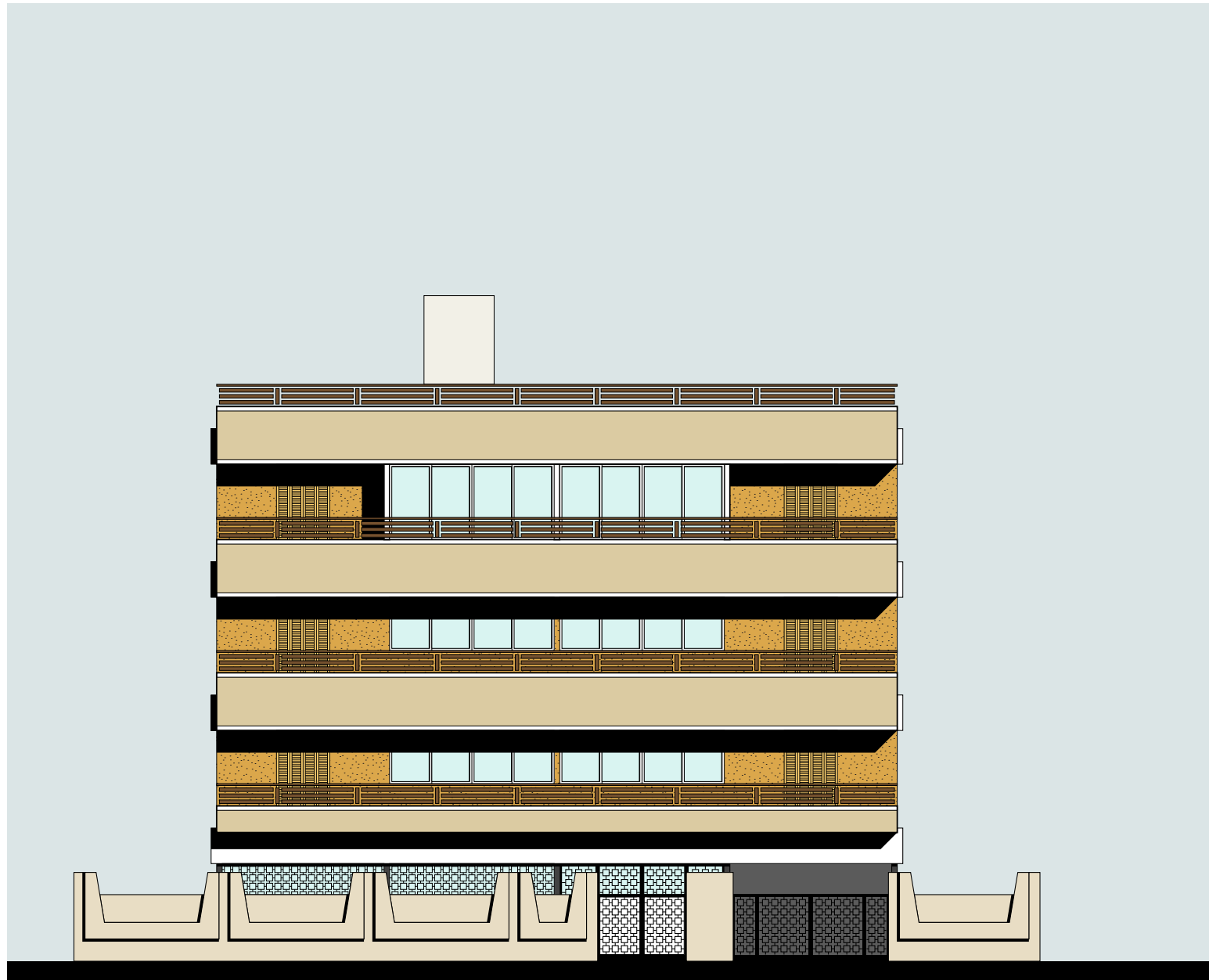


fig.2.a.6 3 El-Insha Street; like Bayt alReda, this extended family household rents out the vacant apartments in the building to exchange students in the nearby Azhar University.

fig.2.a.7 9 El-Insha Street; an extended family household of three generations. Mr. Fahim's and this household's families are acquaintances. 9 El-Insha Street's family consists of a patriarch, who owns a longstanding family business; two daughters; and two sons. The ground floor of the building is the business's secondary headquarters. The first and second floors have one apartment each. The patriarch and matriarch of the family live in the apartment on the first floor with the understanding that it would pass to the nuclear family of the last of their sons to get married. The second floor apartment is allocated to their other son. The third floor comprises two apartments, one for each of their daughters' nuclear families.



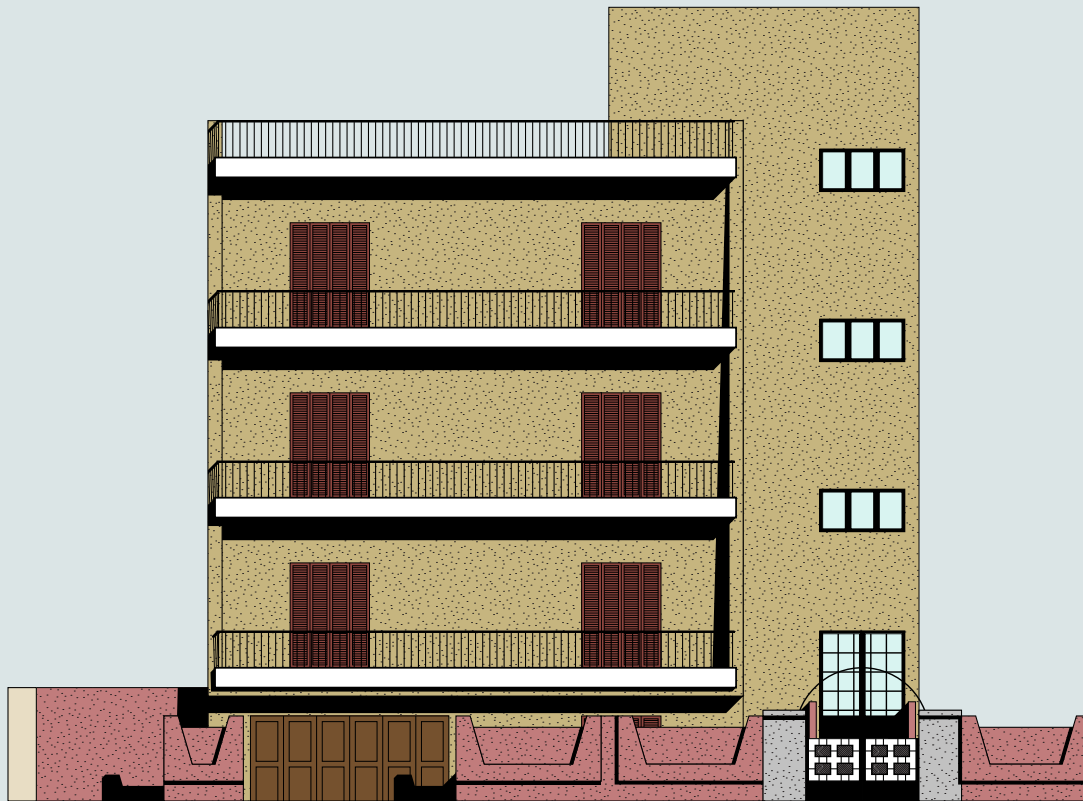
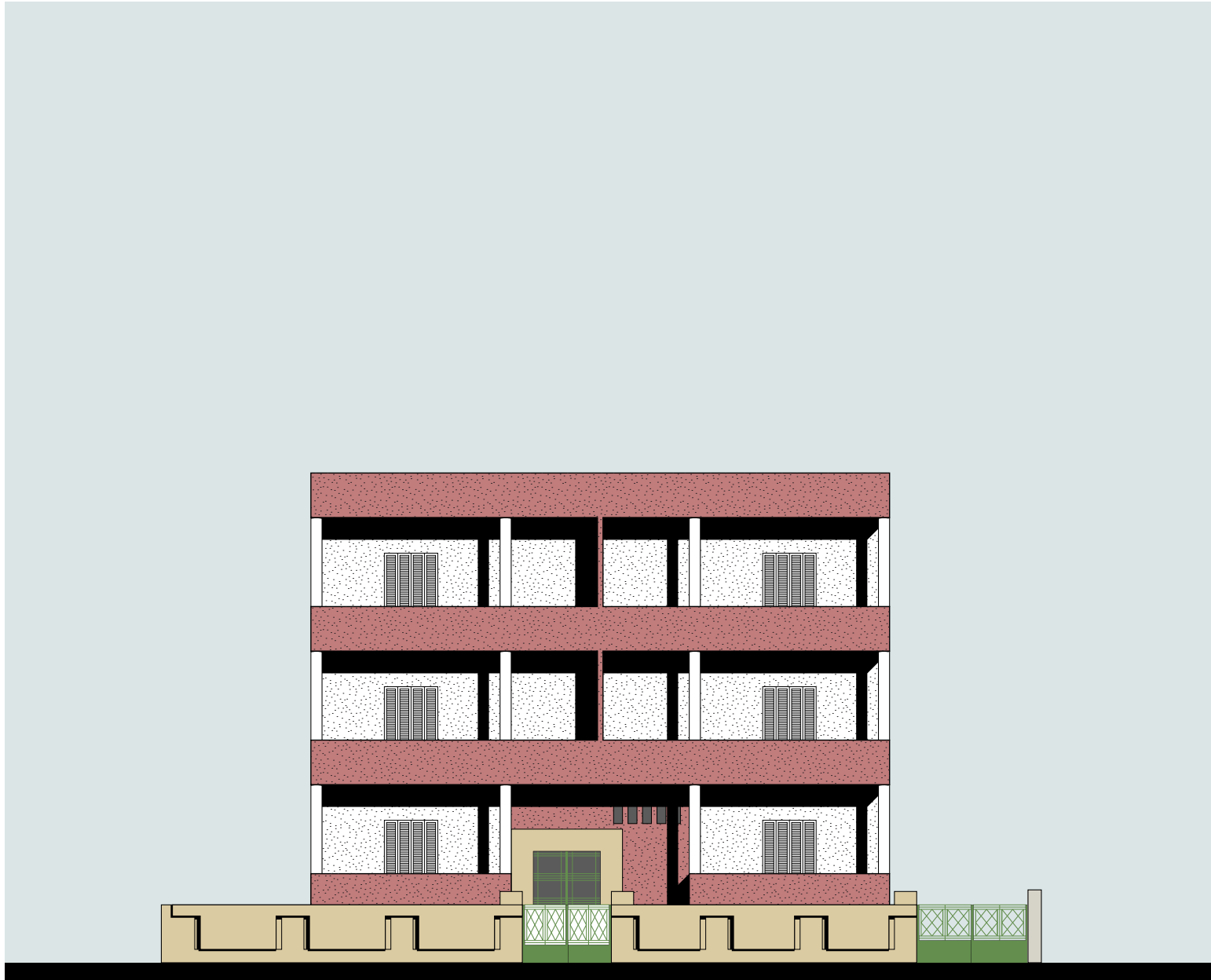


fig.2.a.8 7 El-Insha Street; another very secretive extended family household. By the looks of it though, 7 El-Insha Street has one apartment per floor for a total of three apartments. The patriarch and matriarch of the family occupy one of those apartments, and the other two are allocated to the nuclear families of each of their two children.

fig.2.a.9 15 El-Insha Street; An extended family household consisting of the nuclear families of 3 brothers and two sisters. Most of the siblings of 15 El-Insha Street are Azharites.



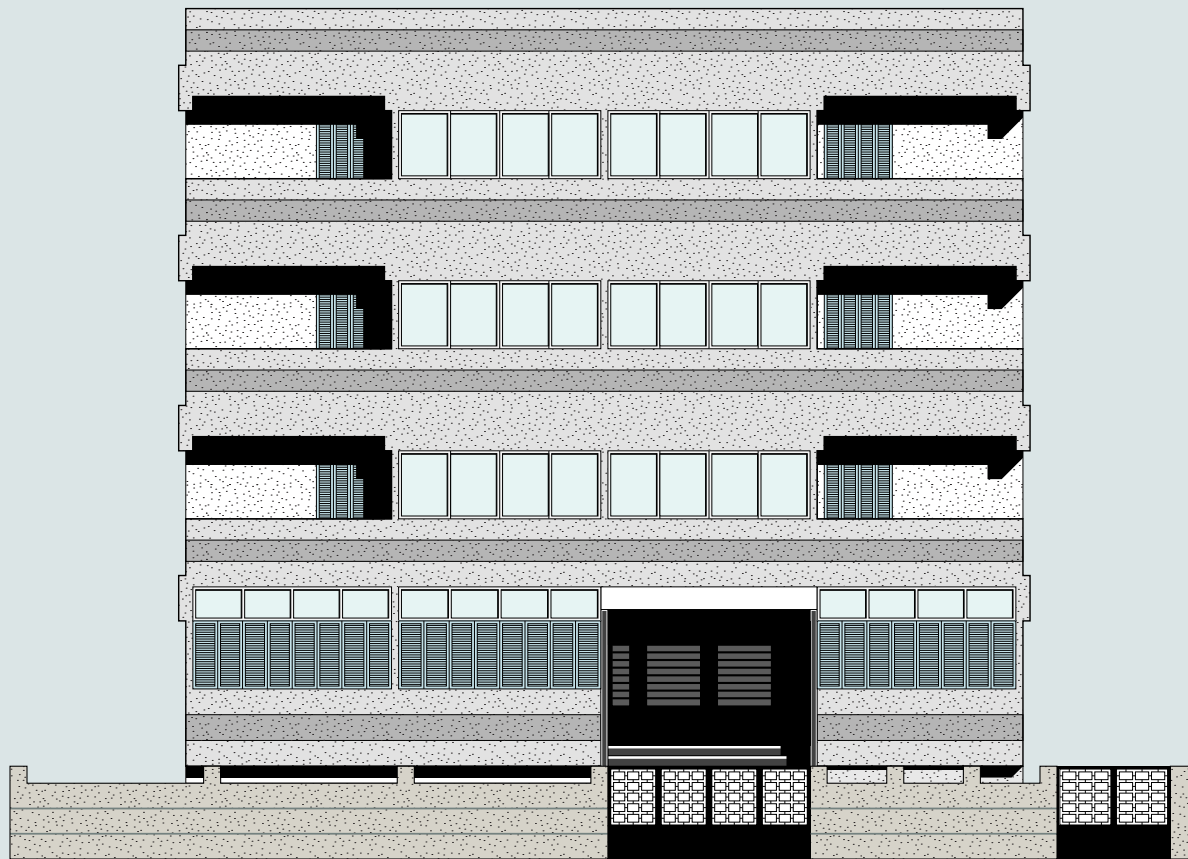


fig.2.a.10 13 El-Insha Street; an extended family household of three generations. Like that of 9 El-Insha Street, the patriarch of this extended family household also owns a longstanding business. He built this 4-storey apartment building for himself and the nuclear families of his 3 sons and 2 daughters. The patriarch and matriarch of the household live on the apartment on the ground floor.

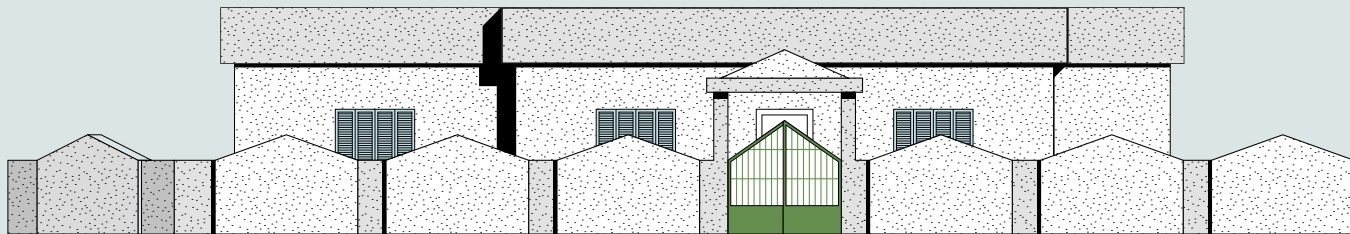


fig.2.a.11 17 El-Insha Street; this one-storey villa housed one couple who had no children. After the wife passed away, the husband's nephew, along with his nuclear family, came to reside with his uncle in the house.

fig.2.a.12 2 El-Insha Street; this two-storey building is an extended family household where the patriarch and matriarch of the family live in the ground floor apartment. I went to the same university as one of the patriarch's grandchildren. Although my university colleague's father had his own apartment in 2 El-Insha Street, for some reason he did not reside there with his nuclear family. The building was intended to be an extended family household regardless.



fig.2.a.13 4 El-Insha Street; an extended family household consisting of three generations. The patriarch and matriarch of the family live in the household, and one their of their sons has left the country, but still has his apartment in the building.

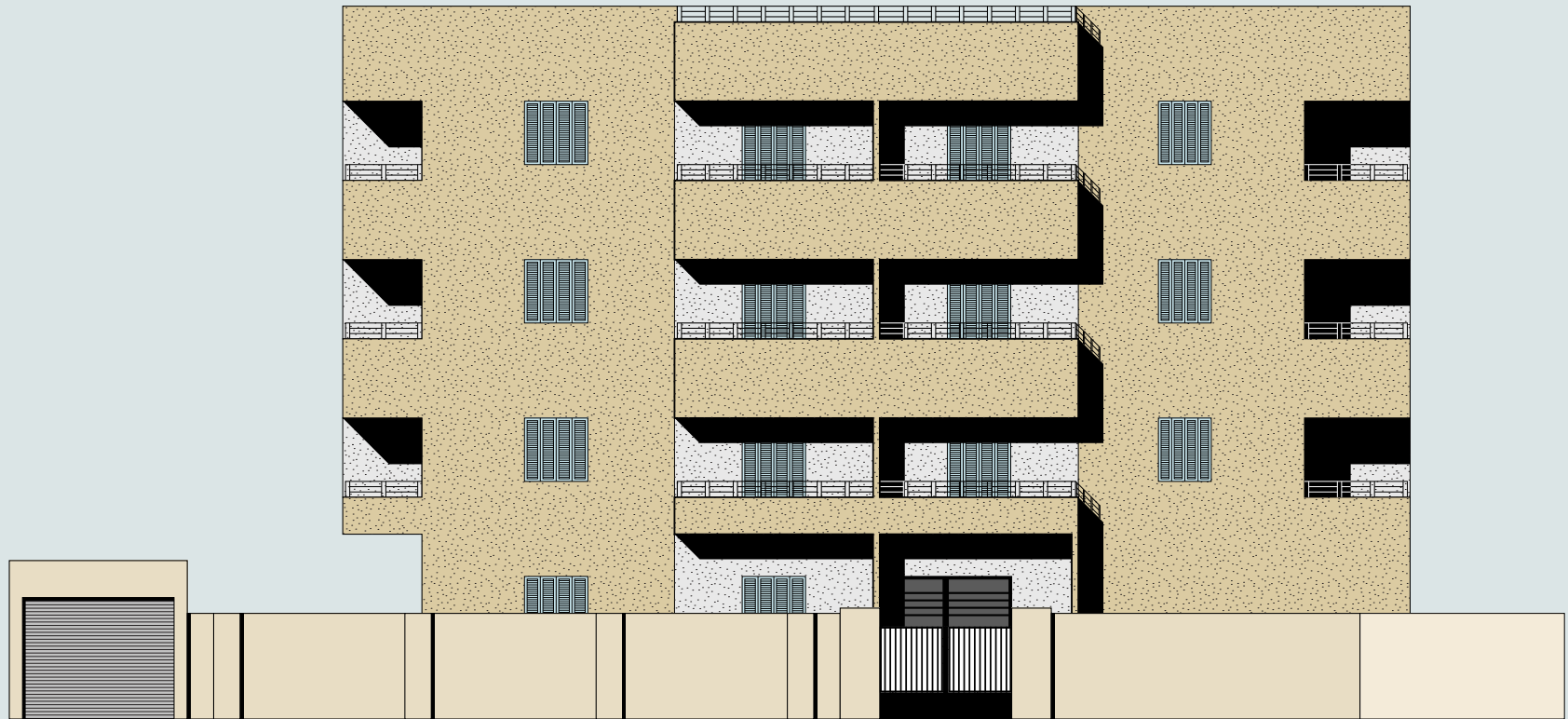
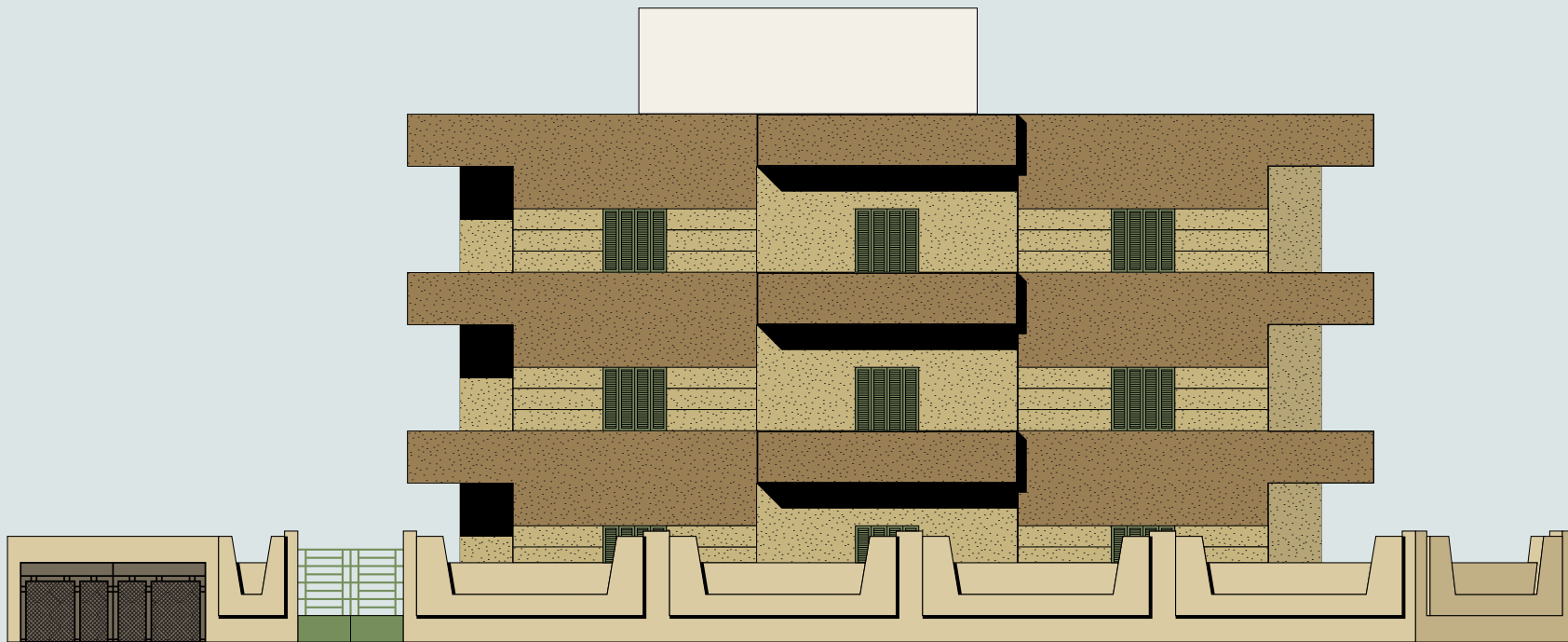




fig.2.a.14 [opposite page] 8 El-Insha Street; another extended family household consisting of three generations. The patriarch and matriarch of the family live in a duplex comprised of apartments on the ground and first floor. Each one of their children, and their respective nuclear families, has their own apartment in the building.

fig.2.a.15 10 El-Insha Street; another extended family household consisting of three generations. The patriarch and matriarch of the family had only one son. He has his own apartment in the building, and his son and daughter, the grandchildren, each have their own apartments as well. An extra apartment in the building was sold to a close family friend.



Some time after I got into architecture school in Cairo, I began to fully understand and appreciate the qualities and uniqueness of 11 El-Insha Street's architectural typology. Given Egypt's wealth of architectural history, we were extensively taught about the correlating subjects of the traditional houses of medieval Cairo and design by accretion; and I soon started to notice a lot of similarities between the typology of those traditional houses and that of 11 El-Insha Street. The most obvious of such similarities was that both typologies housed multiple generations of the same family simultaneously. In that sense, it seemed to me that 11 El-Insha Street was a modern take on a very old concept – it was essentially a traditional extended family house cloaked in a very modular, typical-floor-plan apartment building typology where each of the nuclear families that made up the extended family household had its own private unit. And while, at first glance, it appeared as though the very modular nature of 11 El-Insha Street's typology was quite different from the atypical character of the traditional houses of medieval Cairo, a closer look made it rather clear that, at a very basic level, both typologies "evolved" over time in a very similar manner. One of the fundamental concepts we were taught about those traditional extended family houses was that none of them had a predetermined long-term design scheme at the outset. Rather, a traditional extended family house started off as a simple single-family home that was neatly arranged around a spatial element of pristine geometry – typically a central courtyard; and as the family that inhabited it grew, and the needs of its members changed, the house itself grew as well, and by multiple instances of addition and omission, its design was altered several times over the years to accommodate the changing needs of its inhabitants. Many generations and layers of design later, those extended family households ultimately became the highly irregular and atypical traditional houses that exist today.

11 El-Insha Street on the other hand featured a very standardized design that was devised with a set number of units for a set number of generations and nuclear families in mind; and it was constructed in its entirety before many of its intended inhabitants were ready to occupy or even had any use for their assigned units in the building. Despite that uniform, predetermined character however, and much like the traditional extended family houses of yore, 11 El-Insha Street was consistently altered over the years to accommodate the changing needs of its two extended families, which was a relatively easy process due to the modular nature of the building's simple post-and-beam construction. As a matter of fact, with the exception of my grandparents who lived in their ground floor unit for some years before changing its original spatial arrangement, the only time any of 11 El-Insha Street's apartments followed the building's original floor plan was when they were unoccupied. Albeit at different times, my parents; as well as my uncle and his wife; and each of Mr. Fahim's children and their spouses, all altered the original spatial arrangement of their respective apartments in 11 El-Insha Street prior to moving into the building; and some of them even went on to change those spatial arrangements again and again over the following years. Those alterations to 11 El-Insha Street's typical floor plans ranged from a simple addition of a wall to make one big room into two smaller ones, or removing an existing wall or annexing a balcony to make a smaller room bigger; to complete overhauls of the floor plan for the sake of repurposing an entire apartment into monastic accommodations, or

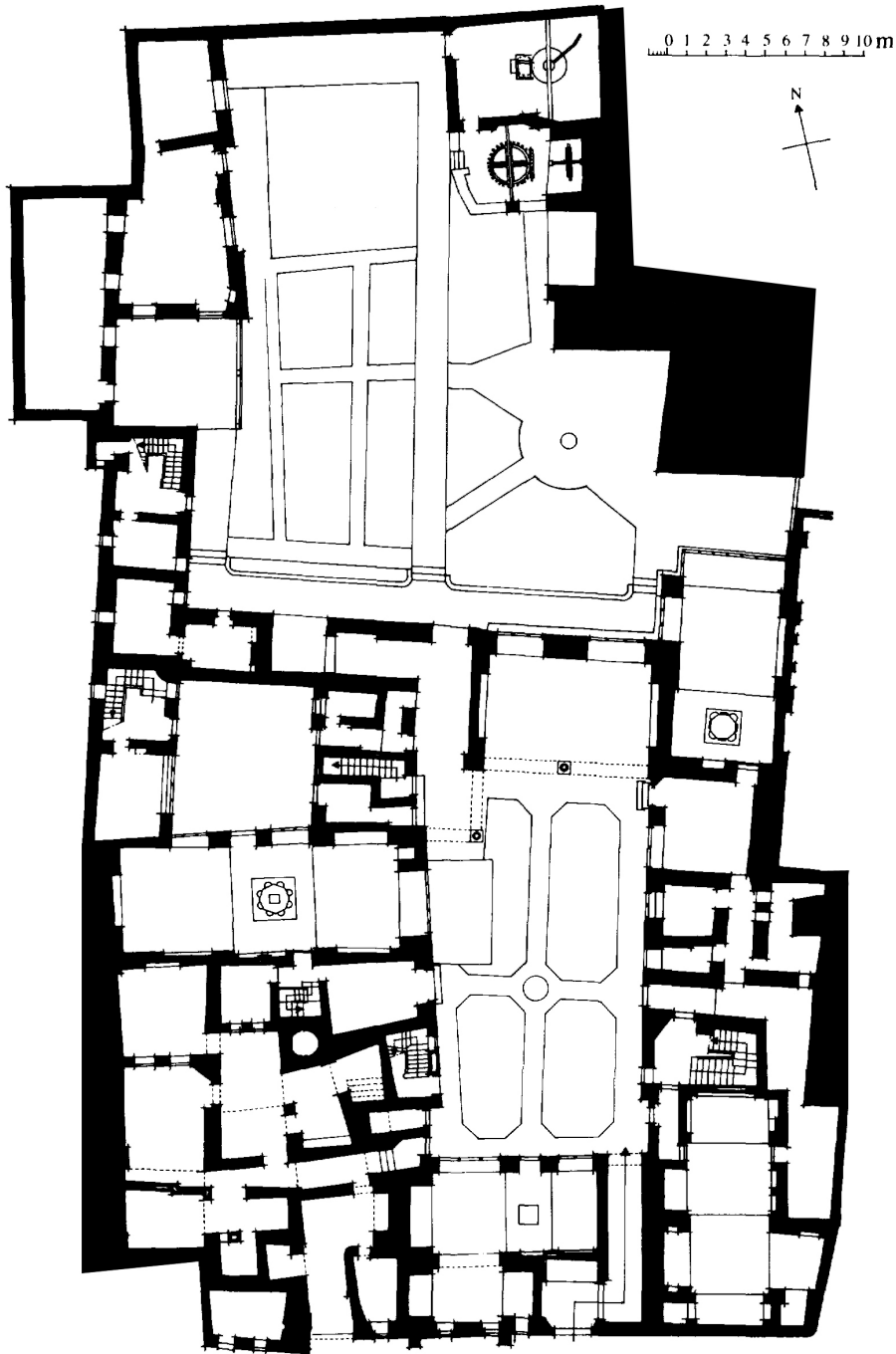
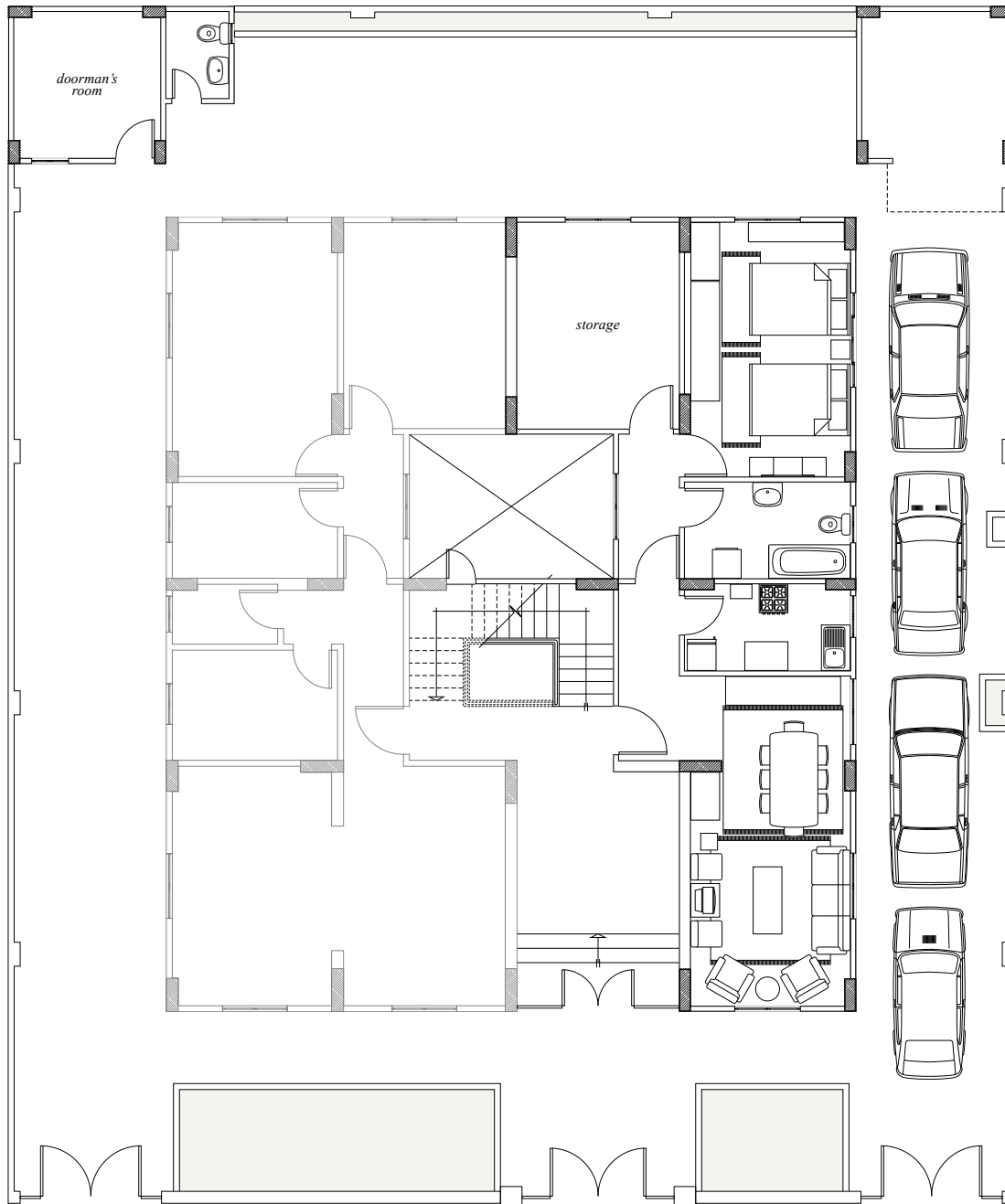


fig.2.a.16 Ground floor of alSuhaymi House; the quintessential traditional extended family house of medieval Cairo. 11 El-Insha Street's typology is a modern take on its socio-spatial arrangement.

punching through floor plates to make two separate apartments into one duplex. As a result, all throughout the 30 years it has housed the extended families of Dr. Abouzeid and Mr. Fahim, 11 El-Insha Street hardly had a typical floor plan to speak of, but rather it has been in a constant state of spatial flux. That is to say, despite its formal architectural beginnings, 11 El-Insha Street ended up having a non-uniform character that is quite similar to that of traditional extended family houses and by way of the same process.

Another striking similarity I found between the traditional extended family houses of medieval Cairo and 11 El-Insha Street was how the extended family household itself interacted within both typologies. In the former, the central courtyard typically functioned as both the spatial and social focal point of the household. It was the seat of the households' patriarch and a common space shared by all the inhabitants of the house – a place where the members of the extended family's different generations met, socialized and accepted guests away from their own private quarters. 11 El-Insha Street on the other hand did not have a geometrical centre per se, but it most certainly had a spatial and social focal point as well; and that was my grandparents' apartment on the building's ground floor. As the patriarch of the family, Dr. Abouzeid's apartment served the same purpose as the central courtyard in a traditional extended family house. In a sense, it was the gateway to the household as a whole with its location on the ground floor and its proximity to the street. It was where my mother, father, uncle, aunt, sister, cousins and myself gathered on Fridays every weekend, and on every seasonal holiday, to share a meal that my grandmother cooked for us. It was where we had our birthday parties, and where we came together to meet relatives when they came to visit. It was where me and my sister met and played with our cousins when we were younger. And its veranda was where we waited for our school bus every morning with our grandparents, and where they waited for us every afternoon when we got back from school. Essentially, 11 El-Insha Street's unit number 2 was the communal space that allowed for a healthy measure of interaction between the household's nuclear families without infringing on the privacy of their own apartments.

fig.2.a.17 [opposite page] Dr. Abouzeid's apartment on the ground floor; it's the only apartment that was occupied without making any changes to its floor plan



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 2 | 1988 – 1997
 Abd al-Aziz Abouzeid & Amaal elSharqawy

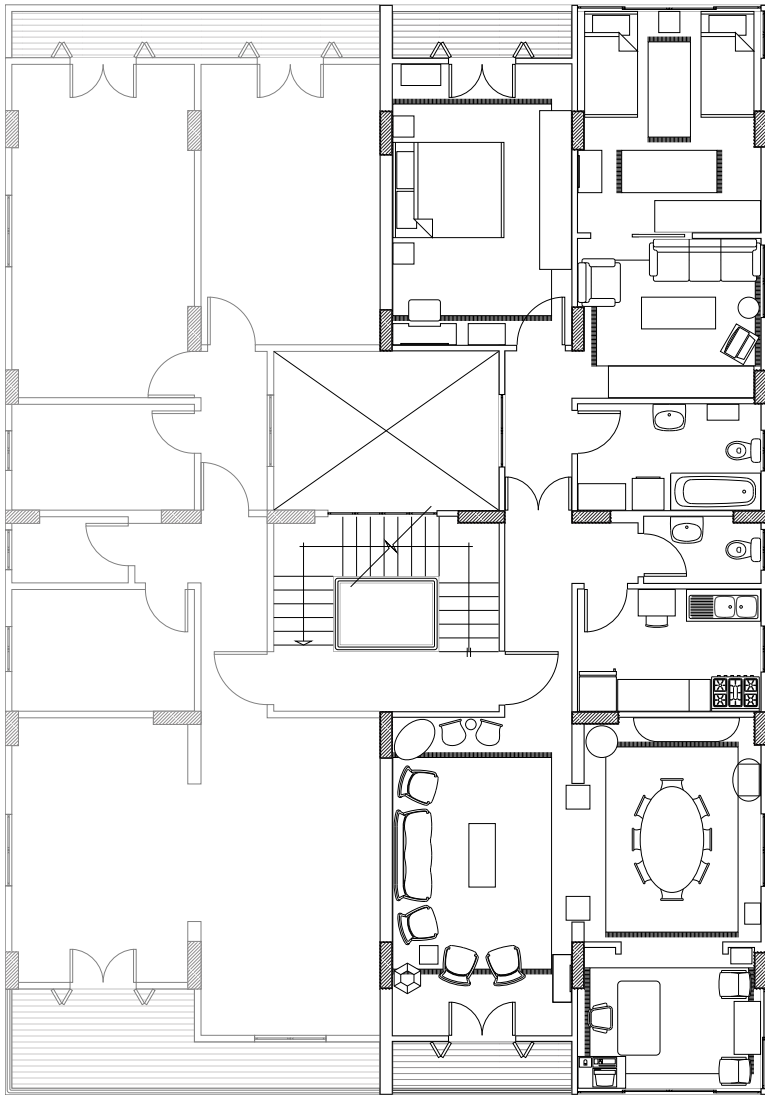
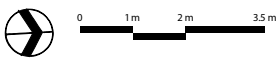


fig.2.a.18 My parent's apartment on the first floor; one of the back bedroom was split into a bedroom for myself, and later for my sister as well, and a living room. Part of the front balcony was annexed into a small study; an important space to my parents since both are academics. Located at front portion of the apartment next to the very formal, and hardly used, reception and dining room, the study was intended to be a quieter room to work in.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 4 | 1987 – 1998
 Ola Abouzeid & Aly elBahrawy

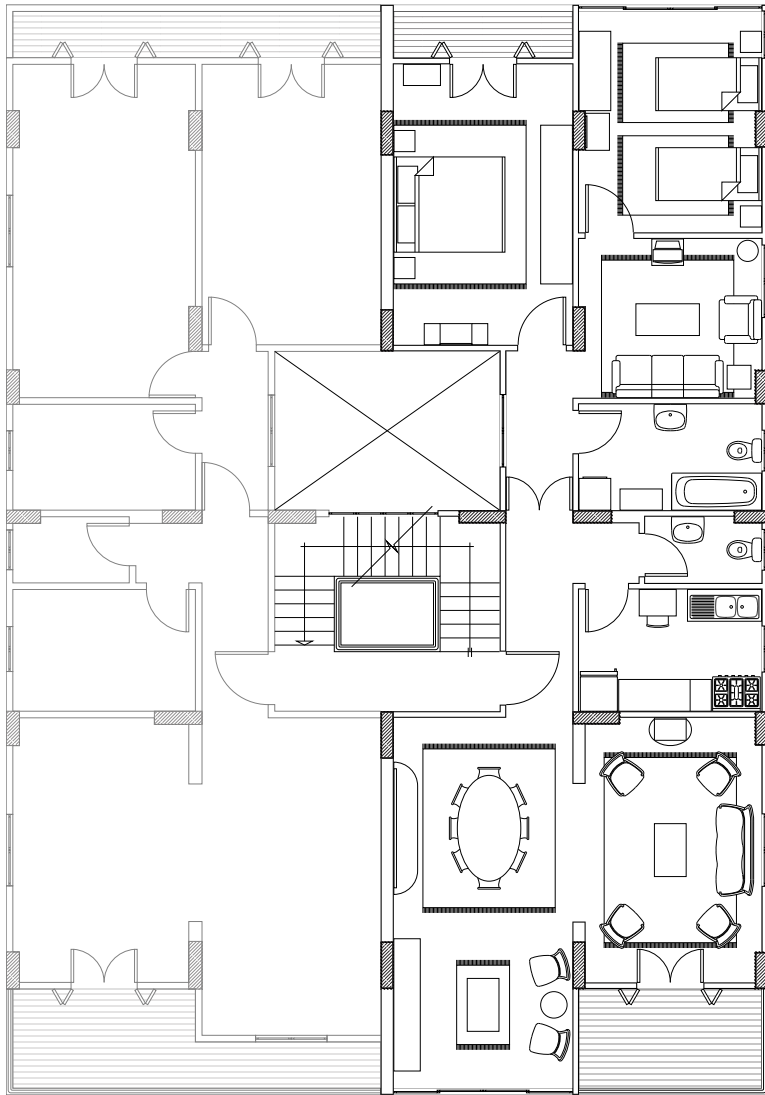
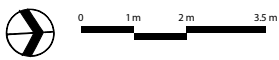


fig.2.a.19 My uncle's apartment on the second floor; like in my mother's apartment, one of the back bedrooms was split into a bedroom for his daughter, and later for his younger daughter as well, and a living room. Part of the front balcony was annexed to make for an extra reception area.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 6 | 1984 – 1995
 Ahmed Abouzeid & Azza elDinasoury



fig.2.a.20 Throughout the years, my grandfather's apartment has been the focal point of all sorts of social activity for 11 El-Insha Street's extended family household. It is where members of the household, usually received family guests and celebrated birthdays [top right]; where they gathered for a weekly meal that my grandmother cooked for them on Fridays; where they celebrated seasonal occasions [bottom left and bottom right]; where me, my sister, and my cousins met to play or watch TV together; and its veranda was where me and my sister waited for our school bus every morning with our grandfather [top left].

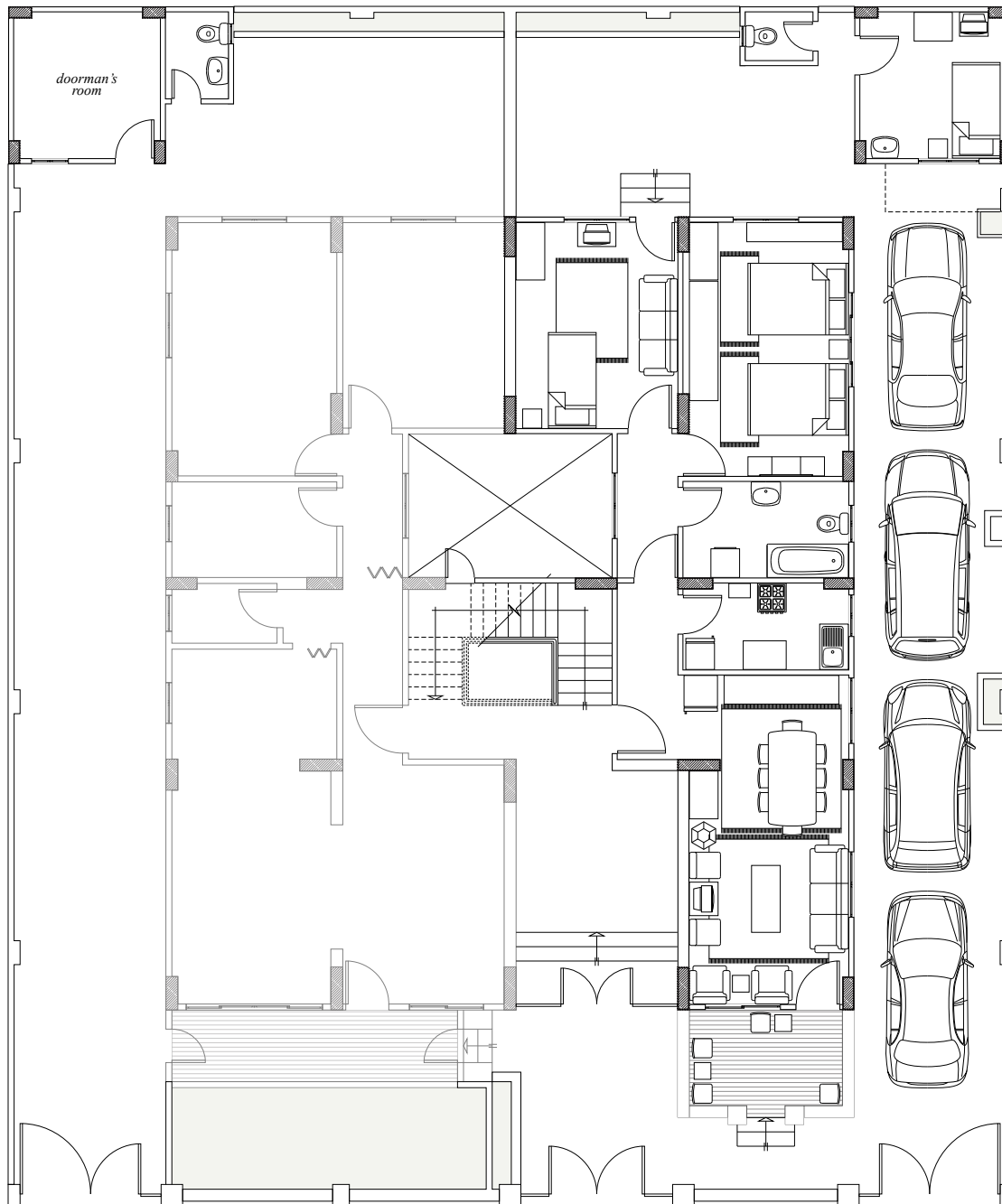
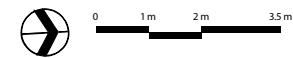


fig.2.a.21 In 1997, my grandfather added a veranda to the front of his unit making his apartment more accessible which in turn further emphasized its character as the central communal space for the extended family household.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 2 | 1997 – 2004
 Abd al-Aziz Abouzeid & Amaal elSharqawy

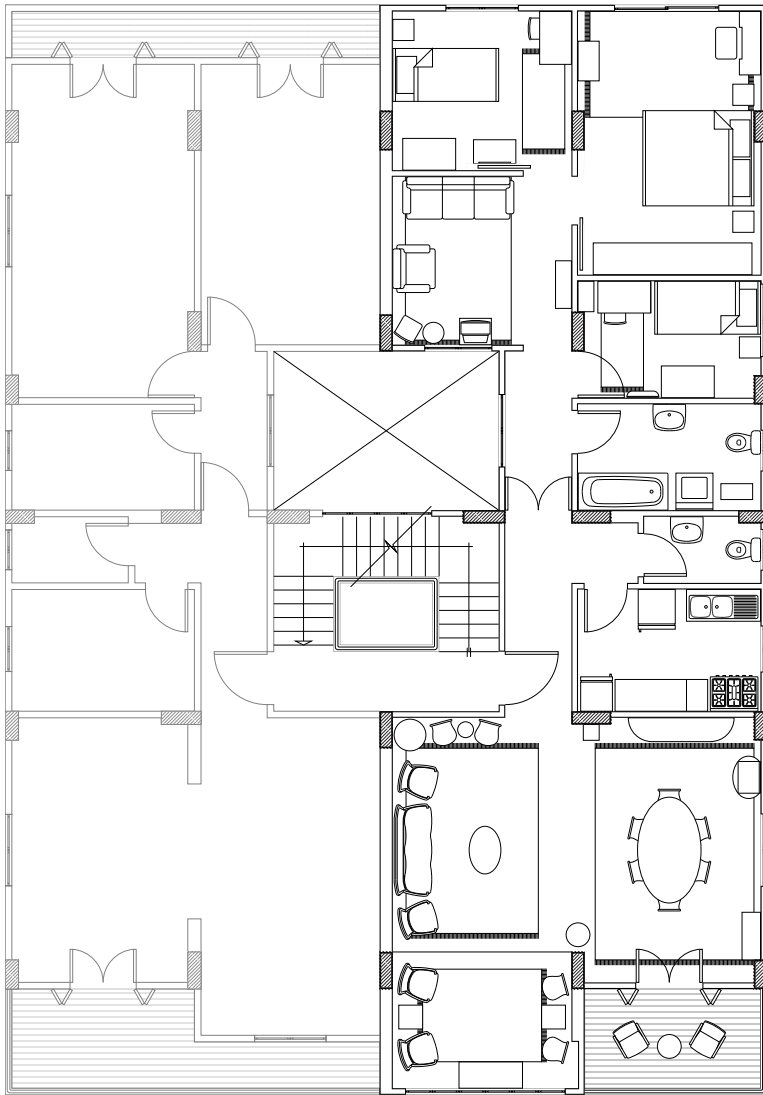
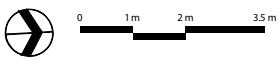


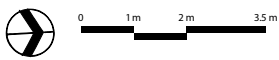
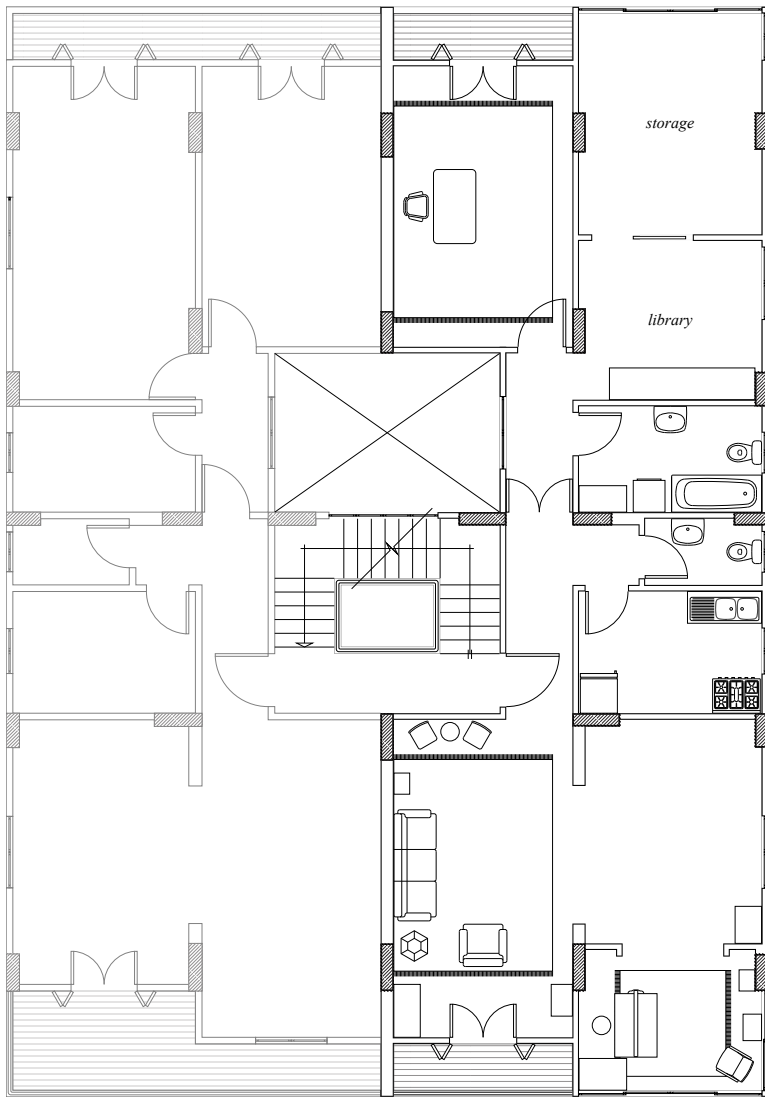
fig.2.a.22 In 1998, my nuclear family moved out of apartment 4 on the first floor to apartment 10 on the fifth floor. The two back bedrooms were rearranged into a bedroom for my parents; two separate bedrooms for me and my sister, and a living area. The portion of the front balcony was, once again annexed, this time to make for a larger reception area.

fig.2.a.23 [opposite page, left] Two years later, in 2000, I got into architecture school. Accordingly, the front portion of apartment 4 was repurposed to become my studio, where I worked on school projects since my room in apartment 10 was too small to fit my drafting table or receive classmates to work on group projects. The back portion of the apartment was repurposed into a bigger study area for my parents, with their former bedroom turned into an office and our former living room turned into a library for all their books.

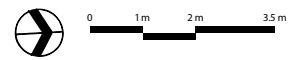
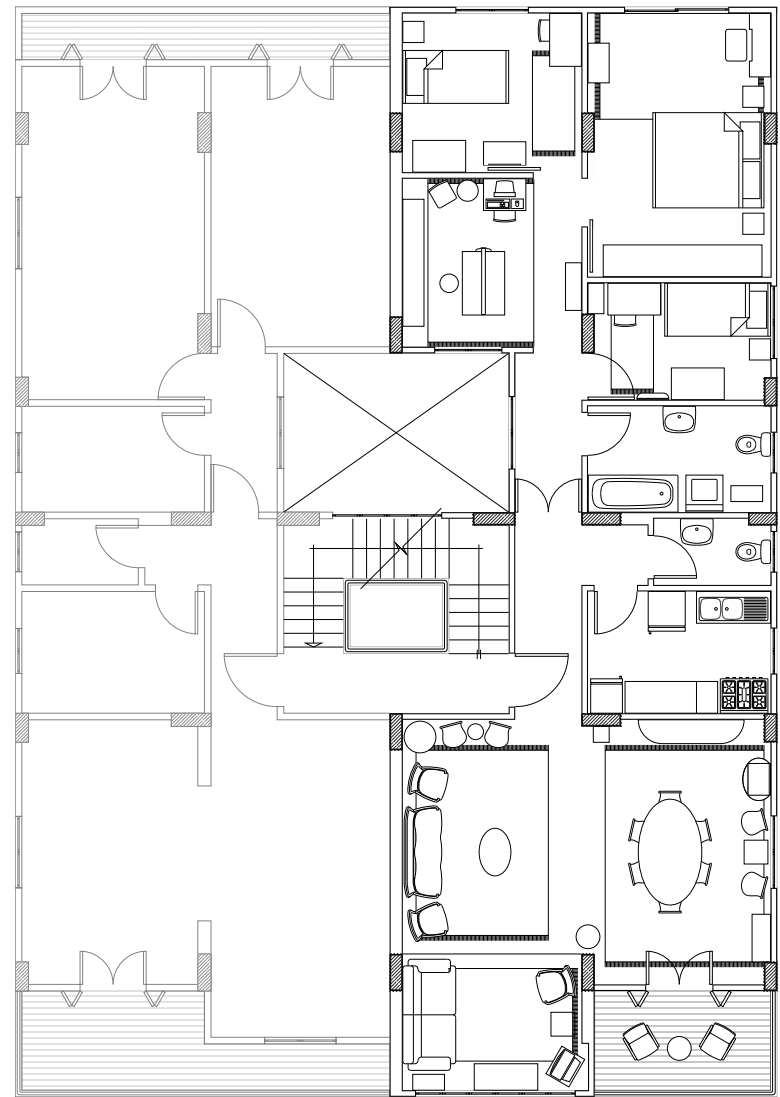
fig.2.a.24 [opposite page, right] Five years after that, in 2005, my sister got into architecture school too. Accordingly, our living room in apartment 10 was repurposed to be her own separate studio; and the living room was moved to the front portion of the apartment.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 10 | 1998 – 2005
 Ola Abouzeid & Aly elBahrawy



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 4 | 2000 – present
 Amr elBahrawy + Ola Abouzeid



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 10 | 2005 – present
 Ola Abouzeid

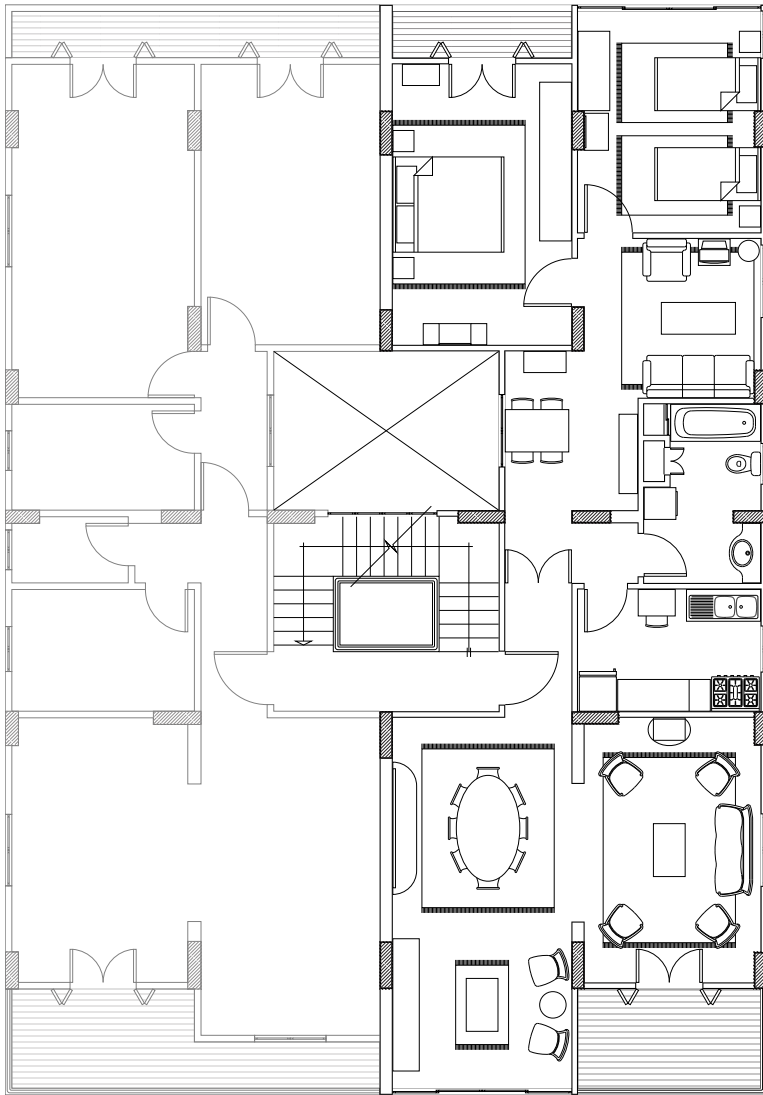
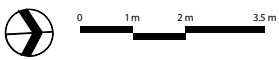
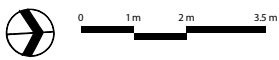
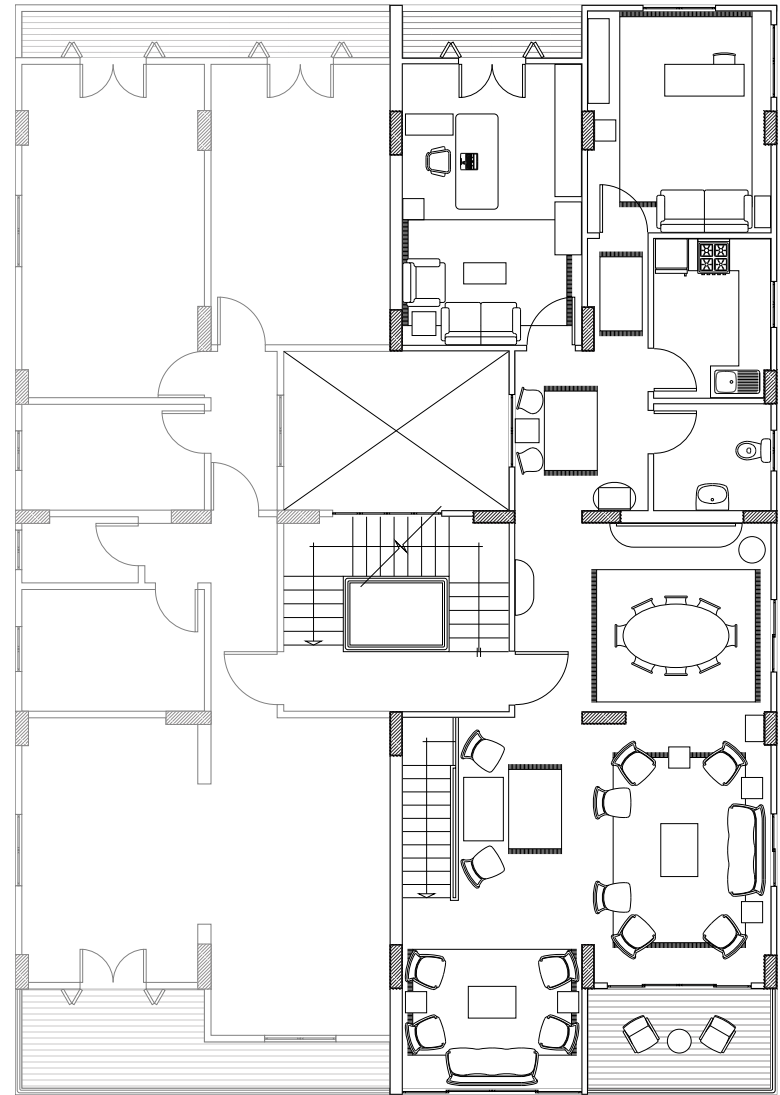
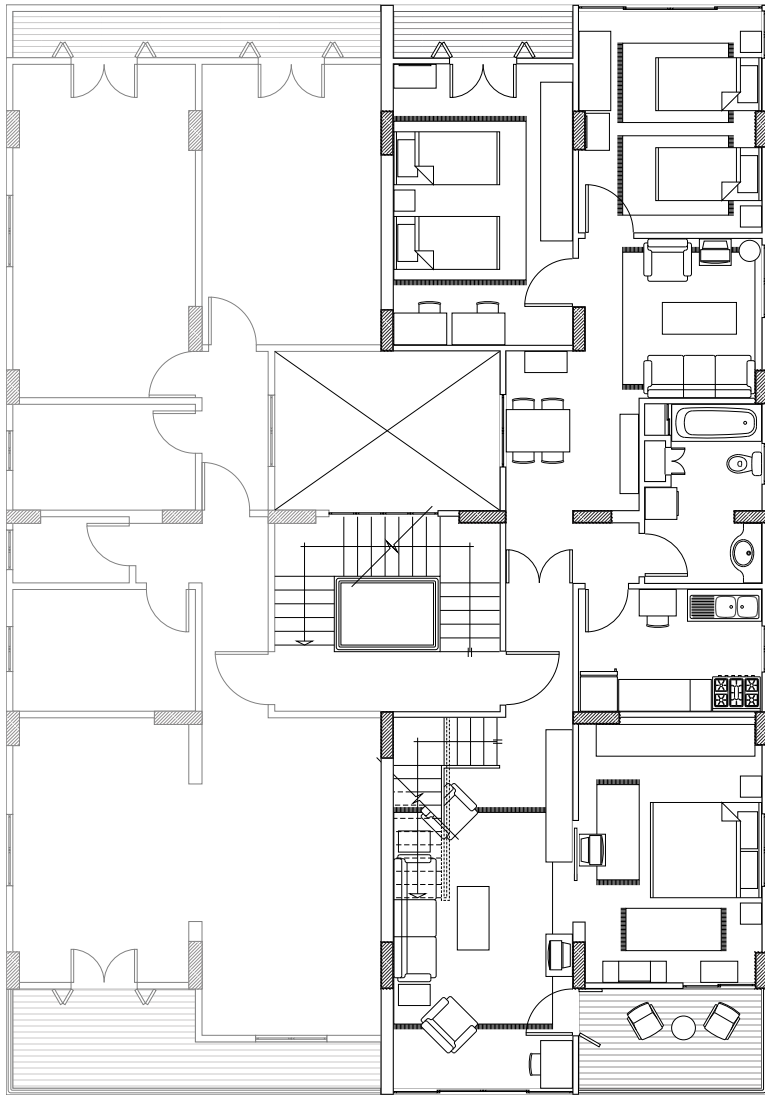


fig.2.a.25 My uncle is, by far, the one inhabitant of 11 El-Insha Street who's responsible for the most drastic, and the most instances of change to his apartment over the years. Not being a fan of eating in front of TV, and barred from using the highly ceremonial dining room; in 1995, my uncle got rid of the hardly used water closet and redid his main bathroom to create more space for having a small dining area that led into the living room. That expanded living space became the centre of activity in his apartment, where his kids studied and received friends and relatives.

fig.2.a.26 [opposite age] In 1997, my uncle had male twins. With four children, and in need of more space; in 2002, my uncle embarked on his most ambitious rearrangement of his unit to date. He punctured through the floor slab of his apartment with a staircase that connected it to his eldest daughter's intended apartment on the next floor turning both units into one duplex. The lower level of that duplex, namely apartment 6, consisted of living and sleeping spaces. The former reception in apartment 6 was turned into my uncle and his wife's bedroom; allowing for the two bedrooms at the back of the apartment to become those of their two daughters, and two sons respectively. The former dining area in apartment 6 was turned into an extra living space, and from there, the internal staircase led to the upper level of the duplex, namely apartment 8. The front portion of apartment 8 consisted of a large, open reception and dining area, complete with their own small bathroom and kitchenette; a ceremonial space that was primarily designated to receive and entertain guests without interfering with the privacy of the family's living spaces on the lower level. The back portion of apartment 8 had a study for my uncle, and a separate study for his daughters.

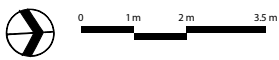
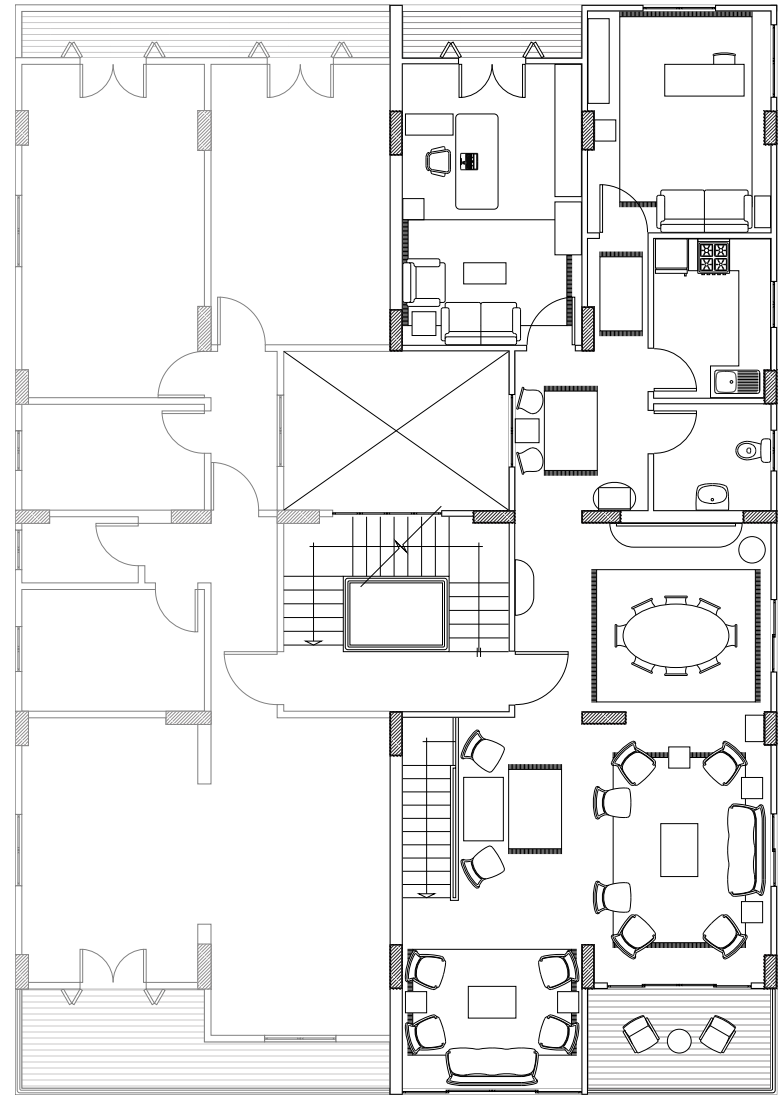
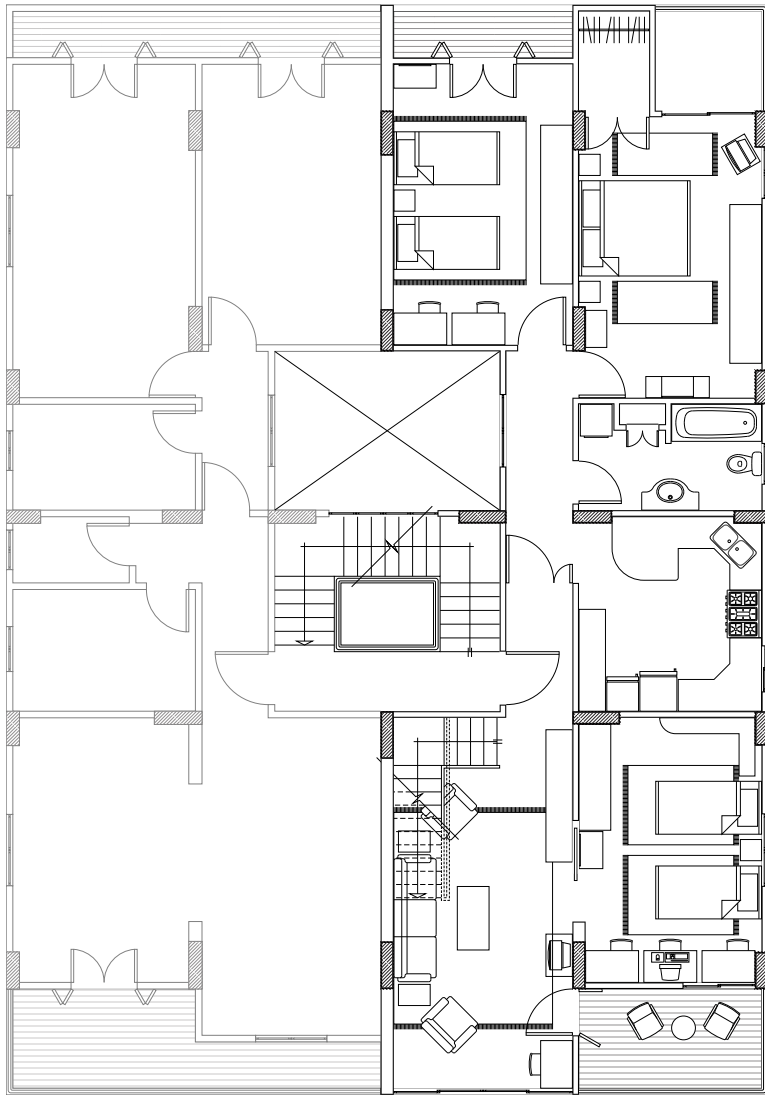


11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 6 | 1995 – 2002
 Ahmed Abouzeid & Azza elDinasoury



11 El-Insha Street
Apartments 6 and 8 | 2002 – 2008
Ahmed Abouzeid & Azza elDinasoury

fig.2.a.27 [opposite page] Realizing that his and his wife's bedroom, which overlooked El-Insha Street, was too noisy for his own taste; my uncle relocated it to the quieter back portion of apartment 6 in 2008, switching bedrooms with his two sons. That simple move, however, entailed yet another spatial rearrangement of the back portion of apartment 6. My uncle got rid of the living and dining space there to make for a bigger master bedroom for himself and his wife; complete with its own little balcony and walk-in closet – which is a rather novel concept in Egypt. He also reverted the main bathroom to its original form, and redid his kitchen giving it more area. The rest of the duplex remained unaltered.



11 El-Insha Street
Apartments 6 and 8 | 2008 – present
Ahmed Abouzeid & Azza elDinasoury

11 El-Insha Street
Apartment 1 | 1997 – 2010
Ramy Fahim & Nagat Zakhary

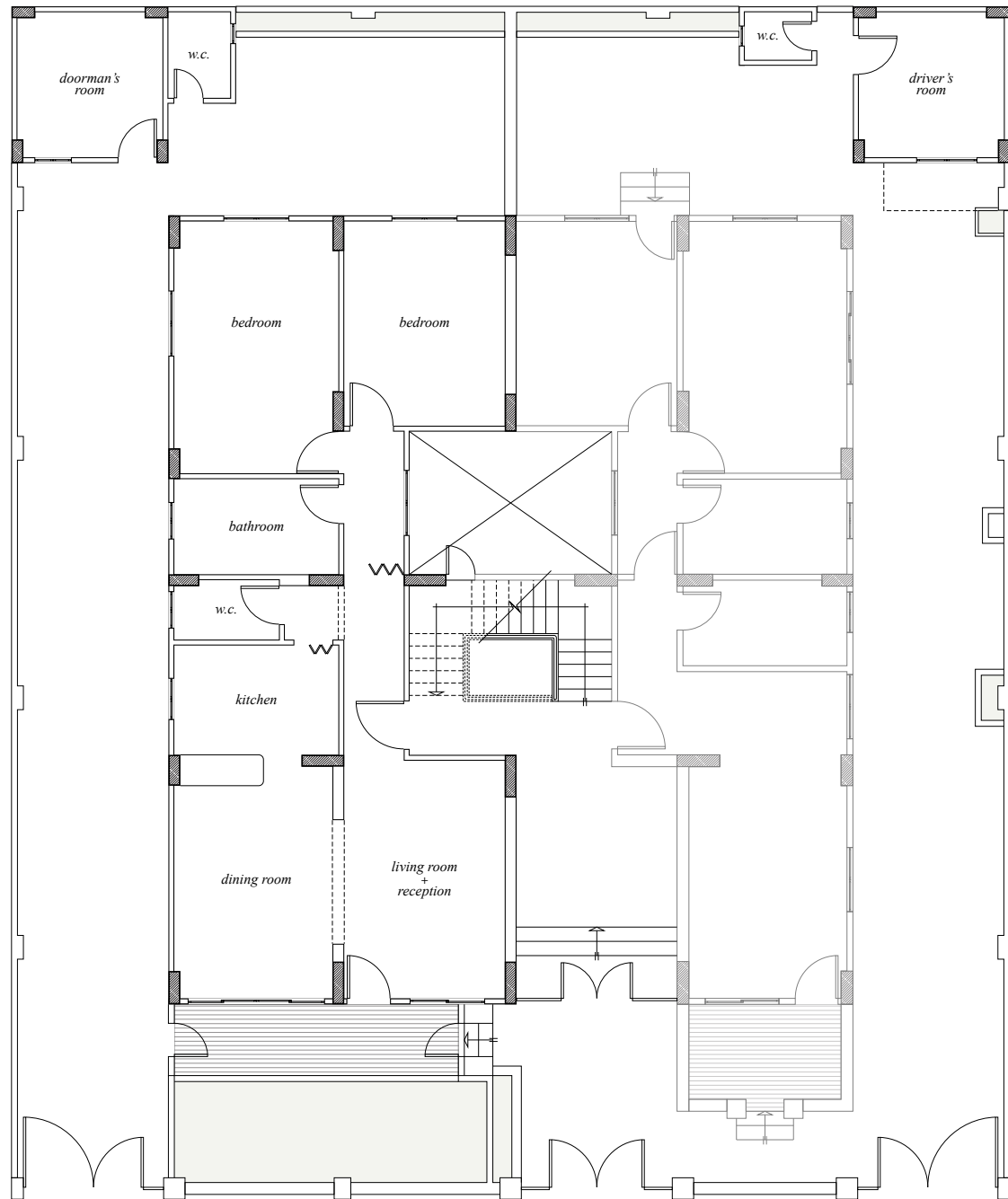
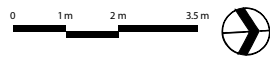
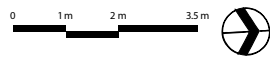
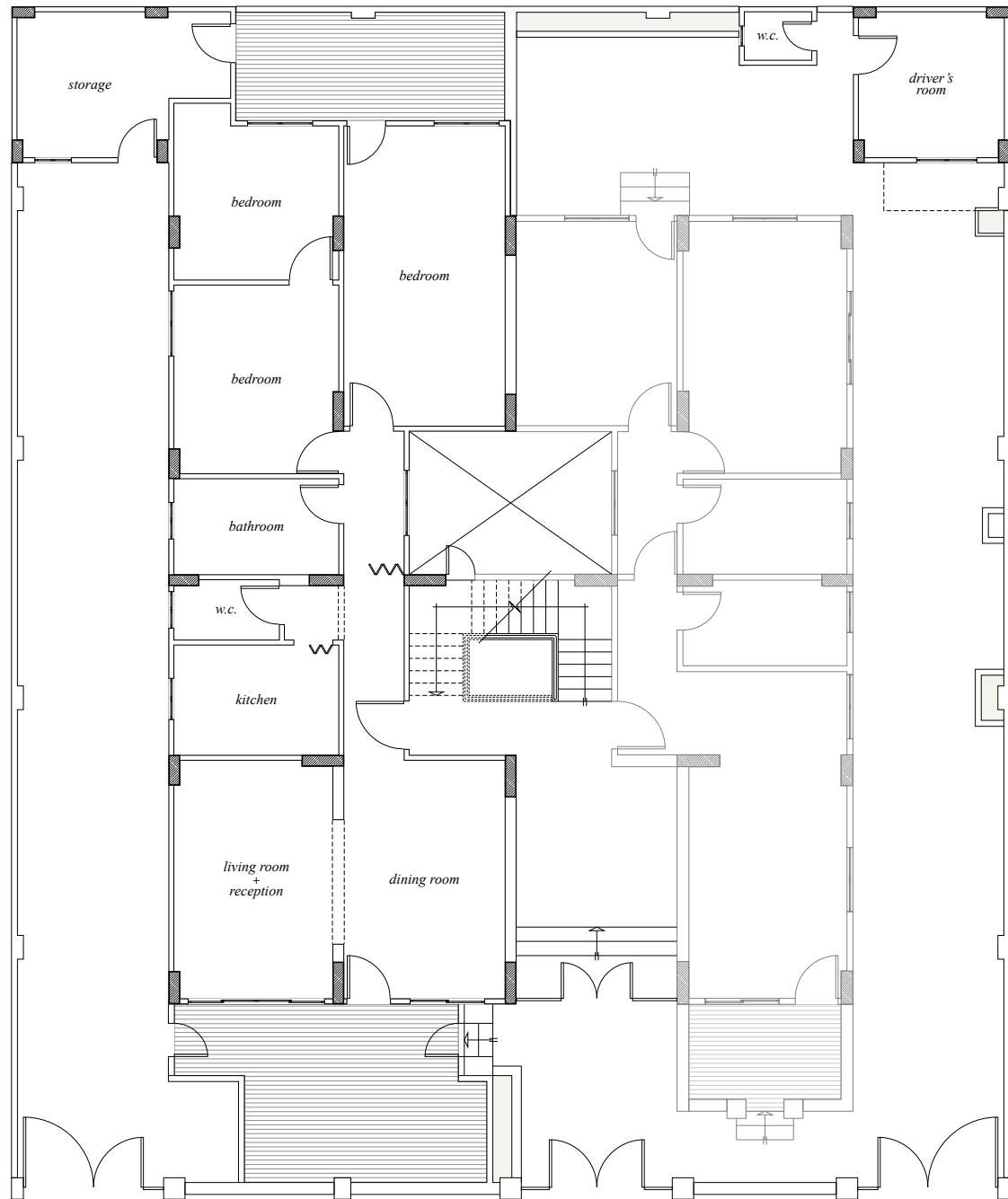


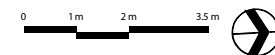
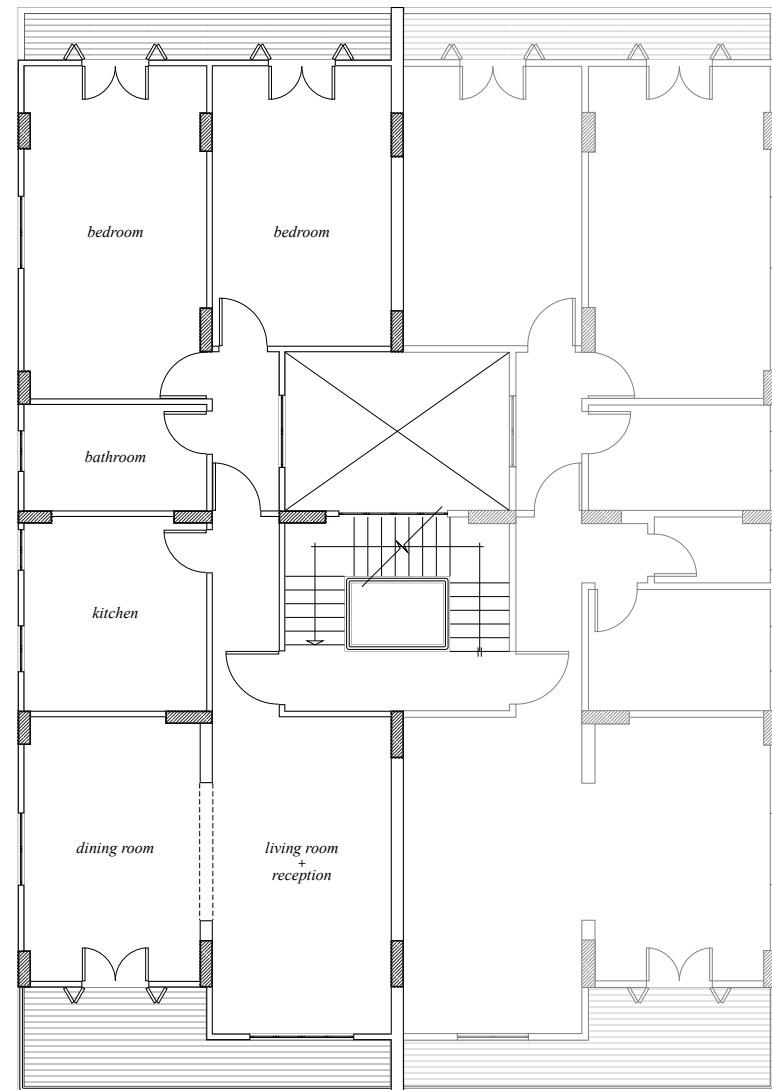
fig.2.a.28 The same year my grandfather added a veranda to his unit, Mr. Fahim's youngest son, Ramy, got married and was ready to move into his unit on the ground floor; apartment 1. Before moving in with his newly wed, the front portion of the apartment was altered. The reception was opened up on a walled porch that annexed the setback in front of the apartment; and the kitchen wall was knocked down opening it up to the dining room.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 1 | 2010 – present
 Ramy Fahim & Nagat Zakhary

fig.2.a.29 [opposite page] After having two sons, in 2010, Ramy Fahim went through another rearrangement of his unit. The rear set back behind his apartment was annexed into another porch and allowed for a bigger bedroom for himself and his wife. It also gave him enough space to turn the other bedroom into two separate one of each of his sons. In the front portion of the apartment, the open kitchen was closed up to become its own separate space once again, after the open-concept kitchen did not sit well with the heavy nature of Egyptian cuisine.

fig.2.a.30 Hatem elHabiby's unit, apartment 3, featured the most minimal alteration in all of 11 El-Insha Street. The water closet was disposed of to allow for a bigger kitchen.



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 3 | 1993 – present
 Hatem elHabiby & Mona Ismail

fig.2.a.31 In Nady Fahim's apartment, part of the front balcony was annexed and turned into a study. The most common spatial alteration in 11 El-Insha Street also occurred, as one of the two back bedrooms was split into a bedroom for his older son, and a living area; which was later turned into his younger son's bedroom.

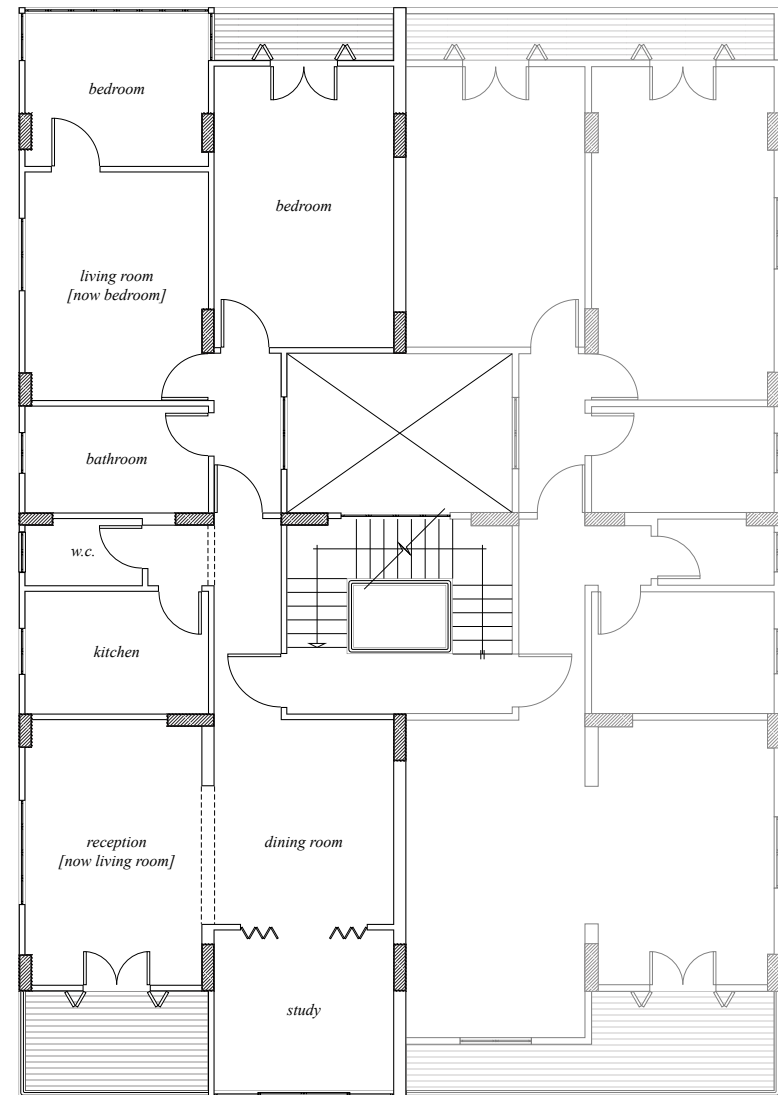
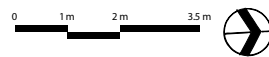
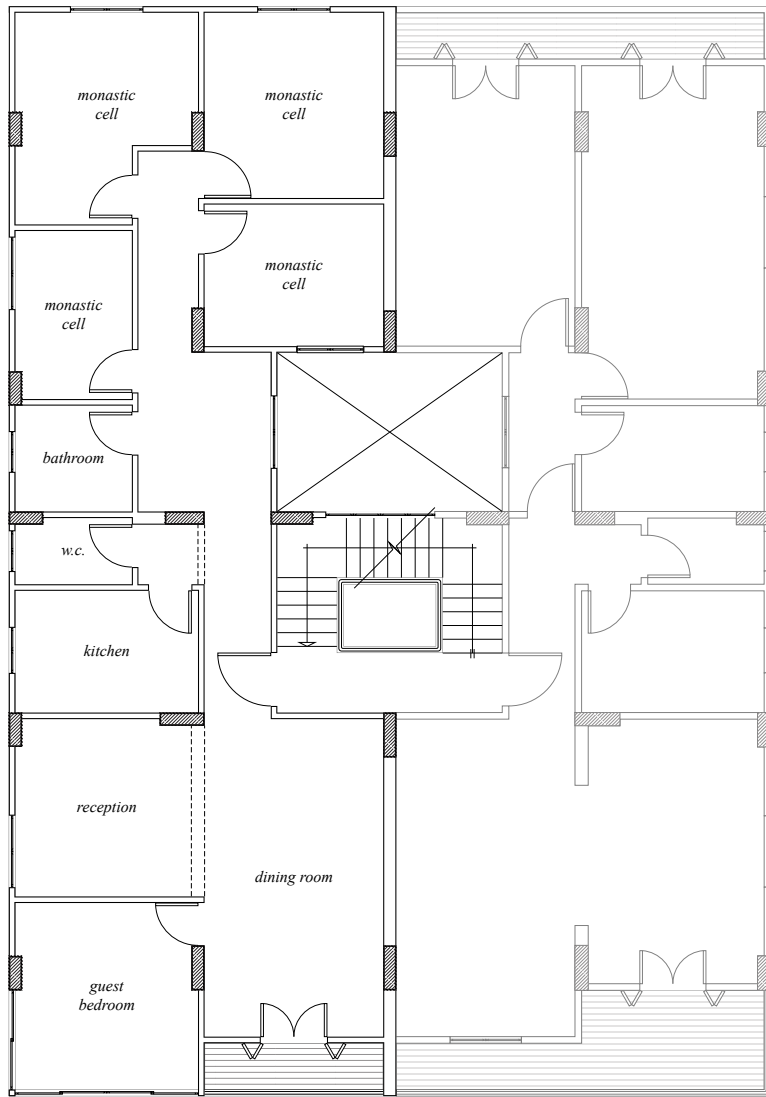


fig.2.a.32 [opposite page, left] Apartment 7 featured one of the most interesting spatial and functional adaptations in 11 El-Insha Street. After graduating university, Mr. Fahim's son, Victor, became a monk. Now Father Dionysius, he accordingly transformed his unit in 11 El-Insha Street into something of a miniature monastery. The back portion of the apartment was split into four monastic cells; and part of the front balcony was annexed into a guest bedroom, which along with the reception and big dining room, made for a communal space for less fortunate wayfarers to stay while Father Dionysius' parent monastery set them up with jobs and their own accommodations.

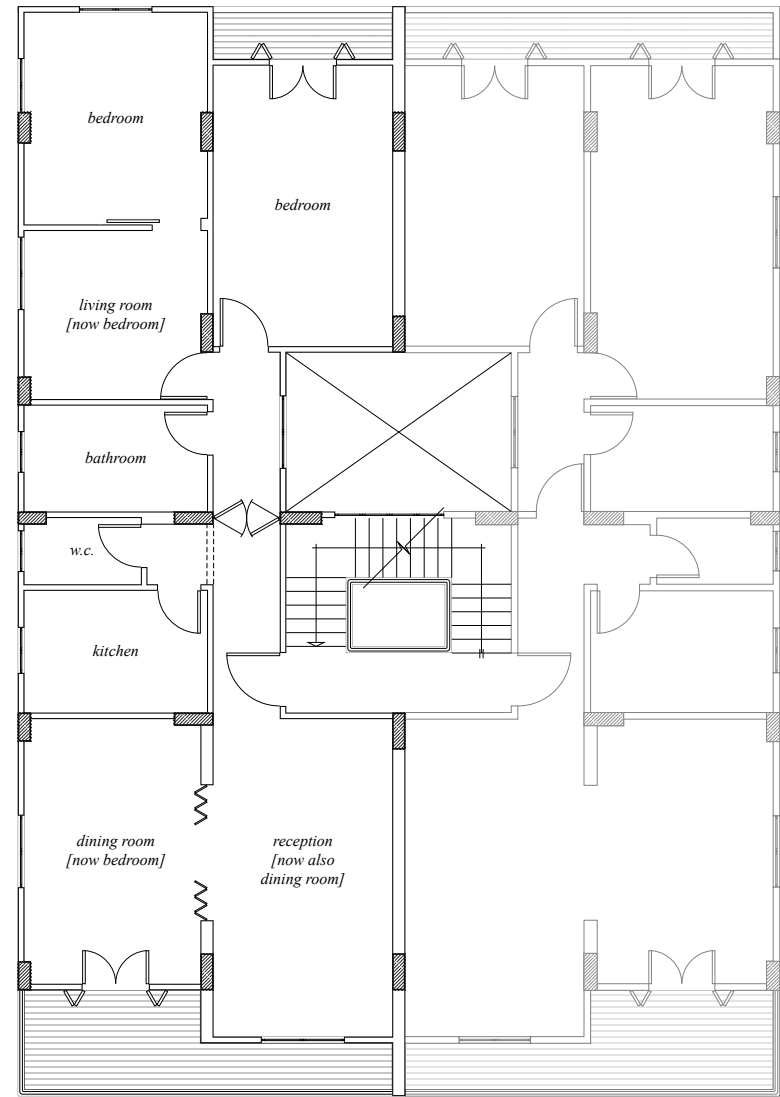
fig.2.a.33 [opposite page, right] Nahed Fahim's unit, apartment 9, also features the most common spatial alteration in 11 El-Insha Street also occurred, as one of the two back bedrooms was split into a bedroom for her son, and a living area; which was then turned into a bed room for other son later on. With the arrival of her third and youngest son, the dining room was appropriated into a bedroom for her eldest son, while his former room became that of his youngest brother. The reception, which now doubles as a living room, came to also include the dining room.



11 El-Insha Street
Apartment 5 | 1990 – present
Nady Fahim & Amal Badei'



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 7 | 1997 – present
 Father Dionysius [Victor Fahim]



11 El-Insha Street
 Apartment 9 | 1991 – present
 Nahed Fahim & Fawzy Ghattas



1984 – 1988



1990 – 1997



fig.2.a.34 The transformation of 11 El-Insha Street's façade over 30 years; clearly less effort was exerted, as well as, less attention given to altering it in comparison to the buildings floor plans. However, it has as much resilience and capacity for adaptation as the floor plans. The arched window on the top floor is my mother's pride and joy. Having that sort of window in was one of her primary concerns during the furnishing of apartment 10 before we relocated to it from apartment 4. Apparently, this window became an identifying marker in the area for 11 El-Insha Street, much to my mother's content.

However, it wasn't just the parallels between the traditional extended family houses of medieval Cairo and 11 El-Insha Street's apartment building—extended family house typology that caught my interest. I also became quite interested in what seemed to be a particular prevalence of that unique architectural typology within Nasr City's urban context. By the time I finished primary school in 1993, I had definitely outgrown my earlier childhood notion that 11 El-Insha Street's apartment building—extended family house typology was the template for all residential buildings. At the time, Nasr City was at the height of its development boom that had started in the mid 80s, and condominium towers were clearly emerging as the predominant residential typology throughout the whole neighborhood. Those towers looked like a much taller and bulkier variant of 11 El-Insha Street since they obviously, and in the strictest architectural sense, followed a similar apartment building typology. But it was also quite obvious that, unlike 11 El-Insha Street's typology, those towers did not house the same social structures. Instead, the substantially larger number of apartments in a condominium tower were inhabited by unrelated nuclear families. Although it was much simpler version of it, I've had that impression since a very young age because the majority of my schoolmates who dwelled in Nasr City lived in apartments in condominium towers, and rather than relatives, they instead spoke of unrelated neighbors who lived with them in the same building.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming prevalence of condominium towers in Nasr City, once the apartment building—extended family house typology caught my interest; I noticed three distinct trends that pertained to it within the context of the neighborhood. The first was that, while it most definitely was not exclusive to Nasr City, the apartment building—extended family house typology was by far the most prevalent there. More than any other Cairene neighborhood, it seemed to me that Nasr City hosted some of the largest clusters of those apartment building—extended family houses, and had quite a few streets that, much like El-Insha Street, were made up entirely of buildings that followed that typology. From there, it also appeared to me as though, within the urban fabric of Nasr City itself, the streets on which apartment building—extended family houses generally stood, as well as the streets that were made up entirely of such typology, were almost always inner streets. Condominium towers on the other hand seemed to be far more common on Nasr City's wider main streets.

And finally, it seemed to me that this clear distinction between the general locales of apartment building—extended family houses and condominium towers within the context of Nasr City reflected an equally clear distinction between the social groups that inhabited both such typologies. Apartment building—extended family houses appeared to be an almost exclusive dwelling typology for middle class professionals, while members of the new middle class seemed to predominately dwell in the condominium tower typology. That is not to say that no middle class professional ever dwelled in Nasr City's condominium towers, because a great many of them did. It just appeared to me as though this did not work in reverse since there were hardly any new middle class extended families who dwelled in their own apartment building households. I had this distinct impression since a very young age because I was aware that the older members of 11 El-Insha Street's two extended family households were all professionals – my grandparents, uncle and aunt were doctors; my parents were

university professors; and Mr. Fahim's sons, daughters, and their spouses, were pharmacists, veterinarians, and accountants, et cetera. I was also aware that those of my relatives, as well as the parents of my schoolmates, who dwelled in the same type of building as 11 El-Insha Street were all professionals too. Conversely though, the parents of my schoolmates who lived in condominium towers almost always had jobs that sounded both different and rather ambiguous to me at such a young age – they either owned export and import companies, or dealerships, or were simply just “businessmen”.

All in all, in the fifteen years or so between the early 90s and the mid 2000s, 11 El-Insha Street stood as a quintessential example of the apartment building–extended family house typology, and along with the other apartment building extended family households down El-Insha street, it constituted one of several building blocks for a unique street model that was particularly prevalent in Nasr City. By the end of those 15 years, I had no reason to believe that any of this would change. I thought that 11 El-Insha Street will continue to adapt to the changing needs of my extended family for years to come, and that the other extended family apartment buildings down the street will do so too. I also thought that El-Insha Street would remain the urban enclave of middle class professionals that it had always been for decades to come. But little did I know, all of that was, once again, about to drastically change over the following few years.



fig.2.1.1 Aerial photo of a typical Nasr City neighborhood, showing the discrepancy between the bylaw-abiding apartment buildings and the towering, bylaw violating condominium typology. There's clearly more of the latter than there is of the former.

2.1 Nasr City [1990s]

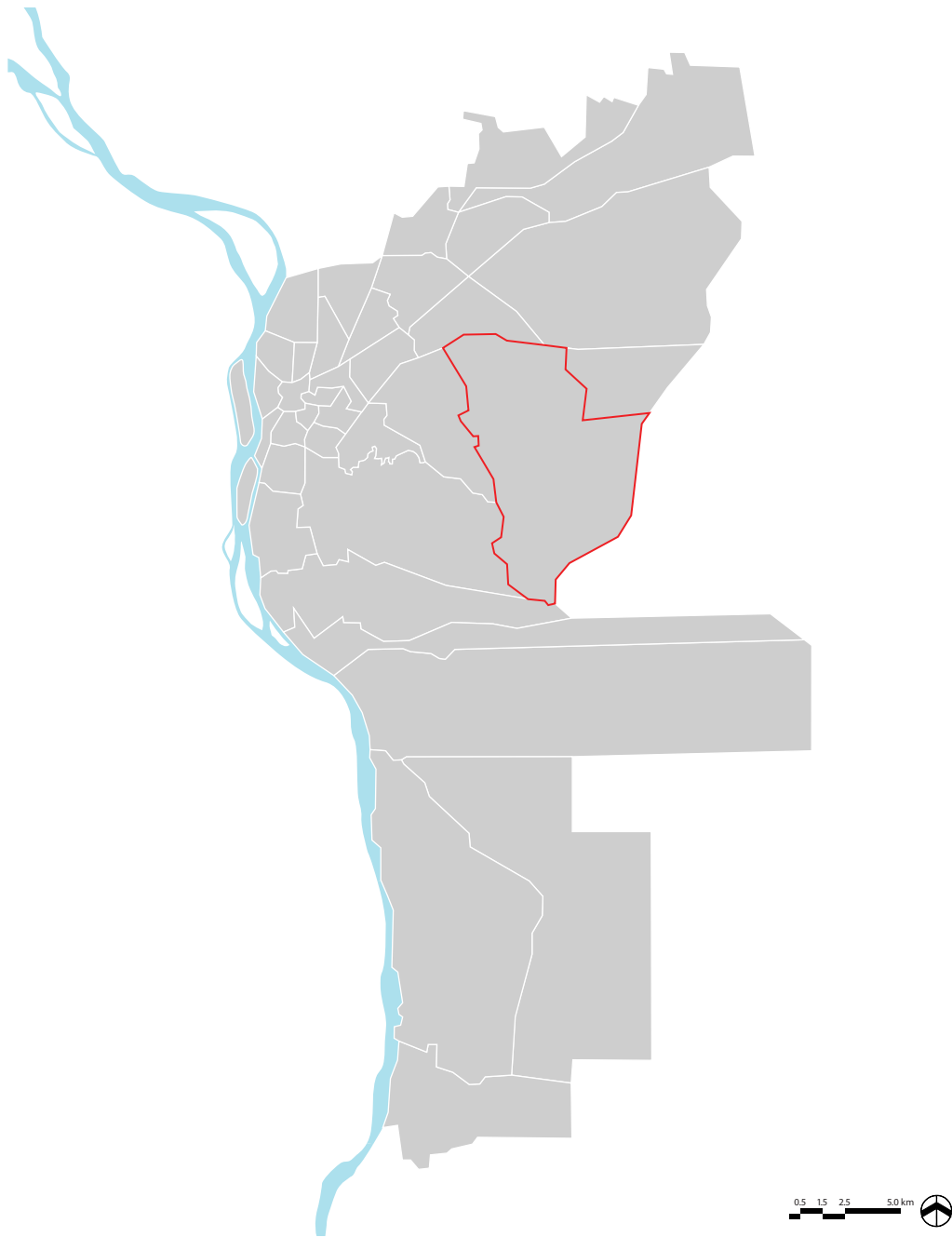
An urban testament to a middle class divide

“Although the broader changes in the Arab world have favored the nuclear family, the extended family still plays a role outside the household. This is visible in the preference for related nuclear family households to reside near one another, and to maintain a fairly intense contact. In cities like Cairo, a typical pattern at present is to build a multi-storey or multi-apartment building with various married kin, each occupying their independent apartment. This novel combination gives the adults many of the positive features of modern nuclear family and gives the children many of the positive features of the traditional extended family. Relatives live as neighbors, but in economically independent households.”

(Hopkins and Ibrahim 1997, 178)

Apart from the very broad reference to the apartment building–extended family house typology in the quote above, and as far as the research for this thesis went, no other formal study or statistical data that directly linked such typology, Nasr City, and the Egyptian middle class together was to be found. Accordingly, a series of statistical maps that were reproduced from raw data pertaining to certain demographic criteria in Cairo’s managerial districts in 1996 are going to be used here

to establish that link by demonstrating two key findings. The first is that Nasr City, at the time, was the residential hub for professionals who, as it was established earlier, represented an older, more moral Egyptian middle class. And the second is that Nasr City, at the time, had the largest concentration of the building–extended family house typology in comparison to the other Cairene neighborhoods – a point that would be made by way of cross-referencing demographic indicators pertaining to the prevalent housing typologies and modes of housing ownership in each of Cairo’s managerial districts. From there, another series of statistical maps applying the same demographic criteria to Nasr City’s managerial sub-districts will be used to establish that, out of all those sub-districts, the apartment building–extended family house typology as a unique form of middle class housing was the most prevalent in the First Zone – the sub-district where 11 El-Insha Street is located. That will then be followed by a number of urban analyses based on a survey that was carried out in Nasr City’s First Zone. Those analyses will illustrate the conformity of its residential structures to Nasr City’s building height bylaws, in order to contextually visualize the urban patterns of where apartment building–extended family houses stood in relation to condominium towers within the First Zone. In essence, the following set of mapping exercises aims at corroborating the main arguments of this thesis by way of concrete demographic and urban data.



Nasr City First Boundaries

Cairo Governorate Districts 1996

fig.2.1.2 Managerially, Nasr City consists of two districts, Nasr City First, and Nasr City Second. The latter comprises most of Nasr City's large-scale projects, industrial areas, and low-cost housing. The latter, on the other hand, comprises Nasr City's core residential zones, and thus is going to be the main focus of the following analysis. Although it is technically part of the Nasr City First district, 'Ezbet elHaggana sub-district, one of Cairo's larger squatter settlements, has been excluded from Nasr City First here so as not to skew the data. Moreover, the seventh neighborhood, which technically is part of the Nasr City Second district, had been included here with the Nasr City first district, since it belongs to Nasr City's core Seventh Zone.

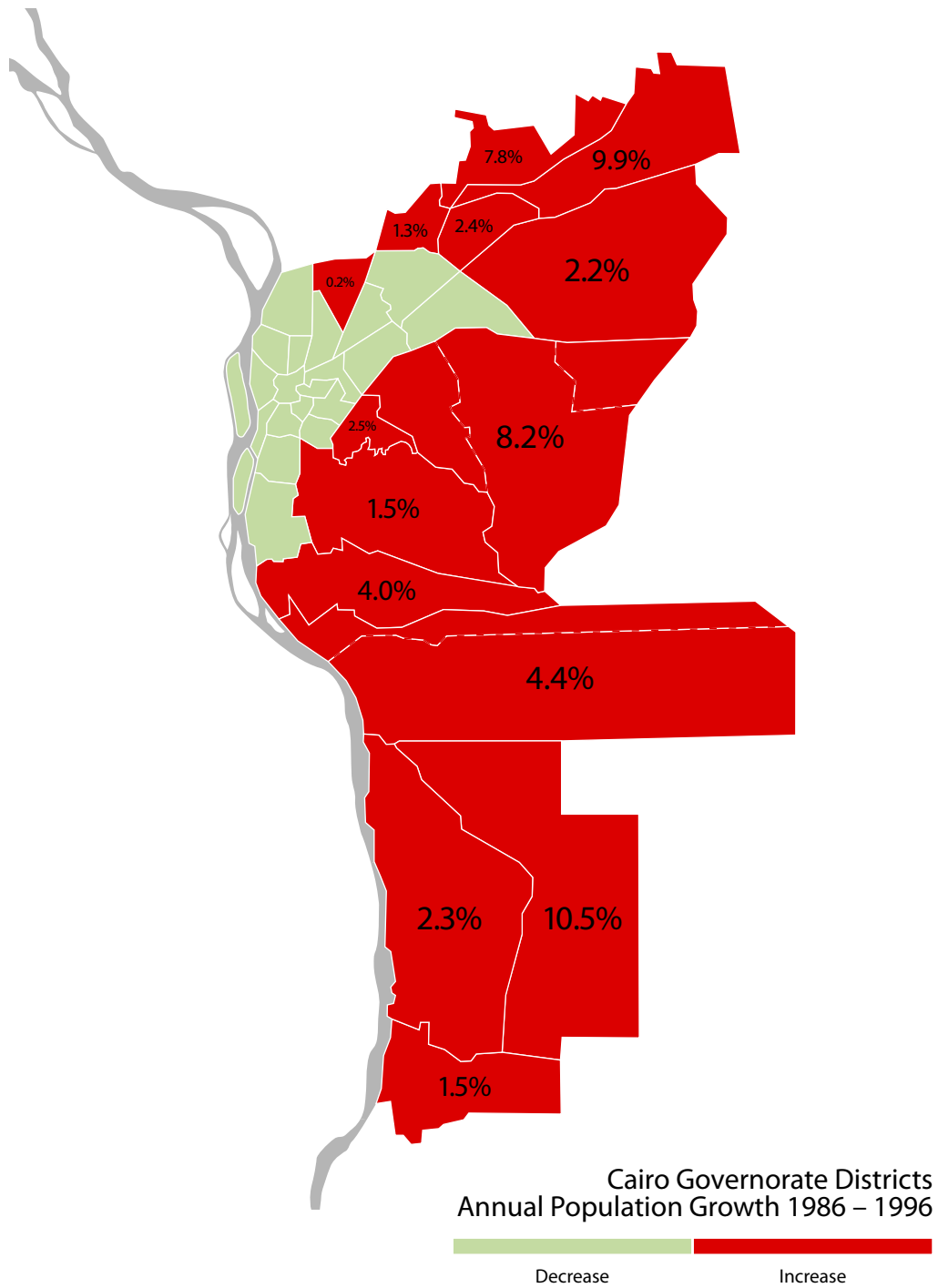


fig.2.1.3 Between 1986 and 1996, the years of its socially driven urban boom, Nasr City exhibited one of the highest population growth rates in all of Cairo, rivaled only by the typically fast-growing lower end residential districts of the city.

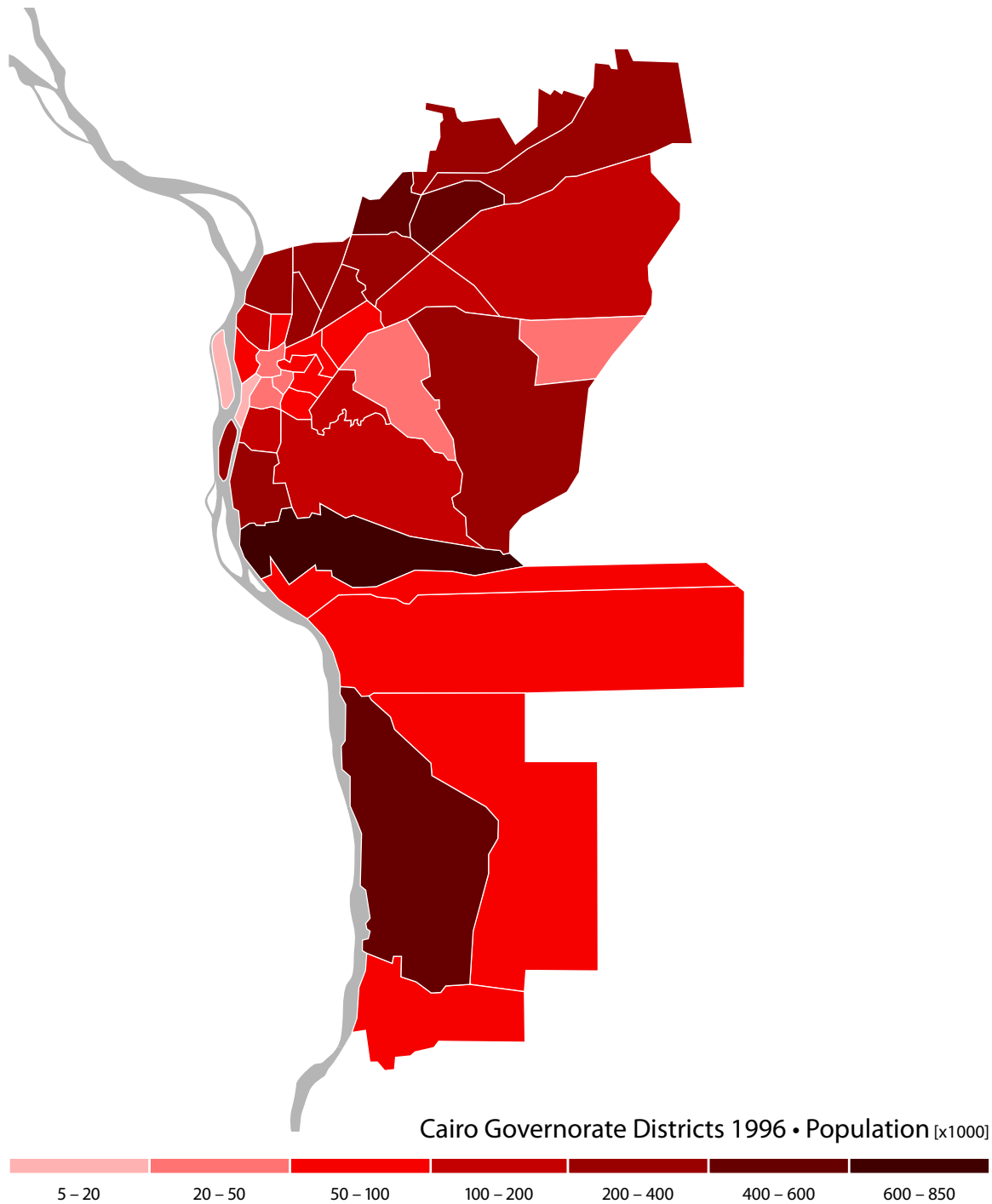


fig.2.1.4 In 1996, Nasr City had some 256,000 inhabitants, a much higher population than Cairo's other high-end middle class neighborhoods, such as Masr AlGadeeda and Nozha districts to Nasr City's north (120,000 inhabitants and 154,000 inhabitants respectively).

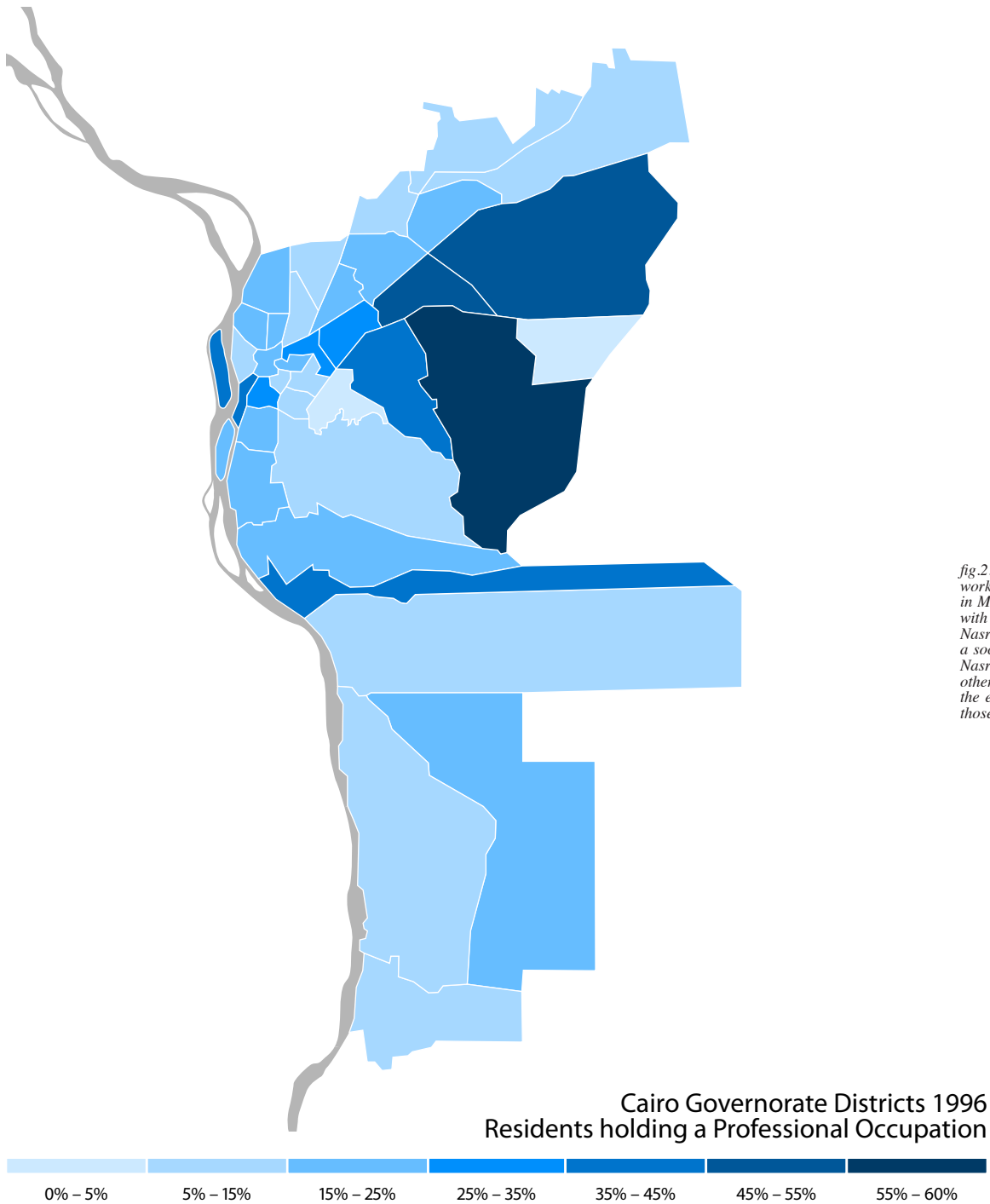


fig.2.1.5 In the same year, 55.5% of Nasr City's working population were professionals, versus 46% in Masr AlGadeeda and 52% in Nozha. Combined with its fairly larger population, this means that Nasr City was indeed the hub of professionals as a social group. Given the high real-estate rates in Nasr City at the time, it is safe to assume that the other half of its working population belonged to the entrepreneurial middle class who could afford those rates.

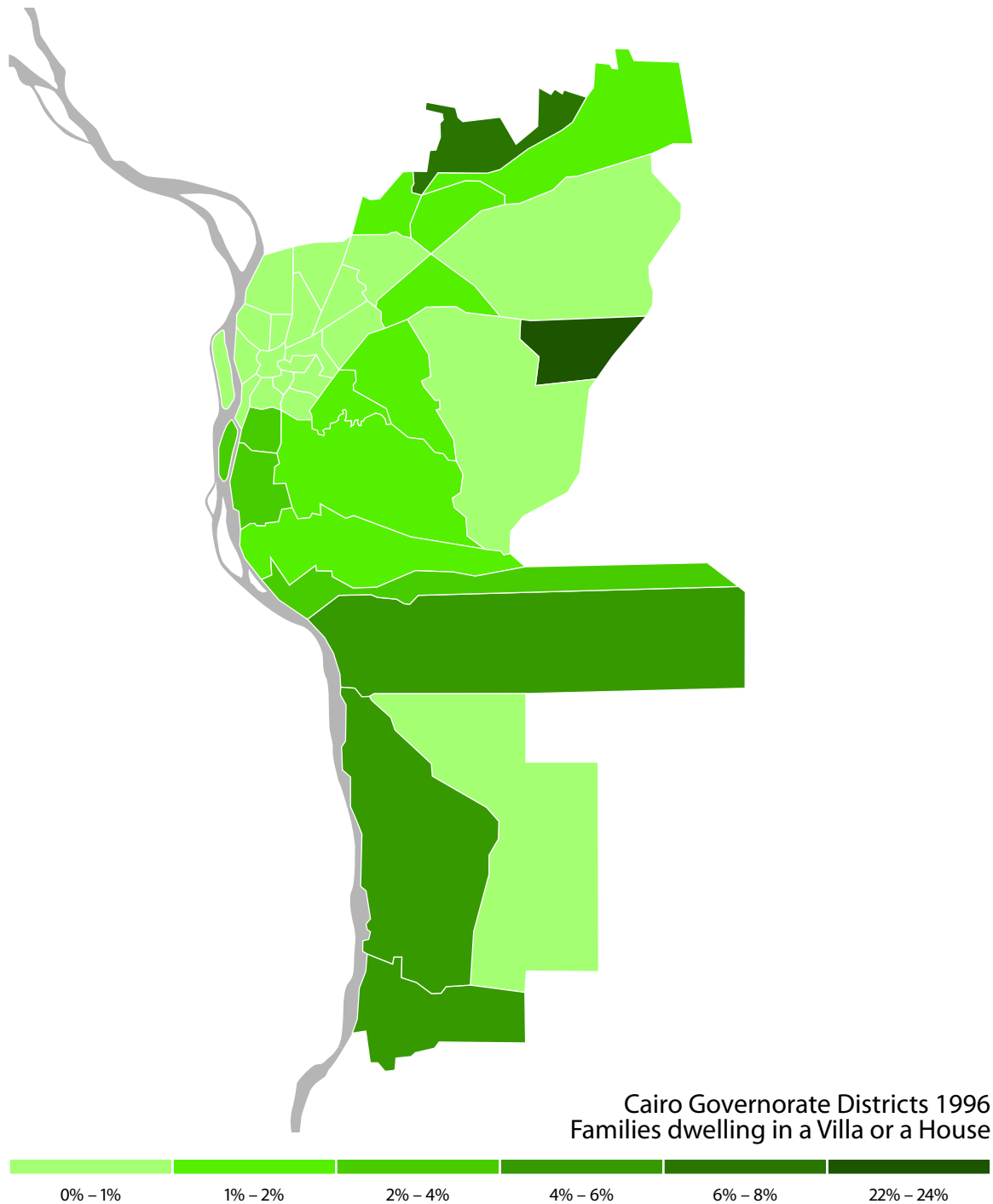


fig.2.1.6 As defined in the census, a house is a residential structure of one to five storeys with only one apartment on each storey; and a villa is a residential structure of two storeys linked by an internal staircase. And while these criteria might have been useful to identify Nasr City's bylaw-abiding apartment building–extended family house typology, the fact the apartment buildings that follow such typology in the district usually have more than one apartment per storey renders this criteria useless. Not to mention that the census's definition of a "family" does not explicitly exclude on include extended families. Indeed, in 1996, Nasr City, like the majority of Cairo's districts, had a very low percentage of its families living in the defined "House" or "Villa".

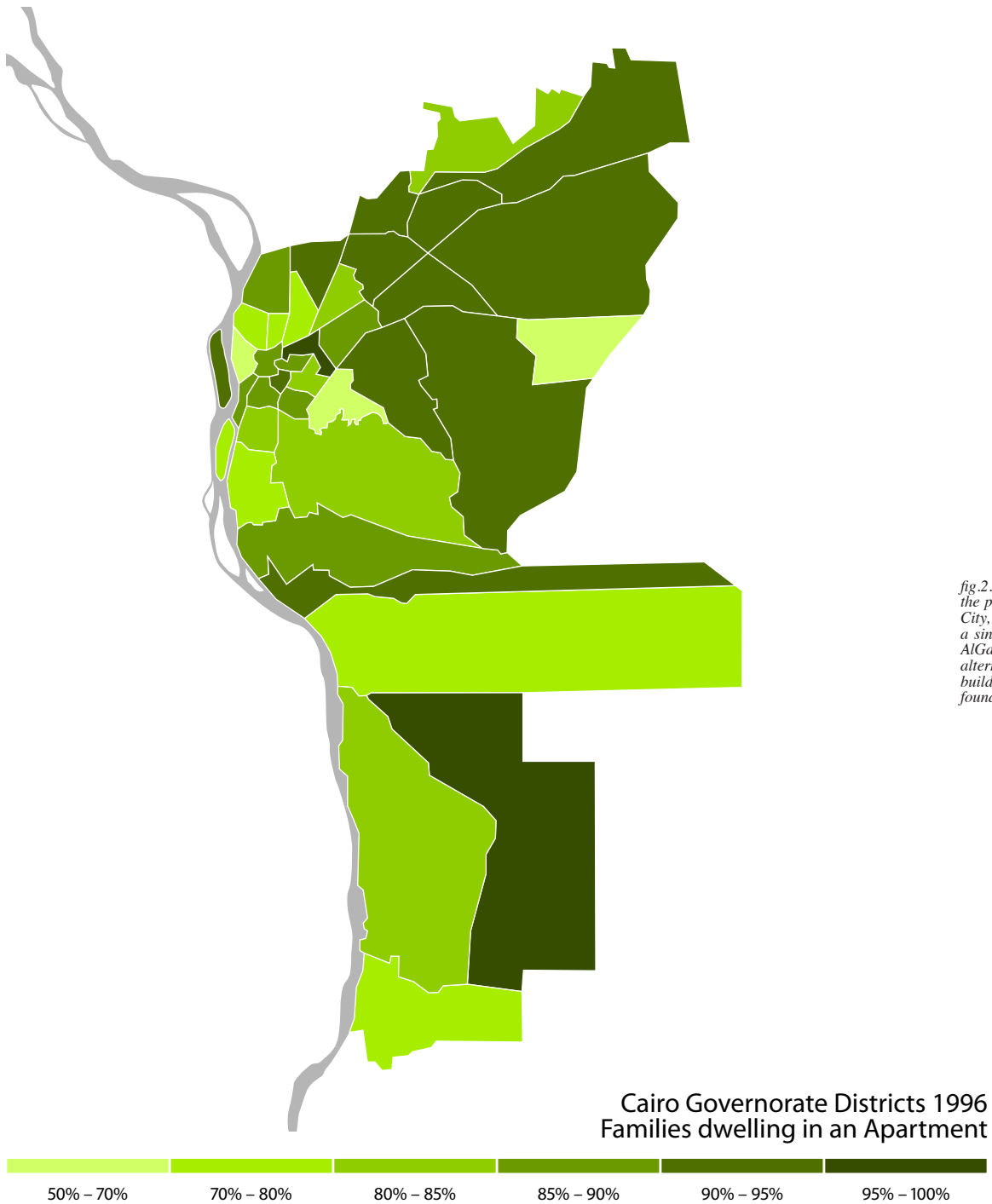


fig.2.1.7 Alternately, a single apartment is clearly the prevalent form of dwelling for families in Nasr City, as 94.5% of its families in 1996 dwelled in a single apartment. That is also the case in Masr AlGadeeda (91.4%) and Nozha (92.25%). An alternate criteria for identifying the apartment building-extended family house typology had to be found.

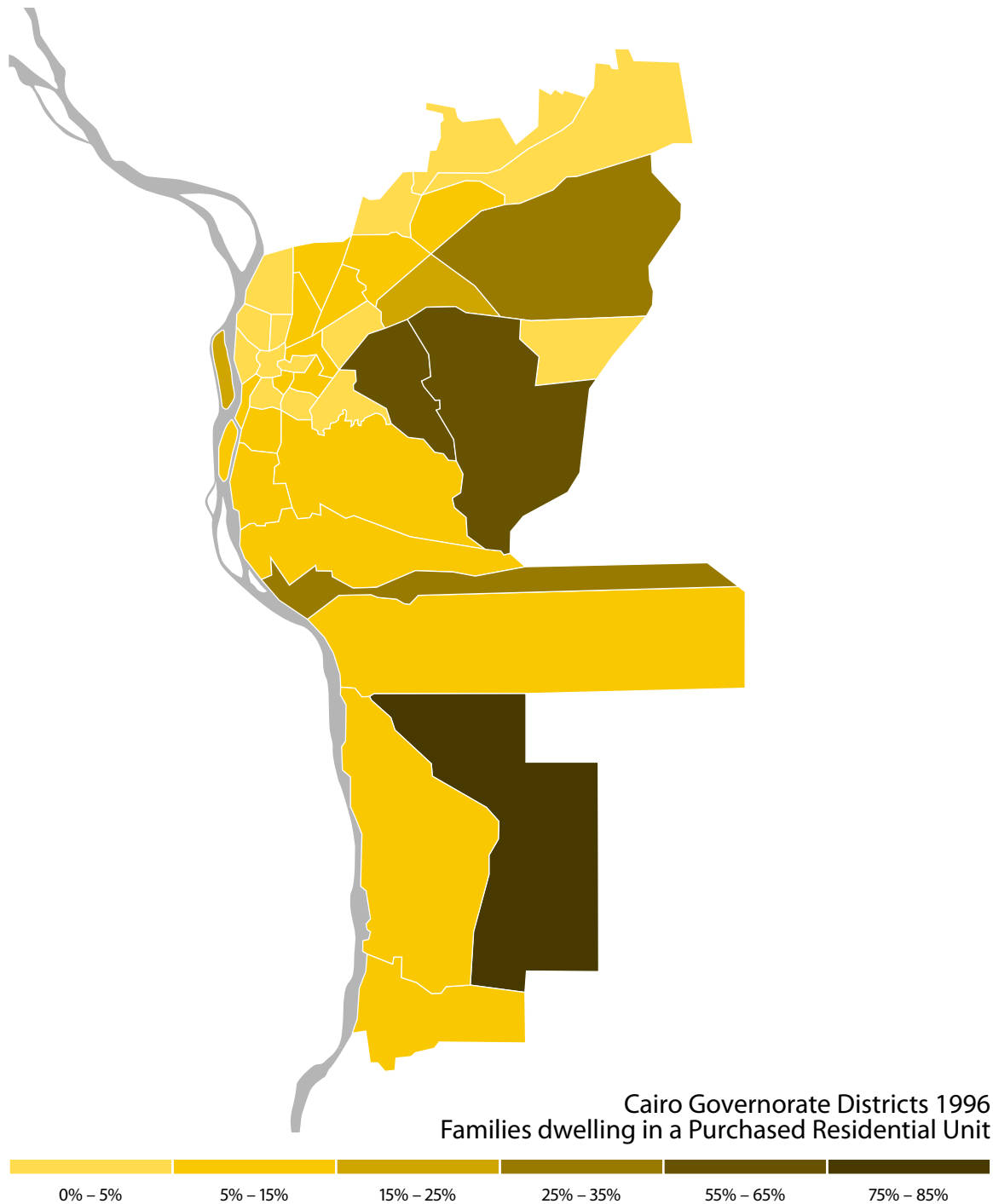


fig.2.1.8 The criteria for identifying the apartment building–extended family house typology presents itself in the mode of residential unit ownership. A purchased unit is one that has been “sold” by its owner to another party through a monetary transaction. Apartments in condominiums, bylaw-abiding or not, that were built by private citizens and sold later to the general public, fall under that type of unit. In other words, this criterion could be used to identify unrelated nuclear families in any given district. In 1996, 64% of families in Nasr city dwelled in a purchased unit, one of the highest percentages compared to the older districts Masr AlGadeeda and Nozha where rental was still the prevalent form of residential unit ownership.

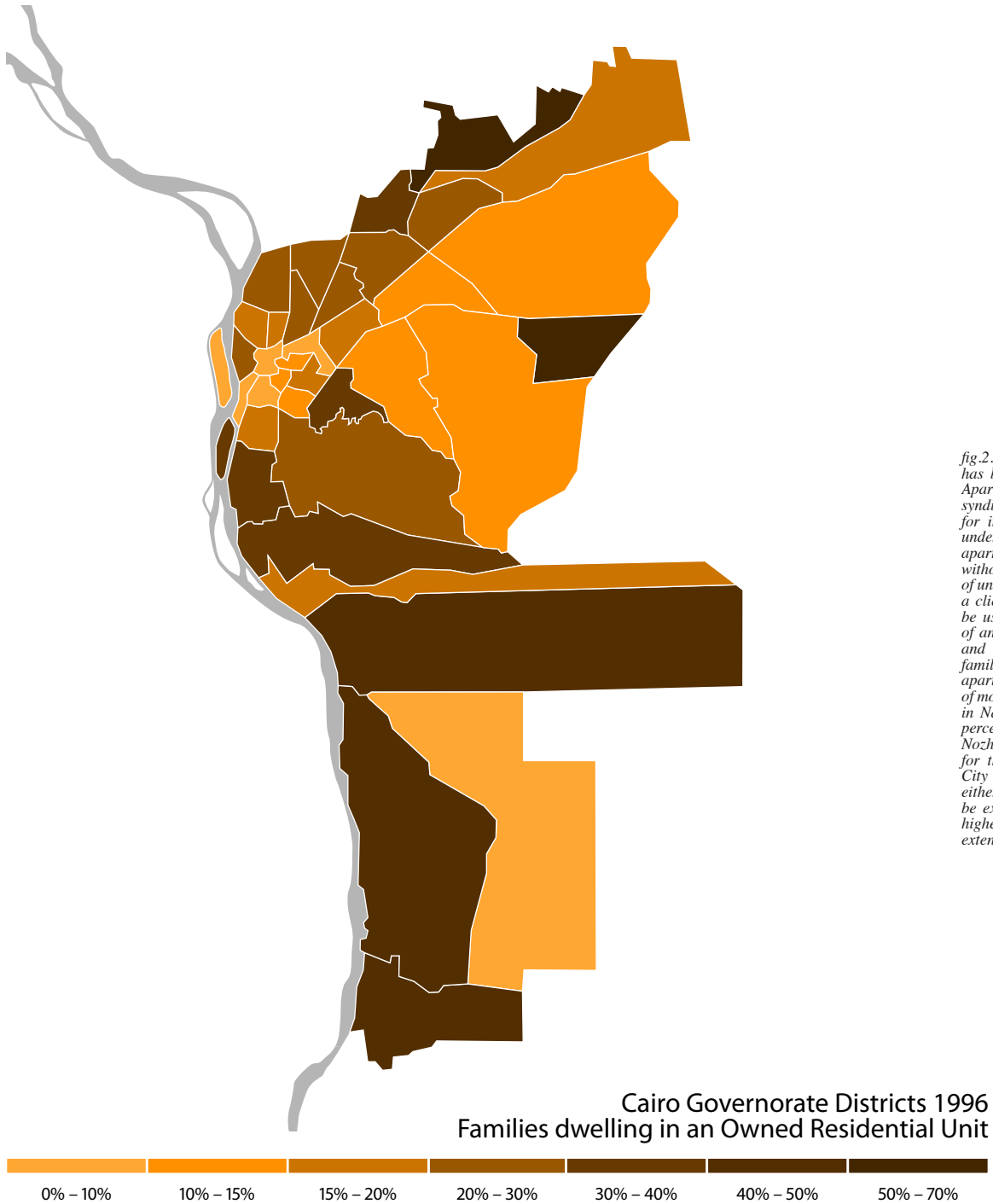


fig.2.1.9 Alternately, an owned unit is one that has been intended for its owner at its inception. Apartments in condominiums developed by syndicates, or other community regulatory bodies, for its members who paid for it beforehand fall under that type of unit. Most importantly however, apartments that are entitled to certain individuals without a monetary transaction fall under that type of unit as well. In residential areas directed towards a clientele of private citizens, this criterion could be used to identify nuclear families that are part of an extended family household, as the patriarch and owner of an apartment building—extended family household would endow his offspring with apartments in the household without the transaction of money. In that regard, in 1996, 13.07% of families in Nasr City dwelled in owned apartments, three percentage points higher than Masr AlGadeeda and Nozha. Keeping in mind that the percentile range for that criterion is rather small, and that Nasr City has a considerably higher population than either middle class district, this difference could be extrapolated to mean that Nasr City hosts the highest concentrations of the apartment building—extended family house typology.

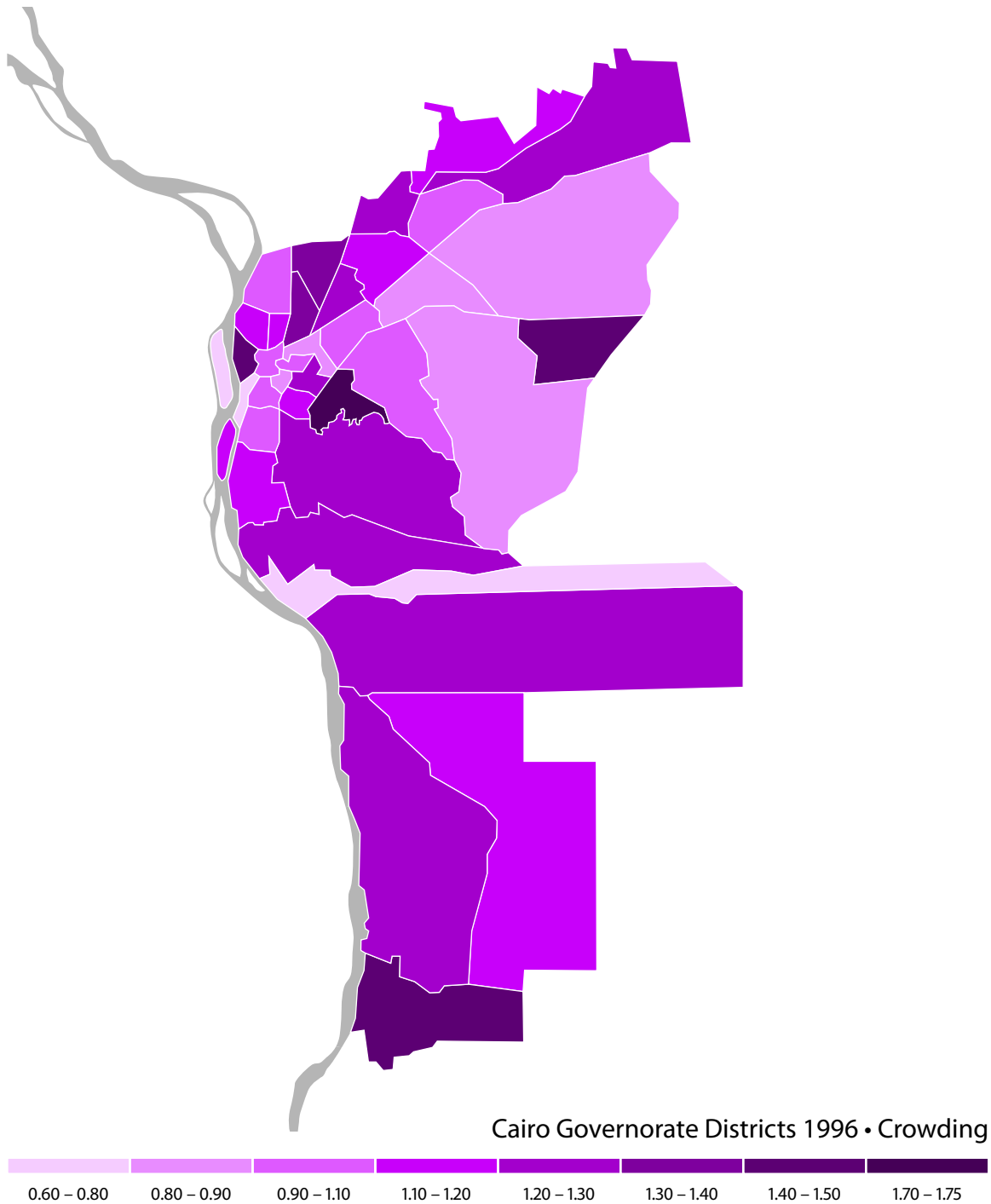


fig.2.1.10 Crowding is defined as a ratio between the number of individuals to the number of rooms available in a certain area. It is a good measure for assessing living quality and population density. In that regard, in 1996 Nasr City had a crowding ratio of 0.89 persons per room. It was a considerably higher density in comparison to the much smaller Masr AlGadeeda (0.83) and Nozha (0.86). This speaks of the negative effect of the prevalence of the bylaw violating condominium towers throughout Nasr City, which typically had smaller apartments with fewer rooms in order to allow for the maximum possible number of apartments to sell per building, and in turn the maximum possible return profit for the building's owner.

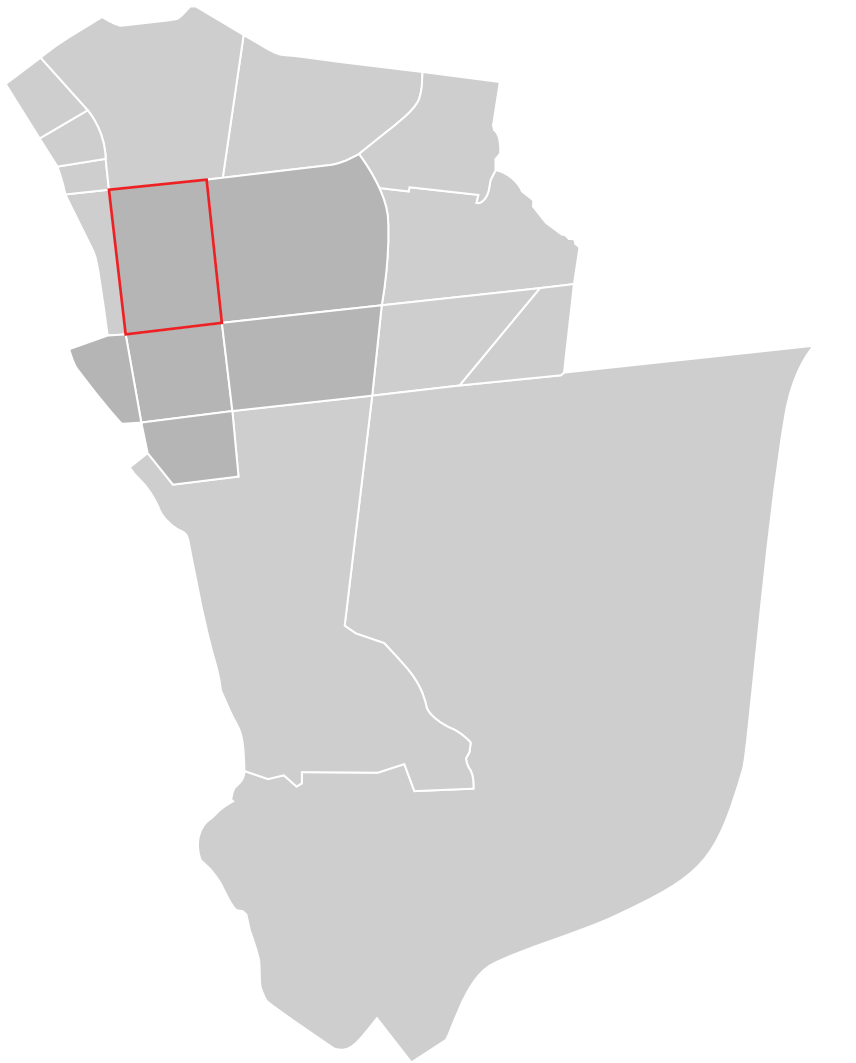
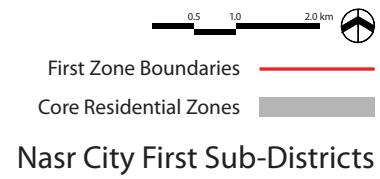


fig.2.1.11 The same criteria applied on the district scale in Cairo will now be applied on the sub-district scale in Nasr City to demonstrate that the First Zone, where 11 El-Insha Street is located, has the highest concentration of the apartment building–extended family house typology within the district. What is of concern here are the core, original residential zones on Nasr City.



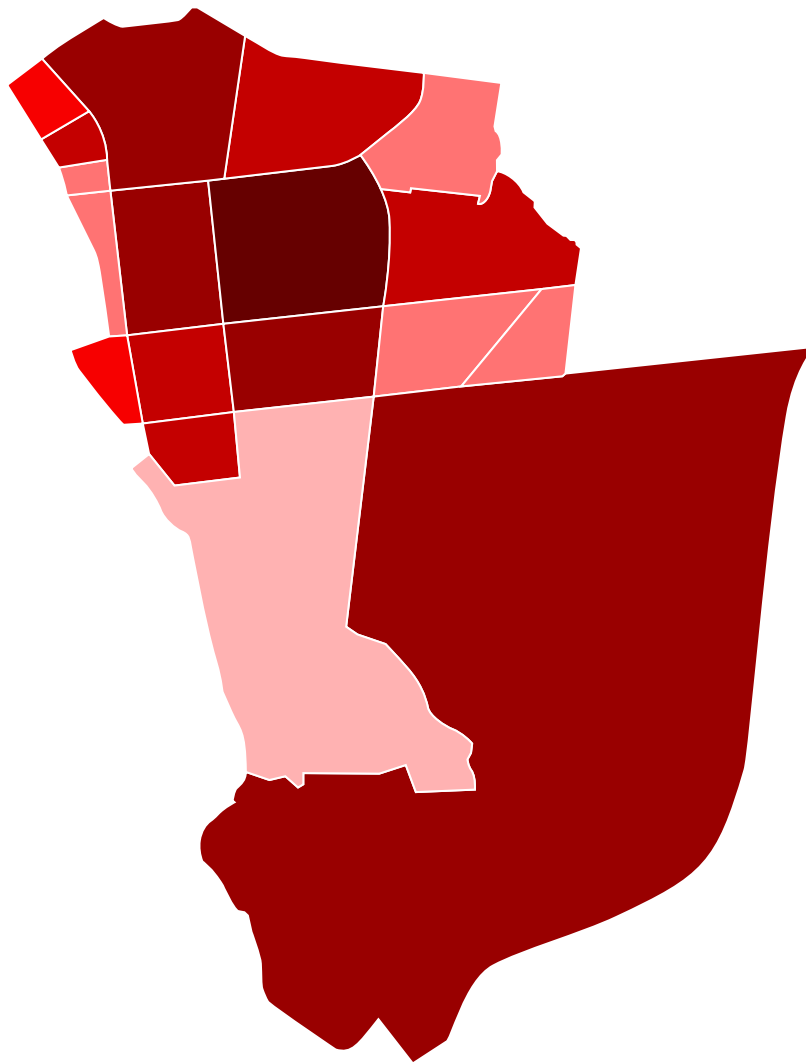
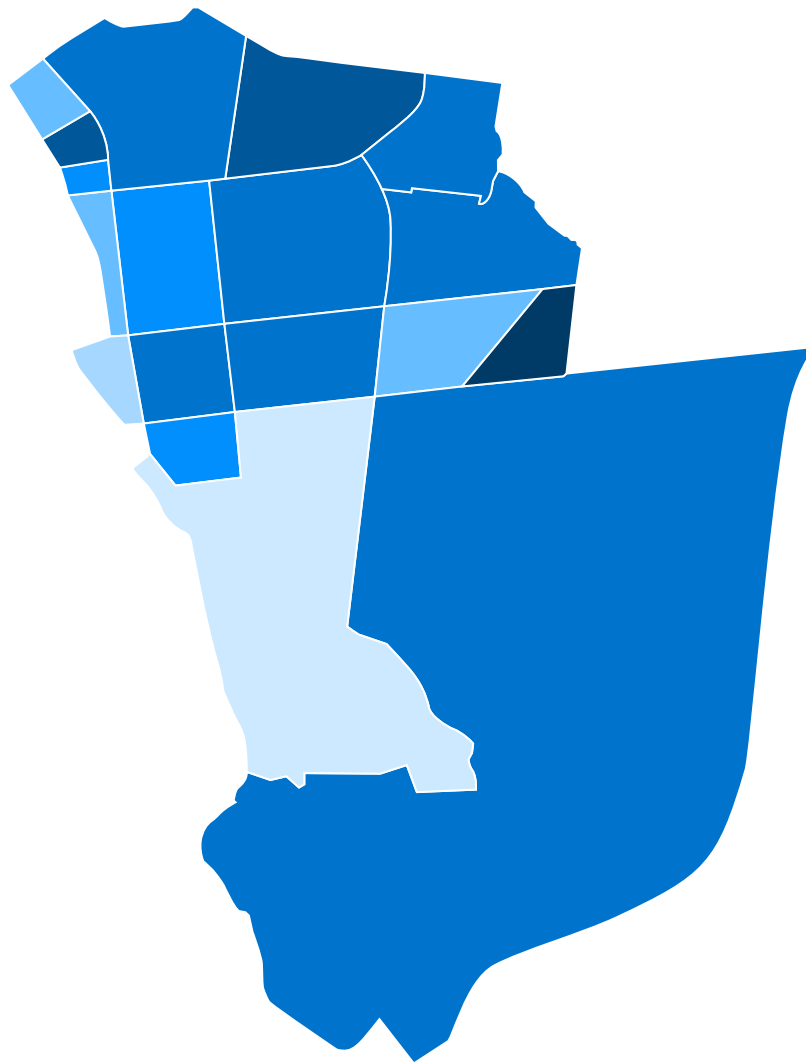


fig.2.1.12 In 1996, the First Zone had some 24,000 inhabitants. Owing to their highly underdeveloped character at the time data from the Ninth and the Tenth Zone are rather skewed and should not be taken into account in the following analysis.

Nasr City First Sub-Districts 1996 • Population [x1000]





Nasr City First Sub-Districts 1996
Residents holding a Professional Occupation

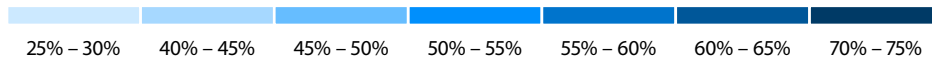


fig.2.1.13 In 1996, 50.7% of the First Zone's working population were professionals.

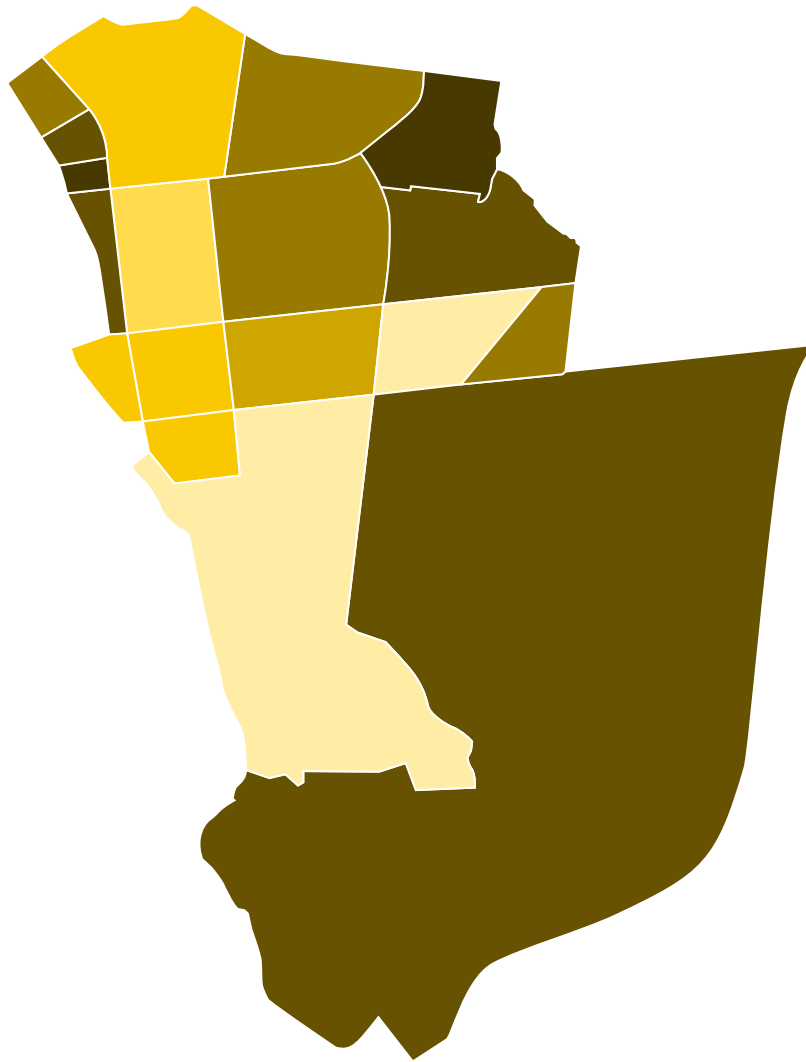
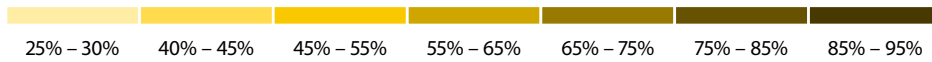
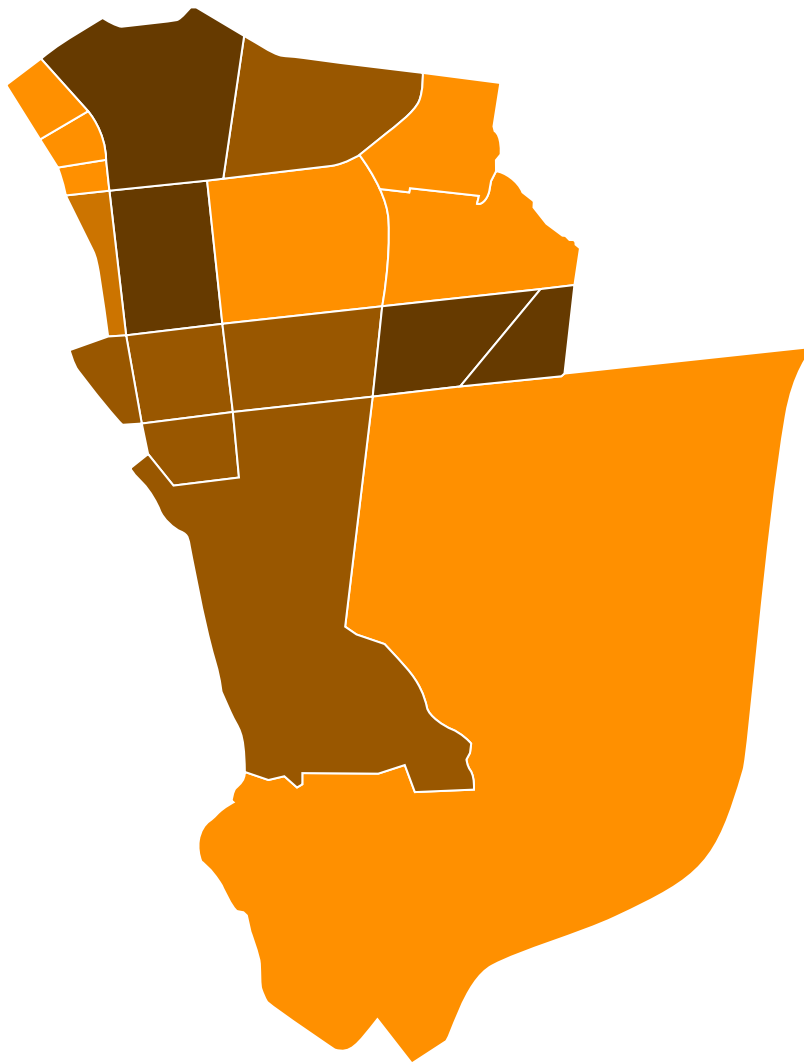


fig.2.1.14 Most importantly however, in 1996, only 40.8% of families in the First Zone dwelled in a purchased residential unit; the lowest percentage in all of Nasr City's core residential Zones.

Nasr City First Sub-Districts 1996
Families dwelling in a Purchased Residential Unit





Nasr City First Sub-Districts 1996
Families dwelling in an Owned Residential Unit



fig.2.1.15 On the other hand, in 1996, 21.6% of families in the First Zone dwelled in an owned residential unit; by far the highest percentage in all of Nasr City's core residential Zones; in turn this could be extrapolated to mean that the First Zone has the highest concentrations of the apartment building-extended family house typology.

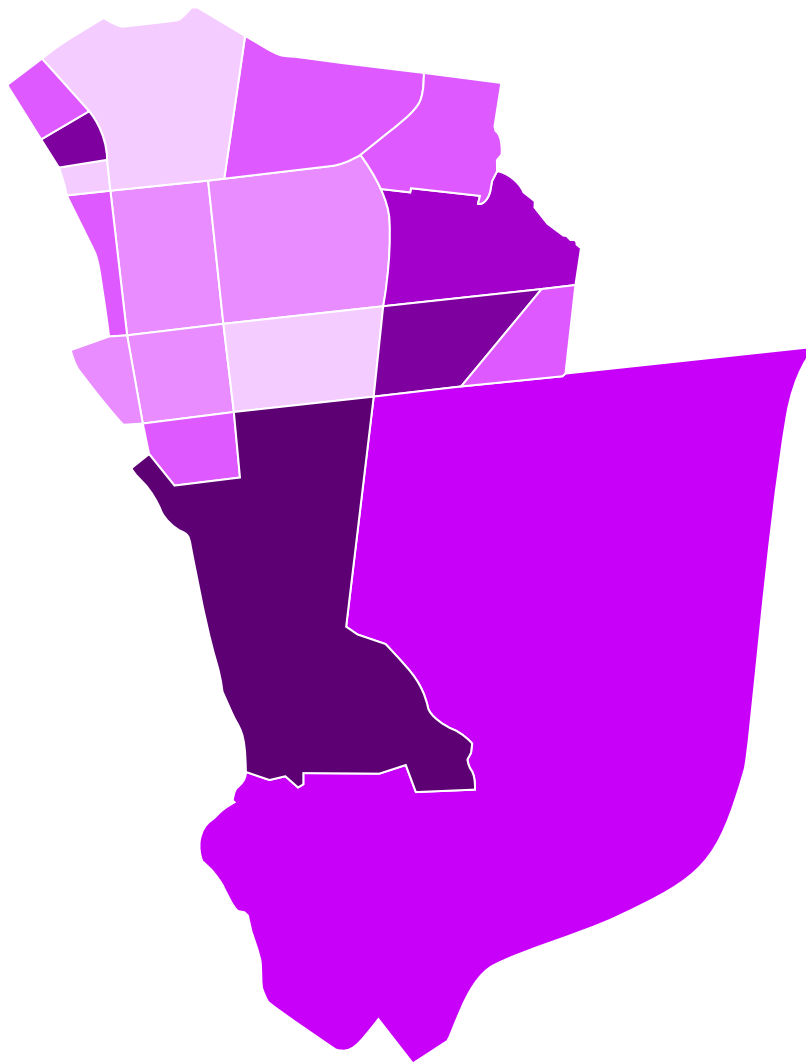
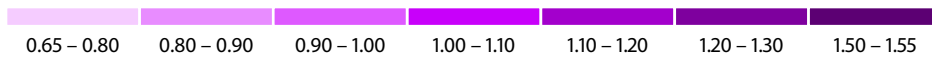


fig.2.1.16 The First Zone also has the second lowest crowding ratio of the districts core residential zones, at 0.89 persons per room, indicating a lesser presence of the towering condominium typology.

Nasr City First Sub-Districts 1996 • Crowding



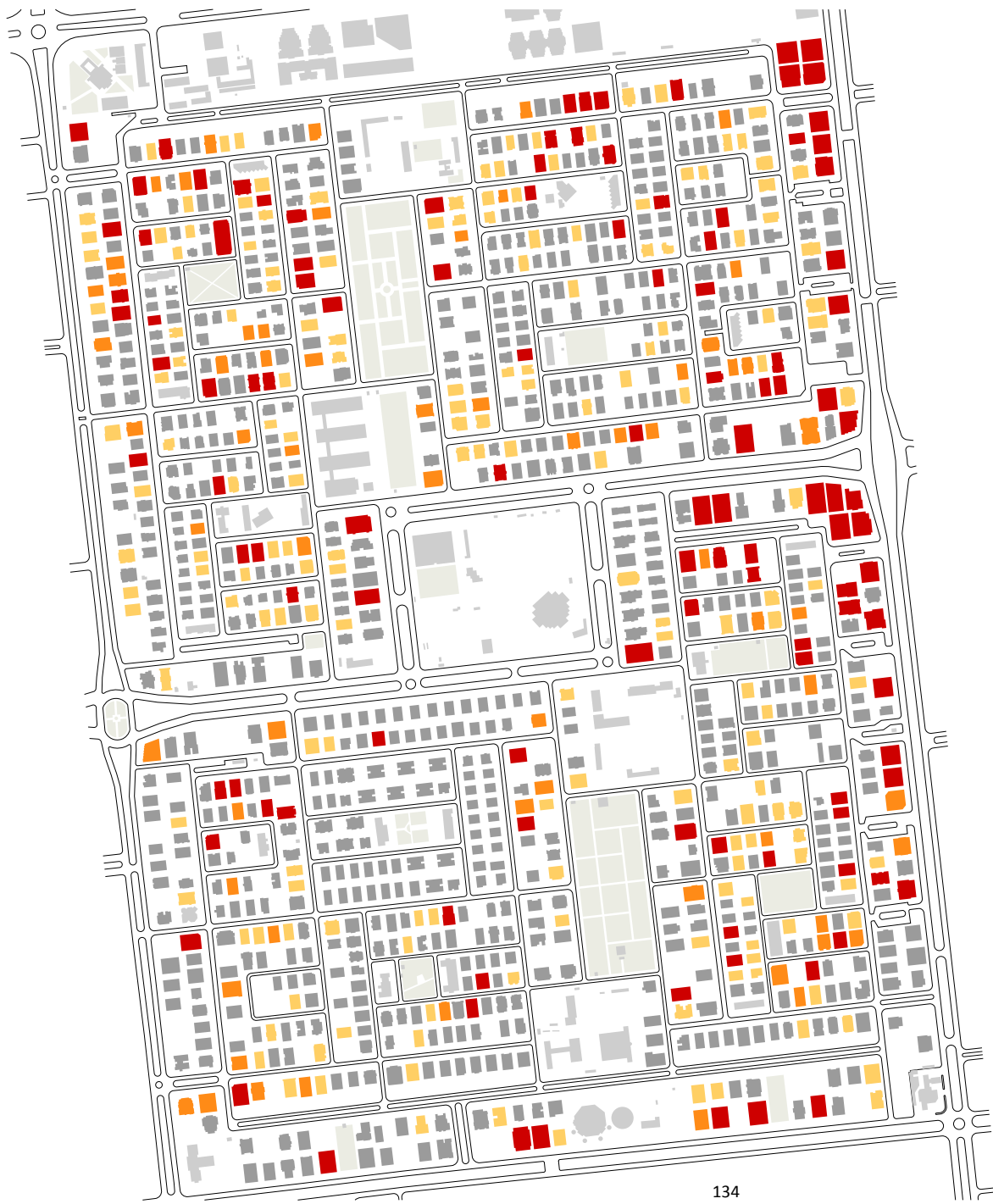
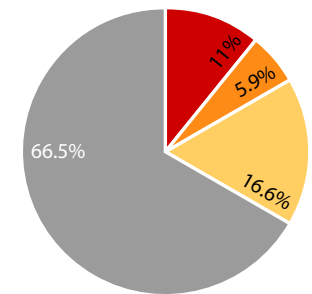
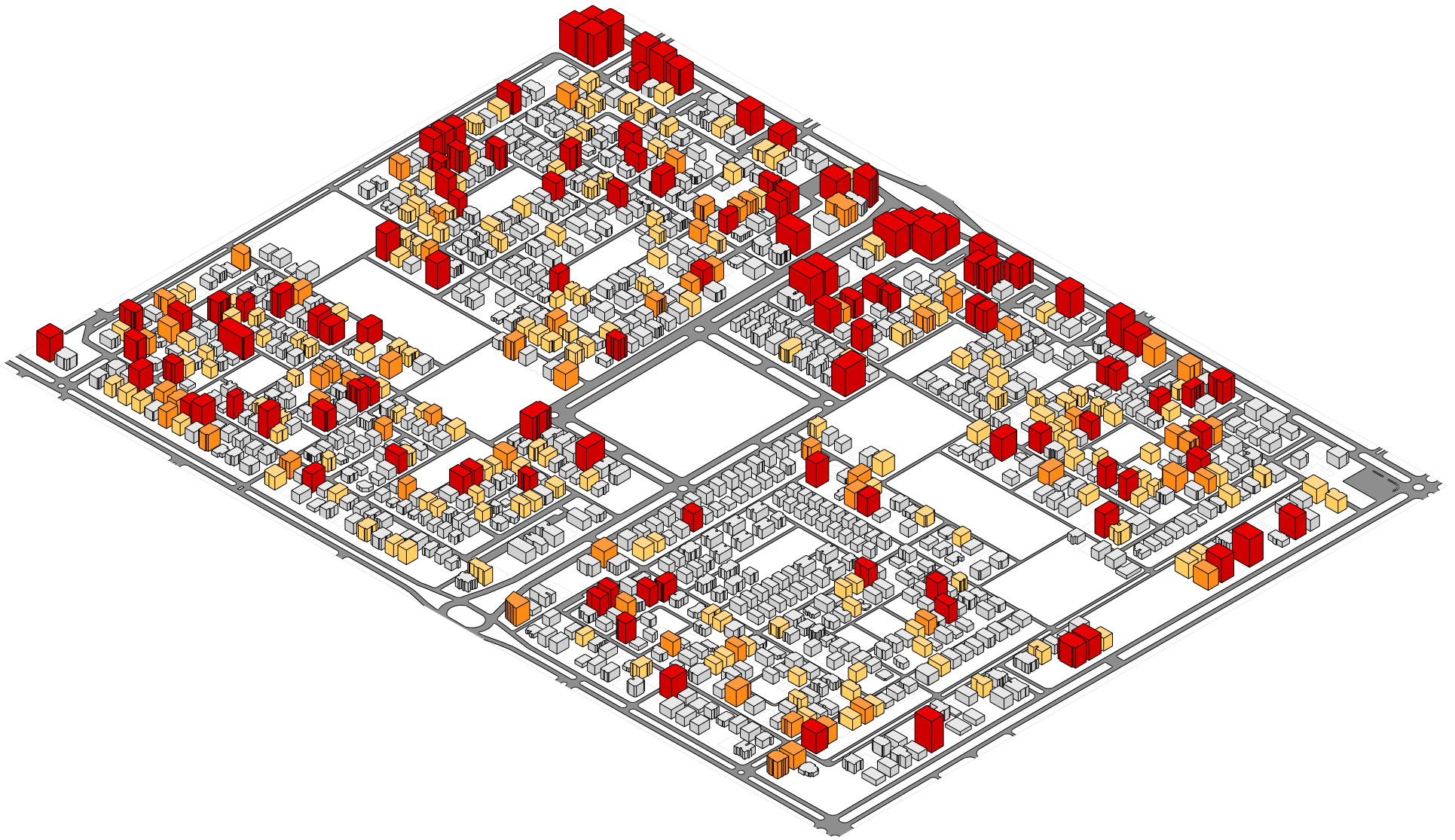



fig.2.1.17 As illustrated here, the grossest violations of Nasr City's building height bylaws in the First Zone in 1994 were mostly confined to the major, wider streets. At the time, the narrower smaller streets in the First Zone's core had more bylaw-abiding apartment building than they did towering condominiums. Building on the preceding statistical findings, it is safe to assume that a good portion of those bylaw-abiding buildings follow the apartment building–extended family house typology.



- within height limit
- 1 to 2 storeys above height limit
- 3 to 4 storeys above height limit
- 5 or more storeys above height limit

First Zone | 1994
Residential Buildings
Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws




 10 storeys and above
 [11 storeys and above on 50m streets]


 8 or 9 storeys
 [9 or 10 storeys on 50m streets]


 6 or 7 storeys
 [7 or 8 storeys on 50m streets]


 up to 5 storeys
 [up to 6 storeys on 50m streets]

fig.2.1.18 A three dimensional representation of the building heights in the first zone in 1994, illustrating the volumetric urban character of the zone's streets at the time.

First Zone | 1994 Residential Building Heights

Chapter Three

3.A The Beginning of an End



In 2003, during an urban course lecture about squatter settlements, our professor asked the class this question: what is the largest informal settlement in all of Cairo? The class responded by naming some of the major squatter settlements like Mansheyet Nasser, 'Ezbet elHaggana, etc. The professor rejected all of our answers as incorrect, and finally replied with a smile on her face "Actually it is Nasr City". A resident of Nasr City herself, she went on to explain that a squatter settlement is just a type of informal settlement. Any urban settlement in which building bylaws are being consistently disregarded or violated is, by definition, an informal settlement. Given Nasr City's sheer size and the number of structures that violate its building bylaws, she contended that Nasr City is by far the largest informal settlement in all of Cairo.

My professor didn't really have any data to corroborate such a statement. It was more of an anecdote that spoke to the perseverance of the condominium typology throughout Nasr City and the toll it had taken on the urban quality of living in Nasr City. Almost ten years after Nasr City had become fully developed, the neighborhood was exhibiting a multitude of problems with its infrastructure. Water and electricity were hardly dependable, there were constantly traffic jams that blocked the main arteries in and out of the district, and there was a chronic shortage in parking spaces. Naturally that was an inevitable outcome to the consistent violation of bylaws in Nasr City – an urban settlement in which the infrastructure was designed to accommodate buildings of a maximum height of five storeys, and yet has ended up with the majority of buildings that exceeded this height limitation. Needless to say, that put a great deal of pressure on the infrastructure of Nasr City and led to the aforementioned problems, much to the dismay of its inhabitants.

fig.3.a.1 [previous page] the demolition of a bylaw-abiding apartment building—extended family house against a backdrop of two towering new condominiums.



fig.3.a.2 Traffic congestion and lack of parking space are some of the many troubles and woes the residents of Nasr City live everyday, thanks to the consistent violation of building bylaws that culminated in overloading the settlements infrastructure.



fig.3.a.3 [right] and fig.3.a.4 The new style of condominium tower that took Nasr City by storm starting in the mid 2000s; a close up on the overly ornate, yet only skin deep, details of the facade



Around the same time, as a junior architecture student, I began to notice a certain style of condominium towers spread throughout Nasr City. I vividly remember a condominium tower popping up two streets down from where I live, which had a very ornate style to it. It looked to me as though it was a very gaudy derivation of a Neo-Classicism. But as far as its functional arrangement and floor plans went, that building pretty much followed the same typology as the condominium towers that pervaded throughout Nasr City since the early 90s. That is to say it was merely a new stylistic take on Nasr City's condominium tower typology. Not even a year later, a new condominium tower that looked almost identical to the aforementioned building, was constructed on the same street. And then another soon followed on another street nearby. And then another, and another, and so on. It just seemed to me that every new building constructed in Nasr City from the early 2000s onwards followed that overly ornate style.

The early 2000s was also the first time I began hearing about New Cairo – A new suburban development that was emerging on the eastern outskirts of Nasr City. It sounded as if most of my teaching assistants, who also had their small private practices on the side as well as most of my professors who had fully established firms, had most of their business centered around designing and constructing residential buildings in New Cairo. It was quite interesting for me to notice that most of their residential building designs followed that same gaudy Neo-Classicist style of the condominium towers that were then taking Nasr City by storm.



fig.3.a.5 [top] and fig.3.a.6 Bustling construction in New Cairo in 2008; Buildings there had the same gaudy neo-classist style as the emerging condominium typologies in Nasr City

In late 2008, this gaudy style of condominium tower came to El-Insha Street. At the time, I had returned to Egypt for my first visit since I had moved to Canada earlier that year, and was surprised to find that the house at the corner of El-Insha Street had been demolished and already another building was in the process of being constructed. When I inquired as to what had happened, I came to know that the owner of the one-storey house that used to stand there had died, and that he was not survived by any children of his own, but rather by a nephew who had sold the property. Shortly afterwards, the new owner demolished the house and began constructing a 10-storey condominium tower.

During the same visit, both my mother and my uncle, each on a separate occasion, voiced their discontent with the construction of the new condominium tower at the end of the street. I had the sense that they felt that structure would infringe on the social character of El-Insha Street. They felt that it would bring in a new class of inhabitants to El-Insha Street – a class they were not accustomed to. On a related note, they also both voiced their discontent with the overall declining quality of urban living in Nasr City. These concerns were not new since they have always complained about the power outages and water shortages ever since the late 90s and the early 2000s, but it seemed as though their complaints were stepped up a notch.

Two years later in 2010 I came back to Cairo for another visit. The condominium tower on the corner of El-Insha Street was fully constructed into the 10-storey stylistic monstrosity that it was. Right across from it, on the street perpendicular to El-Insha Street, another bylaw abiding apartment building was being demolished. As a matter of fact, during that visit, I noticed numerous similar buildings being demolished all over Nasr City and especially in the area around El-Insha Street. During that same visit, I also learned that the inhabitants of the extended family house to the right of El-Insha Street had relocated to the suburbs and repurposed the whole building to become the headquarters of their family business. Moreover, I also learned that the inhabitants of the extended family house to the left of El-Insha Street were putting their property up for sale.

fig.3.a.7 17 El-Insha Street, after widowed owner of the villa died, his nephew sold his uncle's house and shortly there after it was demolished in 2008.

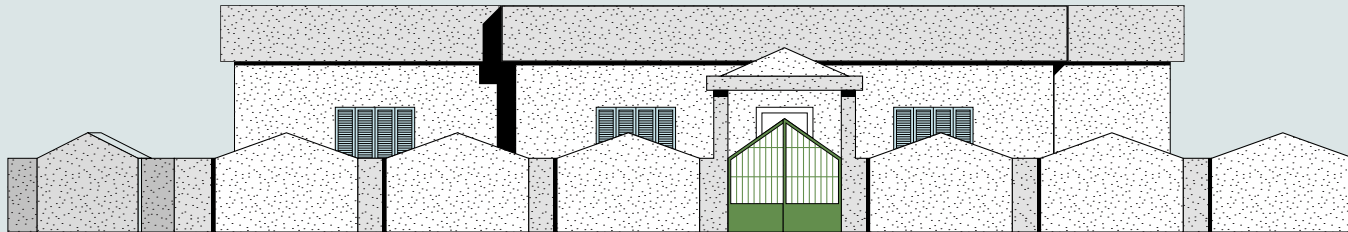


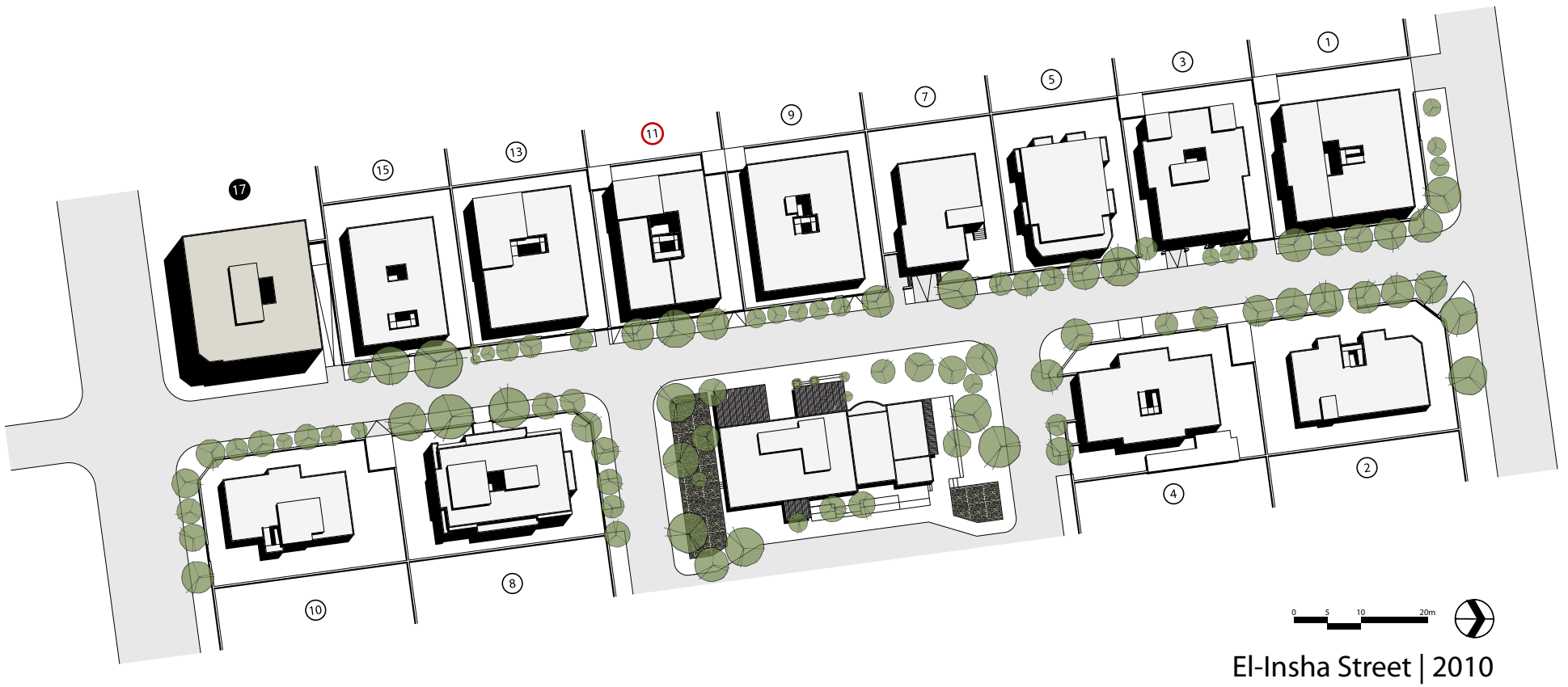


fig.3.a.8 The vacant lot where 17 El-Insha Street used to stand. In Summer of 2008, the construction of a new building was already afoot.

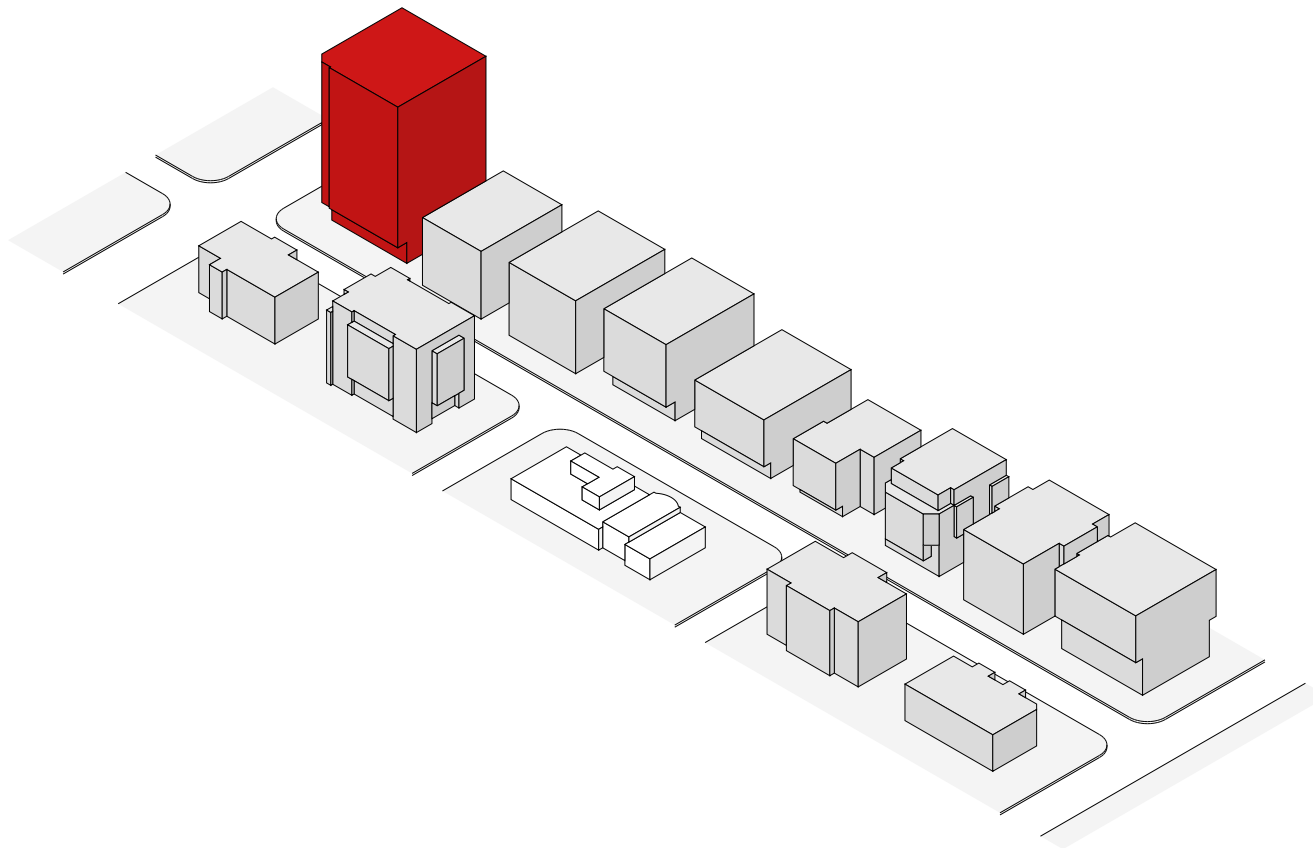


fig.3.a.9 Two years later, a 10-storey condominium tower stood in place of the one-storey villa that was 17 El-Insha Street.

fig.3.a.10



El-Insha Street | 2010



El-Insha Street | 2010



fig.3.a.12 An increasingly common scene in Nasr City since 2008; demolition of bylaw-abiding buildings

Most important of all, however, during that visit I also learned that my uncle had already purchased property and was in the process of constructing his own extended family house in the suburb of Shorouq City. Most of Mr. Fahim's children had also each purchased property and were in the process of building their own separate extended family homes in the suburbs of New Cairo. Both my uncle and Mr. Fahim's children maintained that they were not intending on moving to those suburban homes, but were rather constructing them for their own children to start their own families since, in the particular case of 11 El-Insha Street, there wasn't any space for them to provide each of their children with their own apartments. Most

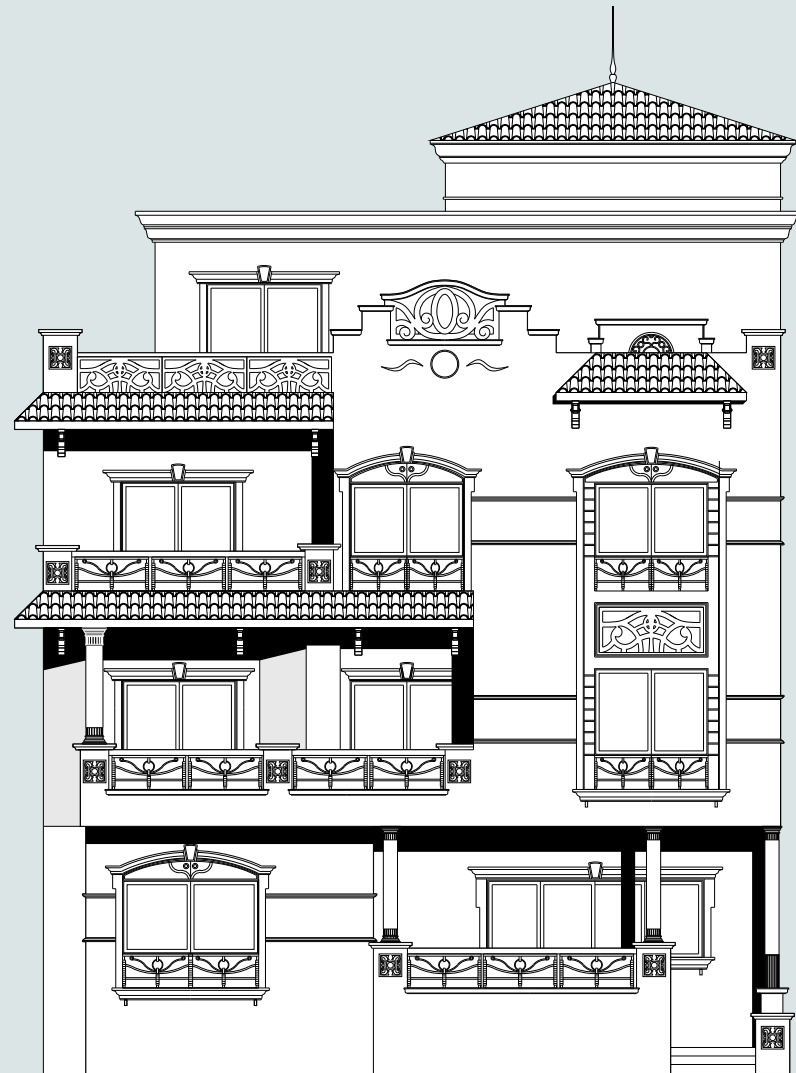


fig.3.a.13 [left] and 3.a.14 Another very common scene in Nasr City since 2008; the construction of condominium towers that feature a very gaudy derivation of neo-classicism

peculiarly however, my mother was also voicing a very keen interest on moving to the suburbs as well, even though as it stands right now, herself, myself, and my sister each have our apartments in 11 El-Insha Street.

By the end of that visit, I came to the sad realization that El-Insha Street had quickly lost its very unique character as a street of apartment building-extended family houses. The even sadder realization that twenty years after it had truly become a modern version of extended family house, 11 El-Insha Street was itself on the verge of no longer being as such.

fig.3.a.15 Abouzeid Residence façade in Shorouq City, this “villa” barely accommodates the future nuclear families of my uncle’s 4 children. The coexistence of two full generations is impossible, and a third generation, namely my uncle’s future grandchildren, are not account for at all in that villa. A quite different situation than when my uncle’s father, Dr. Abouzeid, built 11 El-Insha Street.



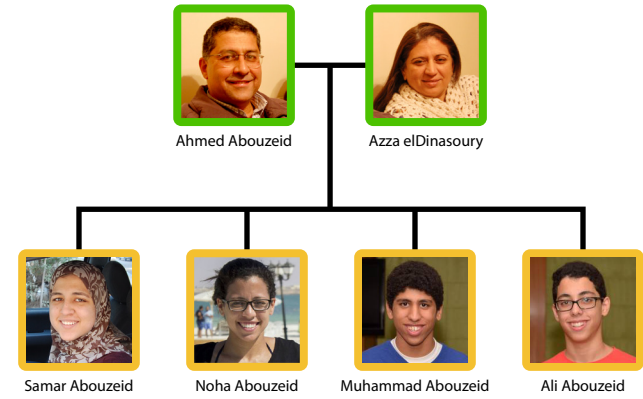
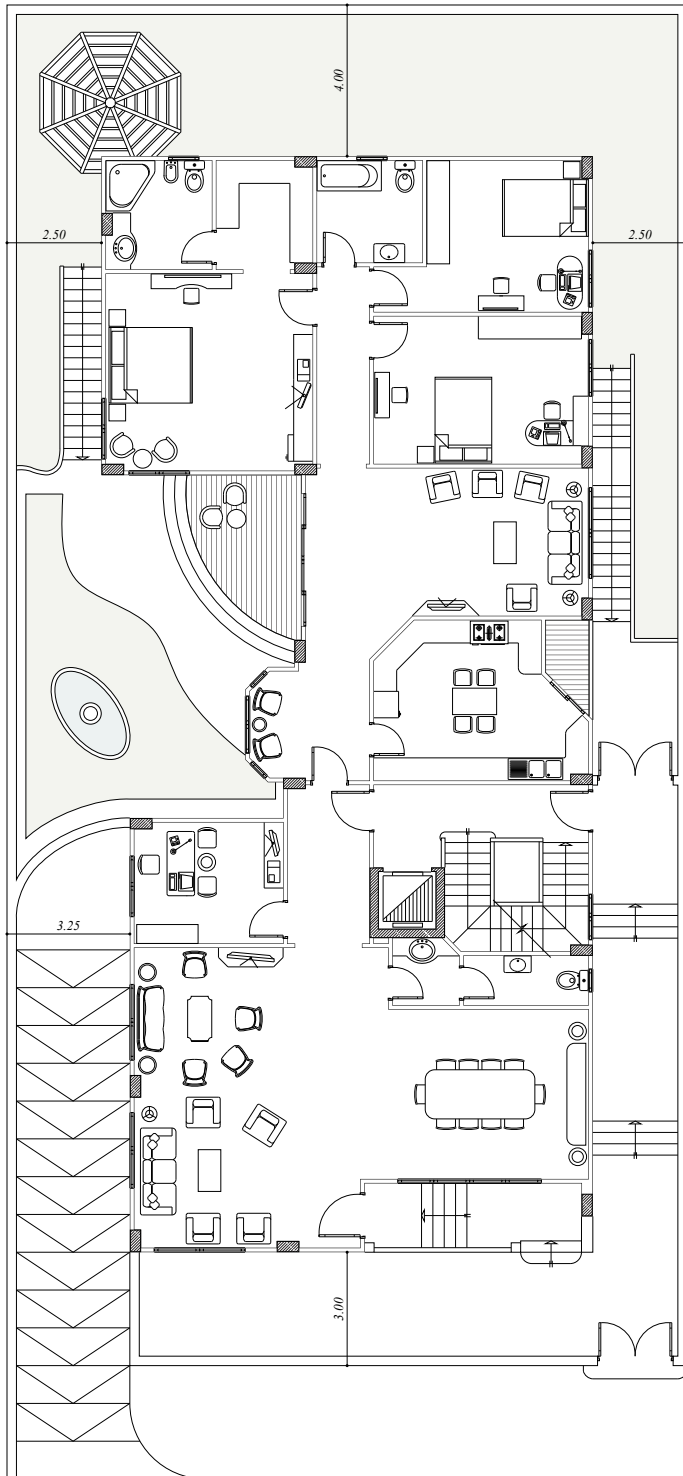
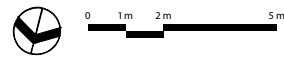
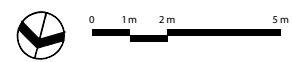
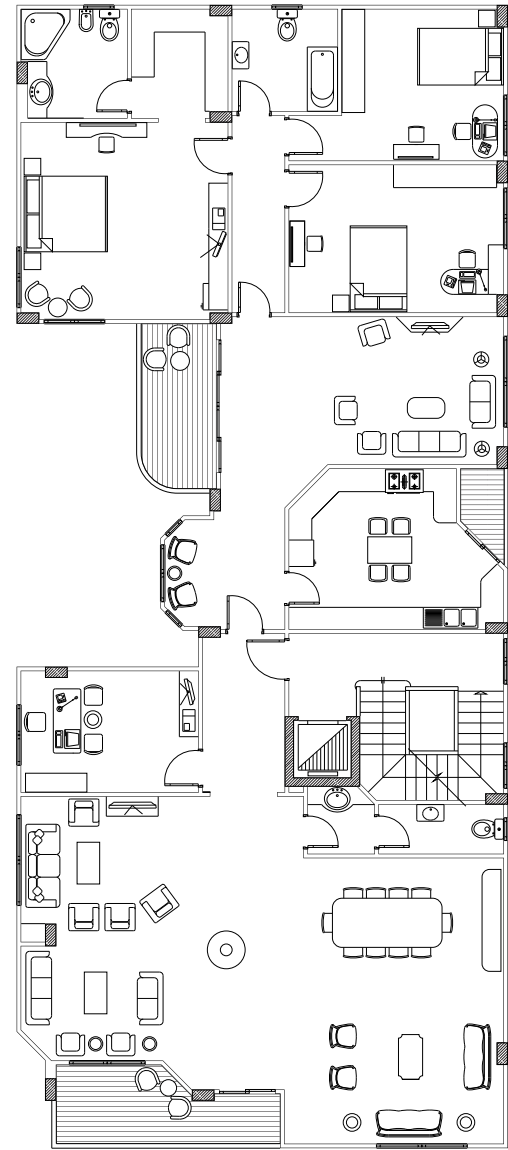


fig.3.a.16



Abouzeid Residence | Shorouq City
 Ground Floor | Apartment 1
 Ali Abouzeid [future occupant]
 Ahmed Abouzeid & Azza elDinasoury

fig.3.a.17



Abouzeid Residence | Shorouq City
First Floor | Apartment 2
Muhammad Abouzeid [future occupant]

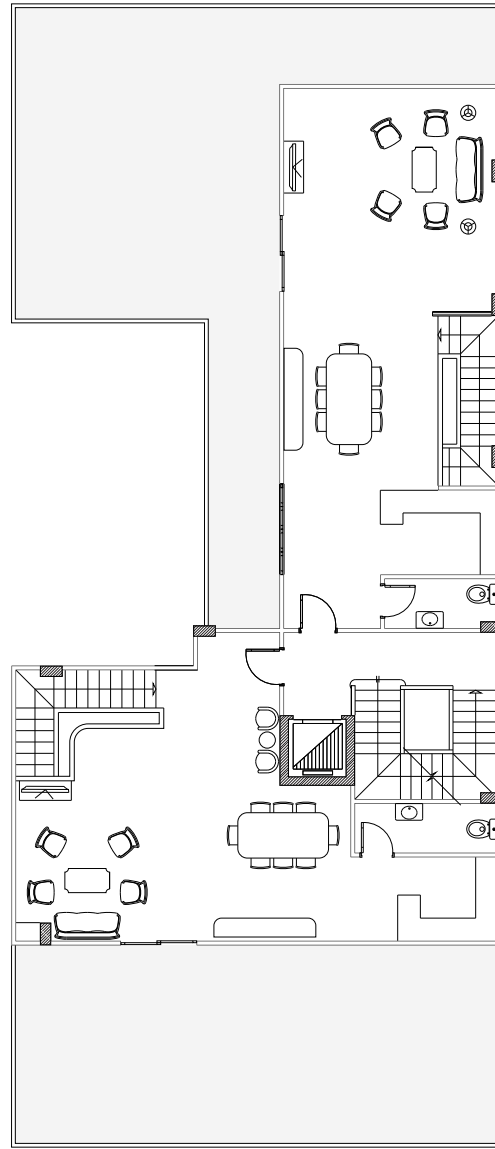
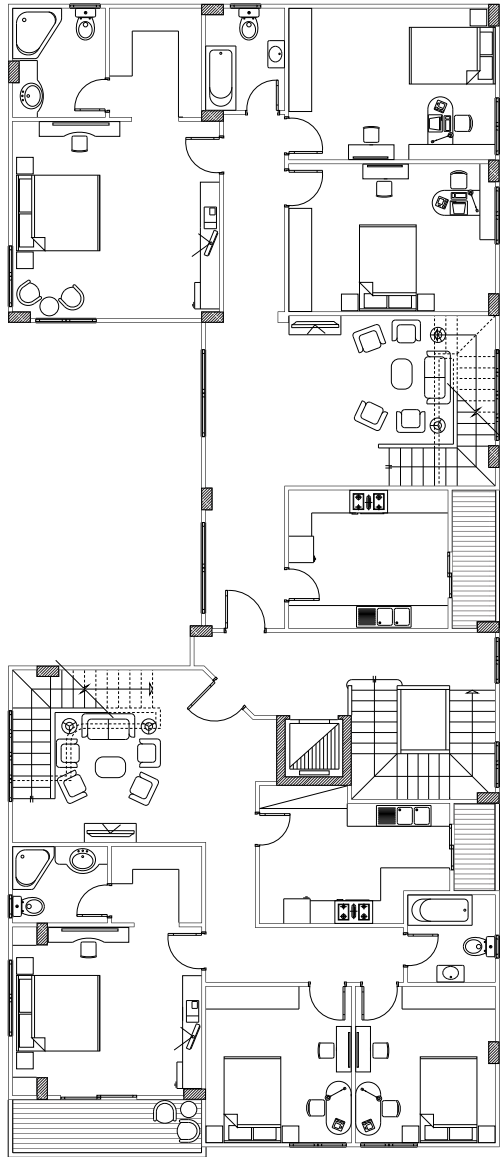
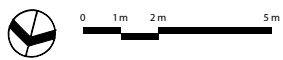


fig.3.a.18



Abouzeid Residence | Shorouq City
Second Floor + Roof | Apartments 3 & 4 [duplexes]
Samar Abouzeid & Noha Abouzeid [future occupants]

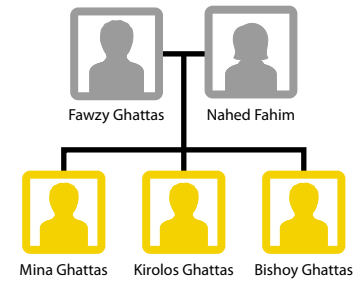
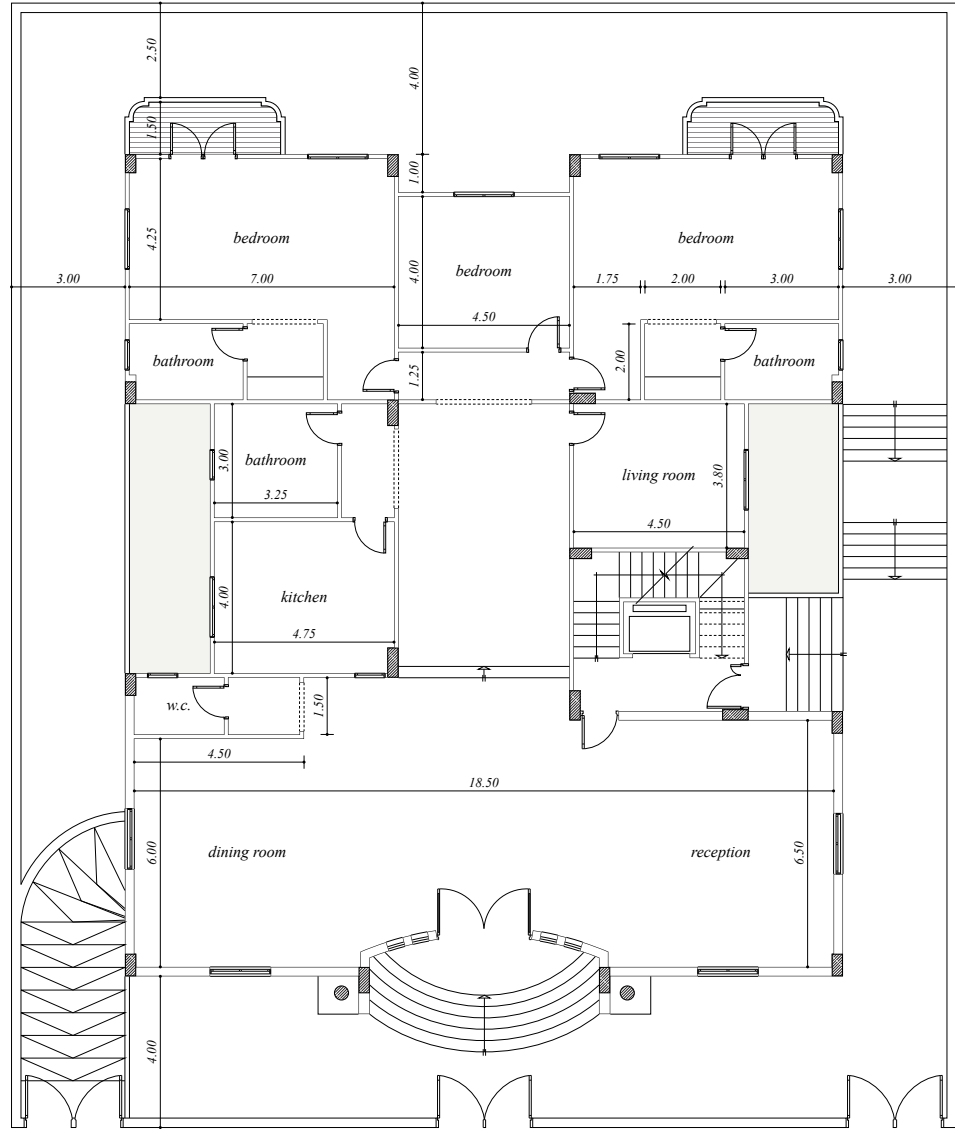


fig.3.a.19 [opposite page] Ghattas Residence Facade; this “villa” in New Cairo is intended to accommodate Mrs. Fahim’s three sons’ nuclear families. Neither her nor her husband have units the structure they built for their children





Ghattas Residence | New Cairo
 Ground Floor | Apartment 1
 Mina Ghattas [future occupant]

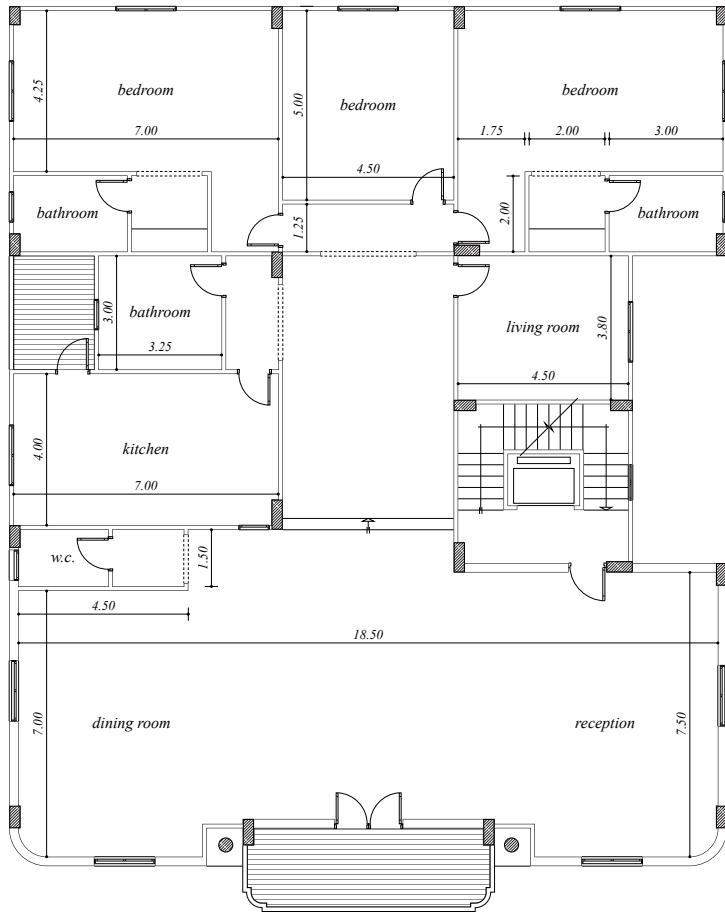


fig.3.a.20 [opposite page] and fig3.a.21

Ghattas Residence | New Cairo
 First + Second Floor | Apartments 2 & 3
 Kirolos Ghattas & Bishoy Ghattas [future occupants]



fig.3.1.1 Since the mid 2000s, and driven by social motives, the Nasr City's middle class has been flocking to new (sub)urban attractors to the east.

The main antagonist of this thesis is the city of New Cairo. This large suburban development was formally established and planned in the year 2000 to encompass an area of nearly 72,500 acres right on the eastern border of Nasr City.¹ In many ways, the suburbs of New Cairo were quite different from Nasr City.

For one thing, New Cairo's urban design is quite a departure from Nasr City's modernist, orthogonal planning. Instead, the over all design of New Cairo closely followed the North American suburban model with wider, meandering streets, and more open spaces. And then, there were the differences in land use patterns in comparison to Nasr City. More areas of New Cairo were assigned to private sector investors for the development of gated communities of a variety of different scales. As for the land that was assigned for development by private citizens,

3.1 An Urban Exodus *New Cairo and the wasted potential of Nasr City's extended family house typology*

that is to say single land lots that would be sold individually to Egyptians to build their private homes, those were predominantly allotted to a villa typology versus Nasr City's apartment building typology. The areas of those lots ranged between 600 and 800 square meters.² As far as building footprint and setbacks went, the building bylaws for New Cairo's villas were not any different than those for Nasr City's apartment buildings at the time. Villas in most areas of New Cairo were allowed a maximum footprint of 50% of the lot area with front and side setbacks of 3 meters and rear setbacks of 4 meters. But with regards to building heights, there was quite a difference. Villas in New Cairo were allowed a maximum height of 3 storeys at 11 meters and in some areas a maximum height of only 2 storeys at 8 meters.³

Although the curvilinear or deformed character of New Cairo's grid stands in sharp contrast to that of Nasr City's orthogonal grid, land uses in both settlements are organized in a very similar manner. Much like in Nasr City, residential neighborhoods in New Cairo are typically situated around a central nucleus or spine of large-scale services with smaller service nodes in the subdivisions of the neighborhoods themselves.

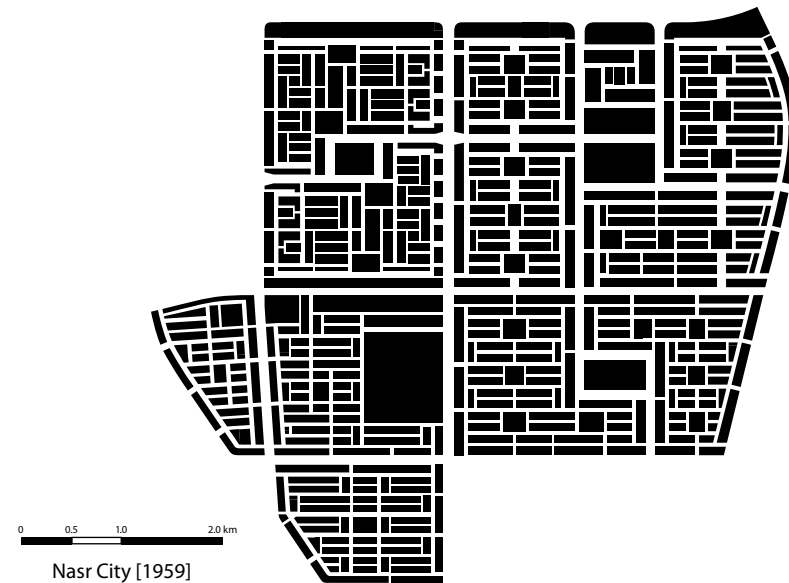
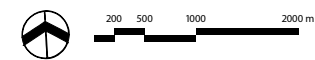
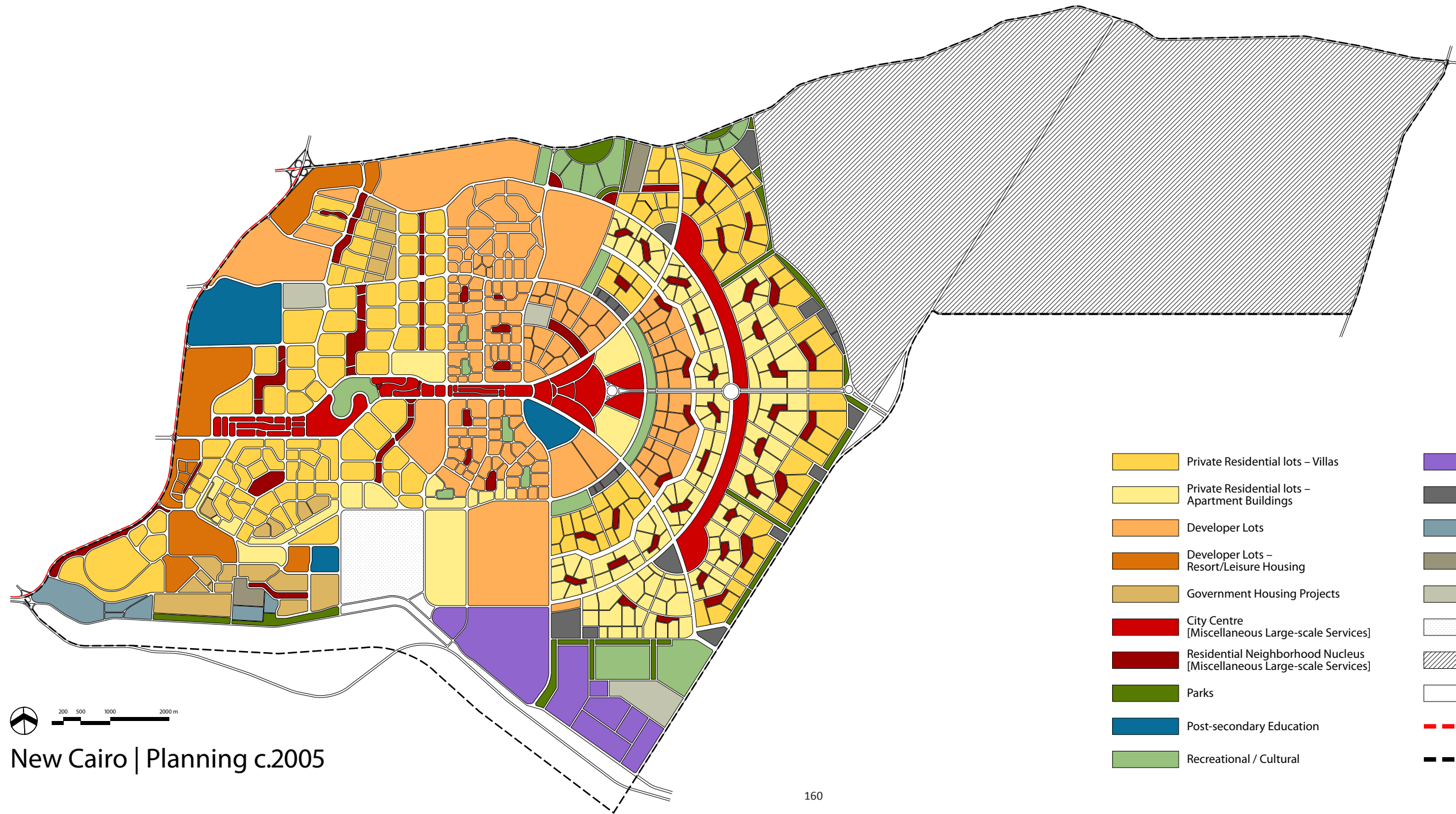


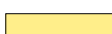












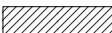






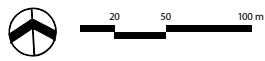
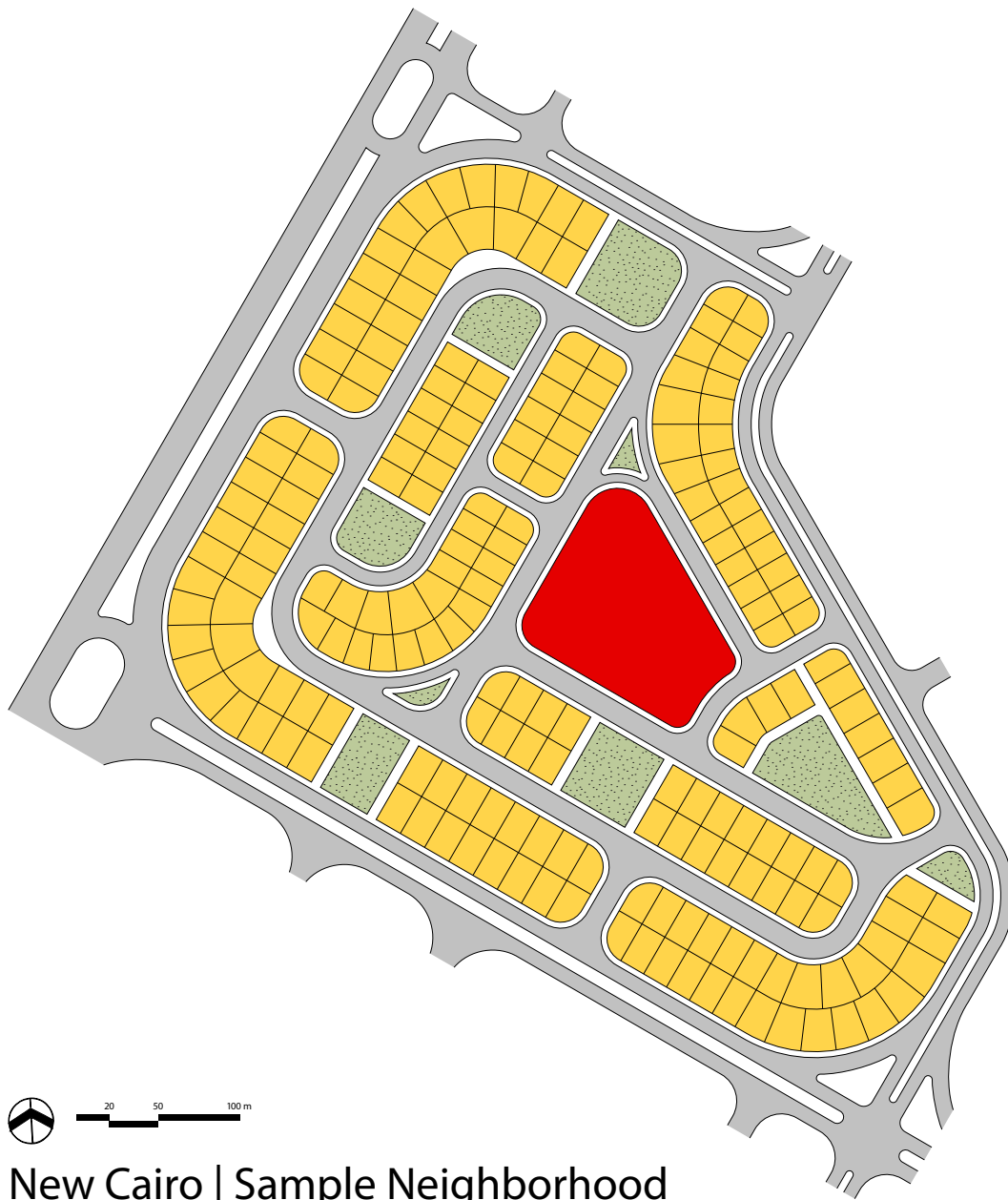
fig.3.1.2 A comparison of the planning patterns of Nasr City and New Cairo. The latter's is clearly reminiscent of and marks a return to the patterns of the high-end residential neighborhoods of yore.

fig.3.1.3 [opposite page] In comparison to Nasr City, New Cairo's planning features much more areas designated for developers and gated communities of varying scales. Apart from the apparent difference in geometry, the areas designated for development by private citizens follow the same arrangements in both Nasr City and New Cairo.



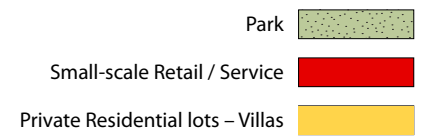
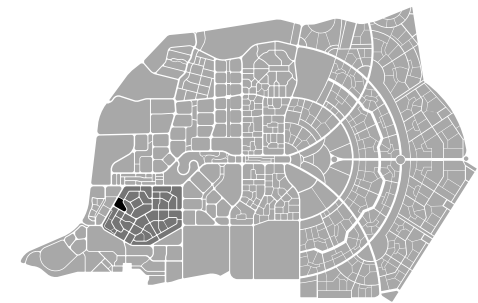
New Cairo | Planning c.2005

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Private Residential lots – Villas |  Industrial |
|  Private Residential lots – Apartment Buildings |  Public Service Infrastructure |
|  Developer Lots |  Mixed-Use |
|  Developer Lots – Resort/Leisure Housing |  Cemetery |
|  Government Housing Projects |  Army Property |
|  City Centre [Miscellaneous Large-scale Services] |  Nature Reserve |
|  Residential Neighborhood Nucleus [Miscellaneous Large-scale Services] |  Future Extension |
|  Parks |  Unassigned |
|  Post-secondary Education |  Nasr City Boundaries |
|  Recreational / Cultural |  New Cairo Boundaries |



New Cairo | Sample Neighborhood

fig.3.1.4 Although the streets are wider and are of rather curvilinear geometry, neighborhoods within New Cairo feature the same patterns as those in Nasr City with a central small-scale service node around which private residential lots are arranged.



Towards the mid 2000's, New Cairo emerged as one of the strongest urban attractors in all of Cairo. With the simulacrum of luxury conveyed through its novel urban form, many middle class, upper-middle class, and upper class Egyptians were situating their homes there. Around the same time, specifically from 2008 onwards, Nasr City began exhibiting a very peculiar trend. Many of its apartment buildings there that followed Nasr City's building bylaws were being systematically demolished and replaced by condominium towers. It could be argued that this trend was triggered by a single event: the enactment of the Universal Building Code of 2008. By decree of that code, all residential buildings in Cairene neighborhoods, including Nasr City, were allowed a maximum height of one and a half times the street width they stand on with a maximum of 36 meters. Residential building footprints were further increased and setbacks were decreased to a minimum.⁴ This code basically nullified Nasr City's building bylaws and in turn made it much easier for all those who wanted to capitalize on the high real-estate values there. It allowed them to construct towering apartment buildings with more units to sell without having to break the bylaws and bribe officials or exploit system loopholes in the process. And since Nasr City was essentially fully developed at the time, this interest translated into buying and demolishing the five or less storey, bylaw-abiding buildings. Needless to say, New Cairo was exempt from that code. Much like Nasr City when it was first established, New Cairo had its own bylaws that were enforced by a separate regulatory body; in this case the New Urban Communities Authority, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Housing.

As it was established in chapter 2, most of the bylaw abiding apartment buildings in Nasr City were extended family houses for middle class professionals. The systematic elimination of the apartment building–extended family house typology could therefore mean one thing: Many of those who were flocking to the suburbs of New Cairo were professionals who were seeking to relocate their extended family homes there. What comes next is a series of urban surveys and demographic analysis that aim to highlight two very important phenomena that are

essential to demonstrating this link. The first is the trend of systematic demolition of apartment building–extended family homes in Nasr City and their replacement with condominium towers. The second is the exodus of middle class professionals from Nasr City to New Cairo.

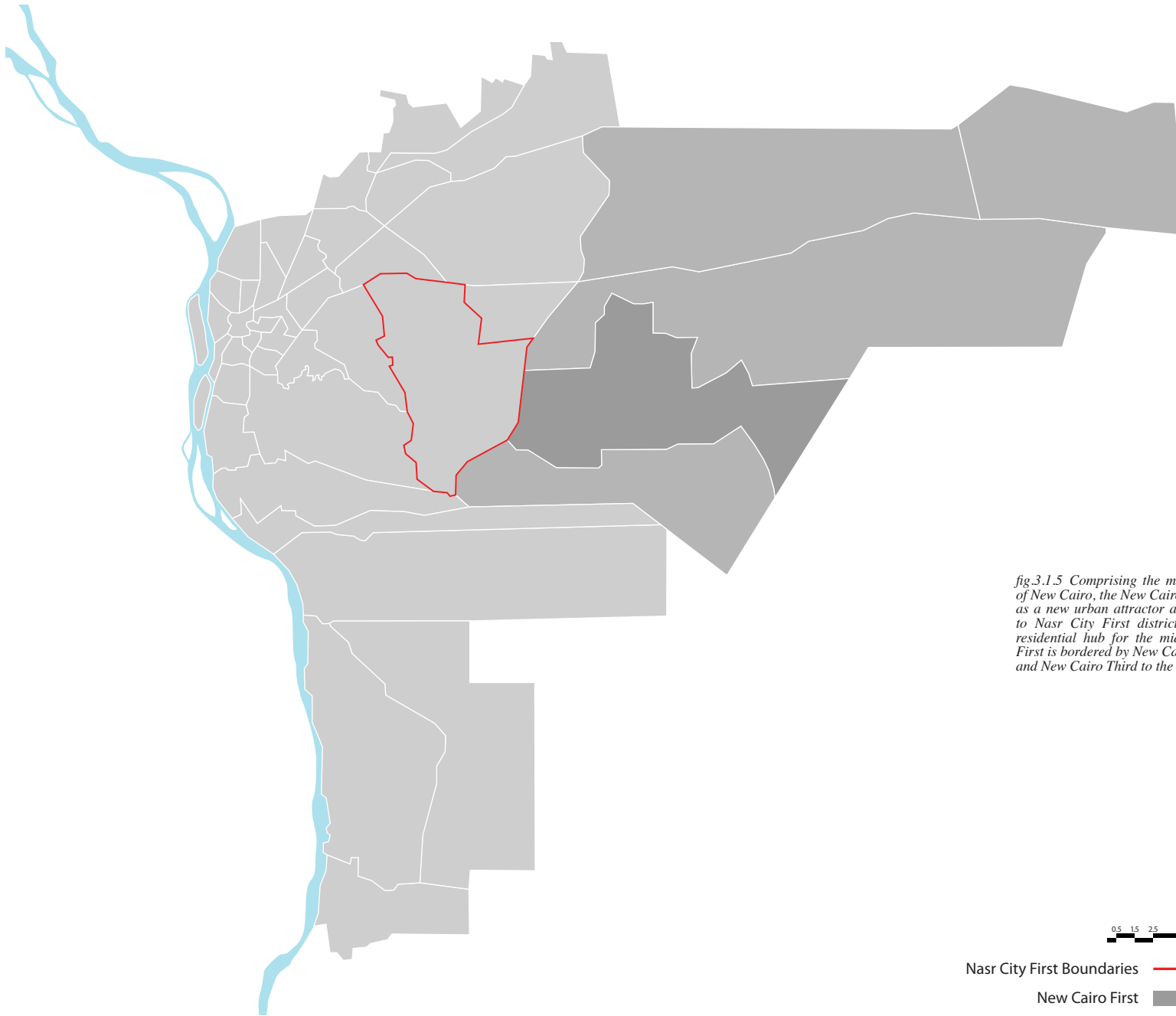
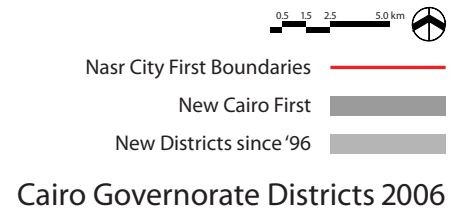


fig.3.1.5 Comprising the most developed portions of New Cairo, the New Cairo First district emerged as a new urban attractor and the main contender to Nasr City First district in its capacity as a residential hub for the middle class. New Cairo First is bordered by New Cairo Second to the north and New Cairo Third to the south.



Cairo Governorate Districts 2006

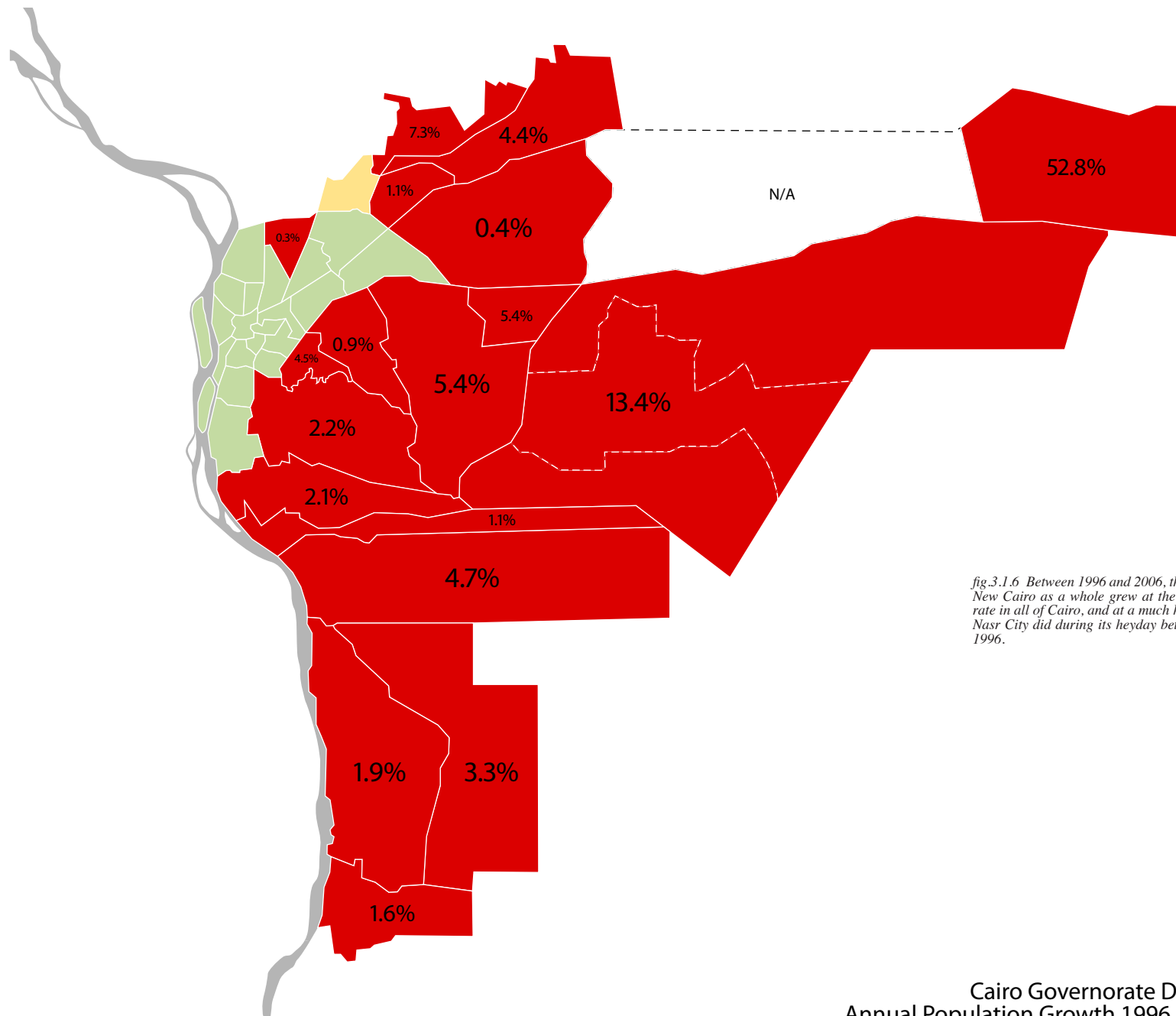


fig.3.1.6 Between 1996 and 2006, the population of New Cairo as a whole grew at the second highest rate in all of Cairo, and at a much higher rate than Nasr City did during its heyday between 1986 and 1996.

Cairo Governorate Districts
Annual Population Growth 1996 – 2006



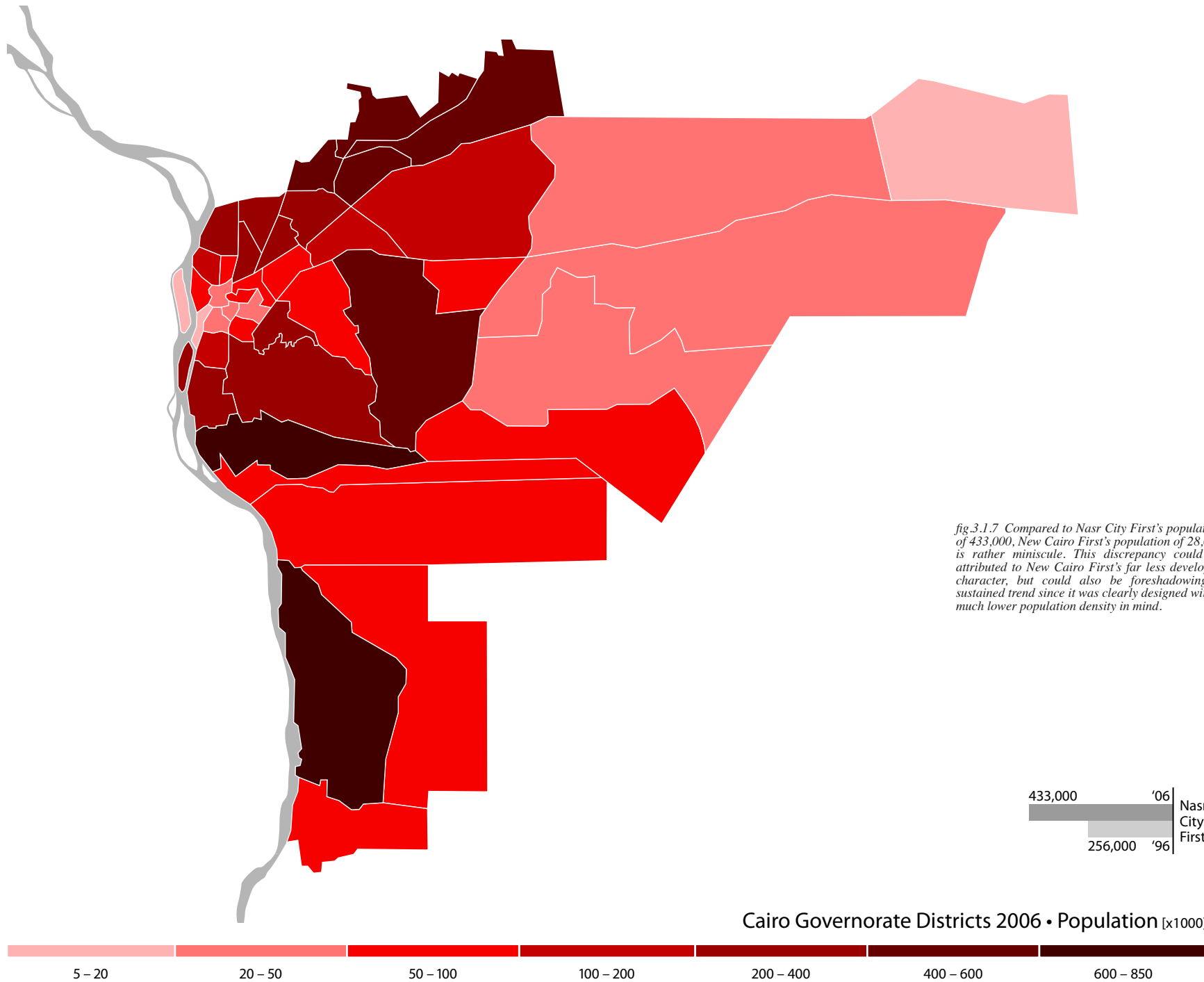
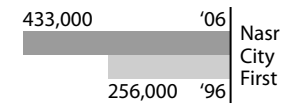


fig.3.1.7 Compared to Nasr City First's population of 433,000, New Cairo First's population of 28,000 is rather miniscule. This discrepancy could be attributed to New Cairo First's far less developed character, but could also be foreshadowing a sustained trend since it was clearly designed with a much lower population density in mind.



Cairo Governorate Districts 2006 • Population [x1000]

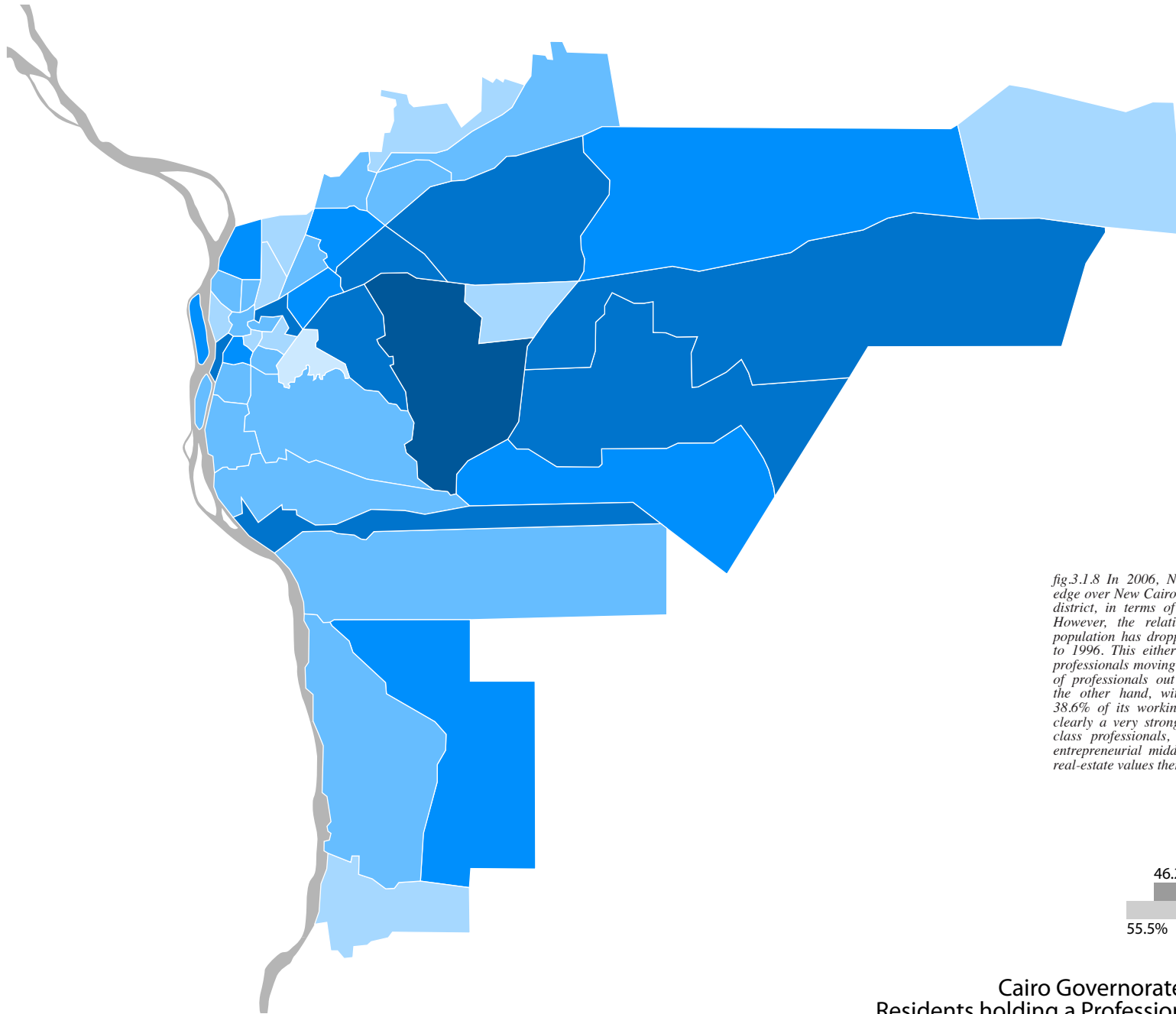
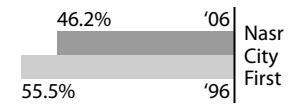


fig.3.1.8 In 2006, Nasr City First still held an edge over New Cairo First, and nay other Cairene district, in terms of its professional population. However, the relative size of its professional population has dropped by about 10% compared to 1996. This either indicates an influx of non-professionals moving into Nasr City, or an exodus of professionals out of Nasr City, or both. On the other hand, with professionals constituting 38.6% of its working population, New Cairo is clearly a very strong urban attractor for middle class professionals, and even more so for the entrepreneurial middle class who can afford the real-estate values there.



Cairo Governorate Districts 2006
Residents holding a Professional Occupation



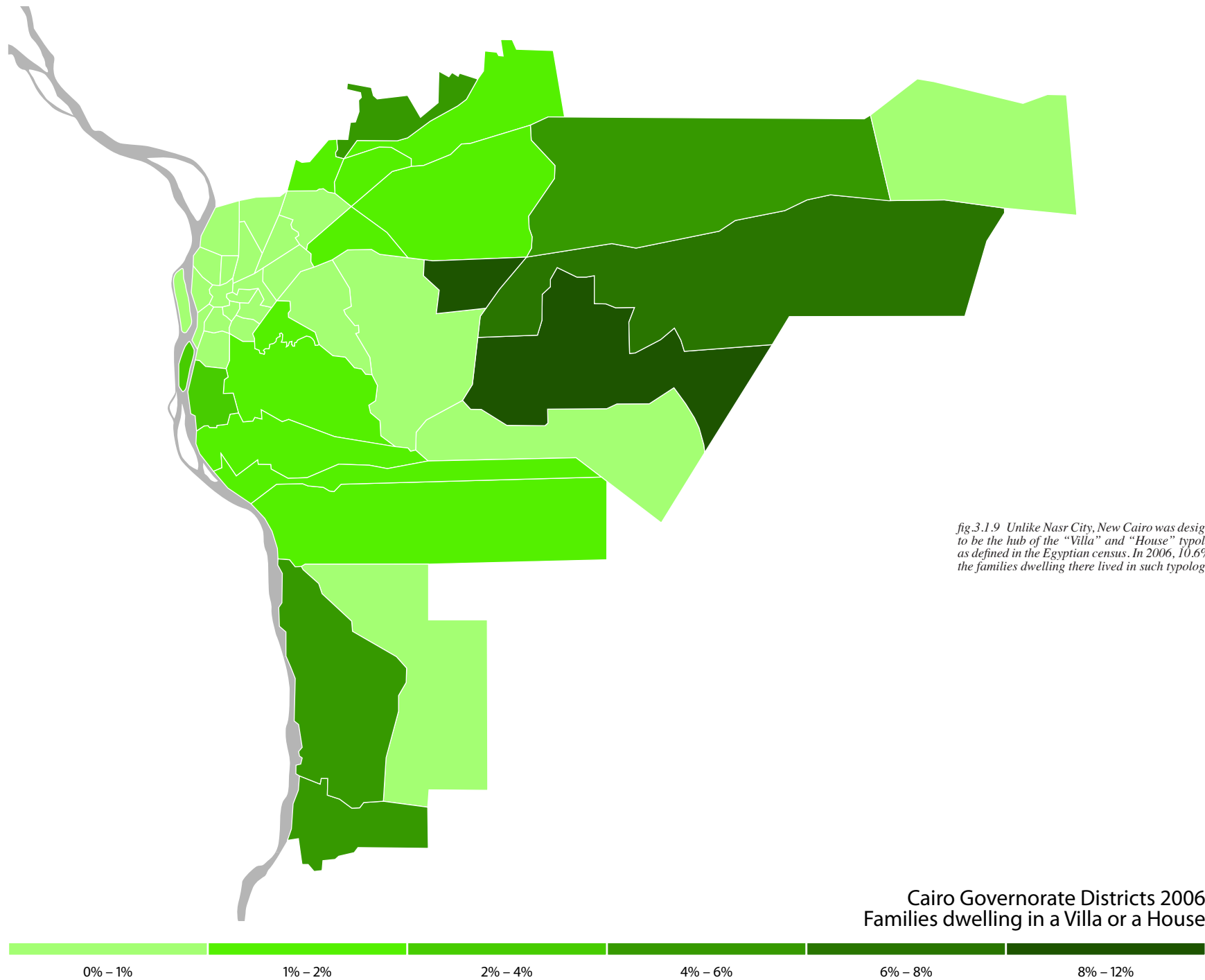


fig.3.1.9 Unlike Nasr City, New Cairo was designed to be the hub of the “Villa” and “House” typology as defined in the Egyptian census. In 2006, 10.6% of the families dwelling there lived in such typologies.

**Cairo Governorate Districts 2006
Families dwelling in a Villa or a House**

0% – 1%

1% – 2%

2% – 4%

4% – 6%

6% – 8%

8% – 12%

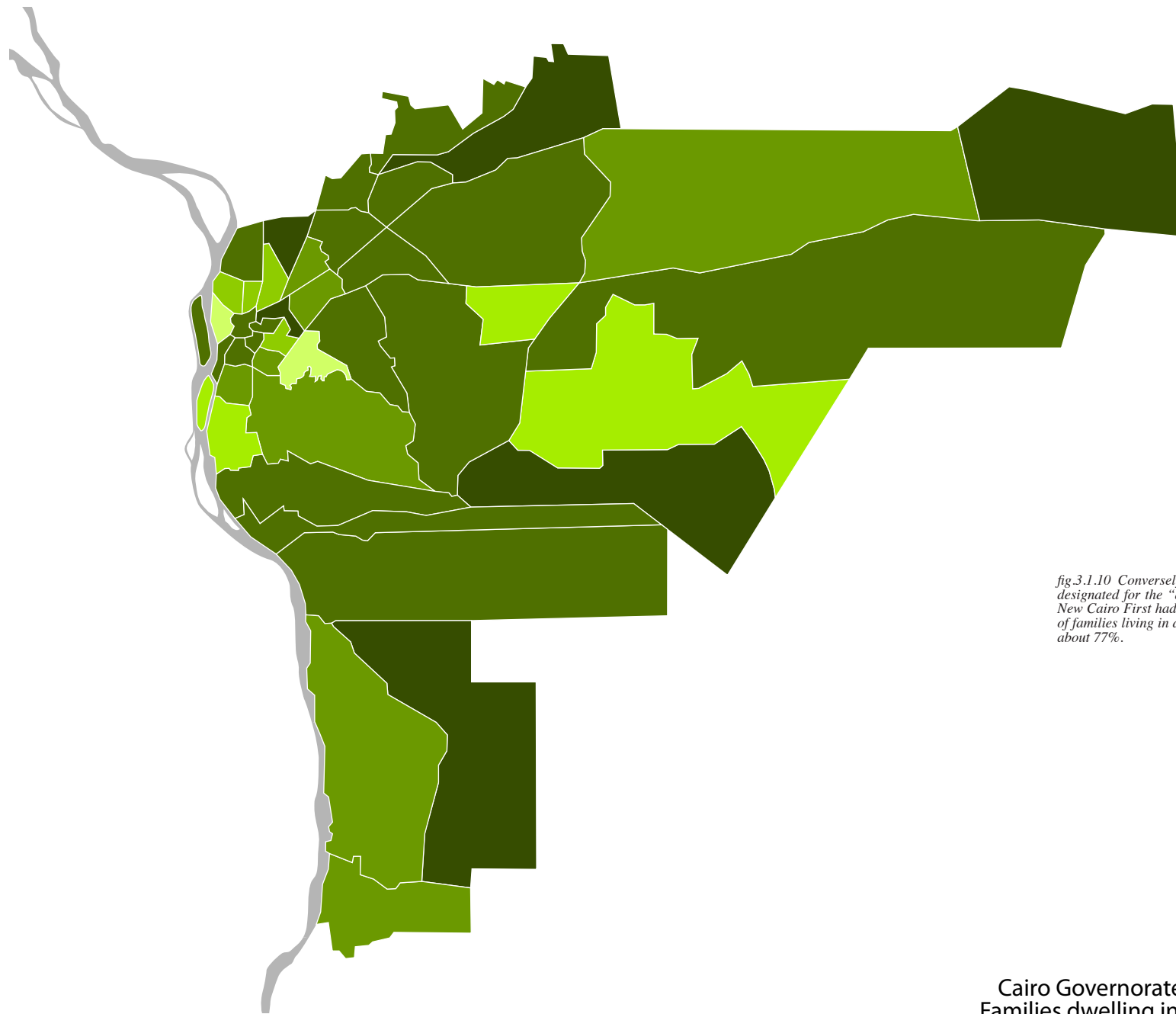


fig.3.1.10 Conversely, with so little of its area designated for the “apartment building” typology, New Cairo First had one of the lowest percentages of families living in an apartment in all of Cairo at about 77%.

Cairo Governorate Districts 2006
Families dwelling in an Apartment



50% – 70%

70% – 80%

80% – 85%

85% – 90%

90% – 95%

95% – 100%

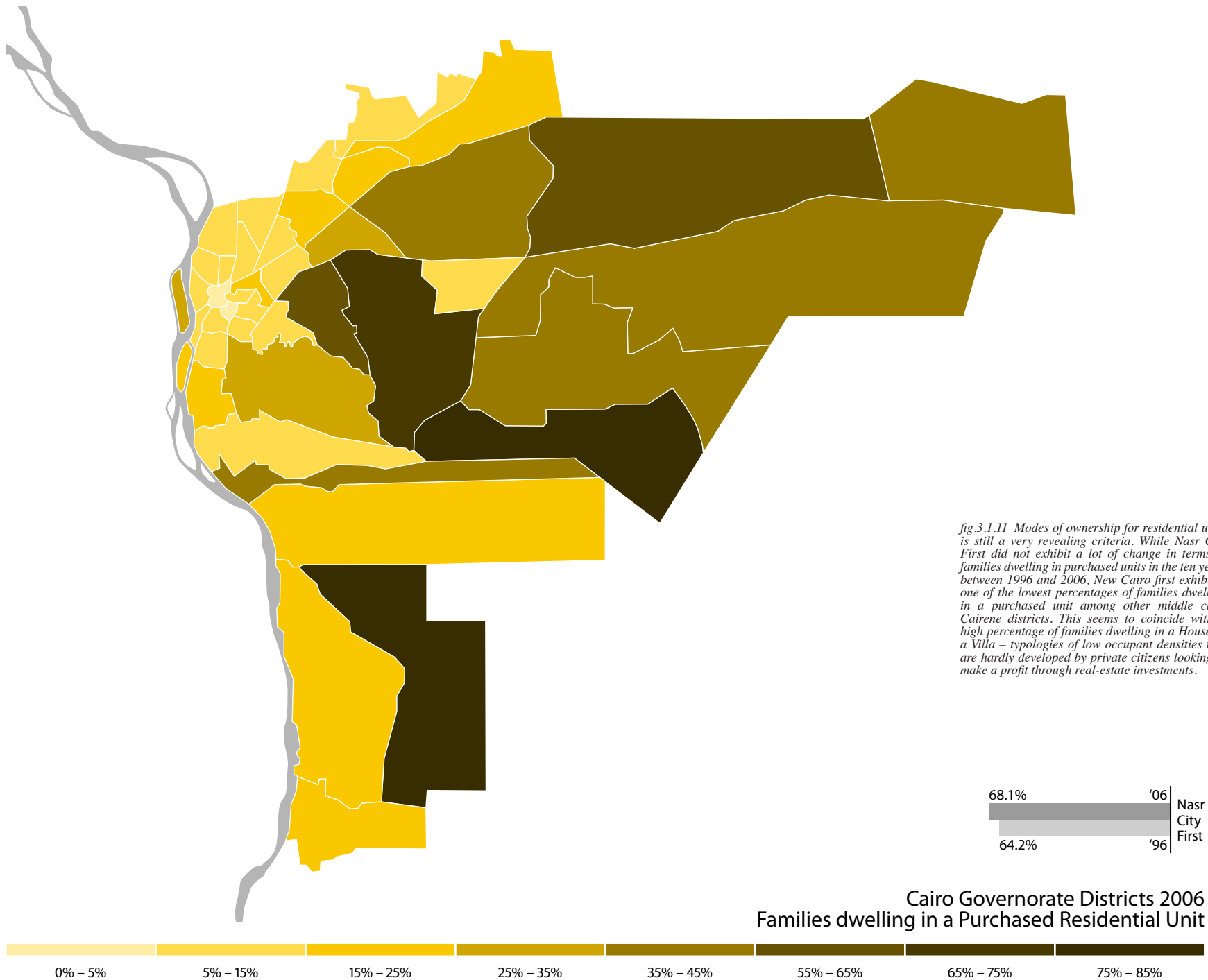


fig.3.1.11 Modes of ownership for residential units is still a very revealing criteria. While Nasr City First did not exhibit a lot of change in terms of families dwelling in purchased units in the ten years between 1996 and 2006, New Cairo first exhibited one of the lowest percentages of families dwelling in a purchased unit among other middle class Cairene districts. This seems to coincide with it high percentage of families dwelling in a House or a Villa – typologies of low occupant densities that are hardly developed by private citizens looking to make a profit through real-estate investments.

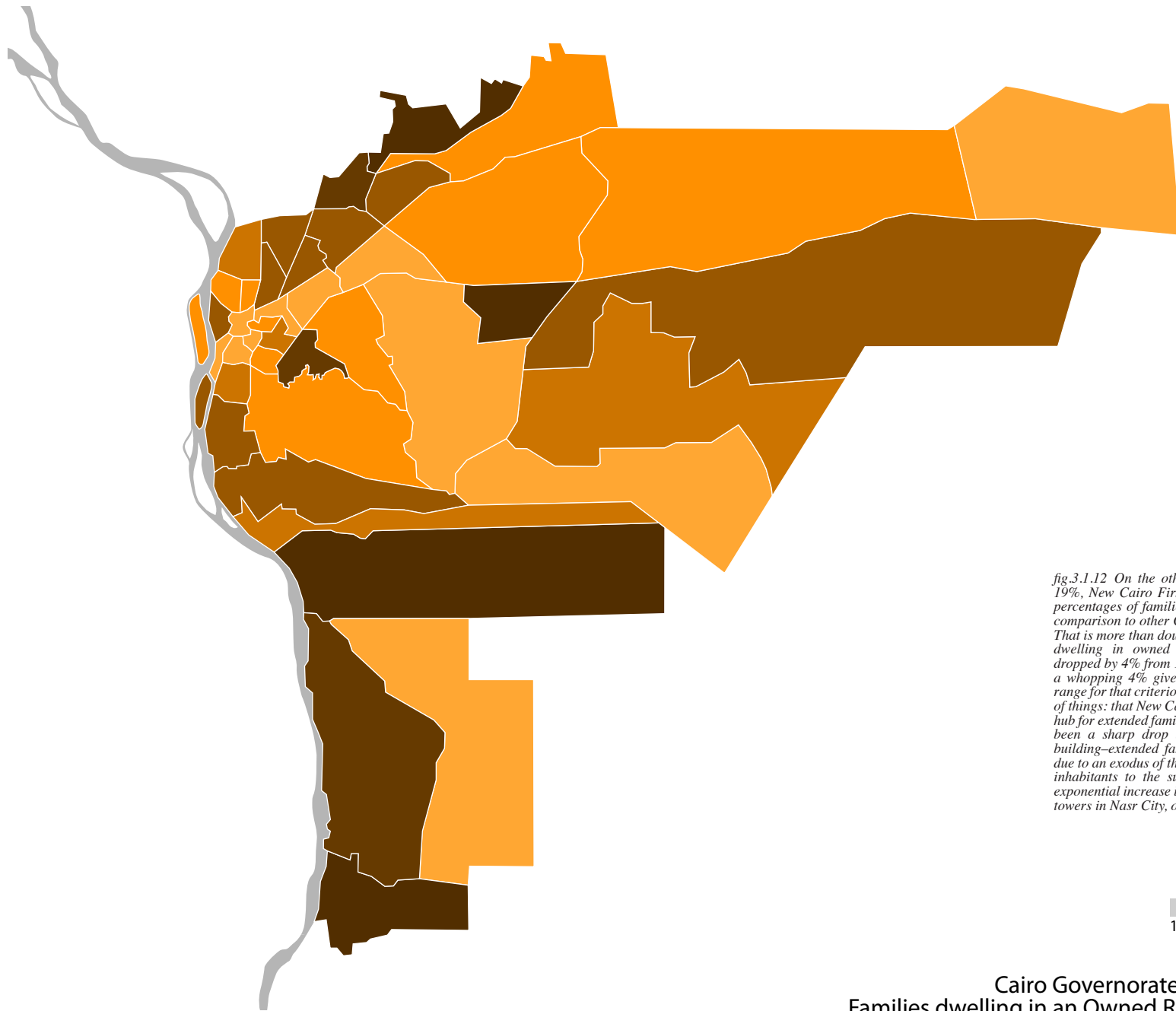
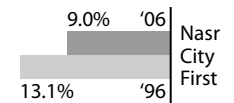
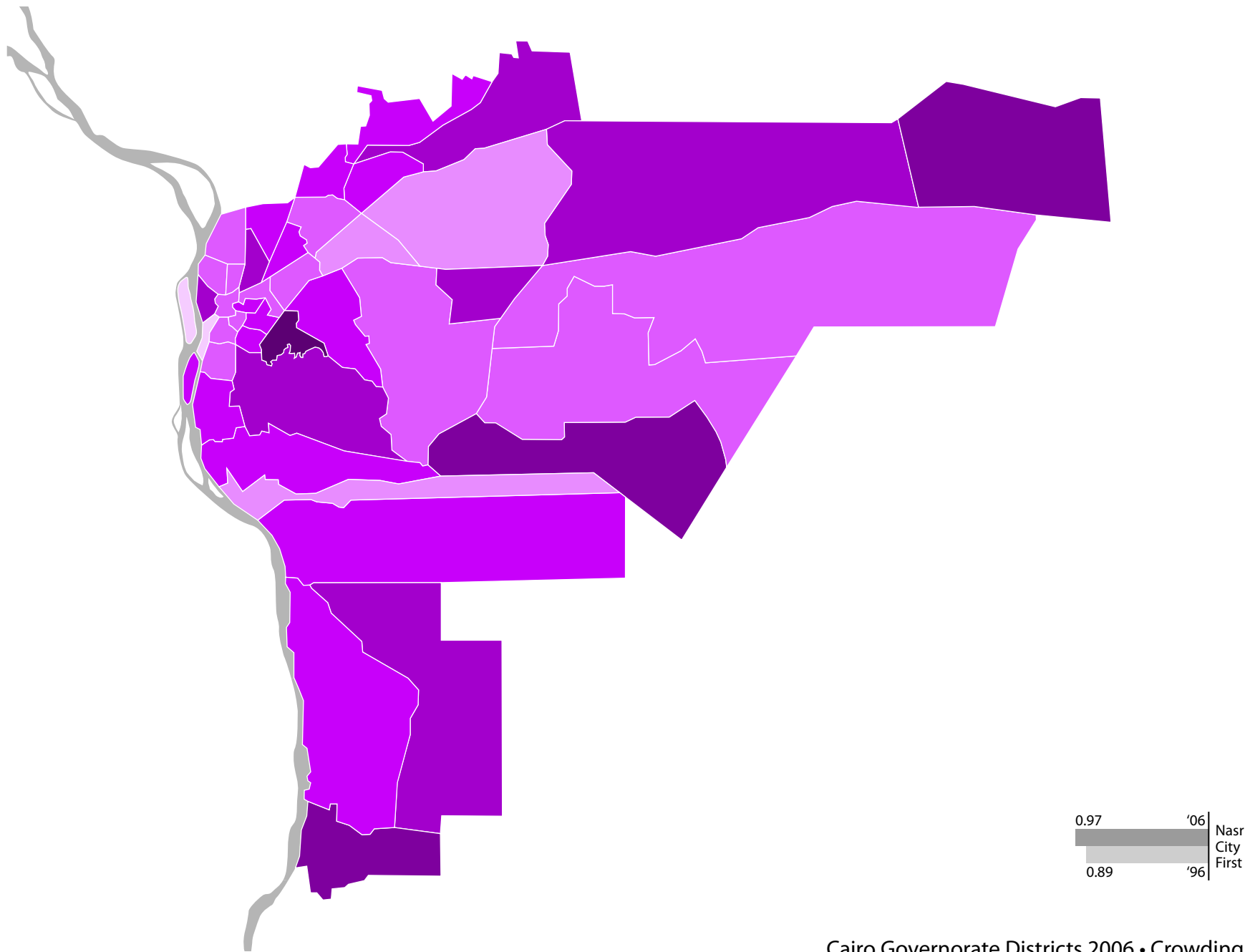


fig.3.1.12 On the other hand, in 2006, at almost 19%, New Cairo First boasted one of the highest percentages of families dwelling in owned units in comparison to other Cairene middle class districts. That is more than double the percentage of families dwelling in owned units in Nasr City; which dropped by 4% from 13.1% in 1996 to 9% in 2006; a whopping 4% given the rather small percentile range for that criterion. This may indicate a number of things: that New Cairo First is becoming the new hub for extended family households, and that there's been a sharp drop in the number of apartment building-extended family households in Nasr city due to an exodus of their middle class professionals inhabitants to the suburbs of New Cairo, or an exponential increase in the number of condominium towers in Nasr City, or both.



**Cairo Governorate Districts 2006
Families dwelling in an Owned Residential Unit**





Cairo Governorate Districts 2006 • Crowding

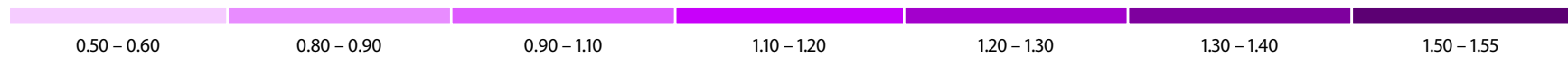


fig.3.1.13 The increase in the crowding ratio in Nasr City first from 0.89 persons per room to 0.97 persons per room further indicates decline of the apartment building–extended family house typology in the face of the more crowded condominium tower

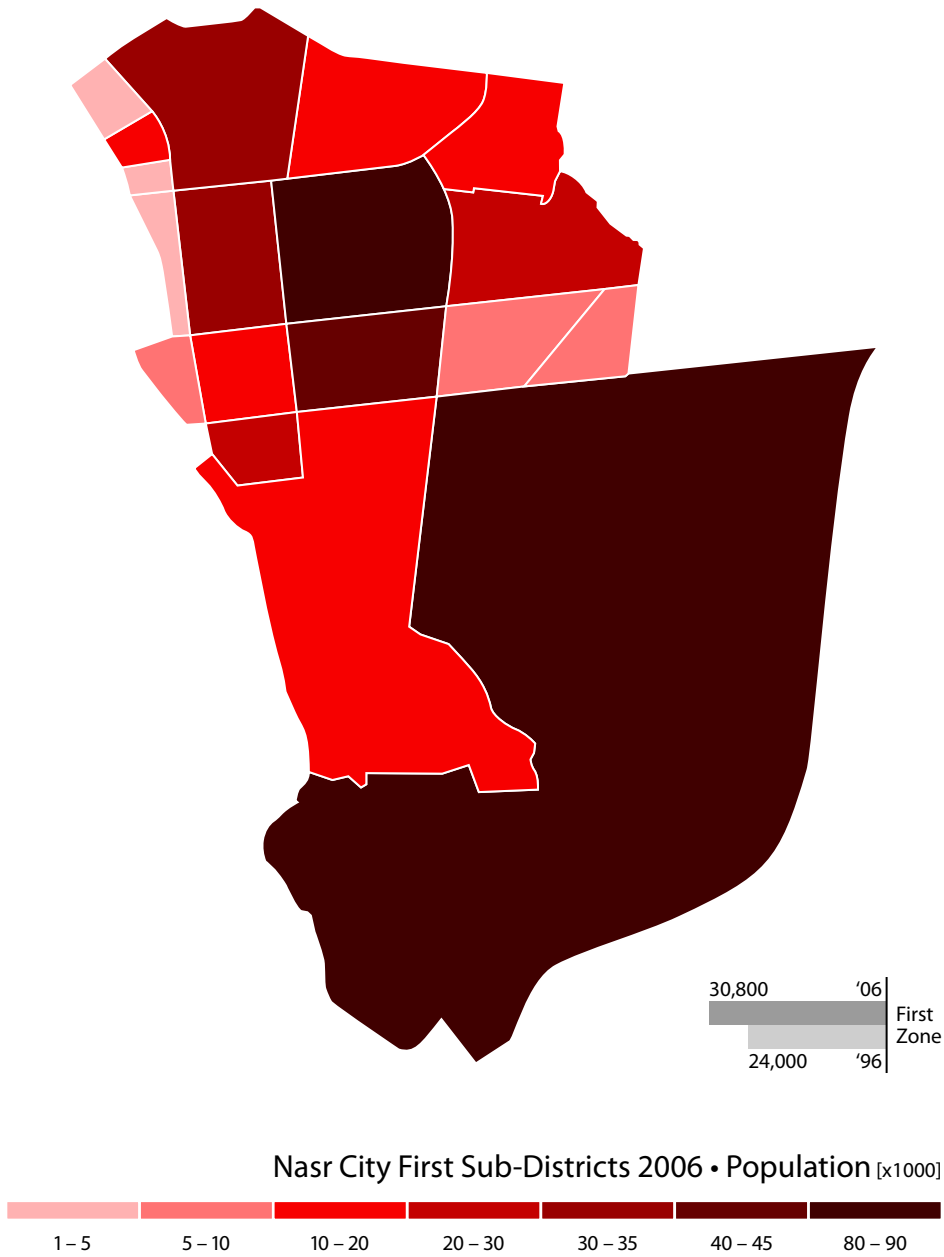


fig.3.1.14 The same criteria applied on the district scale in Cairo will now be applied on the sub-district scale in Nasr City to demonstrate that the First Zone, where 11 El-Insha Street is located, has quickly lost its character as a hub for the apartment building-extended family house typology over the ten years between 1996 and 2006. Over the span of that decade, the population of the First Zone, which was, for the most part, already developed in 1996, still increased by a considerable 4,000 inhabitants. This is strong indication that good portion of new buildings erected during that period followed the condominium tower typology.

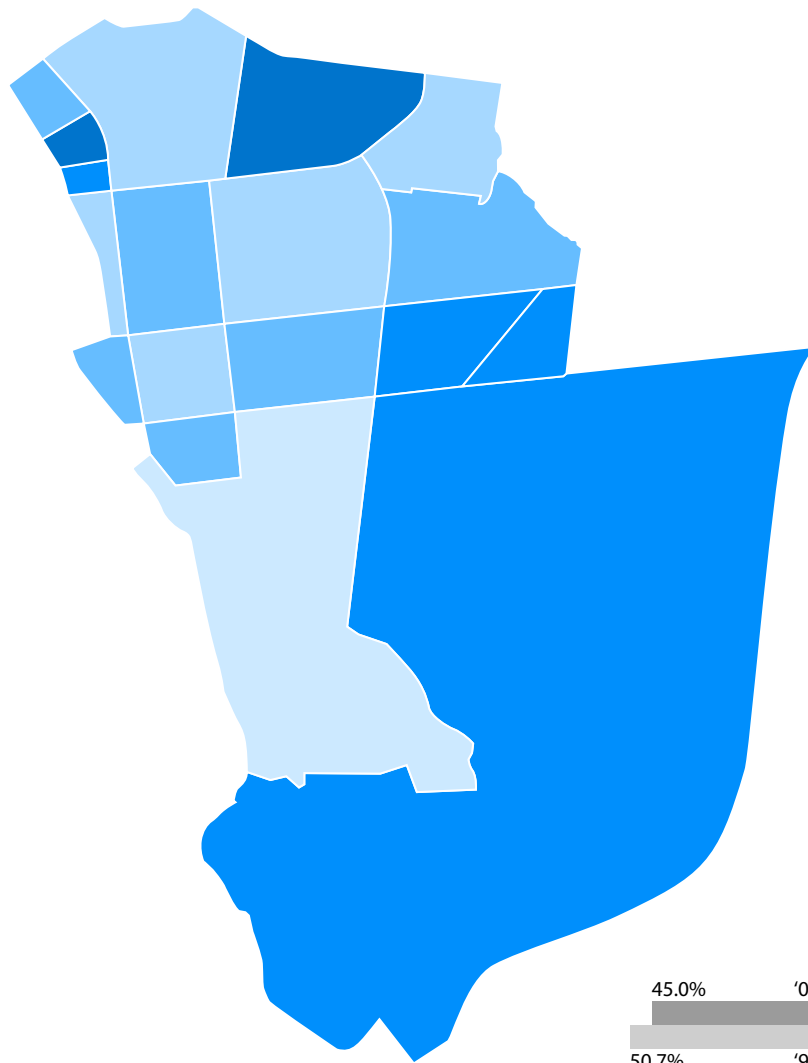
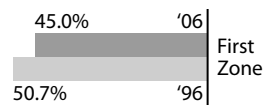
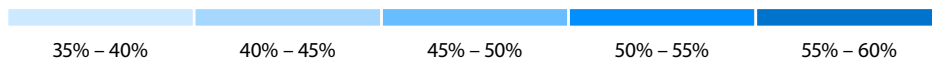
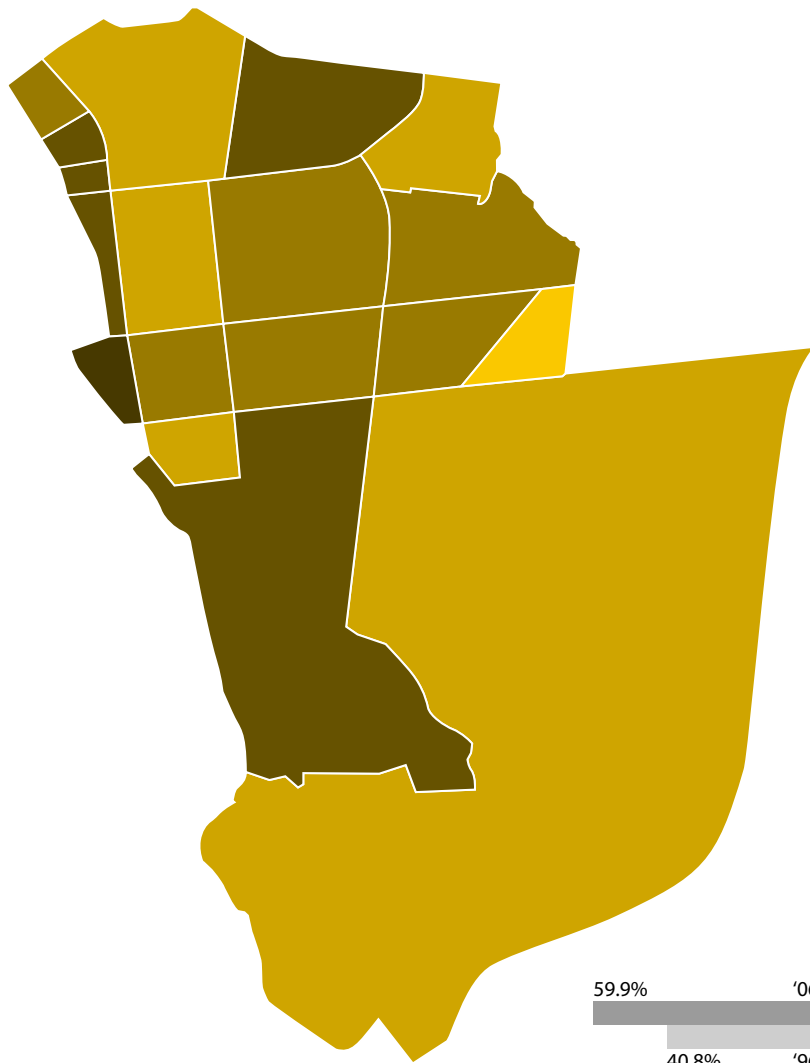


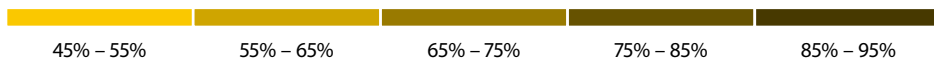
fig.3.1.15 During that same period, the relative population of professionals in the First Zone fell by about 5%.

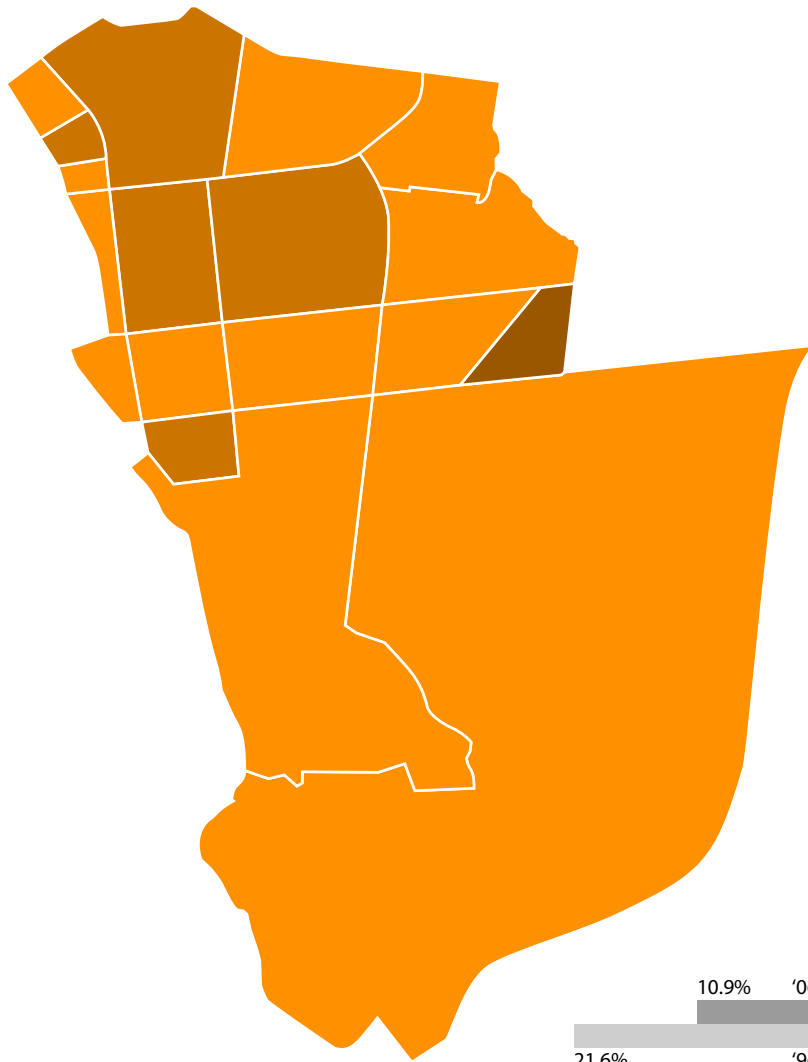
Nasr City First Sub-Districts 2006
Residents holding a Professional Occupation





Nasr City First Sub-Districts 2006
Families dwelling in a Purchased Residential Unit





Nasr City First Sub-Districts 2006
Families dwelling in an Owned Residential Unit

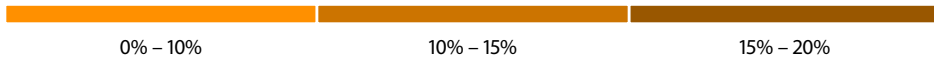
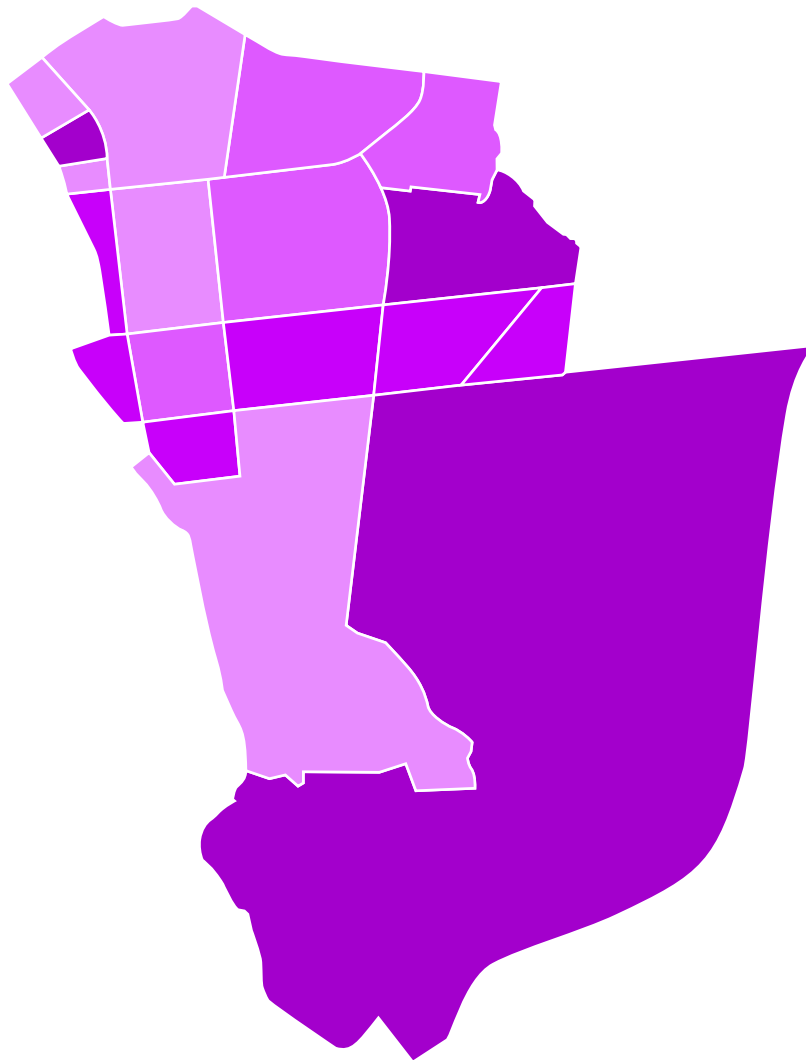


fig.3.1.16 [opposite page] and fig.3.1.17 Also during that same period, the percentage of families dwelling in a purchased unit in the First Zone increased by a whopping 10% while the percentage of families dwelling in an owned unit dropped by almost to almost half what it was in 1996, in one of the strongest indication of the fall of the apartment building–extended family house typology against the condominium tower typology, and possibly the exodus of the former's middle class inhabitants out of the First Zone.



Nasr City First Sub-Districts 2006 • Crowding



fig.3.1.18 While the crowding ratio in the First Zone hovered around the same value in 1996 and 2006, it increased to varying degrees in every single one of the rest of Nasr City's core residential districts, indicating the rise of the condominium tower typology and the toll it has taken on the living quality and densities in said zones.

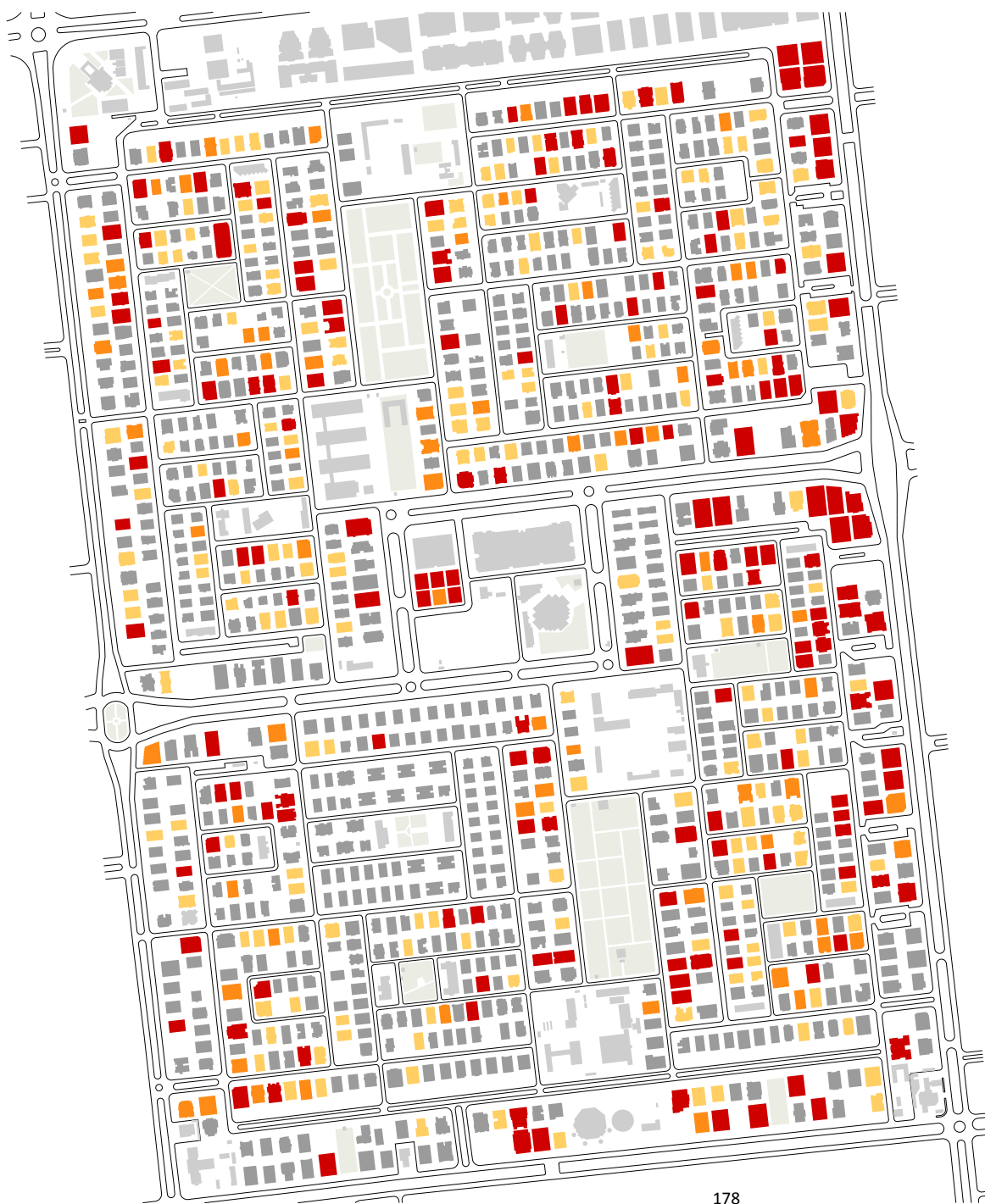
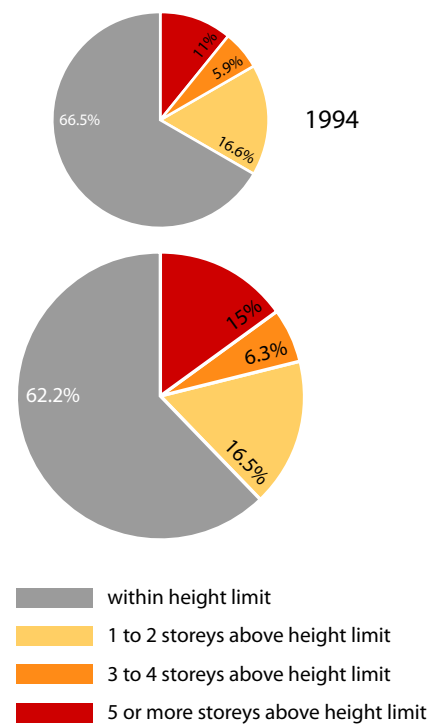
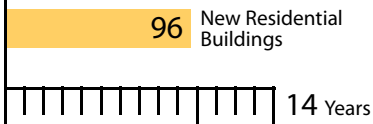
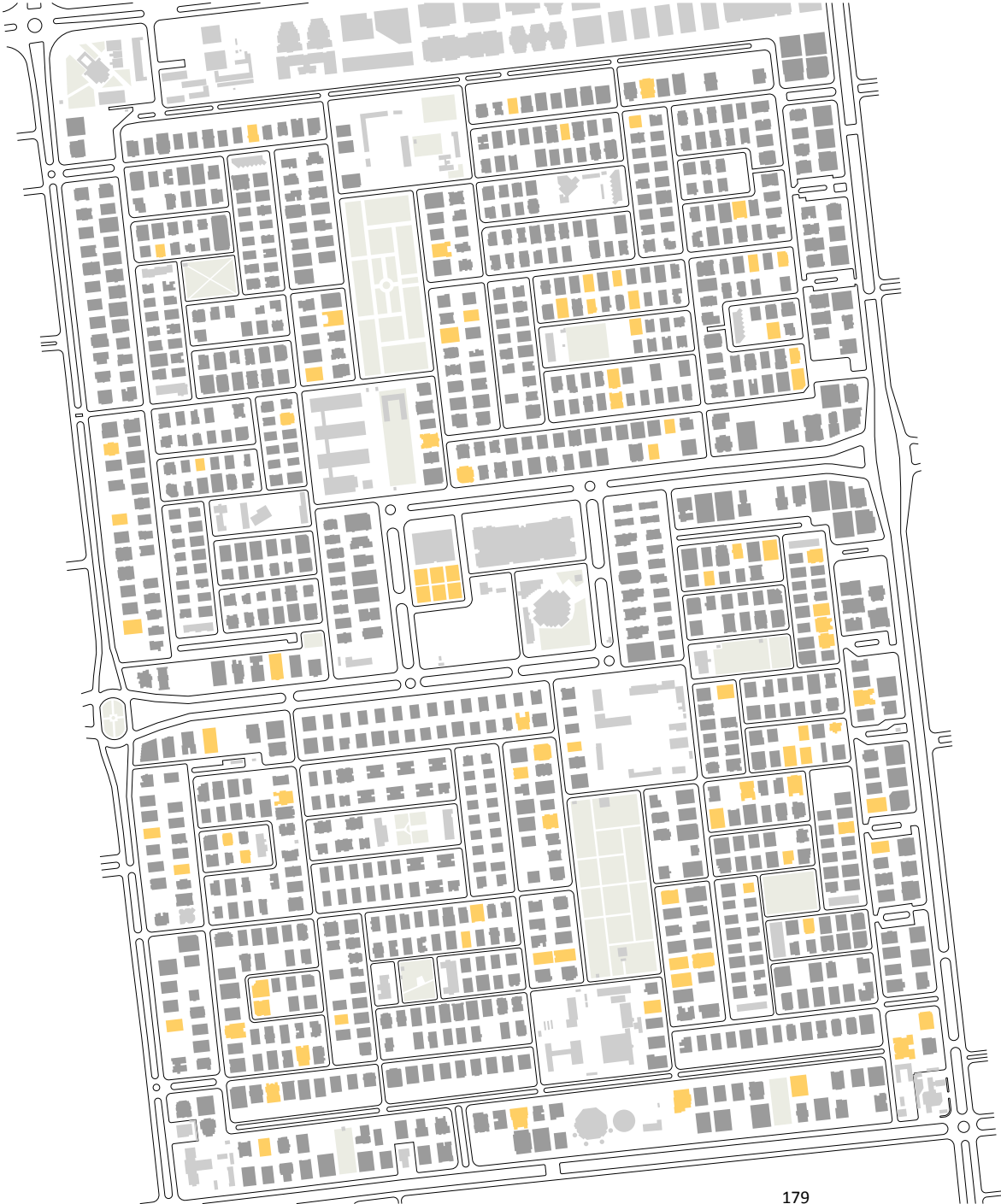


fig.3.1.19 What follows is a series of maps tracking urban changes in the First Zone 14 years after Nasr City came into its own and on the eve of passing the Universal Building Code of 2008.



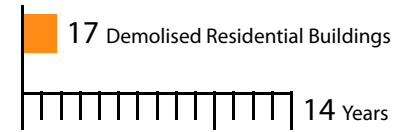
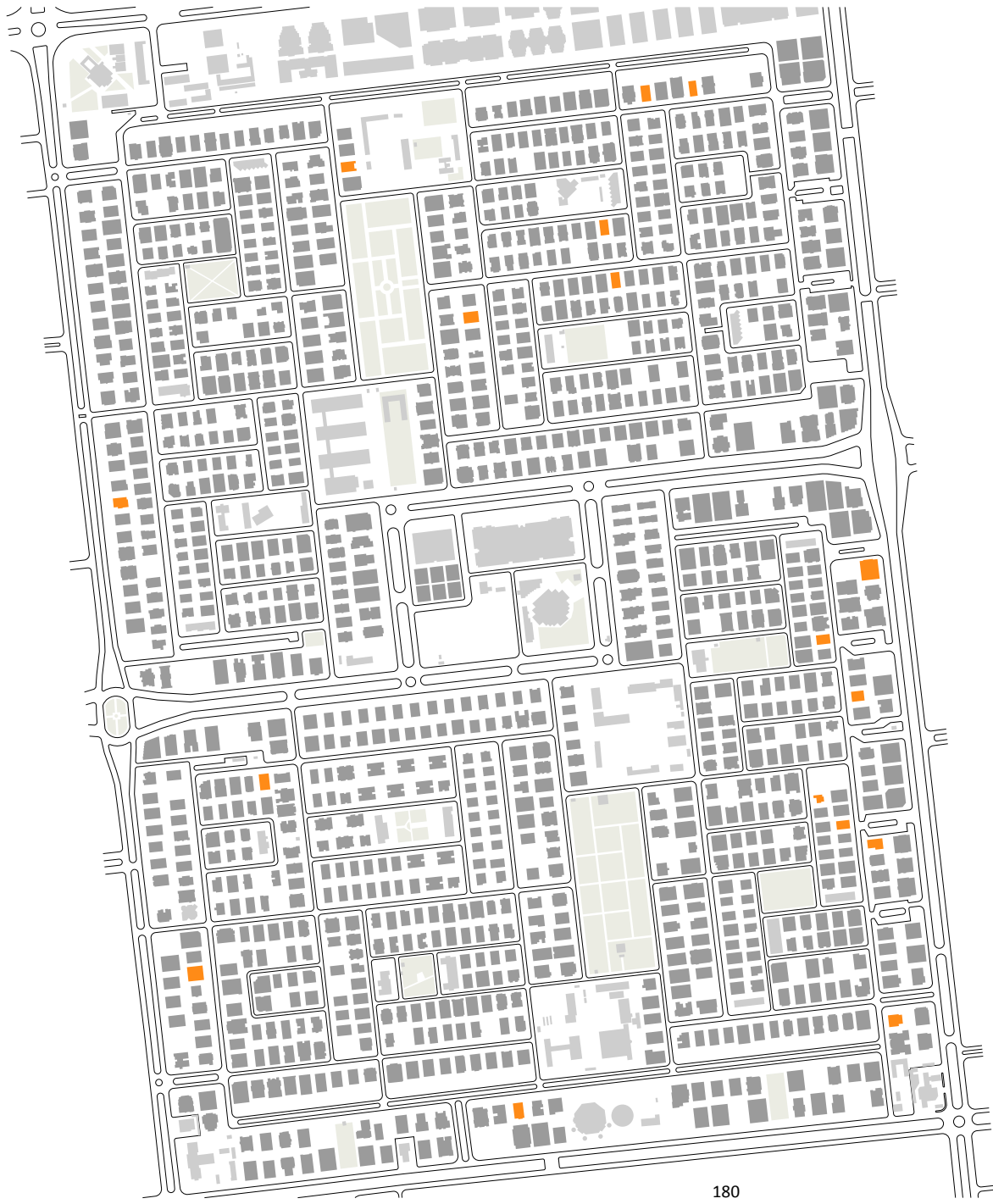
First Zone | 2007
Residential Buildings
Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws

fig.3.1.20



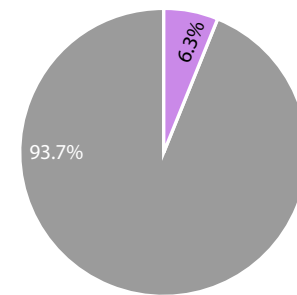
First Zone | 1994 – Late 2007
New Residential Buildings

fig.3.1.21



First Zone | 1994 – Late 2007
Demolished Residential Buildings

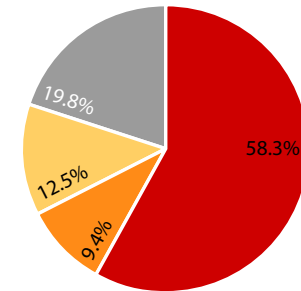
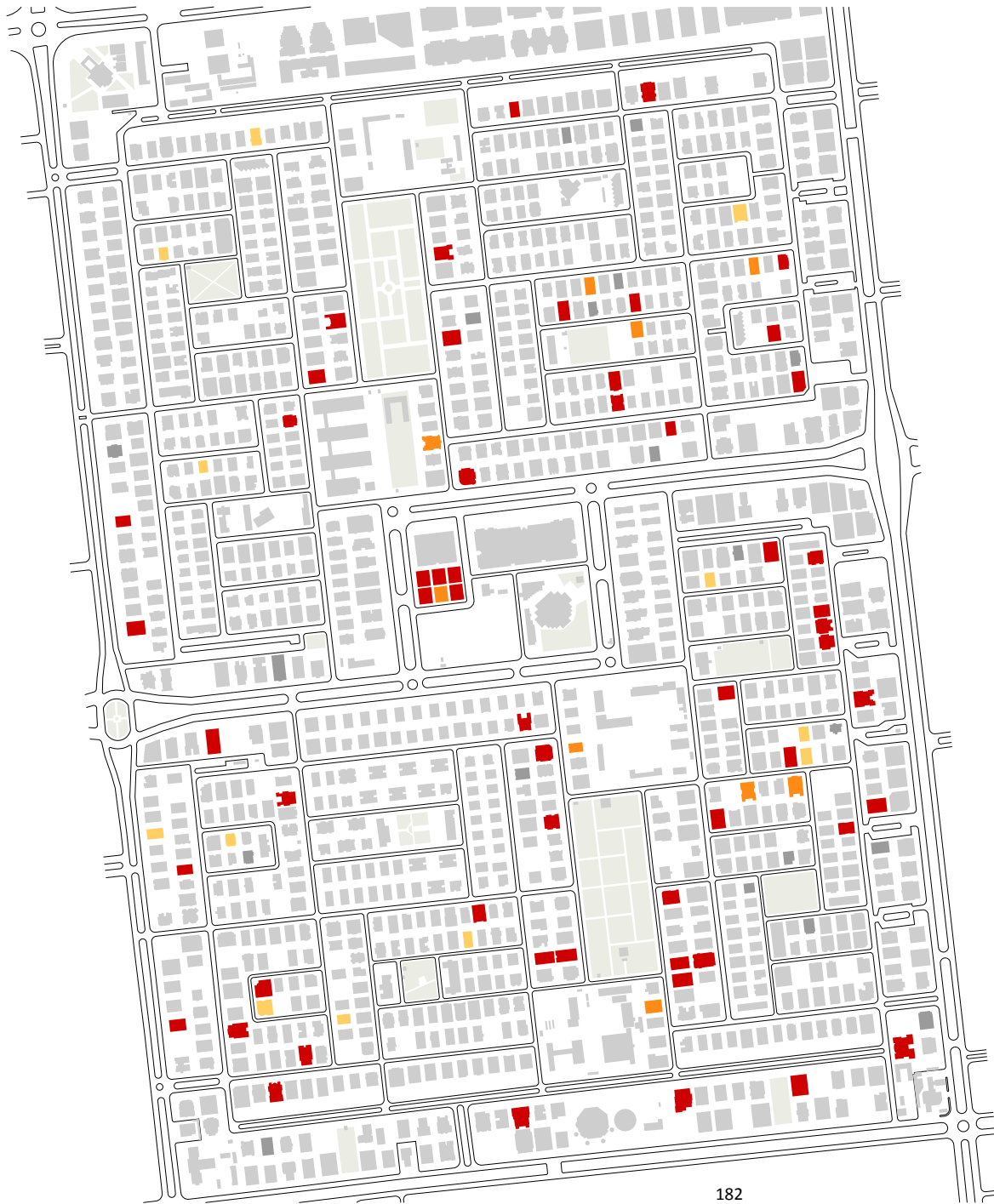
fig.3.1.22



- built on a vacant residential lot
- built in place of a demolished residential building

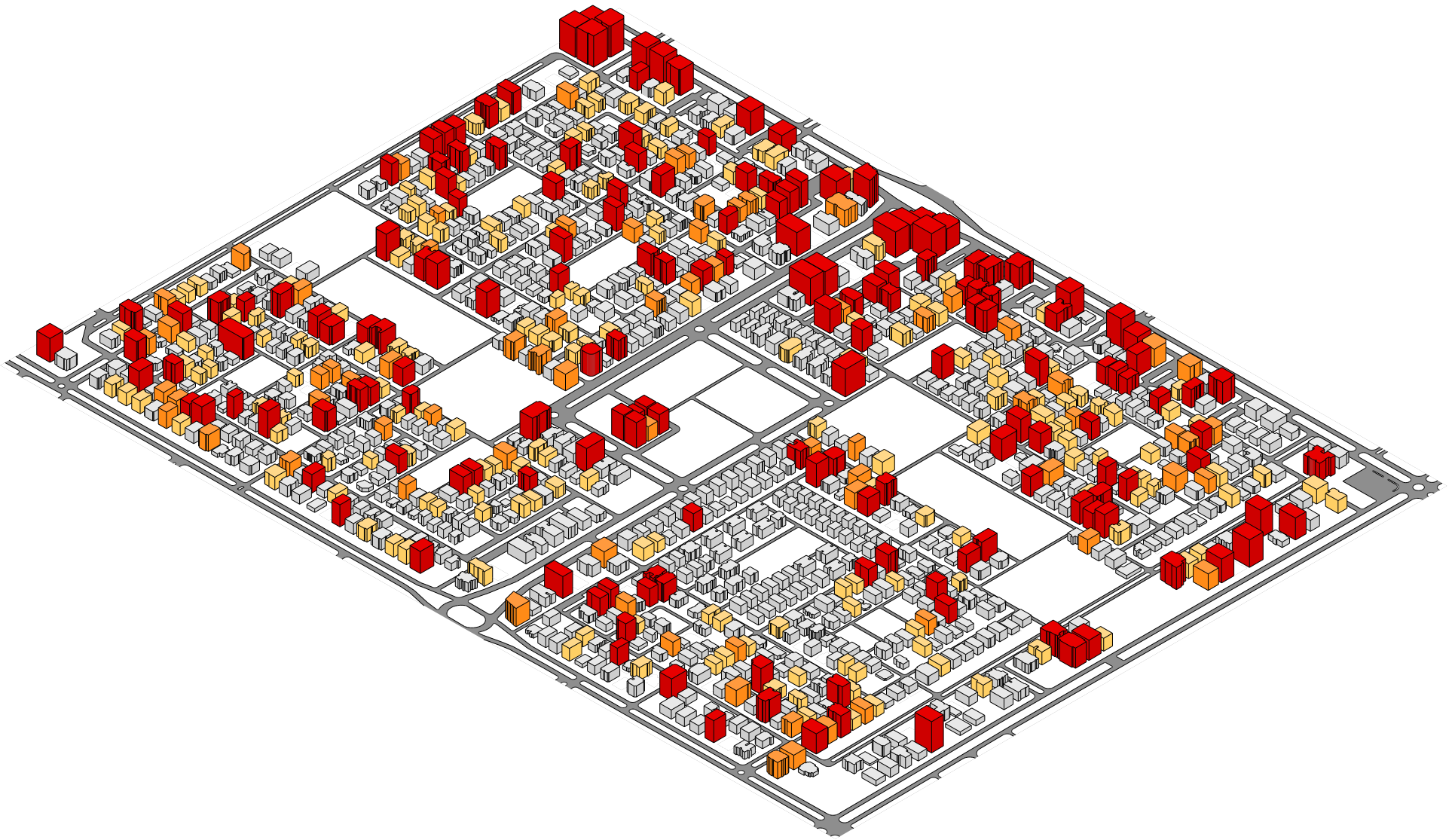
First Zone | 1994 – Late 2007 New Residential Buildings Replacement


fig.3.1.23



- within height limit
- 1 to 2 storeys above height limit
- 3 to 4 storeys above height limit
- 5 or more storeys above height limit

First Zone | 1994 – Late 2007
New Residential Buildings
Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws




 10 storeys and above
 [11 storeys and above on 50m streets]


 8 or 9 storeys
 [9 or 10 storeys on 50m streets]


 6 or 7 storeys
 [7 or 8 storeys on 50m streets]


 up to 5 storeys
 [up to 6 storeys on 50m streets]

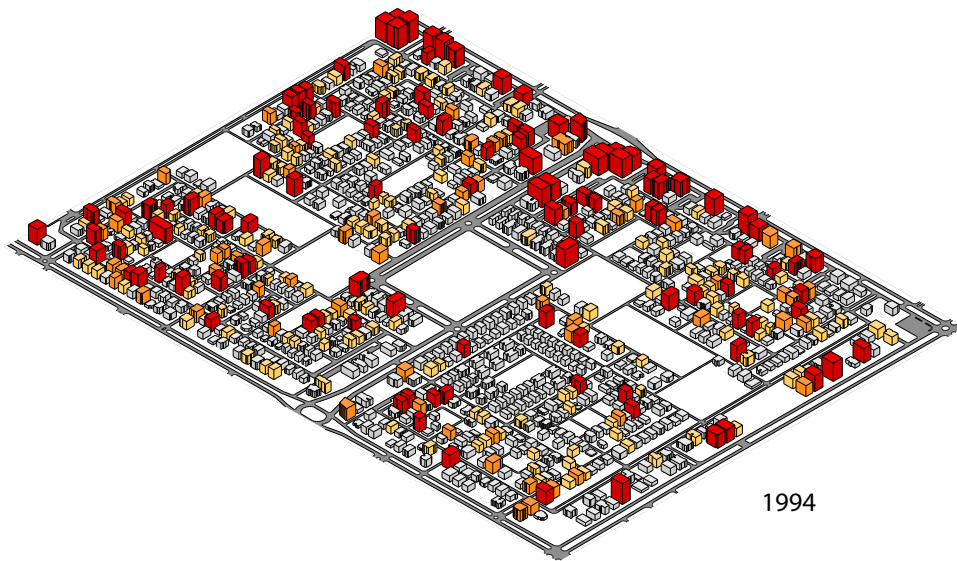
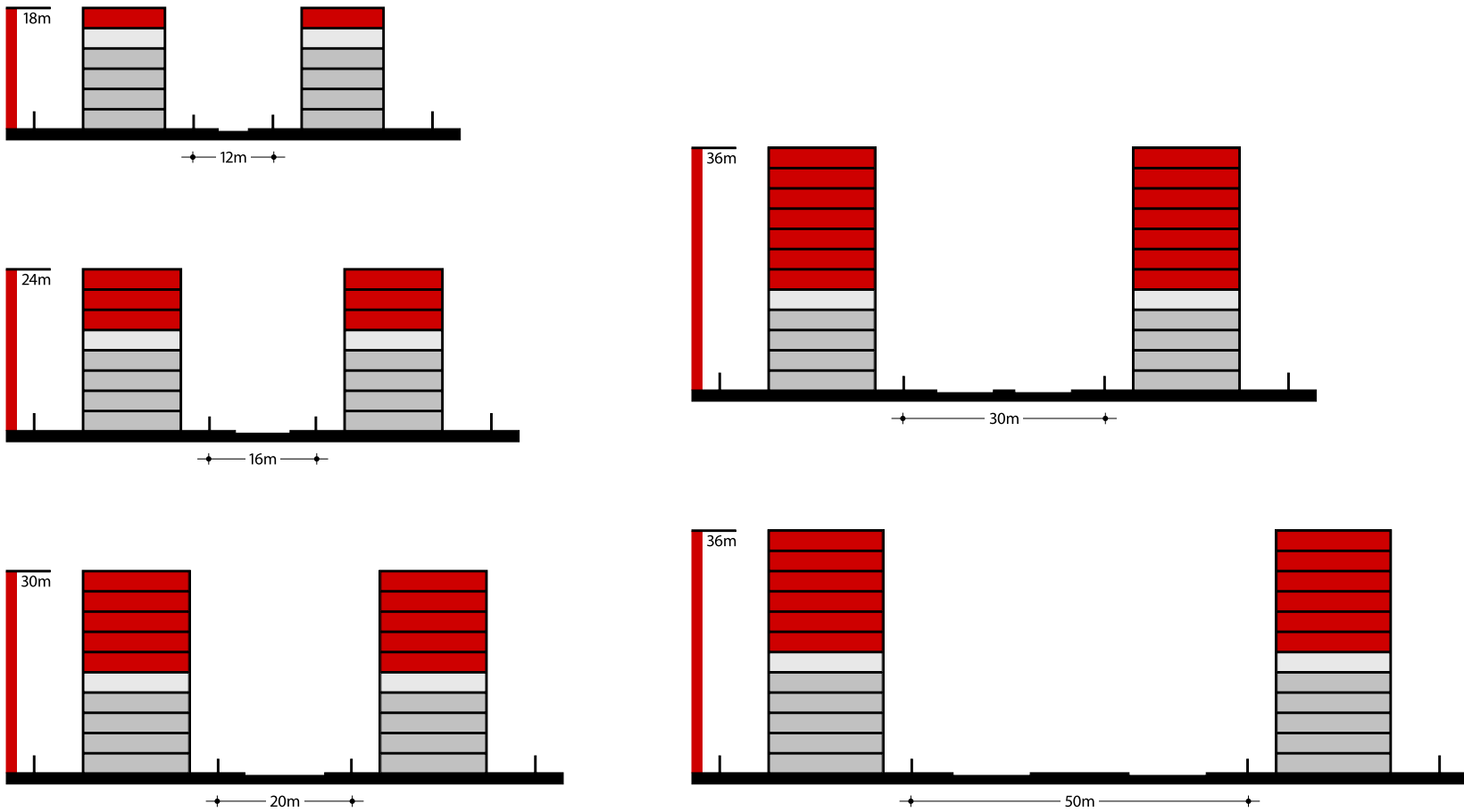


fig.3.1.24

First Zone | 2007
Residential Building Heights



Nasr City Residential Building Heights Universal Building Code | 2008

fig.3.1.25 The passing of the Universal Building Code of 2008 was a turning point for Nasr City. It made legal the construction of condominium towers that were, up to that point, bylaw-violating structures in Nasr City. As illustrated above, applying the formula for building height stipulated in that code to Nasr City had a drastic altering effect to the quality and character of its urban street sections in comparison to its original building bylaws. But most importantly, the passing of that code opened the floodgates for the trend of demolishing the bylaw-abiding apartment building–extended family houses for the sake of replacing them with the now officially approved towering condominiums. The following set of maps tracks the prevalence of that trend and its urban effects throughout the First Zone two years after the passing of the Universal Building Code of 2008.

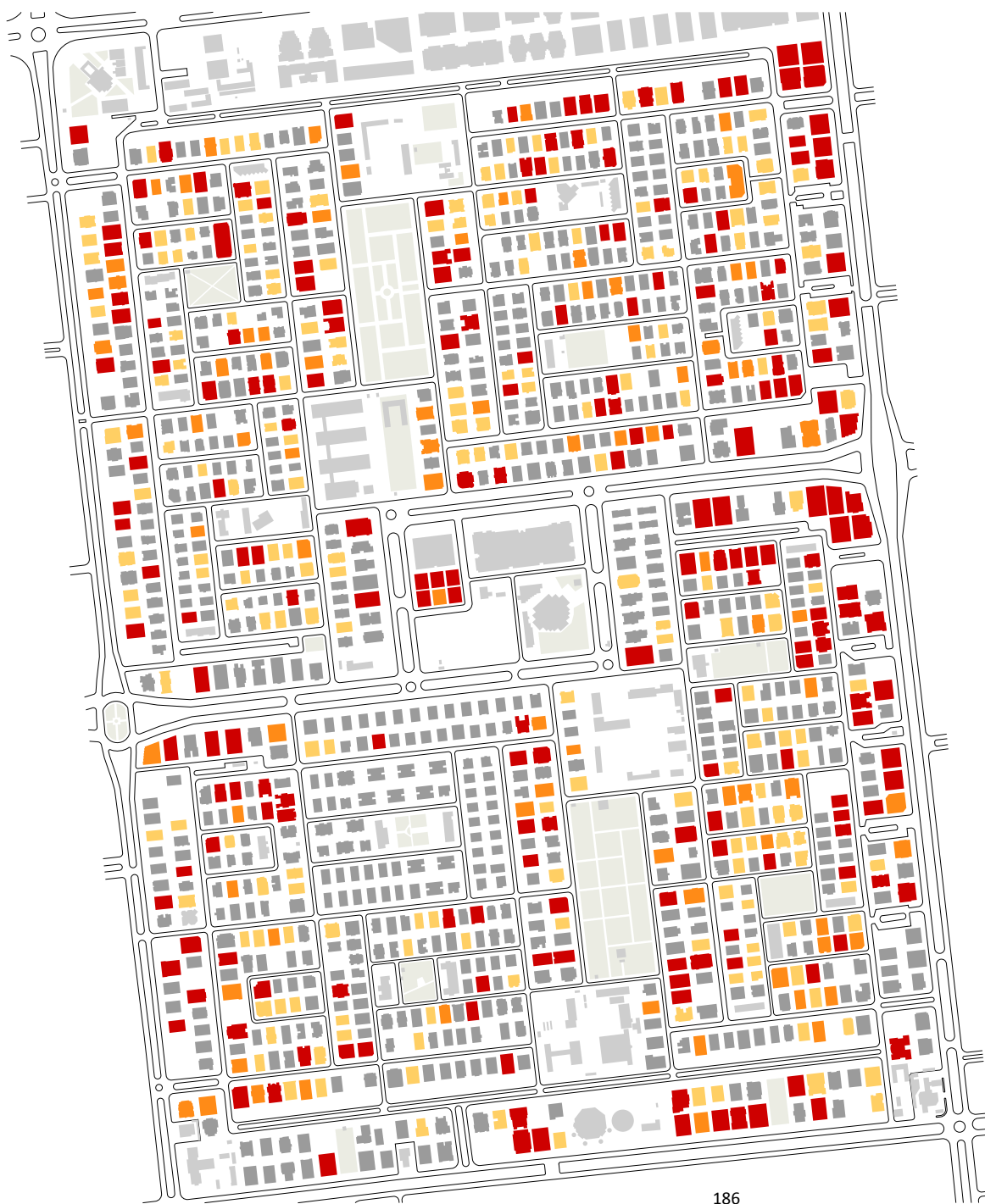
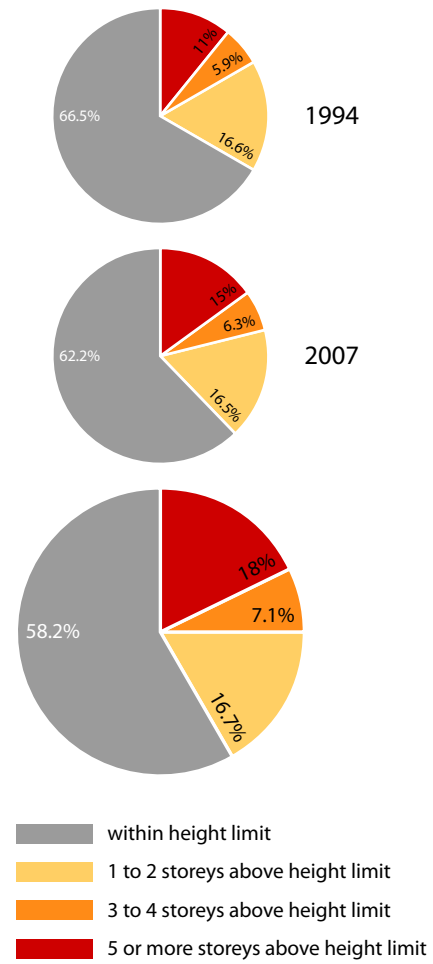
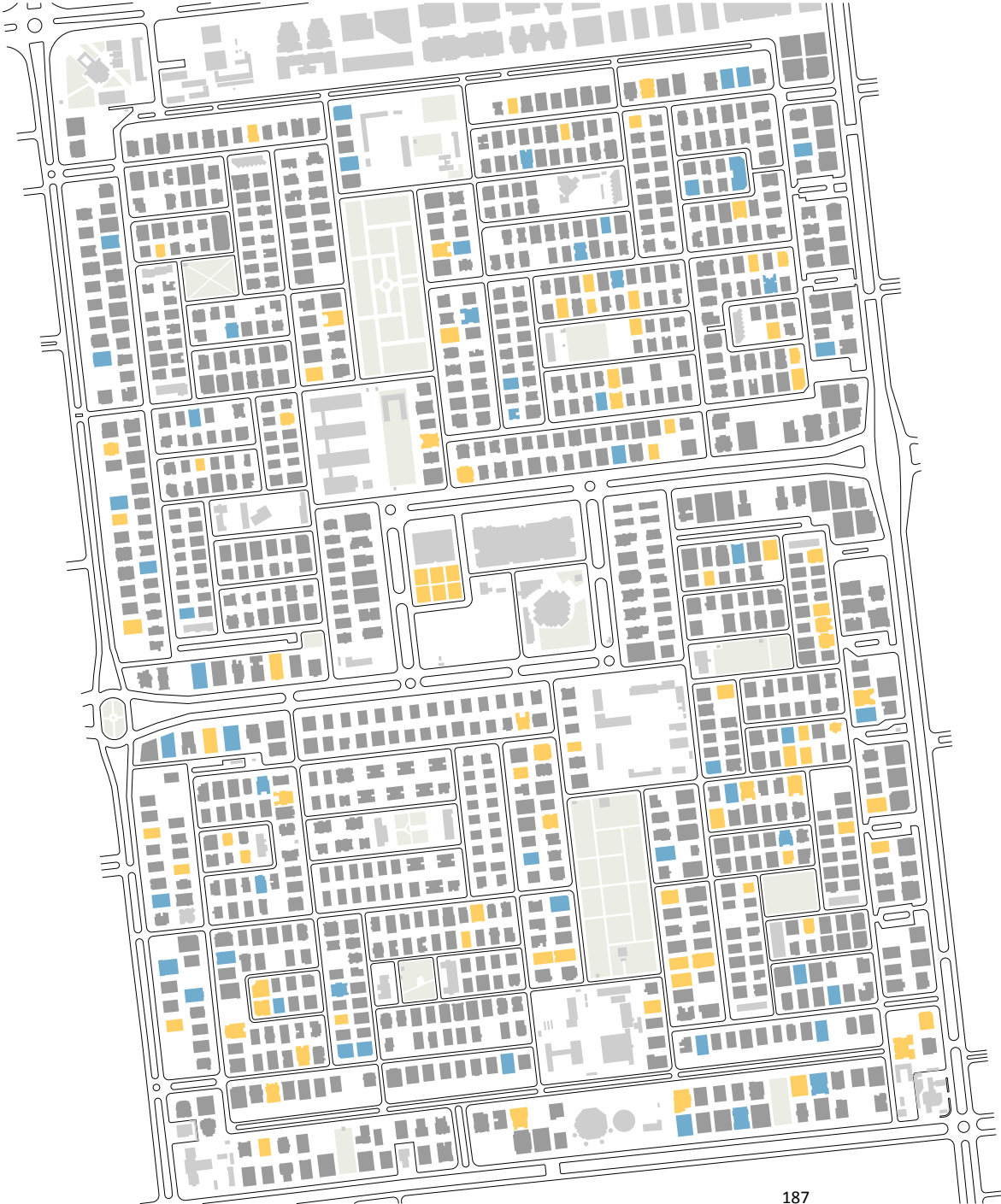


fig.3.1.26



First Zone | 2010
Residential Buildings
Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws

fig.3.1.27

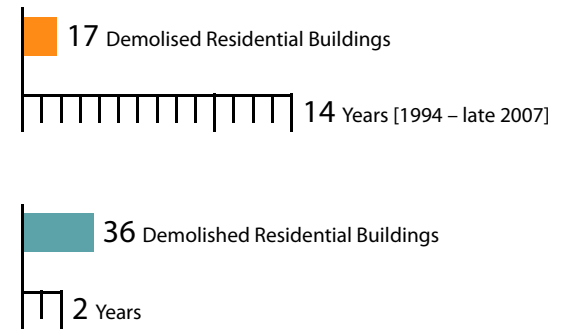
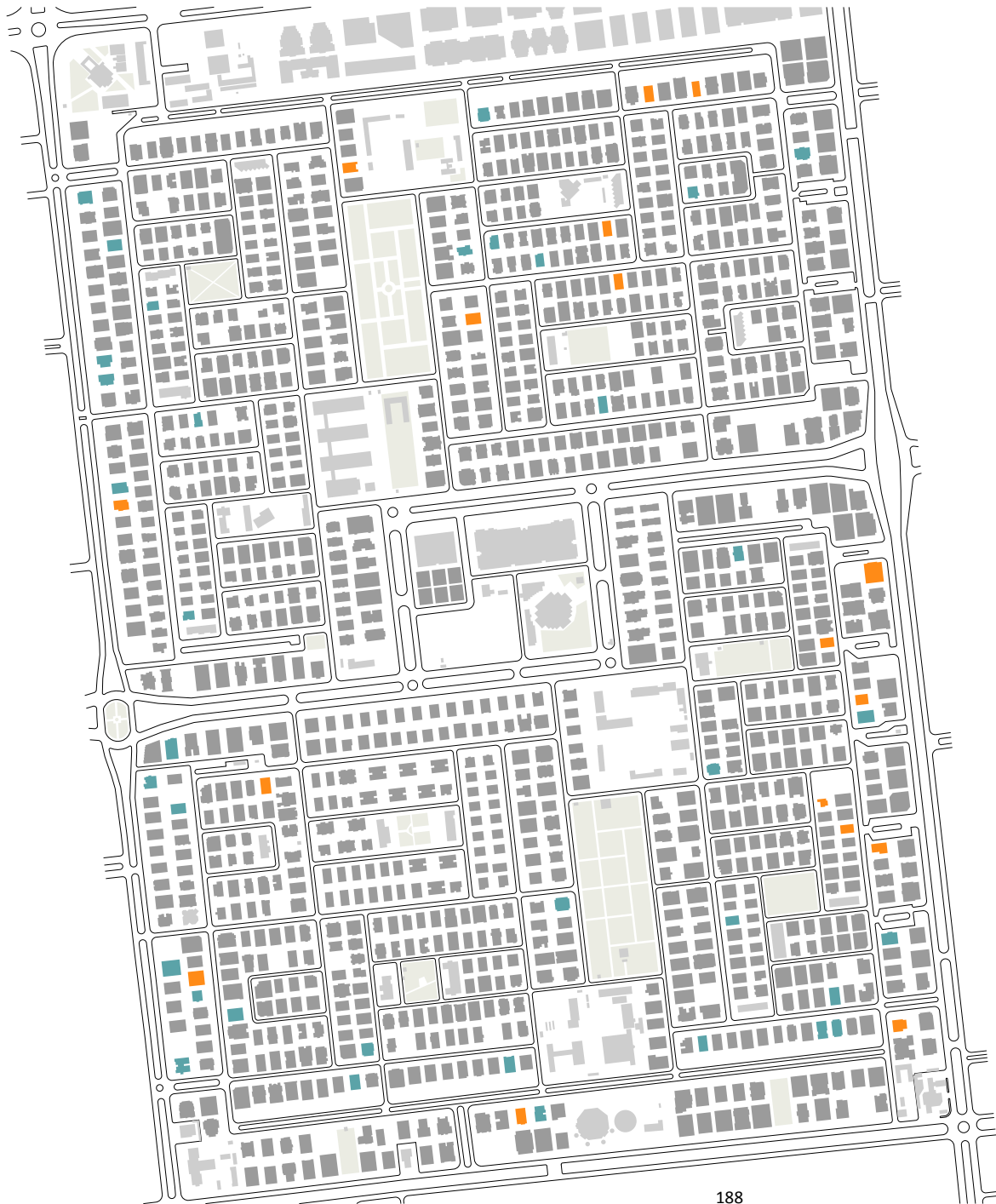


96 New Residential Buildings
14 Years [1994 – late 2007]

56 New Residential Buildings
2 Years

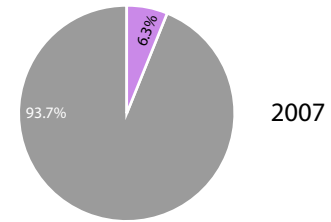
First Zone | 2008 – 2010
New Residential Buildings

fig.3.1.28

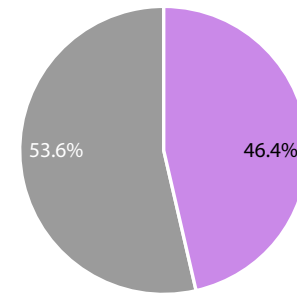


First Zone | 2008 – 2010
Demolished Residential Buildings

fig.3.1.29



2007



- built on a vacant residential lot
- built in place of a demolished residential building

First Zone | 2008 – 2010 New Residential Buildings Replacement

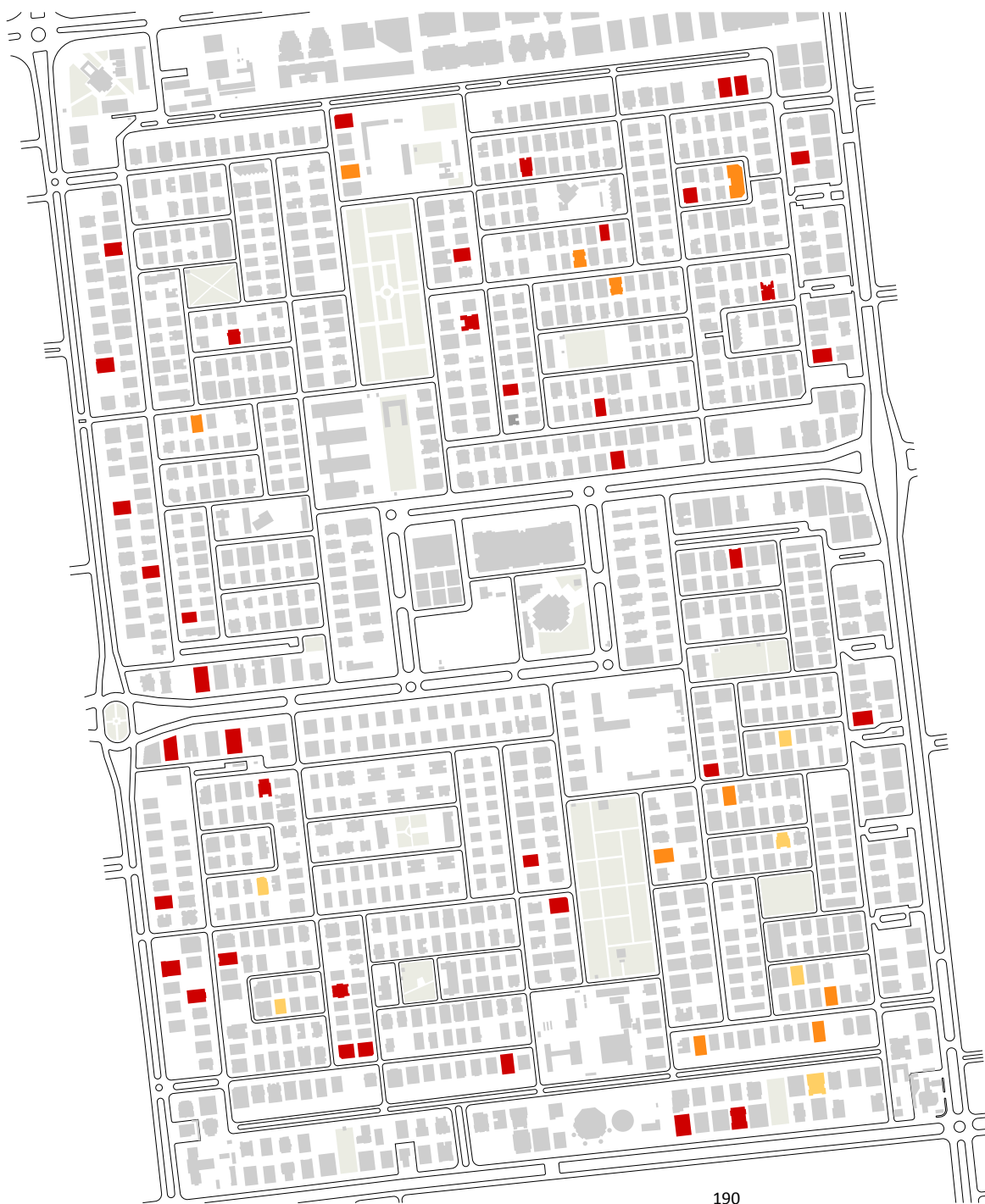
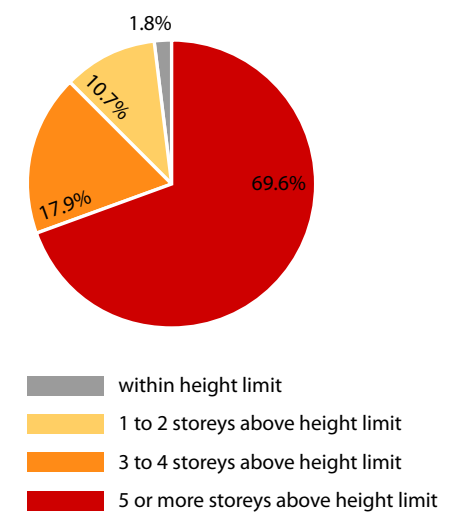
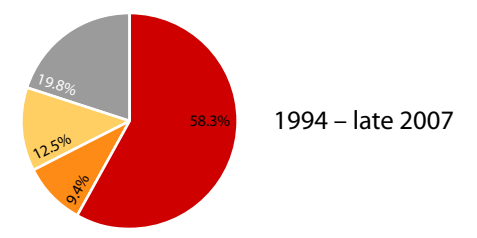
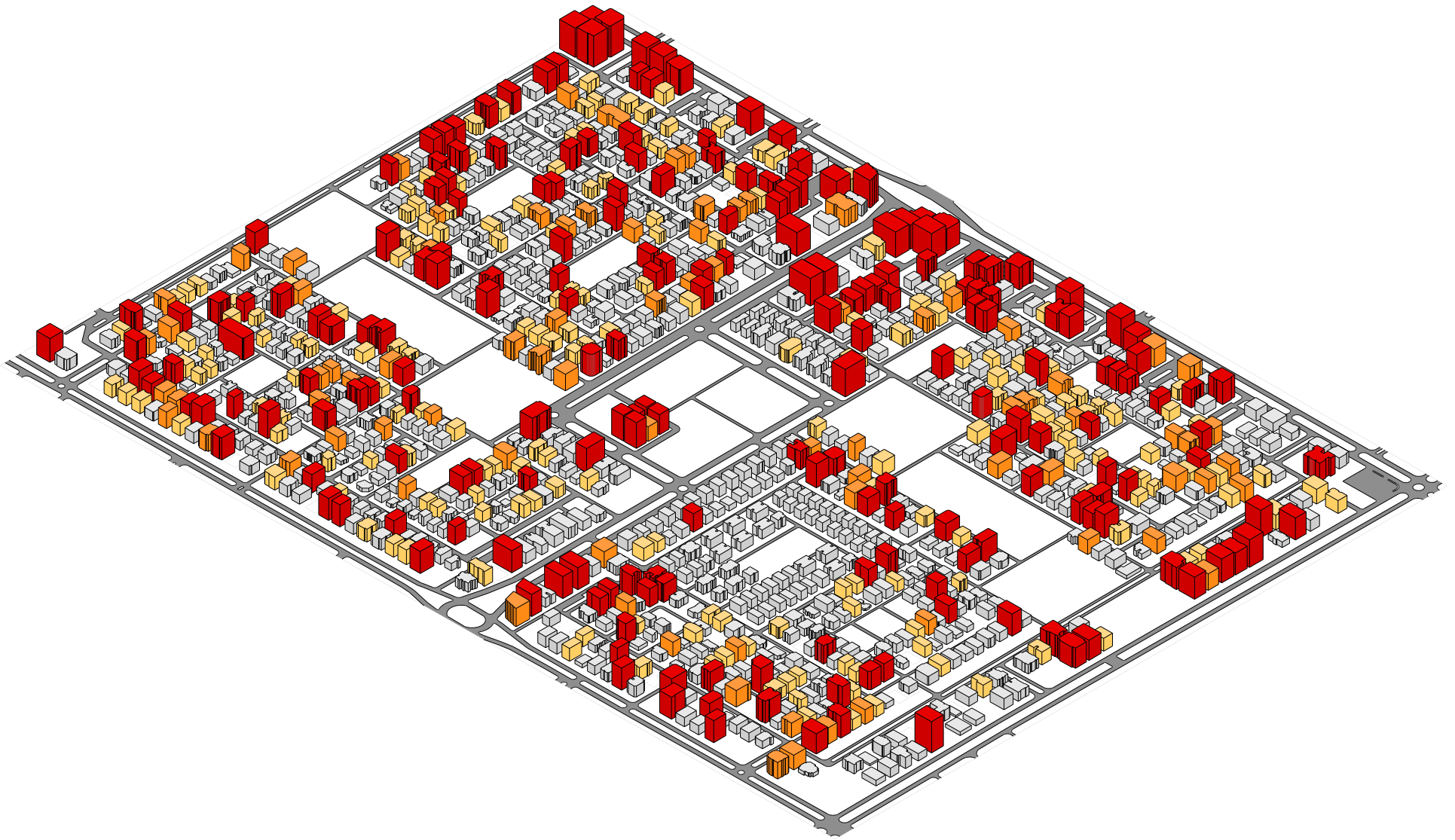



fig.3.1.30



First Zone | 2008 – 2010
 New Residential Buildings
 Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws

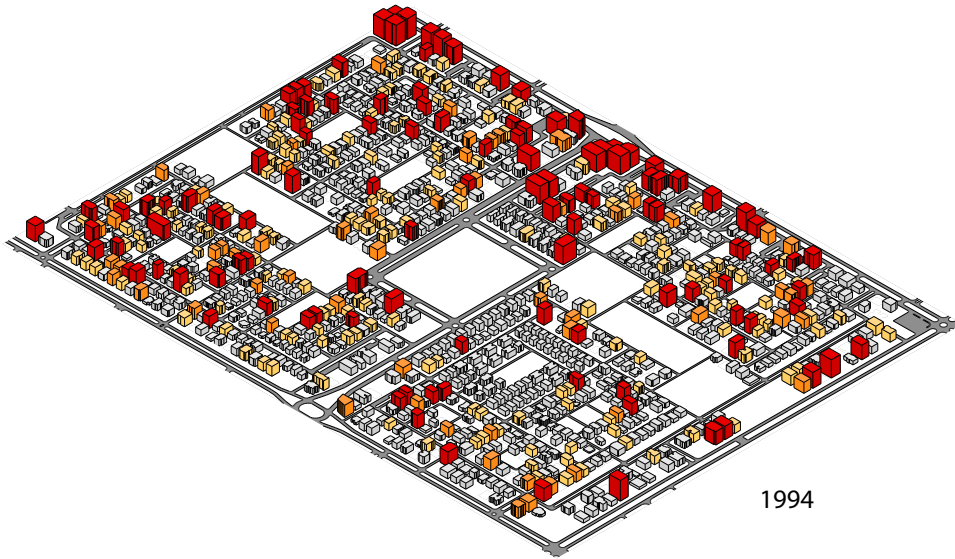



 10 storeys and above
 [11 storeys and above on 50m streets]


 8 or 9 storeys
 [9 or 10 storeys on 50m streets]

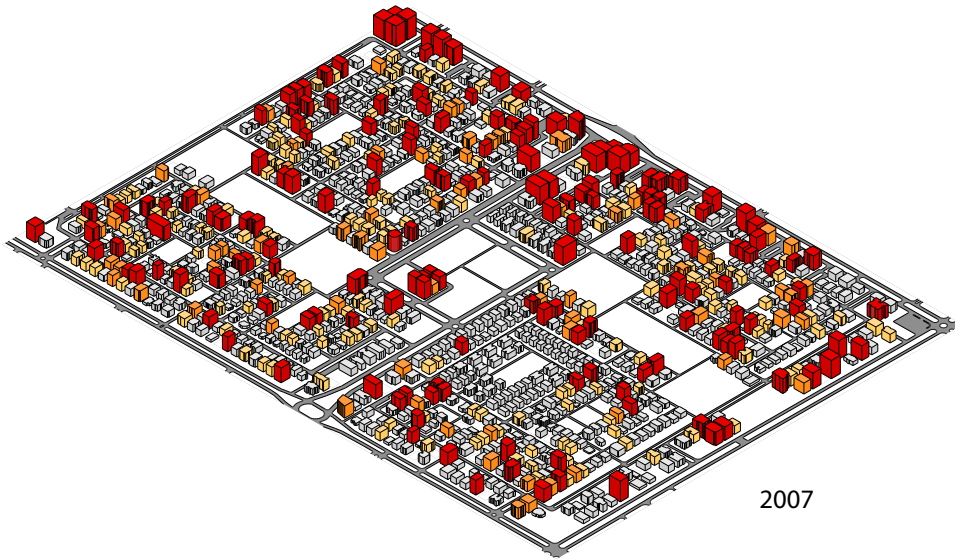

 6 or 7 storeys
 [7 or 8 storeys on 50m streets]


 up to 5 storeys
 [up to 6 storeys on 50m streets]



1994

fig.3.1.31



2007

First Zone | 2010
Residential Building Heights

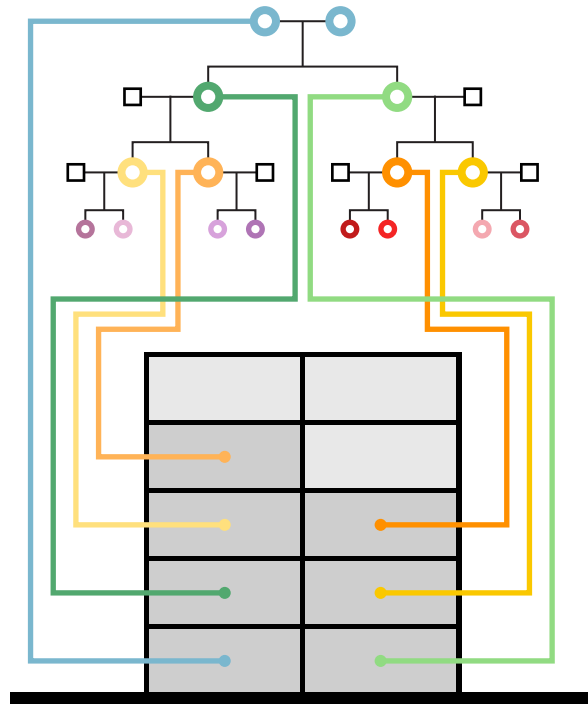
Now that it has been established that there is indeed an exodus of middle class professionals from Nasr City to the suburbs of New Cairo, the main argument to be made here is that there is no logical sense for middle class professionals to abandon their apartment building–extended family houses in order and relocate to the suburbs of New Cairo. The basis for making this argument is that the apartment building–extended family house typology of Nasr City has a latent potential for providing all what middle class professionals are seeking in the suburbs of New Cairo.

First and foremost, there is little difference between the architectural typologies of Nasr City and New Cairo. When middle class professionals relocate their homes to New Cairo, they still construct their new homes as extended family houses. Although they are dubbed ‘villas’ in New Cairo, the internal organization of the villa typology is still comprised of apartments, each of which is typically assigned to a current or future nucleus family of their decedents. These might not be as typical as those in Nasr City’s typology, but they are still apartments nonetheless. The only difference of note between both typologies is the architectural style of the building facades. In New Cairo, the prevalent architectural style can be best described as a gaudy derivation of Neo-Classicism while the apartment building–extended family houses in Nasr City hardly boasts any style due to their very bland outward appearance. This is usually cited by middle class professionals as one of the primary reasons for relocating to the suburbs of New Cairo. Setting aside any commentary on taste and style, their justification is inherently flawed because of the very adaptable nature of the Nasr City typology. It is relatively easy to alter the outward appearance of an apartment building–extended family house so as to resemble the same prevalent style of New Cairo without the need to relocate there.

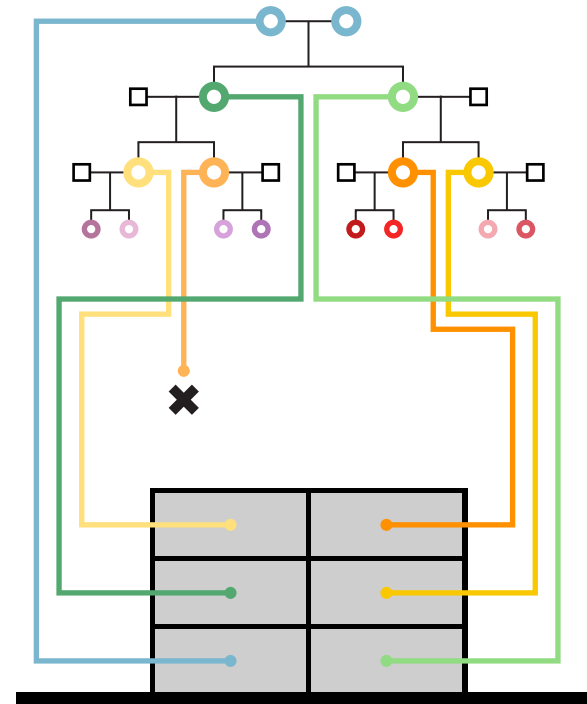
There is also the issue of how the villas of New Cairo are constructed. The floor plans of those villas more often than not follow a non-modular structural grid and employ structural systems such as hollow block slabs and flat slabs that maximize spans and in turn allow for larger, more

open interior spaces. The prevalence of such structural schemes is primarily driven by a desire for more grand and luxurious character to the home. The downside to utilizing those systems, however, is that floor plans are much more difficult to alter. In comparison, the simpler and modular post and beam construction system of the Nasr City apartment building typology endows it with a very adaptive quality, as it has been demonstrated earlier in the evolution of 11 El-Insha Street. That is to say it is far less likely for the villas of New Cairo to accommodate the changing needs of the extended families that live in them as opposed to the Nasr City typology that has done so for multiple generations and has the potential to continue to do so for generations to come.

However, the aspect in which the Nasr City typology has a clear advantage over the New Cairo equivalent is how many generations they can house simultaneously. With a maximum building height of 3 storeys for the villa typology in New Cairo, and extended family house can’t even fully accommodate 3 generations simultaneously. Assuming that each floor has 2 apartments of a decent size and that each generation has two descendants that would leave 1 grandchild with no accommodation. That is not taking into account extended families in which each generation would have more than 2 decedents. Whereas in Nasr City, where the original building bylaws allowed for 5 storeys, an extended family house for the same extended family can easily house 3 of its generations simultaneously with 3 apartments to spare. In other words, middle class professionals are essentially trading down when they relocate to the suburbs and in turn, are compromising an inherent architectural characteristic that defines them as a social group. Not to mention, that leaving their extended family houses in Nasr City usually involves breaking up the extended family as most commonly each of the siblings of the second generations will construct their own extended family house, since if they were to build an extended family home together, the home would only be able to accommodate 2 generations simultaneously.



Nasr City | Apartment Building
Generational Capacity



New Cairo | Villa
Generational Capacity

fig.3.1.32 Given the same base multigenerational family, Nasr City's apartment building—extended family house typology has a clear edge over New Cairo's villa typology in terms of generational capacity.

Finally, and most importantly, there is the question of the cost for middle class professionals to relocate their homes to the suburbs. Although real-estate values in Nasr City are still much higher than in New Cairo, when you take into account that the value of their extended family home in Nasr City is going to be divided amongst its inhabitants, as well as the construction and permit costs of their new extended family homes, more often than not they hardly break even, or even end up losing money with their new acquisition.⁵ Such high costs have a deep impact on their economic standing as a social group, and in turn their status in Egyptian society, in which currently money is the determinant of place in the social hierarchy.

The tragedy here is that most professionals are fully aware of all the above-mentioned shortcomings of relocating to the suburbs. Yet, they are still resolved in their decision to move there. That is mainly because such a decision is not based on any rational reasoning, but is rather socially driven. The ideas of Norbert Elias (1998) concerning the social role of kitsch in a modern society, holds the key to understanding such drive:

“If we leave aside obviously utilitarian forms, any aesthetic work has for the “public”, for the mass of the working population, the function of a leisure dream. This function gives our arts a very different face, compared to those of court, patrician or church hierarchies. The need of mass society for leisure pastimes, which the specialists have to satisfy, is supplementary to the primary needs for work and bread. It is never as vitally important as these, and the form it takes is determined by them – for example, by the constant strain of professional life, the desire to discharge feelings heavily suppressed in working life, or the tendency to seek in leisure substitute satisfactions for wishes not fulfilled by work. In face of the compulsive way in which professional life pushes the leisure activities of the industrial man in a highly specific direction, the individual art

*specialist is powerless. He may poke fun at such activities as much as he likes, deriding the leisure dreams and the taste of souls deformed by work pressures as ‘kitsch’, and mocking the ‘sentimental’ manner in which feelings pent up and damaged under the constraint of work are expressed. **The need for that which is here called ‘kitsch’ is socially imposed, while kitsch itself, in the negative sense of the word, is the faithful reflection of a state of the soul engendered by industrial society. This endows the problem of kitsch with a seriousness with which it is not normally credited.**” (33)*

Although Elias’ ideas apply to the abstract realm of art, they are quite pertinent to the contemporary social dynamic in Egypt. Those whom he refers to as “the working population who’s souls [are] deformed by work pressures” are essentially middle class professionals, and what he refers to as their “leisure dreams” is their desire to relocate their homes to the suburbs of New Cairo. Their strong desire to move there is the outcome of the “constant strain of professional life, the desire to discharge feelings heavily suppressed in working life, or the tendency to seek in leisure substitute satisfactions for wishes not fulfilled by work.”

Today’s middle-aged Egyptian Professionals grew up in the 50s and 60s, at a time when professionals were revered as a social ideal, considered the upper echelon of the middle class, and guaranteed a comfortable lifestyle and economic standing by the socio-economic system of the era. Accordingly, this generation worked hard and excelled in the realm of education in order to become professionals themselves. However, when they started their professional careers in the mid 70s, the socio-economic landscape in Egypt was drastically shifting in the wake of the introduction of the open-door policy. Instead of leading comfortable lifestyles they were expecting, professionals struggled to maintain their middle class status and a decent economic standing and they continued to do so over the span of the last forty years. Now, they believe they are entitled to feel and project that they have indeed retained their middle

class status in the face of such adversity. This is where their relocating their homes to the suburbs of New Cairo comes in as a tool of achieving such a goal.

Forty years after the open-door policy has been introduced, the radical change of the value system of Egyptian society has been firmly established, where size of income and wealth are the sole basis for societal stratification regardless of their source. In turn, the much more affluent new middle class entrepreneurs became more socially confident. They no longer felt the need to reside in the same urban context as the old middle class in order to prove their worthiness of a middle class status. Accordingly, they relocated to the suburbs of New Cairo, making it the new urban mainstay of social status. This prompted the middle class professionals whose middle class status had been hanging by a thread for so long, and who now feel entitled to be recognized as still being a part of the middle class, to move to the suburbs as a means of social validation. That is to say, much like the social emulation by place of residence that has contributed to the rapid growth of Nasr City throughout the 90s, it is now contributing to the rapid growth of New Cairo – only the role of who is emulating whom has been reversed. It is now middle class professionals who are seeking the respect of others in order to feel that they indeed belong to the middle class. They are the ones whose sense of self worth is becoming more and more dependant on other people's opinions of them. In other words, they are exhibiting the same unhealthy imbalance in how members of the new middle class went about satisfying their esteem needs forty years prior.

As Elias pointed out, it is futile for any critic, including the author of thesis, to argue against this trend with the hopes of countering it. The argument that the decision of the middle class professionals to relocate to the suburbs is essentially a waste of the untapped latent potential of their Nasr City apartment building–extended family houses, or that it is quite absurd for them to expend large amounts of money and jeopardize their economic standings in their attempts to do so in order to assert their status in a society where the social hierarchy is

predicated on monetary standings, would both fall on deaf ears, for the social logic behind that move trumps any rational reasoning. And after all, there is no feasible way to counter that trend in reality.

One of the main reasons middle class professionals cite as a basis for the decision to move to the suburbs is the degradation of the social and urban contexts of their extended family houses of Nasr City. It is beyond anyone's control to put an end to that degradation. Initially this thesis would have concluded with a redesign scheme of 11 El-Insha Street that would have been intended to highlight how the latent potential inherent in its adaptability would have further accommodated the changing needs of its inhabitants, nullifying their desire to move to the suburbs of New Cairo. From there the idea would have been that other extended families down El-Insha Street would pick up on this redesign approach and implement it in their own extended family houses, nullifying their desire to move to the suburbs of New Cairo as well, and thereby preserving the urban and social character of El-Insha Street as a whole. The rather optimistic construct that the extrapolation of that model throughout Nasr City's inner streets which are predominantly comprised of the apartment building–extended family house typology would have collectively preserved the social and urban character of Nasr City as a habitat for middle class professionals and ultimately would have countered the trend of relocating their homes to the suburbs of New Cairo. Needless to say, such a proposal had too many unknown and unpredictable variables since people's good judgment cannot be the sole basis upon which to depend. As it has been proven in the case of El-Insha Street, the first of the apartment building–extended family houses that was sold, demolished, and replaced by a condominium tower, was the first and last nail in the street's coffin. It began a chain reaction in which almost every extended family down the street either abandoned or were looking to sell their apartment building houses. With that design approach rendered useless, the only possible way to counter that trend would have been an intervention on a legislative level. That is to say, the government excluded Nasr City from the scope

of the Unified Building Code of 2008, reinstated its original bylaws, and strictly enforced them, or more ideally if it past a bylaw or law that specifically deters families that own apartment building–extended family houses in Nasr City, from selling their homes and buying new homes in the suburbs of New Cairo.

Once again, this is rather unrealistic because the Egyptian government is the one party that stands to gain the most from this trend since the state owns the land in the suburbs of New Cairo and is making a lot of money selling it to the public. In many ways it seems that the government is fueling the overwhelming demand by what Baudrillard refers to as a “consciously induced shortage and chronic speculation”. This is evident in a number of factors. First and foremost, the state does not sell the land in New Cairo directly, but through a ballot system. It also enforces a number of very stringent laws that require the owners of land in New Cairo to build their residences in a very short time after winning this land lottery or the government revokes their ownership of the land after pocketing a percentage of the full cost of the land that the owner had already paid. These difficulties in owning land create a sense of shortage that in turn, incite more demand from the general public.

The tragic conclusion is that Nasr City is destined to lose, if it has not already lost, its character as a hub for middle class professionals and the apartment building–extended family house typology. Inevitably all middle class professionals will abandon their apartment building–extended family houses in Nasr City, waste the latent potential of that typology, relocate to the suburbs of New Cairo for a watered-down version of their former residences, and erode the monetary basis for their middle class status, all for the sake of feeling and projecting that they are still at the forefront of the Egyptian middle class. Ultimately, it is beyond anyone’s power to combat this trend. All that is left now, is to watch as the professional class self-destruct, and in turn for the Egyptian society to descend into social mayhem.

Chapter Four



4.A Safe House

The perks of living in Nasr City during the January 25th Uprising

When Egyptian protestors first took to Tahrir Square on the 25th of January 2011, my initial reaction was that of calm, and almost detached, cynical analysis of events as they unfolded. I believe that being here in Canada at the time – some 9000 kilometers away from Egypt – had little to do with having such reaction. It was more because I've always been cynical about the realm of applied politics. Although I was impressed by the huge turnout of Egyptian protestors, the way I saw it there were going to be only two possible scenarios as to how the standoff between the protestors and the government will play out – both of which were quite grim. In the first scenario, the Egyptian government was going to violently come down on the protestors the way that it always did, and in turn the protestors will back down and that would be the end of it. And in the second, the government was going to have the same response, but the protestors will stand their ground regardless; and judging by what happened in Tunisia a month earlier, the governing regime – or at least its top officials – will be ousted. But then again, in the aftermath of this momentous event, the protestors will still be robbed of their achievement and the chance to realize the changes they sought by more organized, power-hungry groups in a dirty game of politics.

fig.4.a.1 [opposite page] The 25th; A graffiti by Marwan Shahin in Lowran, Alexandria. The 25th of January 2011 saw thousands of Egyptians take to the streets across the country marking the onset of what was later dubbed as January 25 Revolution.



fig.4.a.2 "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice"; The protesters' trifecta of demands to the Egyptian government. As legitimate as they were, those demands were more than anything else a testimony of the protesters' naïveté since the protesters did not seem to have a clear-cut agenda for how to achieve such abstract demands.

It was mainly because of the romantic naïveté of the protestors' demands that I had such a pessimistic outlook. "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice" was a very popular slogan among the protestors as they marched and rallied – one which basically summarized all what they were demanding from the government. Surely, they specifically called for things like raising minimum wages and suspending certain laws that have been abused by the Mubarak regime, but apart from that they provided no comprehensive agenda as to how to realize that poetic triad of abstract ideals. To me, that was quite the blunder. In principle, the protestors indeed had every right to ask the government to uphold such ideals. Yet the fact of the matter was this: On their own, "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice" were very broad and ambiguous terms. As far as political and socio-economic ideologies went, they could have been interpreted to mean very different things, and in turn there were a lot of diverse options for the manner in which they may be put into effect. And still, whatever the interpretation or approach, those terms suggested a whole world of problems that needed to be addressed; problems that ran deep across a wide range of various fields. The few ragtag issues that the protestors appended to their poetic triad of demands were only the tip of the iceberg, and dealing with them was definitely not enough to see that triad realized. To put it simply, without a comprehensive agenda of concrete parameters and steps that grounded them in specifics and defined how they were to be achieved, "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice" were merely a hodgepodge of unrealistic utopian ends and not a set of tangible demands that any government could work with.

Whichever way I looked at it, the protestors' failure to present the Egyptian government with such an agenda inevitably put them in a position of weakness. For one thing, I just couldn't understand how were they going to determine whether or not their demands were met if the government were to accept them. "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice" were as unquantifiable as they were ambiguous. Outlining an agenda of steps for the government to follow wouldn't have only cleared the ideological and procedural ambiguity that came with those demands. More than anything else, that agenda would have also served as a reference for gauging how the government fared in responding to them. As a matter of fact, it would have been the only feasible criteria of assessment in that situation. There was simply no other workable scale against which the protestors could have measured to what extent the government was upholding the unquantifiable ideals they've demanded.

But then again the chances that the government would agree to meet the protestors' demands were very slim. I believed that the protestors' failure to present the government with that agenda was most likely going to be an invitation for the Mubarak regime to either reject or make a mockery of their demands. In my mind, the two and only logical responses from such a corrupt regime were either that it will completely dismiss the protestors' demands on the basis that they are too vague – which sadly would have been a legitimate excuse; or that it will offer the protestors promises of reform that are as vague and poetically ambiguous as their demands. I didn't believe that either response would have satisfied the protestors however. They might have been naïve, but they weren't that stupid to settle for the latter, and they most certainly were not lacking in determination to just easily accept the former. This is exactly why I came to the conclusion that, one way or the other, the protestors and the Mubarak regime were bound to clash violently.

I also felt that it wasn't only the Mubarak regime that was going to exploit the protestors' failure to present the government with that agenda. Such a failure left the door wide open for many a political group banned by the Mubarak regime to step in and impose their already well-established agendas and ideologies which didn't necessarily sit well with the protestors. As power-hungry and Machiavellian as most political organizations are, it was quite plausible that those banned groups would take advantage of the ideological ambiguity of the protestors' demands and claim making common cause with them just to use their numbers and determination to put pressure on the Mubarak regime. Whether those groups then cut deals with the Mubarak regime, or waited until it was driven out of power and then won popular favor under the pretext that they were part of the protests, were both viable possibilities. Those groups were devious enough not to shy away from the former if the opportunity presented itself, and – unlike the protestors – they had extensive and organized networks to manipulate the public and ensure that the latter would come to pass. Either way, they would eventually weasel their way into power and fill the ideological vacuum created by the protestors' lack of an agenda with one of their own.



fig.4.a.3 Strength in numbers; Hundreds of thousands of young protestors assembled in Tahrir Square. The protestors' vast numbers and determination were no doubt their greatest strength, but I felt that their failure to present an agenda to back their demands meant left the door open for more organized political groups to exploit such strength in order further their own agendas.

As much as I was bothered by the protestors' naïveté though, a part of me did identify with it. George Carlin once said: "Scratch any cynic and you will find a disappointed idealist", and he couldn't have been closer to the truth of it. Indeed, I was once an idealist myself, and that persona still lingers. And so I didn't really have anything against what the protestors were ultimately trying to achieve; it was rather the quixotic manner in which they were going about it that troubled me. I just dreaded the utter frustration that I knew they were bound to experience when their idealistic aspirations shattered against the solid wall of real-life political power struggles. And as it happened, only two days into the protests most of what I feared had already started to come true.



fig.4.a.4 A Muslim Brotherhood banner in Tahrir Square. Although the Muslim Brotherhood initially declared that they would not partake in the protests, they soon changed their position seeing the huge turnout of young protestors and their apparent resolve not to leave the square until their demands were met. Not two days after it had started, power-hungry political groups began jumping on the January Uprising's bandwagon.

On the 27th of January, the Muslim Brotherhood – one of the oldest, largest, and most organized banned political groups in Egypt – announced its full support for the protestors and their demands, as well as the intent of its members to participate in the protests until such demands were met. In the days that followed however, the Muslim Brotherhood were tacking on their own sets of demands to the Mubarak regime, and sitting on the protestors' side of the negotiations with the government, as if they were the sole sponsors of what the media had then begun referring to as the January Uprising. I also distinctly remember watching in anger as a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood told a BBC correspondent in a very assertive manner how the Brotherhood could easily secure a 35 to 40 percent of the popular vote right there and then, provided that no electoral fraud would be involved. It was just beyond me that he had the audacity to sit there and



fig.4.a.5 Time Magazine's Person of the Year, 2011. The romantic notion of the anonymous protestor who does not associate with any one particular ideology clearly appealed to the idealistic inclinations of the young protestors in Tahrir Square. In response to the attempts of many a political group to claim the leadership of the January Uprising, both young and old activists who had originally called for the protests proclaimed that the uprising did not belong to a specific political current or group, but that it was rather an uprising of the "people".

discuss the makeup of a post-uprising political scene while such an uprising still had no foreseeable end, and protestors were loosing their lives in violent clashes with the Mubarak regime as he spoke. But then again, the protestors didn't allow the Brotherhood's and other groups' attempts at hijacking the uprising go unanswered. Many of the protestors were soon declaring that the January Uprising was a leaderless uprising which did not belong to a specific ideological orientation but rather represented the Egyptian people as a whole. As much as it was actually true, I once again found that response absurdly romantic and detached from the reality of the situation – its utter naïveté only rivaled by the naivety of announcing it publicly. To me, it essentially offered the Brotherhood and all of those other groups an undeniable reassurance of how easy it would be to take advantage of the protestors.



fig.4.a.6 On January 28, in his first televised address since the outbreak of the uprising, Mubarak offered the protestors a plethora of ambiguous reform promises in response to their equally vague demands. The quote on the screen here reads: "We will take new steps towards more democracy, granting more freedoms to individuals, and battling unemployment."

Then on the night of 28th of January, President Mubarak – who was still in power at that point – appeared to address the Egyptian people on national television. And as I expected, he offered a whole lot of nicely worded, yet empty, promises of reform, and announced that he's dissolving the government and forming a new one in hopes that the protestors would be appeased, abandon their stand, and leave the square. The response that speech elicited from the protestors left me with mixed feelings of fascination and disappointment. In its wake, and as I imagined they would be, the protestors were indeed unsatisfied with Mubarak's unsubstantiated promises, and opted to stand their ground refusing to leave the square.

fig.4.a.7 As it is quite evident from this facetious rewording of Eric Cartman's catchphrase, the protestors weren't the least bit satisfied with Mubarak's hollow promises and refused to abandon their stand.



But then something else also happened; something which I did not anticipate. In their anger over Mubarak's speech, the protestors developed a new set of demands which quickly took precedence over the abstract triad of ideals that they initially called for. "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice" was no longer the most popular slogan chanted in the square as it was being overshadowed by two new slogans: "The People want to bring down the Regime" and "Down, Down with Hosni Mubarak". Yet, again, the protestors didn't seem to have a clue or care about what came next if and when the regime was disbanded or Mubarak stepped down. The flicker of the idealist in me found that development quite intriguing. The power vacuum and lack of an organized government that it seemed to hint at would have been, in a way, the closest thing to a manifestation of Anarchism in its most fundamental form – and I have always been fond of the Anarchist school of political thought. But as much as I admire it, I've also always understood that anarchism is an inherently flawed and unrealistic model. It is human nature to seek out systems of control and think of them as the foundation of civilized society, and to assume that it could be otherwise is just plain silly. And so the cynic in me had no illusions that it would actually ever boil down to situation where an organized government did not exist in Egypt, let alone that the protestors had ever intended it to be that way.

Their demands for Mubarak and his regime to step down were clearly not calculated, but were rather another outcome of their headstrong and quixotic mindset. That is why, for the most part, I found the protestors' response to Mubarak's speech very frustrating. Because if anything, it just made it even easier for all the power-hungry political groups out there to step in whenever the Mubarak regime was overthrown, fill the political vacuum left behind, and cheat the protestors of what should have been theirs by rights.



fig.4.a.8 & fig.4.a.9 A pair of new demands emerged in response to Mubarak's TV address on January 28. [left] A young protestor sits with a sign that reads: "The People want to bring down the Regime". [right] A man holds a sign he fashioned out of a shoe that reads: "LEAVE" in Arabic, referring to the protestors' demand for Mubarak to relinquish his position as President. Holding up a shoe is a sign of extreme disrespect in Middle Eastern culture. The protestors didn't seem to have the slightest idea of what would follow in the eventuality of Mubarak stepping down.

However, over the span of the 28th and 29th of January, my analytical and detached approach towards the protests just went out the window. It had become quite difficult to keep an objective distance from it all considering what happened during those two days. By the afternoon of the 28th, the clashes between the protestors and the security forces had quickly taken a very violent turn, and Tahrir square had effectively become a war zone. There were reports of numerous injuries and deaths among the protestors as security forces resorted to the use of live ammunition and their vehicles ran down crowds; public buildings were set ablaze; a night curfew was announced by the government; and the Egyptian army was deployed on the streets of Cairo. The Mubarak regime also shut down all Internet services, mobile phone networks, and even conventional telephone landlines in a communication blackout targeting the protestors' reliance on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, for coordination. And that wasn't even the worst of it. Towards the end of the night there were reports of looting, acts of vandalism, and gunfights erupting across many of Cairo's residential districts, including Nasr City and the suburbs of New Cairo and Shorouq City where my family and most of my close friends dwell. And to my distress, all those reports maintained that such incidents were taking place in a complete and unexplained absence of the police. Then to make matters worse, the 29th brought news that swarms of convicted felons had escaped from prisons, and nobody seemed to know whether they broke out themselves or if it was actually prison officials that had let them out.

fig.4.a.10 [opposite page] Scores of protestors running through a thick cloud of tear gas. Starting on January 28, the tense standoff between the protestors and the Mubarak regime took a turn to the worst as security forces resorted to the use of excessive violence against the protestors.

fig.4.a.11 [bottom right] A protestor being brutally beaten by riot police. Rubber bullets and water cannons were also used in hopes of dispersing the crowds of protestors, but to no avail. The protestors stood their ground and began to fight back.

fig.4.a.12 [bottom left] A protestor holds a spent bullet cartridge. As the crowds refused to back down, security forces began to use live ammunition against the unarmed protestors. Many protestors were shot dead.









fig.4.a.13 [opposite page, top left] A riot police truck burning on the night of January 28 as Cairo descended into chaos. After the violent events of the day, a citywide curfew was announced for the night of January 28. The protestors however defied it and remained in Tahrir Square where they fought running battles with security forces for the better part of the night. Security forces then began to fall back towards the end of the night giving the protestors free reign over the square. And around the same time, the police conveniently disappeared from the streets of Cairo as an overwhelming wave of mayhem and vandalism swept in to engulf the entire city.



fig.4.a.14 [opposite page, bottom left] A column of tanks rolling into Tahrir Square on January 29. After chaos had taken over Cairo the night before, and with the continued and unexplained absence of the police, the Army was deployed to restore order to the capital. The Army's involvement was an alarming development to say the least since nobody seemed to know whether the Army was acting on Mubarak's orders, or if it had decided to take matters into its own hands. As tanks and troops marched into Tahrir Square, the protestors were reassured that the Army was only there to protect the interests of the nation, which wasn't really much of a clarification as to which side of the conflict did the Army with.

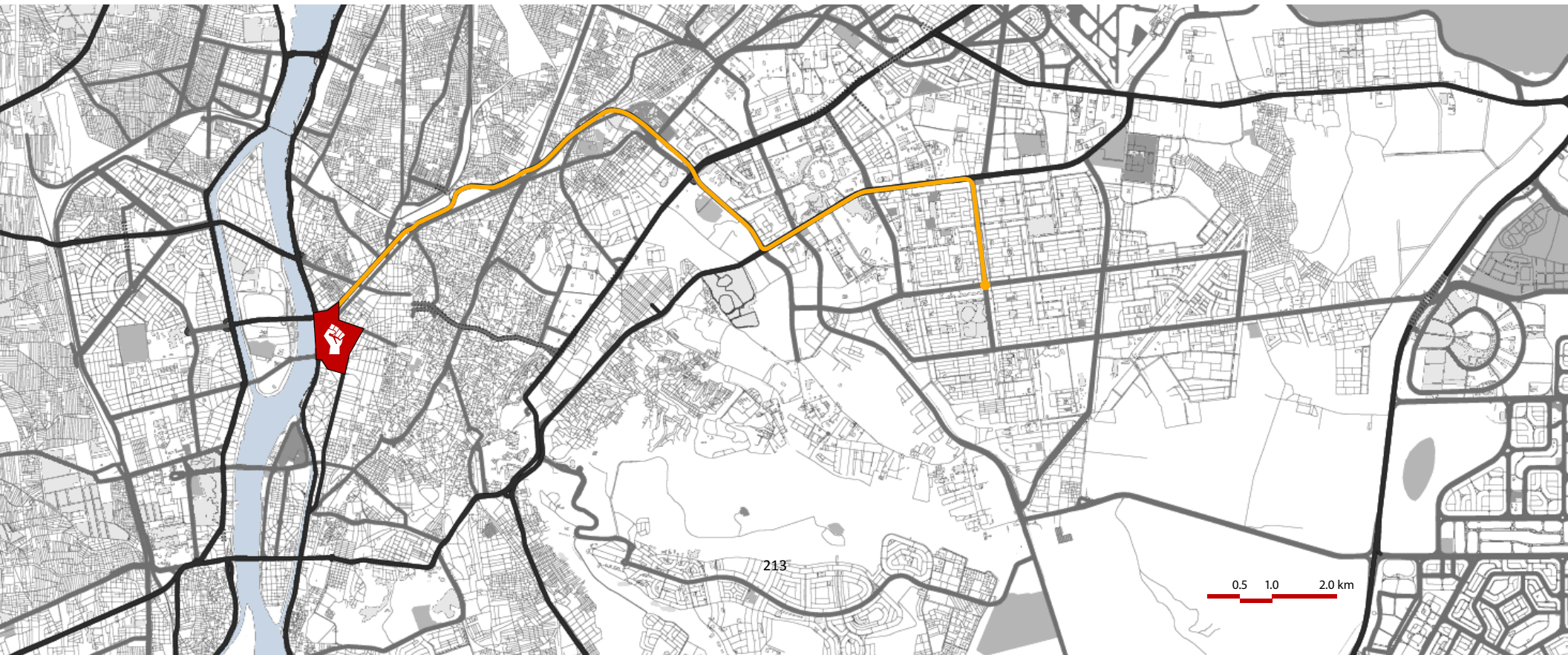
fig.4.a.15 [opposite page, right] An Air Force helicopter hovering low over Tahrir Square as a protestor waves an Egyptian flag with the words "Down with Mubarak" scribbled on it. Adding to the confusion regarding whose side the Army was on, jet fighters and helicopters flew rounds over the square in what looked like an attempt to intimidate the protestors. That was quite contradictory to the very friendly attitude that the ground forces in the square had towards the protestors. Such contradiction raised the worrisome suspicion that there might be a rift within the ranks of the Egyptian Armed Forces, especially that the Air Force is generally associated with Mubarak given that he was its commander during the October War of '73.

fig.4.a.16 [top] On January 29, evidence of the mayhem that had erupted the night before began to emerge. In Tahrir Square, the headquarters of Mubarak's ruling party – the National Democratic Party – was still smoldering from when it was set ablaze by an unknown culprit on the night of January 28. Many public buildings, banks, shops, and private properties were ransacked in almost every part of Cairo that night. And as the looting and plundering continued for days to follow, the government maintained that the protestors, or at least a corrupt few among them, were responsible for those acts of vandalism; while the protestors on the other hand accused the government of using hired thugs to carry out such crimes in order to create a state of chaos in the capital.

fig.4.a.17 [bottom] The run-down fortifications of Abu Za'bal prison – a notorious penitentiary on the outskirts of Cairo. The looting epidemic that hit the capital on January 28 seemed to worsen on the night of the 29th amid reports of mass prison breakouts. With scores of dangerous convicts reportedly loose in the streets of Cairo and the Army mainly occupied with securing the capital's vital sites, the safety of Cairene families and homes was at an even higher risk than the night before.

fig.4.a.18 Marked here is the area of downtown Cairo that had been the main stage for unrest in the capital since the outbreak of the uprising. The fastest route from there to Nasr City is roughly 15 kilometers long. New Cairo is even further at almost 40 kilometers from downtown Cairo, while Shorouq City is the furthest at 45 kilometers. It therefore seemed highly unlikely that those residential districts would ever get caught up in the unrest that had been raging so far away at the administrative heart of Cairo. But as unlikely as it seemed, the night of January 28 brought such unrest to the doorsteps of those residential districts.

It seemed that in its attempts to deter the protestors, the Mubarak regime had decided to hit them where it hurt the most – their home bases. It also could have been that the Mubarak regime was trying to create a state of mayhem and blame it either directly or indirectly on the protestors in the hopes of overturning the public support and sympathy that they had gained. Or maybe it was both. I really couldn't tell because as soon as the final development of the night of the 28th came about, I started to panic. Up until that point, all the action had been centered in Tahrir Square in Downtown Cairo; a predominantly administrative, business, and commercial district that is miles away from either Nasr City or the suburbs of Cairo. I therefore didn't have a reason to worry beyond a mild concern for the few causal friends and acquaintances that I knew were at the square that day; besides, those had made the decision to be there knowing full well the consequences it might entail. But then out of nowhere and for no fault of their own, it was my family and close friends that were potentially in grave danger, and with Internet and phone services down, there was no way of telling whether or not they were safe. It was just too hard to keep my composure about me with their well-being hanging in the balance. And it became even harder as the events of the 28th continued on into the 29th and I was still unable to reach them. So by the time communications



were restored and I finally got through on the 30th, I was quite frantic. And needless to say, this thesis and my arguments about the latent potential of Nasr City's extended family house typologies and their edge over those of suburban Cairo were the last things on my mind. However, three out of the five phone calls I made that day and on the 31st contributed directly to further validate those arguments.



fig.4.a.19 My thoughts exactly. A sign held up in a solidarity rally in Toronto during Egypt's communication blackout. With the rampant disorder that engulfed Cairo's residential districts, it was very hard not to be able to reach one's family and friends.

Naturally, the first phone call I made was to my mother in Nasr City. The first thing she told me when she picked up was: "Amr, you should come see how safe we are here!". She was clearly trying to reassure me that she and the rest of my family in 11 El-Insha street were safe and sound, because, as a mother, she must have known how distraught I was by then. That statement however was not an exaggeration – from what she told me next and what I later learned from other family members and friends living on El-Insha street, it turned out that my family, and all the residents of El-Insha street for that matter, were indeed quite safe. Apparently as soon as the dire developments of the night of the 28th were underway, every grown man from every household on El-Insha street came together and quickly organized themselves into an emergency neighborhood watch to secure the street. They first blocked all four entrances to the street with makeshift barricades

fashioned out of chopped-off tree branches, empty crates, old tires, and basically every other piece of junk they could get their hands on. They then lit a series of small fires down the length of the street for warmth and for keeping darkness at bay, armed themselves with sticks and household blades for self defense, and kept watch in shifts all through the night and up until the next morning. They had themselves strategically arranged in such a way that there were several lookout groups on duty at any given time; that each of those groups was stationed at a visible distance from the next one down the street; and that none of them was made up of less than three individuals. And to avoid any sort of confusion in the heat of dealing with whatever or whoever might have come their way, they decided that all those who stood sentry or went down to the street for any reason must at all times wear a white armband for identification. Moreover, even the storekeepers of almost all the shops in the small market on El-Insha street took part in that neighborhood watch. They helped with set up and preparation, stood sentries themselves, and kept their shops open all night long providing everybody on the street with snacks and hot beverages. And so, except for a couple of false alarms that only served to show how alert the vigilantes of El-Insha street were, the night of the 28th passed without incident, and so did the night of the 29th.



fig.4.a.20 The men of El-Insha street chopping down tree branches to barricade the south end of the street. As soon as the unfortunate events of the night of the 28th began to unfold, those men organized themselves into a neighborhood watch that proceeded to secure El-Insha street in a very thorough and efficient manner.



fig.4.a.21, fig.4.a.22 & fig.4.a.23 Besides tree branches, the vigilantes of El-Insha street used everything from fallen lamp posts, crates, and old furniture to safety guards that they borrowed from near by construction sites to fashion makeshift barricades and block every entry point to the street.



fig.4.a.24 The vigilantes of El-Insha street standing sentry late on the night of January 28. After they had barricaded all of the street's entrances, they lit a series of small fires to illuminate the darker corners of the street and kept watch in shifts all through the night. And in a show of solidarity, the storekeepers of El-Insha street's small market [appearing here on the right] kept their shops open all night, provided the vigilantes with snacks and hot beverages, and even stood sentry themselves.



I was quite relieved to know it was that safe for my family in Nasr City. Sadly though, I was soon struck with feelings of anxiety once again when I learned that that wasn't the case for one of my very good friends who lived alone with her two children in the suburb of Shorouq City. In my phone call to her on January 31st, she painted a very different picture of the situation there during those two fateful nights. Not that anything bad happened, but the impression I got from her was that she and her children in their suburban villa were in a much more compromised position in comparison to my family in 11 El-Insha street. In our conversation, my friend told me that with the trouble that was brewing on the night of the 28th, her primary concern was the safety of her children. So she tucked them in, barricaded all possible entrances to the villa with furniture and bricks, then armed herself with a piece of rebar, and kept guard throughout the night from the villa's main balcony. But then she added that even though she was ready to face whatever might have come her way for the sake of her children, she was not quite sure if she would have been able to fend it off after all. She said that she felt quite alone and

vulnerable with how ominous her suburban street was that night. From her vantage point in the balcony, there was no soul in sight on the street – let alone a friendly one; and the street was shrouded in darkness and a haunting silence that was shattered from time to time by the sound of gunshots echoing in the distance. And it didn't get any better the following night, nor the night after that for that matter.

Although El-Insha street's neighborhood watch was still operating on the night of the 30th when I called my mother, it seemed that the worst of it had already passed in Nasr City. But in my phone call to my friend almost 24 hours later on the night of the 31st, she made it quite clear that the daunting situation in Shorouq City had persisted through the night of the 30th, and that it didn't look like it was going to be any different that night either. As a matter of fact, she told me in a much later phone call that it had been almost two weeks after the 28th of January before she finally felt that her street was relatively safe. During that call she also did mention that before those two weeks were over, the few residents on her street had finally managed to put together a neighborhood watch of their own. From what she told me though, that didn't really make much of a difference – her street was still foreboding and she did not feel any less vulnerable. She explained that despite of her neighbors' best efforts, they were stretched too thin as they tried to secure and hold all the entrances to their vast suburban street. She saw no sign of a neighborhood watch operating except for a patrol of two men making their rounds up and down the street. And even worse, those two men didn't pass by her villa as frequently as she would have wanted them to; and whenever they did, they seemed dwarfed by the scale of the street. She did notice however that they were carrying machetes and firearms. They waved them around while shouting threats at the top of their lungs, and sometimes even fired warning shots, all in order to deter whoever might have been lurking in the distance. But then again from the way she described it, my friend found that hollow display of power more disconcerting than reassuring. It felt as if the two men on patrol duty were overcompensating for their own vulnerability, as well as that of the neighborhood watch in general.

On the whole, it just sounded like my friend did not trust that her street's neighborhood watch was fully capable of dealing with the imminent threat. So I wasn't really surprised when she told me that she continued to stand sentry in her balcony regardless of the fact that it was operating. And although I was sad to hear it, I still was not surprised when she recounted a particular incident in which the shortcomings of that neighborhood watch had allowed the danger to come too close for her comfort. At around 2 a.m. one night, the microphone of a nearby mosque, which is typically used to announce the call for prayer, began to bellow a warning that thugs have been spotted in the area. From her balcony, she saw the men on patrol duty that night racing to the one end of the street where they believed the thugs were approaching. She also heard the sounds of the few other men of the neighborhood watch rushing to the same spot, followed by the sounds of the rest of her male neighbors, who weren't on the street at the time, leaving their houses and joining them. From her portrayal, it just seemed that they were all caught off guard – her street's neighborhood watch was clearly oblivious to how close the danger was until the mosque broadcasted the warning. However, her neighbors made it just in time to cut off the

thugs before they went too far down the street. And no sooner than they had encountered one another, both groups were at each other's throats. My friend said that, standing in her balcony, the sounds of the fight were so loud and clear that it felt as if she was right in the middle of it. She heard the thundering discharge of firearms; the loud metal clatter of machetes clanging against each other; and underneath it all she was literally able to make out the muffled thumps of blows exchanged in fistfights. It wasn't just some potential threat far out in the distance any more; the danger was as real as it could ever get and it was a mere few meters away from her and her children. My friend found herself seriously considering her very limited and extremely bleak options if the thugs came out on top as the fight raged on and neither side seemed to be having the upper hand in it. Thankfully though, it never came to that. After what seemed to her like an eternity, my friend's neighbors were finally able to overwhelm the thugs bringing an end to what she referred to as one of the most horrific experiences of her life.

Before I knew all of that however, and in light of what my friend told me in our first phone call alone, I began to look at the discrepancy between the perilous situation on her suburban street and the considerably safer situation on El-Insha street as the basis for a potential addition to this thesis. Right after I hung up with her on January 31st, I felt that such glaring discrepancy could very well strengthen the case I was making for Nasr City's latent potentials. My analytical faculties, which had then come around for the first time since the 28th, were already formulating arguments about a whole new set of advantages that the urban and architectural typologies of Nasr City had over those of suburban Cairo. My biggest concern though was not to jump to conclusions or make hasty generalizations. After all, both my mother's and my friend's accounts were very specific, and I needed to know if they were actually reflective of the overall situation in Nasr City on one hand, and Shorouq City and the Cairene suburbs in general on the other. Over the following weeks, I managed to verify that that was indeed the case from all the news reports and blog entries that I came across, as well as the correspondences I had with other friends, neighbors, and family back in Cairo. However, the first and most substantial reassurance came as early as the same day, the 31st of January, when I called another one of my very good friends back home. That friend lives in Moqattam City in his wife's extended family house which has the same typology as that of 11 EL-Insha street. He is a practicing architect with a sharp critical sense. He keeps in touch with our wide circle of friends and acquaintances who predominantly dwell in Nasr City and the suburbs of Cairo. And most importantly, he is quite familiar with the arguments of my thesis, as I have discussed them with him many times before. And so, if there were anybody who could have given me an objective and reliable opinion about the half-baked arguments and hypotheses I had at that point, it would have been him.

Naturally, my phone call to him began with me making sure that he, his wife, and the rest of his in-laws in Moqattam City were fine, and that his parents in Nasr city were alright as well. After that was done, and on a lighter note, he jokingly proposed that I roll up my thesis and inappropriately place it up some of the academics back home who had rejected the validity of its arguments. He said that, if for nothing else, the case for Nasr City's advantage over the Cairene suburbs could



fig.4.a.25 A group of vigilantes keeping watch on their street on the night of January 29. As it turned out to be, efficient neighborhood watches such as that of El-Insha street were not an uncommon occurrence in the older high-end residential districts of Cairo during the disorder that erupted on the night of January 28. Those districts were relatively the safest places in the city at the time due to the efforts of such vigilante groups.

be predicated solely on how safer it has been since trouble broke out on the night of the 28th. I was really surprised to hear him say that since I hadn't yet told him about what I've learned in my phone calls to my mother and my friend who lived in the suburb of Shorouq City, nor about the emergent arguments that have since been rambling in mind. I took that as a cue to tell him about those things, and once I did, he went on to elaborate on his lighthearted remark in a more serious tone. He said that with what was going on at the time, the general consensus among Cairenes was that it's a blessing, and even a privilege, to be a resident of any of the older high-end residential districts such as Nasr City and Masr Al-Gadeeda. He told me that tight and efficient neighborhood watches, like that of El-Insha street, were a very common occurrence on almost every street in those districts making them the safest in Cairo. He then added that the very grim and ominous situation on my other friend's suburban street was actually the status quo not only in the rest of Shorouq City, but in all of the Cairene suburbs as well. He said that many of the suburban dwellers he knows were then realizing the value of their former homes in those older districts, and that those of them who had the option, opted to go back to such homes until the situation in the suburbs came to an end. He then concluded by stressing once again that it's become clear to everyone in Cairo that suburbia can be a very unsafe place; and that he therefore believes that all those who were eager to live in the suburbs before will now think twice before establishing or relocating their households there.

The account of my friend who lives in Moqattam City was everything I needed to hear to further pursue and validate my emergent arguments. And so after talking to him I set out to investigate the reasons why Nasr City was much safer than the Cairene suburbs during the rampant disorder that had befallen Cairo back then. My starting point was Nasr City's neighborhood watches since all evidence suggested that such vigilante groups and their outstanding performance were the key factor that set Nasr City apart from the suburbs. I took El-Insha street's neighborhood watch as an exemplary model and began to carefully reflect on its every aspect. I soon found it particularly interesting that despite the bleak circumstances that they had never experienced before, the residents of El-Insha street had almost automatically transformed their immediate urban environment into a safe communal setting. I also was quite intrigued by the effectiveness and efficiency of their impromptu neighborhood watch, especially since a "neighborhood watch" is a very foreign concept to Cairo. As I extrapolated what I worked out to be the reasons behind such unexpected yet impressive capacities, I came to the conclusion that the remarkable performance of the rest of Nasr City's neighborhood watches, and in turn the general state of safety throughout the district, was the outcome of three interrelated factors. Those were: the urban characteristics of Nasr City's streets; the architectural qualities of the buildings standing on those streets; and finally the attributes of the social structures housed within those buildings.

Owing to Nasr City's orthogonal planning, all of its inner streets – which incidentally constitute the bulk of its street network – are linear, short in length, and have relatively narrow widths of either 12 or 16 meters. These features made securing and holding those streets a relatively easy task. In terms of scale, a Nasr City inner street was a small and rather manageable space, and its linear geometry provided whoever was on guard duty with a clear line of sight all the way down its length and facilitated coordination with those manning their stations elsewhere in the street. The same was also true even for the remainder of Nasr City's street network – the longer, wider streets that mark the perimeters of its neighborhoods. Once again thanks to the orthogonal nature of that street network, any given long street in Nasr City has several junctions where inner streets feed into it. Posting guard details at those junctions helped break it down into shorter, more manageable segments.

Another very important factor that facilitated securing the streets of Nasr City is the manner in which buildings stand on those streets. The maximum permissible footprint for a residential building in Nasr City occupies a considerably large area of the lot it's on, and lot sizes are not all that big to start with. Moreover, as it has been demonstrated earlier in this thesis, a great deal of Nasr City's buildings exceeds the stipulated maximum footprint anyway. This resulted in a closely-knit architectural canvas – on any given street in Nasr City, buildings stand quite close to each other and the relationship between the buildings and the street itself is rather intimate too. For those who had the task of securing a street in Nasr City, such an architectural canvas meant that they had little to worry about. The gaps between the buildings down the street where intruders might have come through were very small and therefore quite easy to defend, and securing the street automatically catered to securing the buildings on it as well.

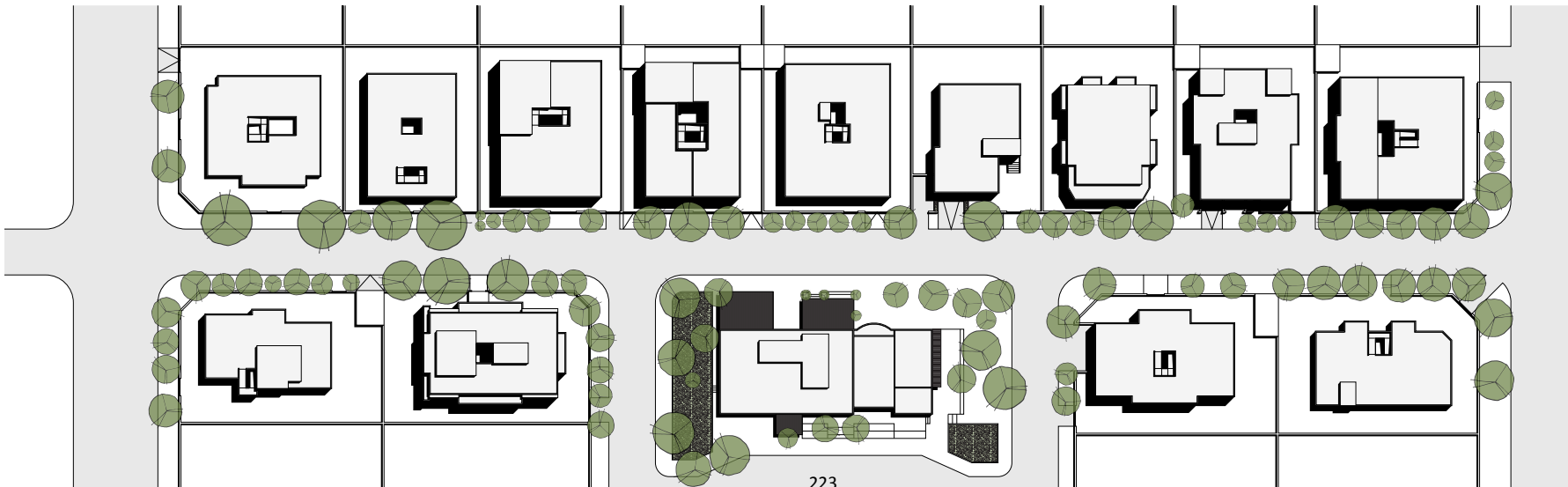
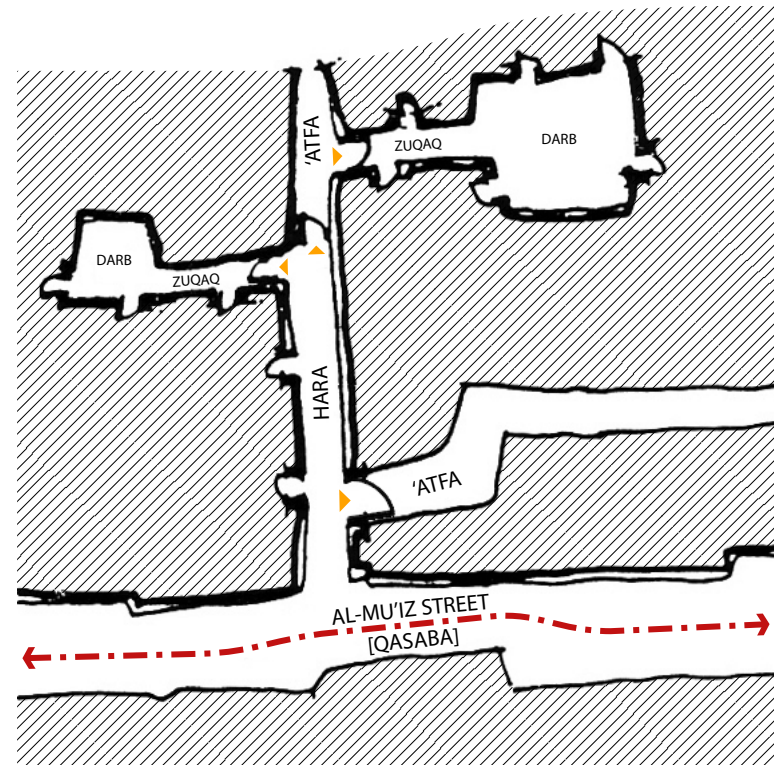
In my opinion however, the most important factor that helped keep Nasr City safe is that a fairly decent portion of the apartment buildings standing on its streets are extended family households. This opinion of mine stems mainly from observations regarding El-Insha street – a street which up until recently was made up entirely of such apartment building–extended family households. Although I was initially a bit surprised that securing El-Insha street came almost naturally to its residents, I soon found myself thinking that it wasn't all that strange after all. Living on El-Insha street for most of my life, I've always known it to be a rather safe environment. But I have to admit though that this doesn't really show right away. The extended families of El-Insha street are very reserved to say the least, and they mostly keep to themselves. As a matter of fact, none of them actually knows any of the other extended families living down the street. Be that as it may however, they are still quite familiar with one another. The residents of each of El-Insha street's extended family households know the faces of every single one of their neighbors on the street; and even though they may not be able to put names to those faces, they can tell to which of the street's other extended family households do those faces belong. As a result, it has always been quite easy to pick out anyone or anything that doesn't belong on El-Insha street; and whenever such a situation presented itself, there would almost immediately be one or more of the street's residents looking into it.

This subdued sense of community that the extended families of El-Insha street have maintained over the years is what concerns me here. As I have discussed earlier in this thesis, the apartment building–extended family house typology of Nasr City features a very delicate balance between the traditional extended family house of rural Egypt and medieval Cairo, where the boundaries of privacy for the nuclear families living in it were rather permeable; and the conventional apartment building typology, where those boundaries are quite rigid. And now in light of my observations regarding El-Insha street, it seems that there is a similar kind of balance featured on those of Nasr City's streets where the majority of the buildings follow this hybrid typology. On one hand there's the traditional residential street of medieval Cairo, where the street was in essence one big extended family house – it had its own door and was made up of a number of extended family households that all belonged to the same kin. And on the other hand there are all the different models for the modern residential street, be it metropolitan or suburban, where the residents of the street are unrelated and tend to be rather withdrawn. And then, nestled perfectly in between both extremes, there's the model for those particular streets in Nasr City. A model where the extended families living down the street are not close enough to be intimate with one another, and yet at the same time they aren't too distant that they wouldn't recognize and care for each other.

I believe that this finely balanced sense of community had a very significant effect when trouble broke out on the night of the 28th. On any given street in Nasr City where the apartment building–extended family house is the dominant typology, it was the main reason why the residents of the street were very quick to come together and set up neighborhood watches. And it was also because of it that they did so in a rather seamless manner. The fact that they were already familiar with each other made it quite easy for them to coordinate and work together when the situation called for it. Apart from that

fig.4.a.27 [top] The street hierarchy in medieval Cairo; the marked doorways are street entrances. In Fatimid Cairo, the city's main spine and most public realm, the *qasaba*, gave way to a semi-public *hara*; a *hara* then led to a semi-private *'atfa*, and in some cases a *zuqaq*; and finally the *'atfa* led to a *zuqaq*, the most private tier of the hierarchy. The transition between the first two public street types and the latter two private street types was controlled by way of a door. In the *zuqaq* street model, all the extended family households that stood on the street were related by blood and the *zuqaq* itself resembled one big extended family house. Not only did it have its own door, but it also had its own courtyard, or *darb*, around which extended family houses of the street were arranged. However, it also had a serious downside since it allowed for those extended family households to get too involved into each other's affairs, which was certainly quite overbearing most, if not all, of the time.

fig.4.a.26 [bottom] El-Insha street as it was for almost two decades; the quintessential example of the Nasr City street model where the majority, if not all, of the buildings on the street follow the apartment building-extended family house typology. This particular Nasr City street model features the best of two worlds, and none of their shortcomings. It has the semblance of an ordained modern residential street, and a social structure that is somewhat similar to that of medieval Cairo's *zuqaq* considering that each of its apartment buildings is an extended family household but none of those households are related. The extended families of that street model are therefore not as distant and detached from one another as the nuclear families of most modern residential street models; and at the same time they are not as overbearingly close and intimate with each other as the interrelated extended families of the *zuqaq* street model. Instead, the mix of modern urban & architectural typology and traditional social structure helped the extended families of that particular Nasr City street model to nurture a very healthy, balanced relationship without encroaching on each other's privacy. I believe that this kind of relationship was one of the main reasons why the residents of streets such as El-Insha street were arguably the safest people in Cairo during the trouble that began on the night of January 28.



balanced sense of community however, there are other aspects to the social make-up of that street model which also helped a lot in dealing with those troublesome times. For Instance, the fact that every building on the street is an extended family household, and that every extended family household is its own social unit, was very beneficial to the management of the street's neighborhood watch. It meant that there were always enough individuals to secure the street, but at the same time there were few social units to coordinate between. Settling on a plan of action for the neighborhood watch as whole required but only one or two representatives from each of the extended family households down the street, and those guaranteed that such a plan would be relayed without a hitch to the other members of their respective extended families. This reduced the chances of confusion or miscommunication within the neighborhood watch and enhanced its overall efficiency. And then there's the very simple fact that, in such a street model, any one member of the neighborhood watch was protecting his own flesh and blood. Apart from his own nuclear family, it wasn't all mere neighbors that he was watching over; it was his extended family – his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Yes, Egyptians are an inherently protective people and they have a natural tendency to help out strangers in their time of need. But the simple fact of the matter is that people are naturally much more protective of their own immediate family. And this is why the neighborhood watches on those of Nasr City's streets that followed such model were arguably the tightest and most alert vigilante groups in all of Cairo.

But then again, there aren't that many streets in Nasr City where the apartment building–extended family house is the dominant building typology. Earlier in this thesis, it's been demonstrated that the greater majority of residential buildings in Nasr City follow a condominium typology where the building towers past the maximum height limit stipulated in Nasr City's bylaws, and houses a large number of unrelated nuclear families. On a street where that condominium typology is dominant, the nuclear families in any one building are hardly familiar with one another, let alone the scores of the other nuclear families living down the street. So when the events of the 28th started to unfold, putting together a neighborhood watch didn't run as smoothly for the residents of that street model, nor was their neighborhood watch as efficient, in comparison to the residents of the apartment building–extended family house street model. Although in terms of sheer numbers the condominium street model has far more residents, the lack of a sense of community on the street hindered the management of such numbers. It meant that there was a lot more confusion, miscommunication, and coordination pitfalls within the neighborhood watch.

As I've explained in the beginning of this analysis, all streets in Nasr City share the same urban and architectural characteristics that turned out to be quite beneficial during the hard times that befell Cairo in the wake of the events of January 28th. It goes without saying then that the social make-up of a street is what made all the difference within the context of Nasr City; it is what made some streets safer than others. I believe that this serves to highlight yet another advantageous inherent quality to the core subject of this thesis – the apartment building–extended family house typology.

And at the same time, it also serves to further discredit the condominium typology that's been with Nasr City since its boom in the late 80s, and which has been lately festering through its urban fabric at the expense of apartment building—extended family households. But then again, riding on their urban and architectural characteristics alone, the least safe of Nasr City's condominium dominated streets were still way safer than any street in the suburbs of Cairo.

As I investigated the dire situation in the Cairene suburbs, I soon found that it is also a combination of their urban, architectural, and social characteristics that rendered them quite unsafe in comparison to Nasr City. Due to the curvilinear planning schemes of the Cairene suburbs, the streets there almost always have a meandering course; and on average, they are longer and wider than the streets of Nasr City. These features, which are an integral part of the suburban luxurious character, had a serious downside to them – they made securing a street in the suburbs a much harder task for its residents. In terms of scale, a street's neighborhood watch there had a considerably larger area to manage on their hands, and the nonlinear street geometry created quite an obstacle for communication and coordination between its members. The bends on the street obstructed a clear line of sight down its length, which in turn meant that a guard detail wouldn't be able to see the danger coming its way until it was too late, let alone signal a warning to the other vigilantes manning their stations elsewhere on the street.

There's also the issue of how the architecture stands on the streets of the Cairene suburbs. In terms of the maximum permissible footprint and minimum setbacks for residential buildings, the Cairene suburbs' building bylaws are not all that different from Nasr City's. And so, much like Nasr city, the adjacent buildings on the typical residential street in the Cairene suburbs stand in close proximity to each other, and in close proximity to the street itself. However, in yet another aspect of the suburban luxurious character, the typical street in the Cairene suburbs features a lot more open spaces than a Nasr city street. And then there's the fact that the suburbs of Cairo are still very far from being fully developed, which means that more often than not the typical residential street there will also feature a number of vacant lots and under construction buildings. Together, these two features resulted in an architectural canvas that's full of gaping holes, which made matters even worse for the members of a street's neighborhood watch in the Cairene suburbs. On top of the street's overwhelming scale and curvilinear geometry, they also had to deal with all the building-free voids down the street where intruders might have come through; voids that are quite large, and were therefore rather difficult to barricade or defend. Not to mention that the unfinished, uninhabited structures on the street, where intruders could have lurked to stage an attack or used as strongholds during one, were another source of major concern that was equally as hard to address.

I however believe that the social characteristics of the Cairene suburbs are what sealed their fate. Obviously, the urban and architectural drawbacks of the typical residential street there would have been less of an issue if there were plenty of vigilantes to post all around its vast extents, blind spots, and big voids. But then again, having that many vigilantes on hand would have required a considerably large number of people living down the street in the first place – and that just isn't a feature of the Cairene suburbs' typical residential street. Instead, the typical street there has a very small number

of residents, which – in light of its overwhelming physical disadvantages – wasn't exactly the most favorable of features. It meant that the typical street in the Cairene suburbs didn't have enough residents for assembling a neighborhood watch with the adequate manpower needed to properly secure the street, which in turn left everybody living down the street in a very vulnerable position. I'd like to make it clear here that such deficiency has little to do with the fact that the suburbs of Cairo are fairly new residential settlements that haven't been fully populated yet. These suburbs are actually designed to have very low population densities. Allocating the greater majority of their residential land use to the villa typology; their strict building bylaws that limit such typology to a maximum of three, and sometimes even two, storeys; and the abundance of large open spaces on their streets – all of these things cater to having a minimal number of residents per street, which is by far the most essential feature of any suburban model. And so it wouldn't have really made much of a difference if the Cairene suburbs were at their full population capacities during the trouble that erupted on the night of January 28th. The residents of the typical street there would have still been gravely short on the numbers needed to keep their street safe.

But then again, having a small number of residents wasn't the only disadvantageous social feature of the Cairene suburbs' typical residential street. I believe that the lack of a sense of community among its residents had quite an adverse effect as well. As I've established earlier in this thesis, any given villa in suburban Cairo is either a single nuclear family household or an extended family household. This in turn means that the social make-up of the Cairene suburbs' typical street model, where all buildings follow the villa typology, is very similar to that of the Nasr City street model, where the apartment building–extended family house is the dominant typology. And while that similarity may imply that the households of the Cairene suburbs' street model would also have the same balanced and healthy relationship featured on the Nasr City street model, the truth of the matter is that they don't – and that's mainly because of three reasons.

For one thing, there's the fact that the suburbs of Cairo are very young residential settlements. It takes a good many years to build up a balanced sense of community like the one in question here. But as it is right now, none of the families living down a typical street in the Cairene suburbs have resided there long enough to develop a relationship that's even remotely close to that special bond that their Nasr City counterparts have nurtured for over two decades. And then there are the urban qualities of the Cairene suburbs' typical residential street, which – regardless of the time factor – will always deter its households from cultivating a communal sense of any kind. In the Nasr City street model, the intimate scale of the street and the proximity of its apartment buildings literally brought its extended families close together, making it relatively easy for them to become familiar with each other. In the Cairene suburbs on the other hand, the vast scale of the street distances the villas standing on it, while its meandering geometry breaks its continuity and fragments those villas into disjointed architectural segments. This reduces the chances of the street's residents running into each other, crossing paths, or interacting in any other way; which in turn makes it virtually impossible for the members of any one of its households to be acquainted with all of their neighbors down the street, let alone maintain a balanced relationship with them.

NASR CITY



NEW CAIRO



SHOROUG CITY



And finally there's the architecture of the villas that stand on the Cairene suburbs' typical residential street. For purposes of privacy, the architecture of these villas hardly ever acknowledges the street, except for it being a front towards which the building's main façade is oriented. And while the same is also true for the architecture of Nasr City's apartment building–extended family houses, there's quite a fundamental difference between the two typologies. In an apartment building–extended family house, the living spaces, where the inhabitants of the building spend the majority of their time, are almost always situated looking out on the street from behind a fairly closed off main façade. This provides the members of Nasr City's extended family household with their due privacy, and at the same time allows them to have a healthy connection to the domain of their street. Not only did such connection make it even easier for them to become familiar with their neighbors down the street, but it's also been the main reason why they are always aware of, and quick to deal with, any sort of trouble as soon as it materializes on the street or threatens any of their neighboring households. In the Cairene suburbs however, a villa usually features a certain design element, such as a pool or a terrace overlooking a big yard, which completely draws the focus of the building and its inhabitants away from the street. The members of the typical household in the Cairene suburbs are therefore far less involved with what happens on their street in comparison to the members of Nasr City's extended family household. They would not be able to tell, let alone act, if and when a problem manifests itself on the street or befalls any of their neighboring households, not to mention that their minimal exposure to the street further reduces their chances of ever becoming familiar with the members of those neighboring households. Needless to say, none of this is conducive to either developing or maintaining a relationship with their neighbors on the street, nor is any of it likely to change over time. Much like the urban qualities of the Cairene suburbs' typical residential street, the architecture of the villas that stand on it will always isolate the families dwelling in them and obstruct their growth as a community no matter how long they may end up residing there.

My analysis and conclusions regarding why Nasr City had been much safer than the Cairene suburbs during the rampant disorder that erupted on the night of January 28th and threatened them for days to follow were gratifying to say the least. Upon completing them, I felt that they made it clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Cairene suburbs are at a severe disadvantage in comparison to Nasr City; and that they indeed provided some very strong points for arguing against middle class professionals abandoning their Nasr City apartment building–extended family houses and relocating to the Cairene suburbs. But most importantly, they also seemed to resonate with what had become of Nasr City and the Cairene suburbs in the wake of those unsettling times.

Over the first year or so after the disorder that took hold of Cairo's residential districts had died out, I couldn't help but notice that once again there was a glaring discrepancy between the sort of atmosphere that set over Nasr City on the one hand, and the Cairene suburbs on the other. In Nasr City, it looked as though such disorder had tapped into the latent social potential of the district's street model where the apartment building–extended family house is the dominant

fig.4.a.28 [opposite page] Samples of the urban fabric in Nasr City, New Cairo, and Shorouq City. Looking at these samples side by side makes it very clear that there are some major differences between Nasr City and the Cairene suburbs in terms of their urban and architectural characteristics. In my opinion, these differences were the main reason why the residents of Nasr City were much more capable of coping with the troublesome times that ensued from the night of January 28 in comparison to their counterparts in suburban Cairo.

typology. This became quite evident as I turned my attention back to El-Insha street being the quintessential example for that street model. There, the hardships of dealing with the imminent threat to their street had brought the extended families of my street closer than ever and set in motion a communal momentum that proceeded to push the limits of their long-standing balanced relationship. It all began in late February when the younger members of El-Insha street's extended family households came together to clear the aftermath of the street's neighborhood watch. On the last Thursday of the month, the youth of 11 El-Insha street's two extended families put up a sign on its front gate announcing that they will be performing a full-scale cleanup of the street starting Friday, and inviting whoever's interested in helping out to join them. The next morning, almost every kid, teenager, and young adult living down the street showed up in front of 11 El-Insha street in response to the invitation, and over the course of the whole weekend, they all worked side by side with the blessings and supervision of their parents. First, they dismantled the remnants of the barricades that were still partially blocking the street's entrances; they collected and disposed of the all clutter and debris that had been lying about the street from when the vigilantes stood sentry; and they swept out the all of street and its sidewalks. They then went on a quest to revamp El-Insha street as they took it upon themselves to wash the gates and entrances of every single one of its apartment buildings, and repaint the sidewalks down the its entire length. And on the last day of the weekend when all the work was done, they gathered in the entrance lobby of 11 El-Insha street where they shared a celebratory meal that the mothers of its two extended families had prepared for them.





fig.4.a.29 [opposite page, left] Prepped and ready to begin the cleanup of El-Insha street. On the right stands Noha, my cousin; and on the left stands Tony, her neighbor across the hall in 11 El-Insha street. Apparently, they were the ones who thought it would be a good idea to clear the aftermath of the street's neighborhood watch, and extended the invitation to the younger members of the street's other extended family households to come out and help. Almost every kid, teenager and young adult living down El-Insha street responded to that invitation.

fig.4.a.30 & fig.4.a.31 The youth of El-Insha street's different extended family households hard at work cleaning their street. They disposed of all the litter that was left behind from when the street's vigilantes stood sentry [opposite page, right], and swept the entire length of the street [left].

fig.4.a.32 Working together to straighten a street sign that was knocked askew during the time El-Insha street's neighborhood watch was in operation. After they were done with the cleanup, the youth of El-Insha went on to give their street a complete facelift.

fig.4.a.33 to fig.4.a.38 [opposite page] In their effort to revamp their street, the youth of El-Insha street washed the gates and entrances of every one of its apartment buildings, and painted the sidewalks down its entire length. They carried out both tasks in a very organized manner.





fig.4.a.39 [left] The youth of El-Insha street posing for a picture to celebrate all what they had achieved after a whole weekend of working tirelessly side by side. A lot of good memories and new friends were made over the course of that weekend.



fig.4.a.40 [right] The youth of El-Insha street gathered around a big tray of traditional fava beans in the entrance lobby of 11 El-Insha street. After all the work was done, and as part of their celebration, they shared a meal that the mothers of El-Insha street's two extended families had prepared for them. Much like everything else about the communal effort to clean and revamp El-Insha street, this very friendly and inviting gesture was the first of its kind.



I found that communal effort, as well as the genuinely warm and friendly sentiments exhibited in carrying it out, to be quite a departure from the reserved relationship that the extended families of my street have maintained with one another over the years. And it was only a little over a year later before they took yet another major step beyond the boundaries of their subdued relationship. In July of 2012, several of the older members of El-Insha street's extended family households organized themselves into what could be best described as a council aimed at addressing issues that affect the well-being of their street. The circumstance that prompted this initiative presented itself when the owner of the bakery that stands across from 11 El-Insha street started to appropriate the little garden adjacent to his bakery with the intention of turning it into an outdoor coffee shop. Concerned that this kind of coffee shop will disturb the calm of their street; invite a lot of strangers into its domain; and compromise the privacy of their households, a group of representatives from a number of the street's extended families came together to discuss how best to deal with the emerging situation and prevent it from developing any further. They then set up a meeting with the owner of the bakery where they presented him with their grievances, and informed him that unless he forgoes his plans, they will have to lodge a formal complaint with the proper authorities on the account of his unlawful annexing of public property. This in turn triggered a lengthy series of negotiations with the man

during which they also brought up the loudness and inappropriate habits of the bakery's workers as nuisances that have long inconvenienced their households, and demanded that he puts an end to them as well. These negotiations eventually came to an end as the owner of the bakery insisted on moving forward with his plans, giving them his word that none of their concerns regarding the coffee shop will ever come to pass, and that he will personally see to it that their issues with his bakery's workers will be sorted out immediately. And while they welcomed the latter half of his promise, which he did fulfill right away, the representatives of El-Insha street's extended families weren't the least bit satisfied with his assurances regarding the coffee shop. They therefore decided to push on with lodging a formal complaint, and divided among themselves the tasks of drafting it; collecting signatures for it from as many of the street's other households that were not yet involved; and finding a suitable connection who will ensure that it will be quickly delivered to the highest authorities. By that point, the situation had caught the attention of the residents of some of the apartment buildings standing on the two other streets that mark the perimeter of the small market where the bakery is located, and they subsequently expressed their desire to sign that formal complaint as well. Seeing that the representatives of El-Insha street's extended families were serious about their ultimatum, and that their complaint document was gaining the support of households other than those of El-Insha street itself, the owner of the bakery finally backed down and refrained from taking any further steps towards transforming the garden into a coffee shop. Shortly after that, a couple of families from 11 El-Insha street hired a landscaper to properly replant the little garden as a gesture of reclaiming it as part of the street's public domain.

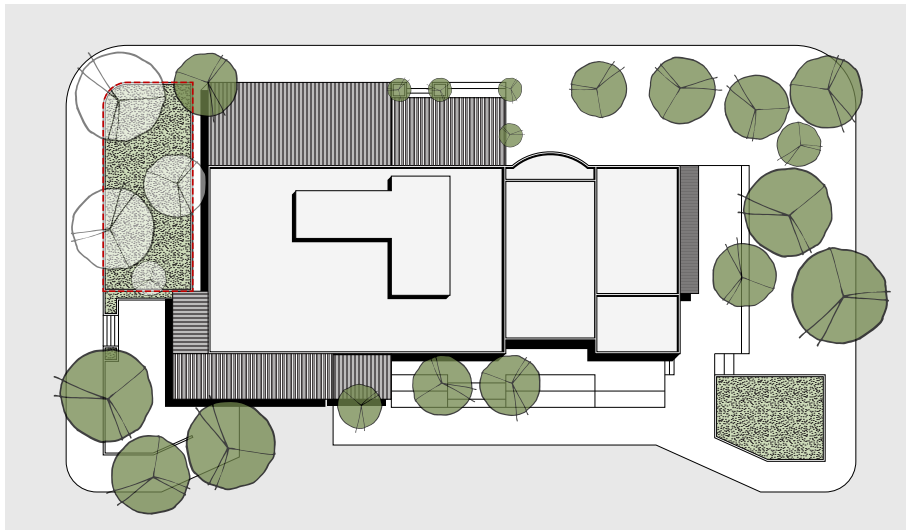


fig.4.a.41 El-Insha street's small market; a dispute over the little garden marked here saw El-Insha street's different extended family households join forces for the first time to protect the interests of their community.

I learned about those events from my mother who had been part of the group that spearheaded the entire effort to thwart the plans of the bakery's owner. In her telling of the story, one thing was very obvious from the way she referred to those of her neighbors who had led that effort with her. They were clearly no longer just faces to her that might or might not have a name attached to them, but instead it sounded more like they were real individuals whom she had come to know and respect though working and sharing experiences together. This left me with the distinct impression that participating in that effort helped the members of El-Insha street's different extended families, or at least some of them, to actually get to know each other; which was undoubtedly a big step forward considering that for more than two decades their relationship amounted to nothing more than a mere casual acquaintance. However, I believe that the real breakthrough of that effort, as well as the effort to clean up El-Insha street for that matter, was that they both saw the extended family households of my street actively and collectively engage in protecting the interests of their community. Although the members of those households have always been prompt to act whenever a dangerous situation manifested itself on El-Insha street, they've had a very different approach towards problems that did not present a clear and direct threat to the street's security. They usually sat idly by until that sort of problem became a real bother and then all they did was moan and complain about it, but they wouldn't take any meaningful action towards dealing with it. And in the few rare incidents when one of the street's social units decided to do something about that sort of problem, they were pretty much on their own – an extended family household could never rally the support of the street's other extended family households, and in some cases not even a nuclear family could muster support from the rest of its own extended family household. And so it was a truly radical development for the extended families of El-Insha street to shake off their passiveness and join forces to address the kind of issues they've let slide so many times in the past, which only seemed appropriate since it took an equally extreme set of circumstances to bring about such a development. In my opinion, the catalyst for the unprecedented behavior of my street's extended families was the disorder that had befallen Cairo's residential districts on the night of January 28th and prompted their successful neighborhood watch endeavor. I believe this made them realize how much they're capable of achieving if they pulled together and worked as a group, which in turn encouraged them to make more use of their newly found potential. As unpleasant as it was, that disorder had done some good after all ushering the extended family households of El-Insha street, and the many other streets like it all over Nasr city, into a more mature phase of their evolution as a community.

During the same period these positive developments were taking place in Nasr City, things were looking pretty grim in the Cairene suburbs. There, the ominous and brooding atmosphere that came with the disorder that erupted in late January 2011 didn't seem to subside over the months that followed. I first became aware of this during a phone call with my friend who lived in Shorouq City some time after order had been restored to most of Cairo's residential districts. In that phone call, she told me that in Shorouq City things never went back to the way they were before the night of January 28th. She said that

although her family and herself were no longer in direct danger, she was still constantly worried and anxious nonetheless because she felt that Shorouq City had become generally unsafe. My friend's somber outlook was indeed justified. At around the same time I had that phone call with her, I also began to notice from all the news reports I was coming across that there was some serious criminal activity going on not only in Shorouq City, but in the suburbs of New Cairo as well. The Cairene suburbs in general were just plagued with incidents of armed robbery and kidnapping school children for ransom. And as late as February 2013, I was still coming across news of those incidents as the crime epidemic continued to haunt the Cairene suburbs for almost two years after the trouble that briefly overwhelmed Cairo's residential districts had ended. This was disconcerting to say the least, but I also found it quite puzzling. Crimes such as those that befell the Cairene suburbs have never been an issue in Cairo's high-end residential districts at any point in time. It was therefore very strange to witness those crimes fester with such intensity through out the suburbs of Cairo, and it was even stranger that that would be the case at a time of relative calm in all of Cairo's other high-end residential districts. To me, it looked a though the disorder of late January 2011 had yielded a very different outcome in the Cairene suburbs than it did in Nasr City. As I've explained earlier, during such disorder all the urban, architectural, and social disadvantages of the Cairene suburbs were brought out for everyone to see, and it is my belief that this in turn encouraged many a criminal and wrongdoer to exploit those disadvantages – that and the obvious fact that the residents of suburban Cairo are generally well off.

By that point, between the promising atmosphere that was shaping up in Nasr City and the bleak air that hung over the Cairene suburbs, I had become quite hopeful. Judging by their behavior, the extended families of Nasr City's middle class professionals appeared to have discovered the potential and advantages of their apartment building households. And from their remarks on the dreadful criminal activity in suburban Cairo, it also sounded like that they were aware and thankful for how safe Nasr City was in comparison. And so, for a little while there, I got to thinking that maybe, just maybe, the trend of middle class professionals relocating their extended family households to the Cairene suburbs might come to an end after all. But alas, every other aspect of their behavior ever since the outbreak of the January uprising seemed to indicate otherwise.



4.B An Unanswered Wake-up Call

The failings of older middle class professionals in a post-Uprising Egypt and the imminent demise of Nasr City's apartment building-extended family households

It's now almost four years after the outbreak of the January Uprising and the unrest in Egypt is still nowhere near a definitive conclusion. Although the Uprising itself came to a close when Mubarak stepped down on the February 11, 2011, protests against the military council that was appointed to temporarily run the country in his stead erupted soon thereafter bringing about a whole new episode of violent strife which lasted until the council's tenure in power ended in mid 2012. And not long after the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi took over from the outgoing military council as Egypt's newly elected president, culminating the Brotherhood's post-uprising ascension to power, protests against Morsi and the emerging Muslim Brotherhood regime flared up in yet another chapter of violent conflict, which came to a bloody end in the summer of 2013 when the Army – in response to such popular discontent – stepped in and removed him from office and then went on to brutally cracked down on his supports. And now, after a mock democratic process in which he was glorified as Egypt's savior in his capacity as the head of the Army that overthrew Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, Abd elFattah elSisi had been elected president, and ever since, Egypt has been under the rule of a regime that bears striking similarities to the Mubarak

fig.4.b.1 [opposite page] Owing to their sustained inaction, continued criticism of the younger, and reluctance to participate of effectuate real change; such passive members of the older generation came to be widely known as the 'couch party' in Egypt, in reference to their sitting their following events and passing judgments while sitting comfortably on couches in their homes.

regime that had been toppled four years earlier – a rule that has been marred by a consistent suppression and violation of civil and human rights. That is to say, Egypt is pretty much back to where it was before the outbreak of the January Uprising of 2011; not to mention that since then the country has also been, and still is, struggling through a rather turbulent process of political reform; a deteriorating economy; rising sectarian tensions; and the rapid ideological polarization of its people.

Be that as it may however, the events of those four years offered yet another very important, and rather conclusive, addition to my thesis. Granted, that addition has little to do with the immediate focus of this thesis on issues of architecture and urbanism. But it remains a pivotal addition nonetheless given that it relates directly to the overarching social concept upon which my arguments concerning those issues were predicated, and which – in essence – constitutes the answer to the “why bother?” question of this thesis. The concept I’m referring to here is the one suggesting that the well-being of any given society is closely tied to the integrity of its middle class and their active involvement in maintaining a sound social order. It’s my belief that the events and aftermath of the January Uprising provide ample clues that prove the failure of the professionals class – whom I perceive as the last remnants of a moral middle class in Egypt – to live up to their supposed social responsibility. A failure that I have argued would be an inevitable outcome of the professionals’ preoccupation with preserving their threatened socio-economic status, and their irrational pursuit of excessively consumeristic and ostentatious lifestyles in order to assert it.

The first and maybe the most obvious of those clues presented itself in who initiated and staged what is now referred to as the Revolution of 25 January – the Egyptian *youth*. It was young Egyptians who called for the initial day of protest on the 25th which practically sparked the “revolution”; it was young Egyptians who endured and stood their ground through the violent events in the months that followed; and it was young Egyptians who suffered, and are still suffering, the most devastating losses through it all. And among those young Egyptians, it seems that young professionals in particular have had a more, if not the most, central role in the Uprising. It is this issue that I find quite contradictory to simple logic.

It baffles me that the professionals of my generation were the instigators of that Uprising and not the professionals of our parents’ generation. It baffles me because the professionals of our parents’ generation were brought up during the 50s and 60s, and – as students aspiring to be professionals – they were part of that era’s socio-economic system where professionals were revered as a higher tier of the social hierarchy; where they were guaranteed economic stability and comfortable lifestyles; and where personal excellence and sincere achievement were the standards for reaping such rewards. And it baffles me because it was also the professionals of that generation who, as fresh graduates, witnessed at first hand the drastic socio-economic shifts of the 70s, and since then have seen the demise of the principles they were brought up on; have been struggling economically to maintain the decent lifestyles they grew believing they were entitled to; and have watched as less worthy individuals ascended rapidly through social ranks while their own status hung by a thread. Logically, one would have expected the professionals of that generation to play a more central and active role in an uprising against

the regime whose ideologies helped subject them to such social and economic injustices as opposed to their children who were born in 80s and lacked their parents' frame of reference. Yet, it seems to me that they hardly played any significant role in the January Uprising, and that instead they generally had a rather negative attitude towards it.

I found some of the aspects of this negative attitude of theirs to be somewhat justifiable. For the better part of their adult lives, older middle class professionals, along with the rest of the Egyptian population for that matter, have been living under an Emergency Law that has been perpetually kept in effect since 1981. They've witnessed the atrocities that the Mubarak regime committed in its name to quell any form of nonconformist political activity; and in turn came to associate engaging in such activity with suffering police brutality, arrests without warrants, indefinite imprisonment with no right for trial, torture, and even death. It goes without saying then that this conviction must have been of the greatest influence on their reaction regarding such a politically charged occurrence as the January Uprising, especially in its early and most turbulent days between its outbreak on January 25th and Mubarak stepping down on February 11th.

During that period, it seemed to me that the greater majority of older middle class professionals refrained from participating in the protests, and that they strongly objected to their children's participation and desperately tried to dissuade them from following through with it. Considering the violent manner in which the authorities typically dealt with protesters, it was an understandable position to take – they simply feared for their children's and their own lives and safety if they would have joined the protests. I also got the impression that they had very little faith that the protests would yield any substantial results; which was a rather reasonable reservation as well. At the time, it indeed seemed highly unlikely that the Mubarak regime, which has effectively kept political activism in check for 30 years, would give in to the protestors' outrageous demands for dissolving the government, putting top officials on trial, disbanding the regime's political apparatus, and for Mubarak himself to step down.

To be fair though, after the inconceivable happened and Mubarak stepped down, I've noticed that the older professionals' generation had a change of heart. The Supreme Council for the Armed Forces (SCAF) had been placed in charge of the country for a transitional period, representing a revered and well-loved Egyptian Army that seemingly sided with the protestors and refused to act against them when called upon by Mubarak during his last days in power. In turn, older middle class professionals started to register an increased presence in Tahrir Square, and even allowed their younger children to take part in the then SCAF-tolerated, peaceful sit-ins – and they were not the only ones. It also seemed to me that members of the higher social classes, who originally wanted nothing to do with the Uprising, followed a similar trend. This spark of activism however was rather short-lived, and was soon revealed for what it truly was – just another fad among the many other fads of higher society.

Over the months after it assumed power, it became evident that the SCAF is no different from, if not worse than, the Mubarak regime in terms of dealing with nonconformist political activity. With escalating fresh protests demanding faster,

more effective and transparent reforms, the council's initial tolerance ran out and not before long it was authorizing the same kind of atrocities that were committed during the early days of the Uprising. It also deployed the military police, and even troops, against civilian protestors – both of which proving to be more brutal than the regular security forces, and it brought civilian activists who openly criticized it to stand military tribunals. At the first signs of the council's new attitude, the majority of older professionals, as well as everyone else who had jumped on the dissidence bandwagon after Mubarak stepped down, reverted to their original position regarding participating in protests. It was a disappointing relapse but an understandable one nonetheless given that their children's and their own lives and safety were, once again, at risk.

Yes, older middle class professionals may have good reason for this passive and discouraging behavior. But then again, this doesn't mean that they are entirely free of blame for behaving in such manner. The young people who went down to Tahrir Square in January 2011, and who have since kept going back, have an instinct for self-preservation and knew full well the dangers of political dissent the same as the older middle class professionals; and still they chose to make their stand regardless. As a part of it myself, I know for a fact that the younger professionals' generation in particular was brought up by their parents to believe that discussing politics, let alone openly defying the political institution, is the stuff of taboo. And yet there they were at the forefront of the Uprising, while their parents – the older professionals – took a backseat and deemed their resort to protesting an uncalculated stunt of hotheaded youth.

This brings me to the single most significant aspect of those older middle class professionals' negative attitude. It seems to me that, so far, their biggest "contribution" to the Uprising and the events that unfolded in its wake has been their incessant criticism of the younger generation's reckless disregard for the dire consequences of their continuous protesting. At first, the only consequence that seemed to bother the older professionals was the authorities' response to the protestors' bold political dissent. During the earliest days of the uprising, the older professionals were critical of the young protestors for thinking lightly of such response. They were simply under the impression that despite their efforts to instill the younger generation with a sense of the atrocious manner in which the authorities handled political dissidents, the protesting youth were still unable to fully grasp that they were literally putting their lives and personal safety on the line by standing up to the Mubarak regime. It was rather difficult for them to acknowledge the fact that the protestors – who are just children in their eyes – were knowingly taking this risk out of a strong commitment to a valid cause. As fathers and mothers, it was much easier and almost natural for them to assume that, at their young age, those protestors were instead misguided by youth's false notions of invincibility when they chose to defy the system; and therefore felt the need to berate them in order to bring them back to their senses. In other words the older professionals' criticism during that time was just another one of their attempts to dissuade their children from carrying on with the protests. And like the rest of those attempts, it essentially stemmed from their fear for the lives and safety of those children. This is why I believe that, at first, their criticism was still well within the bounds of pardonable behavior. However, what it developed to next was most certainly not.



fig.4.b.2 In Egypt, tradition dictates that one week after a child is born, his family would celebrate his birth with members of his extended family. As part of that celebration, the child is placed in a big sifter, after which relatives from both sides of his extended families take turns instructing the child to heed their advice and not that of his other family members – a tradition that is very telling of the ageist nature of Egyptian society. In this caricature, the Egyptian revolutionary youth are depicted as the child in the sifter, and around him, his “elders”, each representing a form of authority in Egypt, are gathered telling him to heed their advice. From left to right those instruct him to: “listen to what the Morshed [Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood] tells you”, “listen to what the Pope [of the Egyptian Coptic Church] tells you”, “listen to what the SCAF tells you”, “listen to what the [educated] Elite tells you”.

As time passed and the youth persisted with their protests, the older professionals’ criticisms took on a very different and far more antagonistic tone as they voiced their discontent with the adverse economic effects of the civil unrest wreaked by the protesting youth. This attitude first became obvious with the stalemate that developed during the 18-day run of the January Uprising as protestors refused to leave Tahrir Square after Mubarak’s failure to offer a satisfactory response to their demands; and became all the more intense as young protestors kept staging sit-ins and demonstrations after the SCAF’s ascension to power and its lackluster performance with regards to achieving the goals of the “revolution”. It just seemed to me that ever since that aforementioned stalemate, older professionals have never ceased complaining about how the perpetual protests staged by the younger generation, and in turn the authorities’ crackdown, are impeding the flow of everyday life and jeopardizing its safety; and are therefore posing serious threats to the country’s economy.

I found that particular recurring complaint to be, by far, the one aspect of the older middle class professionals’ negative attitude that is in no part excusable. Granted, it wouldn’t have been much of an issue for them to voice such a criticism

if older professionals were opposed to the purpose of the protests to begin with; but they weren't. On the contrary, they clearly wanted an end to political, economic and social grievances all along – and therein lies the problem. For one thing, it is a rather selfish behavior for them to be that critical considering that they've hardly been participating in the protests. It is as if they wanted to reap the fruits of socio-political upheaval without having to endure even the least of its inherent trials. After all, putting up with the economic repercussions of civil unrest seems rather mild in comparison to being subjected to physical brutality or losing one's life while protesting.

But what's even more frustrating is that despite being so adamant about the economic drawbacks of the youth's continuous protesting, the older professionals are yet to come up with a viable alternative for it. After four years since the outbreak of the Uprising, all they've had to offer was harsh and unconstructive criticism of the rash younger generation and the error of their ways, which often sank to the level of petty faultfinding. Or at best, they've engaged in endless rhetorical debates about the "less damaging" methods for bringing about the desired reforms, which have so far yielded nothing but impractical options and unacceptable compromises. I believe that this takes their failure to meet their social obligation to a whole new level; because if there were anybody who could – and should – have brought forth such an alternative, it would have been the older middle class professionals. They are the legislators, political scientists, economists, and the countless other experts who, by way of their fields of expertise and age, possess both the adequate knowledge and experience needed to bring the country out of its turmoil and into a new era of genuine reform. But it's not just about them being tailored for the job. After they've stood idly by while the younger generation took the daring first step, one would have expected them to step in and do their part if not for anything but to redeem themselves.

In time, the older middle class professionals' repeated failure to rise to the occasion led me to the conclusion that their incessant complaining about the continuous state of civil unrest in Egypt didn't really stem from a genuine concern for the country's economy as they claimed, but it was rather because such unrest has been interfering with their "leisure dreams". It just seemed to me that they perceived the recurring protests which called for a wholehearted, and therefore lengthy, reform effort as a hindrance to their pursuit of comfortable life styles, and particularly their aspiration to relocate their homes to the suburbs. I also got the distinct impression that they would have rather had matters return to a status quo as soon as possible so that they can get back to wallowing in such "leisure dreams", which they felt that they were entitled to after they had struggled to maintain their social and economic status all throughout their adult lives.

I believe that this is precisely why every single regime that's been in power since the outbreak of the January Uprising, including the Mubarak regime itself, have resorted to playing what came to be known as the "Production Cycle" card whenever public dissatisfaction manifested itself into widespread protests. Almost every time protestors took to the streets, the head of the regime in power would address the "good citizens" of Egypt urging them to practice restraint and to return to their homes so as not to impede the "Production Cycle" and in turn hurt the country's economy. Rather than being

strictly directed towards protestors, that kind of address was more of a veiled message to older middle class professionals – one that played on their fears of a sustained state of civil unrest and economic uncertainty that would undermine their pursuit of “leisure dreams”. And surely enough, every time a regime came out with that kind of address, older middle class professionals, without fail, responded by advocating settling for whatever half-measures that that regime had to offer instead of standing up to it and assuming their supposed social responsibility to affect structured and informed reforms.



fig.4.b.3 The sustained economic woes in Egypt since the outbreak of the January Uprising has been the boogeyman of older middle class professionals, among many other members of the older generations in Egypt. In the four years since the Uprising, they seemed more willing to accept the quickest, rather than the most sustainable, fix to that problem.

This brings me to the one event which, I believe, was the most striking example of the older middle class professionals' failure to take on their supposed social role in the wake of the January Uprising, and which I also believe sent Egypt down the turbulent road that it's been on since. That event is the constitutional referendum of March 19, 2011. A little over a month after Mubarak had stepped down, a seemingly simple question was put to the Egyptian electorate: Should the standing Egyptian Constitution be retained and amended, or should it be scraped and a new one be drafted? Despite its seeming simplicity, there was quite a lot riding on that question as evident by all the extensive projections of what either votes might entail on the long run which quickly became the centre of a heated public debate at the time. But the short version was this: A Yes vote would allow for quicker parliamentary and presidential elections, and thus worked to the advantage of already established and well organized Islamist political groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi Nour Party which, naturally, were at the forefront of the Yes campaign. A No vote on the other hand entailed delayed parliamentary and presidential elections, which would give the younger revolutionary currents that staged the Uprising enough time to organize themselves into proper parties that could take part in those elections. Accordingly, the supporters of the No campaign were the Egyptian youth, many political and social reform advocates, and all those who saw that, by rights, the young Egyptians who staged the revolution should have a central role in shaping the country's future.

fig.4.b.4 [opposite page] possible scenarios for either result of the March 19 referendum of 2011

March 19 Referendum

YES

Referendum on Constitutional Amendments

! Many people will be denied the right to run for presidency

Mar. 2011

Apr. 2011

May 2011

Jun. 2011

Jul. 2011

Aug. 2011

Sep. 2011

Oct. 2011

Nov. 2011

Dec. 2011

Jan. 2012

Feb. 2012

Mar. 2012

Apr. 2012

May 2012

Jun. 2012

Jul. 2012

Aug. 2012

Sep. 2012

Oct. 2012

Nov. 2012

Dec. 2012

Jan. 2013

Feb. 2013

Mar. 2013

Parliamentary Elections

! Muslim Brotherhood & ex-NDP will have the majority of the seats

Presidential Elections

! Many people will be denied the right to run for presidency

End of Military Rule

Election of a Constituent Assembly

! The assembly will be elected by a parliament that's not representative of the people

Election of the assembly may be postponed for up to six months as per the amendments

Referendum on a New Constitution

Parliamentary Elections

! A lot of elections might have a negative effect on the country's stability

Presidential Elections

The new constitution may require new elections

Democratic State

NO

Constitutional Declaration and Election of a Constituent Assembly

! Choosing the assembly via a direct election might be problematic

The constitutional declaration will not necessarily require drafting a new constitution

Referendum on a New Constitution

! Given the current political strife, drafting a constitution might cause a lot of disputes

Parliamentary Elections

Young activists will have an adequate opportunity to establish new political parties; Presidential elections can precede parliamentary ones after restricting the President's powers

Presidential Elections

Democratic State

End of Military Rule

! POTENTIAL HAZARD

NOTES

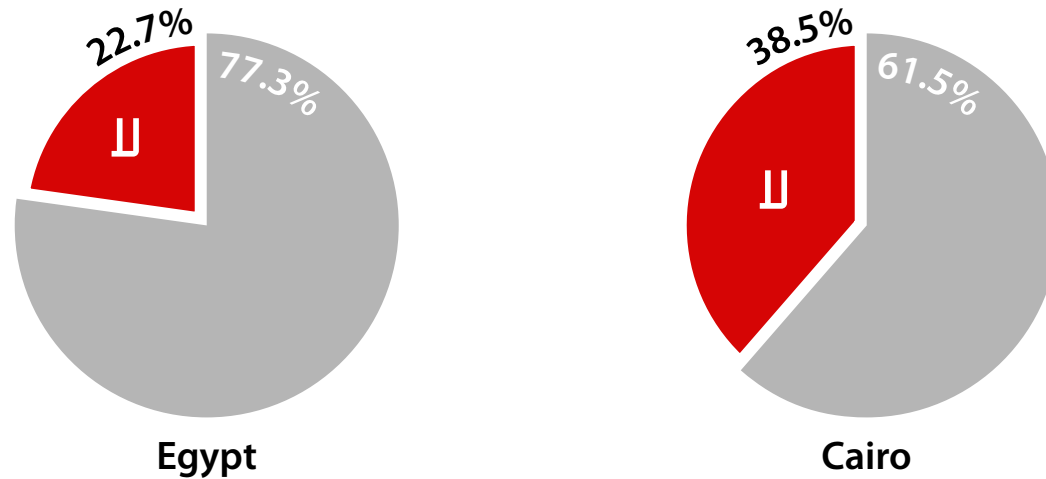

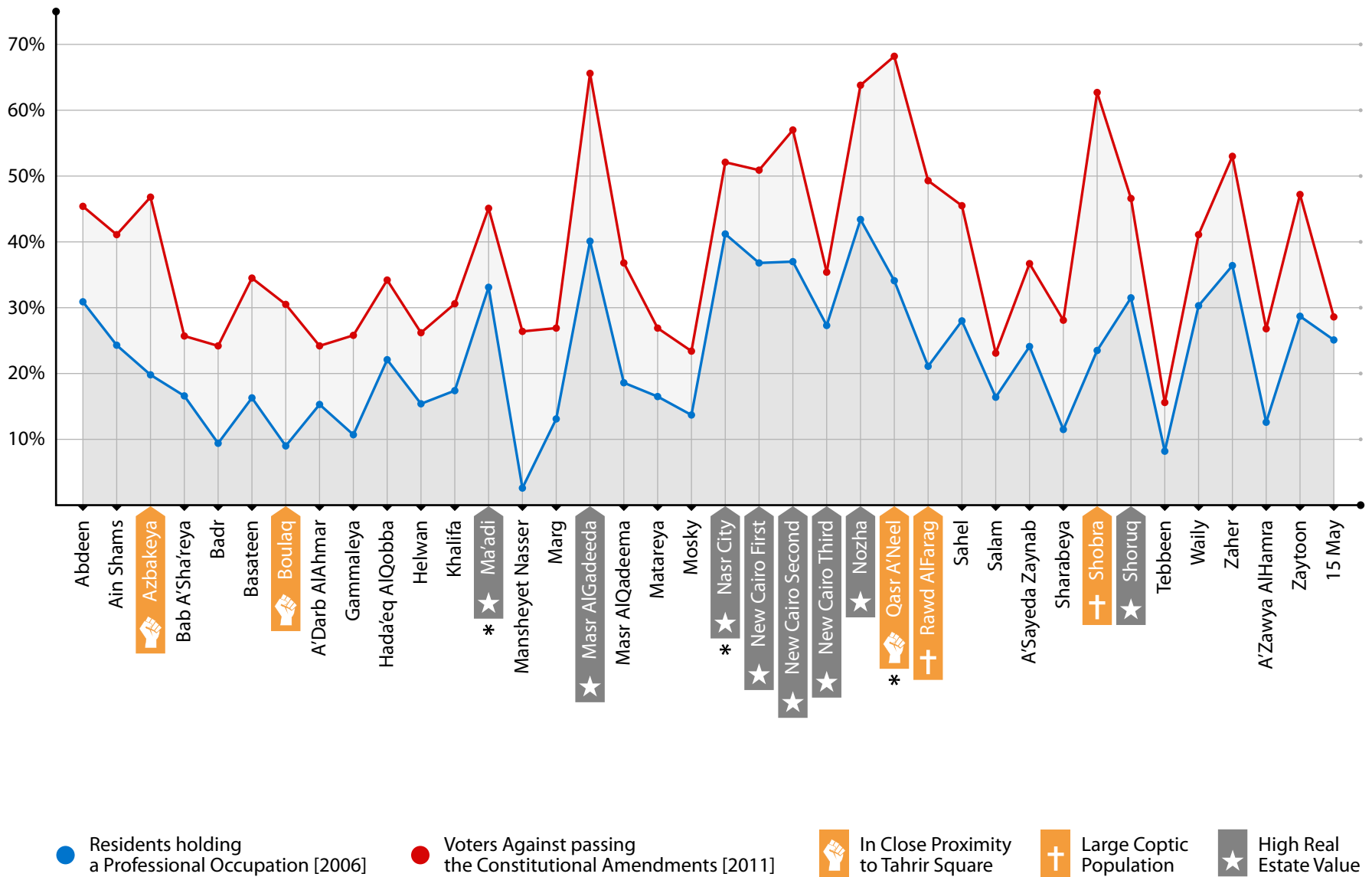


fig.4.b.5 Referendum results in Cairo and Egypt

fig.4.b.6 [opposite page] Voters against passing the constitutional amendments vs. professional population in Cairo's districts

 Voters Against passing the Constitutional Amendments

On the eve of the referendum, an electronic sample poll on the Information & Decision Support Center web site projected that 60% of Egyptians will vote against the amendments versus 39% for. However as one of my best friends remarked at the time, the sample that was used to make such a projection was clearly skewed towards middle and upper classes with access to the Internet. And he couldn't have been more right. The actual results of the referendum which were announced a few days later were the complete opposite of that projection. 77% of Egyptians voted Yes for the passing the amendments, while only about 23% voted No. And in Cairo specifically, 61.5% of its inhabitants voted Yes for the passing the amendments, while 38.5% of them voted No. Needless to say, that was a major letdown, but a breakdown of the referendum results in Cairo told a very interesting story. When I cross-referenced the percentage of those who voted No and the percentage of professional residents in each of Cairo managerial district, I found a rather clear correlation between both percentages. Apart from a consistent difference that could be attributed to the younger electorate that had no occupation because they were still students, the trend of those who voted No was almost identical to that of the professional residents in each managerial district, with a few understandable anomalies. And while this, at first, might seem as a good sign that middle class professionals had assumed some of their supposed social responsibilities, a more encompassing look at the vote as a whole proves otherwise.



* Percentages attributed to Ma'adi represent combined data from Ma'adi and Torah districts. Percentages attributed to Qasr A'Neel represent combined data from Qasr A'Neel and Zamalek districts. Percentages attributed to Nasr City represent combined data from Nasr City First and Nasr City second districts, as well as Ezbet AlHaggana squatter settlement which has been otherwise excluded from the former and treated as its own district. These adjustments compensate for Torah, Zamalek, and Ezbet AlHaggana being parts of the electoral districts of Ma'adi, Qasr A'Neel, and Nasr City First respectively in the results of the 2011 Constitutional Referendum.

As I considered Cairene districts where real estate values are quite high, it was safe to assume that the remaining percentage of those districts' residents who were not professionals were members of the new middle class since they could afford living there. That, by association, meant that the new middle class residents in those districts accounted for the Yes votes there. I also noticed that, collectively, the Yes and No votes in those high real estate value districts were almost split around the 50% mark. And so, when I took a step back and considered the overwhelming majority of the Yes vote in both Cairo and Egypt as a whole, it dawned on me that, given such an even split, it was obviously the members of the new middle class who were, by far, the more proactive of the two factions of the Egyptian middle class; and that they were indeed as they fervently promoted their agendas to the more impressionable members of society and in turn tipped the scales towards a Yes vote. By the same token, I also came to the realization that older middle class professionals on the other hand did nothing beyond casting their own No votes. Those numbers strongly suggested a gross incompetence on their part when it came to carrying out what I believed to be their responsibility as a moral middle class to objectively inform the general public about what either vote entailed. But then again, none of those realizations were much of a surprise to me. Rather, they illustrated, in quantifiable terms, my vivid memories of the older middle class professionals' lackluster and passive attitude during the buildup leading to the referendum, at a time when the Islamist proponents of the Yes vote falsely preached to the inherently religious Egyptian masses that a No vote would bring in a new constitution that would scrap the articles that proclaim Egypt as a "Muslim" state; and that casting a No vote basically amounted to saying No to God himself.

It wasn't long though before older middle class professionals, and most of the Egyptian society, had to face the consequences of the former groups' failure to live up to their social responsibility during the March 19 referendum. About ten months after the referendum, a parliament, with an overwhelming Islamist majority headed by the Muslim Brotherhood, was voted in; and about six months after that, the Brotherhood's candidate, Mohammed Morsi, was elected president of Egypt. Needless to say, in both elections, the Muslim Brotherhood – as expected – utilized its ample resources and already well-established networks, as well as employed the same type of proactive campaigning it had used during the buildup to the March 19 referendum, to secure the majority of the votes. And all the while, older middle class professionals stood idly by still, and did nothing but cast their own votes and complain about the almost certain repercussion of the Brotherhood's uncontested ascension to power. And surely enough, in the months following its rise to power, all of the older middle class professionals' fears came true as the Brotherhood regime's performance quickly became a cause of major concern to everyone save for its own supporters.

During both election campaigns, the Brotherhood, through its candidates, promised to effectuate all the political, economic, and social reforms that the Uprising had called for; it promised to restore the declining Egyptian economy and usher the country into an age of prosperity; it promised allowing a healthy and diverse political and social rhetoric; and in the particular case of Morsi's candidacy for the presidency, it promised to fix almost all of the problems that beset Egypt

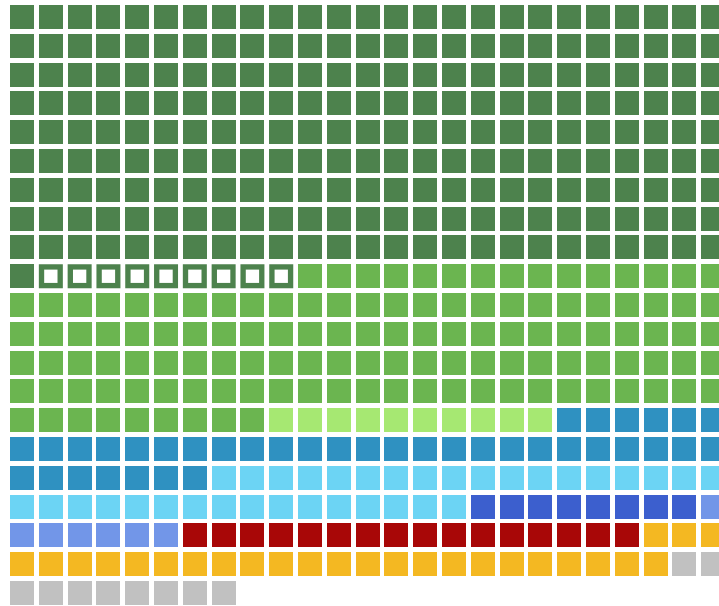


fig.4.b.7 The makeup of the post-Uprising Egyptian Parliament of 2012; the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party secured the most seats.

Egyptian Parliament | 2012

Islamist

- The Democratic Alliance (235 seats; 46%). Led by the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) [solid green], this bloc was intended to be Egypt's pre-eminent post-revolution political force, a broad coalition of Islamist and secular parties who could dominate across the country. However, the FJP won by far the largest number of seats within the bloc, taking 218 of the Alliance's 235, plus another eight FJP-affiliated independents, accounting for a 44.5% of the Parliament's 508 seats on its own.

- The Islamist Alliance (124 seats; 24.5%). The Islamist Alliance was founded by the fundamentalist Salafi Nour Party, which withdrew from the Brotherhood's Democratic Alliance, and which is the most popular of the hardline Salafi groups. The Salafi Authenticity Party and the Building and Development Party – the political wing of the once-militant and banned Islamic Group – also joined the Islamist Alliance. Within the bloc, the Nour party won 108 seats, Building and Development secured 13, and the Asala party took three.

- Wasat Party (10 seats; 2%)

- National Democratic Party Offshoots
 Remnants of the Mubarak Regime (16 seats; 3%)

Liberal/Leftist

- Wafd Party (38 seats; 7.5%)

- The Egyptian Bloc (34 seats; 6.5%)

- Reform and Development Party (8 seats; 1.5%)

- The Revolution Continues Alliance (7 seats; 1%). The Revolution Continues Alliance essentially represents those parties that broke off from the liberal Egyptian Bloc. It includes Egypt Freedom Party, the Muslim Brotherhood youth's Egyptian Current Party, the Socialist Popular Alliance Party and an assortment of lesser groups. The alliance can be described as leftist, though it includes Islamists and economic liberals. The one constant among its most notable members is that they declined to compromise in order to remain in more-powerful groups – the Egypt Bloc and the Muslim Brotherhood.

- Independents (26 seats; 5%)

- Appointees (10 seats; 2%)



fig.4.b.8 The Muslim Brotherhood, and its Freedom and Justice Party, became the subjects of public discontent in Egypt after they have failed to deliver on their campaign promises.



fig.4.b.9 Graffiti of Morsi on the outer wall of the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis. His move to consolidate his, and the Muslim Brotherhood's, position in power not long after he was elected president was a major cause of concern for large portions of Egyptian society, which soon thereafter developed into a full out public uproar demanding his removal from power.

in the wake of the Uprising and impeded the flow of everyday life in his first 100 days in office. By the summer of 2013 though, a little under a year after Morsi had taken office, the Brotherhood regime had hardly fulfilled any of its campaign promises. The economy was in a much worse shape than before the Brotherhood had come into power; public amenities were in shambles as power outages, water shortages, and traffic jams became a staple of everyday life across all of Cairo much to the dismay of its residents; the regime took a number of power grab measures that were clearly aimed at securing their position in power indefinitely; and in many instances, the Muslim Brotherhood supporters cracked down violently on anyone who voiced their opposition to or protested against its regime's policies. All in all, the Egyptian people in general, and older middle class professionals in particular, found themselves under the yoke of yet another authoritarian regime, which seemed poised to excise even more liberties than any other regime they had lived under given its hard-line Islamist ideological platform. And so, when young protestors, once again, took to the streets in the summer of 2013 in an attempt to depose Morsi and the Brotherhood, older middle class professionals hardly voiced any complaints, and even took part in the protests towards the end when the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood regime seemed imminent. When that happened however, I was under no illusion that older middle class professionals had come around and were finally living up to their supposed social responsibility, simply because their track-record over the previous 4 years strongly suggested otherwise. As a matter of fact, the way the events of that summer unfolded put an end to all my prior hopes that Nasr City's middle class professionals might be reconsidering abandoning their apartment building-extended family houses and relocating their homes to the suburbs of Cairo.

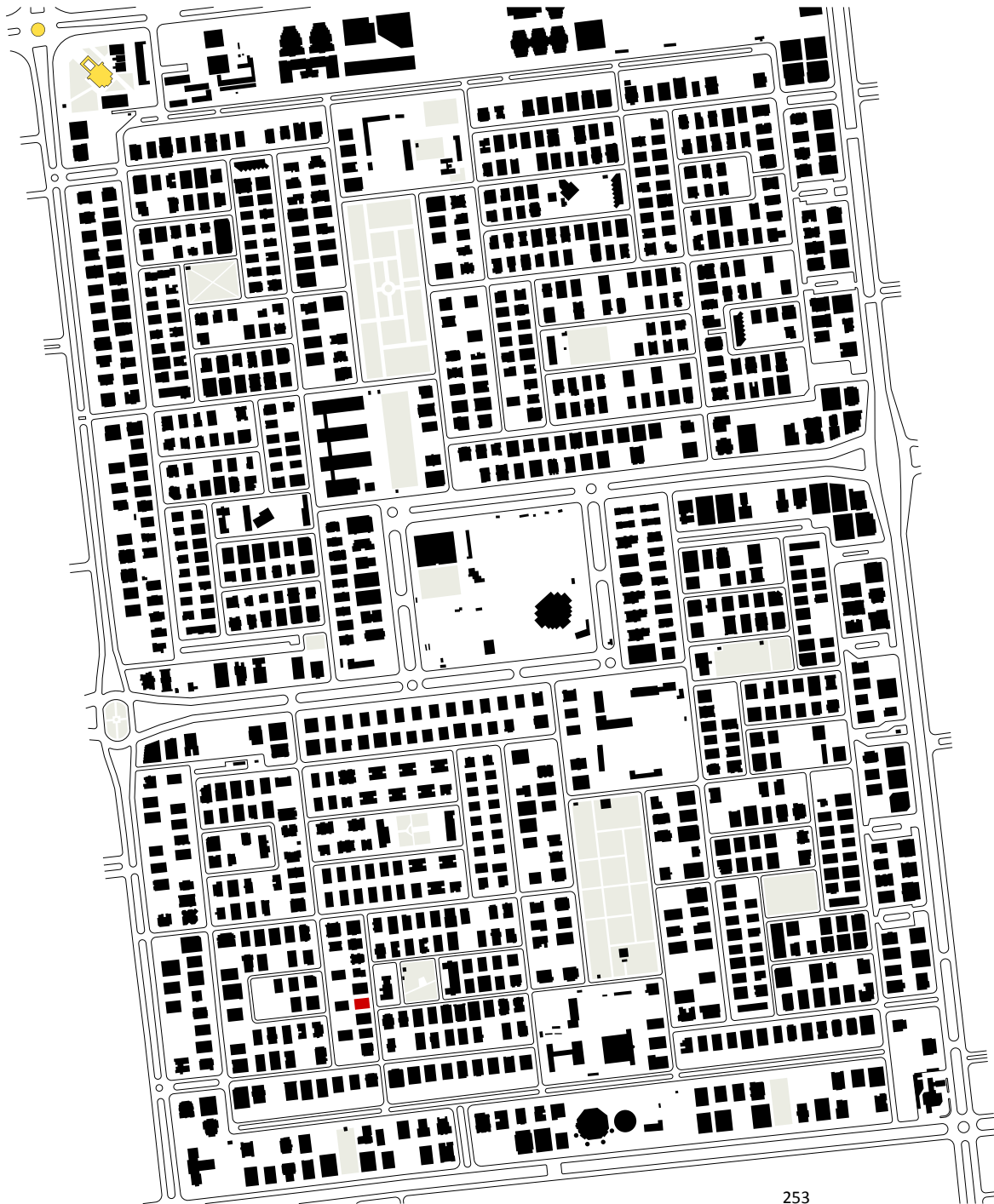


fig.4.b.10 Rab'a Mosque and square relative to 11 El-Insha Street. After the brutal dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in in the summer of 2013, the Rab'a logo [top] became synonymous with the incident, and served a reminder of what happened then and there, as well as a symbol of defiance to the current Egyptian authorities which banned the any public display of that logo.



fig.4.b.11 The Rab'a sit in

In the standoff that developed between the anti and pro Morsi protestors during that summer, the latter group staged its biggest sit-in at Rab'a Square – a fairly large traffic node at the northwest corner of Nasr City's residential neighborhoods, on which the Rab'a mosque, one of the Nasr City's oldest and most iconic landmarks, stands. And with nothing but the suburbs of New Cairo and Shorouq City to the east of Nasr City, Rab'a Square has always served as the primary entry point to Nasr City for the rest of Cairo's population. That is to say, Rab'a Square carries a lot of symbolic weight as a gateway and an urban façade for Nasr City as a whole. And so when the pro Muslim Brotherhood protestors claimed Rab'a Square as their turf, they essentially claimed the whole of Nasr City as such. It came as a shock for Nasr City's middle class professionals, and for

me for that matter, to realize that so many of the neighborhood's new middle class residents were avid supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. They were obviously taken aback by the realization that their new middle class neighbors in Nasr City were fundamentally different from them at a very deep ideological level. And given the clear majority of Nasr City's new middle class inhabitants, it also seemed to me that middle class professionals came to realize that Nasr City was not the habitat that they had once thought of as their own.

The middle class professionals' perception of Nasr City was further tarnished in the aftermath of Morsi's ouster. After the Army had deposed Morsi, pro Brotherhood protestors refused to leave Rab'a square and continued to occupy it, making life that much difficult for all of Nasr City's inhabitants. But when they Army finally moved in to disperse the Rab'a sit-in almost two months after Morsi's ouster, it was a rather ugly affair. In its effort to remove the protestors from the square, the Army exercised excessive, and at times deadly, force, and amid allegations from both the Army and the Brotherhood as to who instigated the violence and killed protestors, the death toll of what was quickly dubbed as the "Rab'a Massacre" piled up. In the wake of that unfortunate event, I got the distinct impression that the image of Nasr City was forever marred in collective consciousness of its middle class professionals inhabitants. It seemed to me that the prevalent sentiment among them was that of alienation, and more than ever before, it looked as though they had more reasons to leave Nasr City than they had reasons to stay.

*fig.4.b.12 [bottom, right] and
fig.4.b.13 [bottom, left] As Egyptian
security forces moved in to clear
the Rab'a sit-in after months of not
addressing the issue, the situation
quickly developed to the worst as the
pro-Morsi supporters and security
forces clashed violently.*

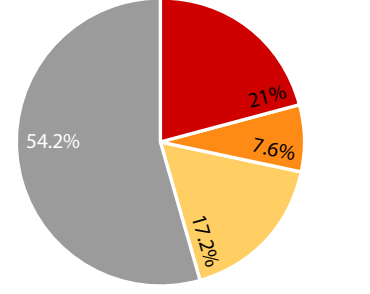
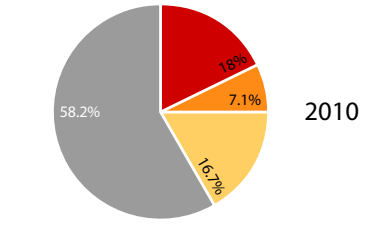
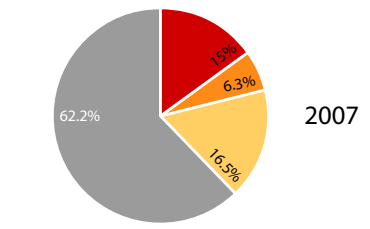
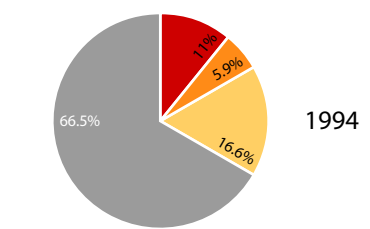
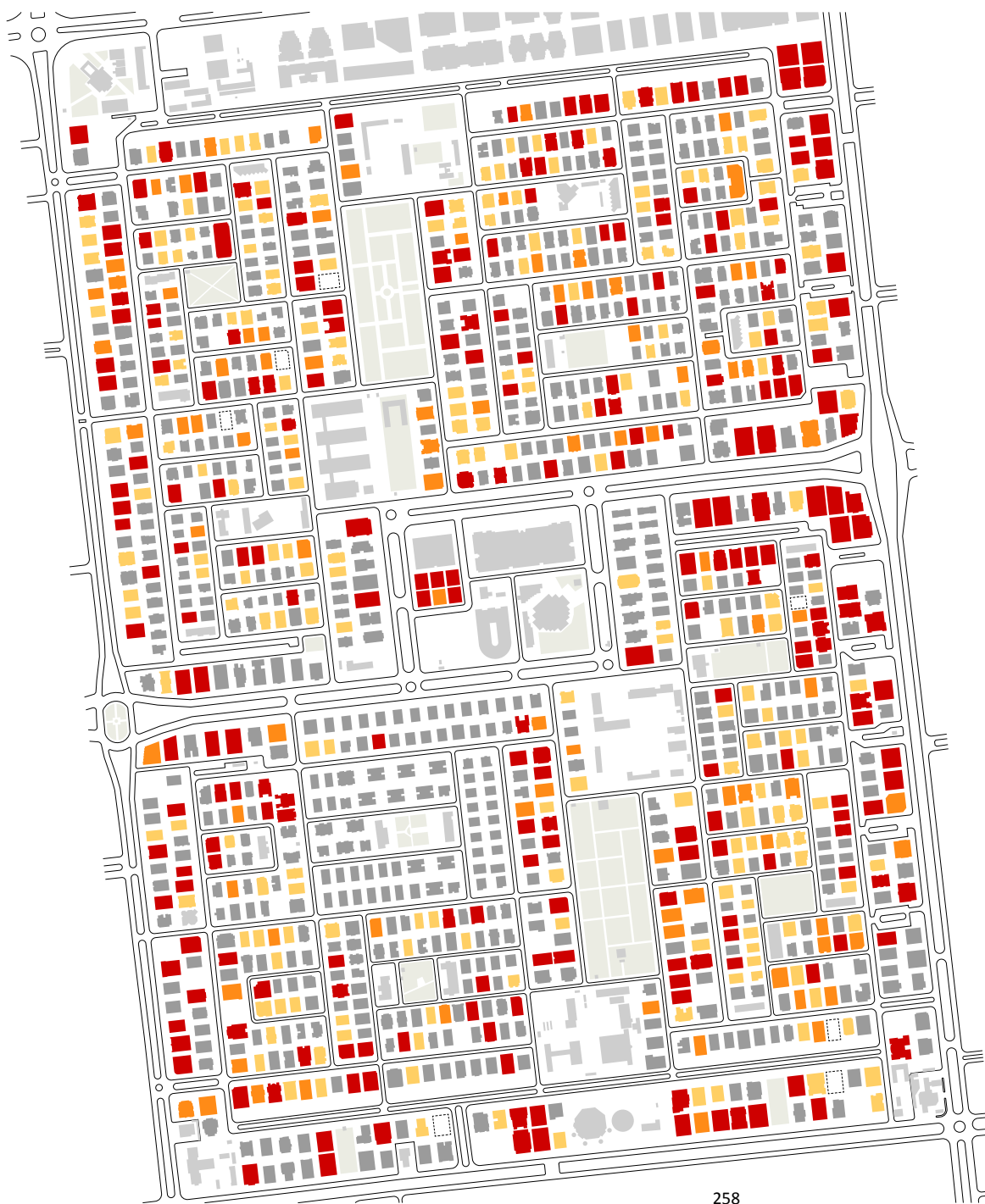




fig.4.b.14 [top, left], fig.4.b.15 [top, right] and fig.4.b.16 [bottom] As security forces stepped-up the force by which they went about dispersing the sit-in and clearing its camps; the Rab'a square, and its typically quiet residential context, quickly developed the semblance of a scorched war-zone.

During my most recent visit to Cairo in early 2014, I conducted an additional layer of urban survey on Nasr City's First Zone. Sadly enough, my findings were in clear correlation with my observations regarding the middle class professionals' stronger than ever resolve to leave Nasr City and relocate to the suburbs. All of the trends that I have tracked in previous surveys persisted. Granted, in comparison to the two-year stretch between 2008 and 2010, some of those trends might have slowed down a bit during the following 4 years, but they most certainly did not completely abate. By-law abiding apartment buildings were still being demolished and replaced by gaudy neo-classical condominium towers at very high rates that suggest that the middle class professionals' exodus is still in full swing. As a matter of fact, the data seemed to also suggest that there was hardly a time following the January uprising when middle class professionals seriously considered staying in Nasr City.

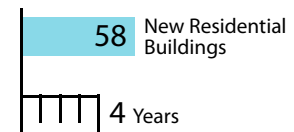
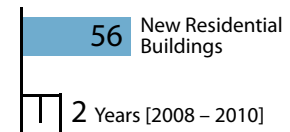
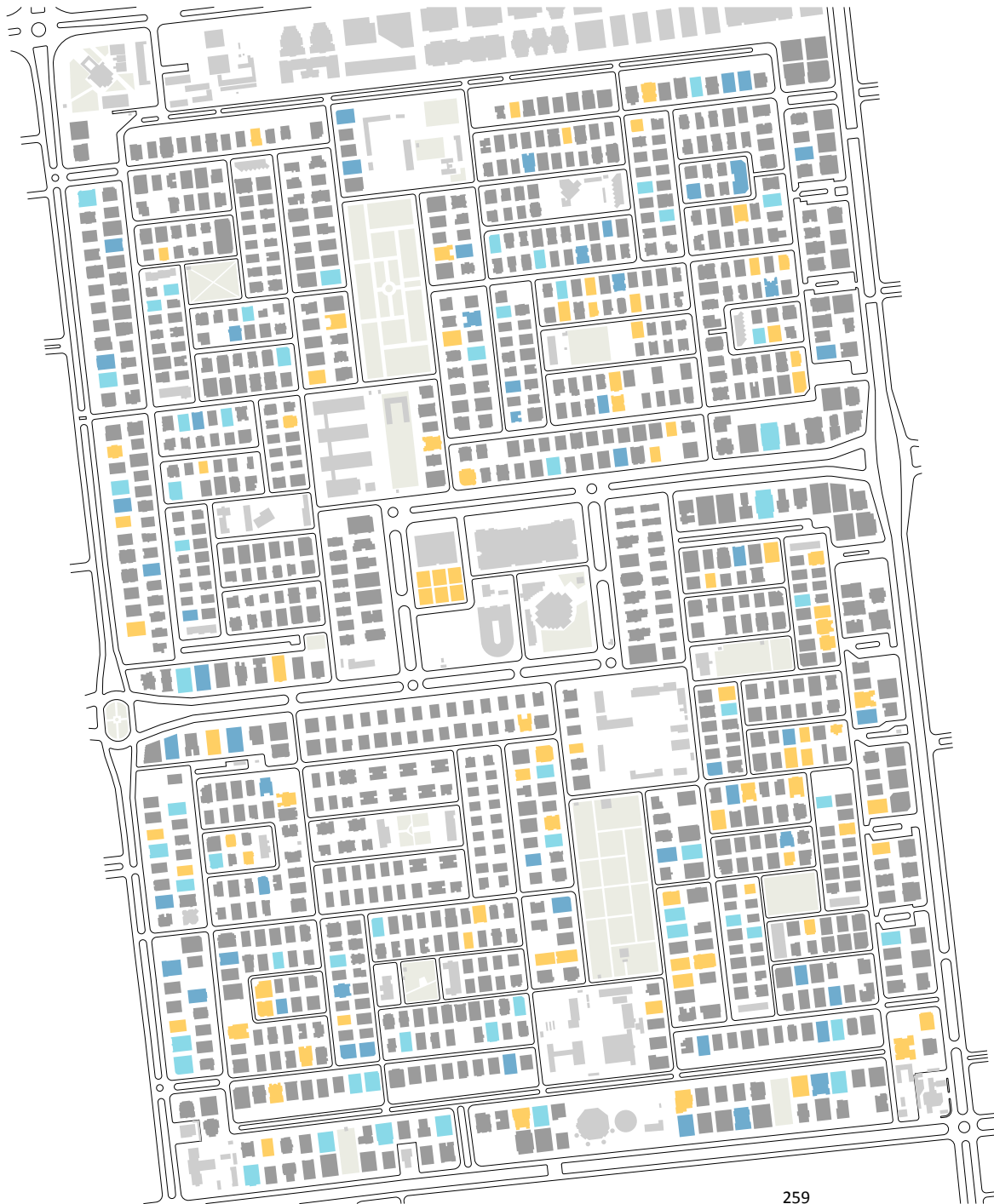
fig.4.b.17 What follows is a series of maps tracking urban changes in the First Zone Four years after the urban survey I conducted in 2010, and three years after the outbreak of the January Uprising. And while the trends tracked in the aforementioned survey have slowed down a bit during those three years, they most definitely have not lost their vigor. The apartment building—extended family house typology is still sharp decline and the condominium tower typology is still on the rise. The following maps aim to demonstrate the continuation of those trends.



- no height data available
- within height limit
- 1 to 2 storeys above height limit
- 3 to 4 storeys above height limit
- 5 or more storeys above height limit

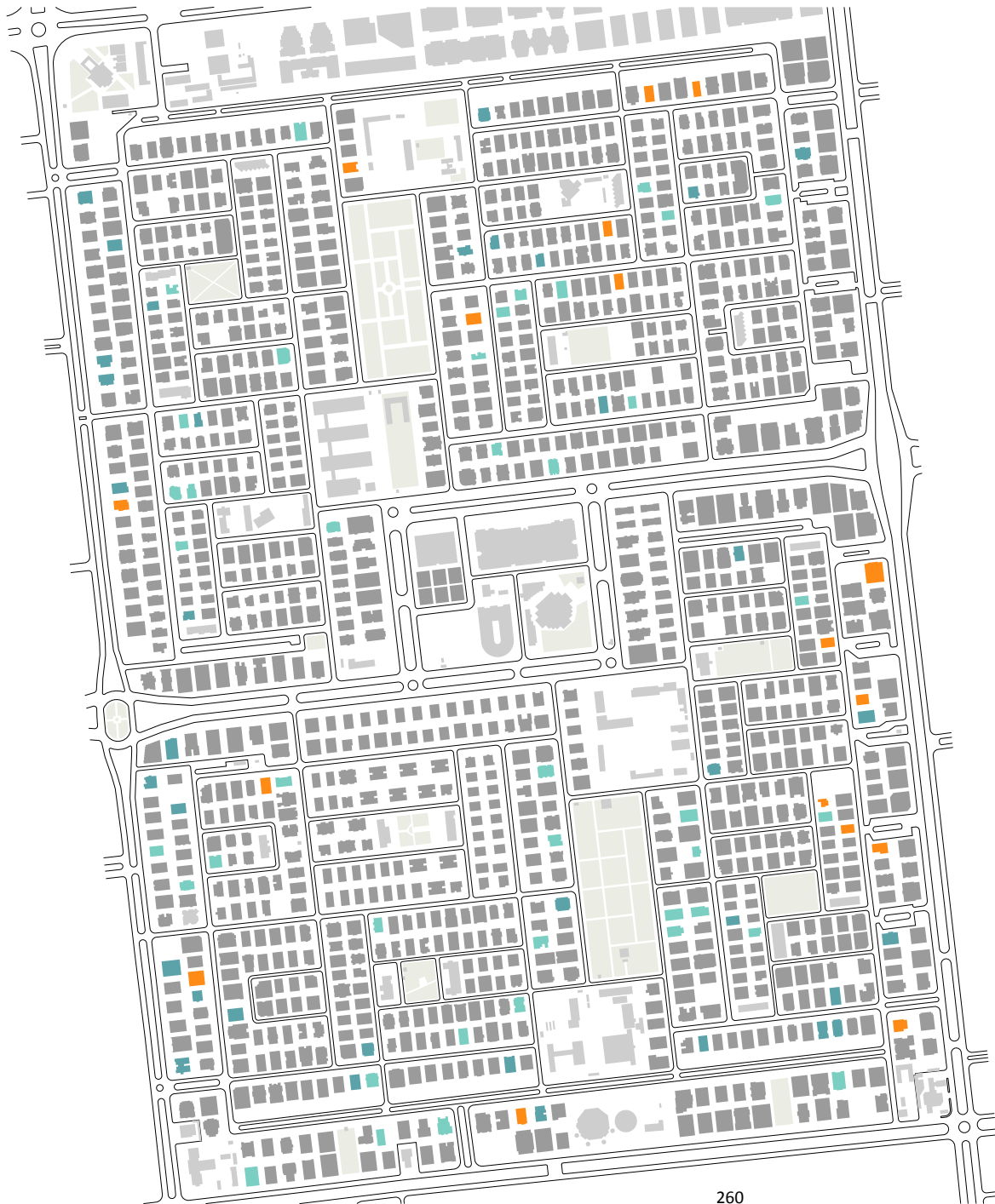
First Zone | 2014
Residential Buildings
Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws

fig.4.b.18



First Zone | 2010 – 2014
New Residential Buildings

fig.4.b.19



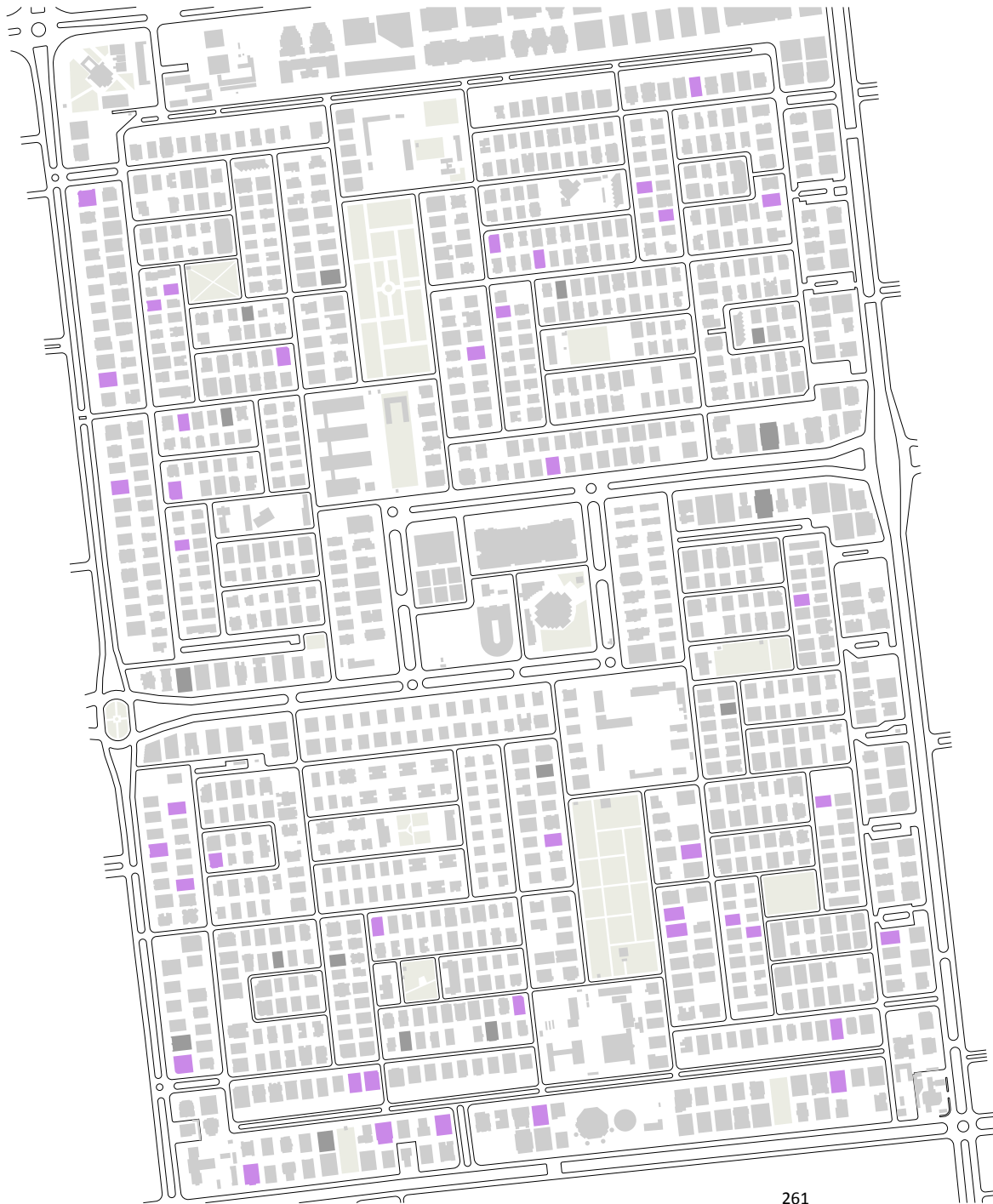
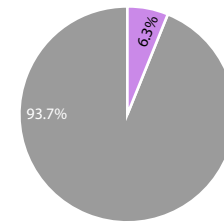
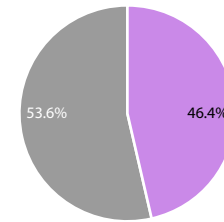


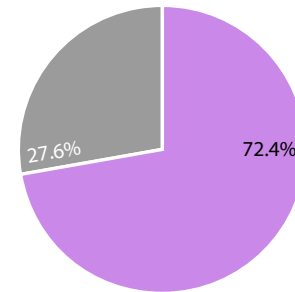
fig.4.b.20



2007



2010



built on a vacant residential lot
 built in place of a demolished residential building

First Zone | 2010 – 2014
 New Residential Buildings
 Replacement

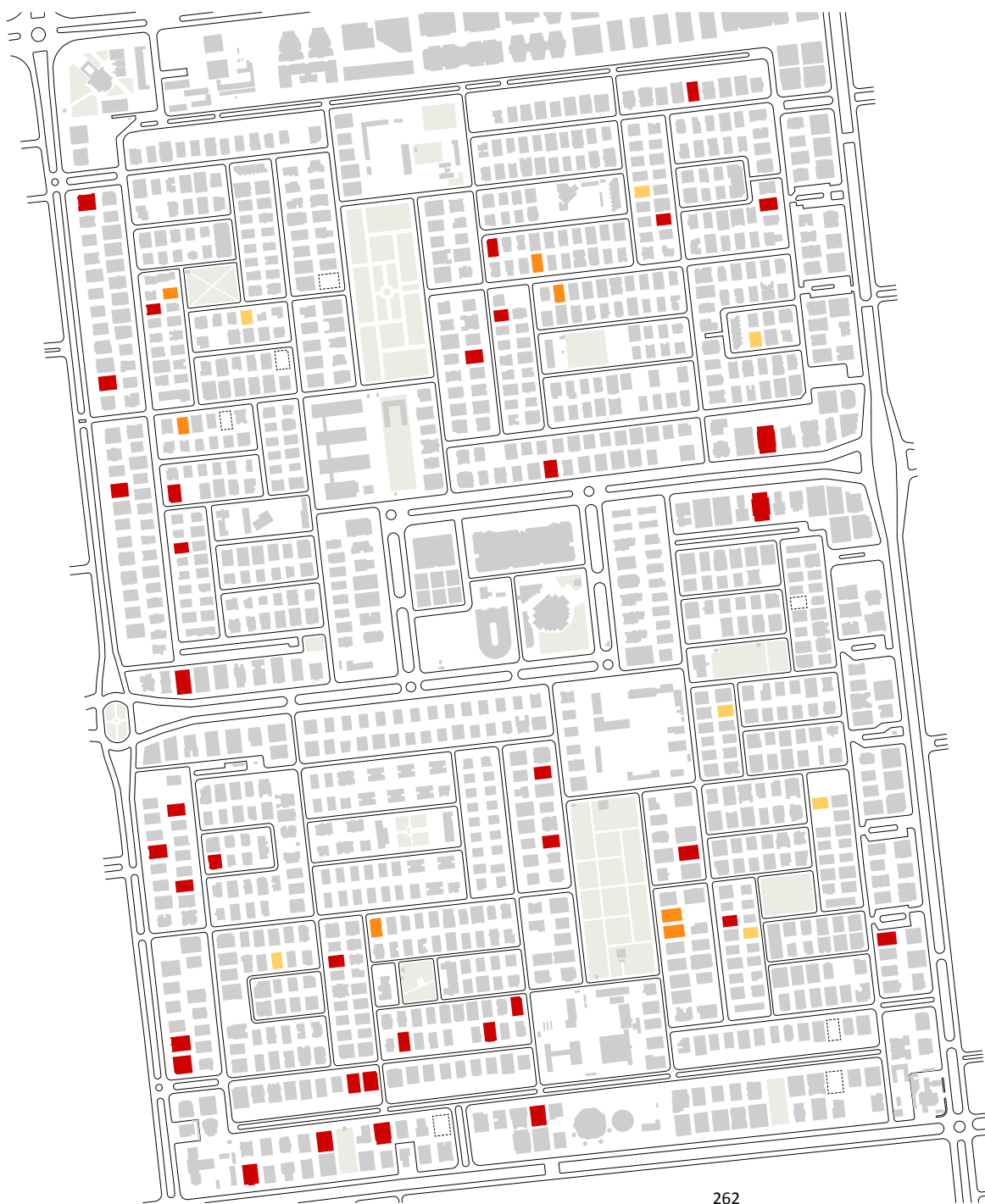
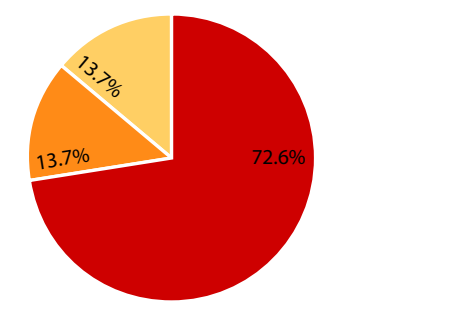
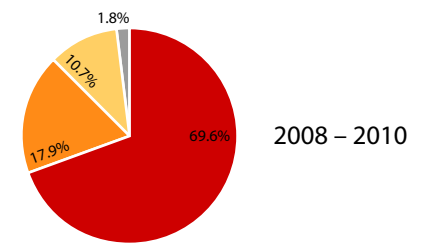
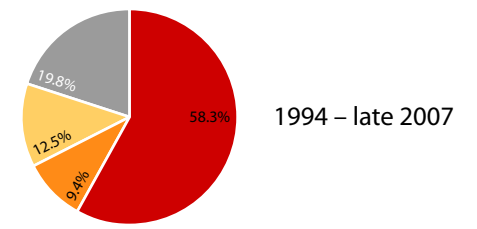
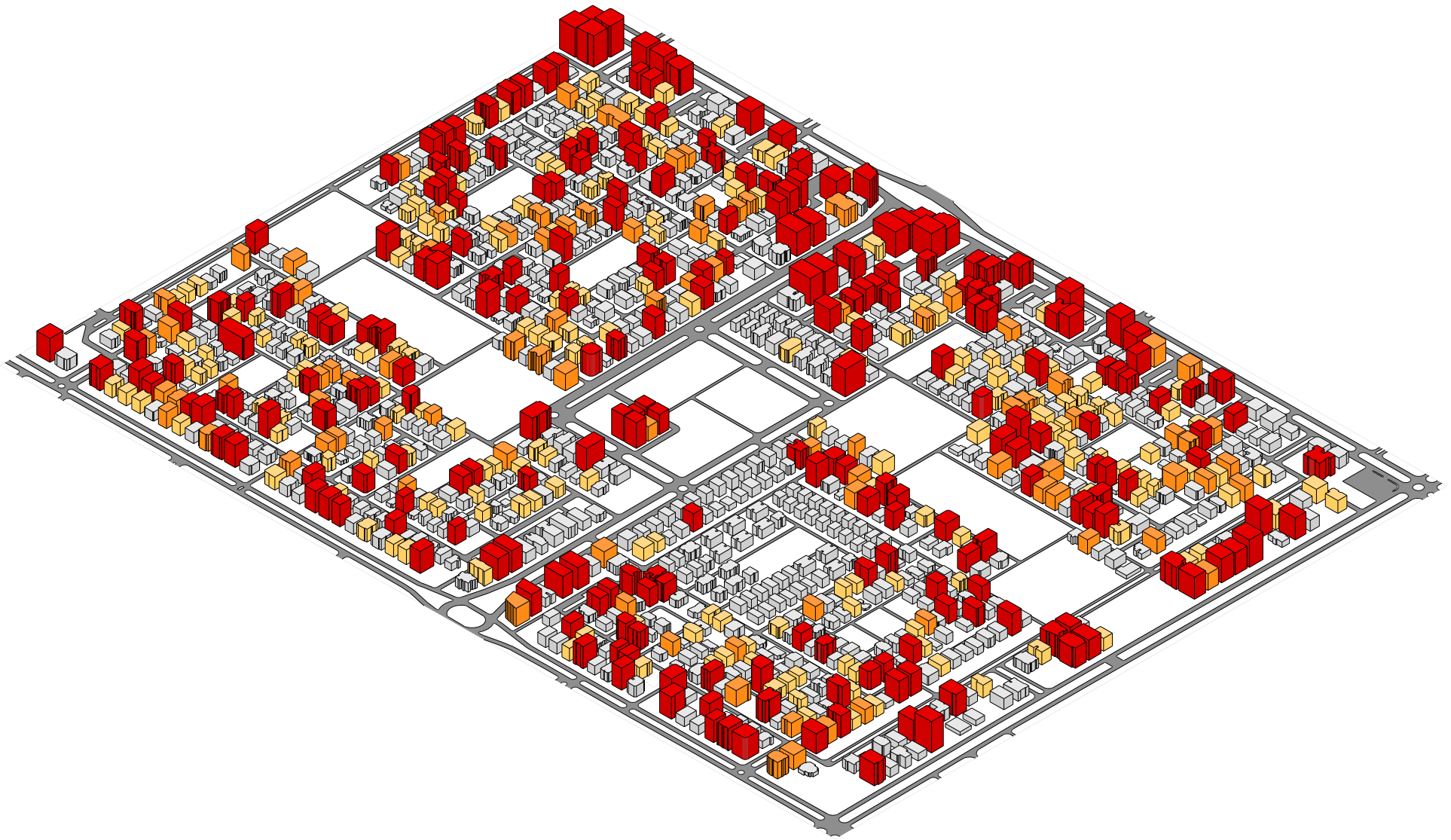



fig.4.b.21



- no height data available
- within height limit
- 1 to 2 storeys above height limit
- 3 to 4 storeys above height limit
- 5 or more storeys above height limit

First Zone | 2010 – 2014
 New Residential Buildings
 Adherence to Height Limit Bylaws



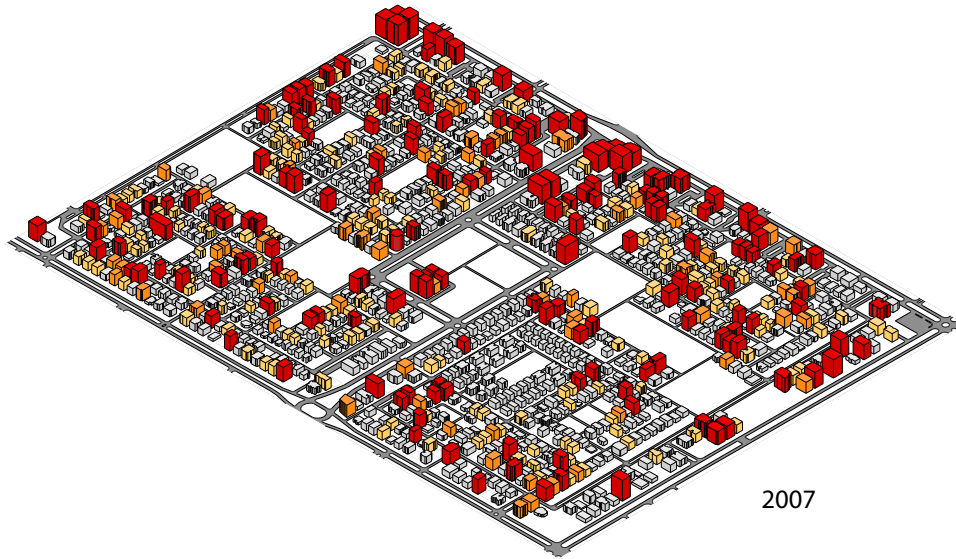

 10 storeys and above
 [11 storeys and above on 50m streets]


 8 or 9 storeys
 [9 or 10 storeys on 50m streets]

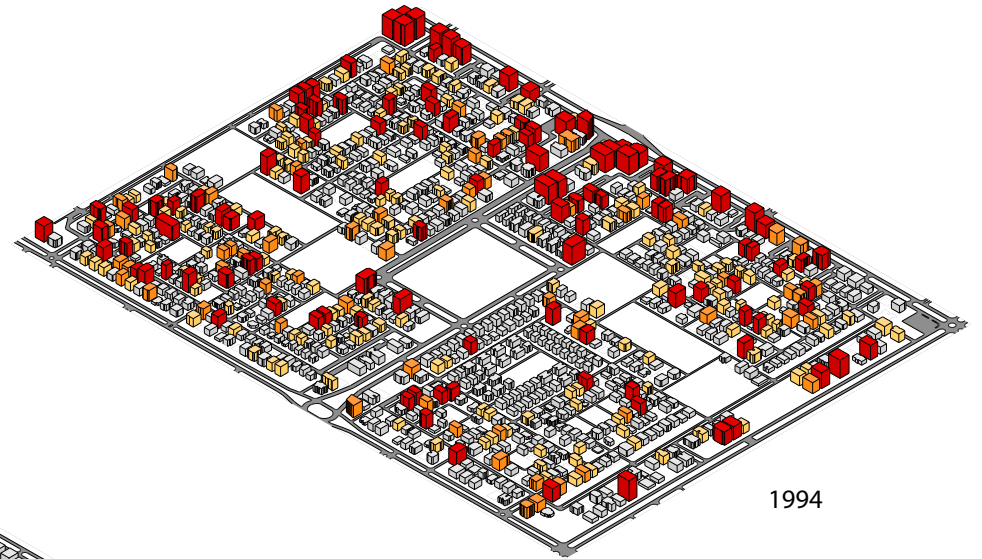

 6 or 7 storeys
 [7 or 8 storeys on 50m streets]


 up to 5 storeys
 [up to 6 storeys on 50m streets]

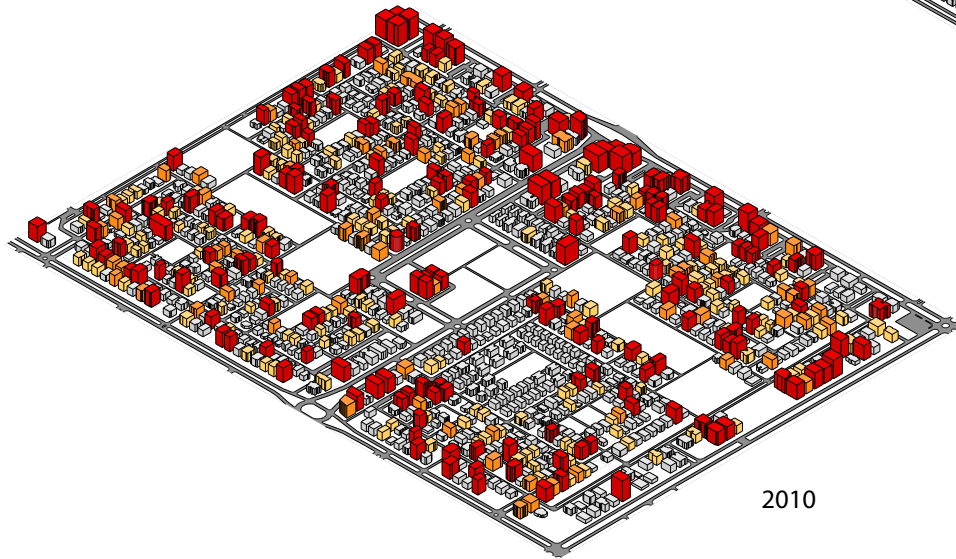
fig.4.b.22



2007



1994



2010

First Zone | 2014
Residential Building Heights

This brings me back to El-Insha Street and my extended family house there – the microcosm that gauges Nasr City as a whole. In 2012, before the Rab’a sit-in and subsequent massacre, 2 El-Insha street was demolished, and shortly afterwards an eight-storey condominium stood in its place, which quickly put out the glimmer of hope I had with regards to the residents of El-Insha Street might be electing to keep residing in their extended family homes down my street. That particular incident was a very early indication that the reversal of the extinction of Nasr City’s apartment building–extended family house typology which I though might be possible hoped for was in fact never going to happen. And during my most recent visit to Cairo in 2014, I learned some things that only served to confirm what I had already suspected. Most of the nuclear families of 13 El-Insha Street household have moved out and were renting their apartments until they got a good offer on selling the whole property. Similarly, many of the nuclear families of 1 and 8 El-Insha Street households have sold their apartments and moved out to the suburbs. My uncle is now in the final phases of completing his Shorouq City residence. And my mother is seriously considering selling her apartment in 11 El-Insha Street and moving to a single apartment in New Cairo, and is now seeing my sister’s and my own apartments merely as future assets for us later in life rather than apartments that we would actually occupy with our own prospective nuclear families.

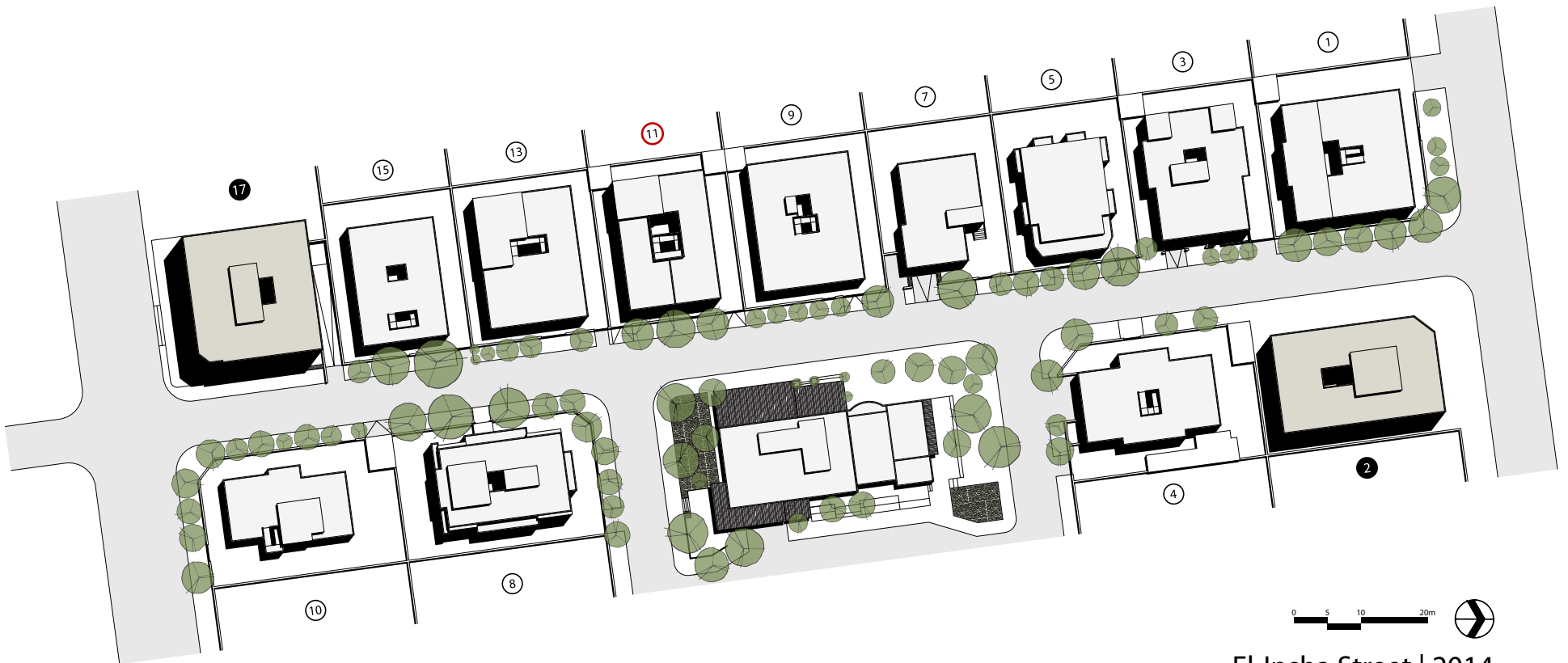
fig.4.b.23 In 2011, another of El-Insha Street’s extended family households was demolished; this time it was 2 El-Insha Street.



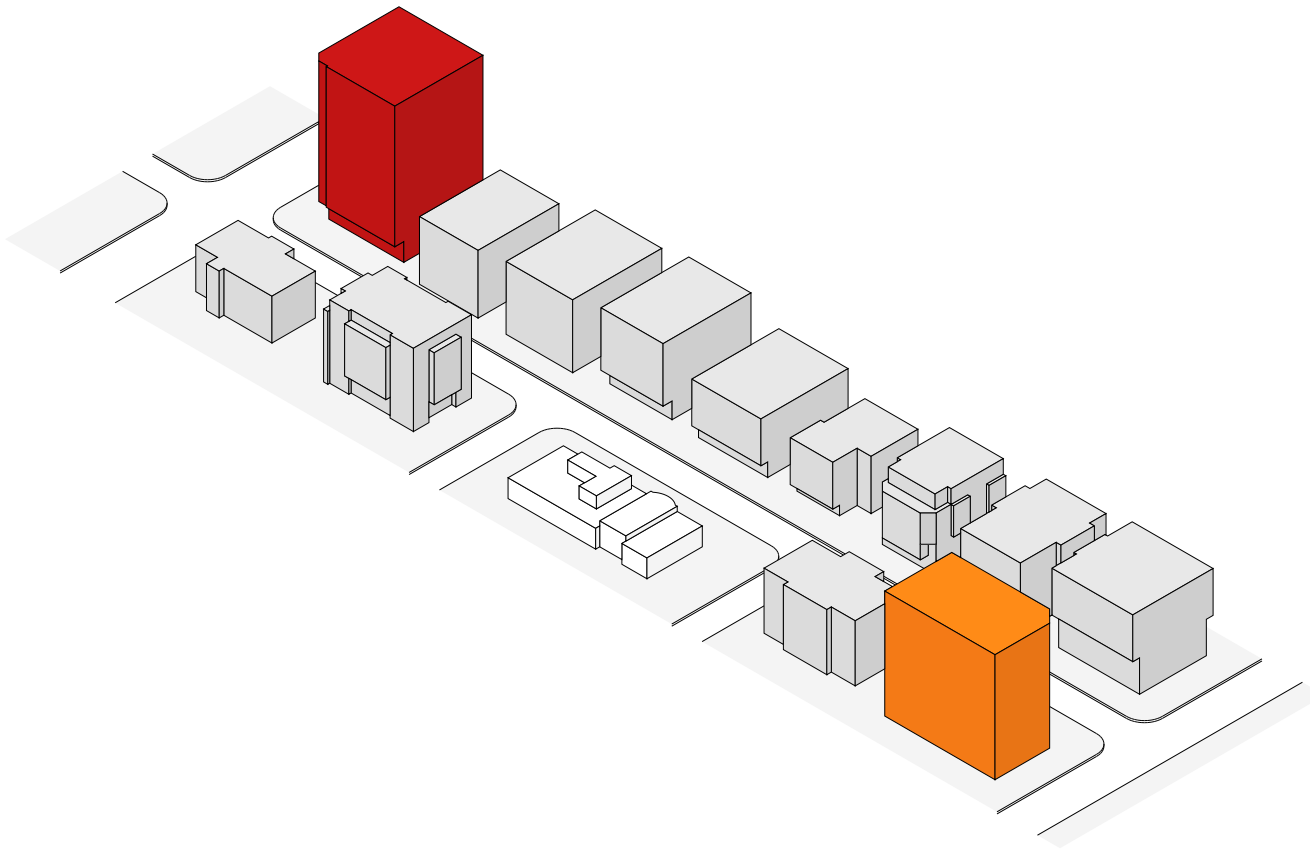


fig.4.b.24 [top] and fig.4.b.25 [bottom] Lot no.2 on El-Insha Street lies vacant after the demolition of the extended family house that used to occupy it. The sign boasts the now legal construction of an 8-storey apartment building, with two apartments on each level, in its place.

fig.4.b.26



El-Insha Street | 2014



El-Insha Street | 2014



In other words, the life of 11 El-Insha Street as an extended family household is at an end, and so is that of Nasr City as a hub for middle class professionals and the apartment building–extended family house typology. The social pull of Cairo’s suburbs and the middle class professionals’ socially driven pursuit of “leisure dreams” is clearly poised to prevail here, and with it, the last remnants of a characteristic architectural typology are most likely going to fade into extinction. Nevertheless, Nasr City itself will live on, albeit in a very different urban, architectural, and social form – there’s yet another chapter in its story. But as this thesis comes to a close, my hope is that, in years to come, it would serve as a record of Nasr City’s apartment building–extended family house typology with its unassuming character and the latent potential of its architecture and social structure, for anyone who might wonder what small role it could have played in the grander scheme of things had it endured.

fig.4.b.28 [opposite page] 11 El-Insha Street, and by association Nasr City’s apartment building–extended family house typology, are fading into extinction.

Notes

1.1 The Egyptian Middle Class [1800s-1960s]

1. Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhya' [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 263.
2. The objectives of establishing Nasr City are listed in a heavily edited informational video that was obtained from the Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development; the video was edited by (photographer/cameraman) Samir alMoqaddem from the Microfilm and Public Relations Department.
3. Although he does not refer to it as a middle class per se, P. J. Vatikiotis states that by the end of Muhammad Ali's reign, a nucleus of an educated class had begun to form. See P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 71. Identifying that nucleus as the seed of the Egyptian middle class here draws on Galal Amin's ideas pertaining to education as the earmark and the primary source of income of the Egyptian middle class up until the mid 70s which is the overarching common theme in his books *'Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]* and *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama' alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*. Moreover, it is clearly stated in *Egypt: A Country Study* that the economic transformation of Egypt in the 19th century, which was set in motion by Muhammad Ali, resulted in a professional "middle class". See Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in "Social Change in the Nineteenth Century", <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/23.htm>.
4. The role of Muhammad Ali as the founder of Modern Egypt, his reform efforts, and the feudal system it produced are staples of history curriculums throughout the various stages of the Egyptian education system. However, I never trusted everything I learned at school, especially when it came to history. In that regard, the chapter entitled "Muhammad Ali, The Modernizing Autocrat" in Vatikiotis' extensive volume on the history of modern Egypt helped verify and substantiate the account given here about Ali's reign and reform efforts. See P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 49-69. The sections dealing with Muhammad Ali and the social changes in Egypt during the 19th century in the country study edited by Helen Chapin Metz were also rather helpful. See Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in "Muhammad Ali, 1805-48", <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/21.htm>; and in "Social Change in the Nineteenth Century", <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/23.htm>.

5. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 119-120; and Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 128-129. Also see Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Social Change in the Nineteenth Century”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/23.htm>.
6. Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.
7. P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 219-220.
8. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 119.
9. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 127.
10. Ibid, 127-128. Also see Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Social Change in the Nineteenth Century”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/23.htm>; and in “The Occupiers”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/26.htm>; and in “Economy and Society under Occupation”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/27.htm>. Also see P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 61; and although the population values conflict with those mentioned in Metz, “Social Change in the Nineteenth Century”, also see Vatikiotis, 81-82.
11. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 121.
12. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 21.

13. Ibid, 129-130.
14. Ibid, 70.
15. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 122-123.
16. Ibid, 26.
17. Even more so than Muhammad Ali’s reforms, the reform efforts of the Nasserist Regime during the 50s and 60s are a very common subject in any basic history of modern Egypt. The account given here about the socioeconomic policies of that era was written after reading a number of different sources in order to verify and substantiate some of the commonly known facts regarding those policies. Although the narratives of those sources were quite engaging, they were either too generalized, or digressed into too much detail that was not pertinent to the flow of my own narrative. Not to mention that, more often than not, any one fact in the account given here is mentioned in more than one of those sources, albeit in different manners and contexts. All of this makes it far more fitting to list the sources that helped me formulate this rather short account than to cite every single fact in it.
 - Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 142.
 - Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 21-22.
 - Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Nasser and Arab Socialism”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/34.htm>.
 - Ibid, in “Nasser’s Legacy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/39.htm>.
 - Ibid, in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.

- Ibid, in “Education”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm>.
- Ibid, in the introduction to “Structure, Growth, and Development of the Economy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/74.htm>.
- Ibid, in “The Role of the Government”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/75.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Land Ownership and Reform”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/85.htm>.
- P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 393-402.
- Raymond A. Hinnebusch, “Class, State and the Reversal of Egypt’s Agrarian Reform,” *Middle East Report* 23, no. 184 (September/October 1993), <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer184/class-state-reversal-egypts-agrarian-reform>.
- Saleh S. Abdelazim, “Structural Adjustment and the Dismantling of Egypt’s Etatist System” (PhD thesis, Virginia Tech, 2005), 21-30. <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-12232002-083424/unrestricted/CHP2.pdf.pdf>.

18. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 125. Also see Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>, and in “Education”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm>, and in “The Bureaucracy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/112.htm>.

19. In addition to being common knowledge about the socioeconomic zeitgeist in Egypt during the 50s and 60s, the ideas presented here regarding the educated middle class becoming an upper echelon of Egyptian society and the emerging social importance of education and government employment are also draws on my understanding of the following sources: Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 153-157; Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 130-135; and Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.

20. Galal Amin, *ʿAsr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 142; and 156-157.
21. Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhyaʿ [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 220-221.

1.2 Nasr City [1960s]

1. The general consensus in Cairo is that those five neighborhoods are indeed the premium residential districts of the City. The eighth chapter of the book *Urban Renewal*, entitled “High Level Districts”, identifies those neighborhoods as such, and provides a brief history of the inception and the general urban features of each of them. Although alAwqaf City, or Mohandeseen, is counted among those neighborhoods in that chapter, it has been omitted here because, although it is part of Greater Cairo, it is located to the west of the Nile and is technically within the managerial jurisdiction of Giza Governorate. See Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhyaʿ [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 247-268.
2. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 103.
3. This statement is based on the extensive body of work listed in a tribute site to Sayyed Karim. See “Sabeqat alKhebra wa alAʿmal fi alHayah alFaneyya wa alMehaneyya” [Previous Experience and Work in His Artistic and Professional Careers], *Imhotep alQarn alʿEshreen wa Raʿed Takhteet alModon alʿAlamy: Dr. Eng. Sayyed Karim [A Twentieth Century Imhotep and World-class City Planning Pioneer: Dr. Eng. Sayyed Karim]*, <http://www.sayedkarim.com/cv.php>.
4. As far as the research of this thesis went, it is not explicitly stated anywhere who was responsible for the detailed planning of Nasr City’s original residential Zones. However, of all the blueprints of the detailed planning of those zones, which were obtained from The Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development, the blueprint of the Second Zone is the only one that credits Sayyed Karim as the planner. The rest do not have any planning credits on them. Furthermore, in an index of legal decrees pertaining to Nasr City, which was compiled by and obtained from Ahmed AbdelMaqsoud Muhammad, a lawyer at the aforementioned company, it is listed that the Second Zone’s urban design was approved by the

Governor of Cairo in 1961, whereas the urban designs of the rest of Nasr City's Zones – the First, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth – were approved at different times throughout 1966. Moreover, in a PowerPoint presentation about the early history of Nasr City, which was obtained from the company's Microfilm and Public Relations Department, the greater majority of the promotional images that showed off Nasr City, and which dated back to the late 60s and early 70s, centered around public and residential buildings in the Second Zone in particular, as opposed to a handful of images of other areas in the settlement that appeared to be far less developed in comparison. All of this strongly suggested that, after completing the overall planning of Nasr City, Karim devised a detailed urban design for the Second Zone to serve as a template for the rest of the settlement's residential zones. Salah Hegab, a renowned architect who writes a regular column entitled "wa Da'eman 'Amar ya Masr [May Ye Always Be Inhabited O Egypt]" in alAhrām newspaper, credits Gamal Fahim and Kamal Shohaib with devising the detailed planning for the rest of Nasr City's residential zones in one of said columns that was published shortly after Karim's death. See Salah Hegab, "wa Da'eman 'Amar ya Masr [May Ye Always Be Inhabited O Egypt]," *alAhrām*, Jul. 25, 2005.

5. Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhya' [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 264; percentages averaged from the ranges offered by the authors.

6. The basic planning features of Nasr City's residential zones and the design logic behind them are discussed in a heavily edited informational video that was obtained from the Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development; the video was edited by (photographer/cameraman) Samir alMoqaddem from the Microfilm and Public Relations Department.

7. Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhya' [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 264; those bylaws were corroborated by sample original zoning maps obtained from The Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development.

8. That restructuring and its date are listed in the aforementioned index of legal decrees pertaining to Nasr City that was compiled by and obtained from Ahmed AbdelMaqsoud Muhammad, a lawyer in The Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development.

9. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama' alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 91; and 114-115. Also see P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 412.

1.3 The Egyptian Middle Class [1970s-1990s]

1. In the opening chapter of his book *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians?]*, Galal Amin identifies and briefly discusses the relation between those three factors and the drastic social changes they affected throughout the 70s and 80s. See Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama' alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 10-11; and 24-31.
2. In January of 1977, “Bread Riots” erupted across Egypt after the Sadat regime cancelled subsidies on basic food items, as well as bonuses and pay increases for public sector employees, in response to external pressures from the IMF and The World Bank among other foreign creditors. The regime was forced to renege on those cancellations to restore calm, and since then governments in Egypt approached cuts to social welfare programs with great caution. See Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Politics among Elites” under “The Politics of Economic Strategy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/111.htm>; and in “Egypt’s New Direction”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/43.htm>.
3. Favoring quantity over quality was the hallmark of the Sadat regime’s approach to higher education. Nine of the fourteen public universities that operated in Egypt in 1990 were established in the 70s and 80s. See Metz, in “Education”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm>. In comparison, only one new public university was established under the Nasserist regime in the 50s and 60s. Coming from an extended family in which the majority of the older generations are professors of medicine, engineering, and political science in Cairo’s oldest universities, a common complaint of theirs at the beginning of every academic year was how the increasing quotas of students that the government allowed to be admitted in their respective institutions would negatively affect their ability to do their jobs, and in turn, the quality of education those institution had to offer. They often lamented the time when they were university students and their schools had far smaller student bodies. As it will be discussed later in this chapter, the Sadat regime’s push for expanding the capacity of the post-secondary education system was more of a response to an overwhelming, socially driven, public demand rather than a genuine concern for providing quality education for all.
4. “In 1985-86, Egypt’s primary and secondary schools employed only 155,000 teachers to serve 9.6 million pupils--a ratio of about 62 students per teacher. Some city schools were so crowded that they operated two shifts daily.” See Metz, in “Education”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm>.

5. At the time, “average annual pay in the private sector was said to be three times that in the government” and “a person holding a ministerial-level position in government could earn up to 1,000 percent more by taking a post in the private sector.” See Metz, in “Wages”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/82.htm>; and in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.

6. The woes of freshly graduated university students with government employment since the mid 70s is a rather familiar issue in Egypt. Growing up in the 80s and early 90s, a staple in most Egyptian soap operas and movies involved the frustrations of a young university graduate waiting for a “letter of appointment” from the government, and the near impossibility of actually receiving it. In the wake of introducing the Open-Door Policy in 1974, “Individual ministries determined the number of new positions that needed to be filled each year; once the quota was met, the names of other applicants were placed on waiting lists. During the 1980s, an average of 250,000 college graduates were waiting at any given time to be called for government jobs; the typical applicant remained on the waiting list for more than three years. This situation caused unrest among middle- and lower-middle-income students who had hoped that higher education would be their ticket to upward mobility.” See Metz, in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.

7. Like the discourse regarding the socioeconomic reforms of the 50s and 60s in Chapter 1.1, the account given here concerning the Open-Door Policy and the drastic socioeconomic shift it affected during the 70s and 80s was written after reading various sources to substantiate and verify known facts about the subject. And for the same reasons given in the note following the aforementioned discourse in chapter 1.1, the material that helped craft the account given here are listed below.

- Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 144-145.
- Ibid, 158-159.
- Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 22-23.
- Ibid, 34-35.

- Ibid, 43.
- Ibid, 89.
- Ibid, 91-92.
- Ibid, 135-137.
- Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Political Developments, 1971-1978”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/42.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Egypt’s New Direction”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/43.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Education”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm>.
- Ibid, in the introduction to “Structure, Growth, and Development of the Economy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/74.htm>.
- Ibid, in “The Role of the Government”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/75.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Public Finance”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/79.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Employment”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/81.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Wages”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/82.htm>.
- Ibid, in “Debt and Restructuring”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/104.htm>
- Ibid, in “Politics among Elites” under “The Politics of Economic Strategy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/111.htm>.

- Ibid, in “The Bureaucracy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/112.htm>.
 - P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 415.
 - Ibid, 429-430.
 - Ibid, 434.
 - Ibid, 449.
 - Raymond A. Hinnebusch, “Class, State and the Reversal of Egypt’s Agrarian Reform,” *Middle East Report* 23, no. 184 (September/October 1993), <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer184/class-state-reversal-egypts-agrarian-reform>.
 - Saleh S. Abdelazim, “Structural Adjustment and the Dismantling of Egypt’s Etatist System” (PhD thesis, Virginia Tech, 2005), 30-41. <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-12232002-083424/unrestricted/CHP2.pdf.pdf>.
 - Sonia M. Ali and Richard H. Adams Jr., “The Egyptian Food Subsidy System: Operation and Effects on Income Distribution,” *World Development* 24, no. 11 (1996): 1778.
8. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 25-26; 115; 167-169; and 171-172. Also see Galal Amin, *Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 159. Also see P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 431-432. Also see Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>; in “Employment”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/81.htm>; and in “Remittances” <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/100.htm>.
9. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 28.

10. These figures were calculated using the “Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)” indicator values for each of the years in both the specified periods for the Arab Republic of Egypt. Those values were obtained from the World DataBank website. The World Bank, “World DataBank,” *worldbank.org*, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>.
11. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 29; 115; and 136. Also see Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 159-160. Metz gives an example that “in the early 1980s . . . a free-lance tile-setter could earn about as much in one week as a government minister could earn in a month.” See Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Urban Society”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/61.htm>. Also see Metz, in “Wages”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/82.htm>.
12. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 36; and 135-136. Also see Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 127; 131; and 159.
13. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 74.
14. Ibid, 23. Also see Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafeera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 45-46; and 127.
15. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 76-77; and 136.
16. The statements made here about middle class professionals are implicit throughout the narratives of Amin’s two books, and draw primarily on my deductions from his more explicit statements about those who quickly rose through the social hierarchy in Egypt during the 70s and 80s. See Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry*

fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995], 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 75-76. Also see Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 127-128.

17. Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 19-20. Amin points out that there is a strong consensus regarding the parasitic nature of the rising social classes during 70s and 80s in Egypt among prominent Egyptian social scientists. And while Amin himself, who is a renowned and widely published Egyptian scholar who was contemporary to that specific period of socioeconomic change, does not challenge that such classes are indeed of that nature, he is more concerned with investigating why they had developed it. What I’m trying to convey here is that, in most social sciences, more often than not there are contrasting academic biases on any given issue. The views presented here regarding the rising entrepreneurial class in Egypt during the 70s and 80s are the most widely accepted in the Egyptian academic circles of social sciences. That is not to say though that these views are absolute, but rather they are more of a general picture of the societal dynamics during that particular period. As matter of fact, later in the same book, in the chapter entitled “Government Jobs”, Amin states that since the beginning of the 90s the reputation of the entrepreneurial class in Egypt, or rather the private sector in general, has gotten considerably better than it was throughout the 70s and most of the 80s. And that’s not to mention that throughout the book, Amin identifies earnest, small and medium scale tradesmen and businessmen as a longstanding and integral portion of the Egyptian middle class that dates back to before any of the socioeconomic changes of the 70s and 80s, or even the 50s and 60s, took place. It is just that, in terms of relative size, they constituted a miniscule portion of the Egyptian middle class in comparison to professionals and bureaucrats. That is the primary reason why they are not discussed in the main socioeconomic discourse of this thesis.

18. Ibid, 72; and 77.

19. The corruption of the bureaucracy is a staple of everyday life in Egypt. The account given here draws upon the widely known drives behind the prevalence of that corruption, and following sources helped substantiate it: Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 42-43; and Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “The Bureaucracy”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/112.htm>.

20. In the chapter entitled “Culture” in his book *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera [The Age of the Masses]*, Amin discusses, at some length, how the types and sources of income of middle class individuals, as well as the time it took them and the manner in which they came to attain their social status, can make all the difference between the values, the moral qualities, and the characteristics of one middle class versus the other. He also points out that the zeitgeist of any given society at any given time is generally of a far better quality when its middle class individuals depend primarily on productive and useful economic activities for their income and had attained their status after long periods of time that involved hard work and genuine achievement, as opposed to when its middle class individuals depend primarily on less productive and unethical economic activities for their income and had attained their status over short periods of time that involved unscrupulous or unethical practices aimed at accumulating large monetary gains. He essentially argues that the well-being of society as a whole is closely tied to the moral quality of its middle class, and highlights the important social role and responsibilities of that stratum. Those concepts, which he deems to be rather obvious constructs, are of the utmost importance in this thesis as they are the underlying themes throughout its discourse. See Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 116-118.

21. In the section entitled “Social Mobility and Patterns of Consumption” in the first chapter of his book *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians]*, Amin briefly discusses the phenomenon that I refer to here as social emulation. However, I had come to identify and formulate my own understanding of that phenomenon before encountering his mention of it. In that sense, his brief discussion of that phenomenon served to verify what I had already learned about it. The discourse presented here regarding social emulation is my own and draws on other academic sources. See Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 31-32.

22. Ibid, 23. Also see Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 46.

23. Galal Amin, *‘Asr alGamaheer alGhafaera, 1952-2002 [The Age of the Masses, 1952-2002]*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Shorouk, 2005), 160. Also see Galal Amin, *Maza Hadath lelMasreyeen? Tatawor alMogtama’ alMasry fi Nesf Qarn, 1945-1995 [Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? The Evolution of Egyptian Society in Half a Century, 1945-1995]*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar El Hilal, 2001), 115. Also see P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 431-432. Also see Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Remittances” <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/100.htm>.

24. Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Egypt: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for The Library of Congress, 1990), in “Mubarak”, <http://countrystudies.us/egypt/76.htm>.

25. I came to learn about the real estate values in Nasr City during that period in my conversations with members of my family and my neighbors in 11 El-Insha Street. Nahed Fahim, in discussion with the author, February 2010; and Maher Farag, in discussion with the author, February 2010. The increase rates presented here were calculated using the land prices relayed to me in those conversations. These inflation figures presented here were calculated using the “Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)” indicator values for each of the years in the specified periods for the Arab Republic of Egypt. Those values were obtained from the World DataBank website. The World Bank, “World DataBank,” *worldbank.org*, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>.

26. In my conversation with Maher Farag, my mother’s cousin who is a dentist and a faculty member at alAzhar University, I came to learn about the various methods of profit-seeking bylaw violation in Nasr City during the late 80s and early 90s. Dr. Farag became very well versed in the workings of residential construction in the settlement at that time after his father delegated him with the responsibility for constructing an apartment building—extended family house for himself and his siblings in Nasr City. According to Dr. Farag, an individual who constructed a residential building that far exceeded Nasr City’s maximum height bylaws would approach the Nasr City District Administration Authority and report that height violation. Accordingly, the Authority’s engineer would “estimate” the cost of one square meter of built area of the building in question, and in turn a fine of double that estimate for every square meter built in violation of the bylaw would be issued to the building’s owner. However, it was a very common practice for the owner of the building in question to bribe the engineer in order to lower his “estimate” and considerably bring down the overall sum of the fine. But if the engineer was unwilling to cooperate, or if the violation was too gross to overlook, and the Authority issued a demolition order for the storeys in violation of the bylaw or the building as a whole, the owner could still circumvent that order and keep his building standing since the administrative bodies that issued such orders were separate entities from those who carried them out. A common practice in that case involved the owner of the building that was to be demolished bribing the officials in the administrative body vested with carrying out the demolition order to stall acting on it, since, by Egyptian law, those kinds of orders became void three years after they’ve been issued if they were not carried out within that time frame. But then again, if that did not work either, the owner of the building in violation still had one last resort to avoiding the building’s demolition. In that case, the common practice involved the owner of the building quickly selling the apartments on the higher, bylaw-violating, floors and filling them with occupants before doing so with the lower floors of the building, since the loopholes in the Egyptian law made it illicit to evict, let alone demolish, bylaw violating structures

once they had been occupied. Those practices also came up in my conversations with Nahed Fahim, my neighbor in 11 El-Insha Street, and with Bassem alBorolossy, an acquaintance of my father, who owns a real estate and construction company. Maher Farag, in discussion with the author, February 2010; Nahed Fahim, in discussion with the author, February 2010; and Bassem alBorolossy (engineer, owner, and general manager of Masr alAseela Company for Real Estate Investment, and Fajr Company for Construction) in discussion with the author, February 2010.

27. Ahmed Kh. Allam, Yhya O. Shedid, and Maged M. El Mahdi, *Tagdid alAhya' [Urban Renewal]* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1997), 264-265. The date for amending Nasr City's building bylaws was obtained from the blueprints of the First and Seventh Zones' detailed planning, which were provided by The Nasr City Company for Housing and Urban Development. On those blueprints the new maximum height values for residential buildings are annotated and dated to 1985. According to the index of legal decrees pertaining to Nasr City, which was compiled by and obtained from Ahmed AbdelMaqsood Muhammad, a lawyer in the company, the boundaries of the settlement were extended and more areas were added to its jurisdictions in 1971, 1982, and again in 1984. The index also lists the approval of the detailed planning of five new residential zones between 1974 and 1993.

3.1 An Urban Exodus

1. "New Cairo," *New Urban Communities Authority*, http://www.newcities.gov.eg/english/New_Communities/Cairo/default.aspx.
2. Bassem alBorolossy (engineer, owner, and general manager of Masr alAseela Company for Real Estate Investment, and Fajr Company for Construction) in discussion with the author, February 2010.
3. Those values were obtained from a photocopy of the official bylaw booklet for the villa zones in New Cairo.
4. Bassem alBorolossy (engineer, owner, and general manager of Masr alAseela Company for Real Estate Investment, and Fajr Company for Construction) in discussion with the author, February 2010.
5. To give an example: Given that the average real estate value in Nasr City's first zone was about 10,000 Egyptian pounds in 2010, a middle class family living in an apartment building—extended family house that stands on a 500 square meter lot in the first zone would get about 5 million pounds for their property. Assuming that said extended family household

is made up of the nuclear families of two siblings, the share of each would be 2.5 million Egyptian pounds. On the other hand, the real estate value in New Cairo's highly sought after Fifth Settlement was about 2,250 pounds in 2010. It would therefore cost either of the siblings of the aforementioned extended family household about 1,575,000 pounds to acquire a comparable 700 square meter land lot there to construct a villa their own nuclear family and the possible nuclear families of their children. And given that the cost of construction and finishing of one built square meter in 2010 was about 1,200 pounds, constructing a bylaw abiding 3-storey villa that stands on 50% of the land of the 700 square meter land lot would amount to 1,260,000 pounds. That is a total cost of 2,835,000 Egyptian pounds for land and construction costs, and that's not counting design cost and building permit fees. At best, those hypothetical siblings would have to pay about 300,000 pounds out of pocket if they sold their Nasr City apartment building—extended family house and each used their share of its price to finance building their separate extended family homes in New Cairo. Not to mention that, in reality, they'd have to come up with the entire cost for constructing their New Cairo homes before taking any steps towards selling their Nasr City dwelling, since they'd have no where to stay during the construction of the former. Surely, there are smaller lots to be had in New Cairo, and cheaper suburban real estate to relocate to. For instance, because it is relatively newer and less developed, as well as further away from the city than New Cairo, the real estate values in Shorouq City averaged at about 1,100 pounds per square meter in 2010. However, there are lower real estate values in Nasr City too, and smaller lots as well; and many situations where there are more than two siblings in any one apartment building—extended family household. In any light, relocating to suburbs is ultimately a rather cumbersome financial undertaking. (The real estate values and building costs used here were obtained during my afore mentioned conversation with Bassem alBorolossy)

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