BUILDING POLITICS:
URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND GOVERNANCE IN CAIRO AND ISTANBUL

Sarah El-Kazaz

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Abstract:

The question motivating this dissertation asks: How do transforming practices of urban governance impact modes of political contestation in developing cities? The dissertation addresses this question in two steps. First, it asks: how do neo-liberalization and globalization transform practices of urban governance in Cairo and Istanbul? Second, it examines how the intended and unintended political consequences of urban governance and planning shape the formation of new modes of political struggle in the city’s neighborhoods. The dissertation tackles these questions through a qualitative study of six neighborhood-level urban rejuvenation projects led by state and non-state actors in Cairo and Istanbul.

I argue that neo-liberalization and globalization have led to a new form of politicization of the redesign of the urban built environment at the fragmented scale of the neighborhood. Developing cities are witnessing a surge of investment in the rejuvenation of the built environment by a variety of international and local non-state and state actors. These diverse actors invest in rejuvenation because they see the redesign of urban neighborhoods as a potent political tool to grapple with the vacuums and paradoxes produced through neo-liberalization and globalization. They expect urban redesign to produce political outcomes as expansive as molding societal behaviors, reordering power hierarchies and constructing “imagined communities.”

Comparison across Istanbul and Cairo revealed that levels of state strength and city-level institutional legacies impacted how urban redesign was mobilized as a political tool. In neo-liberalizing Cairo, non-state actors mobilize urban redesign as a political tool that replaces the role of a retrenched state as a governing organization. In Istanbul, a strong state and its private sector partners mobilize urban redesign to bypass local democratic institutions and entrenched an
authoritarian regime that differentiates between adjacent neighborhoods to accommodate conflicting global audiences.

Studying the contention surrounding these projects, I trace how urban dwellers mobilize informal tactics, claims to historical knowledge and the materiality of the built environment to resist both the disruptions to daily livelihood and intended and unintended political consequences of rejuvenation. Ultimately, I argue that studying the politicization of urban redesign and the struggles it produces is crucial for understanding the mechanisms underlying mass urban protests, like those in Istanbul’s Gezi Park.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AKDN</td>
<td>Aga Khan Development Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>AKP</td>
<td>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKTC</td>
<td>Aga Khan Trust for Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCO</td>
<td>Historic Cairo Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>I2UD</td>
<td>Institute for International Urban Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>Import-Substitution Industrialization</td>
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<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Egyptian Pounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOKİ</td>
<td>Toplu Konut İdaresi Mudurluğu (Mass Housing Authority)</td>
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Introduction

In the neighborhood of Darb El-Ahmar in Cairo’s historical district it is the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) that is designing and installing the first infrastructural overhaul the neighborhood has seen in decades, and not the Egyptian state. The AKDN is self-described as a network of “private, international, non-denominational development organizations”\(^1\) based in Geneva and founded by the Aga Khan, the leader of an Ismaili Shi’ite sect of Muslims. The Foundation implemented an elaborate plan to install new water and sewage pipes, street stone paving, traffic bumps and lighting fixtures along several routes in Darb El-Ahmar. The routes were designed to both make the neighborhood more accessible to outsider visitors, who would visit its historical sites and buy handicrafts produced in the neighborhood, and simultaneously upgrade the pathways most travelled by its community using a limited amount of funds. The AKDN’s “tourist routes,” as they were called by their urban planning team, linked Al-Azhar Park, a 74-acre park that the Aga Khan Foundation created in place of a 500 year-old garbage dump bordering Darb El-Ahmar, and Bab Zeweila, one of Cairo’s historical city gates.\(^2\) With the implementation of AKDN’s plan, an Egyptian citizen’s access to much-needed infrastructure in Darb Al-Ahmar then came to depend on the serendipity of her home or workplace falling along the AKDN’s tourist routes and not the Egyptian state’s services allocation strategy. Similarly, a citizen’s daily-lived experience was shaped by plans that the AKDN implemented on many other fronts, as part of a larger urban rehabilitation project in Darb El-Ahmar. The AKDN funded the restoration of over a hundred private homes and workshops, the redesign of public spaces and the neighborhood’s main public square, the conservation of several historical monuments, including mosques actively used by the community, and infrastructural renewal. The Aga Khan

\(^1\) See the AKDN’s description at: [http://www.akdn.org/about.asp](http://www.akdn.org/about.asp) (accessed 6-15-2014).

\(^2\) Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
Development Network had invested vast human and capital resources into redesigning and controlling the urban built environment in Darb El-Ahmar, transforming the spaces where urban dwellers daily lived, worked, wandered and practiced their political citizenship.

Darb El-Ahmar’s community wasn’t the only one faced with such holistic transformation of their lived urban spaces by non-state organizations in Cairo. In fact, the turn of the millennium witnessed an influx of international organizations, multi-national and local entrepreneurs and newly created state agencies investing in the redesign of public and private spaces, buildings and infrastructure of neighborhoods in Cairo, Istanbul and many similarly positioned developing cities. The question then becomes: why are these non-state actors investing in the redesign of city spaces and the provision of non-excludable urban goods and services? How do the actors sponsoring urban redesign and the practices they adopt differ across Istanbul and Cairo? More broadly, what does the proliferation of urban transformation projects led by non-state actors tell us about the impact of neo-liberalization and globalization on urban governance and practices of contestation and citizenship in developing cities?

The dissertation project is dedicated to examining just these questions through the study of six urban rejuvenation projects sponsored by international and local non-state actors and state agencies in historical neighborhoods of Cairo and Istanbul. I argue and demonstrate that a plethora of non-state organizations and state agencies share a newfound interest in the rejuvenation of urban neighborhoods because they see the creation of a redesigned and controlled urban built environment as a powerful political tool to resolve the paradoxes and political vacuums created through globalization and neo-liberalization. Urban redesign is increasingly expected to perform politics. It is expected to negotiate competing interests, reorder

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3 As discussed at length below, I draw on a literature that examines the history of mobilizing urban redesign as a technology of rule (e.g. see Foucault 1977; Mitchell 1988; Holston 1989; Wright 1991; Scott 1998).
power hierarchies, mold societal beliefs and behaviors, alleviate poverty and generate new material resources. In other words, a plethora of new actors see redesigning the city as a political tool expected to produce an idealized economy, society, culture and collective memory in an era of neo-liberalization and globalization.

The reasons that motivated intense investment in urban redesign as a technology of rule at the turn of the millennium differed significantly across Istanbul and Cairo, however; producing a different topography of urban governance across the two cities. In Cairo, a process of neo-liberalization led to the retreat of the state from governing. The retreat of the state produced an urgent need for tools that would perform political work without recourse to the institutions, legitimacy and resources once amassed by the state. Moreover, intensifying globalization produced new opportunities as well as obstacles for urban governance. Globalization increased the range of international actors interested in influencing political outcomes in a globalizing Cairo. On the other hand, it produced many paradoxes. As the city increasingly hosted mobile capital and audiences on the one hand, and its long established industries and communities of inhabitants on the other, there arose many contradictory expectations from the city’s rhythms and built environment. The city did not automatically adapt to hosting global audiences and capital. Political decisions and tools were needed to mediate these paradoxes. As a result, a plethora of international and local non-state actors as well as independent state agencies hoping to empower divergent political agendas searched for technologies that would replace the political work once expected of the state.

For a variety of coinciding reasons the redesign of urban neighborhoods became increasingly adopted as one of the main technologies capable of performing such political work
at the turn of the millennium.\(^4\) Hence, international NGOs, multi-national and local private sector entrepreneurs, local developmental agencies and newly created state agencies started investing significant human and capital resources into redesigning Cairo’s built environment at the fragmenting scale of the neighborhood. As a result, in Cairo, we see a wide variety of actors mobilize urban redesign as a technology of rule that is expected to perform expansive political work to replace the state altogether. As we see in chapter one, one of the non-state actors sponsoring urban rejuvenation works to empower autonomous local communities capable of self-governing their neighborhood without recourse to the state through careful urban redesign. We then see the other non-state actor sponsor an urban rejuvenation project aimed at reviving a specifically cosmopolitan yet unified Egyptian nation that it sees as essential for the reinvigoration of the now defunct state. As each sponsor of rejuvenation designs the urban built environment to empower divergent political agendas we then see the transformation of governance and daily urban livelihood follow significantly different trajectories from one Cairene neighborhood to the next.

In Istanbul on the other hand, the turn of the millennium saw the revival rather than the retreat of the state. Although the Turkish state, like its Egyptian counterpart, faced immense crisis with the failure of its Import-Substitution-Industrialization (ISI) programs in the 1980s that led to an initial retrenchment of the state, it succeeded to build back its prowess and credibility as a strong and monopolistic governing organization by the turn of the millennium. As discussed below, the most important developments that led to the revival of the Turkish state included the success of its export-led growth strategy and its concerted efforts to bring regular urban services

\(^4\) These reasons included the rise of a heritage industry in the 1970s that favored the preservation of the historical urban fabric of entire neighborhoods rather than isolated monuments, and the experimentation with urban redesign as a tool for alleviating poverty by developmental agencies. It is through these experiments that expert and funding norms developed favoring urban redesign at the specific scale of the neighborhood.
to Istanbul. Hence, in the 1990s and early 2000s we did see international organizations, like the EU, investing in urban redesign projects as a political tool that would replace a retrenching state, in ways similar to what was occurring in Cairo. This trajectory was derailed over the 2000s, however, with the revival of a strong Turkish state fully engaged in the governing of Istanbul. This revival is formalized with the legislation of the “Preservation and Renewal” laws of 2005 discussed at length below.

As it restored its grip on power, however, the Turkish state grappled with the opportunities as well as paradoxes created through intensifying globalization. In its search for technologies of rule that would resolve these paradoxes, the state turned to the increasingly utilized technology of urban redesign at the neighborhood scale. The state mobilized neighborhood-level rejuvenation projects implemented through a new breed of executive agencies set up like corporations and its private sector partners to institute a new mode of differentiated governance that bypassed local democratic institutions. It was through this new differentiating governing regime that the Turkish state planned to manage the multiple audiences attracted to a globalizing Istanbul. As in Cairo, globalization had increased the variety of actors interested in influencing political outcomes in Turkey through urban redesign. With far more control over spaces of governance in Istanbul than we see in Cairo, however, the Turkish state capitalized upon these newly interested actors to find partners with congruent political agendas to fund and implement redesign projects in Istanbul’s neighborhoods. Hence, in Istanbul we see non-state actors implement rejuvenation projects with the intent of instituting the same differentiating governing regime espoused by the state creating much less diversity in the political logic motivating urban redesign from one neighborhood to the next in Istanbul after 2005 than in Cairo.
This comparative analysis thus highlights that the increasing mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool is one of the main mechanisms through which neo-liberalization and globalization transform urban governance in Cairo and Istanbul. It delineates, however, that the two forces work to empower very different manifestations of this political tool. In Cairo we see both neo-liberalization and globalization at work to produce a topography of urban redesign that is significantly different from the topography produced in Istanbul, where it is mainly globalization that engenders urban transformation. Moreover, careful tracing of the political work expected of urban redesign in neo-liberalizing Cairo challenges a salient theoretical assumption about the impact of neo-liberalization on urban governance. In particular, it challenges the idea that neoliberal governance leads to the “commodification” of the city’s buildings and spaces into consumer goods to be traded through ‘free market’ exchange (e.g. see Harvey 1989; Zukin 1995; Keyder 1999; Caldeira 2008). Rather, I demonstrate that neoliberal governance is antithetical to the city’s commodification. In Cairo, the retreat of the state pushes the sponsors of urban rejuvenation to expect the redesigned built environment to perform expansive political work to replace the state that can only be performed if the city’s buildings and spaces are protected from unadulterated market exchange. With neo-liberal governance come protections against the commodification of the city.

Whether it is in Cairo or Istanbul, though, the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool operates through a shared set of logics and practices regardless of the political agendas it is expected to empower. The most important of these practices is a process of constructing new political personhood for the city. When the urban built environment is expected to carry the responsibilities of performing political work, such as molding societal behavior, alleviating poverty or reordering power hierarchies, it is also seen as entitled to rights that would
enable it to perform its political responsibilities. These rights are both positive and negative rights. Positive rights include services such as the management of water levels and the proper dispensation of sewage surrounding the city’s productive buildings, and the education of people who may come in contact with the buildings as to their proper usage and treatment. Negative rights include security mechanisms that protect buildings from physical distortion and use for criminal activity, as well as protections from unadulterated market exchange through property rights regimes that protect buildings from current and future owners and residents. International NGOs, entrepreneurs and state agencies that invest in urban redesign as a political tool work to justify the city’s entitlement to these rights, and to construct city rights as a necessary “public good.” Of course, actors who espouse divergent political agendas will work to construct different rights for the city’s built environment that would mobilize their vision for the political work the city should perform. As the funding of urban redesign as a political tool intensifies, the campaign to grant the city’s built environment legal rights, and eventual political personhood, grows increasingly powerful. The movement to define the parameters of that personhood will intensify contestation amongst the funders of urban rejuvenation as they compete to empower their vision for what the urban built environment’s political persona should entail. This struggle will be most intense, however, for the urban dwellers who see such well-defined rights and political personhood for the city’s built environment threatening to their daily urban livelihood as they live, work and wander in the city. In other words, this dissertation suggests that intensified funding of urban redesign as a technology of rule has initiated a long political struggle over the rights to which the city’s built environment should be entitled to, if any, and the construction of political personhood for that built environment.\footnote{The idea that political personhood develops for non-human entities within the modern nation-state is not unprecedented. The development of legal personhood for corporations with varying rights from one country to the}
As they contest what a city’s political personhood may entail, the sponsors of urban rejuvenation projects I study in Cairo and Istanbul, whether international NGOs, entrepreneurs or state agencies, also share a fundamental premise that shapes the practices through which they design their urban plans and construct rights to which the city should be entitled. They share a disillusionment with societal collectives as a productive force. Istanbul and Cairo, like most developing cities, experimented with modernist and socialist projects that sought to create productive societal collectives that would spur economic and political development. The drastic failure of Import-Substitution-Industrialization (ISI) in both countries put the nail in the coffin of this belief in productive societal collectives. As a result, the actors who invest in urban redesign as a political tool, unlike earlier experiments discussed below, expect the city’s built environment to directly produce their idealized polities in spite of the populations who dwell in the city rather that in tandem with societal collectives. As chapter one demonstrates, even when the city’s built environment is expected to mold and produce an idealized society, it is a society that is perceived as a spectator to the productive work of the city rather than working with the built environment to produce desired outcomes. Because of this fundamental disillusionment with productive societal collectives, transformation projects are often designed in ways that dissociate the redesigned built environment from its social context. It thus works to, what I term, “de-socialize” the inherent sociality of lived city spaces. Such de-socialized urban redesign is also often combined with the construction of rights for the city’s built environment that not only

next is an important case in point. I am suggesting here that we are witnessing the construction of political personhood for the city in ways that mirror the process through which such rights developed for the corporation. As we saw with corporations, however, the development of such rights was not a straightforward process. It entailed lengthy political struggles amongst competing actors fighting for and against the development of a political persona for the corporation and contestation over the rights that might entail (see e.g. Roy 1997; Alborn 1998; Stern 2011; Barkan 2013). I am suggesting that we are seeing the development of just such a struggle over the development of a persona and rights for the city’s built environment. It is of note that some of the earliest corporations were cities as well as churches and universities (Barkan (2013), 28-34).
ignore but also contradict the rights citizens expect from their state. De-socialization thus works to both transform practices of urban livelihood and political citizenship in the city.

De-socializing urban rejuvenation projects do not have the last say in how the city transforms and is ultimately governed, however. Urban dwellers struggle for their own vision of the city as well. To truly appreciate how globalization and neo-liberalization transform urban governance and practices of citizenship, it is essential to study the struggles urban dwellers wage for and against the rejuvenation of their neighborhoods. Urban governance is not exclusively shaped by the top-down urban designs and controls funded by organized actors, whether state or non-state, but is also importantly shaped by the everyday individual and collective tactics (De Certeau, 1984) urban dwellers practice to govern how the city is physically designed and used on a daily basis. In the same way that the variety of actors investing in costly urban rejuvenation projects believe that the physical arrangement of urban spaces and buildings is politically productive, urban dwellers believe in the power of spatial arrangement to shape their daily and political reality. I demonstrate, building on a prolific and insightful literature on everyday urban tactics (e.g. Benjamin 1978; Jacobs 1961; De Certeau 1984; Bayat 1997; Singerman 1995; Ghannam 2002; Elyachar 2005; Ismail 2006; Mills 2010), that urban dwellers believe that the spatial design of their neighborhood shapes power relations, communal hierarchies, experiences of belonging and security, access to coveted resources, the remembrance of history, and daily urban livelihood more generally. They thus mobilize a variety of tactics to resist and capitalize upon the transformations urban rejuvenation projects plan for their neighborhood’s spaces, buildings and infrastructure. It is through studying the interplay between top-down rejuvenation plans and everyday informal tactics as a dynamic eco-system (drawing on Lefebvre (1974) and
the “urban assemblages” literature as discussed below) that I then examine transforming processes of urban governance and practices of political citizenship in Cairo and Istanbul.

I argue that the governance regimes empowered through neo-liberalization and globalization are significantly different from one urban neighborhood to the next within developing cities because of two dynamics shaping neighborhood eco-systems. On the one hand, as the literature on everyday tactics I cite above has illuminated, the everyday tactics mobilized to struggle for particular spatial arrangements of the built environment are shaped by the local specificities and legacies of the neighborhoods and communities of urban dwellers that live there. In chapter four I bring a new contribution to this literature by illuminating the ways in which the varying legacies of material encounters with the built environment from one neighborhood to the next shapes everyday tactics of contestation. Existent local specificity is not the only factor shaping the varied neighborhood eco-systems, however. Rather, it is also the plurality of the top-down urban redesign projects empowered through neo-liberalization and globalization that produces this variation. As I explained at length above, especially in neo-liberalizing Cairo, a variety of actors are investing in costly urban rejuvenation projects that hope to empower divergent political agendas through remarkably different urban redesign plans from one neighborhood to the next. This plurality is key to the production of a mosaic of varied governing regimes across adjacent neighborhoods of the same contemporary developing city. Hence, urban resistance is not only specific to local legacies but more importantly is reacting to a different transformational project wedded to a distinct political agenda from one neighborhood to the next. Urban resistance is not responding to the same top-down regime from one neighborhood to the next, as is often assumed in the study of urban resistances. More pointedly, it is not responding to a monolithic “commodification” of the neo-liberal city as I explained.
above and re-iterate here. In fact, because of how varied the political logics governing adjacent neighborhoods in neo-liberalizing Cairo are, collective action resisting urban transformation faces far more serious impediments in Cairo than in a city governed by a revived state like Istanbul. Because urban transformation in Istanbul is largely attributable to a central state and follows far more congruent political agendas across adjacent neighborhoods, even when sponsored by non-state actors, there is higher potential for coordination amongst urban dwellers facing the same governing regime across adjacent neighborhoods and collective urban resistance such as that which erupted against the redevelopment of Gezi Park in Istanbul in the summer of 2013. It was not neo-liberalization that engendered the Gezi protests but rather a revived strong state using urban redesign as a political tool to capitalize on processes of globalization. Neo-liberalization and globalization produce interacting but distinct dynamics of urban transformation and resistance.

**Literature Review:**

I now turn to a discussion of the scholarly literature that grapples with the study of governance and practices of citizenship in the contemporary city. Because most of the scholarly approaches to these questions tend to bifurcate their analysis and study top-down governance separately from collective and everyday tactics of urban resistance, I will organize my discussion of the literature in this bifurcated manner. I will then bring the two scholarly traditions in conversation as I build my theory with emphasis on the urban eco-systems that produce urban governance and practices of citizenship in the Middle East.

**Top-Down Governance:**

There have been four main approaches to the study of top-down urban governance regimes. I characterize the four approaches as: the comparative public goods provision
scholarship, regime theory, governmental technologies scholarship, and the transnational systemic change literature (abbreviated as the globalization literature). Each of these approaches brings an important perspective to the question of top-down governance of cities. I work to capitalize upon their insights and bring them in conversation as I build my theory of top-down transformation of developing cities.

The first approach conceptualizes top-down governance in terms of the outcomes it is meant to achieve. What brings most of this scholarship to the city is a search for the mechanisms that ensure the provision of “public goods” in the city, and they mobilize comparative research designs to isolate these mechanisms. “Public goods” include infrastructure, regulation of property rights, educational and health services, security, fair trade and many other goods and services that impact daily urban livelihood and political development. Although most of this scholarship is concerned with isolating the mechanisms that produce desirable public goods provision in any setting, many of these scholars recognize the qualitative difference between public goods provision in urban and rural settings and account for these differences in their theories. Most notorious for making that distinction is Robert Bates (1981) who built his theory of the development of proper agricultural policy in Africa on states’ biased concern for appeasing urban populations with goods and services at the expense of the proper functioning of agricultural markets, or the “urban bias.” For the most part, the literature was dedicated to developing theories that explained variation in public goods provision in any setting. Thus a number of alternative explanations developed for uneven public goods provision including low state capacity (e.g. Migdal 1988; De Soto 1989; Herbst 2000), institutional design and decentralization (e.g. North 1990; Fung 2004; Falleti 2010), clientelism, patronage politics and targeted redistribution to electoral constituencies (e.g. Bates 1981; Khan and Jumo 2000; Stokes
2005; Holland 2014 forthcoming), identity-based conflict (Easterly and Levine 1997; Habyarimana et al 2007; Lieberman 2009) and perverse political culture (e.g. Weber 1930; Putnam 1993). What is remarkable about this set of theories is that they almost exclusively operate under the assumption that these goods and services are expected to be provided by the state. Hence, the mechanisms they isolate explain public goods provision either as a product of deliberate state policy or inadvertent state malfunctioning. There is little theorization of top-down organized public goods provision by non-state actors or the possible impact of systemic changes that cross nation-state boundaries, such as globalization, on the state’s parameters of control over public goods provision altogether.

In my work, I draw on this literature’s emphasis on careful comparative work to isolate institutional and non-institutional dynamics that shape top-down governance. I then complicate this scholarship’s approach to urban governance in two main ways. First, I argue that we should move beyond thinking of the state as the sole or even main large-scale provider of public goods, since I demonstrate that organized non-state actors, including international NGOs and private sector entrepreneurs, provide top-down large-scale urban goods and services in the wake of neo-liberalization. Moreover, I argue that the top-down provision of public goods by organized well-funded non-state actors is not simply a product of state malfunction but rather a systemic transformation of the state’s parameters of control produced through both neo-liberalization and globalization. Second, and more importantly, I challenge the idea that public goods could be conceptualized exclusively as a desired outcome of governance or the product of resource allocation strategies by the state or other actors. Rather, I adopt an approach, inspired by the literature on governmental technologies discussed below, that appreciates the potential of these ‘goods’ to act as a political tool or technology of rule. The technicalities of how and where
infrastructure is installed or how public squares and parks are designed matters for performing a large array of political work that includes molding societal behavior, generating new economic revenue, cultivating culture and reordering power hierarchies rather than simply as a distributed resource to a political constituency. It is through this reconceptualization of the potential of the ‘public goods’ that come with urban transformation projects to perform politics that I then build my theory of urban governance in contemporary Istanbul and Cairo.

The second approach, which has come to be known as “regime theory,” is dedicated to studying the coalitions of actors and interests that ultimately govern cities. This approach was pioneered in the 1960s by Robert Dahl (1961) when he asked “Who Governs?” New Haven. He examined the intricate networks of negotiated interests that decide on policy in the American city of New Haven to examine the inclusiveness of governance in what is characterized as a democratic setting. The coalitional literature developed in the late 1980s into a literature that studied the “regimes” that governed cities and impacted top-down policy decision-making and implementation beyond a strict interest in the inclusiveness of democratic governance. Rather, new scholarship focused on the actors with the capacity to govern on the ground. This “regime theory” literature (e.g. Stone 1989; Orr and Stoker 1994) developed mostly to study American cities and a small number of European cities. It responded to a marked increase in overt partnerships between the state and the private corporate sector in the governing of American cities, especially evident in investments for the transformation of the city’s built environment. The literature thus focused its work on analyzing cooperation over time and across different cities between what it saw as the largest two collaborating actors in governing coalitions: government with the institutions and legitimacy to govern and business with the capital resources necessary for implementing policy. The provision of different types of public goods was then
seen as a product of that coordination process. Regime theory thus highlighted the importance of thinking beyond the state as the sole organized actor shaping and implementing top-down policy in the governance of cities. It was especially instrumental in re-conceptualizing business entrepreneurs as actual governing partners rather than simply an organized interest group lobbying American governing actors. It also highlighted the peculiarity of urban governance regimes and the importance of studying the governance of American cities in ways that are distinct from other suburban or rural contexts.

Although regime theory made important strides in expanding the realm of actors seen as governing American cities, it remained wedded to a theory centered on the state. The coalitions regime theory examines remain centered around the state and its governing partners. It continues to privilege the state as endowed with resources and capacities essential to governance that ensure the state will always be party to the governing coalition. It does not grapple with a scenario where the state is not party to the governing coalition. It does not grapple with the scenario I study in Cairo where new non-state actors or even independent state agencies implement urban redesign in an effort to replace the state and the political work it was once expected to perform. This is not too surprising given the geographical limitation of most work developing or applying regime theory to American and a handful of developed European cities, where such retreat of the state from governing hasn’t been experienced as drastically as in some neo-liberalizing developing cities. In my own work I draw on regime theory’s expansion of the realm of organized actors governing cities, and find their insights on the partnerships developing between the state and non-state actors particularly instructive for thinking of the new public-private partnerships taking place to rejuvenate Istanbul. I move beyond their state-centered coalitions however as I grapple with processes of governance in cities, like Cairo, where non-
state actors govern to replace the state rather than in partnership with it. I also find that regime
theory, like the comparative public goods provision literature, approaches urban transformation
in terms of public goods provision and resource allocation rather than in terms of its potential as
a governmental technology. As explained above, I move beyond that limitation to consider the
potential of urban redesign as a political tool.

I turn now to a discussion of the scholarship that inspired my study of urban redesign and
planning as a potential technology of rule. I refer to this third approach as the governmental
technologies scholarship. This literature comes to the city through its interest in the many modes,
including educational curricula, mental health systems, penitentiary institutions and private
property regimes, through which modern top-down ruling regimes, whether the state or capillary
logics of capitalism, control and mold subject populations. A prolific scholarship, especially
popularized through Michel Foucault’s (1977) work on Bentham’s Panoptican and James Scott’s
(1998) work on the creation of “legible” cities by high modernist states, developed to examine
the politicization of urban planning and design (e.g. Benjamin 1978; Foucault 1977; Mitchell
1988; Holston 1989; Wright 1991; Scott 1998). The politicization of urban redesign as a
potential technology of rule gained particular prominence with Michel Foucault’s (1977) oft-
cited analysis of Bentham’s Panoptican. Foucault argued that the architectural design of the
Panoptican, mimicked by modern prisons, optimized the angles through which a population
could be put under surveillance, or the illusion of surveillance, by invisible onlookers. For
Foucault the Panoptican became symbolic of the technologies of spatial reordering through
which modern disciplinary order was produced and put under surveillance. For Walter Benjamin,
spaces of “spectacle,” such as the Paris arcades, were just as important as surveillance for
empowering the logics of modern capitalism. Timothy Mitchell (1988) built upon both traditions
to illuminate how not only spatial design but the “representation” of space into an objectified world to be dominated, ordered and controlled was key to the workings of the modern project in the metropole as well as the colony (see also Gwendolyn Wright’s (1991) and Zeynep Çelik’s (1997) work on French colonial urbanism). James Holston (1989) examined the intricate architectural details through which Le Corbusian architecture (through the work of Le Corbusier’s students in planning Brasilia) aimed to plan cities that would produce the perfectly productive and socially cohesive citizenry. Finally, James Scott (1998) then expanded upon that analysis to trace how city plans, such as the ones designed by Baron Haussmann and Le Corbusier, were mobilized to render societies “legible” and accessible to high modernist states. For Scott the planning of cities was one of the main technologies through which the high modernist state ordered and controlled previously illegible subject populations. This scholarship drew attention to the importance of examining not only whether cities were planned and serviced as the main political concern but also the technical details of the architectural designs and plans as potentially even more crucial to politics. Urban planning and architectural design were not purely scientific apolitical endeavors but rather were regularly mobilized as political technologies to rule over and mold subject populations.

In my work I adopt the kernel of the idea that urban redesign can be mobilized as a political tool to trace the practices through which organized actors govern Cairo and Istanbul in an age of neo-liberalization and globalization. I join a nascent literature dedicated to revealing the governmental technologies through which neo-liberalizing regimes govern (e.g. Mitchell 2002; Elyachar 2005; Ong 2006). Unsurprisingly most of this literature has thus far focused on the transformation and mobilization of economies and markets as governmental technologies in an era of neo-liberalization, whilst the city remains an important arena of investigation but only
secondary to their analysis of markets. My work builds upon their insights but focuses specifically on how urban redesign is being mobilized as a technology of rule in an era of globalization and neo-liberalization. Although studying state-market relations is essential to understanding the inner workings and contradictions of the process of neo-liberalization, I shift the primary focus to urban redesign as a governmental technology to unmask the practices through which neo-liberal regimes govern contemporary societies on the ground. I find, as explained above, that investment in urban redesign is one of the main mechanisms through which neo-liberalization impacts the governance of contemporary societies and so focus my research on this increasingly utilized political tool. Moreover, I mobilize a comparative research design to carefully trace the plurality of this governmental technology and how it travels from one context to another.

Studying city planning as a governmental technology in contemporary cities, I find that practices through which urban redesign is mobilized as a technology of rule have undergone a significant historical shift. Because of the failure of socialist planning, contemporary governing actors investing in the redesign of city spaces are disillusioned with the idea that societal collectives are a productive political force. Hence, unlike the modernist and socialist city planners, contemporary urban designs are not aimed at molding and disciplining subject populations into productive societal collectives. Rather contemporary urban redesign expects the urban built environment to itself replace the societal collectives’ productive force. The built environment is expected to directly generate new economic resources and revenue, cultivate culture, alleviate poverty, mold civic-minded citizens and embody history, in spite rather than in collaboration with the societies that inhabit the city’s spaces. Urban redesign has become “de-socialized.” What is counter-intuitive about de-socialization is that it often works to reverse and
contradict the spatial practices through which citizen’s bodies were disciplined and controlled through modernist plans. For example, we will see that the logic of the city’s visual topography now directs a visiting tourist’s gaze upwards onto the balconies and windows where neighborhood dwellers historically directed their gaze to monitor and control their community’s activities on the street; reversing the logic of Foucault’s Panopticon. With the multiplication of a city’s audiences and the new productive responsibilities a city’s built environment is expected to perform urban redesign is not solely directed at molding and disciplining an ideal society. In fact, contemporary urban planning and design wreaks havoc with modernist modes of societal discipline as it develops new modes of rendering a population, seen as a nuisance and obstacle to progress rather than its champion, invisible.

Finally, the fourth approach is a structural one that sees transformations in urban governance as largely determined by transnational systemic change. In contemporary times such systemic change is seen mainly as a product of forces of globalization and neo-liberalization. There exists a prolific literature dedicated to studying the impact of systemic change on political outcomes, and especially the transforming role of the state in a globalizing world (e.g. Soysal 1994; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Keohane 2002; Hazbun 2008). A subset of this literature developed to examine the impact of neo-liberalization and globalization on the transformation and governance of cities (e.g. Harvey 1989; Boyer 1994; Zukin 1995; Keyder 1999; Sassen 2000; Caldeira 2008). This “global cities” literature importantly argues that the coinciding of the intensification of global networks with the proliferation of de-industrialization crises in cities worldwide produced a systemic transformation that led to new competition between globalizing cities and increasing involvement of non-state actors in the governance of cities. David Harvey (1989) famously described this as a shift from “urban managerialism” to “urban
entrepreneurialism.” Revolutions in communication, logistics, transportation and financial technologies dramatically increased the mobility of capital and people (both in terms of human capital and tourism). Hence, cities connected to these global networks developed a newfound potential for attracting capital and audiences including tourists, professionals, international development agencies and dignitaries that are not in any way embedded within the city’s local or national context. With such mobility developed a new competition amongst globalizing cities. Cities not only competed for global attention but also to ensure that their own local audiences and resources remain committed to the city and avoid capital flight. On the other side of that coin, increasing global mobility meant that a much larger variety of international actors became interested in shaping the political fates of globalizing cities. Intensifying globalization and competition amongst global cities coincided with another crucial development: de-industrialization. Industrialized cities in both developed and developing countries faced existential and economic crises with the navigation of industry away from those cities and their working populations in the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike in developed economies, in developing countries like Egypt and Turkey de-industrialization was a symptom of much larger national economic failure that led to a process of neo-liberalization and retreat of the state from governing. Hence, globalization coincided with urban crisis that only increased the urgency for attracting global capital to de-industrializing cities. To capitalize upon the opportunities produced by globalization and grapple with de-industrialization crises, public-private partnerships proliferated across cities worldwide that invested in the urban built environment to attract mobile capital and tourism to the city. A shared implication of this scholarship’s work is that processes of globalization and neo-liberalization lead to the “commodification” of the city
and the transformation of its built environment into commodities consumable by local and global audiences.

This scholarship is crucial for understanding the forces transforming the parameters within which actors are empowered and produce practices of governance in Cairo and Istanbul. The new power imbalances created through systemic shifts crucially impact urban governance as I demonstrate in my own work. What I challenge about this literature’s assumption is the homogenizing and automatic impact they argue this process produces and the limited, often non-existent, agency they accord governing actors and the city’s legacy and materiality. As I demonstrate, urban contexts do not automatically transform to accommodate new global audiences and capital. Rather globalization creates many paradoxes that produce political struggle and the mobilization of political tools to resolve them. Here I join an insightful literature dedicated to revealing the urban paradoxes created through globalization (e.g. see Huyssen 2008; Roy and Ong 2011). Moreover, as explained above, a variety of actors with divergent political agendas are empowered by neo-liberalization and globalization to govern cities. Hence the city is governed through a diverse array of regimes rather than homogeneous actors and practices. These actors, especially in neo-liberalizing cities, also mobilize the city’s built environment to perform political work that often entails protecting the city’s built environment from unadulterated market exchange. As a result, my work ultimately challenges the assumption that the neo-liberalization of urban governance results in the “commodification” of the city as often concluded by this line of scholarship. Finally, through my comparative analysis I join Brenner et al. (2010) in showing that neo-liberalism is in fact “variegated” and works to transform cities differently from one context to the next. The institutional and non-institutional dynamics of cities
and neighborhoods shape the ways in which neo-liberalization and globalization impact governance.

In conclusion, I built my theoretical framework in conversation with the insights furthered by these four approaches as well as their limitations. My theoretical framework goes beyond all four of these approaches, however, in propagating the fundamental idea that governance is a product of an eco-system of interactions between top-down governance and the everyday tactics of the urban dwellers who live, work and navigate the city. Simply put, the exclusive focus on understanding how state-led or more expansively top-down governance operates does not equate with studying governance in Cairo or Istanbul. I turn now to the literature most concerned with the urban dwellers who are so central to understanding eco-systems of governance.

**Urban Resistance:**

The implementation of top-down plans of urban transformation and regulation of the urban built environment does not always suit the urban dwellers who live, work and navigate the city on a daily basis. The transformation of the city’s spaces and buildings may limit urban dwellers’ access to coveted resources, reorder power hierarchies to diminish their prowess within their social networks or restrict their movement, networks of communication and spaces of sociality in the city, among other disruptions. Urban transformation could also favorably transform an urban dweller’s access and positioning in the city. Thus, with top-down urban governance comes the potential for urban dwellers to actively transform the city in ways that would reverse such disruption and regain control over their lived city spaces. A literature developed to examine the resistances and interventions urban dwellers practice to empower their visions for the spatial arrangement of the city. Although a small fraction of this literature focuses
on collective action (e.g. see Leitner et al. 2007; Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010), in line with approaches within the social movements literature, most of the literature produced to grapple with these urban resistances focuses on informal everyday tactics practiced by individual dwellers as they struggle to shape their city spaces (e.g. Benjamin 1978; Jacobs 1961; De Certeau 1984; Bayat 1997; Singerman 1995; Ghannam 2002; Elyachar 2005; Ismail 2006; Mills 2010). The focus on everyday tactics as opposed to organized protest is not coincidental. As this literature insightfully demonstrates every day tactics that subtly transform and iteratively contest the city’s planned designs are far more consequential for the physical arrangement of contested city spaces, their regulation and ultimate production of power hierarchies in the city. Collective protest movements certainly accelerate and empower such resistances but they are built upon this foundation of everyday tactics of resistance.

The disruptions created by modern urban planning and architectural design were illuminated as early as the 1930s through Walter Benjamin’s seminal work on the Paris Arcades (1978) and again in relation to American urban planning in the 1960s through Jane Jacob’s (1961) celebrated work as an activist urban planner. Attention to the tactics of resistance practiced by urban dwellers to re-appropriate these disruptions gained momentum, however, with two important scholarly developments in the mid-1980s: Michel De Certeau’s (1984) intervention in urban studies and James Scott’s (1985) intervention in the social movements literature. James Scott (1985) argued that scholars of resistance should move beyond focusing on organized collective action, and especially protest movements, and recognize the disruptive potential of informal “weapons of the weak.” For Scott, who developed his theory through studying rural peasants, “weapons of the weak” were both disruptive actions, like desertion, foot-dragging and arson as well as discursive “hidden transcripts” (Scott, 1990) that included
slanderous rumors, subversive acting, sarcasm and so on. Scott’s intervention, widening the realm of the study of forms of resistance, coincided with Michel De Certeau’s (1984) entreaty to study the daily practices of urban dwellers not simply as adaptive to shifts in top-down governance but as disruptive to dominant power relations. He argued that urban dwellers, whom he refers to as “ordinary practitioners of the city,” mobilize everyday spatial “tactics” that displace dominant power relations through “trickery” of the totalizing strategies of top-down urban planning. He describes such everyday tactics tricking the modern political project as follows,

“Ordinary practitioners of the city live down below, below the thresholds at which visibility begins…Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible…foreign to the ‘geometrical’ or ‘geographical’ space of visual panoptic, or theoretical constructions. These practices of space refer to a specific form of operations (‘ways of operating’), to ‘another spatiality’ (an ‘anthropological,’ poetic and mythic experience of space), and to an opaque and blind mobility characteristic of the bustling city. A migrational or metaphorical city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.”

As they “slip into the clear text of the planned city,” everyday tactics trick the plan to reorder power relations. Building upon Scott’s and De Certeau’s insights a scholarship developed that was dedicated to the everyday spatial tactics mobilized by urban dwellers to empower their visions for the city. This approach became especially popular in the study of Middle Eastern cities, where such tactics proved more visible in the region’s chaotic metropolises (Bayat 1997; Singerman 1995; Ghannam 2002; Elyachar 2005; Ismail 2006; Mills 2010). The scholarship documented the many ways that urban dwellers did in fact perceive spatial arrangement and architectural design as politically productive; shaping power relations, communal hierarchies, experiences of belonging and security, access to coveted resources and struggles over history and political identity. The scholarship then documented the plethora of spatial tactics mobilized by

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6 De Certeau (1984), 93-94
urban dwellers to resist and capitalize upon top-down urban plans as they sought to empower their visions for the city. Bayat (1997) demonstrated how everyday tactics were used to secure urban livelihood and Singerman (1995) argued that such tactics produced political voice in authoritarian and highly unequal settings. Ghannam (2002) demonstrated how everyday spatial tactics re-appropriated Sadat’s modernist projects for Cairo to redefine modernity, progress and citizenship in the city. Mills (2010) demonstrated the ways in which spatial practices transformed the collective remembrance of political violence and the formation of political identity in Istanbul. Ismail (2006) argued that everyday tactics were not only re-appropriating or resisting existing top-down regimes but were actually mobilized by urban dwellers to “govern” their communities, where the state had retreated from governing in neo-liberalizing Cairo.

This literature thus became instrumental in emphasizing the importance of spatial design to urban dwellers, and the wide array of tactics they mobilized to contest top-down urban plans as they struggled to secure their urban livelihood and political positioning. My study of the practices urban dwellers mobilize to resist and capitalize upon urban rejuvenation projects in Cairo and Istanbul is inspired by this literature on everyday tactics. That literature was especially instrumental in widening the arena of actions I see as tactics of resistance and my methodological attention to the spatiality of those practices as illuminated by De Certeau (1984). Moreover, through this scholarship I came to see everyday tactics as not only modes of resistance but also as acts of governance as demonstrated by Ismail (2006), which moved me to think of urban governance as a product of an eco-system of interactions between top-down urban planning regimes and the urban dwellers who inhabit the city’s spaces.

What I challenge about this literature’s approach is its treatment of the contexts of resistance. Because of the nuanced localized scale at which this scholarship unveils everyday
tactics, it has been very attentive to how local specificities shape tactics of resistance. What it has not been careful about, however, is isolating the political opportunities that empower some tactics but not others. Although the study of organized social movements has made great strides in using comparative analysis to reveal the “political opportunity structures” and contingent event sequencing that motivate and empower social movements in different contexts (e.g. Kitschelt 1986; Tilly 1995; Tarrow 1998; Sewell 1996; Beissinger 2002), such comparative analysis of the political opportunities that shape everyday urban tactics is largely absent. Although the literature on everyday tactics of resistance is careful to link informal tactics to particular political regimes, like Sadat’s modernist project (Ghannam, 2002) or Ataturk’s nationalist project (Mills, 2010), this literature tends to assume that each political regime will manifest itself similarly across the urban terrain it governs. Hence each political regime is theoretically perceived as potentially creating the same urban disruptions across different locales of the cities it governs, which are then re-appropriated through localized everyday tactics. They do not analyze the potential plurality of that top-down governing regime itself in creating different governing regimes from one locale to the next. This is especially problematic when we’re dealing not with regimes that are seen to be acting in very specific times and places but with forces as capillary and pluralistic as neo-liberalization and globalization. As I demonstrate, the top-down governing regimes empowered through neo-liberalization and globalization in Cairo and Istanbul produce very distinct urban plans and political disruptions or “opportunities” from one urban neighborhood to the next. [Of note here is that I expand our understanding of political opportunity to include the disruptions created through non-conventional governmental technologies such as urban redesign. As such I move beyond the more limiting set of structures seen as determinant of political opportunity by the scholarship on organized social movements
(e.g. Kitschelt 1986; Tilly 1995; Tarrow 1998). Hence, community members develop different everyday tactics to respond to divergent top-down governing regimes; creating distinct parameters of contestation from one neighborhood to the next. Careful attention to these parameters of political opportunity not only enriches our understanding of everyday tactics of resistance but also of the collective action that at times develops from regular localized informal contestation.

**Eco-Systems of Governance:**

After analyzing the literatures on urban governance and resistance, I turn now to describing the methodological intervention I make in order to bring the two literatures in conversation. I do so through advancing a theory of urban governance produced through an eco-system of interactions between top-down urban transformation and the everyday tactics of urban dwellers. I base my eco-systemic approach to the study of urban governance on two theoretical interventions in the study of cities: Henri Lefebvre’s (1974) theorization of the production of space and the literature on urban assemblages.

It was Henri Lefebvre’s (1974) theorization of the “production of space” that pushed me to think of urban governance as a product of the interactions between top-down urban planning and redesign and everyday tactics of urban dwellers. Lefebvre argues that a society’s spaces, and the power relations they embody, are produced through a dialectic relationship between the following triad: “spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces.” For Lefebvre, “the spatial practice of a society…produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it…A spatial practice must have a certain cohesiveness, but this does not imply that

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7 Lefebvre (1974), 40.
it is coherent.” In other words, spatial practice is a society’s space as “perceived” by the regimes and logics that aim to master and dominate it.

“Representations of space,” on the other hand, are “conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived.” In other words, representations of space are the plans produced by the planning and technocratic experts aiming to reconcile “the lived” and “the perceived” city. As urban planners, architects and technocrats produce such plans, the expert knowledge they mobilize is not immune from ideology. Lefebvre impresses upon us the entanglement of the production of that knowledge with the ideologies promoted by ruling regimes. This complicates a neat distinction between the ideologies shaping spatial practice and the expert knowledge mapping that spatial practice onto urban plans or “representations of space.” Hence, Lefebvre reminds us that the relationship between the triad should be analyzed as dialectic rather than as oppositions.

Finally, “representational spaces [are] space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also of some artists…who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate.” I want to note here that I adopt Lefebvre’s fluid and dynamic conceptualization of “representational spaces” but endow urban practitioners with stronger agency (in line with De Certeau’s (1984) theorization) in shaping the production of physical as well as symbolic space, and in turn in disassembling dominant regimes. For me, everyday tactics of urban practitioners impact a society’s spatial texture both materially and symbolically. This qualification aside, the design

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8 Lefebvre (1974), 38.
9 Ibid.
and methodology informing this dissertation project takes seriously Lefebvre’s critique of scholars of “representational spaces” who “nearly always forget to set them alongside those representations of space which coexist, concord or interfere with them; they even more frequently ignore social practice.”\textsuperscript{11}

The methodology I adopt in this project is inspired by Lefebvre’s entreaty to study the production of space through analyzing “the dialectic relationship which exists within the triad of the perceived, the conceived and the lived.”\textsuperscript{12} Hence, in studying the production of space and power dynamics in each of the six neighborhoods undergoing rejuvenation in Istanbul and Cairo, I analyze how each neighborhood is perceived by the organizations and actors who sponsor and fund the rejuvenation project, how the neighborhood is conceived by the urban planning and architectural and legal experts who produce its urban plans, building designs and property controls, and how the neighborhood is lived by the urban practitioners who use everyday tactics to both capitalize upon and resist the project. It is this triad that develops the eco-system I then argue produces practices of governance and citizenship in each neighborhood. As I work with this triad I aim to heed Lefebvre’s warning that: “This distinction must, however, be handled with considerable caution. For one thing, there is a danger of its introducing divisions and defeating the object of the exercise, which is to rediscover the unity of the productive process.”\textsuperscript{13}

I thus build upon Lefebvre’s theorization to pay particular attention to the agency and productivity of the city and its spaces not only as perceived and conceived by the actors sponsoring urban transformation in Istanbul and Cairo but also by those who live both cities. Doing so, I illuminate the eco-systems of interactions that ultimately produce practices of governance and citizenship in the city.

\textsuperscript{11} Lefebvre (1974), 41.
\textsuperscript{12} Lefebvre(1974), 39.
\textsuperscript{13} Lefebvre (1974), 42.
Urban Assemblages and Spatial Agency

To fully capture the forces, actors and practices shaping urban governance however, it is not enough to theorize urban governance and power relations as a product of an eco-system or spatial triad, but it is also essential to widen the arenas of agency that have a potential for shaping governance. In order to fully operationalize thinking about the agency of urban space in shaping politics, I mobilize an epistemic and methodological approach to studying lived urban space that has come to be known as the study of urban “assemblages”. A recent and prolific wave of scholarship (e.g. Latour 1993& 2005; Mitchell 2002; Bennett 2004 & 2005; McFarlane 2011) has developed to recuperate agency amongst an expansive array of actors (both human and non-human) that allows us to think of non-human agency and the politics produced through materials, technologies, and repertoires of knowledge to understand the production of space. As it recuperates such an expansive field of agency, it pays particular attention to the contingent nature of the encounters through which actors and forces interact to shape the political. Jane Bennett (2005) insightfully captures the nature of such assemblages as follows,

“Some actants have sufficient coherence to appear as entities; others, because of their great volatility, fast pace of evolution, or minuteness of scale, are best conceived as forces. Moreover, while individual entities and singular forces each exercise agentic capacities, isn’t there also an agency proper to the groupings they form? This is the agency of assemblages: the distinctive efficacy of a working whole made up, variously, of somatic, technological, cultural, and atmospheric elements.”

The appreciation of such assemblages allows us to widen the field through which we detect the production and distribution of power. Thus, we expand on Gayatri Spivak’s discipline altering question asking, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (Spivak, 1988) to the even more powerful, “Can the Mosquito Speak?” (Mitchell, 2002). Most importantly this approach pays attention not only to the agency of new actors like the non-human but even more importantly the assemblages that

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14 Bennett, (2005), 446-447.
bring them together, even if ephemerally, to reshape the political. This attention to contingency is in conversation with William Sewell’s (2005) methodological call to analyze history as “eventful.” Sewell urges social scientists searching for causal explanation to pay attention to the contingent circumstances that come together to produce “events” that transform dominant structural forces and change the course of history. Assemblage theory builds on “eventful” analysis by expanding the range of actors producing such contingency to the non-human and by seeing circumstances as they come together not only in time (through the time-bound “event”) but also in space. I trace the networks of funding, expert norms, materiality of the built environment, institutional legacies, communal dynamics and practices of meaning-making that contingently come together to assemble the deployment of urban redesign as a technology of rule in Cairo and Istanbul. I thus bring together the study of top-down urban transformation and urban resistances through a study of governance as an eco-system but pay careful attention to the wide arena of human and non-human agency that assembles these eco-systems.

Revisiting the Argument:

In sum, this dissertation argues that one of the main mechanisms through which neo-liberalization and globalization transforms urban governance in developing cities is through the proliferation of projects sponsored by non-state and state actors to holistically redesign the city’s built environment at the scale of urban neighborhoods. A variety of actors including, international NGOs, private sector entrepreneurs, local developmental agencies and newly created state agencies are investing in the redesign of the built environment in order to mobilize it as a political tool. Urban redesign as a political tool is expected to reorder power hierarchies, mold societal beliefs and behaviors, generate new economic resources, alleviate poverty and shape collective memory. This political tool is mobilized differently in Istanbul and Cairo,
however. In Cairo, where a neo-liberalizing state retreated from governing, urban redesign is mobilized by a wide variety of actors as a political tool to replace the political work once expected from the state. In Istanbul, with a revived and strong post-millennial state, urban redesign is mobilized by a much narrower set of regulated non-state and state agencies as a complement to a larger state project of governance aimed at grappling with the opportunities and paradoxes of globalization, rather than replacing the state. Comparing urban transformation in Cairo and Istanbul reveals that neo-liberal governance, with the retreat of the state as in Cairo, is antithetical to the “commodification” of the city’s built environment into exchangeable goods to be consumed as property and image. Rather, it requires the presence of a strong state for the realization of projects aimed at commodification, if they are ever realized as such.

What my dissertation also demonstrates is that urban governance is a product of an ecosystem of interactions between these top-down urban transformation plans and the practices of urban dwellers who capitalize upon and resist these top-down plans in an effort to empower their own vision of the city. Contemporary practices of urban redesign rely on two fundamental characteristics that shape the transformation of the urban dwellers’ “lived city” no matter which political agendas the sponsors of rejuvenation hope to empower. The contemporary mobilization of urban redesign as a technology of rule works to entitle the city with new political personhood that constructs rights for the city’s built environment not just its inhabitants. Moreover the plans and rights crafted for urban neighborhoods often work to “de-socialize” contemporary lived neighborhoods. It is the mobilization of urban redesign to empower a plethora of political agendas that often work to “de-socialize” lived city spaces that is then at the heart of contestation over the city’s spaces and definitions of citizenship in Istanbul and Cairo.
Part II: Research Design

To study the impact of globalization and neo-liberalization on the governance of developing cities, I designed my research to focus on the contentious implementation of six urban rejuvenation projects in Istanbul and Cairo. I focused on projects implemented in historical neighborhoods of the city.

Case Selection: Cairo and Istanbul

I chose to compare Istanbul and Cairo for several reasons. The two cities are similar on several important fronts. First, being two of the three megalopolises of the Middle East, Istanbul and Cairo provide many of the urban dynamics characteristic of developing cities at this scale. Second, both cities, being in the same region, share similar historical experiences with the Ottoman Empire, modern Mediterranean trade and direct intervention/colonialism from Western powers. This was particularly influential in creating similar epochs of cosmopolitan and nationalist orientations in both cities. They also thus grapple with similar identity cleavages, especially along religious lines. Third, both cities have long multi-layered histories that provide numerous opportunities for historic preservation and cultural production.

Finally, I chose to compare the two cities because both Egypt and Turkey faced the same crisis and failure of state-led inward-looking import-substitution-industrialization projects followed by sudden openness to global networks in the 1980s (see Waterbury 1983; Keyder 1987; Mitchell 2002; Adly 2013) but with dramatically different results for the strength of the state as a governing institution. Both the Egyptian and Turkish states faced major crises of government, underwent liberalization and the retrenchment of the state from the economy and governance in the 1980s but, as explained below, the Turkish state was able to revive itself by the mid-2000s whilst the Egyptian state remained largely absent from the governance of the city.
throughout the 2000s and until the writing of this dissertation in 2014. This difference between the strength of the Egyptian state and the Turkish state post-2005 had a significant impact on the actors and practices shaping urban rejuvenation in Cairo and Istanbul. Most importantly, it dramatically shaped the divergent political work urban redesign was mobilized to perform in Cairo and Istanbul post-2005. Such divergence allowed me to analytically parse the differences between the impacts of globalization and neo-liberalization on the governance of developing cities. Whilst both Cairo and Istanbul were undergoing intense globalization during the implementation of the urban rejuvenation projects under study here, only the rejuvenation projects implemented in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 were designed in accordance to political logics motivated by the retreat of the state and the neo-liberalization of governance. The rejuvenation projects implemented in Istanbul after 2005 were initiated and implemented under the tutelage of a strong revived state grappling with globalization but not neo-liberalization as defined by the retreat of the state from governing. The many characteristics that make Istanbul and Cairo so similar make this divergence in state strength even more striking and provides me with the analytical leverage to focus on the impact of state strength on the governance of globalizing cities.

I turn now to a short discussion of the politico-economic dynamics that shaped the divergent trajectories Turkey and Egypt took after the failure of their experiments with ISI. In Turkey, the failure of the country’s experiment with state-led ISI and the economic crisis that ensued was dramatically followed by the country’s bloodiest military coup in 1980. The first civilian government after the coup led by Prime Minister Turgat Özal implemented drastic reforms to retrench the state’s involvement in the economy and reverse the insular economic policies of the 1960s and 1970s. As Adly (2013) explains at length, these retrenching and
liberalizing reforms were very selective in nature. As the state cut down its expenditures across the board it built and invested in a state-led program to support export-led growth. It invested in subsidizing and coordinating manufacturing efforts geared at outside markets to undercut rising exporters, and especially the Asian Tigers.\textsuperscript{15} The biggest beneficiary from this program were the group of Anatolian textile manufacturers that came to be known as the “Anatolian Tigers” and eventually formed the base for the Refah Party that brought the first party with an Islamic platform to power in the modern Turkish Republic’s history in 1997, and eventually became the base for the Justice and Development Party (AKP) dominating Turkish Politics throughout the 2000s, and until the writing of this dissertation in 2014.\textsuperscript{16} Export-led growth proved a major success for the Turkish state and eventually brought about a rise in GDP per capita “from 2000 dollars in the year 2002 to almost 10,000 in 2010 despite population growth.”\textsuperscript{17} Adly (2013) argues for the sustainability of this economic revival because it was based on real value-added in the export manufacturing sector, as opposed to the artificial growth spurt that Egypt experiences as discussed below. Such an economic revival was the first step for the return of confidence in the Turkish state as a governing organization.

Another arena where the state targeted its limited resources was the implementation of two programs of urban management, especially in Istanbul. The first was a program led by Mayor Bedrettin Dalan of Istanbul in the 1980s to de-industrialize the city,\textsuperscript{18} moving industry to the periphery and outside the city, and to transform its infrastructure. Dalan’s infrastructural program was mostly geared at the creation of new transportation networks, which did not shy

\textsuperscript{15} Adly (2013), 28-69.
\textsuperscript{16} For more information on the importance of export-led growth and the Anatolian tigers to the growing power of both the Refah and AK Parties, see M. Hakan Yavuz, (2009), chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{17} Adly (2013), 2.
\textsuperscript{18} Bezmez (2009).
away from razing entire zones of the city to make way for new boulevards and highways, \(^{19}\) geared towards making Istanbul more accessible to global capital. \(^{20}\) Second, as state coffers started to regain some health in the early 1990s, members of the Refah Party who were newly elected to municipality positions, and most notably Recep Tayyip Erdoğan elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994, implemented a vigorous targeted program of urban services provision. They dedicated all the efforts of state municipalities to providing basic urban services to local constituencies that included proper garbage collection, repairing Istanbul’s sewage and water networks and continuing Dalan’s efforts to cleanse industrial waste from Istanbul’s waterways, and especially the Golden Horn. Successfully restoring local services that had steadily declined in Istanbul since the minority populations’ and merchant classes’ exodus and intense industrialization of the city in the 1950s was one of the main contributing factors to the gradual restoration of the citizens’ faith in and reliance upon the state as a governing organization. \(^{21}\) As the Turkish state was retrenching and liberalizing to slash entire social welfare and security programs and privatizing state industrial and agricultural enterprise, the state simultaneously targeted the limited resources it had at very specific programs mainly geared towards export-led growth and urban management that led to its revival both as an economic power and an authority trusted by Turkish citizens as a governing organization once more.

The first official indication of the state’s revived strength that is relevant to Istanbul’s contemporary governance was the legislation of the “Preservation and Renewal Law” no. 5366 by the AKP-majority Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The law popularly referred to as the introduced a whole new era in the state’s interventionism in Istanbul’s governance. Through the


\(^{20}\) For analysis of the impact of these infrastructural projects on the topography of property and real estate value in the historical districts, see chapter 3 on property rights of the dissertation.

\(^{21}\) For importance of urban services program to the rise of the Refah and AK party see Yavuz (2009), pg. 62-64.
law, state agencies were given the power to designate particular neighborhoods in historical zones of the city as debilitated “renewal areas” and sanction the implementation of holistic urban rejuvenation projects, either by state agencies or private sector winners of state bids, in these neighborhood-level “renewal areas.” Importantly, the law decreed that the implementers of urban rejuvenation projects under law no. 5366 were allowed to condemn and take private property of owners who fail to negotiate necessary property transfers with the sponsors of the rejuvenation project through “emergency nationalization.” The amount of power given to the state and its private sector partners in overriding citizens’ contestation of the condemnation of their property signaled the return of a stronger and more interventionist state than Turkey had seen in decades. The Turkish legislature then expanded the same “emergency nationalization” powers of the state to the condemnation of property, outside historical neighborhoods and in middle-class neighborhoods, seen as unsafe in the event of earthquakes or natural disaster through the “Afet Yasası” or “Disaster Law” in May of 2012.

Although the question of the institutional and non-institutional factors that led to the Turkish state’s ability to grapple with the adversities brought about by failed ISI experimentation is an important and highly debated one (e.g. Aricanli and Rodrik 1990; Rodrik 1993; Öniş 1999; Buğra and Keyder 2006; Adly 2013), in this dissertation I am most interested in how different levels of state strength, confidence and interventionism impact the political logics shaping urban rejuvenation in Istanbul, and not in adjudicating how the state’s revival was achieved. As such I consider the pre-2005 projects, namely the European Union (EU) project in Fener-Balat in my sample, to be implemented within an environment of relative state retreat from governance, and rejuvenation projects implemented after the legislation of Law no. 5366 in 2005, namely the
entrepreneurial GAP İnşaat project in Tarlabası and state-led Mass Housing Authority (TOKİ) project in Sulukule in my sample, as operating under the tutelage of a strong interventionist state.

The Egyptian state followed a very different trajectory after the failure of its experimentation with ISI. First of all, Egypt experienced a much more gradual liberalization process than did Turkey. Gamal Abdel Nasser was seen as the President who oversaw the implementation of the most interventionist state policies with land reforms, nationalization of industry and private enterprise and the expansion of a welfare program. Nasser’s socialist programs were dismantled through a two-step process. First, after the 1973 war and the normalization of Egyptian-Israeli relations, Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat saw that he had enough strength as a president to implement a package of reforms meant to liberalize the economy that came to be known as the “infitah” or “open-door policy.” Through these policies Sadat removed trade barriers to increase private sector involvement in an outward-oriented economy. Sadat did not, however, dismantle the state’s welfare program or fast-growing bureaucracy. Moreover, the state had not gone through a dramatic crisis prompting its retreat from governing and remained an important authority in Cairo’s governance. The Egyptian state faced true economic crisis however with a major debt crisis in 1991 under the leadership of Hosni Mubarak. It was this crisis that led to an accelerated program of state retrenchment in Egypt with heavy involvement from the IMF and World Bank. This marked Egypt’s entry into its “Washington Consensus” era. In Egypt’s case retrenchment translated into an acceleration of the state’s retreat from governing (already started in the 1980s), the privatization of state industry and the gradual reduction of the state bureaucracy and state subsidies (an ongoing process until the writing of the dissertation in 2014). Egypt’s economic liberalization did not

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22 For analysis of Sadat’s urban policy in Cairo see Ghannam (2002), chapter 2.
23 For analysis of Egypt’s program of IMF-led retrenchment see Mitchell (2002), chapters 7-9.
bring about the economic revival advocates of privatization had hoped for, and definitely did not in any way compare to the economic health and revival seen in Turkey. Although Egypt’s economy did experience a boom era from 2003 to 2008, the growth indicators were largely based on tourism and the export of raw materials rather than a growth in the country’s manufacturing productive base that would have brought more stable and sustainable growth, as Adly (2013) argues. The most important implications of the state’s retreat from governing to my study of Cairo’s governance were: a) severe decline in urban services, b) the introduction of major limitations on urban rent control legislated in 1996 and c) the development of informality as a modus operandi that came to define the state’s relationship with its citizens, as well as new governing actors such as the non-state sponsors of urban rejuvenation under study in this dissertation. As Sims (2011) demonstrates, the Egyptian state’s active intervention in Cairo’s governance since the 1991 crisis has been restricted to infrastructural investment in building a number of bridges and tunnels to dilute Cairo’s heaviest traffic bottlenecks, and the military’s rampant sale of army-owned lands in the desert periphery of Cairo to real estate developers at symbolic prices. The state had effectively retreated from governing Cairo.

In sum, as this analysis demonstrates, urban governance in Istanbul after 2005 operates under the leadership of a strong interventionist state whilst urban governance in Cairo operates within an environment of state retreat from governing. Hence, the political logics motivating the investment in urban rejuvenation projects in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 are shaped by the

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24 For elaboration on the failures of Egypt’s experiment with privatization see Mitchell (2002), chapter 9.
26 For in-depth discussions of the nature of informal state-citizen relations in Cairo’s popular and informal neighborhoods, see Singerman (1995) and Ismail (2006) respectively.
27 See chapter 3 of the dissertation on property rights for a discussion of the changing laws on rent control, and the state’s “informal” relations with the non-state sponsors of urban rejuvenation in Cairo.
28 It is a running joke amongst Egyptians that Mubarak’s greatest achievement during his 30 years as president was building a handful of bridges and tunnels in Cairo.
retreat of the state from governing the city, while the rejuvenation projects initiated and implemented after 2005 in Istanbul are shaped by the presence of a strong interventionist state.

Case Selection: Six Neighborhood Rejuvenation Projects

To capture the variety of actors investing in the rejuvenation of both cities, I study urban rejuvenation projects sponsored by three types of organized actors in each of Cairo and Istanbul: an international NGO, a private sector entrepreneur, and a state agency. I turn now to providing short descriptions of each of the six projects. The philosophies and implementation of the projects are discussed throughout the dissertation’s chapters but I provide a brief orientation here. I start with the projects in Cairo.

The international organization Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) sponsored an urban rejuvenation project in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo. As described above, the AKDN is self-described as a network of “private, international, non-denominational development organizations” based in Geneva and founded by the Aga Khan, the leader of an Ismaili Shi’ite sect of Muslims. The Aga Khan serves as the head of the organization’s board of directors but is not the sole funder of the organization. Darb El-Ahmar is a Cairene neighborhood located within the zone of the city officially categorized as “Historic Cairo” and popularly known as “Islamic Cairo” (see zone 1 in Figure 2). The AKDN’s rejuvenation project in Darb El-Ahmar was initiated in 1997 under the auspices of the AKDN’s subsidiary organization, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The urban rejuvenation project followed the AKTC’s first project in Cairo: the construction of the 74-acre Azhar Park in place of a 500 year-old garbage dump bordering Darb El-Ahmar neighborhood. After the Aga Khan had declared that he was gifting Azhar Park to Cairo in the presence of former first lady, Suzanne Mubarak, the Aga Khan and President Hosni Mubarak personally signed an agreement giving the AKTC authority to implement its project in

Darb El-Ahmar. The AKTC’s project in Cairo received funding from several funding partners alongside the AKDN that included the Ford Foundation, the Egyptian state’s Social Development Fund, the Egyptian-Swiss Development Fund and the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE). The project’s activities included investment in “micro-credit for business development and housing rehabilitation, employment-generation, as well as direct investment in the restoration of monuments, the re-use of historic buildings, and the improvement of small-scale infrastructure and open spaces.”30 The project operated its urban rejuvenation project in Darb El-Ahmar from 1997 until its exit in 2012 (with the exception of a small number of programs including their micro-credit operations).

The state agency, Historic Cairo Organization (HCO) led by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, funded and led an urban rejuvenation project in Gamaliyyah neighborhood with a focus on El-Mu’ez Street. Gamaliyyah is also located within the boundaries of Cairo’s Historic City but is even more central than Darb El-Ahmar as it is located within Cairo’s historical city gates (see zone 2 in Figure 2). The HCO is an organization that was proposed by the Minister of Culture Farouk Hosny to the Prime Ministry. It is organized as an umbrella organization under the office of the Prime Ministry that encompassed five state agencies: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Communities, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Religious Endowments (’Awqaf) and the Governorate of Cairo. Each of the ministerial arms contributed funding for the parts of the project that involved their ministry, but the Ministry of Culture contributed the bulk of the investment and officially led the project. The Ministry of Culture’s funds came exclusively from the tourist entry fees to Egyptian antiquities collected by its subsidiary Supreme Council of Antiquities.31 The project was started in the year 2000 and the

30 Aga Khan Trust for Culture (2005), 3.
31 Mohamed Rashidy, Personal Interview, Zamalek, Cairo, 9-19-2011.
restoration of El Mu'ez Street was completed and open to the public in 2010. The project was ongoing in areas of Gamaliyyah adjacent to El Mu'ez Street as of January of 2012.

Finally, the private sector investment company Ismailia Consortium was founded in order to invest in the rejuvenation of Wust El-Balad or Downtown Cairo (see zone 3 on Figure 2). Downtown Cairo lies outside of the bounds of Historic Cairo and was first planned and built under the tutelage of Khedive Ismail, a royal descendent of Mehmet Ali Pasha, in the 1860s and 1870s. The neighborhood was originally called El-Ismailia in honor of Khedive Ismail, inspiring the Consortium’s name. The main investors in the Consortium, as of June of 2014, were the Egyptian billionaire Samih Sawiras, member of the richest family in Egypt and majority owner of Orascom Hotels and Development, the private Saudi real estate investor Sulaiman Abanumay’s inheritors and the Saudi private equity firm Sherket Amwal El Khaleej. The Consortium was capitalized at 385 million Egyptian Pounds at the time. The project commenced in 2008. By June of 2014 the Consortium had bought 21 entire apartment buildings, fulfilling half of the project’s ultimate goal of buying 40 of Wust El-Balad’s renown historic apartment buildings (known as ‘amayer Wust El-Balad). The project was ongoing at the time of the writing of the dissertation in 2014 and the Consortium had not yet started to refurbish the buildings or implement any of its plans to transform public spaces and infrastructure surrounding the newly owned buildings.

Figure 1 (below): This is a map of Greater Cairo (Governorates of Cairo and Giza) roughly bounded by the Ring Road that was built to surround the city in the mid-1990s but does not include the newly built satellite cities that are currently expanding to the east and west of the artificial boundary produced by the Ring Road. The Ring Road is depicted in orange on the map.

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33 For details on Khedive Ismail’s project to transform Cairo see Mitchell(1988), pg. 64-69.
The three neighborhoods under investigation are depicted as blue polygons in the center of the city.\footnote{“Cairo, Egypt,” [map]. 2014. Scale undetermined; generated by Sarah El-Kazaz, using “Zee Source ZeeMaps, Inc.” https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1107483 (9-7-2014).}

Figure 2: This map focuses on central Cairo to provide a closer delineation of the three investigated neighborhoods in adjacent neighborhoods in the city.\footnote{“Central Cairo, Egypt,” [map]. 2014. Scale undetermined; generated by Sarah El-Kazaz, using “Zee Source ZeeMaps, Inc.” https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1107483 (9-7-2014).}
I turn now to the projects in Istanbul. The international inter-governmental organization the European Union (EU) funded the implementation of an urban rehabilitation project in Fener and Balat neighborhoods. Fener and Balat are adjoining neighborhoods located on Istanbul’s Golden Horn, and officially considered within Istanbul’s Historic Peninsula, a World Heritage Site (see zone 1 of Figure 4). Fener is home to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul. Both neighborhoods were known for being inhabited by minority communities, mainly minorities of Greek heritage in Fener and Istanbul’s Jewish minority in Balat, before the exodus of minorities in the 1950s. The idea behind the rehabilitation of Fener-Balat was first initiated by the urban planning and conservation experts attending the second meeting of UN Habitat in Istanbul in 1996. The experts then conducted feasibility studies for the project under the auspices of UNESCO in 1997-1998. The team of experts then approached the European Union with the proposal to sponsor the funding and implementation of the project. The EU agreed and signed a preliminary agreement with Fatih Municipality (the jurisdiction within which Fener-Balat is administered in Istanbul) to jointly fund the rehabilitation project. The original agreement was that each of the EU and the municipality would contribute seven million Euros to the project. The project was then arbitrarily stalled due to a change in municipality leadership and was not honored again until 2003. In 2003 the EU was given the authority to implement the rehabilitation project in coordination with the municipality but the municipality was not going to contribute financially to the project. According to Burçin Altınsay, the former local Co-Director of the technical team of the EU project in Fener-Balat, the municipality argued that they had already contributed over seven million Euros in refurbishing the neighborhood’s services and

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38 Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012.
39 The product of the study was compiled as the following edited volume: Remi Stoquart and Nurdane Çağlar (eds.), Réhabilitation des Quartiers de Balat et de Fener (péninsule historique d’Istanbul): Diagnostic et Proposition D’Amenagement, (Union Européenne, UNESCO, 1998).
infrastructure during the interim five years. The EU then started the implementation of its four-pronged project of “restoration of houses, social rehabilitation, renovation of the historical Balat Market and establishment of a waste management strategy” funded in full by the EU’s allocation of seven million Euros, but with technical support from the municipality. The EU’s project was then completed with the organization’s exit from the neighborhood in June of 2008. I argue that the EU’s project in Fener-Balat was planned within an environment of Turkish state retreat from governing and thus adopts political logics meant to replace rather than bolster the state’s project. I also argue that as the first holistic rehabilitation project to be implemented in Istanbul its branding as a “success” in rejuvenating Fener-Balat set the stage for the adoption of urban redesign as a technology of rule in post-1980s Istanbul.

The two other projects I study in Istanbul were initiated through the invocation of Law no. 5366. The state agency, Turkey’s Mass Housing Authority or TOKİ, funded and implemented an urban rejuvenation project in Sulukule neighborhood (see zone 2 of Figure 4). The state declared the area largely known as Sulukule that actually refers to the two smaller adjoining neighborhoods, Neslişah and Hatice Sultan, as a “renewal area” in April of 2006, and it was to be renewed through collaboration between TOKİ, Fatih Municipality and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Sulukule is located within the boundaries of Istanbul’s Historic Peninsula further inland from Fener-Balat. The neighborhood is known to be populated by a high concentration of a population that identifies as Roma. I designated TOKİ, then headed by

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40 Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012.
42 I discuss the reasoning behind the EU’s decision to enlist Fatih Municipality as a collaborating partner in chapter 3 on property rights.
Erdoğan Bayraktar the former Minister of Environment and Urban Planning, as the sponsor of the project because although Municipality mayors are highly visible during formal planning sessions and any interactions between TOKİ and Sulukule’s population, it was TOKİ that funded and implemented the project. TOKİ is a state agency that was created in 1984 as a Mass Housing Authority to operate under the offices of the Prime Ministry. It was originally created to manage the country’s social housing programs. TOKİ’s role changed dramatically after 2002. According to Kuyucu and Ünsal (2010), one of the major responses of the newly-elected AKP government to the economic crisis of 2001 was the reformulation of TOKİ or what they translate as the MHA. They argue,

“As a result of numerous legal reforms passed between 2002 and 2008, the MHA became the sole agency to regulate the zoning and sale of almost all state-owned urban land (excluding military land). These reforms authorised the MHA to construct ‘for-profit’ housing on state land either by its own subsidiary firms or through public–private partnerships, in order to raise revenues for public housing construction. Furthermore, the MHA acquired the power of making planning/zoning revisions in gecekondu [informal housing] transformation zones and the right to expropriate property in these areas.”

In relation to Sulukule, the rights to all the private property that was transferred to the government, either through voluntary negotiations or forced “emergency nationalization,” were transferred directly to TOKİ. TOKİ then funded the razing of all but the three buildings protected as historical buildings within its project zone, and the construction of a new housing development in its place. The construction of the new buildings was completed in 2012 and the first houses were transferred to their new owners on June 26th of 2012. Only two weeks before the new owners received their houses, on the 12th of June of 2012, the courts produced an “iptal

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47 Kuyucu and Ünsal (2010), 1485.
karar” or a decision that revoked official approval of the Sulukule project on the grounds that it was harmful to the people. Although the “iptal karar” was seen as a symbolic victory for activism against the razing of the neighborhood, it came after the neighborhood had physically been removed and so could not actually undo the reality of the project. Eventually, TOKİ continued to have control over new property in the neighborhood.

Finally, the private sector construction company GAP İnşaat funded and implemented an urban rejuvenation project in Tarlabası, Istanbul (see zone 3 in Figure 4). In 2006, the state declared specified parameters within the greater neighborhood of Tarlabası (known as Tarlabası Phase 1) a renewal area in accordance to Law no. 5366 and a bid was opened for its renewal in early 2007. GAP İnşaat, subsidiary of the major conglomerate, Çalık Holding, most well-known as a media conglomerate, was declared winner of the bid for urban renewal and signed an agreement to that effect with Beyoğlu Municipality on the 4th of April of 2007. The agreement with the municipality entitled GAP to fund, plan and implement the urban renewal project within the parameters of Tarlabası Phase 1. As with TOKİ, rights to all the private property that was transferred to the government, either through voluntary negotiations or forced “emergency nationalization,” were transferred directly to GAP (and not the municipality). The project was stalled for several years due to contestation in the courts led by an oppositional neighborhood council, discussed in chapter 3, but the buildings within the project were eventually evacuated by 2011 and first construction efforts in the neighborhood started in 2012.

Figure 3 (below): This is a map of Istanbul that shows both its Asian and European sides. Greater Istanbul extends further east and west than the figure presents. The three neighborhoods under investigation are depicted as blue polygons and are all located on the European side of the city.

50 Nilgun Kivircik, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 7-4-2012.
Figure 4: This map focuses Istanbul’s historic center to provide a closer delineation of the three investigated neighborhoods in adjacent zones of the city.52

To study the eco-system of practices through which each of the six neighborhoods is governed I follow a methodology, explained above, that draws on Lefebvre’s (1974) theorization of the production of space. To re-iterate, I study how each neighborhood is perceived, conceived

and lived. First, I study how each neighborhood is “perceived” by the sponsors who invested in its rejuvenation. I examine the political agenda each actor hopes to empower through urban rejuvenation and the political work they see necessary to achieve that goal. Here I interrogate the ways in which they believe urban redesign will perform that political work. Second, I study the “conception” of the neighborhood as urban planning experts translate the funders’ perceptions into implementable plans for the redesign of the neighborhood. Conception includes planning the redesign of the neighborhood’s spaces and buildings, as well as endowing the neighborhood’s built environment with the rights experts believe are necessary for urban redesign to perform the political work expected of it. Through tracing the joint production of these urban plans and construction of rights, I reveal how experts’ technical concerns for buildings’ health and survival accumulate to justify the case for and eventual acceptance of new rights and entitlements for the built environment. What appear at first to be purely scientific, technical and apolitical decisions produce a new political configuration of rights and entitlements in Istanbul and Cairo. Third, I study the practices of urban dwellers through which the city is “lived.” I study the everyday tactics through which urban dwellers capitalize upon and resist urban rejuvenation projects to empower their visions for the city. Focusing my research on the moment of transformation of the neighborhood thus allows me to reveal the ways in which urban dwellers see spatial arrangement as productive politically, in reordering power hierarchies and communal dynamics, transforming mechanisms of security, commemorating particular histories over others, and so on. Studying the ‘lived’ neighborhood at the moment of transformation I reveal what’s at stake about the urban built environment’s spatial arrangement for the dwellers who live, work in and navigate the city as they negotiate their political positioning and subjectivity on a daily basis. The four empirical chapters of the dissertation are organized such that they follow this logic. The first studies the
projects’ perceptions of society and how urban redesign is expected to mold it. The second and third chapters study the “conception” of the neighborhood. The second chapter studies the mobilization of an architectural technique, the rendering of city spaces visible or invisible, by experts redesigning the city, and the disruptions that technique creates for the lived city. The third chapter traces the construction of rights for city buildings and spaces, through a study of private property regimes crafted to protect each rejuvenation project’s plans for the neighborhood. Finally, I dedicate the fourth chapter to the everyday tactics of urban dwellers in the “lived” city, with special emphasis on how the materiality of the ‘historical’ built environment shapes those tactics. Ultimately, I bring together my analysis of these four facets of the transformation of neighborhoods to illuminate practices of governance in each neighborhood, and how understandings of citizen rights and responsibilities are transforming and resisted in Cairo and Istanbul.

A Focus on Historical Neighborhoods

I chose to focus my study on urban rejuvenation projects taking place in historical neighborhoods in the centers of Istanbul and Cairo for three main reasons. First, historical neighborhoods have long lived histories with existent communities who have developed relationships with neighborhood’s residential, commercial and leisurely spaces, as well as vested interests in the manipulation of property rights in the neighborhood over elongated periods of time. Historical neighborhoods are also geographically at the center of many of the navigational networks of the city. Thus, many of the city’s dwellers who live outside the neighborhood visit and navigate these neighborhoods’ spaces on a daily basis. In other words, I was keen to study neighborhoods that had developed through long historical trajectories to become central to so many of the city’s dwellers in different capacities. Their transformation thus creates very
different dynamics from the building of new enclosed suburban complexes on the city’s peripheral and undeveloped lands.

Second, I chose to study historical neighborhoods because I was interested in investigating the links between urban redesign and cultural production. Historical neighborhoods are rich in Istanbul and Cairo with an urban fabric, both of buildings designated as monuments and others simply deemed historical, that are linked to many historical epochs. As a result, they are neighborhoods where a struggle over contested city spaces is saliently linked to struggles over historical commemoration, identity struggles and practices of cultural production more generally. Finally, I chose to limit the study to formal historical neighborhoods because the dynamics of their development and planning are quite distinct from informal neighborhoods in Cairo and Istanbul. Keeping my focus on the formal city, I thus avoid adding even more analytical layers to my study of the processes shaping urban governance.

**Methods:**

I conducted in-depth case studies of the six urban rejuvenation projects through qualitative fieldwork in Cairo and Istanbul. I conducted preliminary fieldwork trips over the summers of 2009 and 2010. I then spent 6 months in Cairo and 5 months in Istanbul in 2011-2012 to conduct the bulk of my fieldwork. For data collection, I relied on in-depth semi-structured interviews with planners of each project, state officials and dwellers/workers in each of these neighborhoods. During my fieldwork in 2011-2012, I conducted 25 in-depth interviews with planners/government officials in Cairo and interviewed 70 private individuals from the neighborhoods. In Istanbul, I also conducted 23 interviews with planners/government officials and around 65 interviews with neighborhood residents/workers. Around 85% of these in-depth
interviews are audio-recorded. I also collected large amounts of documentary materials for each of the projects from the planners of the projects, as well as any organized opposition groups to the projects. The materials include social and architectural surveys, urban plans and redesign maps, court records, brochures, archived meeting minutes and written correspondence between the relevant actor and state institutions. Finally, I conducted numerous hours of participant observation in each of the neighborhoods. I spent many hours visiting the homes of families that had restored their homes as part of rejuvenation projects in Cairo and Istanbul, participated in neighborhood women’s crafts workshops, regularly attended urban activist groups’ meetings in Istanbul, helped urban activists in building/designing a neighborhood garden and cooking food for residents of Tarlabası, Istanbul, attended neighborhood council meetings, attended state-led ceremonies to award residents newly completed homes in Sulukule, Istanbul and participated in activist protests and press releases.

In drawing upon my interviews and participant observation to write up the dissertation, I identify the protagonists I met throughout my fieldwork under two different categories. The first category is composed of the government officials, project directors and urban planning experts who fund, design and implement the rejuvenation projects. All people who fall within this category are identified by name and not anonymized in my analysis. They all gave me written consent to do so. The second category is composed of the community members who reside, work visit, or organize oppositional activism in the neighborhood that I interviewed and encountered during my fieldwork. All members of this category are anonymized. I use pseudonyms to identify those protagonists that provide the reader with enough context whilst keeping their identity anonymous.
Chapter Summaries:

Chapter one examines how urban redesign is mobilized to engineer social transformation in Cairo and Istanbul. It is dedicated to the first set of the triad of practices identified by Lefebvre (1974) to shape the city’s eco-system of governance: “perception.” In other words, it focuses on the big picture strategies of top-down governance. The main aim of this chapter is to demonstrate empirically the ways in which the diverse rejuvenation sponsors under study all invest in urban redesign as a political tool. In particular, it examines rejuvenation sponsors’ belief that urban redesign is capable of molding societal behaviors and cultural values, and traces the architectural techniques through which they work to produce particular socio-cultural transformation.

Although funders invest in the rejuvenation of urban neighborhoods to produce a wide array of political outcomes, I chose to focus on the engineering of social and cultural change because it most starkly illuminates the characteristics of the governing regimes each sponsor believed should govern Istanbul and Cairo. The chapter both traces the rejuvenation sponsors’ beliefs about the productivity of urban redesign as a tool for molding socio-cultural transformation and the architectural techniques they actually deploy to empower the specific socio-cultural transformations they aspired to. Studying both beliefs and architectural techniques ensures that I triangulate my evidence regarding the rejuvenation sponsors’ strategies and shed light on multiple facets of their strategic deployment of urban redesign as a political tool. In addition to demonstrating that rejuvenation sponsors do in fact invest in urban redesign as a political tool for molding societal behavior and cultural values, the chapter contributes to two additional scholarly conversations. First, it revealed the difference between the neo-liberalization of urban governance and neo-liberal modes of governmentality. I demonstrate that the neo-liberalization of urban governance produces a mosaic of governmental regimes working to empower different
political agendas in adjacent neighborhoods. Importantly, however, not all such governing
regimes aspire to produce new practices of “neo-liberal governmentality” as famously defined by
Rose (1996). In fact, of the six projects under study only the two international developmental
organizations aspired to produce such “neo-liberal governmentality” in Cairo and Istanbul.
Second, it revealed that rejuvenation sponsors believed that the eradication of societal behaviors
that might harm buildings were amongst the rights that buildings should be entitled to in Cairo
and Istanbul.

Chapter two examines the management of the visibility of neighborhood buildings and
spaces as one of the main architectural techniques through which the sponsors of rejuvenation
produce their divergent political agendas. This chapter is part of a two chapter sequence that
examines the second set of the triad of practices identified by Lefebvre (1974) to shape the city’s
eco-system of governance: “conception.” This chapter focuses on the architectural conception of
the neighborhood through tracing the decisions of architects, urban planners and conservationists
to render a neighborhood’s built environment visible and invisible. I made this decision because
the transformation of a city’s image into an image that is visibly consumed by new global
audiences is widely seen in the literature as one of the main impacts of globalization and neo-
liberalization on urban governance. I trace the processes through which this city image is
produced to carefully interrogate the literature’s assumptions about the impact of both forces on
urban governance. Moreover, this strategy was corroborated by the fact that the urban planners,
architects and conservations designing rejuvenation in Cairo and Istanbul that I encountered
during my research were consistently fixated on the visibility of spaces and the visual image of
the neighborhood as central to their urban plan. To provide a nuanced understanding of the
mechanics of globalization and neo-liberalization, the chapter first traced how each project’s
political agenda shaped the ways in which they deployed visibility as an architectural technique; demonstrating the multiple political logics through which the city’s image is produced and unseating the literature’s focus on the consumption of space as the sole logic shaping that image.

The chapter then traced the specific disruptions to urban livelihood that were produced by each distinct regime governing the visibility of a neighborhood’s spaces, and its image. Tracing that disruption illuminated how important spatial and building design was to the development of networks of sociability and political engagement amongst the neighborhoods’ dwellers.

Chapter three examines the new property rights regimes set and implemented by the sponsors of urban rejuvenation in Cairo and Istanbul. The second chapter in the sequence dedicated to studying the city’s “conception,” this chapter focuses on “conception” through the legal and non-legal techniques deployed by project experts to protect redesigned buildings from unadulterated market exchange and from their owners. It traces the practices through which rejuvenation sponsors work to construct new rights for neighborhood buildings through justifying and implementing new controls on property usage and transfers. The chapter focuses on property rights specifically because it is the arena of conceived protections that provoked the fiercest struggles between project implementers and neighborhood communities. The study of private property regimes contributes to two scholarly debates. First, it contributes to a scholarly conversation in political science that debates the importance of property rights to political and economic development and the explanations for variation in the implementation of property rights. Second, it contributes to a scholarly conversation about the “variegation” (Brenner et al. 2010) of the impact of neo-liberalization and globalization on urban governance from one city to the next. Comparing the techniques deployed by rejuvenation projects implementing a similar set
of property controls across Istanbul and Cairo I reveal the impact of institutional and non-institutional city-level legacies on the transformation of the governance of property in each city.

Finally, chapter four examines the everyday tactics through which urban dwellers resist and capitalize upon rejuvenation projects as they grapple with the disruptions created through the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool. The chapter is thus dedicated to the third set of the triad of practices identified by Lefebvre (1974) to shape the city’s eco-system of governance: “lived city.” It seeks to illuminate the eco-systemic nature of governance through studying how everyday practices of urban dwellers subvert the strategies of top-down governance to shape reality on the ground and ultimately transform the city’s governance. The chapter focuses on the everyday tactics that are specifically practiced by dwellers of ‘historical neighborhoods’ in order to trace how everyday tactics of resistance are shaped by the materiality of the urban built environment surrounding urban dwellers. Because the chapter is dedicated to tracing the micro-dynamics of that relationship it focuses on informal everyday tactics rather than large-scale social movements. The chapter contributes to two scholarly debates. First, it interrogates the tensions created with taking “archive fever” (Derrida 1996) outside the confines of the archive and into the bustling lived city. Second, it contributes to a scholarly conversation dedicated to studying the mechanisms that shape modes of political resistance by tracing the impact of the materiality of the built environment on modes of everyday resistances.
Chapter 1 -- Perception:

Engineering “Community” Through Architecture

A Tale of Two Rooftops:

“In the winter, everyone would go up to the roof in the morning and spend the day there. We would have breakfast together, and if one woman has something sweet she would add it, and if another woman has something she would add it. In the summer, we would go up to the roof at night after sunset, and the girls would play together, and the men and youth would play cards together, and the older women would sit together chattering away,” remembered Umm Hassan nostalgically as we climbed the stairs up to the rooftop of Beit El Kharazaty in Darb El-Asfar Alley of Gamaliyyah in Historic Cairo.

Umm Hassan had grown up in Beit El Kharazaty that was built in 1881 as a single extended family unit’s house. By the time Umm Hassan was born into Beit El Kharazaty her family was sharing the many rooms of the house with twenty-four other families. The roof provided not only communal space for the twenty-five families but also the cool breeze and clean air they couldn’t get access to in their confined rooms.54

Beit El Kharazaty’s curse was that it was architecturally conjoined to the four centuries-old Beit El Suheimy. In 1994 NADIM, a private conservation company, embarked on restoring Beit El Suheimy with financial support from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development55. As they were designing the restorations, NADIM’s team discovered that the water and sewage pipes of Beit El Kharazaty were embedded within the structures of the walls of Beit El Suheimy. Hence, the overuse of these water and sewage pipes by the twenty-five families living in Beit El Kharazaty produced eminent danger to the structure of Beit El Suheimy.56

To solve that technical problem NADIM decided that the only solution was to evacuate the residents of Beit El-Kharazaty and restore the house as a second historical building in the alley. The twenty-five families had lived in the building as tenants with long-term rent controlled contracts from the owner, the Ministry of Religious Endowments or ‘Awqaf. NADIM worked with the Cairo Governorate to secure funds for compensating the families. The compensation came in the form of apartments that the families would own in Madinat El-Salam on the periphery of Cairo, more than thirty kilometers away from Gamaliyyah.57 Umm Hassan’s brother and father moved to Madinat El-Salam. Umm Hassan attributes her father’s death to the move. He passed away at the age of 86, three months after the move.58

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53 All names are fictitious to guarantee anonymity. Only planners that provide consent to be quoted are named.
54 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-21-2011.
55 This project predates the state-led project to restore Gamaliyyah neighborhood discussed below.
56 Tarek Swelim, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 8-24-2011.
57 Tarek Swelim, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 8-24-2011.
58 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-21-2011.
By the time I visited Beit El Kharazaty with Umm Hassan in 2011, it had been restored and many of its upper floor rooms turned into offices for NGOs and its lower spaces used for private events and performances. As I walked onto the building’s now eerily still rooftop restored with perfectly carved yellow stones, I could visualize the geography of the summer nights Umm Hassan remembered so vividly. The young girls would sit in the corner elevated square, their mothers, making tea on mobile gas burners, sat on a rectangle separated from the girls by the cages of birds and animals that were bred on the roof, and the men and youth would sit on the other side. Sitting side by side with Beit El Kharazaty’s residents were many of the current inhabitants of Darb El-Asfar, who regularly joined the roof’s festivities. The loss of the roof to the zeal of heritage restoration was mourned as a communal one.

Our walk up the stairs to the rooftop of Haga Samia’s home in Darb El-Ahmar only two kilometers away from Darb El-Asfar, was a more joyful experience. In contrast to the mournful loss Umm Hassan was experiencing, Haga Samia was proud of her rooftop. Haga Samia rents an apartment in a three-story building in Darb El-Ahmar that was recently restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC). During the rehabilitation of the building, the AKTC created a new roof that was accessible to all its inhabitants.

On the roof Haga Samia took a moment to let me absorb the views. Looking due east I could see a direct view of the Azhar Park, the largest green space in Cairo, created by the AKTC in 2004. Turning around I could see the skyline of the historical city of Cairo and especially the many minarets for which the city has been popularly known as “the city of the thousand minarets.” As Haga Samia was watching my awe of the view, she explained that it was even more beautiful before the new high rise now obstructing her view of the park was built in the chaotic aftermath of the January 2011 uprisings.59

Haga Samia then turned to show me with pride the vegetable garden, built into two large basins on the roof, that she was working with her neighbors to cultivate. She explained that the Aga Khan had installed the garden basins as part of a larger project for greening rooftops all over Darb El-Ahmar.60 Finally, she turned to the large solar energy panes to explain that the AKTC had collaborated with an NGO to bring solar energy to their building. Unfortunately however, the solar energy water heater had not been working for over a year and a half now and no one had come to fix it.61 As we were leaving, Haga Samia explained that although she loved spending time on the roof, she felt that the responsibility for its upkeep and especially for the garden fell disproportionately on her shoulders because she lived on the third floor and closest to the roof.62

Haga Samia’s roof wasn’t the only one. The AKTC created more than a hundred such rooftops in the neighborhood that I was regularly invited to see by proud residents of newly rehabilitated buildings. Kareem Ibrahim, a former Director of the Aga Khan

59 See discussion of the new high rises below.
60 The Aga Khan collaborated with a local environmental NGO for the creation of the rooftop gardens.
61 The Aga Khan collaborated with Solar CITIES (funded by USAID) to install the solar water heaters. For details on the project see Cam McGrath, “Egypt: Rooftops Empower the Poor” Inter Press Service (January 3, 2010) available at: http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/01/egypt-rooftops-empower-the-poor/
62 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 11-23-2011.
project, explained that the decision to create accessible roofs above renovated homes was a deliberate and complicated one. The architectural team was divided on the efficacy of creating rooftops. A faction of the team was convinced that the creation of accessible roofs would be detrimental to the rehabilitation of the buildings because they predicted that the residents would continue to use the roofs as dumping grounds for unwanted rubbish or for animal husbandry. Such activities would accumulate detrimental debris that would eventually eat at the building’s structure and pollute the building’s environment. The other faction argued that the creation of these roofs would create coveted communal space and be valued by the buildings’ residents.

To resolve the debate the AKTC’s team experimented with the first few houses they rehabilitated and found that the roofs were indeed highly valued. As Kareem explains, “when the rooftops became accessible...a lot of people would take up living room furniture and spend their evenings there, and some even pitched sun canopies. It was in buildings where the roofs were not accessible that people started throwing their rubbish on the rooftop or using it as storage space because they weren’t benefiting from it... It was rare that you would find anybody who ruined their rooftop...There were those who would raise chicken. They still raise chickens but the situation is so much better now than it used to be.” Ultimately, the AKTC found that the creation of accessible rooftops worked to both foster communal ties in Darb El-Ahmar and to protect the physical structures of newly rehabilitated buildings.

The destruction of rooftops in Darb El-Asfar and their creation in Darb El-Ahmar maps onto the political work that NADIM and the AKTC expected the building to perform. NADIM expected the restoration of the physical attributes of buildings as old as Beit El Suheimy to evoke collective remembering of and appreciation for the historical epoch it represents. They saw the commemoration of that history as a cause vital enough to the public’s interest to warrant, as the Cairo Governorate agreed, sacrifices from the families relocated and the loss of Beit El Kharazaty’s communal rooftop. The AKTC, on the other hand, had a different set of expectations from the ‘historical’ buildings they rehabilitated in Darb El-Ahmar. As they, in a similar spirit, hoped for the celebration of the histories represented by the buildings they restored, they also expected the restored buildings to mold new communal networks and values. They expected the architectural design of the buildings to produce a trusting cooperative community that self-governed its own neighborhood without reliance on the state, but it linked

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63 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
its fate to that of its environment instead. The new residential rooftops would secure both the cultural and social outcomes they hoped for. A roof and vegetable garden shared by all inhabitants of a building was expected to cultivate cooperation and trust amongst neighbors. The installation of solar panels on the roof was expected to foster the community’s knowledge of and investment in alternative energy sources for a better environment. In addition, giving some of Cairo’s poorest residents access to the city’s most coveted views and nicest summer breezes at symbolic rental rates was expected to significantly upgrade the poor’s daily lived experience of the city and alleviate the psychological woes of poverty. Finally, as the rooftops produced these societal outcomes they were expected to protect the newly restored historical aesthetic from physical degradation. Accessible and coveted rooftops were going to protect the building from the rubbish and animal refuse that used to be piled on unused roofs in the neighborhood. NADIM and the Aga Khan Foundation had high expectations from the productive capacity of architectural redesign. This chapter examines the expectations a diverse array of rejuvenation sponsors have of the built environment. In particular, it traces the ways in which diverse rejuvenation sponsors aim to mold societal behaviors and cultural values, and ultimately new governing regimes, through the intricate techniques of urban redesign. In other words, the chapter illuminates the practices through which urban redesign is mobilized as a political tool in Cairo and Istanbul.

Introduction:

Investment in the rejuvenation of urban neighborhoods in contemporary developing cities has been studied as either a mechanism for generating new economic resources or their redistribution. A prolific literature on “global cities” (e.g. Harvey 1989; Zukin 1995; Keyder 1999; Sassen 2000) argues that urban rejuvenation is intended to generate new economic
resources by transforming the urban built environment into commodities consumable by mobile global capital either as real estate or objects of the tourist’s gaze. On the other hand, another established literature on public goods provision (e.g. Bates 1981; Putnam 1993; Herbst 2000; Falleti 2010; Holland 2014) views investments in neighborhood and infrastructural redesign as a redistributive good that provides particular constituents access to coveted resources. This chapter is dedicated to challenging such resource-driven explanations. I argue instead that careful architectural redesign is coveted as a political tool that is expected to perform political work as expansive as molding societal behavior, reordering power hierarchies, entrenching new regimes of governance and constructing “imagined communities,” rather than strictly generate or redistribute material resources.

To investigate the potential logics motivating rejuvenation I focused my analysis on the intricate scale of architectural design decisions rather than the oft-analyzed scale of the choice of particular neighborhoods or constituencies over others. Asking how a neighborhood is redesigned rather than which neighborhood or community was selected for upgrading expanded the array of logics captured through my analysis as potentially motivating urban redesign. I find that a variety of state and non-state actors invested in urban rejuvenation as a tool that was expected to produce and entrench new governing regimes that they saw most effectively resolved the political vacuums produced through neo-liberal state retreat and the paradoxes of globalization. Moreover, I find that engineering new political “community” was central to the project of producing new governing regimes. Hence, sponsors of rejuvenation focused on mobilizing architectural design for producing the socio-cultural transformations they saw necessary for engineering new political communities. Each of the rejuvenation sponsors adopted a distinct logic to their urban planning and design decisions depending on the “community,” and

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64 See the dissertation’s introductory chapter for in-depth analysis of both literatures.
ultimately governing regime, they were working to engineer. Urban planning and architectural
design was not a scientific practice with a clear set of rules. As I demonstrate, the most intricate
and detailed design decisions were shaped by political motivations.

To unpack the variety of political projects sponsors of rejuvenation hope to empower
through the tools of urban redesign in contemporary Cairo and Istanbul, I analyze three urban
rejuvenation projects grappling with the retreat of the state from governing in Cairo and Istanbul
pre-2005, and two projects initiated and sanctioned by a revived Turkish state in Istanbul post-
2005. To trace the ways in which urban redesign is mobilized as a political tool, I analyze two
facets of each urban rejuvenation project. First, I examine the “perceptions” (Lefebvre 1974) that
sponsors of five urban rejuvenation projects have of the social molding and cultural
transformation necessary for the proper governing of the neighborhood and city they invested in
rejuvenating. I then analyze the technical urban plans and designs they mobilize to produce these
socio-cultural transformations.

I find that each of the five projects is working to produce a new mode of governance
through urban redesign. The three projects implemented in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 are
mobilizing urban redesign to perform political work that replaces work once expected from a
now defunct state, but different organizational actors aim to use that political work to produce
different governing regimes. The international organizations, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in
Cairo and the EU in Istanbul, aimed to produce governing regimes that eradicate the need to rely
on the state as a governing organization altogether. They worked to produce autonomous
communities that take the initiative to self-govern at their local scale of the neighborhood
without resort to state institutions. In other words, they aimed to entrench what Rose (1996)

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65 Here I am referring to “perception” purposefully as theorized by Henri Lefebvre (1974) to be one of a triad of
practices that shape the city’s eco-system of governance. See introduction for elaboration on Lefebvre’s theory.
identifies as a neo-liberal mode of governance. On the other hand, the private sector entrepreneur, Ismailia Consortium rejuvenating Downtown Cairo, was working to bring back the state. The Consortium hoped to produce a unified national entity through architectural redesign that the state was incapable of fostering at the time in order to bring back a revived nation-state to govern Egypt. Ismailia decided to forego numerous opportunities for economic profit in its dedication to mobilizing urban planning as a tool for reviving an Egyptian nation, and ultimately the restoration of the Egyptian nation-state as the monopolistic governing organization. In pursuit of a revived nation-state they saw that urban planning should prioritize fostering an Egyptian nation over the local and divisive needs of the community directly inhabiting Downtown Cairo. In other words, within the pluralistic field of actors empowered by the neo-liberalization of urban governance to rejuvenate fragmentary zones of Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005, I find the international organizations to be the actors most committed to actively empowering neo-liberal modes of governmental rule (Rose 1996) as practice and “de-statizing” government.

The urban rejuvenation projects implemented in Istanbul after the state’s revival operated according to a very different political logic. They mobilized urban redesign as a political tool expected to complement and mobilize a larger state project. The two rejuvenation projects, led by the private sector construction company GAP İnşaat in Tarlabası and by the state agency TOKİ in Sulukule, were initiated by the Turkish state and handed over to the two organizations in accordance to the “Preservation and Renewal Law” no.5366 of 2005. I find that both organizational actors implemented projects that worked to empower the Turkish state’s efforts to mobilize urban redesign as a tool for entrenching an authoritarian regime of differentiated governance that bypasses local democratic institutions, namely the municipalities. Both projects
implemented urban plans that differentiated between Turkish citizens, including some but not others, as they oriented the rejuvenated neighborhoods towards attracting distinct global audiences. I argue that the Turkish state sanctioned the two rejuvenation projects in order to institute this new form of differentiated governance that it saw as essential for managing the paradoxical audiences attracted to a globalizing Istanbul. The Turkish state, and its private sector partners, expected urban redesign to perform the political work necessary for capitalizing upon the opportunities produced through globalization. In sum, each of the five rejuvenation projects mobilized urban redesign to produce the socio-cultural transformations they saw as essential for instituting the new mode of governance they believed was ideal for contemporary Cairo or Istanbul.

As I demonstrate the ways in which sponsors of rejuvenation work to mobilize architectural design and urban planning as a political tool I join a prolific literature dedicated to studying the ways in which the technical redesign and planning of urban spaces is mobilized as a technology of rule (e.g. Benjamin 1978; Foucault 1977; Mitchell 1988; Holston 1989; Wright 1991; Scott 1998). As discussed in the dissertation’s introduction, my work contributes to this literature by tracing the ways in which the dual processes of globalization and neo-liberalization have transformed the mobilization of urban redesign as a technology of rule. In particular, in this chapter I trace two important historical developments in the deployment of urban redesign as a political tool. First, I show the plurality of competing political projects investing in neighborhood redesign as a technology of rule and creating a mosaic of varied governance regimes in adjacent neighborhoods. More importantly, I trace the movement of rejuvenation sponsors away from a fixation on disciplining the bodies of a well-ordered and legible society through urban redesign. In fact rejuvenation sponsors are actively deploying architectural redesign to dislodge the failed
governing regimes that relied on productive societal collectives as they work to produce “communities” fit for neo-liberal governance in a globalizing world. Specifically, we see the AKTC work to link the fate of communities to that of their environment rather than to the fate of societal collectives, and de-center the role of human agency in governance. In short, sponsors of rejuvenation repeatedly make architectural decisions that reverse the disciplinary architectural designs so deliberately engineered by modernist planners. All in all, the chapter is dedicated to demonstrating the ways in which rejuvenation sponsors mobilize the redesign of urban neighborhoods as a political tool. It thus sets the stage for analysis in upcoming chapters of the ways in which intended and unintended political consequences of urban redesign reconstruct practices of citizenship and contestation in Cairo and Istanbul.

The final section of the chapter links the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool to the rights rejuvenation sponsors believe the built environment should be entitled to in order to fulfill the expansive responsibilities expected of it. I make that linkage through taking an alternate view of the socio-cultural transformations rejuvenation sponsors aim to produce in the city. I reveal that urban planning and conservation experts work not only to mold societal behavior through urban redesign but also devise programs of societal reformation for the sake of protecting the city’s built environment. As they expect the carefully designed urban built environment to fulfill expansive political responsibilities, the sponsors of urban rejuvenation work to secure the physical designs, building structures and neighborhood aesthetics they see as essential for the built environment’s ability to perform this political work. They thus work to construct rights that the neighborhood’s built environment should be entitled to in order to perform that political work that they justify as in the “public’s interest.” Throughout the dissertation I analyze different arenas of rights that the sponsors of rejuvenation believe the city’s
buildings should be entitled to. In this chapter I demonstrate that one such arena of rights is in fact the reformation of society itself. I argue that the sponsors of urban rejuvenation across the board believe that society should be reformed for the sake of securing the health of their neighborhood’s buildings. They see and justify particular programs of societal reformation and communal displacement as necessary for protecting the physical structures of buildings from the ignorance and destructive tendencies of the city’s urban dwellers, and declare such societal reformation as a right to which the urban built environment should be entitled. In particular, in this section I focus on the educational programs urban planners and conservationists in Cairo implement with the aim of molding societies protective of the physical structure of their built environment.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first three sections examine the perceptions of governance espoused by the sponsors of the five urban rejuvenation projects, and the architectural techniques they deploy to empower their political agendas. The five projects are divided into three categories in accordance to the three governance regimes I argue they are mobilizing. Within each of the three sections I focus on one project that I find particularly representative of the category. I chose to present a particularly in-depth analysis of the case of the AKTC in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo because the meticulous and deliberate manner in which AKTC experts linked architectural design and communal transformation warranted such attention. Moreover, the fact that the AKTC and EU projects were fully implemented before the writing of the dissertation provided more data and source materials to formulate a better understanding of both perceptions and mobilized techniques. Finally, the fourth section of the chapter focuses on the societal reformations urban rejuvenation experts worked to produce for the sake of protecting the physical built environment.
Autonomous Communities: Aga Khan Trust for Culture

Two of the six projects I study design their urban rehabilitation projects around retaining existent urban dwellers within the neighborhoods restored. For the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) working in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo and the European Union in Fener-Balat, Istanbul this choice is not simply an efficient planning decision that minimizes the contestation and costs involved in the relocation of neighborhood residents. Rather, it is a deliberate choice motivated by the political agenda that drove both organizations to invest in urban rehabilitation in the first place. One of the main reasons that the AKTC and the EU invested in urban rehabilitation in Cairo and Istanbul was to empower a particular vision for how urban dwellers should be socially organized and governed. At the cornerstone of that vision was a commitment to the transformation of the organization and practices of urban dwellers already living and working in these neighborhoods before the advent of urban rehabilitation. They believed that careful redesign of the urban built environment would perform the political work necessary to bring about such social transformation, and planned their projects accordingly.

In this section I focus on tracing the social transformations that motivate the AKTC’s investment in the rehabilitation of Darb El-Ahmar and the techniques of urban planning and redesign they mobilize to produce such transformation. The EU’s project in Fener-Balat follows similar maxims, albeit with a less pronounced emphasis on social transformation than the AKTC. I focus on the AKTC’s project as the more deliberate of the two. I argue that these two organizations are the most committed to molding urban dwellers equipped for the displacement of the state as a governing organization. They work to produce “communities” adaptive to and enabling of a ruling regime working to “degovernmentalize the State and to de-statize practices
of government," which Nikolas Rose (1996) insightfully identified as the fundamental tenants of neo-liberal modes of government. In other words, within the pluralistic field of political agendas empowered by the neo-liberalization of urban governance in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005, the not-for-profit international organizations of the AKTC and the EU are the most committed to political agendas that actively empower neo-liberal modes of governmental rule as practice. As such they are committed to modes of governmental rule eloquently described by Nikolas Rose (1996) as follows,

“Advanced liberal rule…seeks to degovernmentalize the State and to de-statize practices of government, to detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule, relocating experts within a market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand. It does not seek to govern through ‘society’, but through the regulated choices of individual citizens, now construed as subjects of choices and aspirations to self-actualization and self-fulfillment. Individuals are to be governed through their freedom, but neither as isolated atoms of classical political economy, nor as citizens of society, but as members of heterogeneous communities of allegiance, as ‘community’ emerges as a new way of conceptualizing and administering moral relations amongst persons."

As I demonstrate in this section the AKTC’s work in Darb El-Ahmar revolves around a “perception” (Lefebvre 1974) of governing and social organization that mirrors Rose’s (1996) depiction of “advanced liberal” rule. I find the AKTC committed to producing autonomous communities of self-motivated individuals governing their neighborhood with reliance on the mediation of experts who translate their desires into optimal reality.

The AKTC team doesn’t perceive these “communities” to be purely human, however. They foster and build “communities” that tie together human agents and their agential environments. As such, analyzing the AKTC’s understanding of “community” or

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66 Rose (1996), 41.
67 Although Rose (1996) dedicates the article to what he calls “advanced liberal” democracies, in his discussion of the modes of governance he subsumes neo-liberal governmentality within his category as operating according to comparable logics, making my reliance on his theory in reference to neo-liberal governmentality accurate.
68 Rose (1996), 41.
“neighborhood” complicates and adds to Rose’s (1996) depiction of neo-liberal governmental rule. It reveals that neo-liberal governmental rule not only de-statizes government but also de-centers the role of human agency in government to create human-non-human governing “communities.” As it works to foster autonomous human communities the AKTC promotes the linkage of the fates of urban dwellers to the fates of their environments, and especially the built environment of their neighborhood. The AKTC centers its project around motivating Darb El-Ahmar’s residents to invest just as much, if not more, in the upgrading and protection of their neighborhood’s buildings and spaces as they would in cultivating personal skills and human capital in pursuit of their personal desires and aspirations. For the AKTC, human capacity works in relation to its agential environment and only through linking the fates of human communities to their non-human environments that desirable political outcomes are produced. In short, “community” for the AKTC not only comprises the urban dwellers who share allegiances at the micro-scales of residential building units and neighborhoods but also the relationship between these urban dwellers and their environments. As they disinvested from the state as a governing organization and were disillusioned with the modernist and socialist emphasis on the productivity of human societal collectives or “society” (Rose, 1996), the AKTC turned to re-linking communal clusters of urban dwellers to the environments they inhabit as politically productive “communities”; de-centering the role of human agency in driving political change.

I turn now to a discussion of the “perceptions” the AKTC team has of the transformations necessary to produce these new governing human-non-human “communities,” and the architectural techniques through which they work to foster these transformations.69 I focus

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69 In addition to my source materials, the analysis in this section depends on a micro-study I conducted of the literature produced by Dr. Dina Shehayeb, a member of the AKTC team and what I term a “self-reflexive expert.” Dina Shehayeb, earned her PhD in architecture at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee with a specialization in Environment-Behavior Studies, and worked with the AKTC from 1998-2005 as a consultant who lead their
specifically on analyzing the AKTC’s project to restore private homes and rehabilitate two of the neighborhood’s main public spaces: the main open public square, Aslam Square, and the neighborhood’s largest vegetables and fruit market, Tablita Market.

**Autonomous Community and “De-Statizing” Practices of Government:**

The first indicator that the AKTC was working to mold autonomous communities was the philosophy and reasoning behind its investment in the rehabilitation of private homes in Darb El-Ahmar. By the time it exited in 2012, the AKTC and its partners had funded the restoration of 121 residential buildings and the hundreds of apartments within those buildings. The restorations cost the AKTC 43 million Egyptian pounds, the Egyptian-Swiss Development Fund 10 million Egyptian pounds, and the Egyptian Social Development Fund 33 million Egyptian pounds in direct raw material and construction costs. In addition, the AKTC, as the implementer of this project on the ground, contributed the human capital necessary for the design and management of the project. It thus indirectly incurred the costs of its paid urban planners and architects who led the project for over a decade. It is in deciphering the reasons behind why the AKTC restored their homes using the architectural techniques that they chose to implement that it becomes evident that the AKTC is in fact motivated by a mission to build autonomous communities in Cairo.

One of the main declared goals of the AKTC’s project in Cairo was the preservation of the city’s heritage. Thus, one could say that the reasoning behind the AKTC’s funding of the private building restorations was quite straightforward. They were preserving what they saw as Darb El-Ahmar’s physical heritage. As Kareem Ibrahim, former director of the AKTC’s housing “community liaison” division. Her scholarship provides a unique lens into the philosophies of the AKTC team as the expert most responsible for producing the AKTC’s strategy towards Darb El-Ahmar’s community and most engaged in scholarly debates on the issue. On her background see Dina Shehayeb’s personal website: [http://www.dkshehayeb.com/gpage2.html](http://www.dkshehayeb.com/gpage2.html) (accessed 7-15-2014).

Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
and public spaces programs, pointed out, however, a simple interest in the preservation of historical buildings or historical aesthetic would have prompted the AKTC to adopt a very different strategy to urban rehabilitation. Such a strategy would have valued the preservation of aesthetically harmonized square footage (probably with an exclusive focus on building exteriors), as did the project in the adjacent Gamaliyyah neighborhood to which Kareem contrasted the AKTC’s project, rather than the modular approach the AKTC actually adopted. He made clear that the AKTC was primarily concerned about cultivating a working “module” for governing the neighborhood and resolving the many issues it was dealing with, including the deterioration of its physical urban fabric. Kareem explained,

“The idea behind the project wasn’t that we fix Darb El-Ahmar…People complain that we fixed some houses and not others. Fixing all the houses in Darb El-Ahmar wasn’t our goal at all. Darb El-Ahmar has more than 5500 residential buildings and we fixed little over a 100 of those, and that’s nothing. It’s a drop in the ocean. Rather, our goal was to develop a successful mechanism…we wanted to generate real improvement in living conditions and one of our main tools to reach that was the housing program. The housing program was a tool towards the bigger mission of stabilizing the existent community in the neighborhood.”

Later in the interview he argued for the success of the AKTC’s strategy as follows,

“We produced a very very successful module for dealing with the neighborhood. First of all, we engaged people not just financially but also emotionally and there developed a very strong sense of ownership through the project. People gained hope in investing and took from their pockets to invest in the public good.”

It thus becomes clear from the AKTC’s overall strategy towards housing rehabilitation that their aim was not to preserve as many historical buildings as possible or produce a totalizing historical aesthetic. Rather, they sought to invest in their housing program as an architectural technique that would produce a mechanism for the neighborhood’s governance. Theirs was an interest in producing mechanisms that would resolve perpetual issues facing the neighborhood’s

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71 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
72 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
community and urban fabric rather than a one-off restoration of historical buildings. From Kareem’s second quote, it started to also become clear that they saw this mechanism to depend on molding autonomous neighborhood dwellers who would take the initiative to invest in the “public good” and govern their neighborhood, rather than depend on outside institutions like the state.

In fact, cultivating an interest amongst neighborhood dwellers to invest autonomously in the rehabilitation, and overall governance, of their neighborhood was one of the cornerstones of the AKTC’s strategy in Darb El-Ahmar. Kareem Ibrahim wasn’t the only one who held this view. Mohamed Mikawi, former general manager of the AKTC’s project in Cairo, and Dr. Dina Shehayeb, urban planner and consultant on the AKTC’s project, espoused a similar perspective. In their co-authored article Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003), analyzing the AKTC’s housing rehabilitation program, they impressed upon their readers that “If the present pattern of disinvestment [from Darb El-Ahmar neighborhood] persists, it can only pave the way for further deterioration and the eventual loss of irreplaceable social, economic and cultural assets,” and that the AKTC’s housing rehabilitation program was designed to reverse that disinvestment. 73 Most importantly, the official report that the AKTC produced to document and evaluate its ongoing project in Darb El-Ahmar in 2005 entitled, “Cairo: Urban Regeneration in the Darb El-Ahmar Neighborhood,” emphasized the same goals. In the report’s introductory paragraphs the AKTC emphasizes the importance of re-investment in the neighborhood as follows,

“The Aga Khan Trust for Culture believes that the downward spiral of disinvestment and deterioration [of Darb El-Ahmar neighborhood] can be stopped, and that this area offers the pre-conditions needed to preserve its urban qualities, as well as the potential to regenerate its economy…No all-encompassing projects and no far-fetched social engineering agendas are required; rather, what is needed is an incremental improvement

73 Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003), 1.
of what is already in place, and a strengthening of the available social capital and positive economic trends.\footnote{74} It thus became clear that the AKTC saw its mission to be reversing disinvestment in the neighborhood but did not call on any larger governmental agencies or institutions for that goal. Rather they were clearly envisioning governance at the specific scale of the neighborhood and espoused the reliance on local initiative and “social capital” for governing the neighborhood into a state of regeneration and out of decline.

What the report also indicates is that the AKTC sought to foster neighborhood residents’ initiative to invest in and govern their neighborhood not as individuals but as a community reliant on a wealth of “social capital” as emphasized in Rose’s (1996) depiction of neo-liberal modes of governmental rule. Kareem Ibrahim makes that direct linkage when he asserts that the idea behind the housing rehabilitation program and the rules the AKTC devised for the restoration of homes “was to have people start talking to each other, or else the neighborhood’s problems would never be resolved. In other words, there had to develop communal sense of ownership and we worked on creating it.\footnote{75}” For Kareem the residents were the ones responsible for autonomously resolving their neighborhood’s problems but they couldn’t do so as atomistic individuals. Rather they had to coordinate as a community to govern their neighborhood.

Before analyzing the architectural techniques the AKTC deployed it is important to ask whether the AKTC’s team designed their project to build upon and cement existent social networks or whether they saw their project cultivating communal cohesion from scratch where none existed. The AKTC team’s beliefs about the urban dwellers they were working with would shape the architectural techniques they saw as necessary or even viable in the molding of communal cohesion in Darb El-Ahmar. As we saw with the creation of rooftops in the

\footnote{74} Aga Khan Trust for Culture (2005), 2.
\footnote{75} Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
neighborhood, the AKTC team regularly debated the efficacy of different strategies and architectural techniques. Kareem Ibrahim even asserted that several people within the project did not even believe that the AKTC should invest in a housing program because they didn’t believe people would ever invest in funding their homes’ restorations. As we saw with the debate surrounding the rooftops and the efficacy of the housing program, the team’s debates stemmed not from debates over scientific approaches to urban planning but from deep-seated beliefs about the neighborhood dwellers with whom the team was interacting in Darb El-Ahmar. My interviews with several team members demonstrates how divergent these perceptions of Darb El-Ahmar’s community were within the AKTC’s team.

Dina Shehayeb agreed with the project’s official line, as articulated in the AKTC’s 2005 report as quoted above, that there already existed strong communal networks in Darb El-Ahmar. Her empirical research in Shehayeb and Eid (2007) showed that communities in Cairo’s “popular neighborhoods” like Darb El-Ahmar were quite cohesive and much stronger than ones in “new cities” built on the periphery of Cairo for large social housing projects. 76 Moreover, in an interview Shehayeb specifically asserted, “When [community members in Darb El-Ahmar] are sure they are getting the benefit there is this positive collaboration. They do a lot of positive collaboration together. At the smallest scale in order to clean the building or share the rooftop. Workshops do it all the time to bring new raw material or even share power tools.” 77 Not everyone on the AKTC team shared Dina’s view. One of the youth who had been recruited from Darb El-Ahmar’s community of dwellers to act as a community liaison for the project held the exact opposite view. After working with the project for over a decade this team member described the relations between Darb El-Ahmar community members as follows,

76 Shehayeb and Eid (2007).
77 Shehayeb (2011), paragraph 18.
“The community in Darb El-Ahmar is considered a bit different from any other, even the community in Gamaliyyah that lives directly adjacent to it... You feel that they have this trait of being arrogant and feel that there is no one else quite like them... The other thing is that [members of Darb El-Ahmar’s community] don’t like each other, and this in itself is a problem.”

Ahmed Beblawy, serving as director of the housing and public spaces program in 2012, and who saw himself as an outsider to the community, shared this perspective on communal cohesion in Darb El-Ahmar. This was particularly evident in his evaluation of the participatory planning process that the AKTC resorted to in planning Aslam Square described below. He argued that participatory planning was successful in accommodating people’s divergent needs and teaching community members how to use the square but not in teaching them how to protect it from one another’s transgressions. He explained, “You’ll find people here very strange in that they all fear each other. In other words, he’ll come say that it was so and so who transgressed, and when we ask why he didn’t stop him, he’ll say ‘I don’t want any trouble.’ And that is the main problem.”

He goes a step further though and argues that mistrust is a trait common to all Egyptians. Although Darb El-Ahmar’s community members harbor particularly negative and fearful attitudes towards one another, Egyptian society at large is mistrusting. He argues, “We don’t have a culture of trust. Nobody talks about this culture of trust but I see that the crux of the issue is in this culture of trust, that you trust the ones around you. And this is a trait we don’t have in Egypt, not just here. It has developed for all Egyptians. We are sitting face to face now and you (in reference to me as interviewer) don’t believe that I’m giving you the right information.”

Hence, for Ahmed and his “community liaison” team members the AKTC was not simply building upon a wealth of social capital in Darb El-Ahmar. It would have to cultivate most of it from scratch. Karim Ibrahim, however, straddled the two extremes. He believed that there

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78 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
79 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
80 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
existed social ties between Darb El-Ahmar’s residents but not a culture of collaboration and cooperation amongst them necessary for the creation of “community” in the neighborhood. He argued that resorting to micro-credit and rotational savings mechanisms for financing housing restorations was ideal in Darb El-Ahmar because “people know each other and trust one another.”\textsuperscript{81} As I explained above, however, he saw that people in the neighborhood were not “talking to each other” or cooperating in resolving their neighborhood’s problems, and that it was the AKTC’s role to cultivate such cooperation.\textsuperscript{82} In other words, for Kareem, and similarly-minded team members, the AKTC’s role was to transform latent social ties into active communal networks that would autonomously govern their neighborhood.

I turn now to a discussion of the architectural techniques the AKTC team agreed upon implementing to cultivate autonomous communities once the team had debated and agreed upon a strategy. I turn first to the housing rehabilitation program. The AKTC restored the interiors and exteriors of private residential buildings on a strictly voluntary basis and demanded from residents a financial contribution to the restoration costs. Although for the first handful of buildings restored the AKTC only demanded 0-10% of the funding from building residents, the majority of the residents of restored buildings contributed around 30% of the financial cost of the restoration. By the final phase of the project some of the residents were asked to contribute up to 50% of the financial cost. This was a hefty requirement from low-income residents who were mostly tenants, on long-term rental contracts, rather than owners of the apartment units. Hence, it was likely that there would be major discrepancies within each building between those who would be both willing and capable to restore their homes and those who were not. Yet, the

\textsuperscript{81} Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
AKTC demanded that all residents of a building agree to the restoration and to paying their share of its financial cost before it would agree to start working with the residents.

According to Kareem Ibrahim, this final requirement was one of the most important mechanisms for the production of communal cohesion in the neighborhood. The AKTC scientifically justified their demand to residents by arguing that they were aiming to restore the entire structure of their buildings and hence could not restore just one or two of the residents’ apartments at a time. Rather, all residents of a building had to agree to restorations in order to receive the AKTC’s funding. Kareem Ibrahim makes clear, however, that what seemed a decision motivated by scientific necessity was in fact motivated by the AKTC’s aim to cultivate communal cohesion. As elaborated above, he argued that the idea was to get residents to talk to each other. “Even if residents had the money, they can’t just come and restore the building on their own. That wasn’t what we were aiming for at all. Our purpose was that you get to know your neighbors.”

To facilitate that communication the AKTC developed a mathematical model for calculating each resident’s share of the building’s actual square footage and of the usage of vacant or shared spaces in the building that would determine each resident’s share in the restoration’s financial burden. This calculation was not straightforward, however. The AKTC only allowed building residents to divide shares into increments of 0.5 of a share and so residents couldn’t resort to smaller fractions to gain perfect equality. Hence, Ahmed Beblawy explained that the shares were agreed upon through “compromise between [building residents] because they were never perfectly even geometrically.” Kareem Ibrahim described the AKTC’s reasoning behind the approximation of building shares as follows,

“We didn’t divide their shares very accurately, so there would be debates where residents would say, ‘your apartment is a little bit bigger and mine is a bit smaller,’ and so on. We

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83 Ibid.
84 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
worked to make sure that people at the end of the day felt that they were one unit and that
the unit was not their apartment. And that was one of the most critical challenges we
faced. People thought of their home as strictly their apartment. We wanted to instill in
them the concept that the community is made up of interconnected units and that it’s not
the apartment that’s the home. Rather it’s a residential building all connected and that
they have to see it as a residential unit. Then, after a while we would start to talk to them
about public spaces and that they are living around open spaces that they have to start
taking care of. So, you create larger and larger units and larger networks connecting the
community.\textsuperscript{85}

The decision to demand that building residents apply as one unit and divide shares slightly
unevenly was not motivated by the scientific demands of architectural design. It was motivated
by the AKTC’s goal to create more cohesive communities. What is remarkable about Kareem’s
description of the AKTC’s community-building process is the bottom-up perspective he sees the
AKTC mobilizing. People are molded to relate to their immediate local communities as their
units of allegiance or “public.” The AKTC is not working to build publics that have allegiance or
relate to a wider nation. Nor is the AKTC working to cultivate individuals who see themselves as
citizens demanding a social contract from a state governing the nation. Rather, in line with
Rose’s (1996) depiction of neo-liberal governmentality, the AKTC is working to build a public
related through allegiances fostered at the local level and organized as autonomous communities
that share the same immediate concerns and have the initiative to govern those concerns.

The AKTC did not just mobilize the procedure of collective building restoration
applications to foster autonomous communities. It also designed the architectural features of the
restorations with the specific purpose of community-building. Two architectural interventions
were particularly stressed: rooftops and water pumps. As we saw above, the AKTC created more
than a hundred new roofs atop buildings in Darb El-Ahmar. Chief amongst the reasons they
decided to invest in these rooftops was to create more interaction and cooperation amongst the
building’s residents. As all residents of the building had access to the rooftop, the AKTC

\textsuperscript{85} Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
expected people to negotiate on how the rooftops would be used, arranged and taken care of. They also hoped that the rooftops would be used as a space for building residents to socialize and cultivate stronger relations amongst them. Moreover, the AKTC collaborated with local NGOs to plant gardens on the roof that residents were expected to coordinate in planting and growing. Of course, as we saw with Haga Samia, and many other residents, the burdens of maintaining the roof and its garden weren’t always divided equally amongst the residents.

They similarly designed building infrastructures to be shared and used in coordination amongst building residents. Kareem Ibrahim particularly highlighted that the AKTC installed shared water pumps to foster collaboration amongst building residents. Sharing water pumps meant that residents of different apartment units would have to coordinate to ensure that enough water was reaching each apartment, and that none of the apartments were using water excessively in ways that would limit others’ access or create a financial burden for others. I was told by several of the residents of restored homes that they did in fact actively coordinate with their neighbors to secure access to the water they needed. Kareem emphasized the deliberate nature of their choice of water pumps as follows,

“Our purpose was that you learn to coordinate with your neighbors. So, for example when we installed water pumps we would find that in a building with six residents, each of the residents wants to install their own water pump. We would refuse such requests because if they can’t resolve issues around using a water pump or water pipes, then there is no sense in them restoring the house altogether. In other words, they have to talk to each other.”

Installing shared water pumps and pipes wasn’t simply a scientific architectural decision. It was a deliberate pre-meditated decision to increase coordination between building residents, and by extension, strengthen “community” in Darb El-Ahmar.

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86 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
The AKTC team showed the same dedication to producing autonomous community in their designs of public spaces, and especially Aslam Square and Tablita Market. First, they planned both public spaces using participatory planning methods. As Ahmed Beblawy asserted, “We had a very very important rule when we first started the [rehabilitation] project to try and ensure that all our decisions emanated from the community.”\textsuperscript{87} Participatory planning was a technique mobilized to foster both autonomous actors and collaborative communities. In urging neighborhood residents and market vendors to actively assemble in planning sessions and dedicate many hours to thinking seriously about the best uses and designs for their shared spaces, the AKTC worked to foster neighborhood dwellers’ initiative in planning and managing their shared spaces. As Ahmed Beblawy asserted, the community had to practice creating its own solutions to the problems it faced. Moreover, Dina Shehayeb, who led the participatory planning of Tablita Market, argued that it was also mobilized to have people practice speaking to each other and resolving their conflicting interests through negotiation;\textsuperscript{88} creating more cooperative communities. It wasn’t enough that residents or vendors interacted regularly in these public spaces. They also had to learn to collaborate in governing their neighborhood. Fostering such autonomous community was not as simple as gathering all community members in a planning session, however. The AKTC planned participatory planning sessions in accordance to power hierarchies in the neighborhood. In planning Tablita Market, Dina Shehayeb and her team felt that the only way they would be able to ensure participation from a diverse array of vendors was to organize sessions sensitive to power dynamics in the market. They thus divided the planning process into two sessions where one included powerful vendors in the market and the other one included less influential, mostly female, vendors in the market. Shehayeb and Abdel Hafiz

\textsuperscript{87} Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
\textsuperscript{88} Shehayeb and Abdel Hafiz (2006).
(2006) argued that the idea behind stratifying the process according to power hierarchies “was to give an opportunity for the less influential vendors to express their opinion and not be dominated by the more powerful leaders of the vendor community.”89 Hence, vendors were to practice becoming autonomous communities in units stratified according to power hierarchies. Ultimately, Dina argued that participatory planning was so successful in generating communication amongst previously non-negotiating vendors that “the participatory design process continued among the vendors in the Market itself after the completion of the [official participatory design] workshop. They are so motivated to discuss and negotiate solutions, that they stopped a workshop team member one night at 9 p.m. and invited him to join a self-initiated discussion group till 11:30 pm.”90 The question that remains unanswered is whether self-initiated negotiation obfuscated or reinforced market hierarchies.

The planning of Aslam Square was similarly layered. Kareem Ibrahim explained that the planning of Aslam Square was organized into planning sessions that were stratified into layers of children, women, men, store owners, residents of buildings overseeing the square, and service providers (in particular the man who owned and operated a children’s swing set in the square).91 Ahmed Beblawy elaborated that the planning sessions were not only stratified according to these layers but also that the people invited within these layers were deliberately chosen according to their influence in the neighborhood. He said, “We would have to invite the people that they call ‘community leaders’ or heads of the neighborhood (kebar el manteqa) and gather them together either in the square itself or in our offices and discuss their requests.”92 Eventually it became clear that identifying “community leaders” would not be so straightforward and would generate a

89 Shehayeb and Abdel Hafiz (2006), 70.
90 Shehayeb and Abdel Hafiz (2006), 73.
91 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
92 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
lot of contestation around the planning process. Ahmed describes the challenges this process created as follows,

“That didn’t stop the people with whom we negotiated from arguing with us as we implemented [the designs] because it was exactly as we saw with the [25th of January] revolution with personal agendas and factional demands...We would implore the supposed community leaders to intervene and some would succeed and some wouldn’t...because even if you resort to the community leaders, we don’t follow the notion of a head (el kebeer) of a place anymore here in Egypt, and especially in these neighborhoods. In other words, in the past you would go and reach an agreement with the head and nobody would contradict it, but now they bring you someone and say that he’s the head and as soon as they turn around someone else shows up and you try to convince them that you had an agreement, and they say, ‘who told you he was the head?’”

Thus, the AKTC sought to find mechanisms for organizing Darb El-Ahmar’s autonomous communities that clearly relied on existent, or what they thought were existent, power hierarchies. Governing local entities would not be unmediated. It required a structure of hierarchies within the community to succeed. Ahmed deplored that the Egyptian mentality that would have once facilitated following the neighborhood head or “kebeer” were disappearing and making the production of these autonomous communities more challenging.

In addition to participatory planning, the AKTC team made deliberate design decisions that would increase communal interaction. In a most general sense the AKTC as they created Al-Azhar Park and rehabilitated public spaces like Aslam Square and Tablita Market were interested in cultivating spaces for societal interaction and mixing. More specifically, the AKTC’s design of Aslam Square was geared towards increasing the variety of neighborhood dwellers who spent time there to socialize. Kareem Ibrahim described the square as the neighborhood’s “private public space” or “lounge.” Initially the square was used mainly by children playing and by the community’s youth, who spent many hours socializing at the neighborhood coffee shops

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93 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
overlooking the square. The idea was to maintain the social activities occurring in the square but also to make it a more comfortable space for other members of the community who felt hindered from using it. They found that this was particularly the case for women who felt unsafe passing through the square, where lingering young men often made inappropriate remarks and harassed women as they passed by. The AKTC team then devised a new walkway parallel to the mosque for the women to use that was on the other side of the square from the coffee shops and so protected the women from such harassment. They also built several public benches in the square where women and children would be able to socialize, and older men coming out of the adjacent Aslam Mosque would be able to sit as they put their shoes back on and socialized.\(^5\) What is notable about these designs is that they worked around existent societal values rather than attempting to reshape those values. In other words, although creating the pathway for women most likely increased their ability to navigate the square and interact with a wider variety of neighborhood dwellers, it was also designed to work around existent practices of male-female interactions. The square’s design only removes the women from the harassment’s earshot but doesn’t change the modes of communication that the men lingering at coffee shops used to interact with women, or their levels of respect for female passers-by. The AKTC was not interested in molding new values for gender relations or women’s rights. Rather the AKTC is working to foster autonomous communities who take the initiative to govern their neighborhoods collectively within the set of power structures and values practiced in the neighborhood.

The other major intervention the AKTC deployed to produce more social interaction in Aslam Square was to devise mechanisms for stopping local merchants from parking their pick-up trucks in the square. To that effect they converted a vacant plot of land on a side street adjacent to the square into a parking lot for the trucks. They also installed short metal barriers

\(^{5}\) Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
around the square that were spaced out such that they don’t allow car access but allow for normal pedestrian movement. The idea was that the removal of cars from the square would give the community more physical space to socialize and give pedestrians, especially children, a higher sense of safety in the square. Eventually, the plan faltered. A parking mafia, dwellers unlikely to have been included within the AKTC’s participatory planning sessions or considered integral to the neighborhood’s communal ‘public,’ commandeered the parking lot and charged high prices that favored wealthy owners of private cars rather than the merchant owners of the pick-up trucks. In response, the truck owners sawed down the metal barriers around the square, removing them, and resumed parking in the square, as I frequently observed during my time there.\textsuperscript{96}

The AKTC team devised similar strategies to make Tablita Market more accessible to neighborhood vendors and the community. According to Dina Shehayeb, the participatory planning sessions revealed that women vendors were unable to spend much time at the market because there were no public toilets in the vicinity. The main worry vendors had from building such a toilet was that it might be commandeered as a vacant space by drug lords and used for selling drugs. They resolved the issue, and planned for the exclusion of the drug lords from the market’s community, by building a locked toilet and giving the key to one of the female merchants to control access to it. They also found that vendors believed more community members would come to the market if it were cleaner, and so devised new mechanisms for garbage collection and market cleansing.\textsuperscript{97} All in all, the AKTC invested in the participatory planning and redesign of public spaces with the goal of fostering local autonomous communities that mobilized existent power structures and values to coordinate on governing their neighborhood without resort to the state.

\textsuperscript{96} Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
\textsuperscript{97} Shehayeb (2011).
The Built Environment as “Community”:

As the AKTC built communal cohesion and initiative amongst Darb El-Ahmar’s dwellers, they also worked to instill the idea that the community’s fate was intricately tied to that of their neighborhood’s environment. For the AKTC the “community” that actually governs Darb El-Ahmar combines the neighborhood’s urban dwellers and the agential built environment of spaces, buildings and infrastructure they inhabit. They thus worked hard to cultivate a strong human-non-human community based on the awareness of the neighborhood’s urban dwellers of the linkage of their fates to that of their built environment and an active commitment to investing in that environment.

The main idea behind having building residents, whether owners or tenants, financially invest in the restoration of their homes as a priority over the many other ways neighborhood residents could invest their limited financial resources was to foster a clear linkage between the building’s well-being and personal well-being for the residents. In other words, the AKTC was claiming that the restoration of homes should be prioritized because structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing homes were not a luxury secured through wealth but actually the pathway to socio-economic development, wealth and personal well-being. They emphasized to neighborhood residents that investing in their building’s restoration was essential to their well-being along three main dimensions: bodily and psychological health, sociability and economic revenue.98 First of all, the AKTC saw the restoration of buildings as a means towards guaranteeing a healthier and more secure life for its residents. As Ahmed Beblawy explains, “Our goal was to create a structurally safe residence (maskan ’amen) that was environmentally sound (saleh bee’eyan).” Hence, Ahmed argued that the most fundamental aspects of every

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98 For full articulation of the AKTC philosophy linking housing rehabilitation to communal well-being see, Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003).
restoration were to have “proper ventilations, natural light, proper sanitation and water systems, and to abolish the notion of shared bathrooms. In other words, each family would have its own independent bathroom unit.”99 Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003) in their technical report on the housing rehabilitation program also asserted that the most fundamental aspect of the restorations that the AKTC undertook, even in the least invasive of the restorations, was ensuring that the home provided for healthy living. The five most dangerous conditions that they strove to fix in a home were: “1. Lack of water supply in dwelling; 2. Lack of water outlet in dwelling other than in toilet; 3. Toilet facility shared by more than one household; 4. Non-ventilated “windowless” inhabited room, bathroom or kitchen; and 5. Small non-habitable rooms within the semi-private spaces of the building – outside dwelling units – used to raise animals (goats and sheep), or store hazardous materials, or used as kitchens.”100 The AKTC not only saw housing restoration as a means for securing the bodily health of its residents but also their psychological health. Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003) argue that housing restorations are psychologically rewarding because they “make residents proud of living in the area that they are already highly attached to…[and] children will grow up seeing more beauty than their parents ever did.”101 Moreover, housing restorations increase the potential for leisurely spaces in the home through refurbishing sociable spaces such as balconies or rooftops. Shehayeb and Kellett (2011) dedicated a scholarly article to a discussion of the many uses through which housing becomes an essential psychological as well as economic asset to low-income residents. Finally, the re-utilization and management of vacant spaces in the building, as well as vacant public spaces, ensures that these spaces are not utilized for criminal activity, as we saw with the reasoning behind locked market toilets. Hence, housing restoration and management also increases psychological ease through

99 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
100 Shehayeb and Mikawi, (2003), 6.
increasing feelings of security from neighborhood crime. All in all, the AKTC saw and strove to convince residents that their bodily and psychological health was dependent on living in structurally and environmentally sound buildings.

Second, the AKTC saw housing rehabilitation as essential for sociability. Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003) argue that “Rehabilitation of the housing stock will serve as the glue to the local community.”\(^{102}\) Having sound physical structures to inhabit will ensure that residents remain in the neighborhood and maintain their strong social ties. As Kareem Ibrahim asserts upgrading the neighborhood would stem the out migration that resulted from residents “leaving as soon as they could afford to.”\(^{103}\) Moreover, pride in place not only boosted the residents’ psychological self-esteem but also increased the likelihood that residents would invite family and neighbors to socialize within the physical space of their home.\(^{104}\) As we see in the upcoming chapters, many of the residents I met explained that the ability to host visitors was one of the main reasons they invested in the restorations. The restorations similarly increased the physical spaces where people socialized whether in private homes or public spaces.

Third, the AKTC saw the rehabilitation of the neighborhood’s physical spaces and buildings, and especially enhancing its aesthetic presentation to outsiders, as an important tool to protect urban dwellers from relocation by a predatory state most concerned with Cairo’s imagery. Dina Shehayeb explains that one of the main tactics she deployed to convince neighborhood residents to invest in housing restorations was by convincing them that they needed to develop a high media profile to protect themselves against relocation by the government. She used the analogy of Darb El-Asfar (in this chapter’s opening anecdote of contrasted rooftops) as follows,

\(^{102}\) Shehayeb and Mikawi, (2003), 7
\(^{103}\) Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
\(^{104}\) Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003).
“Al-Darb al-Asfar was always in the papers as an example of being a wonderful experiment of improving historic buildings, and I said ‘when you get positive media coverage, no one will remove you. Not this governor, not the following one. It will be public opinion, it will look very bad’. And this reassured them, it was number one guarantee.”

Dina then took panoramic pictures of their debilitated homes from Azhar Park before any of the restorations took place and showed them to the building residents to make the following argument,

“I told them ‘seriously, if Susan Mubarak is invited to the opening of this park, which she will be, and she stands there, during construction or something, this is what she will see of you guys. These are the backs of your houses; they gave their backs to a garbage heap for hundreds of years. Would you blame her if she said ‘poor people, we have to move them to new cities, to better housing?’ You can’t blame her.’ And they were convinced.”

Hence, the AKTC worked to link the fate of the neighborhood’s buildings to the fate of the social networks that the residents presumably highly valued as essential to their well-being in Darb El-Ahmar. The social networks, that according to Shehayeb and Eid (2007) were not only integral to providing their leisure but also provided residents with resources such as childcare, errand pooling, and financial support.

Finally, the AKTC team argued that the restoration of private residential homes as one of the key pathways towards the residents' accumulation of economic revenue. Although Kareem Ibrahim pointed out the importance of restored homes as valuable real estate, the AKTC team emphasized a plethora of income-generating consequences of housing restoration. Most basically, with stronger and healthier bodies, residents would be more capable of working productively to generate more income. Second, Shehayeb and Kellett (2011) described the many potential ways the actual space of the home could be used for income-generating work activities

106 Shehayeb (2011), paragraph 11.
107 Shehayeb and Eid (2007), 8-12.
108 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
such as sewing or baking. More pointedly, Shehayeb and Mikawi (2003) argue that the AKTC was invested in housing rehabilitation in order to help residents generate income. Restorations, and especially the creation of rooftops, would “increase the opportunity for positive use-patterns already existing in the area, some of which have an economic impact, such as poultry raising, and some the project would like to introduce, such as growing vegetables and herbs.”

Moreover, outside the home restorations generate income in two ways. They create new construction jobs in the neighborhood. They also attract new renters and tourists to the neighborhood. As Kareem Ibrahim elaborates, “one of the goals of the Aga Khan for the park was that it would become an engine for economic development…and that the people would start coming down from the park to visit the neighborhood bringing along economic revival.” Tourists would visit the monuments, use income-generating tourism services in the neighborhood, and serve as a new market for the handicrafts and merchandise produced locally in the neighborhood.

The importance of these outside tourist audiences only multiplied with globalization and increasing global tourism to Cairo. Thus it was essential to upgrade the neighborhood’s built environment to attract tourists and make the neighborhood accessible to them. In short, the generation of income does not solely depend on an urban dweller’s productive skills and nurtured human capital. The health and maintenance of one’s urban built environment is also directly generative of economic revenue. The fate of one’s economic well-being is directly linked to the fate of her environment.

As it linked the fates of urban dwellers to their environments, the AKTC worked to rekindle a relationship of dependency reminiscent of the linked fate that once existed between agricultural lands and villagers before it was severed through industrialization and dramatic

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agricultural transformation like the British enclosures of the 1600s. Particularly, the AKTC was working to reverse and decenter the emphasis the modernist project had put on human capacity as the exclusive agent of economic and political development and re-introduce the role of environmental agency to that equation. Of course the relationship the AKTC hoped to foster between urban dwellers and the city’s built environment depended on a set of urban dynamics and resources and global audiences that did not shape the villager-land relationship. Nevertheless it rested on the same idea of linked fate. Empowering human-non-human autonomous “communities” for governing Darb El-Ahmar without reliance on the state stands as a cornerstone of the political agenda that motivated the AKTC to invest in the neighborhood.

**Nation Before Community: The Ismailia Consortium**

The private sector entrepreneur, Ismailia Consortium (Ismailia for short), sought to empower a very different mode of governance in Downtown Cairo as they invested in the rejuvenation of the neighborhood: reviving a unified yet cosmopolitan Egyptian nation. Ismailia continued to believe in the basic tenets of a governing nation-state. Although, like the AKTC, they saw that the current state apparatus had failed drastically in governing Cairo, they did not seek, as the AKTC were doing, to displace the state as a governing organization with self-governing local autonomous communities, but rather they were dedicated to bringing back a functioning state. For Ismailia the main reason that the state failed, or was left to fail, so drastically was in the disintegration of the nation as the unit of citizens’ allegiance and interconnectedness. It was to the revival of the nation as the primary unit of citizen allegiance and inter-connectedness. It was to the revival of the nation as the primary unit of citizen allegiance and inter-connectedness. It was to the revival of the nation as the primary unit of citizen allegiance and inter-connectedness. It was to the revival of the nation as the primary unit of citizen allegiance and inter-connectedness. It was to the revival of the nation as the primary unit of citizen allegiance and inter-connectedness.

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110 For elaboration on British enclosures see e.g. Moore (1966), pg. 20-29.
111 It is remarkable to note here that the severing of this relationship of linked fate was gradual. When industrialization produced a whole new configuration of human-environment relations in urbanized cities and townships, it provoked the need for a new form of government. Thus, some of the first known chartered corporations were township or city corporations (Barkan, 2013) created and given legal exemptions to govern the special configuration of human-environment relations created through industrialization. That is of course before all such human-environment linkages were seen as obsolete.
organization that the Ismailia Consortium became dedicated. They saw that such a revival required a concerted socio-cultural program. Egyptian citizens needed to mix and interact more regularly across socio-economic strata and share a common cultural repertoire.

What my analysis demonstrates is that although Ismailia invested in the rejuvenation of Downtown Cairo as a profit-making enterprise, its urban plans were also dictated by a political logic. I find that the Ismailia Consortium made repeated trade-offs in their plans that forego profit-making opportunities for the sake of other priorities. I argue that most of these trade-offs service the political logic motivating this project: the revival of a nation. As they designed a profitable rejuvenation project, Ismailia was working to deliberately empower a ruling regime governing through a strong and cohesive nation-state. Given the current disarray of the ruling state in Egypt, they searched for governmental technologies that operate outside of the realm of the state to perform the socio-cultural work necessary for bringing about the national revival they saw so essential to political life. They turned to the city and its built environment. Ismailia believed that through proper urban planning and redesign their urban rejuvenation project would produce the socio-cultural transformations necessary for the revival of the Egyptian nation, and eventually the retrieval of a functioning state. Moreover, the profit trade-offs necessary for following this political logic made economic sense. After all, the return of a strong functioning state is essential for a true economic revival and the realization of full potential of profits not only for the Downtown project but also for the many other investments Ismailia’s investors had made in the country. The revival of a unified nation through urban redesign is the first and most essential step in retrieving that state.

Ismailia’s commitment to the revival of a unified nation is clear from both their justification for architectural design decisions as well as the measures they adopt to control
property transfers in Downtown Cairo. This section interrogates the “perceptions” the Ismailia Consortium has of the transformations necessary to produce a revived national unit through urban redesign. I rely on the visions the CEO of the Consortium imagines for Downtown. These are the visions that the CEO conveyed to the urban planning team of the Institute for International Urban Development (I2UD) that have been hired to execute their plans for rejuvenating Downtown, once the project enters its implementation phase. At the time of writing this dissertation in 2013-2014, the Ismailia Consortium’s project in Downtown was still at the initial stage of buying apartment buildings. By this time Ismailia had bought 21 of Wust El-Balad’s (the Arabic name for Downtown) apartment buildings, and were half way to their initial goal of buying forty buildings clustered in two geographic zones of Downtown. They had not refurbished the buildings or implemented, along with I2UD, any of their plans to redesign the public spaces and infrastructure around the clusters of buildings they bought. Hence, such plans were still hypothetical but instructive of their vision.

A Cultured Nation:

One of the decisions that is most indicative of Ismailia’s perceptions of the transformations needed in order to produce their idealized political unit, is their choice of the location of Downtown for their rejuvenation project. Karim Shafei, CEO of Ismailia Consortium, explained one of the main reasons behind the decision as follows,

“A very important development took place in the last five to seven years, and that was the Egyptianization of Egypt. Until about eight years ago, all the new brands that were created would be called Daly Dress, or Mohm and then in the past few years there started to open brands [with distinctly Arabic names] like El Diwan, Alef Bookstores, and Makani. In other words, there was a move towards a more national, a more Egyptian, identity and not the very confused mutated Westernized identity of Egypt. Part of that identity was represented in Wust El-Balad…So, I think [Wust El-Balad] represents a certain nostalgia towards better times when Egypt was living a much better life, when everyone was respectable, and everyone was cultured (the adjective used here was nedheefa, which literally translates to ‘clean,” but nedheefa has a distinct class
connotation denoting wealthier classes in Egypt and refers to adjectives such as civilized and cultured). All of these were factors that made Downtown attractive to us.\textsuperscript{112}

They saw Wust El-Balad as a location that was becoming associated with a new project of cultural production and identity formation. It was a location that already provided the seeds for cultivating the national revival or “Egyptianization of Egypt” they saw as essential for producing a mode of governance based on their idealized nation-state model. Ismailia did not plan to simply latch on to a naturally growing national identity but they sought to actively foster and shape it. They planned to do so through sponsoring the arts and cultural activities as one of the pillars of their project. Karim Shafei explains the philosophy behind sponsoring the arts as follows,

“We think that Downtown like all downtowns around the world should be accessible to all socio-economic segments of the society… What we’re trying to do is bring all these people together around positive activities. The key focus for us is art and culture. We believe that art and culture is non-discriminatory and it attracts people from all segments of society but with a very positive reason to come down. We don’t believe that shopping is a positive activity for example…Art brings people together. Cultural spaces like El-Sawy Cultural Wheel and Azhar Park’s El-Geneena Theater are very good examples of how a space can bring together a wide diversity of people…There are very specific coffee shops in Wust El Balad, for example, that we want to keep, and we don’t want them to…[become too expensive], because this will drive away a segment of artists that we think are very enriching for the place.”\textsuperscript{113}

The arts unite people across socio-economic segments around a “positive activity” or common cultural repertoire. Hence, Ismailia Consortium planned their rejuvenation project such that particular spaces were set aside as subsidized spaces for arts and cultural institutions, and the services their artists would need like cheap coffee shops. They decided to forego the higher rents they would have been able to collect from other tenants and venue operators in order to sponsor the arts. The arts and cultural venues, unlike their other renters, would perform the political work necessary to revive an Egyptian national identity.

\textsuperscript{112} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
Ismailia’s sponsorship of the arts in Wust El-Balad would foster and multiply cultural production in a variety of ways. First, the financial subsidization of artists would allow them to focus on their artistic and cultural production full-time rather than seeking alternative employment to support their artistic work. Second, the clustering of artists around specific spaces in Downtown would create physical proximity and collaboration amongst artists to enrich the process. Third, housing artistic and cultural production within buildings with the aesthetic qualities and narrative histories that provoke the “nostalgia” that Karim saw emanating from Downtown’s buildings serves not only to inspire artistic production but also attract new audiences for these artists. For Ismailia, the physical qualities of the buildings where cultural production is taking place matters.\textsuperscript{114} Of course, as owner of the spaces that house this artistic and cultural production, Ismailia decides which artists and cultural messages are sponsored through their project. The question then becomes: what is the vision that guides which forms of cultural production will be hosted within the spaces of Ismailia’s Downtown clusters?

Karim Shafei presented a very specific vision for the substance of the identity Ismailia hopes to promote either through artistic production or other entertainment venues. He explained, “I would like cosmopolitan from a completely different perspective than how for example City Stars (a shopping mall built on the outskirts of Cairo proper in 2003-2004). City Stars is a very American mall-like experience, which is completely different from what Downtown can offer. I’d like cosmopolitan in the sense of a pizzeria, for instance, operated by an Italian living in Egypt or an Egyptian who lived in Italy for thirty years and married an Italian woman. I’m not interested to have Pizza Hut…I’m not interested in having Zara and Mango (transnational chain clothing stores). I’m interested in having Azza Fahmy, the jewelry maker (Egyptian high-end jeweler specialized in artistic silver jewelry) or Mounaya who sells items (accessories, clothing, specialty home décor and the like) from Morocco, Lebanon and Turkey and so on, all from the region, but it’s not mass production like Zara and Mango.”\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{114} There has been a notable trend in the Middle East over the past decade or so to link artistic production and performance to buildings and spaces that are seen as aesthetically and historically symbolic of the meanings that artists hope to provoke.
\textsuperscript{115} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
In other words, Ismailia is working to cultivate a national identity that sees Egyptians as cosmopolitan with a shared appreciation of outside, seemingly Western, cultural influences distinct from “the mutated Western identity” Karim deplored above. The careful crafting of this cosmopolitan Egyptian identity comes through embedding Egyptians within intimate and local networks of cultural exchange as represented in the image of a “pizzeria, for instance, operated by an Egyptian who lived in Italy for thirty years and married an Italian woman,” rather than the distant processes of mass production that Pizza Hut represents. To cultivate such intimate networks of cultural exchange, Ismailia foregoes the profits that it might accrue from mass producers such as Zara, Mango or Pizza Hut in its search for its ideal venue operators.

What is remarkable about Karim Shafei’s discussion of the identity Ismailia was working to cultivate through Downtown’s spaces is that his discourse is completely focused on the crossroads of two identity categories: socio-economic class and national citizenship. Karim was concerned with the arts unifying Egyptians across class strata and his definitions of cosmopolitanism were completely dictated by interactions and exchanges across boundaries of national allegiance denoted by country depictions like Greek, Moroccan and Italian. What is notably absent from this discourse is religion or religiosity as an identity category that may impact Egyptian identity one way or another. It begs the question as to where religion fits into the project of cultural production Ismailia sees itself sponsoring in Wust El-Balad. In what ways would the incorporation of religious cultural production be acceptable for arts and cultural institutions sponsored by Ismailia? These questions became especially salient as Ismailia was implementing its urban rejuvenation project at a time when Egypt was undergoing a lot of political strife and inter-religious communal violence surrounding the question of the place of religion in politics and Egyptian identity. During our multiple meetings and numerous hours
discussing Ismailia’s project to rejuvenate Downtown, Karim only mentioned the question of religion once. He jokingly ended one of our meetings in 2011 wondering whether the project would ever take off if a Salafist Islamist government took hold that wouldn’t allow them to operate their night entertainment venues. For Karim, Egyptian national identity was produced strictly in relation to class and interactions with other nations residing outside Egypt’s physical borders. Religion did not feature in the “imagined community” Ismailia was working to produce in Cairo.

**Unity Across Class:**

The second tenet of Ismailia’s program for producing national unity revolved around generating inter-class mixing. In addition to its centrality to a new wave of cultural production, the other reason that motivated Ismailia to choose rejuvenating Downtown in particular over other neighborhoods in the city was Downtown’s geographical centrality. According to Karim, “Downtown is extremely central and it’s the one location traversed by all the transportation means in Cairo. There you’ll find the train station, metro stations, bus stations, taxis and all the major tunnels and bridges. So from Downtown, you’re twenty minutes away from any location.”

Hence, everyone passes through Downtown and has access to Downtown no matter which mode of transportation they prefer or can afford. In fact, Ismailia was so keen on keeping that flow of traffic in and out of Downtown that they were against any urban plans that would lead to the pedestrianization or blockage of car traffic from any zones in Wust El-Balad, as elaborated below. Ismailia was actively seeking an accessible location that would facilitate the mixing of people from across different walks of life.

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116 Ibid.
117 Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 9-29-2011.
In fact, Ismailia saw one of the main transformations necessary in Downtown was increasing its access to Egyptians from across all socio-economic classes and worked to deliberately facilitate that mixing. Karim Shafei explained,

“We think that Downtown like all downtowns around the world should be accessible to all socio-economic segments of the society, which means that it is neither an exclusive space for affluent society nor middle market and more income-challenged markets. We think it’s a place where everybody has to co-exist. What happened over the past fifty years is that particular segments, if you rank them A, B, C, D and so on, those in ranks A and B abandoned Downtown completely in terms of residences, commercial, offices and hotels and everything. They abandoned it completely. They were replaced by cheaper activities or more economic activities. Apartments that would have been occupied by import-export businesses or cotton distributors would be replaced by seven workshops (per apartment) for iron works, shoe-makers, tailors and so forth. So what happened is that A and B were pushed out. So what we’re trying to do is maintain the traffic we see today and create a space that would bring back the A and B segments.”

As we saw above, Ismailia is working to bring these socio-economic segments together through “positive” arts and cultural activities. The other pillar of their plan to increase the mixing of societal classes across socio-economic class was through increasing their interactions in Downtown’s public street space.

Ismailia had an elaborate plan for fostering entertainment venues that host guests out of doors within Downtown’s shared spaces, and saw that Downtown’s existent architectural design to be uniquely suited for fostering such outdoor entertainment and interactions. Usually the accommodation of outdoor markets, cafes and restaurant seating requires the pedestrianization of traffic routes. Wust El-Balad, however, has naturally pedestrianized passages that do not interfere with traffic. According to Karim, one of Downtown’s architectural “gems” is the organization of Wust El-Balad’s apartment blocks. They are organized such that they all overlook and are connected to an intricate web of passageways that travels across the entirety of Wust El-Balad. Presumably, one could walk across the entirety of Wust El-Balad along these

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118 Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
passageways and avoid car traffic for the entire journey. The semi-enclosed semi-public nature of these pedestrianized passageways turned them into the closest thing to an alley in Downtown.

These passageways are currently serving a variety of functions. Some of them serve as a space for local service providers. One of the passageways I most frequented during my fieldwork is home to several services that stood side by side. A traditional coffee shop (qahwa) stands at the entrance to the passageway. Next to the coffee shop, and taking the corner of the first bend in the passageway, is a very small stall where two women cook homemade food like baked chicken, grape leaves and lentil soup at very cheap prices, relative to similar foods at Egyptian restaurants. The women cook the food at home, heat it in their small stall, and display it in a small cart standing outside of their stall. In front of the coffee shop and homemade cooking stall stand four to five table-clothed plastic tables with chairs. The furniture is shared between the coffee shop and cooking stall’s customers and is usually overwhelmed by a different set of customers depending on the time of day. To the left of the first bend in the passageway is an outdoors flower shop on the right and a tailor and ironing shop facing it. This passageway is navigated by daily customers of these service providers and usually hosts long nights of entertainment of diners and tea drinkers. Other passageways are dominated by commercial trade. There, low-end retailers from nearby streets spread their merchandise sales into the passageways. Some passageways become dominated by traditional coffee shops if the alley is wide enough. Finally, some of the passageways remain entirely vacant.

Ismailia is planning to completely redesign the passageways that fall within the clusters of buildings it is buying. The passageways are to be transformed into pedestrian spaces of outdoor entertainment. The passageways will host outdoor seating for restaurants, coffee shops and similar entertainment venues as well as serve as a semi-enclosed entryway to a regulated
shopping experience. In other words, they will serve as semi-enclosed public spaces where Ismailia envisions Cairenes will once more interact, respect one another and relate to one another as a unified national entity across socio-economic strata. To ensure that their entertainment venues are accessible to citizens of different income levels, Ismailia plans to allocate their spaces to venue operators providing services at a gradation of prices. Karim explained,

“There are very specific coffee shops (qahawy) in Wust El Balad that we want to keep, and we don’t want them to transform from selling the hookah tobacco stick (hagar shishah) at 2LE a piece and a cup of tea for 1.25 LE to suddenly requiring customers to pay a minimum of 25LE…Yet, we want to make sure that there will be another Hookah provider who will charge from 5-15 LE and a third charging at 50LE in the same spaces of Downtown.”

In the same vein, Karim explained that they plan to ensure that boutique hotels in the neighborhood would provide rooms across a wide price spectrum ranging from $60-$500 a night. Ismailia has decided to rent out their spaces to operators that fulfill their price range quotas at the expense of hosting tenants that would pay higher prices for the spaces across the board to ensure socio-economic diversity in Downtown.

The consumers’ shopping experience will be similarly gradated. As we saw in reference to Karim’s definition of “cosmopolitanism,” Ismailia plans to host a very regulated high-end shopping experience that avoids mass production. Karim asserted however that Ismailia did not plan to eradicate the current low-end shopping experience that had “invaded” Downtown in the 1980s with shoe-sellers, cheap clothing stores and travel agencies in favor of this higher end market. Rather, Ismailia plans to provide for a segmented market but regulate low-end retailers in ways that would ensure they don’t violate their vision for Downtown as follows,

“Even if you want to serve the cheaper markets, it should be done through organized retailers…I think that there are many alternatives that will offer price competitive

119 Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 9-29-2011.
120 Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
121 Ibid.
products but without necessarily putting (arza’) neon pink signs with dazzling lights over art deco buildings built in 1918. I believe the storefronts can be standardized, the branding could be very limited and the product would be sold at competitive prices, but the setting and service provided by the store would be up to the standard of the neighborhood.”

In other words, Ismailia plans to host a lower-end shopping experience that does not alienate the high-end boutiques’ customers or more generally distract from the aesthetic qualities, image and atmosphere Downtown is meant to evoke. Hence, the price isn’t always right for Ismailia Consortium. The creation of the mixed-use spaces they envision that produce their idealized Egyptian cosmopolitan cultural experience requires careful urban planning and land-use allocations of the spaces they’re renting out to merchants and venue operators.

It was only with a detailed discussion of the entertainment venues, and especially dining experiences, that Ismailia are planning to operate within their clusters that the socio-economic boundaries of the Cairenes they saw mingling in Wust El-Balad started to crystallize. As we discussed Downtown’s map, Karim explained that entertainment and dining venues would be gradated across space. On the cornering edge of one of Ismailia’s clusters stands Cinema Radio. Cinema Radio was built in the 1930s with Cairo’s largest movie screen, and amongst the largest in the region, often chosen for famous movie premiers attended by Cairo’s wealthiest society. The hall was so large it was later split into a cinema and a theater, and eventually went into disuse. Ismailia bought Cinema Radio and plans to transform it into a space for a premier dining experience. They plan to convert the theater into a space for luxury dinner shows that would hail from across the region from Turkey, Morocco, as well as Egypt. Thus, at one end

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122 Ibid.
124 It is interesting to note that in the meantime and before Ismailia entered the implementation phase of the project, it struck a deal with Bassem Youssef who refurbished the space and hosted his satirical political TV program, “El Bernameg” to a live audience from the theater within Cinema Radio in 2013-2014, until his show was stopped.
of Ismailia’s cluster will stand a dining experience geared for Downtown’s most affluent visitors. The passageways leading to that experience will be planned as “accessible” spaces, however, lined with restaurants and entertainment venues offering services at a gradation of prices.\textsuperscript{125}

The question then became: how “accessible” will these passageways be? Since at the time of my fieldwork and at the time of the writing of this dissertation Ismailia had not yet refurbished the buildings it bought in Wust El-Balad and had not started renting its spaces to venue operators, it was unclear how the gradation of price ranges would actually materialize. To try to gage that “accessibility” I then asked Karim to approximate restaurants that currently offer services in Cairo that would be at the lower end of the food vendors within these “accessible” passageways. Karim was hesitant to name any chains since Ismailia is dedicated to “organic” and unique non-chain food vendors, so I ventured with a suggestion. I asked Karim whether there would be food vendors analogous to an Egyptian chain called “Gad.” Gad is a chain that provides as its most popular offering fava bean and falafel sandwiches. The Fava bean sandwich is the most popular food staple for Egyptians across all segments, but is especially popular to lower socio-economic strata as the most affordable Egyptian food. Gad sells a fava bean sandwich at the price of LE 1.75\textsuperscript{126} but fava bean sandwiches can be easily bought at half the price in non-chain stalls and street carts, which abound in Downtown. I suggested Gad to Karim as a fava bean vendor that is likely to live up to Karim’s standards for low-end retail. Karim’s facial expression of incredulity at my suggestion said it all. He emphatically responded that Ismailia had no plans for hosting Gad, and by extension analogous food vendors, within its spaces. Karim’s facial expression of surprise and despair communicated to me that if I was suggesting a place like Gad for the project then the hours we had spent discussing the project

\textsuperscript{125} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 9-29-2011.

\textsuperscript{126} All food item costs are collected in 2014.
were in vain. Such a suggestion meant that I clearly still didn’t understand the atmosphere that Ismailia hoped to cultivate in Downtown. It thus became clear that there was no space for Gad’s customers or the customers who regularly frequented Downtown’s cheaper street carts within Ismailia’s clusters of Downtown. There was a limit to the meaning of “accessible” after all. In fact, half an hour later Karim showed me the drawings and graphic adaptations that the project’s planning and design teams had created for a futuristic Downtown. These were the images shown to the project’s current and future investors, but I was not given a copy of the presentation because Karim felt it might compromise the nature of the ongoing project and investor negotiations. As he explained to me the different plans, we came across images of the passageways Karim had described as “accessible” earlier in our conversation. In the futuristic designs, Ismailia’s team had decided to insert hypothetical storefronts of food vendors and restaurants currently operating in Cairo to give the investors an approximation of the activity that would be taking place in these passageways. The operators that showed up on these futuristic drawings included Makani, the restaurant Karim mentioned as part of the trend for the “Egyptianization of Egypt,” Mori Sushi and Cinnabon. All of these food vendors and restaurants offer price ranges that would be considered a treat for the Egyptian middle class, and are most frequented by members of Cairo’s upper middle class. To provide a sense of these price ranges, one regular Cinnabon costs 22 LE in Egypt. That is more than 12 times the cost of a fava bean or falafel sandwich at Gad. There was a clear lower boundary to the socio-economic segments Ismailia saw interacting and mixing within a futuristic Downtown as they had envisioned it.

This discussion pushes us to probe further into the mixture of people Ismailia saw taking part in the “imagined community” or national unit it was promoting in Wust El-Balad. In revisiting Karim’s reasoning for maintaining cheap coffee shops, it becomes clear that Karim’s
invitation to “a segment of artists that we think are very enriching for the place” is a pointed delineation of particular characteristics of low-income earners who would be welcome in Ismailia’s Wust El-Balad. There is no mention of the people who work in car repairs shops (samkareyya) currently lining the large boulevard adjacent to Ismailia’s passageways, or of the more general population of people who work in crafts and metals workshops or cheap retail merchants in Downtown and frequent its coffee shops. When I asked about Ismailia’s relationship to these workshops, and especially the car repairs shop industry, Karim responded that the car repairs business didn’t cause a direct problem for Ismailia since Ismailia’s clusters of buildings ended on the edge of that boulevard and didn’t include any buildings with car repairs shops.\(^{127}\) Indirectly, he saw that an industry like cars repairs does not have a place in Downtown and with the “domino effect” that their project will create, the car repairs shops will eventually see that Downtown is no longer fit for their work and their customers, and will want to leave the area.\(^{128}\) In other words, there were activities that Ismailia saw as unfit for Downtown. The question this generates is whether the people who used to work in Downtown would find a place for even entertainment or shopping in Downtown once their activities are removed. Would they be welcomed into Ismailia’s “accessible” passageways? From the initial indicators and discourses I analyzed, it would seem that this socio-economic segment is unlikely to be welcome or have access to the spaces Ismailia is rejuvenating in Wust El-Balad. Ismailia’s commitment to the mixing of Egyptians across different socio-economic segments is after all bounded. There are segments of the population that are less welcome than others in the national unit Ismailia sees itself sponsoring through inter-class mixing in a rejuvenated Downtown.

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\(^{127}\) See chapter for 3 on property rights for a discussion of the process Ismailia employed with informal workshops in the buildings they bought.

\(^{128}\) Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
Although there are socio-economic boundaries to the social interactions that are envisioned to take place in Downtown, Ismailia hopes such interactions will cross national country boundaries. It works to foster a space producing a cosmopolitan Egyptian identity not just through Egyptians’ frequenting of venues and spaces designed to generate a “cosmopolitan” atmosphere but through actual regular interactions between Egyptians and foreigners in Wust El-Balad. One of Ismailia’s goals is to

“Attract the people who stay in the hotels on the Nile’s waterfront to visit Downtown, not [like] Khan El Khalili [area]...as tourists who sit, smoke nargila and take pictures with camels. Rather, with the mentality that this is an attraction for Egyptians who are coming to Downtown because this is their normal outing and their normal shopping place...So, the residents of the Nile hotels will want to come to Downtown, and that’s how you start creating a space that is shared between Egyptian people and the foreigners who are visiting temporarily and the foreign residents living in Zamalek, Garden City or Maadi [neighborhoods].”

Ismailia saw the production of a cosmopolitan Egyptian national identity dependent on inter-class mixing as well as regular interactions between Egyptians and foreigners.

**Defining Community:**

The final indication of Ismailia Consortium’s commitment to a governing logic that operates according to the nation-state model rather than local autonomous communities model, is Ismailia’s designation of the “public” or communal unit that is entitled to a sense of ownership of Downtown. When I asked Karim Shafei whether Ismailia considered adopting a participatory framework for planning Downtown, he responded that Ismailia is committed to a participatory framework but with a particular definition of the “community” participating in that planning process. Karim defined that “community” as follows,

“Definitely now is the time to bring the community’s input into our planning process. It’s not only about the neighborhood, however, in the sense that Wust El-Balad is regarded by many Egyptians as the property of all Egyptians. In other words, you can’t go ask the people living next to the Pyramids in Nazlet El-Seman neighborhood whether or not they

129 Ibid.
want to paint the Pyramids pink. The Pyramids are owned by all of Egypt, so if we are going to make a decision about it, we would need to take a referendum. Also, Wust El-Balad has a very small number of residents. The actual people who live in Downtown are a minority. On the other hand, all Egyptians love Wust El-Balad and have an opinion about it. So we need representation from the entire community across the board. We need to talk to artists, shoppers who come to Downtown to buy a suit for [the low cost] of LE 200, and so on. At the same time we need expert opinion, which is represented in the I2UD and the Egyptian team they consult.”

Karim then elaborated that although they hadn’t found a formula for guaranteeing the participation of “community” in the larger sense of all Egyptians who are interested in Downtown, he had been working to start discussions with many people on the topic. At the time of our interview, he had approached over a hundred people since officially publicizing the project that included “urban planners, artists, journalists, and citizens generally.” Unlike the AKTC’s emphasis on generating autonomous local communities responsible for the governance of the spaces where they lived and worked, Karim Shafei emphasized that the unit that should have a say in the governance of Downtown should be a much larger national unit that has a stake in how Downtown is planned and governed. The issue now was finding a mechanism that would allow for their coordination of such a large array of perspectives and opinions. According to Ismailia’s philosophy, the urban dwellers who had lived, worked and developed their social networks in the immediate vicinity of Downtown for decades did not have priority in the planning or governance of this space. Even though these urban dwellers may have inhabited the neighborhood, they were not considered Wust El-Balad’s “community.” In designing and governing Wust El-Balad nation comes before community.

Karim’s view of the role of the urban dwellers currently living in Downtown in the planning and governing of the neighborhood becomes less surprising when we consider that most of people that had lived or worked in Ismailia’s buildings were evacuated. One of the basic

130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
tenets of Ismailia’s rejuvenation project is that it needs to acquire full control over the buildings and spaces it plans to rejuvenate in order to implement its vision for Downtown. Thus, they decided to buy up forty buildings in Downtown Cairo that are geographically clustered into two zones. Once they bought any buildings, they worked to evacuate around 70% of the occupants of each of the buildings. Vacant buildings would allow Ismailia to control the organization of different unit functions in the buildings and control the characteristics of the tenants and venue operators in accordance to the very particular visions Karim described above. Clustering the buildings allowed Ismailia to reap the economies of scale that come with repairing infrastructure in clusters and designing joint public spaces or passageways, as well as control the overall environment and services fostered around its refurbished buildings. In chapter 3, I discuss the techniques through which Ismailia vacates its buildings and controls the characteristics of new tenants. What is significant for Ismailia’s definition of “imagined community” is the fact that most of the urban dwellers who did live or work within Ismailia’s buildings would physically relocate from the neighborhood. In other words a vacated Downtown would make a conversation about “community” in the sense of the people who live and work in the neighborhood a moot point. For Ismailia, the disruption that the evacuation of Downtown’s dwellers would bring to their urban livelihood, social networks, and political engagement is a sacrifice necessary if Downtown is to become rightfully accessible to all Egyptians. The “de-socialization” of Downtown’s lived spaces is necessary for producing the national unit Ismailia hopes to foster. Nation comes before community.

**Differentiated Community: GAP İnşaat in Tarlabası, Istanbul**

Like the Ismailia Consortium’s project, GAP İnşaat’s project in Tarlabası and TOKİ’s project in Sulukule in Istanbul were premised on the wholesale evacuation of the owners and
renters who lived and worked within legally defined boundaries of both neighborhoods. Unlike Ismailia, however, GAP and TOKİ were not evacuating the two neighborhoods in order to cultivate a new space for nation-building. The two urban rejuvenation projects were part of a larger state project to respond to the paradoxes of globalization through instituting a new form of differentiated governance. The Turkish state mobilized urban redesign to produce a new regime that differentiated the rules of the game that would govern distinct citizen communities as defined at the localized scale of the neighborhood.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, Turkey had witnessed the revival of a strong state in the early 2000s after a short-lived experience with neo-liberal retrenchment. The revived state worked to capitalize on the opportunities generated through globalization. To reap those benefits, it became clear that the state needed to grapple with the paradoxes globalization had created. The Turkish state had implemented several policies since the 1980s in an effort to increase the in-flow of global capital and tourism. The policies most relevant to the city were the infrastructural overhaul implemented in the 1980s and the intensification of urban services in the 1990s described in the previous chapter. The same policies that were meant to strengthen the state vis-à-vis society were simultaneously meant to make Istanbul more accessible to global capital. With the advent of the 2000s, it became clear that providing global capital access to the city would not be enough. Globalization was not an automatic process. It was an inherently plural and contradictory process that required new mechanisms of governance that went beyond simple access and openness. In particular, globalization produced two sets of paradoxes. First, there were multiple global audiences that would be attracted through distinct and contradictory urban programs. Second, processes of globalization produced new forms of societal segmentation and citizen demands within Turkey’s electorate. In response to these paradoxes, the
revived state of the 2000s, and especially the reigning Justice and Development Party (AKP), worked to transform its mode of governance. It worked to develop a mode of governance that would produce new segmented zones of governance targeted at distinct global audiences and differentiated communities of citizens. The state hoped to institute distinct rules of the game within segmented zones of governance. To produce that transformation, the revived state worked to bypass electoral institutions of governance that governed political jurisdictions in accordance to the same rules of the game down to the smallest municipal districts. It turned to urban redesign at the localized scale of the neighborhood to institute this new differentiating governance regime that bypassed local democratic institutions.

In June of 2005 the AKP-majority Grand National Assembly of Turkey passed Law no. 5366 referred to as the “Preservation and Renewal Law.” The law gave the state the power to declare urban neighborhoods that the state identifies as declining or decrepit within historical urban zones as “Renewal Areas” or “Yenelime Alanlar.” The renewal areas were strictly defined zones of historical areas at a much smaller scale than local municipalities. Once the central state declared a neighborhood zone as a renewal area it collaborated with the relevant local municipality to find a suitable actor for implementing an urban renewal project in that zone. Two of the first zones to be declared as “renewal areas” were Sulukule and Tarlabası neighborhoods. The urban renewal project could either be assigned to a state agency or allocated to a private sector partner through a bid. In the case of Sulukule it was the Turkish Mass Housing Authority or TOKİ, an executive state agency operating from within the Prime Ministerial office, that was assigned the execution of the project in collaboration with Fatih Municipality. In the case of Tarlabası, it was the private sector construction company GAP İnşaat that won the bid to fund and implement the project, in collaboration with Beyoğlu Municipality. The state agency or the
private sector winner of the renewal bid was given special powers to execute the renewal project. First, the executing actor was given full authority to produce the urban plan for the neighborhood, with minimal consultative requirements. This new urban plan then became law and replaced any official land-use maps in official registries. In other words, the renewal area was now governed by a plan that is distinct from any other planning mechanism that may have governed city-wide urban planning. The law also allowed for the emergency nationalization of private property that allowed for the forcible transfer of private property obstructing the project’s implementation to the state, if necessary. Finally, as we see in chapter 3 the actor urban rejuvenation project sponsor’s control over the renewal area does not end with the completion of the physical redesign of the neighborhood. The sponsoring actor was given the authority to control all future planning and real estate transfers in the neighborhood. In short, a new governing regime with distinct rules of the game set by an unelected executive agency or private sector actor was instituted at the local scale of the neighborhood. It was through the proliferation of urban rejuvenation projects justified by the state as necessary for staving off the city’s decline that a new mode of differentiated governance was born in Istanbul. Within each of these neighborhoods specific techniques of urban redesign were then mobilized to produce the communal transformation the sponsoring actor saw fit for setting the new rules of the game through which this specific neighborhood was to be governed.

Because the state did not have the resources (funding or otherwise) necessary for the physical redesign of so many zones of the city, it enlisted private sector actors as partners who would fund and implement urban rejuvenation projects. It used the mechanism of the bid to isolate private partners who would most closely implement the governing regime that the state thought was needed for a particular urban neighborhood. Of course, once the private sector actor
was given the authorities outlined in the “Preservation and Renewal Law” there were no guarantees that the private sector actor would necessarily implement a project as congruent with the state’s agenda as the state would hope. Hence, the AKP-led government resorted to other means to increase the likelihood that these new governing regimes remain largely congruent with state agendas. In particular, the government resorted to securing congruence through personal connections. In fact, GAP is a subsidiary of Çalık Holding, whose CEO at the time of the allocation of the bid was none other than the then Prime Minister Erdoğan’s son-in-law, Berat Albayrak. It appears from the corruption scandals that erupted in December of 2013 and resulted in the resignation of then Minister Environment and Urban Planning and former head of TOKİ, Erdoğan Bayraktar, that there was a trend of such corrupt practices. In other words, the state made legal and extra-legal efforts to secure congruent governing agendas in the segmented zones governed by private sector actors. Of course, the logics of the private organization governing the zone would always bring their own unintended consequences.

I now turn to a discussion of GAP’s “perceptions” of the communal transformations necessary for the success of its plans in Tarlabası, and the differentiated governing regime they were developing for Tarlabası’s futuristic community.

A New Tarlabası:

When GAP arrived in Tarlabası after winning the renewal bid in April of 2007, they decided that the only way they would be able to foster the community they envisioned for Tarlabası, would have to be through the evacuation of existent urban dwellers who lived and worked in the neighborhood at the time, and to start from a *tabula rasa*. According to Nilgun

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Kivircik, Director of GAP’s Tarlabása Yenileniyor project division, GAP had a very particular vision for the community they foresaw living in a futuristic Tarlabása. GAP planned to create a residential space within Tarlabása that would be complemented by office space on the neighborhood’s main streets. Nilgun described the new residential community or clientele that GAP hoped to attract to Tarlabása as a clientele who would be able to afford to live in such a central location, once GAP modified real estate value. Moreover, she envisions that they would mostly comprise of smaller families with less need for cars in daily life.133 Moreover, GAP aimed to attract a particular kind of commercial clientele. In its most basic formulation GAP hoped to foster “hizmet” or services and “ticaret” or commerce but not “imalat” or productive activities in the neighborhood. Thus, in addition to services geared towards neighborhood residents (such as super markets and fruit and vegetable sellers), GAP would foster commercial activity in three main sectors: the banking and financial sector, the retail sector and the food and beverage sector (gastromoni). Most importantly they aimed to attract a commercial clientele of professionals that would use their office spaces that would include, “major architecture firms, law offices, the creative sector, advertising agencies, PR groups,” and so on. The bulwark of productive workshops that existed in the neighborhood before GAP’s evacuations would find no place in a futuristic Tarlabása.134 GAP’s vision for Tarlabása was vividly depicted in their brochures and on billboards that stood on the arterial Tarlabası Boulevard. The billboards were positioned to cover the neighborhood’s buildings after their evacuation and pillaging in 2011-2012. Figures 5-7 are images from GAP’s billboard and brochure. Their brochures depicted a futuristic Tarlabası populated by young upper middle class Turkish families and professionals.

133 Nilgun Kivircik, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 4-5-2012.  
134 Ibid.
Figure 5: Image from GAP’s billboard obtained by author from GAP’s team in July of 2012.

Figure 6: This is an aerial image of Tarlabası after its building had been evacuated during the winter of 2011-2012. It shows the billboards in the lower left corner of the photo, as they cover the view of the evacuated buildings from the street. Photo taken by author in April of 2012.
What is remarkable about Figure 5 is that the before and after pictures not only contrasted the state of the physical urban fabric of Tarlabası but also contrasted the community GAP envisioned for a futuristic Tarlabası to the neighborhood’s existent population. They used clues such as people’s attire, degree of people’s idleness and the make of parked cars and vehicles to provide clear markers of class and profession that distinguish the futuristic and existent communities of Tarlabası. They also referred to markers of religiosity and ethnic background. In an image that was hanging as a poster in GAP’s offices in 2012, GAP contrasted a before picture depicting an older woman who wore a veil similar to that worn by the majority of the Kurdish women who lived in Tarlabası before the evacuations with a picture of a futuristic Tarlabası where clearly non-Kurdish women were strolling in the neighborhood in the attire depicted in Figures 5 and 7 above.

A survey of the characteristics of the population living in Tarlabası before GAP’s advent to the neighborhood clarifies just how divergent GAP’s vision is from the community that lived in the neighborhood. The survey was conducted in August of 2008 by well-known Turkish urban
planner Faruk Göksu and his team when they were commissioned by the municipality and GAP as mediators with the community. According to the survey, the buildings within the parameters of GAP’s project housed 442 residential households that amounted to 2,200 residents, and it included commercial space for another 452 commercial occupants of the buildings. The following are some of the most telling statistics from that survey. The survey estimated that 52% of the population hailed from Eastern Turkey, and was most likely ethnically Kurdish, and that 4% of the population were refugee populations, mostly from African countries. It also estimated that 12% of the population was unemployed and that 77% of the population had temporary employment with high probability of job loss. They estimated that more than 60% of the population had either not attended any school or only completed primary education. Meanwhile, 11% graduated high school and 3% went to university. The survey also indicated that the commercial activity in the neighborhood was divided as follows: 33% workshops, 26% small shops, 8% restaurants, 7% were hair salons or sold wigs, 7% coffee shops, 6% hotel-bar, 4% tailors, 2% bakery and 7% other. Finally, the survey also estimated that 18% of the population was working as street vendors and 4% were transvestites or prostitutes. The existent population of residents and workers was remarkably different from the community Nilgun had in mind.

The population was mostly composed of low-income wage earners with minimal educational qualifications. The commercial sector included illegally employed workers and did not host any of the professional services industries GAP envisioned for the neighborhood. Nilgun provided vivid imagery of just how different Tarlabası’s commercial sector was from what GAP envisioned as she explained why all workshops would be removed from the neighborhood. Nilgun deplored that Tarlabası had been a center for the production and preparation of stuffed

\[135\] Other informal estimates place the Kurdish population at around 80% of the neighborhood’s population. It is likely somewhere in between but they certainly represent the majority ethnicity in Tarlabası.

mussels (*midye dolma*). “Mussels were being sorted in all of the basement levels or cellars [of Tarlabası], and there were rats that big (and gestures to her arm’s length).” Facilities for the storage and sorting of mussels would definitely not be allowed or tolerated in the futuristic neighborhood. Non-productive commercial activity would also be regulated in the futuristic project area. Although Nilgun did explain that most service-providers who could afford their office and commercial spaces would be able to practice their commercial activities there she highlighted that some activities that did not mirror the ethos of the project space would not be tolerated. In particular, she explained that most shops facing the main Tarlabası Boulevard currently sell and vividly display wigs (*peruklar*) in their window shops. Such wig showrooms would not be tolerated. “We will not be displaying wigs in those windows,” she said emphatically. Rather, Nilgun had other plans for top floor window displays on the project’s office buildings. Such top floors would be reserved for art galleries or acceptable store displays. The contrast did not stop with the commercial sector. Although never verbalized in our interviews, GAP’s imagery contrasting a futuristic Tarlabası to an image of an older Kurdish woman signals that Gap also envisioned an ethnically Turk population in the neighborhood. The existent population was remarkably different from the community that GAP saw fit for a rejuvenated Tarlabası. Thus, they found that the only way to implement the dramatic communal transformation necessary to fulfill their vision was to completely evacuate the urban dwellers who lived and worked in Tarlabası before the neighborhood was declared a “renewal area.”

GAP’s stated logic for these mass evacuations and the transfer of all property rights to GAP was not the replacement of a population but the architectural necessities of attractive real estate in the city’s center. Nilgun highlighted two architectural advantages from evacuation and property transfer of 100% of the buildings within the project parameters. First, it would allow

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137 Nilgun Kivircik, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 4-5-2012.
GAP to redesign the structural contours of the buildings of the neighborhood to ensure that they are in line with the functions GAP envisions for these spaces. Specifically, GAP would be able to combine narrow buildings to create the larger spaces necessary for office and large luxury residential units. GAP planned to gut the building interiors and combine them into one building whilst preserving the facades of historical buildings onto the exterior of the now much larger building. Second, it would facilitate GAP’s access to the infrastructural repairs it may need to carry out during the refurbishment of the buildings and neighborhood, and the economies of scale that come with refurbishing infrastructure for buildings clustered in the same geographical space. Although Nilgun initially provided very scientific reasoning for the need for building evacuations, it became clear through our interviews and analysis of the legal “conception” of GAP’s project that not all urban dwellers who could afford to live or work in its refurbished apartments would be allowed to do so. As we will see in chapter 3 on property rights, GAP devised several legal techniques for controlling all new owners and tenants who would live and work in a rejuvenated Tarlabası. Nilgun explained that such legal mechanisms were put in place to ensure that only a clientele that lived up to GAP’s “standards” would be allowed to inhabit the neighborhood. The production of this controlled environment was meant to attract the community that GAP envisioned for Tarlabası by ensuring that those who didn’t fit into the community’s profile would be excluded from the neighborhood. It would similarly attract the global audience interested in interacting with GAP’s new Turkish clientele. By empowering GAP to plan and govern Tarlabası, the Turkish state was allowing for the production of a governance regime at the local level of the neighborhood that would differentiate between citizens’ rights to live in particular areas of the city. It thus empowered a differentiating governance regime that applied different rules of the game from one Turkish citizen to the next.

138 Ibid.
The application of such differentiating governance regimes did not go unchallenged however. When protesters burned GAP’s billboards [see Figures 5-6] during the Gezi Protests that took place in the summer of 2013, GAP internalized that as a protest against the differentiating regime they had advertised for Tarlabası. They then decided to appease the protesters and signal a change in the community they envisioned for the neighborhood. They did so through replacing their old billboards with the ones seen in Figure 8. Suddenly Tarlabası’s new community would include a Kurdish auntie, a workshop owner and lower-income families. GAP saw its project as implicated within the state’s project of differentiated governance that was being protested in the adjacent Taksim Square, and sought to, at least visually, distance itself from it.

Figure 8: Image taken of GAP’s billboards after they were replaced in July of 2013. Photo taken on author’s behalf by Timur Hammond in July of 2013.

In sum, I have thus far demonstrated that the five diverse sponsors of urban rejuvenation examined above invest in rejuvenation with the aim of mobilizing urban redesign as a political
tool. The sponsors of rejuvenation repeatedly make architectural design decisions with the aim of producing socio-cultural transformation that they see essential for devising a new governing regime in the city. No matter what political agenda they hope to empower the sponsors of rejuvenation, across the board, shared in the belief that careful architectural design was capable of producing desired political outcomes.

Reforming Society for the Sake of the Building: An Urban Education in Cairo and Istanbul

As they designed the urban built environment to mold societal behaviors and cultural values necessary for new regimes of city governance, the sponsors of rejuvenation showed another motivation behind their interest in societal transformation: protecting the city’s built environment. As rejuvenation sponsors expected the neighborhood’s built environment to fulfill expansive responsibilities, including but not limited to socio-cultural transformation, they sought to protect the productive capacity of that built environment. Maintaining the integrity of the design, planned usage, structure and aesthetics of buildings in each of their neighborhoods was essential to the success and fulfillment of their political projects. Downtown Cairo’s buildings needed to maintain their nostalgic aesthetics to facilitate the cultural production Ismailia saw as essential for reviving Egyptian national unity. Tarlabası’s window displays needed to showcase art works rather than wigs in order to produce the right local community and attract the right global audiences. Darb El-Ahmar’s rooftops needed to remain accessible to all building residents in order to foster communal collaboration. The building was responsible for performing political work at every juncture.

Thus, the sponsors of rejuvenation found it necessary to devise techniques for protecting the buildings’ physical structures from harm. They worked to construct a set of rights that the neighborhood’s built environment should be entitled to in order to fulfill the political
responsibilities expected of it, and that rejuvenation sponsors justified as in the “public’s interest.” A set of the most basic rights they saw buildings entitled to were rights that protected buildings from human activities that may physically harm and mutilate buildings. In this section I analyze the societal reformations that urban planning and conservation experts believed were necessary for the sake of the buildings’ entitled protection, and the techniques they mobilized to produce that reformation.

At the most extreme spectrum of these reformations the sponsors of rejuvenation projects justify the displacement of entire residential populations as well as commercial and industrial activities from the neighborhoods they're rejuvenating for the sake of its buildings’ integrity. As we saw with the projects in Tarlabası, Sulukule and Downtown Cairo the evacuation of the entirety of the residential and commercial communities existent in the neighborhoods was seen as essential for the built environment’s ability to perform the political work expected from it. Such a belief was shared by several of the prominent urban planning and conservation experts I interviewed. One such Egyptian conservationist, Tarek El-Morri, argued for developing systems that would ensure that the populations living in a neighborhood were suited to that neighborhood’s characteristics. In particular, he argued that urban dwellers who live in Gamaliyyah should be replaced by a population “that is first of all above average intellectually and second that are youth in order to liven up the neighborhood. Even more desirable would be people that have a special relationship to the neighborhood” who are “like yourself and myself and love and appreciate the neighborhood.”

Tarek, who had consulted the state’s Historic Cairo Organization (HCO) on their project in Gamaliyyah, argued that if he had his way in planning Gamaliyyah, the ideal population would be “chosen according to selection mechanisms. It is not necessary that the [residential units’] prices be too high but it is essential that they are

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139 Tarek El-Morri, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 1-7-2012.
chosen through a selection [process]…which would elevate the neighborhood.”

For Tarek replacing the current population in Gamaliyyah with a young and intellectual community is essential for Gamaliyyah’s urban fabric to live up to its potential. More specific to the health of particular buildings, NADIM saw it necessary to evacuate the twenty five families living in Beit El Kharazaty and disrupt the social world they lived on their rooftop in order to protect the structurally joint historic Beit El Suheimy in Gamaliyyah, Cairo.

Similarly, several of the projects saw it as essential to ban particular commercial and industrial activities from the rejuvenated neighborhoods for the sake of the built environment. As discussed above, Ismailia’s CEO Karim Shafei saw that low-end retailers who put up neon signs on Downtown Cairo’s art deco buildings should be replaced by organized retailers who don’t detract from Wust El-Balad buildings’ aesthetics and the neighborhood’s atmosphere. Similarly, as discussed in the next chapter, the HCO saw that the century-old Lemon and Onion Market had to be removed from Gamaliyyah. Moreover, with the exception of the AKTC and EU projects, all of the sponsors of urban rejuvenation saw that industrial workshops had to be removed and banned from the neighborhoods. Hania Khalifa, the head on-site HCO engineer, explained that the shops and workshops engaged in commercial and productive activities in Gamaliyyah, Cairo had to change their commercial activities (taghyeer el nashat) to ensure that the neighborhood’s urban fabric operates as an “open-air museum.” Changing these commercial activities would both attract the tourists the HCO saw as their main audience and protect the physical building structures of the monuments the tourists were coming to see. Hania explained the HCO’s general philosophy towards commendable and problematic commercial activities as follows,

“We have activities such as trading in copper and aluminum. Some stores produce and sell hand-crafted products that we protect and keep [in the neighborhood], but others trade in heavy metals in kilos. How is the tourist going to benefit from that? He will not

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140 Ibid.
benefit at all…And there are also the workshops like those specialized in carpentry. How will that benefit the tourist? In no way at all. So we try to negotiate with them to change their activities in ways that would be in closer alignment with the area’s touristic atmosphere.”

She then listed commendable activities for the area as, “small-scale handmade crafts, possibly coffee shops, and the sale of Khan El Khalili and bazaar products.” More importantly, industrial workshops were endangering the physical health of centuries-old registered historical monuments in the neighborhood. Hania explained that carpentry workshops and all commercial activities operating heavy machinery were particularly problematic. “The sawdust (from carpentry) has bad effects (on the monuments)…because it turns into a very soft powder that clings to and stains the façades [of the monuments] completely. In addition, when it combines with car exhaust, it absorbs the exhaust and creates a layer of dirt on the [monuments’] stones.” Moreover, “the machinery they use, like rolling machines (darfallah), is heavy machinery that produces intense vibrations that adversely affect the monument’s structural soundness. So we try to distance these activities from the monuments.” In short, the sponsors of urban rejuvenation repeatedly justified the replacement and displacement of neighborhood residents and workers for the sake of protecting the neighborhood’s built environment. The displacement of a neighborhood’s urban dwellers was a right that the built environment was entitled to.

The displacement of neighborhood dwellers wasn’t the only technique mobilized by urban rejuvenation projects to protect buildings from people. Rather, one of the main techniques of societal reformation that urban planners, architects and conservationists practiced was the development of educational programs for training neighborhood dwellers about the proper treatment and usage of their built environment. I dedicate the rest of this section to the

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141 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011.
142 Ibid.
143 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011.
educational methodologies and discourses practiced by the experts implementing urban rejuvenation. These educational programs provide an especially incisive lens into the perceptions urban planning experts have of society and its relationship to the city’s built environment.

Because the rejuvenation projects I study are located in “historical neighborhoods,” most of the educational programs I encountered during my fieldwork were geared towards cultivating societal respect for historical buildings and monuments. Several of the conservation experts I encountered lamented that their compatriots were ignorant of the importance of heritage and lacked the sensibilities necessary to take care of their monuments and historical urban fabric. I focus here on the perceptions of two prominent experts of conservation in Cairo and the educational projects they implemented. First I turn to Dr. Saleh Lamei, a prominent conservationist in Cairo.\textsuperscript{144} Saleh expressed a real concern with Egyptians’ treatment of the monuments he had dedicated his life to conserving. He argued that he could not depend on the input of neighborhood dwellers in the conservation of buildings because “unfortunately [the population’s] awareness here [of historical value] is marked by backwardness.”\textsuperscript{145} To give an example of urban dwellers’ “ignorant” behavior he vividly described how people would tie their donkeys to the window bars of empty mosques and let them defecate in front of the mosque without removing it. He argued that “the lack of respect for the place is as a result of its disuse. This would change if residents feel like they are benefiting from it.”\textsuperscript{146} Thus, Dr. Lamei decided a decade ago to found a society called the Society for the Friends of Historical Cairo dedicated to eradicating such ignorance. According to Saleh, the most successful of the society’s efforts were educational programs geared towards children. The programs focused on educating children

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\item \textsuperscript{144} Dr. Saleh Lamei is the Director of the Centre for Conservation and Preservation of Islamic Architectural Heritage (CIAH). He has consulted as a conservationist on numerous heritage preservation projects commissioned by the Egyptian state, Rafiq El-Hariri in Lebanon, as well as many other projects around the Islamic world. For biography see: \url{http://www.ciah.biz/content/saleh-lamei-moustafa-prof-dr-ing-dr-hc}
\item \textsuperscript{145} Saleh Lamei, Personal Interview, Ramses, Cairo, 8-2-2011.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
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about the histories of buildings in their neighborhood and fostering a love for art and reading amongst them. He saw the success of the program in the children’s new found protectiveness of their surrounding buildings. Instead of writing on the monuments’ walls, the children now fought with their mothers to stop them from throwing trash out their windows and onto the streets.\textsuperscript{147} The biggest goal and measure of success of the educational program was not the children’s capacity to read and absorb knowledge, their talent for the arts, their mathematical skills, or any other skills that may contribute to their own enlightenment and human capacity. Rather, the children were being educated to protect the physical health of Cairo’s buildings.

Dr. Nawal El Messiri also mobilized educational programs in support of NADIM’s area conservation project of Darb El-Asfar Alley in Gamaliyyah, Cairo. Dr. Nawal El Messiri attained her doctorate in anthropology and was married to the project’s director Dr. Asaad Nadim. She was considered the main liaison between the project and the community that inhabits the alley. Although she dedicated most of her time to negotiations with community members that ensured they would cooperate with the project and were well-served by it, she felt that one of her main missions was to change the way people treated their monuments. Nawal remembers that when she first arrived in the neighborhood the project was focused on restoring Beit El Suheimy and she spent many hours with residents “speaking about not throwing any more garbage [in Beit El Suheimy]. This was one major issue: stopping this act of using El Suheimy as a dumping place.”\textsuperscript{148}

Over time she also, like Saleh, decided that one of the best ways to instill such values and sensibilities was through educational programs for the community’s children. She initially attempted to lecture to schoolchildren in the local schools about heritage. In her words, Nawal

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} Nawal El Messiri, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-27-2011.
hoped to use her lectures to, “talk to them so that as they pass by this area, they would not write on the monuments. I wanted to give them some ideas about how important these monuments are and how to take care of them.” Due to bureaucratic hurdles, however, she was unable to deliver these lectures. She then decided to take matters into her own hands and worked on two projects for the children. The first project got children to design and sell garbage bins to local workshops. NADIM funded the garbage bins that the children then colored and sold to the workshops, keeping the money they collected. It was through artistic enjoyment and pride as well as financial incentives that the children would become more invested in the cleanliness of their neighborhood. The second was a more involved project with a wider audience. Nawal wrote two illustrated children’s books that were meant to convey the importance of the monuments and caring for them, as well as specific information about Beit El Suheimy. She distributed the books to the neighborhood’s children. Years later, during our interview, Nawal described her evidence that the educational program had succeeded as follows, “Until now, around twenty years later, not a single child has drawn a scratch on the monuments with a pencil or anything. They pass by it and it is intact. Nothing has happened to it.” The children had adopted values that would protect the monuments from their naturally destructive tendencies. Again, it was not about the general enlightenment or skills that the children attained. Rather, societal education and reformation was perceived as one of the rights that the city’s buildings were entitled to.

To gain clearer insight into Nawal’s perceptions of the alley’s community and her social program, I now conduct a content analysis of the illustrated children’s book she wrote entitled, “A Trip to Beit El Suheimy.” The most remarkable thing about the book is that the children who live in Darb El-Asfar alley are not the protagonists of the book. Rather the book guides children

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
who live outside the neighborhood into Gamaliyyah on their first visit there. Throughout their journey the children are instructed by their grandfather to gaze upon the representations of the new neighborhood and people they are visiting. Darb El-Asfar’s children become the passive objects of the outsider’s gaze rather than the protagonists of a story that is meant to produce a stronger relationship between them and their neighboring monument.

The fact that the children are passive objects rather than active subjects is not the only indication of how distant and alien Nawal perceives the dwellers of Gamaliyyah to be in relation to those like herself, and the protagonist children in the book, who live in neighborhoods populated by more affluent Cairenes. Rather, the substance of what the outside children were gazing upon was just as indicative. The young children’s grandfather instructed them that they were entering what is known as a “sha’aby” or popular neighborhood. The grandfather then explains the many strange images they encounter in Gamaliyyah. The children are told that “a lot of the neighborhood’s residents wear sha‘aby clothes such as the airy jelbab (long men’s tunic that extends to the ground) and women wear long clothes and cover their hair.”

Two things stand out in this description. First, although a few men do wear the jelbab in Gamaliyyah, the vast majority of the men I encountered and talked to in Gamaliyyah were dressed in attire that resembled the grandfather’s outfit combining a shirt and trousers of some sort. Second, it is notable that the author of the book felt the need to depict a woman’s long dress and head covering as unique to shaʿaby neighborhoods, since the head covering is quite common amongst members of Egypt’s middle and upper middle classes as well. As it creates an artificial distance between Gamaliyyah’s residents and the upper middle class protagonists of the book, it more fundamentally ignores the fact that Gamaliyyah is home to a mixture of lower-income and middle class families, as well as host to a decidedly middle class commercial base.

The book continues to describe Gamaliyyah’s exoticism and strangeness through a description of its foods. The grandfather informs the children that “Fatimid Cairo is known for its delicious foods including fava beans, falafel, koshari (an Egyptian dish that mixes layers of rice, lentils, macaroni, chickpeas and so on), and grilled meat skewers, and a lot of these foods are sold on wooden food carts.” Again the book creates an artificial distance here because all of these foods are widely popular across all Cairene neighborhoods and socio-economic classes. Moreover, it continues to emphasize the neighborhood’s class distinction by claiming that most food vendors use food carts catered to the lower classes rather than depict the diversity of stalls, restaurants, coffee shops that one sees in Gamaliyyah, as in most other neighborhoods in Cairo.

It is important to emphasize here that the grandfather encourages his grandchildren to gaze upon these new and exotic scenes but never suggests that they join them. We don’t see the children eating food from the wooden carts or buying a drink from the seller of the traditional drink called “‘erqsu” that we are introduced to at length. These scenes and the people who populate them are objects to be gazed at rather than fellow dwellers of their city with whom to engage.

The most striking indicator of Nawal’s perceptions of the children she was working to educate is the depiction of Darb El-Asfar’s children in the book. The book describes the encounter with the neighborhood’s children as follows, “during their strolls in the alleyways [the visitors] watched young children playing with their neighbors wonderful games such as ‘street marbles’, and ‘the hula-hoop,’ and ‘football,’ and ‘hide and seek.’” The book thus made it a point that children in the neighborhood played games like any other children. What was striking about the neighborhood’s children is how they were represented in the illustration. As seen in Figure 9, the illustration depicted four boys playing marbles on the street. Notably, the image

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represents the children playing in Gamaliyyah as just boys, whereas of the three children visiting with their grandfather two are girls. Most important is how the children are dressed. Of the four boys one is wearing a *sha‘aby gelbab*, such as the one described earlier, one is wearing a patched shirt and a third is wearing a striped pajama. Their clothes are remarkably different from the tidy shirts the three visiting children are depicted as wearing as seen in Figure 10.


Importantly, these clothes are quite removed from the reality of how children I saw playing in Gamaliyyah’s streets and alleys were dressed. Specifically, it would be very unusual for any children to be wearing a gelbab as they are playing on the street. Moreover, all children I met were dressed to be out of doors, and none of them wore clothes reserved for the home such as pajamas outside. Some of the clothes may not have been as tidy or coordinated as the clothes the children visiting from outside were depicted as wearing, but children as old as the ones depicted in the illustration and reading this book were very careful to wear clothes they saw as representable, and were aware of the ways in which they were presenting themselves. Finally, a lot of the children out playing in the afternoon would be wearing their school uniforms as they were playing with friends before returning home. There is no indication in Figure 9 of the importance of school life to Darb El-Asfar’s children. The illustration of the children wearing unkempt clothes that seem quite different and strange to the children living outside of
Gamaliyyah stands as a lens into Nawal’s own perceptions of and alienation from the children she worked to educate in Darb El-Asfar for the sake of protecting the building from their natural proclivity to destroy it. This illustration was bound to also shape how Darb El-Asfar’s children saw NADIM’s project itself, likely creating a wedge between them. After all, the book that was purposefully distributed to them and was meant to educate them about Beit El Suheimy represents them as unkempt boys who look very different from the image they work to project of themselves.154

The representation of neighborhood children certainly drove a wedge between the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and Darb El-Ahmar’s young men. As I will explore at length in chapter 4 of the dissertation, I encountered several groups of young men who were quite disgruntled with the AKTC’s project to rehabilitate their neighborhood of Darb El-Ahmar. One of the main reasons that drove the young men to distrust the project was the way in which the AKTC represented them as children in their brochures. The young men had participated in the AKTC’s fieldtrips and social programs, including courses on the environment, as young teenagers and were repeatedly photographed during these events. As Waleed expressed with indignation, “we later learned that they took pictures of us and put the pictures up on their office walls and brochures…as if we were street children (‘eyal tassawul) and the Aga Khan was feeding us, whereas we are educated and working.”155 It mattered to Darb El-Ahmar’s young men how they were represented as young children by the AKTC and this representation shaped their evaluation of and resistance to the project. As they were producing educational programs that would protect the built environment from the behaviors of neighborhood dwellers, they were deploying techniques that created discord and resistance of the whole project.

154 Farha Ghannam in her book, Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt (2013), demonstrates the importance of self-image to boys and men in Cairo’s working class neighborhoods. 155 Anonymous, Personal Group Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-8-2011.
Finally, urban planning experts saw educational programs as an important technique not just for protecting buildings from their human users but also to ensure that their human users know the full potential of uses they can derive from the productive buildings. The AKTC team, in particular, saw that educating neighborhood dwellers to derive the largest value from their buildings and lived spaces as essential for producing the human-non-human autonomous communities the AKTC worked to empower as the neighborhood’s new governing regime. Ahmed Beblawy clearly makes that linkage. He identified the problem the AKTC was facing as follows, “we had a problem in the housing program because people weren’t fit to use their house after its rehabilitation.” He described that they would use the water and sewage systems incorrectly and destroyed them soon after the AKTC installed them. Similarly, he described his most heart-wrenching moment as the moment when neighborhood dwellers would first enter their newly rehabilitated homes because “they would be very happy to be coming back to their new homes but their attitude was very difficult (sa’b ’awy). In other words, they would come in, bring their friends, and massive furniture, and the first thing you see as you enter the house would be the new stairs broken because they are going back and forth ‘deb deb’ and banging doors because they are so happy. That was a huge problem.” Ahmed’s solution to this problem was to educate the people who would be receiving new homes. He explained that the community liaison team would be responsible for holding long sessions with people before they entered their new home about how to take care of it, but Ahmed saw a lot of those sessions as pointless. He argued that such sessions don’t work if the people are uneducated. Instead he wished that the AKTC’s programs in Darb El-Ahmar were synchronized so that the people who took literacy classes were the same people whose homes are restored. That way the people sitting through these sessions would be educated and literate, and grasp the ideas the community liaison team
were trying to convey about the usage and protection of their rehabilitated homes. In sum, the AKTC team also saw education and literacy as essential to the success of their project to produce strong resident-building relations and ultimately autonomous communities in Darb El-Ahmar. The AKTC literacy programs shouldn’t have been randomly allocated to any of the neighborhood’s dwellers. Education should have been targeted to people with rehabilitated homes to generate more productive buildings.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrated that a variety of non-state and state actors are investing in the rejuvenation of the urban built environment with the intent of mobilizing urban redesign as a political tool. We saw sponsors of rejuvenation in Cairo expect careful urban redesign to produce local autonomous self-governing communities in one neighborhood and a cosmopolitan yet unified Egyptian nation in an adjacent neighborhood; creating a mosaic of governing regimes across the city through the political tools of urban redesign. In Istanbul we saw the state and its private sector partners mobilize urban redesign to bypass local democratic institutions to entrench an authoritarian regime of differentiated governance. Significantly, the private sector GAP project saw Gezi protestors contesting not its disruption of daily life but the political essence underlying its rejuvenation project when they burned its billboards, and responded with a promise of reversing its differentiating regime to a more inclusive political “community.” Rejuvenation sponsors worked to entrench new regimes for the governance of political community through the bricks and mortar of urban redevelopment. Moreover, they constructed new rights, including programs of societal reformation, to protect the productive capacity of that brick and mortar. As we saw with the Gezi protestors’ contestation of GAP’s billboards and will see through the upcoming chapters, urban dwellers had come to recognize the
political projects underlying urban redesign and development of new political personhood for the urban built environment, and contest its impact on their daily livelihood and more crucially on nodes of power production in the city.
Chapter 2 -- Architectural Conception:

Visible Architecture, Gazing and Reconfiguring the Lived City

Umm Ahmed\textsuperscript{156} had finally saved enough money to install aluminum windowpanes a few years ago. The reflecting glass provides Umm Ahmed an unobstructed view of the outside world without being seen, and the insect screen keeps out uninvited guests. Most importantly, for Umm Ahmed, as for many others in Gamaliyyah, her aluminum windows signaled wealth and the ability to afford such a luxury.

The state is now demanding from Umm Ahmed that she remove her aluminum windows. Engineers from the state agency, Historical Cairo Organization (HCO), created under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture explained to Umm Ahmed that they are now restoring her street, the main arterial boulevard of the neighborhood, El Mu’ez Street, to an authentic historical look. As part of their effort to beautify the street’s façades, they are installing carved wooden \textit{mashrabiyya} windows on her building instead of the chaotic variety of window styles that currently adorn the building’s façade. Moreover, she won’t have to pay anything for installing the \textit{mashrabiyya}.

Umm Ahmed was not convinced that the HCO engineers needed to remove her aluminum windows and install \textit{mashrabiyya} to make the street more beautiful. Not only will the \textit{mashrabiyya} block the cooling air from entering the apartment, it is also much more difficult to clean than her aluminum panes. Umm Ahmed decided to put up a fight. For three years now the head on-site engineer for the HCO, Hania Khalifa, has not been able to amicably convince Umm Ahmed of installing \textit{mashrabiyya} on her windows. The HCO’s next step is to involve the Governor and local municipality, who would issue decrees demanding that she allow the workers to install the \textit{mashrabiyya}. Umm Ahmed is now searching for new tactics to resist the decrees.\textsuperscript{157}

The battle between Umm Ahmed and HCO engineers rages at the nexus of what is visible from her home, her windows. In their effort to harmonize and beautify the visible, the state is redrawing the boundaries of control private individuals have over their private property. Like so many other residents and business owners in Gamaliyyah neighborhood in Cairo, Umm Ahmed is being asked to transfer control over the physical contours of her privately owned home to the state for the sake of the street’s visible “beauty.” Giving primacy to the visibility of a project’s accomplishments is a central tenet of urban rejuvenation projects in globalizing Istanbul and Cairo. This chapter examines the modes through which rejuvenation sponsors render city spaces

\textsuperscript{156} All names are fictitious to guarantee anonymity. Only planners that provided consent to be quoted are named.

\textsuperscript{157} As narrated by Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011.
visible and invisible as an architectural technique as they work to empower particular political agendas through urban redesign. The chapter then traces the ways in which this primacy of visibility as an architectural technique is transforming and disrupting urban dwellers’ everyday experiences of their city and the assemblage\textsuperscript{158} of modes of political engagement and networks of sociability in the city’s lived spaces.

**Introduction:**

This chapter joins a larger scholarly conversation that links visibility to technologies of governance in the modern and late modern periods. First, foundational scholarship linked the centrality of visibility in urban planning to a modern governing order based on discipline and population control obsessed with molding the ideal productive society (Foucault 1977; Benjamin 1978; Mitchell 1988; Holston 1989; Scott 1998). Visual order became essential for placing the productive society under surveillance (Foucault, 1977) and rendering cities legible and accessible to high modernist states (Holston 1989; Scott 1998). Surveillance and legibility came to the modern cityscape through urban spectacle and a more general fixation on “representing” visual order (Benjamin 1978; Mitchell 1988). The main audience gazing onto the city’s disciplining and representational spaces was a local population to be molded into ideal modern productive national citizens.

The gazing audiences for whom the city’s visual topography and imagery is designed in contemporary Cairo and Istanbul is a far more expansive and global audience with fleeting as well as long-term relationships to the city. This chapter examines the ways in which visibility as an architectural technique of urban redesign is mobilized as a political tool to grapple with these multiple global audiences in contemporary Cairo and Istanbul. In other words, the chapter

\textsuperscript{158} The use of the verb “to assemble” here is intentional in reference to the literature on urban assemblages (e.g. Latour 1993; Bennett 2005 and 2009; McFarlane 2011) discussed in the introduction.
illuminates the “conception” (Lefebvre 1974)\textsuperscript{159} of the city’s designed spaces through a focus on the management of the visibility of the urban built environment in neighborhoods undergoing rejuvenation in Cairo and Istanbul. I demonstrate that the processes of neo-liberalization and globalization have led to the mobilization of the architectural design technique of visibility as a political tool in significantly different ways than it had been deployed by modernist planners.

Like modernist planners, contemporary architects, urban planners and conservationists continue to fixate on the visibility of the urban built environment as one of the main tenets of their urban planning techniques to be prioritized over other planning considerations but visibility is mobilized to perform significantly different political work in contemporary times. In particular, the neo-liberalization of urban governance in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 motivated a variety of rejuvenation sponsors aiming to mobilize urban redesign to empower divergent political agendas, as explained in previous chapters. Each of these rejuvenation sponsors follow a different logic for rendering the built environment visible and invisible that maps onto their specific political agenda, producing a mosaic of logics for the designs of neighborhood visible topographies from one neighborhood to the next within the same city. Most importantly, each of the divergent logics followed to design a neighborhood’s visual topography produces a distinct set of political and social ramifications in the neighborhood undergoing rejuvenation. To uncover that multiplicity this chapter focuses only on rejuvenation projects operating under the condition of neo-liberalization and retreat of the state from governance as in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005.

Comparing three urban rejuvenation projects in neo-liberalizing Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 and one activist group’s project to subvert a rejuvenation project in Istanbul post-2005, I uncover multiple ramifications of the pluralistic visibility regimes that include the refiguring of

\textsuperscript{159} Here I am referring to the verb “conceive” purposefully as theorized by Henri Lefebvre (1974) to be one of a triad of practices that shape the city’s eco-system of governance. See introduction for elaboration on Lefebvre’s theory.
communal hierarchies, exacerbating perceptions of inequality, and transforming state accessibility to neighborhoods. As I study the linkages between the architectural redesign of the city’s visual topography and the many ramifications it has on everyday lived experiences of the city, I uncover not only the multiplicity of its visibility regimes but also the ways in which the use of urban redesign as a governing technology in fact works to “de-socialize” the city’s lived spaces. The chapter also demonstrates how competing actors work to justify a wide array of rights for the city’s built environment as necessary for the success of their urban redesign plan and fulfilling the city’s expansive political responsibilities. The city’s built environment thus gets entitled to services that prioritize monuments over citizens and security regimes that secure buildings from their daily users rather than working to secure those users’ wellbeing. Tracing how the justification and implementation of such rights for the city transforms the lived experience of the city at the scale of the neighborhood is then essential for understanding the assemblage of new publics\textsuperscript{160} and practices of citizenship in Istanbul and Cairo.

**The audience: Who is gazing?**

Before turning to the actual plans urban rejuvenation projects have for transforming the visibility of city spaces, I describe here the audiences that urban preservation projects expect to be gazing at the physical visible spaces or images of visible spaces in their targeted neighborhoods. Depending on the goals of their projects, there are multiple audiences that a project may seek to attract. To appreciate the diversity of the audiences, I divide them into insiders and outsiders. I designate outsiders as people, international and local, who did not originally live, work or visit the neighborhood on a regular basis before the rejuvenation project

\textsuperscript{160} Following the critique of Seyla Benhabib (1992) and Frazer (1992) of normative public sphere theorists such as Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas, this dissertation seeks to take the public from the realm of the normative to the realm of the lived. I seek to build an empirical understanding of the public based on lived experience of the city (see De Certeau 1984).
arrived. I designate three different categories of outsider audience. First there is an ephemeral audience. Preservation projects aimed at attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) or increasing the country’s prestige count amongst their audience investors and dignitaries. This audience is ephemeral in the sense that its presence in the neighborhood is rare, their visits are carefully staged, and they are most often lured by brochures and photographs. Second, there is a present audience of tourists, students and experts. Most rejuvenation projects hope to attract both international and local tourists to the neighborhood. In addition to tourists, most such rejuvenation projects are linked to a larger network of preservation and planning experts, and their students, who visit to bring their own expertise or appraise the project as a model. This audience is generally middle and upper-middle class, with the luxury of time and money necessary to travel or enjoy a recreational visit to these neighborhoods. I categorize this audience as present since it is an audience that is only successfully attracted to the neighborhood if it actively comes and visits the neighborhood as a constant flow of strangers. Finally, there is a permanent audience of real estate buyers. Although most rejuvenation projects have the implicit (and sometimes unintended) consequence of attracting new permanent residents to the neighborhood, entrepreneurial projects explicitly seek to attract new residents to the housing they are providing in the neighborhood. The new residents are a permanent audience who joins and reconfigures the fabric of the neighborhood.

Outsiders are not the only audience to these projects, however. Some urban transformation projects count the original resident and working community as their audience as well. As discussed below, such interveners find it central to their project to convince the insiders that they are trustworthy and interested in the well-being of the community.
Multiplicities of the Visibility Logic: The Story of Three Urban Interventions

As discussed above, multiple actors are actively transforming Cairo and Istanbul. In this section, I investigate how the varied visions and goals of three intervening actors lead these actors to redesign the visibility of neighborhood spaces in clearly distinct ways.

Selling the Gaze: HCO Project in Gamaliyyah, Cairo

I turn first to the Historical Cairo Organization’s (HCO) project in Gamaliyyah, Cairo. As discussed in the introduction, this is a state-led historical preservation project that aimed to preserve and restore the Gamaliyyah neighborhood at the heart of Historic Cairo, with a special focus on the monument-laden Mu’ez Street at the heart of the neighborhood. The ongoing historical preservation project was initiated and funded by the Ministry of Culture in 2000, with the collaboration of other arms of the government, managed under the umbrella of the HCO. ¹⁶¹ Conversations with one of the main directors of the project, Mohamed Rashidy, and the head engineer on-site, Hania Khalifa, confirmed that attracting gazing tourists to the neighborhood was one of the main tenets of their project. On a more abstract level, these conversations highlighted that the project also aimed to enhance Cairo’s global image, increasing the country’s international prestige as well as attracting more FDI to the country. As a result of these goals, the project has a decidedly outsider audience that is both present in the form of tourists and ephemeral in the form of investors and dignitaries.

The specific logics through which the actors planning and implementing this project saw the visible image of Gamaliyyah should be constructed is clearest from conversations with Hania Khalifa. As we walked around Gamaliyyah, Hania explained that when they first arrived in the neighborhood the biggest problem they faced was the removal of the Lemon and Onion market that once stood at the entrance to El Mu’ez street at Bab el Fetouh. She argued that the market

¹⁶¹ Mohamed Rashidy, Personal Interview, Zamalek, Cairo, 9-19-2011.
had to go because, “this [street] is supposed to be an open-air museum in the future so we’re trying to create the proper image or at least ensure that the available commercial activities service tourism as a museum would.” She explained the logic behind removing the market that does not service the tourist as follows,

“First of all imagine you’re entering the street from this entrance and it smells like onions and smells like garlic. Of course it’s very unappealing [mesh thareefa] that you start your journey with this visual image or with this smell. Moreover, the peel of the onions and the garlic cloves used to fly all over the street, ruining it. So it created a lot of damage and an uncivilized image. They would spread their goods outside and sit on the sidewalk so the image is not attractive to any visiting tourist. Because of that it left a bad imprint (bassma) at the beginning of the street, at the beginning of the journey from Bab El Fetouh.”

For Hania the tourist is the main audience for her project and catering to the needs of the tourists’ senses is her main goal. She showed concern for the tourist’s overall sensory experience but paid particular attention to the visual image the tourist encounters. The image is disorderly, uncivilized, unattractive and leaves a negative bassma on the tourist’s journey.

The centrality of visual appeal to Hania’s plans for the neighborhood became even starker during her discussion of their efforts to harmonize El Mu’ez Street’s façades according to one architectural style. When I asked if they worked on all buildings in the street she replied: “Yes, we renovate the old and the new buildings. Like on your left you can see a new building and on your right you can see several old buildings.” Sure enough the old and new buildings had very similar façades with identical wooden mashrabiyya work regardless of whether or not such woodwork adorned the original building. The primacy of the street’s visual harmony overrides the logic of historical accuracy. It is far more important that the neighborhood acquire a particular visual style regardless of how ‘authentic’ that may be.

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162 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011
163 Ibid
164 Ibid
Hania further elucidated how central visual harmony is to the HCO’s plan as she explained the role of the policing state in the implementation of the HCO’s plan,

“The governorate or the local municipality help us…if for instance there are people who are building façades that are in violation [of our plan], because when we finish our work, we require that people build in accordance with the façade and lighting patterns that we did. We renovate façades, place storefront signs, modify street lighting and lighting for individual stores, so that the lighting does not cause a glare for the tourist.”

Her fixation on the tourist as her audience and the visual appeal of the neighborhood to that tourist, is reflected in the actual standardization of building exteriors and lighting fixtures along the entirety of the main thoroughfare, El Mu’ez street as seen in Figure 11.

![Figure 11: Harmonized façade of El Mu’ez Street in Gamaliyyah, Cairo. Picture taken by author in January of 2010.](image)

The HCO team is clearly prioritizing the visual appeal of their project over other planning priorities. The mechanics through which the HCO hopes to create that visual appeal, through

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165 Ibid
controlled harmonization of the visual experience, are directly related to the aims and goals of the project: selling the gaze to an outsider audience.

Marketing Development: EU project in Fener-Balat, Istanbul and Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s project in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo

    Not all interventions in historical neighborhoods claim the tourist as their main audience, however. As we saw in chapter one, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s project in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo and the EU project in Fener-Balat, Istanbul place much greater importance on the existent community as an audience to their project than the HCO as they work to produce autonomous self-governing communities through urban redesign capable of replacing the state as a governing organization. The projects’ developmental focus on upgrading the lifestyle of neighborhood residents and on producing self-governing autonomous communities translated into very different plans from the HCO’s. Most important for this chapter is the fact that the projects renovated private building interiors as well as exteriors, and on a strictly voluntary basis. Both projects were restricted by a limited amount of funds, however, and this is where visibility comes in: visibility as marketing.

    Relying on their limited funds, the projects only selected a small percentage of the private residences and businesses who applied to receive their rehabilitation grants. The visibility of the buildings renovated was central to the criteria both projects set for selecting grant recipients. The importance of visibility to the EU’s selection criteria are clear from a conversation with Burçin Altınsay, the former local Co-Director of the technical team of the EU project in Fener-Balat. When I asked her what the criteria for selecting homes for renovation were, she replied that amongst six criteria of selection, the second criterion was, “Location of the house, so that it would create visibility at the beginning for the first phase.”

166 Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012.
difficult to convince people and funders that this project was meant to restore homes to their
former beauty whilst ensuring that current dwellers retain them. They were sure that their best
marketing tool would be the final product of the visual image created by their renovated homes,
and concentrated their efforts on selecting the most visible homes.\textsuperscript{167}

The Aga Khan project in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo was also highly influenced by the
visibility of its project as it selected where to work and invest most of its funding. Kareem
Ibrahim, who worked with the Aga Khan project for twelve years as former Director of the
Housing Project, and eventually coordinating multiple arms of the project, elucidated the
project’s criteria as follows. When I asked him why they had selected to concentrate all their
urban upgrading efforts on a narrow strip of the neighborhood called Darb Shoghlan he
explained that there were three main reasons for choosing it. The first is related to the history of
the Azhar Park built by the Aga Khan foundation. The park had been built to replace a 500 year-
old garbage dump in Cairo. The houses in Darb Shoghlan, that now border the park, are the
poorest and most debilitated since they had bordered that garbage dump. Kareem’s second line
of reasoning is that,

“This is the area bordering the park, and thus any interface between the park and Darb El-
Ahmar occurred along this strip. And one of the goals of the Aga Khan for the park was
that it would become an engine for economic development…and that the people would
start coming down from the park to visit the neighborhood bringing along economic
revival. Therefore it was important that we identify at the very least the spots or places
that would serve as an entrance to the neighborhood and begin to develop them.”\textsuperscript{168}

Thus the focus of the urban upgrading project was to draw attention to the Darb El-Ahmar
neighborhood from the park. In other words they were marketing the neighborhood to the
wealthier visitors of the park that would spend money in the neighborhood. It is important to
realize here that almost all houses that are visible from the park have been restored by the

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid
\textsuperscript{168} Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
project. Third, as discussed in the next chapter, Kareem argues that the creation of the park is bound to attract real estate development to its borders that hopes to capitalize on the park view. Thus, developing Darb Shoghlan and controlling real estate on that strip was vital to saving the neighborhood from the visual catastrophe of tall concrete buildings rising to capitalize on the park’s view.169

Kareem’s second reasoning draws attention to an important tenet of developmental work in Egypt: attract outsiders to spend money that spurs economic rejuvenation. Because of their interest in attracting outsiders to the neighborhood, they then created planned tourist routes that would take the tourist from one entrance of the park and walk them through Darb El-Ahmar to another entrance of the park or walk them out of Darb El-Ahmar to Gamaliyyah through Bab Zeweila. Due to limited funds, explains Ahmed Beblawy, Director of the Housing and public spaces unit, all infrastructural changes they made were concentrated along these tourist routes [see Figure 12]. The streets were cleaned, provided with new sewage systems, lighting fixtures and adorned with visually appealing brick.170 The inclusion and exclusion of urban dwellers from infrastructural services or housing rehabilitation were governed by a logic of visibility that worked to market development to an insider and outsider audience.

169 Ibid.
170 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.
Finally, I turn to the fourth transformational actor under study in this chapter. Tarlabası, Istanbul is a neighborhood undergoing a large-scale urban transformation project led by the private sector construction company Gap İnşaat, which aims to create a luxury residential and commercial district in Tarlabası. This project, unlike the ones described above, necessitates total evacuation and replacement of the existing urban dwellers in the neighborhood. Hence, in the winter of 2011-2012, after several court expropriation decisions were issued, all buildings within the boundaries of Gap’s project were evacuated as discussed and illustrated in chapters one and three. Although Gap’s project is examined elsewhere in the dissertation project, in this chapter I focus on opposition to it.

In particular, I focus on a group of activists working to reclaim some of Tarlabası’s spaces for the benefit of the threatened community in the neighborhood. The Tarlabası activists aimed to create a bahçe or garden within the neighborhood to provide children a safe place to play and hold classes, movie screenings and so on. The garden initiative was supported by a local
NGO with a very limited amounts of funds secured from mostly international donors interested in supporting local developmental initiatives.\textsuperscript{171}

The garden was a perfect manifestation of the projects such funders hoped to support. Since this project was less capital intensive and more reliant on manpower and expertise however, I argue that the network of expertise to which the intervening actors belong is far more important in shaping its outcome in this case than in others. The activists involved were mostly professionals and the ones specifically responsible for planning the transformational garden were urban planners, architects, artists and filmmakers. They were also a group of what I classify as self-reflexive experts engaged in a critical appraisal of urban planning repertoires worldwide, contributing to this conversation through writing, filmmaking and art.

Even such “oppositional” urban planners seeking to reclaim contested spaces for a community under threat is not immune from a fixation on visibility. As related at length below, the activists found themselves at odds with the community members from whom they rented land for the garden because of their insistence on the visibility of the garden as a public space.\textsuperscript{172} The landowners retorted that public spaces are socially construed rather than defined by their visibility.

Given this exposition of the mechanics of how different rejuvenation sponsors work to engineer particular visual topographies for the neighborhoods where they intervened, I now turn to investigating the political and social ramifications of their logics for the visibility and invisibility of city spaces.

\textsuperscript{171} Anonymous, Personal Interview, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 7-7-2012.
\textsuperscript{172} Personal Participant Observation Notes, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 6-30-2012.
An Expanded Gazing Public:

I turn first to the social ramifications of projects seeking to attract outsiders to the neighborhood. As discussed above, both “commodifying” projects such as the HCO’s project in Gamaliyyah Cairo and developmentally oriented projects like the EU and Aga Khan projects see merit in attracting outsiders to the neighborhood. I study here how this shared goal transforms urban livelihood.

Attracting outsiders is fully realized when gazing upon the built environment as a commodity is successfully sold to strangers who would not otherwise be visiting these spaces. Selling the visual appeal of the built environment automatically entails an expansion of the parameters of the gaze of strangers upwards and deeper into the neighborhood. It operates on the assumption that what is visible is public and fair game for gazing photographing outsiders. In this section I investigate the blind spots of such an assumption, and the nature of daily spatial practices it masks in these neighborhoods. It is through such false assumptions that selling the gaze violates dynamics of urban livelihood, explains defiance to rejuvenation plans, and ultimately redraws the parameters of the public for urban dwellers.

Our Streets:

I start this discussion from the streets of the neighborhoods I studied. The street may be assumed to be the space that is the most acceptable for the stranger’s presence, gaze or even photography-- a navigational space where a passersby is naturally expected to see whatever activity is practiced in that “public” space. In reality, not all streets are simply navigational in Istanbul and Cairo. Streets are home to a variety of everyday activities that are practiced alongside and sometimes override the street’s navigational uses. Geographically enclosed streets such as side streets, dead-ends and alleyways are particularly amenable spatially to such
activities. As I passed through such streets, I would find women sitting on the steps to their homes in small clusters chatting, cooking, cleaning rugs on their doorsteps, and watching their children play on the street. Men would also spend long hours on the streets, either clustered on seats at the corners of these streets with their eyes on several intersecting streets, or if there was a coffee shop, they men would overflow from the coffee shop onto the street. Along with spending most of her time on her dead-end street in Gamaliyyah, Cairo [the site of the HCO project] socializing with her friends, Habiba also made her living on the street. She used to wipe down and clean cars parked on the street. Habiba lamented that with the recent pedestrianization of the street, cars don’t park there anymore and she had to search for a new source of income away from her home.\(^1\)

During meal and recreational times, the street became a place for even more elaborate social interactions. Halime Hanım who has lived in Tarlabası Istanbul [the neighborhood undergoing mass evacuations to make way for Gap Inşaat’s upgrading project] for more than forty years, described how during the first twenty years or so in the neighborhood she had lived in a building removed from the main thoroughfare lower down the hill on a narrow side street. She remembered that the street was central to her life with her Roma neighbors at the time. They regularly had mangal or barbeques on the street and ate together. Moreover, both men and women would watch television together on their shared TV set out on the street in front of the building. When Halime moved in the 1990s to her newly owned apartment in Tarlabası on the main thoroughfare, the site of her socializing with her now mostly Kurdish neighbors changed from the street to the home and the park.\(^2\) It was the physical dimension of the street not the fact that it was visible or invisible that governed where Halime would share meals with her

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\(^1\) Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 10-26-2011.
neighbors. Similarly, Nurgul Hanım in Sulukule, the predominantly Roma neighborhood of Istanbul, was fixated on her parents’ street as the center of “komşuluk” or neighborliness and her social memories of the neighborhood. Most vivid for her was dining with the neighbors on the street. They would cook dinner together as neighbors inside or outside the homes. They would then set up small tables outside of their homes and the neighbors would eat together almost every night. This was especially true in Ramadan. Moreover, the street was the space for neighborhood celebrations, whether they were wedding processions or sünnet (circumcision) celebrations. Such celebrations also filled the streets of other neighborhoods in Istanbul and Cairo. Workshop-dominated Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo [site of the Aga Khan project] was particularly festive on Sundays, the weekly workshop holiday. Thus, the streets were home to many fluid activities that are central to repeated and prolonged social interactions governed by negotiated societal protocols.

Understanding the fluidity of activities on the street and the disruptions a presence of gazing tourists may cause is significant on two levels. First, it helps us understand the ways in which communities are transitioning in light of these urban rejuvenation projects and the ways in which their lived publics are being reconstructed. On another level, coming to terms with these spatial practices helps us understand spatial practices that develop in defiance to urban rejuvenation plans in targeted neighborhoods. We can thus position such spatial practices as continuity of communal dynamics rather than rupture from and defiance to the well-ordered plan. The unintended spatial practices that defy the well-ordered plan are a result of the blind spots of the planners who assumed that urban dwellers operate according to neat private/public dichotomies constructed along the lines of visibility and invisibility.

Gendered Asymmetries

The constant inflow of a present outsider audience of tourists, students and so on is bound to have multiple ramifications on the social dynamics of a neighborhood. Such ramifications are not experienced symmetrically by urban dwellers, however. The expansion of the gaze upwards and deeper into neighborhoods will affect different groups of urban dwellers divided along gender, class, property ownership, commercial activity, religiosity, and so on asymmetrically. I address other transitional asymmetries elsewhere in the project, but in this section I focus on gendered asymmetries as one of the starkest differentiations resulting from the expansion of the gaze in Muslim-majority Istanbul and Cairo.

Scholarship on Muslim-majority countries has predominantly translated the religious beliefs and cultural practices of Muslim communities into a rigid division of public and private spaces along gender lines: the public is a male-dominated sphere and the private is a female-dominated sphere (e.g. Mernissi 1987; Hessini 1994). Such categorization and depiction is problematic on multiple levels. First of all, on a theoretical and normative level, the public/private dichotomy generally relegates the realm of female activities to private concerns that do not merit recognition as political or as pertinent to matters of societal justice (Benhabib 1992; Fraser 1992). Moreover, such scholarship operates on the assumption that public/private dichotomy operates on the boundaries of what is visible and invisible which does not acknowledge the fluidity of activities across these boundaries in the urban Middle East as discussed above. More specific to the Middle East, I join scholarship that asserts that the idea that women, religious or not, do not have a presence in “public” or shared spaces is simply inaccurate (e.g. Ghannam 2002; Reynolds 2012). Moving away from the private/public dichotomy altogether, I argue here that given the actual importance of particular religious beliefs
and cultural practices, the relationships between men and women in shared spaces and the modesty of women’s dress are bound in a history of shared neighborhood practices that develop soft and negotiated boundaries and gender protocols. It is the threatening of these soft and negotiated boundaries by the constant inflow of gazing, roaming and photographing outsiders that leads to dramatic gendered asymmetries in the use of shared spaces in targeted neighborhoods.

Women are visible on the streets of Cairo and Istanbul. They chat, sell trinkets from their small shops, peddle vegetables and fruits, cook, watch their children play, clean their rugs, watch TV, and share meals with their neighbors on the street. Moreover, more so in Istanbul than in Cairo, when these streets are adjacent to their homes, they do so in a lighter veil than they would wear elsewhere. Many of these activities are done on streets shared with neighborhood men but this sharing is managed through careful negotiated protocols. Most important to these protocols is the management of the gaze that defined the soft and negotiated boundaries of male-female relations. According to Islamic religious edicts, men and women should lower their gaze (ghadd el bassar) when interacting and communicating with members of the opposite sex. Such a lowered gaze has developed into an important protocol for managing male-female relations in these enclosed neighborhoods. The lowered gaze operates according to a logic that is in direct opposition to the logic of the expanded gaze.

The expanding gaze of tourists is not only moving deeper into neighborhoods but is also expanding upwards to visible purviews of the home. Balconies, cumbas [protruding windows popular in historical Turkish homes pronounced jumba] and clotheslines have now become the object of the tourist’s gaze and photography. The history and architectural styles of these visible aspects of the home have become one of the centerpieces of guided tours of the neighborhoods.
Unabashed guidance of the gaze upwards, however assumes that what is visible is “public” and fair game to the stranger’s gaze. On the other hand, both men and women in Cairo and Istanbul treat these protruding purviews as extensions of the home that are valuable connectors to their social worlds outside. The balconies are especially important for women. They communicate with one another sharing stories, gossip, advice, and even sharing utensils across balconies on a regular basis. Balconies and cumbas are also important connections to the street. In particular women buy their groceries through the baskets they drop from their balconies and windows, in which their orders are placed. Trusting in the protocols of the lowered gaze most women appear in a light veil. Male passersby or grocers and bakers filling their baskets are expected to lower their gaze and avoid seeing the women in the balconies.

These soft and negotiated boundaries are at the heart of managing male-female relationships in shared and visible space. The expansion of the outsider visitor’s gaze deeper and upwards violates these protocols bringing rigidity to these boundaries and asymmetrically violating the comforts women have in establishing their social universe in these shared and visible spaces. As we stuffed grape leaves in the kitchen of a women’s association in Fener, Istanbul [the site of the EU’s rehabilitation project], I discussed the place of women in shared spaces with six women who lived in the neighborhood. During the conversation, Ayşe Hanım expressed her discomfort in spending time in the park on the banks of the Golden Horn, where strange Turkish men would stare at her and her friends every time she sat there. Instead the women expressed comfort in spending time in the courtyard of the mosque at the top of the hill in Çukurbostan, and the tea garden up on the Molla Aşkı hill. The location of these spaces up the hill and deeper into the community provided reassurance for the women that they would be around a community, male or female, that respected the shared protocols of soft and negotiated
gender boundaries. Melek Hanım finally summed up such places of comfort as what she termed “belirli mekanlar” or well-known places, and the rest of the group agreed, “Yes, belirli mekanlar!” As outsiders increasingly penetrate higher up the hill and deeper into the neighborhood such belirli mekanlar governed by well-known and shared gender protocols will disappear limiting the presence of these women in their neighborhood’s shared spaces. The withdrawal of women from these shared spaces will of course directly affect women in limiting their daily exposure to wide social networks, commercial encounters, the circulation of news, and so on. It is important to realize however that this is not a unidirectional story. For Amira and Heba, residents of Gamaliyyah, Cairo the presence of outsiders had its benefits alongside its nuisances. For Amira, knowing that outsiders were choosing to come to the neighborhood signaled to her that her neighborhood had finally become safe and secure enough for them to visit. Moreover, the tourists’ presence drew more attention from the state for securing the neighborhood. For Heba, on the other hand, it was a matter of anonymity. She hoped that the increasing presence of strangers in the neighborhood would increase levels of anonymity there. Heba found the dense and overseeing nature of her alley’s network suffocating for a young woman like herself seeking independence and greater mobility in the city. What is clear then is that the influx of a present outsider audience of tourists and students will result in dramatic shifts for how women occupy shared spaces and navigate their city.

Transforming Boundaries of Private Property Rights

Now I turn to discussing three social ramifications linked to the specific visual topographies designed by projects fixated on “selling the gaze” to a strictly outsider audience. In

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176 Anonymous, Group Personal Interview, Fener, Istanbul 6-14-2012.
177 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-21-2011.
178 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 8-24-2011.
this section I study the transformation of private property regimes. When a historical preservation project is fixated on creating a totalized image of visual appeal and harmony such as the state-led HCO project in Gamaliyyah, Cairo, it can only achieve these goals through controlling the exteriors of privately-owned property. When the project, state-initiated or not, has the backing of state authorities, it does in fact redefine the control private individuals have on that property. I argue that as the visual image gains importance with the shift to consumable cities, aesthetically subjective claims such as, “we need to make this street more beautiful” or “this market needs to acquire a more civilized image,” become increasingly accepted as statements made for the “public’s interest.” “Making a street look more harmonious” becomes accepted as an activity that benefits the common good to such an extent that it may override the immediate interests of the private individual in controlling private property. Hence, the state becomes empowered, through guaranteeing the implementation of totalizing renewal projects, to implement the common good of a harmonized street and to further control private property.

The experience of the fishmonger Mustafa in Gamaliyyah, Cairo illustrates how far and how violently urban rejuvenation projects have been able to violate private property when empowered by the logic of visual appeal as a public good. Mustafa runs his family’s sixty-year-old fish stall on El Mu’ez Street. When the street was renovated, he decided to open a fish restaurant across from the original fish stall. He decided to have an inaugural party for the fish restaurant in August of 2008. As luck would have it, he lamented, the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hosny, was passing through El Mu’ez that day preparing it for the First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak’s visit. He was appalled by the image of people boisterously celebrating and fish travelling across the street and in Mustafa’s account exclaimed, “How can there be a fish stall in

179 See chapter three of this project for discussion of how various non-state actors and state agencies leading urban rejuvenation projects reshape private property rights in Istanbul and Cairo. In this section I focus exclusively on how the aesthetic preferences of interveners reshape and confront pre-existing property rights and notions of beauty.
front of Beit El Seheimy [a historical restored house]?” He then ordered that the fish stall, not the restaurant, be closed down. The next day Mustafa received a call from the Municipality ordering him to close down the fish stall, and by the time he had arrived at the stall the police had sealed it shut and two guards were placed in front of it. Mustafa was unable to sell fish from his stall and private property for three years until the advent of the January 2011 uprisings in Egypt, when he reopened it. Mustafa exclaimed that the authorities were mistaken to think that the fish store was not civilized enough for El Mu’ez Street. Rather he argued that “foreigners used to come and take pictures of the fish in its display or as it was being cleaned or grilled. The foreigners want to see the street as it was in the past.”

Mustafa challenged the state’s hegemony over deciding what is aesthetically pleasing.

Mustafa was not alone in having to move his business away from El Mu’ez. As Hania Khalifa, the head HCO engineer, explained all owners of market stalls in the Lemon and Onion market were also moved. They were relocated to Souq El Obour, two hours away. Although some of the merchants and workshop owners on El Mu’ez Street lost control over both the physical contours of their private property and the practices they could adopt within them, the majority of the residents and business owners in Gamaliyyah faced problems similar to that experienced by Umm Ahmed, whose story was introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In those cases stores can no longer control the color and lighting of their store signage, building owners can no longer control the shape of their gates or the color of their exterior paint, and Umm Ahmed can no longer control her windows. Observing the ease with which the state, through its guarantees of visually-harmonizing projects, mandates modifications of building exteriors leads me to argue that private property rights are developing in such a way as to deny

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180 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 10-24-2011.
181 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011.
that space exteriors can be claimed as private. As the power of harmonized visual imagery increases the claims over aesthetic subjectivity become more centralized repressing exterior expression of individual creativity.

**Changing Perceptions of Inequality:**

I have argued thus far that the logic of selling the gaze hinges on imposing rigid private/public dichotomies that operate along the boundaries of visibility and invisibility. In this section I investigate the ways in which this rigid classification of the public and the private can then operate in a paradoxical manner where the priorities of the state become literally written into stone. To be more specific, in this section, I study how the HCO’s fixation on beautifying facades whilst leaving the interiors untouched changes perceptions of national inequality, especially when the state sponsors such projects.

Projects dedicated to exclusively restoring building exteriors resort to two justifications for that choice. First, they invoke the logic of private property and the rigid boundaries between public and private property. Individuals should be free to change the interiors of their living or working space as they see fit, they argue, and external parties, especially the state, should not have any say in that. This assertion of course follows the initial invasion on the exteriors of private property discussed above. The second logic is that of efficiency. Every project has limited funds at its disposal, and the greatest impact the funds can make would be by bringing visual harmony to the whole neighborhood rather than to a smaller number of individual residences. Moreover, selective service of interiors would create discrepancies amongst the citizens. Thus the HCO only fixed water and sewage pipes that service the street and the monuments but never fixed pipes that service private residences. Hania Khalifa, the head on-site HCO engineer, justified this decision on account that “if you enter into one house, all the rest
will say, ‘me too!’ and they may even break their own sewage systems so that you would have to enter and fix them. Thus such projects create beautified façades at the expense of what’s behind the façade.

Most large-scale historical preservation projects are interventions in neighborhoods that are dilapidated and seriously underserviced by the state. Therefore, when a state decides to upgrade a neighborhood the state brings services to that neighborhood, like it did in Gamaliyyah, that the neighborhood had not seen for long periods of time. Yet, when the services did come to Gamaliyyah, they came to expressly service the built environment rather than the citizens’ needs. This is not only inferred from the surroundings but also directly expressed by Hania Khalifa, the state project’s representative in Gamaliyyah,

“It is very possible that they hate the project. They see millions of Egyptian pounds being spent on the street that they believe should be theirs… I explain to them that they should in fact protect the monuments because the monuments are the reason why they are getting these services.”

She thus makes the link clear for the citizens. It is not because you are citizens of the polity that you are now getting services. It is because you are lucky enough to be living near these monuments that your neighborhood is now more livable. Thus the priorities of the state become visible in the built environment and in the state’s discourse to the people. Interestingly, this state mentality, which pervades in many arenas of state policy, became the target of opposition critique of the army in December-January 2011, when they seemed more concerned with securing state buildings than securing citizens’ lives in the wake of the upheavals. A telling and widely circulated caricature was drawn in criticism of this mentality [see Figure 13]. The caricature is a drawing of people arranging themselves in the image of a building, saying “Quick, pretend you’re a building! [‘e’mel nafsak mabna].”

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182 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011.
183 Ibid
Figure 13: Cartoon by unknown Egyptian Cartoonist, with penname Alaa G, produced and circulated on 2/2/2012. The upper slogan translates to: “Quick, pretend you’re a building!” The lower slogan translates to: “Urgent: The army moves to protect buildings in Port Said.”

Back in Gamaliyyah, Cairo citizens daily saw the discrepancies between what the state provided to restore its heritage and attract tourism in contrast to what it gave them. Haga Samra lived in a home on Darb El-Asfar, where the historical and recently restored Beit El Seheimy can be found. The entire alleyway was renovated but Samra’s house remained in its initial unlivable form. We stayed outside her door, where she preferred to spend her day with access to some fresh air and away from the insects and collapsed ceiling in her room. She was completely fixated on the discrepancy between the outside and interior of her home. She was at a loss at why her room was not renovated, if they had come as far as her alley and renovated it entirely.

185 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-21-2011.
Next door to Samra the discrepancy between the beautifully painted gate and what’s behind it was even more pronounced. Pushing aside the gate I walked into a veritable no-man’s land. The land is a heap of dirt upon which four shacks are standing as abodes for four families, made up mostly of single women with their children of different ages. In the corner close to the gate stands a lonely toilet bidet shared by the four families. The conversation with them did not reach the stage of interiors and exteriors of buildings. Their confusion lie in why the state did not secure any funding for their medicine and health needs if it had so many resources as to make El Mu’ez so beautiful.186 The priorities of the state and the country’s inequalities had become etched into stone. Some of their compatriots can afford the services and amenities provided on the now renovated Mu’ez, and the galas taking place in Beit El Seheimy but these women can’t afford their medicine and daily food. Inequality has visibly hit home. The paradoxes of the rigid divisions between the public and the private imposed by the primacy of visibility only exacerbate the daily experience of inequality for the neglected citizen.

**Securing the Neighborhood:**

In order for the gazing visitor to derive true visual pleasure from her surroundings, she needs to roam these neighborhoods unhindered by safety concerns. Thus, those who plan historical preservation projects with a fixation on the provision of visual pleasure are inherently concerned with providing visible markers of security within the neighborhood. As insightfully discussed by El Sheshtawy (2006) and Caldeira (2000), this security paradigm centers on the creation of visible barriers to crime perpetrators and containing the flow of people into the areas to be secured. Gamaliyyah neighborhood in Cairo was marked by such visual signals of security. In particular, the gates at the entrance to Mu’ez Street were barricaded to stop cars from entering, security forces were positioned at several important intersections, and important mosques were

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186 Anonymous, Group Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-21-2011.
closed after three o’clock in the afternoon, in disregard of prayer times. Most importantly, the unregulated and chaotic Lemon and Onions market was removed wholesale from the neighborhood leaving in its wake a large expanse of an empty and easily regulated section of the street with a lot of vacant and closed stores. A few of my respondents like Amira, discussed above, found the influx of tourism and such visible markers of security reassuring. Some were even distraught that the HCO’s project had come short on providing the security necessary for the area to be truly attractive to tourists. The most extreme rendition of this concern comes from Abu Ayman whose lemon and onions business had been moved with the market to Souq El Obour on the peripheries of the city. Abu Ayman was happy to see Gamaliyyah being cleansed and renovated to attract tourists. He lamented however that the street was not visibly secure enough. If they really wanted to secure the neighborhood, he argued, they should install metal detectors at all the major entrances to the neighborhood and especially the entrances to El Mu’ez. Metal detectors would both curtail crime and provide tourists with a strong sense of security; the same security they feel in malls.187

Although a minority of my respondents found such markers reassuring, most of my respondents found such markers disruptive to the flow of the street. Most emphatically, some of my respondents actually linked this fixation on visible markers of security to a paradoxical decrease in security, and to the proliferation of illegal activity. Interviews with Hag Ahmed and Abu Tarek provide a particularly vivid presentation of how the removal of the messy Lemon and Onion market led to the unintended proliferation of illegal activities and insecurity. Both respondents were also dislocated from the Lemon and Onion market in Gamaliyyah to Souq El Obour, but continue to live in Gamaliyyah above where their stores used to be. To Hag Ahmed the market provided a social monitoring mechanism for the neighborhood such that,

187 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Souq El Obour, Cairo, 12-31-2011.
“You know when we were there, we prohibited any wrongs, any bad behavior (‘elet ‘adab), any sexual harassment, any transgressions in any way because we know each other and we know whose son that is. We can tell him, ‘come on boy leave (yalla ya wad ‘emshy)’ or ‘shut up boy’ (ya wad ekhrass). We also know whose daughter this is and we can say ‘yes my daughter, do you need anything? Is anything the matter?’ And if she were mistreated, she would come and enter my store and tell me the following person is bothering me and I’d go get this person. In other words, we, in the market, we all knew each other and knew the residents in the area and whose son this is and whose daughter this is so nothing used to happen.”

The social sphere of the market was so personalized and well monitored that it was secured against transgressions. Abu Tarek concurred with Hag Ahmed’s perception and specified the transgressions he now sees in Gamaliyyah after the removal of the market in the following dialogue:

“Interviewer: Since, you are still living in Gamaliyyah, could you give me your opinion on the changes in the neighborhood more generally after the completion of the project?

Abu Tarek: The place has deteriorated significantly…

Interviewer: In what ways?

Abu Tarek: There are people selling drugs. I mean, as soon as the market was moved, in a week’s time, there were drug dealers approaching people in the middle of the street.”

Both residents emphasize the centrality they saw for the market in securing their neighborhood from illegal activities and behavioral transgressions. It was a very social process governed by the monitoring gaze of the storekeepers, who spent more than fourteen hours a day in the market, and the long-term relationships between the store owners and the residents. In a sense this perspective mirrored Jane Jacobs’ (1961) argument that sidewalks, monitored by neighborhood window watchers, are in fact safer than empty playgrounds out of the range of neighborhood watchers. According to Hag Ahmed and Abu Tarek, it is the social and personalized monitoring that secures the neighborhood not the silent barricades and disconnected police officers. Most

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188 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Souq El Obour, Cairo, 12-31-2011.
189 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Souq El Obour, Cairo, 12-26-2011.
importantly, the vacuum left by the market made room for illicit crime and paradoxically increased the levels of insecurity in the neighborhood.

**Communal Hierarchies:**

Now I turn to discuss social ramifications specific to the developmental “community-oriented” projects, i.e. the Aga Khan and EU projects in my cases. For such projects visibility becomes an important criterion for the allocation of limited resources. The location and visibility of particular homes becomes one of the key selection criteria for homes that would receive the exterior/interior rehabilitation grants. Thus, once the development agency completes the project and exits the neighborhood, the visual image one encounters is that of visible differentiation. Some buildings are beautifully restored and others remain debilitated. The unintended consequence of such projects is the creation of visual hierarchies based on the fortuitous location of some homes in geographically desirable spaces. Those with the beautiful homes, whether they are owners or renters, have received a visual marker of distinction.

I argue that these visual hierarchies create elevation in communal status over time. There are several ways in which visual hierarchies operate to elevate status. First, it is known in Darb El-Ahmar that the residents of any renovated home contributed financially to the renovation. In phases two and three of the project people contributed 30% of the cost.\(^{190}\) [This does not apply to the EU project where grants covered the full cost.] Thus, renovated homes came to provide a visual marker of wealth and the status tied to financial wellbeing. Second, renovated homes came to be known as those that are safe and accommodating to visitors. Significantly, such homes became models for dignitary trips bringing status to these homes. Haga Samia repeatedly pointed out that the Governor of Cairo himself had visited her home.\(^{191}\) More important for daily life, all

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\(^{190}\) Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011.

\(^{191}\) Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 11-23-2011.
my respondents expressed that after renovating their homes they became much more comfortable inviting guests to their homes. Becoming communal gathering places could arguably have strong implications for who controls community agendas, and dispute resolution. Thirdly, it is not only that the interiors of the home that are inviting to visits but the exteriors also play a key role in signaling a family’s status. Mustafa and his wife Magda had renovated their home with the Aga Khan Foundation. As they described the renovations, they were very proud of the new interiors of their home but were disappointed with the finishing on the exterior. They were frustrated that the Aga Khan architects had decided to use the stones from their old pre-restoration building because it was “heritage” without even refurbishing the stones to look like an elegant façade. As I was leaving their home, Magda expressed how ashamed she was to lead her son’s fiancé’s family to the home. She lamented how hard she had to work to reverse the initial image they had of her family when they first saw the untended façade. The façade was one of the main markers of their status in the community. Thus, I argue that the importance of visibility in the selection criteria of rehabilitated homes for development projects have the unintended consequence of creating communal hierarchies of status.

Advertising the Public:

Finally, this section investigates the ways in which rendering spaces is visible and invisible is central to the design of “oppositional” urban transformation projects. I do so through examining an urban activists’ project to create a garden for neighborhood children in Tarlabası, Istanbul. I uncover these dynamics through relating an excerpt from my field notes as I shadowed the urban activists in Tarlabası.

I met with the urban activists on a Saturday afternoon on one of Tarlabası’s main thoroughfares, on the boundaries of the Gap İnşaat renovation project. We were going to start

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192 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-6-2011.
planning the bahçe (garden) the activists planned to create in the neighborhood. The day before we had met and decided that the garden should be designed as a green space resembling a park, where neighborhood children would play, take classes and attend movie screenings. This Saturday we were to see the place that the activists had rented for this park and start planning it. The activists with whom I gathered that day included urban planners, artists and professional filmmakers.

As we started our journey, we took several turns and entered a small side street on our way to the park. As we entered the side street, I saw a familiar scene of communal gathering. The entire street was lined with clusters of women seated together chatting and preparing food at the steps of their buildings, and a group of young men huddled at the other end of the street [I knew from my own research that this alleyway was dominated by a Kurdish community].

We then surprisingly stopped at a makeshift gate covered by two large blankets and our leader pushed it aside and entered. This was where we were going to build the park. The space stood empty where two demolished small buildings used to stand in the past. It was long rather than wide and had two levels of elevation. The ground was nothing but dirt but a tree had grown from this dirt creating some shade. Two old chairs stood at the arched windows on the other end of the space.

We took a few minutes to survey the space and the activists started throwing around ideas for the park’s design. They started making drawings of the space. A planner suggested that the sides should be planted with greenery and a soft surface should be installed in the middle where the children would play. Someone then suggested painting one of the walls white to act as a screen where movies could be projected. The discussions were slightly interrupted when five to six men from the community entered the space. Two of the men were older while the rest I
recognized as the young men who were huddled at the other end of the street. They entered quietly and started listening to the plans and ideas floating around. The activists then turned to look at the makeshift wall and gate enclosing the space. They saw that the stones constituting the wall were actually free standing and unconnected to the walls of the buildings on either side of the space. Not only were these stones unnecessary, exclaimed an activist, but they also presented a safety hazard. The activists quickly and unanimously concurred that the wall and gate must go. They were designing the bahçe to be an open public space thus it must be inviting and visible to all.

The young men listening to this discussion lost no time to interject. “The wall and covered gate must stay,” they pronounced. On the side, I had just learned that these young men were the ones renting the place to the activists. They had veto powers on what was to be done with the park. The young owners then proceeded to explain how they used this space and what they wished to preserve from its current design, attempting to make a convincing argument for the wall. One of the young men pointed to the windows of the building overlooking the park and explained that they drop electrical wires from these windows to connect them to their TV and Play Station. They meet here most evenings of the summer to play videogames. They also spend a lot of time on the chairs by the arched windows smoking and talking into the night. The young men then made it clear that they will continue using this space in the evenings after the children had gone home, and would like to keep the privacy provided by the wall and gate.

The activists then retorted that they saw no reason why removing the gate and wall would have any effect on the young men’s ability to meet in the evenings. They promised that they would keep the chairs and electrical cords, but maintained that it is absolutely essential that they remove the wall so that the park would be inviting to children and seen as safe by their mothers.
It would be defying the idea of building a public park, the activists argued, if it was not visible, easily reachable and open. One of the young men then felt the need to make his case very explicit. “We use recreational drugs in this space, if you know what I mean, and we’d like to make sure it remains an unassuming place that would hide our activities and not arouse police suspicion.” It then became quite clear what was at stake for the young men. As the stakes started to dawn on them, the activists started to think of more creative solutions to this impasse. One of the activists then suggested that they paint the walls from the outside. They could use stencils and colorful designs that would still be inviting. The young owner then retorted that even this creative solution is problematic. A colorful wall would attract the attention of the police as much as it would the children. More importantly, the young owner questioned the activists’ concern. He argued that the park does not have to be visible and open for the children to come. Since, all the children and mothers here know each other, he was sure that the location of the park and the opportunities it provided will spread through word of mouth. He did not see that there was any reason to think it would be any less accessible with this wall. The meeting ended with the unspoken agreement that the wall would not be torn down or painted. After all, owners have a veto.193

Visibility stood at the core of the negotiation taking place between the activists creating the park and the owners of the park’s space. The activists, most of whom are trained as urban planners, valued the role of visibility in creating an inclusive inviting “public” space. They were adamantly that it goes against the logic of creating a public space that it be invisible. The owners contested this assumption, however. What is public does not have to be visible. They by contrast, suggested that communal networks and word of mouth would prove most important in attracting children and their mothers to the park not its visibility or physical openness. They argued that

193 Participant Observation Notes, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 6-30-2012.
public spaces could be construed through the social rather than just the power of visibility. At the heart of these opposing paradigms were very real ramifications for the landowners, however. The activists’ fixation on visibility was bound to expose them to coercive state machinery, perhaps desirable to neighborhood mothers, reshaping state-society relations and the assemblage of the community’s lived political public.
Chapter 3—Legal Conception:

Remaking Property Rights and Adjudicating between Citizens and Buildings

In January of 2004 Can Bey signed a contract with the EU agreeing not to sell his home in Fener, Istanbul to any individual or entity for the next five years. He also agreed not to increase rents for tenants beyond official inflation rates for the same period. In return the EU would fully fund and implement the restoration of the exteriors and interiors of Can Bey’s home.194 Can Bey agreed to suspend his rights to sell and rent his private property as he pleased for five years in return for a fully funded restoration of the physical structure and architectural aesthetics of his building. Only 2.5 kilometers away and across the Golden Horn in Tarlabası, Istanbul, the cousins Ahmet and Hüseyin Bey were grappling with a very different restriction on their property rights. On the 24th of May of 2012 the cousins received an official order from the local Beyoğlu Municipality decreeing that their home had been nationalized. They had forcibly lost all ownership rights to their private property. The municipality’s order explained that the cousins’ property was being nationalized in accordance to law no. 5366 since they had failed to reach an agreement to voluntarily transfer their property, which fell within the Tarlabası renewal zone, to the authorities through the transparent negotiating mechanisms adopted by the municipality and GAP İnşaat. Thus, the council demanded that the cousins evacuate their building immediately and report to the municipal office within fifteen days to collect the (minimal) compensation they were entitled to.195 Ahmet and Hüseyin Bey were not the only ones to lose ownership rights over their buildings through “emergency nationalization.” 41% of all private property owners within the parameters of GAP’s project in Tarlabası had lost their

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194 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Fener, Istanbul, 5-17-2012. During the interview the author was given a copy of the contract signed on 1-15-2004.
195 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 7-9-2012. During the interview the author was given a copy of the second notification the brothers received of the municipality “emergency nationalization” decision no. 578 taken initially on 5-24-2012. The second notification and warning letter was signed on 6-25-2012.
property through emergency nationalization by May of 2012, as GAP worked to gain ownership of 100% of the buildings in the neighborhood with the state’s support. The control owners had over their property was quickly changing in both Fener and Tarlabası neighborhoods of Istanbul. The new property regimes owners faced in both neighborhoods were diametric opposites, however. In Fener the EU created a property regime that manufactured residential retention against the currents of rapid property transfers through real estate market exchange. In Tarlabası on the other hand, GAP created a property regime that expedited residential relocation through forced property transfers that would supplant what they saw as a slow-moving real estate market. What explains such variation in private property controls from one neighborhood to the next within the same city?

This chapter is dedicated to answering just this question as I examine the ways in which new modes of urban governance empowered through neo-liberalization and globalization have transformed property rights regimes in Cairo and Istanbul. In particular, the chapter interrogates the ways in which the sponsors of neighborhood-level urban rejuvenation projects devise and “conceive” new property regimes in Cairo and Istanbul as they work to empower their political agendas through urban redesign.

Introduction:

The struggle over the protection of private property rights has been deemed one of the core struggles at the heart of the creation of the modern state. A long line of scholarship has argued that the struggle over property rights defined the configuration of political regimes and institutions that developed into the modern state (e.g. Hobbes 1651; Locke 1694; Moore 1966; 196)

196 Internal Report prepared by GAP İnşaat on 5-25-2012. Author was given access to the report by GAP’s team on 7-4-2012.
197 Here I am referring to the verb “conceive” purposefully as theorized by Henri Lefebvre (1974) to be one of a triad of practices that shape the city’s eco-system of governance. See introduction for elaboration on Lefebvre’s theory.
North and Weingast 1989; Islamoglu 2000; Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). In addition, recent scholarship, originating in the school of new institutional economics, argues that the uniform protection of private property rights is an essential condition for economic growth (e.g. North 1990; De Soto 1989; Haber et al 2003). This chapter investigates the impact of neoliber alization and globalization on the development of the private property rights regimes deemed so central to state-society relations and economic prosperity in the modern era.

I argue that globalization and neoliber alization have transformed property rights regimes in two main ways. First, private property regimes are being set by organized sanctioned non-state actors at the local scale of the sub-municipal neighborhood in globalizing cities. Globalization and neoliber alization have transformed the scalar locus and organizational/institutional configuration through which private property regimes are set in contemporary cities. Second, and more fundamentally, the struggles over property rights in globalizing cities are not simply adjudicating between the rights of different human groupings competing over access to property as resource or means of production. Rather, the contestation over property rights in globalizing cities is a struggle over adjudicating between the rights of citizens (or competing citizen groupings) and the rights of the physical buildings and spaces dubbed as “property.” This struggle intensifies with the strengthening of well-funded campaigns to construct new rights and a political persona for the globalizing city’s built environment that challenge the precepts of citizenship in a modern state.

Thus far the setting of private property rights in the modern era has been studied as a process that is expected to be controlled and enforced through state institutions, however expansive the state may be defined. The literature, mentioned above, examining contestation over property rights regimes as determinant of modern political regimes and state institutions
assumes that actors competing over setting property regimes that favor their interests direct their struggle at controlling the design of the state’s institutions as the entity that would secure those rights into the future (e.g. Moore 1966; North and Weingast 1989; Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). By extension, scholarship that studies the long-term enforcement of property rights once they’ve been negotiated and set direct their focus to the state’s institutions. The assumption is that an ideally functioning state would uniformly enforce its private property rights regime within its jurisdiction. Douglass North (1990) dedicated his seminal book on the topic, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, to theorizing the ideal informal and formal institutional configurations that would ensure that the state protects private property rights and argued that property protections were a necessary condition for economic growth.

Scholarship that sought to explain deviations from that ideal in the protection of property rights then wrote within a tradition that saw the protection of property rights as one of many “public goods” provided by the state. Within this tradition variation in the protection of property rights specifically and non-uniform provision of “public goods” more generally was explained as either an inadvertent symptom of the state’s malfunction as a governing institution or a deliberate strategy by state leaders in pursuit of supporting constituencies. Whether inadvertent or deliberate, variation from the uniform provision of property rights protections was seen as a deviation from the ideal of uniform protections by the state. Alternative explanations for that aberration from uniform protections by the state included low state capacity (e.g. Migdal 1988; De Soto 1989; Herbst 2000), short-sightedness of wealth-accumulating rulers (e.g. North 1990; Haber et al 2003), clientelism and patronage politics (e.g. Khan and Jumo 2000; Stokes 2005), strategic electioneering and constituency-based politics (e.g. Bates 1981; Holland 2014), identity-based conflict (Easterly and Levine 1997; Habyarimana et al 2007; Lieberman 2009)
and perverse political culture (e.g. Weber 1930; Putnam 1993). Although the reasoning behind variation in property rights protections within a state’s jurisdiction continues to be an arena of vibrant scholarly debate, the assumption remains that it is the state that is expected to be providing this public good. As such this literature would continue to account for the variation in property protections and controls enforced by organized top-down non-state actors across neighborhoods within Istanbul and Cairo as an aberration to the ideal functioning of the state. I argue instead that such variation is a new normal generated through a systematic shift in the role of the state in urban governance in global neo-liberalizing cities.

Of course not all scholarship on the provision of public goods has focused on the state’s role. An established body of scholarship has documented the effective provision of public goods through informal channels and bottom-up cooperation amongst citizens (e.g. Jacobs 1961; Scott 1990; Singerman 1995; Ostrom 1996; Bayat 1997). Most of this scholarship has focused on the bottom-up provision of public goods within the framework of the state’s failure to provide such goods (Singerman 1995; Bayat 1997; Ismail 2006). This scholarship often identifies the informal provision of public goods as a form of resistance against state excesses. Bayat (1997) argues that informal networks provide citizens disenfranchised by the ruling state (especially within predatory states) access to resources from which they had been excluded, and Singerman (1995) argues that such networks provide citizens with new channels for the expression of political voice within authoritarian regimes. Another strand of that literature argues that practices of bottom-up public goods provision, even within the purviews of an ideally-functioning state, are healthier arrangements that ensure that the public goods are attuned to the particularistic needs of the affected citizens (Jacobs 1961; Ostrom 1996). Although this literature builds an important nuanced understanding of the provision of public goods, it also operates within the framework of
a dichotomous setting where public goods are either formally provided by the state or informally through bottom-up informal citizen networks. It has not reoriented its understanding of these informal networks and bottom-up practices to the systematic transformations globalization and neo-liberalization have generated for the top-down and formal terrain of public goods provision.

To illuminate this systematic shift in the enforcement of private property controls, I dedicate this chapter to carefully tracing the ways in which sponsors of urban rejuvenation projects in Istanbul and Cairo reshape private property regimes in both cities. As I argued in the introduction and preceding chapters these sponsors of neighborhood-level urban rejuvenation projects were empowered to redesign and transform the urban built environment through processes of globalization and neo-liberalization. Tracing their impact on private property regimes thus illuminates the mechanisms through which globalization and neo-liberalization transform property rights regimes in the city. I find that the processes of neo-liberalization and globalization have distinct impacts on the transformation of property rights in developing cities.

The neo-liberalization of globalizing cities as experienced in my cases in Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 produces a mosaic of divergent property rights regimes set and enforced by a plethora of non-state actors and independent state agencies at the fragmenting scale of the neighborhood. As explained in the introduction and preceding chapters, the neo-liberalization of a globalizing city incentivized a plethora of non-state actors and independent state agencies to invest in the redesign of the built environment as a governing tool that would replace the political work once expected from a now retrenched state. Each of those actors espoused a different political agenda and deliberately mobilized neighborhood-level urban rejuvenation projects in an effort to empower that agenda. What this chapter reveals is that sponsors of each of these rejuvenation projects then devised mechanisms to enforce a specific set of property rights that
they saw as essential for the successful implementation of their project and empowerment of their political agenda. As a result, the controls on the transfers and usage of private property differed dramatically from one neighborhood to the next in Cairo and in Istanbul pre-2005. In other words, neo-liberalization produces a mosaic of divergent property rights regimes set and enforced at the fragmenting level of the urban neighborhood. This variation is a systematic byproduct of neo-liberalization and the redefinition of the role of the state as a governing organization. The retrenched state is no longer expected to set these property regimes. Hence, variation in the setting and enforcement of private property regimes is not a symptom of the inadvertent malfunction of the state or deliberate state strategy but rather the redefinition of the state through forces of neo-liberalization. To understand the practices and institutions through which property rights are set and contested we must now shift our focus to the well-funded and organized actors actively transforming and governing the city and the scale of the urban neighborhood as the site of that contestation.

The remaking of private property regimes in globalizing cities governed by strong states such as the revived state governing Istanbul since 2005 operates under a different logic, however. There, as seen in preceding chapters, the non-state and state sponsors of urban rejuvenation work to advance increasingly congruent political agendas through urban redesign. Hence, as shown below, they work to set increasingly congruent property rights regimes within the different neighborhoods. Unlike neo-liberalizing settings, cities governed by strong states do not exhibit a mosaic of divergent property rights regimes. Rather, the unique impact of globalization on the development of property rights regimes in an urban setting led by a strong governing state is in transforming the scale and institutional configuration through which property rights are set. Globalization shifts the scale at which property rights are set to that of the urban neighborhood
providing a mechanism for ruling actors to bypass local democratic institutions of governance. I argued in chapter 1 that urban redesign was mobilized by the Turkish state to grapple with the paradoxes of globalization through a new mode of differentiated governance that bypasses traditional modes of democratic local governance in Istanbul. Setting property rights through these urban rejuvenation projects at the fragmented scale of the neighborhood allows for the property regimes necessary to support that differentiated mode of governance to also bypass these democratic processes. In other words, as it grappled with globalization the Turkish state mobilized urban redesign to devise new authoritarian mechanisms for the differentiated governance of private property and urban livelihood more generally in Istanbul.

Transforming the scale, actors and institutions through which property rights regimes were set was not the only impact that globalization and neo-liberalization had on the development of property rights in Cairo and Istanbul, however. More fundamentally, neo-liberalization and globalization transformed the setting and contestation over property rights into a process that adjudicated between the rights of buildings and citizens. Whether in Cairo or in Istanbul, as sponsors of urban rejuvenation placed increasing responsibility on the built environment to perform political work, they saw that the neighborhood’s buildings and spaces should be entitled to rights that would ensure they fulfill those responsibilities. In the previous chapters we saw rejuvenation sponsors fund educational reforms geared towards protecting buildings from citizens and reroute urban services such as water pipes and security apparatuses to service buildings rather than citizens with the justification that buildings should be entitled to such rights for the sake of the “public’s interest.” In this chapter I demonstrate that rejuvenation sponsors develop and implement new controls over private property that protect them from unadulterated market exchange and from usage by their owners and tenants. Such protections are
seen by rejuvenation sponsors as necessary to ensure that the urban built environment is able to perform the political work that advances their specific political agenda, which they argue serves the “public’s interest.” As sponsors of rejuvenation become increasingly successful at transforming the reality of property controls on the ground and the acceptance of building rights as justifiably serving the “public’s interest,” they increasingly empower the construction of new political personhood for the city’s built environment. Hence, contestation of private property regimes in globalizing cities increasingly revolves around adjudicating between the construction of the city’s political persona and the parameters of citizenship in the contemporary polity. Contesting property rights in globalizing cities is not simply about securing access to coveted resources in the form of “property” at the expense of other competing citizen groupings.

The impact of globalization and neo-liberalization on the development of property rights in Cairo and Istanbul is not unmitigated, however. The ultimate property regimes enforced in each of the neighborhoods I study in Cairo and Istanbul is a product of an interaction between city-level institutional and non-institutional legacies and the political agendas espoused by those sponsoring its rejuvenation. I unpack that interaction through tracing the property controls each of the six rejuvenation sponsors under study hopes to adopt and the techniques and measures they use to enforce those property controls. I find that the substance of the controls on the transfer and usage of private property adopted in each neighborhood is shaped by the visions rejuvenation sponsors have for the redesign of the built environment. The techniques that the sponsors of rejuvenation devise to implement and enforce these preferred property controls, however, are largely restrained and determined by the city-level institutional legacies. Specifically, legacies behind the creation of affordable housing stocks in each city and the current state’s capacity to implement the rule of law are the main determinants of the techniques
and measures adopted by the sponsors of urban rejuvenation projects to enforce their preferred set of property controls. As a result projects espousing similar political agendas across Istanbul and Cairo espouse a similar set of preferred property controls but mobilize very different techniques to enforce those preferred controls across Istanbul and Cairo. Strikingly, urban rejuvenation projects in Istanbul adopt higher levels of violence and dependence on the involvement of state institutions during the enforcement of their preferred property controls than projects espousing similar goals in Cairo. The importance of city-level institutions in shaping property rights regimes within neo-liberalizing and globalizing cities highlights the “variegated” nature of these processes as insightfully argued by Brenner et al. (2010). Comparative analysis of the techniques deployed to enforce the mosaic of divergent property regimes developing across Istanbul and Cairo clearly demonstrates that the forces of globalization and neo-liberalization unevenly impact the governance of property, and the city more generally, to produce a “variegated” topography of “global cities.”

To illustrate this argument, the chapter is organized as follows. The first section of the chapter sets the stage for understanding the context within which each of the actors is intervening by providing an overview of the pre-existing formal and informal institutional legacies governing property rights in Cairo and Istanbul. It focuses exclusively on the political economic history behind the accumulation of affordable housing in the geographical center of each city. The second section of the chapter examines how each of the urban rejuvenation projects remakes property controls in its targeted neighborhood. Through tracing the preferred set of property controls each project espouses I identified three main sets of preferred property controls advanced by the six projects. I thus organize the section according to these three sets and compare similarly-oriented projects that share the same preferred set of property controls across
Cairo and Istanbul to reveal the divergent techniques each of the intervening actors adopts to enforce their preferred controls on the ground across both cities. I end the chapter with a discussion of how the political agendas espoused by the sponsors of urban rejuvenation interact with city-level historical legacies to produce a variegated terrain of property controls within and across Istanbul and Cairo.

Section I: Historical Legacies of Property Regimes in Cairo and Istanbul

In this section I analyze the political economic history behind developments in the housing stock in the geographical and historical centers of contemporary Cairo and Istanbul. This is important for two main reasons. First, such contextual background is essential for an empirical understanding of the relations of property in Cairo and Istanbul before the advent of the urban rejuvenation projects studied below. Because the six projects see their urban redesign projects as correcting for “distortions” in the neighborhood, it is important to study the history behind the “distortions” they may identify. Of course the divergent visions each of the intervening actors bring to Cairo and Istanbul shape which “distortions” each of the actors hope to rectify through their new designs and property controls. Second, it is important to study these legacies because, as demonstrated below, historical legacies of property controls do restrain the ways in which the intervening actors are able to reach the outcome of desired property controls.

Affordable Housing in Cairo: Rent Control Institutions

The history of affordable housing in Cairo’s central neighborhoods is quite straightforward. It can be traced to the development of rent control laws. In 1947 the Government of Egypt (still within the sphere of British colonial power) enacted Law no. 121/1947 that froze rents at rental rates of 1941 and forbade tenant eviction. The laws were enacted as a temporary measure to alleviate the pressures created by the economic crisis resulting
from the dismantlement of the military-industrial complex created during World War II. The original emergency mandate of this law then took on a newfound permanence with the rise of Nasser and the Free Officers to power. During Nasser’s reign (1954-1970), the Egyptian government adopted several sweeping reforms such as agricultural land reforms, nationalization of private business and rent control laws meant to redistribute wealth from a landowner aristocracy to the rest of the populace, and increase the state’s control over the country’s industry and commerce. The rent control laws in particular redistributed wealth from property owners to tenants. Six different rent control laws were adopted during Nasser’s time in office. The laws lowered and fixed rental rates, giving the owners no control over setting these prices by law. Finally in 1969, tenants were given the right to inherit rental contracts without limits on the number of generations to inherit it.

Interestingly, the rent control machine only solidified into place with the end of Nasser’s socialist era and the rise of Nasser’s successor Anwar El Sadat. Although Sadat adopted an economic platform, known as his “open-door policies,” designed to overhaul Nasser’s socialist economic program and revert to the dynamics of free market economics, he chose not to reverse the rent control policies. Rent control proved a valuable source of subsidies to an urban populace otherwise disenfranchised by Sadat’s policies. These subsidies were especially lucrative because they did not incur any new costs for the government. Sadat had a particular need for such subsidies following the outbreak of the January 1977 bread riots that erupted in direct protest of the removal of government subsidies on daily staples such as the flour used for

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198 El Araby (2003), 438.
199 For further details see literature on the development of Nasser’s economic and political program (e.g. Waterbury 1983; Vitalis 1995; Tignor 1998).
200 Refer to Waterbury (1983) for further details on Sadat’s “open-door” policies.
making bread.\textsuperscript{201} In timely fashion Sadat enacted a new set of laws further solidifying rent control in September of 1977. Fixing rental rates at 7\% of construction costs, the new laws now gave tenants the right to re-rent units. Moreover, in 1981 a new law further protected tenants from eviction, even if the original contract had expired, except in the narrow cases of: a) the building’s demolition, b) default on rent within 15 days, c) the vacancy of the unit, and d) improper use strictly defined.

Sadat’s successor, Hosny Mubarak, found the same merits in solidifying rent control as did Sadat. They were a great source of subsidies to a potentially riotous urban populace. In the words of David Sims, Mubarak also realized, that “the surest way to commit political suicide is to champion the removal of rent controls”\textsuperscript{202} in Egypt. Hence, Mubarak maintained a commitment to control rents for all tenants already renting their housing through rent control laws. In 1996, however, the Egyptian government under Mubarak’s leadership enacted the first curtailing of the rent control regime. The enactment of structural adjustment in the wake of the forgiveness of Egyptian debts in 1991 and the rise of a new business coalition within the ranks of the ruling National Democratic Party\textsuperscript{203} pushed for the removal of rent controls from newly rented units. The government would no longer rely on creating new subsidies at the expense of property owners in Egypt. That coalition was neither ready nor powerful enough to remove old and existent subsidies, however. By 1996 42\% of all housing units in Cairo Governorate were rented under old rent control laws.\textsuperscript{204} Hence, Law no. 4 of 1996 creates two parallel systems for the regulation of rent. It protects rent control for all units rented before 1996, the old pre-1996 rentals (\textit{el ’egar el qadeem}), but eliminates these rent control restrictions on all units rented

\textsuperscript{201} Ghannam (2002), 37.
\textsuperscript{202} Sims (2010), 147.
\textsuperscript{203} See Mitchell (2002), chapters 7-9 for discussion of structural adjustment and the adoption of neoliberal economic policies during this era.
\textsuperscript{204} Sims (2010), 146.
subsequent to the enactment of this law in 1996, now classified as the new rental system (el 'egar el gedeed). The 1996 law then made two main modifications to the old rental system. It limited the inheritance of pre-1996 rental contracts to one generation of inheritors, and allowed for controlled price increases on the rental of non-residential units. Egypt’s legacy of rent control laws has had two main effects on the housing stock in Cairo. First, it has provided an invaluable resource of housing affordable to low-income families. Second, it has led to the deterioration of many buildings where owners find their assets captive to their tenants and unworthy of investment in their maintenance. In fact, many owners hope that their buildings collapse since it is one of the rare ways for annulling an old rental contract. On the other hand, the 1996 law decreeing new short-term rentals created new market opportunities for landlords of newly rented apartments and ventures such as the Ismailia Consortium’s venture in Downtown Cairo.

Affordable Housing in Istanbul: Exodus, Industry, and Kin/Village Networks

The history of the political economy of affordable housing in Istanbul is remarkably different and mostly governed by informal legacies. Much of the property found in Istanbul’s center, and especially its commercial districts, was owned and inhabited by minority communities in Istanbul until the 1950s. Although most of the Greek and Armenian minority populations of Turkey fled minority violence or were exchanged through population exchange treaties at the inception of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Istanbul was exempt from such population exchange treaties, and retained a large percentage of its minority populations until the 1950s. In the wake of a minority tax levied during World War II, anti-Greek and minority riots in September of 1955, and the forced deportation of Greeks in response to the

\[205\text{See Howard (1931).}\]
\[206\text{See Bali (2005) for further discussion of these taxes.}\]
\[207\text{For discussion of the riots and their place in Istanbul’s collective memory see Amy Mills (2010).}\]
Turkish/Greek crisis over Cyprus in 1964, Istanbul lost a vast majority of its minority residents. With the exodus of minority property owners, the property they owned was nationalized and became “de facto assimilated into the same category as public land.” The state then transferred that property to a new class of rural migrants into the city. The rural migrants either gained ownership through purchasing the buildings from their official caretakers or occupied the empty buildings and gained ownership rights retroactively. As in the case of the legalization of informal settlements in Istanbul, it was through political patronage that most occupants of the nationalized buildings gained retroactive ownership rights. Politicians vying for electoral support in these districts promised and delivered such ownership rights in return for votes as part of particularistic deals crafted by competing politicians. Rural migrants to the city came in large numbers with the industrialization of Istanbul. Although Istanbul had been incrementally industrializing since the nineteenth century, the city’s industrialization reached one of its most intense peaks in the 1960s and 1970s with the adoption of import-substitution-industrialization (ISI) policies. A bulk of that industry was located along the Golden Horn or Haliç within Istanbul’s central and historical zones. Thus, there was strong demand by workers for affordable housing in the city’s center. This proved ideal to migrants who were able to gain ownership of post-exodus nationalized buildings at very little cost. Moreover, much of the migration into the city was facilitated by kin and village networks. Migrants depended on members of their village who already relocated to Istanbul for securing job opportunities and housing options upon their arrival in the city. Thus, Istanbul’s neighborhoods became divided

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208 Kuyucu and Ünsal (2010), 1486.
210 Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1487
211 Keyder (1999), 147.
212 Bezmez (2009), 825.
213 Keyder (1987), Ch. 7.
into enclaves dominated by migrants from different regions and villages of Turkey. More importantly, many of those who were able to gain ownership of vacant buildings rented their building’s units formally through market forces as well as informally and at symbolic rates to members of their family or village.\(^{214}\) The kin/village networks combined with the fact that most demand for housing came from the worker populations of Istanbul kept rental rates low in these neighborhoods.

The deindustrialization of Istanbul, overseen by Mayor Bedrettin Dalan in the 1980s, was accompanied by a series of infrastructural projects designed to transform Istanbul into a global city poised as a service and financial rather than industrial center.\(^{215}\) As discussed in the introductory chapter, the major public works projects sponsored by Dalan included the clearing of all factories and residential buildings on the Golden Horn and the pedestrianization of Istiklal Boulevard to create a commercial center there. Moreover it included the creation of an arterial Boulevard connecting Taksim Square and the now pedestrianized Istiklal to the old city and the Golden Horn, which involved the demolition of over 300 buildings in Tarlabasî.\(^{216}\) The major works projects and the movement of the commercial and industrial centers of the city changed the socio-economic topography of the city dramatically. Different neighborhoods within the city center transformed into enclaves that were most attractive to divergent segments of the population. Some of these enclaves, because of their geographical location vis à vis the new commercial centers and traffic flows, became highly attractive to upper middle and middle class segments of the population. Other enclaves became densely populated by the losers of deindustrialization and migrants from the Southeastern regions of Turkey, fleeing counter-

\(^{214}\) Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1487. The importance of these networks for the provision of rental units below market prices is corroborated in my own interviews with tenants who live in the neighborhoods under examination.

\(^{215}\) For more detailed analysis of Dalan’s project see Robins and Aksoy (1995).

\(^{216}\) Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1486.
Kurdish insurgency violence in the region. Tarlabası, positioned on the northern side of the newly created Tarlabası Boulevard and now geographically cut off from the commercial centers of Pera and Istiklal through the massive iron-railed Boulevard, as well as Fener-Balat on the Golden Horn, that once was home to the majority of workers of now defunct factories on the waterfront, became two such enclaves with higher than ever concentrations of lower-income populations.\textsuperscript{217} Fener-Balat and Tarlabası retained many of their original inhabitants, who were not assimilated into the new political economy of Istanbul, and attracted new migrants to the city. Rental rates remained low and even declined in these neighborhoods. With decreasing rental rates, owners paid less and less attention to the infrastructural and structural soundness of their buildings leading to much physical decline to the housing stock in these neighborhoods. The decline of the housing stock was accompanied by deterioration in the provision of government services in the neighborhoods that had attracted a population marginal to the electoral calculations of the main competing parties [like Tarlabası now dominated by Kurdish populations and Sulukule historically dominated by Istanbul’s Roma population]. The decreasing level of service provision spiraled into creating lower rental rates and property values in these neighborhoods. In sum, a series of informal institutional dynamics led to the creation of a bulk of affordable housing in a number of enclaves within the central districts of Istanbul.

In 2004 and 2005, the Turkish government enacted several legislative decisions to reverse these developments in the housing markets. According to Kuyucu and Ünsal (2010), “despite rapid economic liberalisation and urban restructuring during the 1980s and 1990s…the greatest obstacle posed to institutionalising such a system was the continuation of populist mechanisms in land/housing markets…It was the wreckage of a major accumulation crisis—the

\textsuperscript{217} Specific histories of each neighborhood are further elaborated in the background chapter to this dissertation.
2001 economic crash—that brought populism to a definite end.” In the wake of this economic crisis, the newly elected Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002 decided to enact a series of structural adjustment programs to pull the country out of economic collapse. Foremost amongst these programs were reforms to housing markets in Istanbul. Most significantly, the reforms criminalized informal (gecekondu) housing, channeled new powers to the Mass Housing Authority (TOKİ), discussed in the introductory chapter, and enacted laws for the renewal of debilitated historical neighborhoods in urban centers. It is this last reform that is most pertinent to the scope of urban rejuvenation projects in historical zones examined in this chapter. As discussed in the introduction and chapter 1, on June 16 of 2005 the Grand National Assembly of Turkey passed Law no. 5366 known in short as the “Preservation and Renewal Law.” The law empowered urban municipalities to transform neighborhoods deemed “urban renewal” areas through large-scale renewal projects implemented by both state agencies and private sector actors. Most importantly, if the urban transformation plan necessitated the evacuation of private property, the intervening actor, backed by local municipalities, was enabled by this law to condemn and take any property from owners who refused to accept the negotiated compensation offered by the project, as an act of “acil kamulaştırma” or emergency nationalization. It is this law that empowered most non-state actors, like GAP İnşaat, that are transforming Istanbul’s historical landscapes today.

Section II: A Mosaic of Property Controls

The preceding chapters examined the plural political agendas advanced by the sponsors of the six urban rejuvenation projects under study in this dissertation and the urban redesign plans they saw necessary for empowering those agendas. This section demonstrates that all six of the projects found it necessary to devise new controls for the transfer and usage of private

\footnote{Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1484.}
property within the parameters of their project to guarantee the proper implementation of their specific urban redesign plans. I find that each of the six projects adopts one of the three following property regimes: a) controlled property transfers en masse, b) community retention and controlled building aesthetics, and c) controlled property usage and building aesthetics. Below I comparatively analyze the six projects through grouping them into these three property regime categories. I then trace how each project arrived at their preferred property regime as fulfilling their project’s goals and the techniques they mobilized to enforce their preferred property controls.

**Property Regime I: Controlled Property Transfers En Masse**

Three of the projects I study share the belief that it is necessary to evacuate almost all private property within their project parameters and transfer it to new residential and commercial clients to fulfill their vision for the neighborhood: the Ismailia Consortium’s project in Downtown Cairo, GAP İnşaat’s project in Tarlabası, Istanbul and the state agency TOKİ’s project in Sulukule, Istanbul. As I argued in chapter one, these three projects were not motivated by the same political agendas to invest in urban rejuvenation. The Ismailia Consortium’s project was working to revive a unified, albeit bounded, Egyptian nation through urban redesign, whereas the two projects in Istanbul, operating under the tutelage of a strong Turkish state post-2005, were working to implement new ruling regimes of differentiated governance through urban redesign. Although one may have initially predicted that the Ismailia Consortium and GAP projects would adopt similar agendas since they share similar organizational incentives and characteristics, both being profit-seeking entrepreneurs, I found that the fact that the Ismailia Consortium was operating within a context of state retreat, whereas GAP was operating under the tutelage of a strong interventionist state was far more consequential in shaping the sponsors’
goals and visions for the neighborhood. In fact, as explained before, the two projects within this set that have congruent agendas and visions are GAP’s and TOKİ’s projects both implemented after 2005 after the revival of the Turkish state’s role as a governing organization in Istanbul. In spite of those divergences, the three projects share the same set of preferred property controls for the implementation of their projects. All three necessitate the control of private property along two axes: property evacuation and transfers, and planned space usage post-renovation.

Because the two projects implemented in Istanbul by GAP in Tarlabası and TOKİ in Sulukule are motivated by similar agendas, share the same preferred set of property controls and resort to the same techniques and measures to enforce those property controls, I limit my detailed analysis in this chapter to tracing the property controls adopted and enforced by GAP İnşaat. I chose GAP because it shares the same organizational characteristics as Ismailia Consortium and because the project was analyzed in detail in chapter one setting the groundwork for this section. As such, this section focuses on comparing the property controls adopted and enforced by Ismailia Consortium in Downtown Cairo and GAP İnşaat in Tarlabası, Istanbul.

Both projects shared a belief that they needed to attract a new residential and commercial clientele to the rejuvenated neighborhood that would correct for the current distortions in the pricing of real estate in the neighborhoods, but more importantly to fulfill their political agendas. As elaborated in chapter one, the Ismailia Consortium saw it necessary to evacuate most occupants within their project’s parameters in order to foster the perfect configuration of cultural and commercial activity as well as class-mixing in Downtown Cairo that they saw as essential to reviving a unified cosmopolitan Egyptian nation. Similarly, GAP saw that it was essential to evacuate all residential and commercial occupants of buildings within its project’s parameters in order to foster the community best fit to live and work in a neighborhood so central to a global,
and I argue differentiated, Istanbul. Both projects were keen on producing very controlled environments within their project parameters and saw evacuation as a necessary first step for guaranteeing that their ideal clientele inhabits the neighborhood.

To guarantee that controlled environment, both projects adopted a holistic approach that would necessitate the evacuation of entire clusters of buildings within the targeted neighborhoods. GAP’s plan for the rejuvenation of Tarlabası is designed so that they evacuate and acquire 100% of the buildings within the geographical parameters of their project. As discussed in chapter one, in addition to guaranteeing control over building occupants, evacuating 100% of the buildings within their project parameters granted them several architectural advantages that would ensure they maximized the economies of scale of rejuvenation and redesigned Tarlabası’s narrow buildings to accommodate the office and large luxury residential units they planned to create by gutting the interiors of existent buildings and combining them whilst preserving the facades of historical buildings onto the exterior of the now much larger building.\textsuperscript{219} The Ismailia Consortium followed similar guidelines in planning their project in Downtown Cairo. They chose to focus all their work on two clusters of contiguous buildings in Downtown. Their target is to buy all buildings in these targeted clusters and obtain at least 65% vacancy of the occupants in each building. They would then refurbish the interiors and exteriors of all the buildings acquired and rejuvenate all shared spaces (streets, alleyways, empty lots, and so on) in the clusters.\textsuperscript{220} Hence, the first shared central tenet of both projects is that of wholesale property transfers of buildings within their project parameters prior to their implementation.

Once the buildings are evacuated and refurbished both projects also needed to control the characteristics of future owners and renters of residential and commercial units within the

\textsuperscript{219} Nilgun Kivircik, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 4-5-2012
\textsuperscript{220} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011
parameters of the project area to guarantee the integrity of their neighborhood’s environments.

As we saw in chapter one both projects were particularly keen on controlling future occupants of commercial units within the project’s parameters. They both had restrictions on which commercial sectors they saw would fit in the rejuvenated neighborhood and the characteristics that would fulfill their standards for occupants within those sectors. Ismailia Consortium had a particularly specific vision for the retailers and entertainment venue operators catering to both higher end and lower end markets that it saw would fulfill its vision of cultivating a cosmopolitan yet Egyptianized commercial and cultural space.

After setting these rather precise contours of their visions, both GAP and the Ismailia Consortium then hired a team of urban planning, architectural and conservation experts to produce urban plans that would apply these visions to the physical setting of the neighborhood. The plans developed by these expert teams included the following. 1) Land-use maps that scientifically determined which building units were most suited to which uses. Land use maps would designate whether a unit should be commercial or residential, and recommend particular types of commercial activities for the units. The calculations that went into determining land use maps included the specifications and dimensions of the buildings in question, the width of the streets leading to the buildings and traffic patterns. 2) Conservation plans that designated which elements of the buildings were historical and worthy of preservation and how they were to be restored. 3) Architectural plans that would designate the best dimensions and designs for each building unit. 4) Urban plans that would among many considerations designate traffic patterns, locations of public spaces such as parks and squares, design infrastructural needs such as street lighting and the creation of parking spaces. These plans add a whole layer to the initial visions brought to the project by the corporations. As Karim

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221 Chapter 1 of this book project analyzes the networks of technical experts engaged in these projects at length.
Shafei, CEO of Ismailia Consortium, reminds us, “We have our own view that we’re trying to reconcile with the view of the [urban planners]…They agree with us on the stages of the project but the devil is in the details.” The scientific plans not only alter and modify these visions but they also have significant ramifications for property value. As we see below, many of the current inhabitants of Tarlabası who decided to get space in GAP’s new project rather than relocate would not be able to get property in their original buildings on the main thoroughfares because all residential units were moved to buildings further down the hill in Tarlabası on its narrow streets and alleys. Many thought that detracted from the value of their property. This, however, was a reality out of their control because it was up to the scientific plan.

Ultimately it was a combination of the visions espoused by the corporations and the scientific plans created by the experts that produced the final outcome of property controls that GAP and the Ismailia Consortium needed to adopt in order to successfully implement their projects. I now turn to a discussion of the techniques and measures adopted by both projects that would guarantee the enforcement of these property controls. I focus first on the techniques mobilized by both interveners to transfer private property in order to implement the wholesale evacuation of their project’s clusters.

In Downtown Cairo, the Ismailia Consortium convinced its pool of investors that it was economically viable to invest in buying all owners and renters out of their building units within their targeted clusters. They thus embarked on an independent venture to obtain legal ownership of these buildings from their current owners one building at a time and one unit at a time. First, the Consortium approached the owners of the buildings in question. According to Karim Shafei most of the buildings they encountered were initially built by family members in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and currently owned by their inheritors. Because of the

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222 Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
application of Islamic laws of inheritance, “today most of the buildings [in Downtown Cairo] are
owned by multiple inheritors ranging from say ten up to buildings where [the Consortium]
negotiated with one hundred inheritors.” More importantly, because of rent control, owners
had little financial incentive to manage, maintain or invest in their buildings. As Karim
explained, units that would be rented for 3,000 LE on the open rental market are occupied for the
low price of 7LE a month instead. As a result, although some of the negotiations with multiple
stakeholders proved difficult (negotiations could last from four months to two years), the process
of buying the buildings in Downtown Cairo proved financially feasible. At the time of our
interview in July of 2011, the Consortium had acquired title to twenty-one buildings of the forty
they targeted in this project phase.

It was, however, more costly to evacuate the buildings they bought from the inheritors.
The transfer of ownership of the building comes with transfer of the rental contracts tenants hold
within the building. The Ismailia Consortium had calculated that it would be necessary to
evacuate at least 65% of the occupants of each building for the refurbishment of the building to
make financial sense. Before analyzing the process of evacuating the building, it is essential to
understand their composition. 600 of the units found in the 20 buildings they acquired were
rented (mainly through “old” rental contracts). Of all the units in the twenty buildings only 5%
were residential units. Commercial units included offices, workshops, stores, small hotels and the
like. Of the 600 rental units, 150 units were occupied by tenants in legally precarious situations.
The three most common legal transgressions practiced by dwellers, according to Karim, were: a)
the use of the unit for a function that is not sanctioned by the initial license for the unit (e.g.

223 Ibid
224 Ibid
225 Ibid
commercial rather than residential use), b) a misconstrued contract, and c) occupation of the unit by persons other than those legally stipulated in the rental contract.226

Legal tenants entered negotiations with Ismailia Consortium over the right price for key money. Long-term rental contracts were significant financial assets. The compensation varied from case to case but Karim asserted that in many cases the compensation was valued at rates that would allow the tenant to purchase a similar unit elsewhere in Cairo (and in proximate neighborhoods). By July of 2011, the Consortium was able to broker these negotiations with enough tenants to achieve their targeted occupancy rates in most of their buildings.227 As discussed earlier, not all tenants were legally renting these spaces for a variety of reasons. In the case of legally precarious situations, the Consortium had two options for vacating the space: taking the tenants to court or compensating them for voluntary evacuation. Karim explained, “until today we have not forced the evacuation of any tenant from their building, we pay them to avoid litigation. This is partly because of the social responsibility that we have but from another point of view as well court cases in Egypt can last 7, 8 and up to 9 years, so it is actually cheaper to reach an agreement with them.”228 Eventually, all tenants are offered compensation for voluntarily vacating their spaces within buildings owned by Ismailia Consortium. For some tenants, however the price is never right. Some occupants (renters or owners) of the units within the Consortium’s buildings are too well off to find any monetary compensation lucrative enough for their relocation. Others however are never asked to vacate their spaces by the Consortium. “There are people that I want to stay… There is a coffee shop in one of the buildings that gathers all the artists from a particular block. We don’t want them to leave. They will continue to be

226 Ibid
227 Ibid
228 Ibid
there. In sum, all owners and tenants in building acquired by the Ismailia Consortium are compensated and voluntarily transfer their ownership and rental rights.

GAP İnşaat adopted a completely different strategy for evacuating its buildings in Tarlabası, Istanbul. Unlike the Ismailia Consortium’s complete independence from any arms of the state during its building acquisition and evacuation process, GAP is fully reliant on the state in vacating its buildings. As explained in preceding chapters GAP won a bid in 2007 run by the state to renew specified parameters within the greater neighborhood of Tarlabası (known as Tarlabası Phase 1) in accordance to law no. 5366. Once GAP won the bid it had monopolistic authority to transform the neighborhood that was guaranteed by the state.

To implement its project in Tarlabası, GAP needed to gain ownership of 100% of its project area through economically viable means. The project perimeters included 278 buildings. According to a survey conducted in August of 2008 of the area, 49% of the building units were residential units, 20% were commercial units, 3% were storage units and 29% of the units were empty. Of the neighborhood’s dwellers (residential and commercial) approximately 75% were tenants, 20% owned their apartments and 5% lived/worked in apartments that they neither rented nor owned.

Law no. 5366 requires clear evidence that owners were offered negotiated settlements for their buildings before authorizing “emergency nationalization.” Hence, GAP embarked on holding negotiations with private property owners in the neighborhood. During the negotiations, building owners were given two possible options. The first option they were given was to sell their property, transferring legal title of ownership, entirely to GAP in return for compensation.

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229 Ibid
231 Ibid
232 Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1488.
The valuation of the buildings was conducted by third party independent agencies registered with the Capital Markets Board.\textsuperscript{233} The second option the property owners were given was the ownership of units within GAP’s new project in exchange for their current property. Each property unit was evaluated and the property owner was offered a percentage of the area of their original building in square meters in the form of a property unit in GAP’s new project. Nilgun Kivircik, Director of the Tarlabasi project within GAP, explained that the buildings in their current state necessitated much investment from GAP for restoration and renewal that was calculated into the valuation.\textsuperscript{234} As a result, owners were only given fractions of the space they originally owned. Kuyucu and Unsal reported that GAP offered at their initial negotiations, “Property owners…42 percent of their “existing” property after the project’s completion.”\textsuperscript{235} My interviews with former property owners corroborated that owners were almost always offered percentages that fell below 50% of their current property area. Moreover, the units offered were almost never located in the original building because units were assigned in accordance to GAP’s ideal land use map. This particularly hurt owners of property geographically located on the main boulevards, as they were offered residential units in the interiors of the project, considered less prime real estate. Their original units on the main boulevards were reserved for office and commercial units on the land use map.

In response to what they saw as the unfairness of the terms of these initial negotiations, property owners in Tarlabasi created a neighborhood association in February of 2008 to collectively contest the “fairness” of these negotiations in line with Law no. 5366. The neighborhood council with the involvement of 200 owners, who signed letters of attorney to

\textsuperscript{233} Kentel Strateji A. Ş. (2008)
\textsuperscript{234} Nilgun Kivircik, Personal Interview, Beyoglu, Istanbul, 4-5-2012
\textsuperscript{235} Kuyucu and Unsal, 1488
guarantee negotiation of property as one block, and a comparable number of tenants, stalled GAP’s ability to attain “emergency nationalization” court orders for four years. During the four years the neighborhood council was able to get GAP to include some of its recommendations for the plan and ensure that tenants were given the opportunity to pay for and own units in public housing (albeit 45 Km outside the city). Eventually, however, with the defection of several key leaders, the association disintegrated in 2011. GAP was thus able to finalize the transfer, either voluntarily or involuntarily through nationalization, of almost all property in Tarlabası by the winter of 2011-2012, and evacuating them as photographically illustrated in chapter one.

By the 25th of May 2012, of the 491 units in the project area 59% of all the units were vacated voluntarily through negotiations with owners and 41% vacated involuntarily through “emergency nationalization” court orders. As opposed to the voluntary transfer of property in Downtown Cairo, the evacuation of Tarlabası involved a significant amount of involuntary property transfers, no tenant compensation and full reliance on the state.

I now turn to the techniques and measures mobilized by GAP and the Ismailia Consortium to control the characteristics of renters and owners in the new project units post-restoration. GAP İnşaat enlisted the power of the law to develop techniques for controlling the transfer and usage of property within the project parameters even after GAP’s initial sale of the property. As per their business plan, GAP intended to sell all of their project’s units after refurbishing them. They were sure however that they could maintain control over all sales and rental transactions of future project units even after they initially sold them to new property owners. They enlisted the power of the legal contract, particularly restrictive property deeds, to establish such guarantees. Such deeds stipulated that GAP has exclusive rights, through a

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236 Kuyucu and Ünsal, 1493.
237 Internal Report prepared by GAP İnşaat on 5-25-2012. Author was given access to the report by GAP’s team on 7-4-2012.
marketing organization, to market real estate within the project’s parameters. Moreover, owners agree not to sell or rent any of their individual units at prices lower than those announced by GAP through its marketing organization.\(^{238}\) Hence, GAP intends to manage all marketing (for sales and rental) of units within the project parameters, and this right is guaranteed to GAP through the power of the law. It is such a marketing organization that would ensure that GAP’s standards for owners and tenants are applied.\(^{239}\) Moreover, GAP capitalized on the same rental contract to ensure the physical integrity of the project area. In signing the contract owners agreed not to make any “alterations, additions or changes” to their independent units or any additional areas surrounding that unit that might be contrary to the project. In the case of any violations, GAP’s designs of the project will be used as the legal baseline for inspection.\(^{240}\) Recognition of GAP’s designs as the baseline for the law is a clear indication of the state’s support of GAP’s position vis à vis the new owners. It is through the support of the state that GAP can depend on the rule of law for the implementation and sustenance of its project.

The Ismailia Consortium, on the other hand, chose a different pathway for the management of its project’s units that can be summed up in two techniques: property rental rather than ownership agreements, and subsidies. As they crafted their business plan, the Consortium’s board had to decide whether the occupants of its newly refurbished and renovated units would be offered the opportunity to own or rent these units. Presumably, in a society such as Egypt where ownership, especially for the upper socio-economic segments, is far more prized than property rental, selling the units would have created immediate profit gains, decreased the risk of under occupancy, and saved the Consortium from having to maintain the buildings in the

\(^{238}\) Sample contract between owner and GAP. Section 13.


\(^{240}\) Sample GAP contract, section 12.5.
future. Rather than capitalize on these benefits, the board decided to keep all buildings they refurbish under their ownership and rent rather than sell refurbished units.\textsuperscript{241} Renting the units would be the key to ensuring the Consortium’s control of the units. Short-term rental contracts would ensure that the Consortium selected their tenants and periodically supervised their activities to renew the contracts. Transferring property ownership would not provide such guarantees. The Ismailia Consortium could not opt for restrictive property deeds, as GAP did, because it lacked the trust in the state entities necessary for enforcing such contracts. Karim Shafei explained that through his dealings with the state, his mistrust of the state’s ability to enforce the law was twofold. First, as discussed above he found the judicial arm of the legal system profoundly inefficient.\textsuperscript{242} In addition, Karim found the state’s enforcement institutions just as problematic. “The police are corrupt beyond reason. It is possible that the police would come to us and say they won’t implement this court order unless they are paid 10,000 LE,” he exclaimed. Hence, the inefficiency of the judicial arm of the state and the corruption of its enforcement arm combined to assure the Consortium that they could not rely on the capacity of the state to guarantee restrictive deeds. Instead they resorted to contracts that would give them the most direct control over their property and least reliance on the state: enforceable rental contracts (‘aqd tanfeethy). Such contracts are expedient because if the contract is broken the Consortium is able to resort directly to the police without the need for a court order. Signing such contracts showed commitment from the tenants that they would not break it and limited the Consortium’s dependence to only one arm of the unreliable state.

In addition to relying almost entirely on the rental of refurbished project units, the Ismailia Consortium needed to find a mechanism that would ensure that operators such as book

\textsuperscript{241} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid
sellers, art studios and galleries and coffee shops that would not be able to afford the Consortium’s regular market rental rates would still be able to operate in the neighborhood. Hence, they created a system of subsidies for its preferred operators to ensure that commercial venues attract a range of customers. They “subsidize space for art institutions, including artists and galleries and so on…and [they] subsidize space for food and beverage outlets such as restaurants and coffee shops to protect these price categories.” The Ismailia Consortium thus ensures that the price is not always right for their project units. Instead the Consortium created price categories, through subsidies, that would ensure they attracted their preferred operators even in defiance of supply/demand market forces. In sum, the Ismailia Consortium manages its project units through the hard grip of enforceable rental contracts, and a differentiated system of subsidies. Unlike GAP, the Ismailia Consortium opted for mechanisms that would minimize its reliance on the state. In sum, although Ismailia Consortium and GAP shared the same set of preferred property controls they mobilized very different techniques to implement and enforce those property controls. In Cairo, the Ismailia Consortium adopted a far more voluntary and compensatory regime to transfer property and evacuate the neighborhood than did GAP. To control new clientele inhabiting the neighborhood post-rejuvenation GAP in Istanbul relied on state-guaranteed restrictive property deeds whereas Ismailia Consortium devised several techniques that would minimize its dependence on the state.

Property Regime II: Community Retention and Controlled Building Aesthetics

Not all urban rejuvenation projects seek to attract a new clientele to buy and rent property in their targeted neighborhoods. In fact, some projects hope to do the exact opposite. As discussed in preceding chapters the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo and the EU project in Fener-Balat, Istanbul adopt what they term a community-centric developmental

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244 Ibid
approach to urban rehabilitation in historical zones. They plan projects that aim to improve the lifestyle of current residential and commercial dwellers of the neighborhood whilst restoring its historical fabric. As elaborated in chapter one this dualistic commitment was fundamental to producing the new governing regime based on autonomous local human-non-human communities that they worked to promote through urban redesign. Thus, at the centerpiece of these two projects stood a commitment to ensuring that current dwellers continue living in the neighborhood in spite of increasing real estate market values that may result from neighborhood upgrading. In the words of Burçin Altınsay, the former local Co-Director of the technical team of the EU project in Fener-Balat, “All our efforts were directed towards trying to keep that area with the people living in it…We didn’t want to create real estate speculation through our project.”

Similarly, Kareem Ibrahim, a former Director of the AKTC’s housing and public spaces programs in Darb El-Ahmar, described the vision for Darb El-Ahmar as one that would provide current residents the environment to invest in and retain their own property. At the cornerstone of both projects’ plans was the restoration of private residential homes. It was essential for both the EU and the Aga Khan that current inhabitants, owners and tenants, benefit from the restoration of their home rather than its transfer to other occupants due to its increased market value. Both interveners needed to deploy techniques to control against the transfer of property to outsiders after the restorations.

The other main pillar of the visions upon which both projects rested was the restoration of the historical physical fabric of the targeted neighborhoods. Thus, both interveners aimed to restore historical architectural attributes of the private homes during their rehabilitation, and aimed to produce mechanisms that would ensure the sustainability of the historical restorations.

245 Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012
246 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
Historical restorations were followed more rigidly by the EU than the AKTC, however. Burçin Altınsay, leading the EU team, described their conservation philosophy as follows, “In terms of building conservation, we were in line with international conservation rules. We tried to change them as little as possible: use all the original material, bring their original qualities forward and still give people enough space and good conditions to live in.”

It was imperative for the EU that the property owners and renters would then protect that conservation work once the EU completed the restoration and exited the neighborhood. Similarly, the Aga Khan was concerned with regulating how owners changed their buildings after the completion of the restorations. They also were quite concerned with finding ways to safeguard the general historical physical fabric of the whole neighborhood, not just the homes they were able to restore. In particular, they were most concerned about the destruction of historical private property that would be replaced by more economically lucrative high-rises that would overlook the Azhar Park that borders the neighborhood. Kareem Ibrahim explained that as they were designing the project in Darb El-Ahmar, they were concerned that investment patterns in Darb El-Ahmar would mirror those around the Fustat Garden in Cairo. He explained that “if you were to walk on the other side coming from ‘Ein El Seera neighborhood, you will find really tall apartment buildings overlooking the Fustat Garden. There was an urban fabric there that was demolished in its entirety to make way for these high-rises that overlook the park.”

In sum, the Aga Khan project needed to control changes made to the individual private homes that they restored and regulate against the development of real estate that would threaten the historic urban fabric.

The final outcome of controls that would regulate private property in both Darb El-Ahmar and Fener-Balat was governed by these overall visions of the projects as well as detailed

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247 Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012
248 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
scientific urban and conservation plans produced by the experts. In the case of these two projects, experts owned the development of the vision for the neighborhood as well as detailed urban plans. The expert decision that was most significant for property governance was the choice of buildings to be renovated. Since the projects are based on the allocation of grants to volunteers who hoped to restore their privately owned and rented homes, deciding which homes were to receive these grants was a crucial determinant of the distribution of property controls in the neighborhood. Restored buildings would be the ones that would succumb to the greatest level of controls that guaranteed residents high levels of residential security, decreased the chances that these buildings would enter real estate markets and decreased their owners’ ability to make architectural changes to the buildings. Although a highly political decision the choice of grant-receiving buildings was based on scientific criteria that included geographic clustering (as explained below), the historic worth of the building, the visibility of the building (see chapter two), and the number of families residing in the building (the EU targeted a balanced number that would benefit the largest number of families possible whilst protecting the building structures\textsuperscript{249}). In these neighborhoods the final outcome of property controls was almost exclusively determined by technical experts.

I now turn to an examination of the techniques both projects adopted to enforce these controls. First, I study the techniques both projects mobilized to ensure that newly restored homes would not be transferred to new owners and tenants. The AKTC deployed two main techniques against property transfers: reliance on long-term rental contracts and a joint-investment program. Of the occupants of housing units in Darb El-Ahmar neighborhood in 2003, 68% were tenants in possession of log-term old rent controlled contracts and 32% owned or

\textsuperscript{249} Burçin Altınsay, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 5-3-2012
partially owned their housing unit. Because the AKTC was most interested in ensuring the tenure of the occupants of homes rather than their owners, most of the AKTC’s dealings were with tenants. The old rent control system proved the strongest guarantor for the continued occupancy of these homes by current tenants post-restoration. In particular law no.136 of 1981 gives tenants the right to restore their homes in the case of eminent danger. On the other hand the same statute establishes that the rental contract expires in the case of building collapses. Hence, rent control laws provided the AKTC with the means to ensure their tenants’ long-term tenure but they had to ensure that the work they were doing would be considered “restoration” or tarmeem and not building “collapse” or hadm that could empower owners to evict their tenants.

First, they negotiated with owners to ensure against the eviction of current tenants under the rubric of building collapse. The most prevalent negotiation tactic was to reach an agreement between the tenants and the owner(s) that would allow the owner to increase rents in the rental contract. Another tactic was facilitating the building of an extra floor on top of the building for owners to use or rent using new rent control laws. Eventually through such negotiations a significant proportion of the owners who were approached by the AKTC agreed to the restorations and the AKTC restored 121 buildings in Darb El-Ahmar. Although the AKTC had to secure informal written or verbal agreement from the owners, they expressly stipulated in their legal contracts with tenants that it was up to the tenant to resolve any legal complications that may arise between the tenant and owner as a result of these restorations. Not all owners upheld

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251 Law no. 136/1981.
252 Law no. 49/1977, section 31.
253 Rent increases could go up to ten fold initial rental rates but remained marginal increases if compared to free market rental estimates.
254 Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011
255 Sample legal contract agreement between Aga Khan and building occupants. Section 10
their agreements however. In one case the owner attempted to foil the restorations by declaring the AKTC’s work as building collapse in the midst of their work. He visited the site of construction on his building as the AKTC team was conducting structural repairs and declared that he would bring a local municipality representative the next day to declare the building collapsed and nullify the tenants’ rental contracts. Since the AKTC had no clear legal cover from the state, their solution was to change the physical reality on the ground, and rebuild the house through the night to guarantee the tenants’ status.²⁵⁶ This incident illustrates the precarious nature of the informal agreements with owners and the limitations of the AKTC’s reliance on rental contracts without enlisting clear state support.

The second technique that the AKTC adopted to ensure long-term tenure of the restored homes by the current occupants was to devise a scheme of joint investment in the restoration process with all building occupants. Although the AKTC used a grants-based system to restore privately owned homes, the program required that the occupants of the housing units contribute financially to the restorations. For the first 22 restored building units in phase I of the project, the occupants of the homes contributed 10% of the financial burden but for all other restored units, the housing unit occupants were required to contribute 30% of the financial burden. Moreover, all occupants of every single unit within a building have to agree to fulfill their share of the 30% to start the restoration process. The AKTC devised this scheme to ensure that all building inhabitants would see their future as tied to the future of the building. The fact that hundreds of tenants were willing to invest in property that is owned by their landlord is testament to their security in their residence for the long-term.

By contrast, the EU project in Fener-Balat, Istanbul could not rely on pre-existing rent control contracts that would protect current inhabitants, and especially tenants, from gentrifying

²⁵⁶ Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011
real estate markets as a consequence of their rehabilitation project. According to a survey conducted in 1998 as a precursor to the EU project in Fener-Balat, 60% of all households in the neighborhood were tenants, and 40% owned (or partially owned) the dwelling in which they lived/worked.²⁵⁷ Hence, the EU was faced with a similar concern as that of the AKTC for the retention of the neighborhood’s current tenants, and aimed to increase owners’ investment in their homes and neighborhood. The EU team thus decided to create legally binding contracts to stipulate controls against gentrification. For each restored home, the owner had to sign an agreement with the EU that stipulates that “the owners accept that for the duration of five years after the restoration’s completion, if there are tenants, the owner will not increase the rent on a yearly basis above the official inflation rates as announced by the National Statistics Institute.”²⁵⁸ The owner also agrees not to do any of the following actions during the five years following the restoration: sell the property, transfer full or partial ownership rights of the property to a third party (like a bank through mortgage agreement), or sign an agreement of intent to sell the building. The owner is required to pay the full amount of the restoration grant provided by the EU in the case of violation of any of these conditions.²⁵⁹ The EU then filed notarized copies with the original property deeds through the office responsible for registering ownership deeds.²⁶⁰ Through this final stipulation, the EU created a mechanism that would manage the relationship between the owner, tenant and future buyers. All future buyers would be notified of these obligations through the property registration office and of their possible violation of the agreement. The EU was able to secure the state’s support for its agreements through its

²⁵⁸ Sample contract between owner of restored building and EU.
²⁵⁹ Ibid
²⁶⁰ Ibid
partnership with Fatih Municipality.\textsuperscript{261} The short time period for which this contract is valid (five years), however, indicates that there are limitations to the powers the EU holds in its agreement with the municipality.

In addition to guaranteeing that the current residents would be the main beneficiaries of their restoration of privately owned buildings and urban rehabilitation program, the AKTC and EU also aimed to protect the neighborhood’s physical historical fabric. The AKTC adopted two main tactics to fulfill that goal: formal legal contracts protecting historical restorations and restoration clustering. First, they relied on a legally binding contract with the building occupants to ensure that occupants would not make any alterations in defiance of the historical restoration of their private property. The third section of the contract states, that the occupants “agree to…their commitment to protecting these [restoration] works upon receipt of the housing unit in question…and to not destroy it or change its aesthetic or structural physical attributes or implement any alteration to the housing unit except after attaining written approval from [the Aga Khan Foundation].\textsuperscript{262}” Section 15 then stipulated that a breach of these decrees would entitle the AKTC to collect the entirety of the grant from violators.\textsuperscript{263} In addition to this formal legal contractual agreement, the AKTC also ensured its supervision of any violations to the agreement through the provision of continued complimentary maintenance to the buildings after turning it over to the occupants. The occupants could only ensure continuing to receive this service free of charge through abiding by the terms of the agreement.\textsuperscript{264} The AKTC’s presence in

\textsuperscript{261} As stated previously, the EU initiated this project in partnership with Fatih Municipality. Eventually however, the municipality refrained from producing any financial contributions, so it developed into a de facto EU project.

\textsuperscript{262} Sample contract Aga Khan, section 3.

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid

\textsuperscript{264} Information on complimentary maintenance from numerous anonymous interviews with members of the Darb El-Ahmar community who restored their homes with the Aga Khan. Also, Ahmed Beblawy, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 10-30-2011
and around the buildings they restored was their best guarantor that the occupants would uphold their agreement.

The second tactic that the AKTC deployed to preserve the historic fabric of the neighborhood, was to stall the construction of high-rises around the Azhar park. To do so the AKTC clustered their project’s restoration efforts in areas with a key vantage point to the park. Kareem Ibrahim, former Director of the project, explained that the project intensified its work in the Darb Shoghlan area (bordering Azhar Park) of the neighborhood to create a physical presence of buildings around the park, where inhabitants are invested in the maintenance of their buildings’ current physical attributes post-restoration, and the owners would not be able to build high rises. This clustering was “designed as a kind of protection to that buffer area [bordering the park], and so we intensified our efforts with the physical component of the project in that area.”265 The AKTC’s best strategy was to create a physical imprint on the area bordering the park in order to control the real estate boom.266

The EU, even more so than the AKTC, saw the protection of the architectural heritage of the restored buildings as cornerstone of its project. The EU thus similarly inserted a stipulation in their contracts stating that “the tenant/owner cannot make any changes to the restored sections of the building that are contrary to the restoration project. For the duration of five years, the Municipality will conduct inspections to ensure that no changes were made that are contrary to the restoration project.”267 The owner is required to pay the full amount of the EU restoration grant in the case of violation of these conditions.

265 Kareem Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Fustat, Cairo, 12-12-2011
266 In the wake of the January 2011 uprisings and withdrawal of state security forces, several high rises were built around that buffer area. This phenomenon indicates the success of the physical buffer as well as the importance of state enforcers in regulating construction. For further details see, Nora Shalaby, “The Continuing Catastrophe in al-Darb al-Ahmar,” Al Mahrusa Blog, (1-15-2013), accessible at: http://almahrusa.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-continuing-catastrophe-in-al-darb.html
267 Sample contract between owner of restored building and EU.
The shared desired property controls for the AKTC and EU projects are remarkably divergent from those espoused by other interveners in their respective cities, demonstrating the centrality of the interveners’ visions to the production and adoption of these controls. What their pairwise comparison then additionally demonstrates is the effects historical legacies have on the techniques projects adopt to reach their desired final outcome. The divergences between the EU’s techniques of choice and those of the AKTC were twofold. First, the AKTC had at its disposal a pre-existing system for the protection of tenants whereas the EU had to invent such protections. Second, the EU relied on its collaboration with the Municipality for guaranteeing the supervision of its contracts. The AKTC, with no such cover, had to actively supervise developments in the neighborhood itself through maintenance rounds and making physical changes on the ground that would stall gentrifying real estate.

Property Regime III: Controlled Property Usage and Building Aesthetics.

Finally, a significant proportion of urban rejuvenation projects in historical neighborhoods do not fixate on the needs of the neighborhood’s permanent residents (whether new clientele or original dwellers) as their primary concern. Rather their main audience is that of the transient and temporary population of visitors—local and international tourists—attracted to the large concentration of historical monuments in the targeted neighborhood. The two main axes upon which the visions for such projects revolve are the protection of historical monuments in the neighborhood and the creation of an environment that attracts outsider tourists and caters to their needs during the visit. As discussed in preceding chapters, the case that most exemplifies the adoption of such a vision in this dissertation, is the project to rejuvenate the neighborhood of Gamaliyyah in Historic Cairo funded and implemented by the state agency Historic Cairo Organization (HCO). In order to implement its vision of tourism-centric historic preservation the
HCO needed to control two main facets of private property: the regulation of building exteriors and the control of commercial usage of privately owned spaces in the neighborhood.

First, I turn to how attracting tourists to the neighborhood as a central goal for the project necessitated property controls in Gamaliyyah. As we saw in chapter two Hania Khalifa, the head on-site HCO engineer, summed characterized the HCO’s philosophy in Gamaliyyah as one geared towards creating an “open-air museum” that would service tourism. To attract tourism the HCO was most concerned with achieving two main goals: creating a visually appealing environment and providing the tourist with the necessary commercial services. The creation of visual standardization and harmony in El-Mu’ez street was one of the pillars of the vision of the HCO as discussed fully in chapter two. As explained by Mohamed Rashidy, one of the directors of the project and trained conservationist, such visual harmony necessitated the control of the exteriors of private property to ensure that people maintain the proper building heights, signage, lighting fixtures, windows, exterior paint themes, the placement of clothes lines, and the like, in accordance to the HCO’s master plan.²⁶⁸ Hence, the HCO needed to reshape the contours of private control over the exteriors of privately owned buildings.

Although most of their work was concerned with the exteriors of privately owned buildings, the HCO’s control of private property did not always stop there. As discussed in chapter one the HCO also saw that it was necessary to control the commercial and productive activities building owners and renters were practicing within their property. Controlling building usage was essential for both servicing tourism and protecting the history embodied within the centuries-old historical monuments that lined the streets of Gamaliyyah. Hence, they developed an elaborate list of the commercial and productive activities that would not be tolerated within the project parameters and devised ways to ensure violators would change their commercial

²⁶⁸ Mohamed Rashidy, Personal Interview, Zamalek, Cairo, 9-19-2011
activities (*taghyeer el nashat*). In some cases, the protection of monuments necessitated the total relocation of residents from their homes or workshops and stores inside the monuments.\(^{269}\) The attraction of tourism and protection of history called for the control of building aesthetics, the control of commercial usage of privately owned spaces, and on rare occasions the transfer of property rights.

I now trace the techniques adopted to implement such property controls by the HCO. Although as an arm of the Egyptian state the HCO could have mobilized a comprehensive strategy with reliance on possible new legislation to enforce property controls, the HCO deployed a case-based approach to the enforcement of its controls. The HCO is not the state. They represented an arm of the state that was positioned within a complicated relationship with other arms of the state.\(^{270}\) The HCO is an organization that was created at the impetus of the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hosny to implement a comprehensive urban rejuvenation and historical preservation plan in Gamaliyyah, Cairo. Knowing that it was necessary to involve several key ministries in this project Farouk Hosny initiated the HCO as an umbrella organization to combine personnel from five state agencies: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Communities, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Religious Endowments (Awqaf) and the Governorate of Cairo. Although the HCO was organized officially as this umbrella organization, the core leadership of the implementation team of the HCO was composed almost entirely of state officials that worked under the Ministry of Culture, with specific experience within the Supreme Council of Antiquities (an arm of the Ministry of Culture).\(^{271}\) What is important and remarkable about the choice of these five

\(^{269}\) Ibid
\(^{270}\) This work challenges a unitary view of the state in contribution to a long line of academic scholarship that does so (e.g. Mitchell 1991; Elyachar 2005).
\(^{271}\) Mohamed Rashidy, Personal Interview, Zamalek, Cairo, 9-19-2011
ministerial/governorate entities is the lack of involvement of judicial or legislative forces in the coalition. This was a coalition created to implement a one-time project rather than a holistic plan for redrawing the legal relationship between the state and its citizenry, especially regarding property.

Seeing the position of the HCO within the Egyptian state’s apparatus, the question then becomes how did the HCO ultimately implement the necessary property controls on the ground? The process was similar for changes to the exterior of buildings as well as requested changes in commercial/industrial activities practiced within the privately owned spaces. Once the position of a building within the urban plan became clear and the necessary changes to be made to the building (external or change of activity) were defined, the engineers on the project, including Hania Khalifa, would start a series of negotiations with the building inhabitants that would be affected by these changes. The idea was to enlist voluntary collaboration from the inhabitants as the most efficient pathway for implementing the project. Hania explained that regarding building facades, they would negotiate with intransigent owners and “try our best to work with them and we try to convince the people once, and twice, and thrice and ten times. Sometimes we can start refurbishing the entire façade but keep that person’s window untouched until the very end, so when he finds that the façade is all beautiful, he would ask for his window to be redone.”  

Hania also explained that they similarly negotiated with business owners engaged in unsuitable commercial or industrial activities. “We try to the best of our ability to convince them to change their [commercial/industrial] activity in conformity with the area. Then we collaborate with the governorate and local municipality to ensure that they facilitate the production of the necessary licenses.”

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272 Hania Khalifa, Personal Interview, Gamaliyyah, Cairo, 9-26-2011
273 Ibid
The effectiveness of these negotiations had its limitations, however and the HCO did not always gain the voluntary acceptance of these changes from the people. Because the HCO’s project hinged on implementing the same standardized changes to building exteriors and commercial activities for the totality of all buildings within the project’s parameters, it was necessary to implement aspects of the project involuntarily. To do so the HCO turned to the governorate and local municipality for enforcement support, and the use of force if necessary. The governorate and local municipality were especially instrumental in implementing decisions related to changes in commercial/industrial activity. Such decisions involve much investment from the merchant/workshop owner involved to start a new activity or to move the current activity to another location far from Historic Cairo. They are thus much more likely to protest such decisions and more likely to abide by them only when forced to (usually through the threat of or actual deployment of violence). The role of the local municipality and governorate becomes clear from their involvement in the removal of the wholesale Lemon and Onion market on El Mu’ez Street. “When we first started in El Mu’ez Street,” explained Hania, “the Lemon and Onion market was causing a lot of problems, so we convinced the governorate and local municipality to provide them with alternatives [to this market] in Souq El Obour. So, those who wanted to change their activities here would do so, and those who had no interest in changing their activity were given a stall in Souq El Obour and the governorate owns their properties here [in El Mu’ez Street].” Hania then explained that although the governorate is the enforcer of these decisions, the HCO provides (at least partially) the funds necessary for relocating the stores and workshops. What is important to remember is that all decisions executed by the governorate and local municipality are executive orders created exceptionally for each case.

\[274\] Ibid
The arbitrary nature of the violence deployed to enforce these orders is exemplified in the closure of the fishmonger Mustafa’s store in Gamaliyyah, Cairo that we encountered in chapter two. As we saw Mustafa’s sixty year-old fish stall was ordered shut because he was unlucky enough that the former Minister of Culture, Farouk Hosny, was visiting El Mu’ez Street on the same day that Mustafa was celebrating the opening of a new restaurant that would provide a nice seating environment for his clients serviced by his fish stall. The celebrations alerted Hosny to the fact that there existed a fish stall in the midst of the newly renovated El Mu’ez Street, and in Mustafa’s account exclaimed, “How can there be a fish store in front of Beit El Seheimy [a historical restored house]?” The next day Mustafa received a call from the municipality ordering him to close down the fish stall, and by the time he had arrived at the store the police had sealed it shut and two guards were placed in front of it. Mustafa was unable to sell fish from his store and private property for three years until the advent of the January 2011 uprisings in Egypt, when he reopened it. Mustafa’s experience illustrates the violence and abruptness of the power exercised by the governorate in collaboration with the HCO to control the usage of private property. Moreover, it illustrates the importance of personality politics to the implementation of this project. The persona of the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hosny, and his regular involvement in overseeing the project was instrumental in both crafting the vision for the project that excluded the fishmonger from El Mu’ez Street, as well as mobilizing the enforcement necessary for its implementation. Mohamed Rashidy repeatedly affirmed in our interview the importance of Farouk Hosny’s personal involvement with the project in its execution. Most emphatically he exclaimed,

“If it weren’t for him (Farouk Hosny), [the project] wouldn’t have been completed. If it weren’t for his power and his relations with the President (of Egypt) and the First Lady that kind of funding would not have materialized. It may be true that the Ministry of Housing and the Cairo Governorate and the Holding Company for Water and Waste
Water transformed [infrastructure] with their own financial resources, but if it weren’t for Farouk Hosny, the Ministry of Housing would have never spent fifty million on El Mu’ez Street, and the Ministry of Religious Endowments wouldn’t have relocated residents and compensated them with replacement housing, and the Governor wouldn’t have contributed."  

All in all, it becomes clear from the incident and Mohamed Rashidy’s commentary that the persona of Farouk Hosny and the power he could mobilize in dealing with other state entities was instrumental in providing the funding and resources needed to implement the project as well as the will to enforce the case-by-case decisions to control property rights necessary for the implementation of the HCO’s vision.

To conclude, rather than taking legal measures, as did the Turkish government through law no.5366 discussed above, to reshape the property rights in Egypt in ways that would facilitate their project in Gamaliyyah, Cairo, the HCO implemented the property controls necessary through producing case-by-case executive decisions in line with the needed property transformations. It was the HCO’s position as an umbrella organization that had access to state entities such as the Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Interior, in addition to Farouk Hosny’s personal clout, and not the rule of law that gave the HCO the enforcement capacity necessary to implement these case-based decisions in the totality of their project’s parameters.

Discussion:

This comparative case analysis demonstrates that non-state actors and independent state agencies are actively designing and enforcing new property rights regimes in Cairo and Istanbul at the fragmenting scale of the urban neighborhood. The main determinant of a property regime in a neighborhood undergoing rehabilitation is the vision of the sponsoring actor leading that project. Hence property regimes governing neighborhoods that stand side by side can be highly divergent if the sponsors redesigning them espouse divergent visions for the targeted neighborhoods.

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275 Mohamed Rashidy, Personal Interview, Zamalek, Cairo, 9-19-2011
neighborhoods. Because the sponsors of urban rejuvenation in a neo-liberalizing Cairo and Istanbul pre-2005 espoused such divergent political agendas and visions we saw a mosaic of divergent property rights regimes develop in those settings. After 2005 in Istanbul we saw a new convergence in the property regimes adopted from one neighborhood undergoing rejuvenation to the next as the revival of a strong and interventionist state ensured high levels of congruence between the political agendas and urban redesign plans adopted by sponsors of urban rejuvenation across the organizational spectrum. In both Istanbul and Cairo new property regimes were set and enforced at the scale of the neighborhood, fragmenting property rights provision in Cairo and bypassing democratic institutions in Istanbul.

Although the setting of desired property controls in a neighborhood is shaped by the rejuvenation sponsor’s vision, what cross city comparison of similar projects across Istanbul and Cairo demonstrates is that preexisting legacies of property regimes within each city shaped the measures each project took to reach these ideal property controls. In particular the differences between techniques adopted by projects operating in Istanbul when compared to those in Cairo are twofold. First, the transfer of property was significantly more violent in its forced and involuntary nature in Istanbul than in Cairo. Moreover, relocated parties (and especially tenants) received far less compensation in Istanbul than in Cairo. Second, non-state actors relied on state institutions for implementing property transfers and guaranteeing long-term property controls in Istanbul, as opposed to the complete independence of non-state actors in Cairo from reliance on state institutions for enacting these property controls. Why do we see these two divergences?

I turn first to differences in levels of compensation and voluntariness of property transfers. The main reason why tenants are more highly compensated for their relocation in Cairo than in Istanbul can be traced to the legal rent control institutions that have protected the rights of
tenants in Cairo for over half a century. Similarly, rent control institutions explain why property transfers were so much more voluntary in Egypt for the Ismailia Consortium than they were in Istanbul for GAP. The old rent control system in Cairo has led building owners to evaluate their assets as standing far below market prices so long as they stand hostage to their long-term tenants (spanning two generations). Hence, the owners are willing to sell to the Ismailia Consortium at deflated prices. There is a ceiling to the amounts they would request from the Consortium during negotiations. This renders the project initially expensive but economically viable. The same cannot be said of a holistic project in Tarlabası or Sulukule, Istanbul. Building owners in Istanbul do not find themselves captive to their tenants. Rather they feel captive to the conditions of the neighborhood. Thus, they see that any marginal improvement in the physical environment and servicing of the neighborhood would lead to a direct increase in the value of their property. They thus have optimistic estimations of their buildings’ worth in the near future and no such ceiling to their compensation demands. Hence, the buying up of whole clusters of buildings in Istanbul does not make economic sense. As a result, it was essential for the implementation of GAP’s and TOKİ’s holistic projects in Istanbul that the state be fully involved to overcome this financial hurdle through “emergency nationalization.” The Turkish state saw that supporting forcible and often violent property transfers as the only way to implement the rejuvenation projects it saw so essential to incorporating the new mode of differentiated governance it worked to produce for a globalizing Istanbul. To mitigate the loss of constituent support the majority ruling party, AKP, initiated its renewal program in two neighborhoods dominated by minority populations that stand outside its electoral constituency: Sulukule with a majority-Roma population and Tarlabası with a majority-Kurdish population. As the AKP strengthened its grip on power and its differentiating mode of governance became further
entrenched, it moved to other zones of the city that housed some of its own electoral constituencies. Eventually, the Turkish parliament passed the “Disaster Law” or “Afet Yasası” in May of 2012 that increased the state’s power to implement “emergency nationalization” across Istanbul wherever the state assessed buildings to be at risk from collapse due to natural disasters, especially earthquakes. The prospect of “emergency nationalization” had reached middle-class neighborhoods, where much larger percentages of inhabitants are potential AKP supporters.

Although the choice to involve the state in the implementation of these top-down projects is predicated on the historical legacies of property regimes in Istanbul and Cairo, it is also highly dependent on the non-state actors’ belief in the current capacity of the state to implement the rule of law more generally. The Ismailia Consortium and Aga Khan relied on contracts that minimized their interaction with the state because they did not trust it would be able to supervise their neighborhoods. Their Turkish counterparts showed no such hesitation. They trusted in the Turkish state’s capacity to enforce the law. In sum, non-state actors in Istanbul relied on the state because they needed to but also because they could. Non-state actors in Cairo, on the other hand, minimized dependence on the state because they did not need to but also because they could not trust its capacity to provide such support.

To conclude, the variegated mosaic of new property controls adopted within and across Istanbul and Cairo is shaped by an interaction of the political agendas each rejuvenation sponsor hopes to mobilize through urban redesign and the historical legacies of the city within which that actor is implementing the rejuvenation project. Table 1 illustrates that interaction through synthesizing a comparison of the property controls adopted by the four non-state actors analyzed in this chapter since they adopted comparable sets of preferred property controls across Istanbul and Cairo.
Table 1: Summary of how a rejuvenation sponsor’s preferred property regime and historical legacy interact to shape property controls.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, disillusionment with the state as a governing organization and global mobility have empowered a multiplicity of international and local non-state actors and state agencies to govern private property controls in Cairo and Istanbul at the fragmenting scale of the neighborhood. These new governing actors mobilize the redesign of the city’s built environment, through neighborhood-level urban rejuvenation projects, as a political tool expected to realize their competing political agendas. As they redesign the neighborhood’s built environment they devise rights and protections that would enable the city’s productive capacity. One of the main sets of rights they work to secure for the urban built environment are rights that are aimed to control the transfers and usage of private property; protecting private buildings from unadulterated market exchange and their owners. In this chapter I traced the many measures new rejuvenation sponsors took to devise such private property controls in order to mobilize very specific facets of their urban plans. Comparative analysis of the property controls devised by six urban rejuvenation projects in Cairo and Istanbul revealed that the sponsors’ vision for the neighborhood was the main determinant of the set of property controls adopted in any each
neighborhood but that city-level dynamics shaped the techniques any given rejuvenation sponsor was able to deploy in order to implement these controls. In particular, city-level property rights legacies and capacities for the implementation of the rule of law lead to higher levels of violence and state involvement in the implementation of a given rejuvenation sponsor’s preferred property controls in Istanbul than in Cairo. In short, neo-liberalization and globalization empower a multiplicity of property governing regimes that mobilize urban redesign as a political tool but do so unevenly across developing cities.
Chapter 4 -- Lived City:

Everyday Tactics, Urban Materiality and “Possessing” the City’s History

The Güneşli family276 (pronounced “Gueneshley”) lives in a narrow three-story home in Balat, Istanbul. Their home was included within the parameters of the Fener-Balat Rehabilitation program implemented by the European Union, in collaboration with Fatih Municipality. The rehabilitation program was initiated in 1997 and one of its main goals was to restore “historical homes” through fully funded grants from the EU but only on a voluntary basis with full agreement of the resident(s). The Güneşli family volunteered their home and it was included in phase two of the project and assessed for restoration in 2003-2004.

After many deliberations with the EU projects’ architects, the Güneşli family only agreed that the EU project would restore the exteriors of their home. Meanwhile, although the family did not want the EU to restore their home interiors, they took this opportunity to hire their own team to repair the interior of the home as they saw fit. In the course of the repairs, the family decided to repaint their walls. As they removed the gypsum and paint layers of the wall they made an unexpected discovery. Instead of uncovering dark layers of ugly brick, they were astounded to find beautiful colorful walls beneath the gypsum. Emel Hanım and her son Hüseyin attempted to describe what they found in great detail as I sat in their living room.

“The bricks were covered with a white lime-based plastering material…We don’t know this plastering material today,” started Hüseyin. The plaster was covered by handcrafted designs that came together to form what Hüseyin described as “an enormous richly-adorned painting (tabl)”. According to Emel Hanım, the handcrafted designs would start at one corner of the wall and cover the wall to the other corner, and there would be a large picture design in the middle of the wall surrounded by ornamental floral designs on the edges. “They used at least three to four colors. There was yellow, green,” declared Emel Hanım. Hüseyin then expressed their marvel at the preservation of the colors where “decades had passed and yet the colors remained vivid (canlılar renkler). Truly, we were astonished by the vivid colors.” Finally, as Emel Hanım was ending their description, I realized that they had uncovered walls with painted patterns in several rooms in the house not just the living room. She described them as such, “the painting would cover the wall from top to bottom and in the middle a different design/pattern (desen) would be found. In other words, it was like a painting (tabl). Each wall had a different design (desen) at the center…for example this room’s [pointing to the adjacent room] design was different.” After much deliberation with my research assistant, we came to the conclusion that what the Güneşli family had uncovered beneath layers of paint and gypsum were most likely fresco-based murals.

The reason why Emel Hanım and her son Hüseyin had to go to such lengths to describe the murals to me was that I could not see them. As I sat in their living room in June of

\[276\] All names are fictitious to guarantee anonymity. Only planners that provided consent to be quoted are named.
2012, all I could see were cream-colored plain walls covered in the paint we see regularly in any of our contemporary homes. The question then became: where are the murals?

The Güneşli family had actively covered the murals. Emel Hanım vividly explained the decision. In the same breath as she described the beauty of the colors of the mural, she suddenly exclaimed that “they were so beautiful, that we immediately covered the walls to ensure that the UNESCO not see them…because they would not have given us permission to plaster over them. They would have forced us to restore them.” Hüseyin then explained that when they did find the murals, they did contemplate keeping them but that neither the original materials nor the craftsmen (üstalar) necessary to restore the walls were to be found. “It would have required archeologists or specialized university students…it would have required both a long time commitment and a large financial investment to restore. Perhaps if we had the resources, we would have done it, but who is capable of that?” Most importantly, “the UNESCO…could not see it. Had they seen it, for sure they would have restored it.”

Emel Hanım then emphatically made her case against involving the EU architects (whom they referred to as UNESCO). She argued, “they would not have given us money, they would have said let’s restore it. They had found similar artifacts in several houses before ours. As soon as they saw them, they would immediately start restoring. I mean in our case, they took around one year and a half [to restore the exteriors of the home]…If they were to restore these drawings, it would last at least five years of them working inside of our home. In other words, for five years there would be men from UNESCO working inside my home and it would be impossible to be comfortable. It would be very difficult because their restorations are very involved (çok ağır yapılıyor).” Having to live outside her home for five years was too costly of a choice for Emel Hanım to make in order to restore the murals. Ultimately, in fear of the EU restoration team’s zeal, the Güneşli family rushed to cover the murals adorning their home’s original walls.277

The uncovering and covering of the murals stood at the nexus of the tension between the assumptions and increasingly empowered ethical disposition of a global heritage preservation industry and the logistical needs and practices that produce everyday urban livelihood. The murals vanish amidst a struggle between the need for history and the need for place, at the moment when the two needs cannot co-exist. In protecting their need for place, the Güneşli family took a stand against a growing global industry to preserve urban heritage that came to Fener-Balat in Istanbul through the EU.

As we’ve seen through preceding chapters of the dissertation, the rejuvenation and preservation of the urban fabric of ‘historical’ neighborhoods in contemporary Istanbul and Cairo is motivated by a plethora of political agendas. Urban rejuvenation projects come to historical zones of both cities to mobilize agendas as diverse as archiving and preserving history, attracting global and local tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI), engineering a civic-minded society, alleviating poverty and molding collective memory. Rejuvenation projects led by a multiplicity of international and local state and non-state actors deliberately redesign the historical neighborhood’s built environment to empower these agendas.

Rather than focusing on rejuvenation sponsors and top-down governance, this chapter focuses on the everyday tactics (De Certeau, 1984) urban dwellers who live, work and wander in historical neighborhoods practice in order to resist as well as capitalize upon ongoing urban rejuvenation projects, and empower their visions for the neighborhood. In other words, it focuses on unveiling the ways in which the “lived city” (Lefebvre 1974) reshapess reality on the ground and ultimately the eco-system governing Istanbul and Cairo. Studying these everyday tactics, I demonstrate that urban dwellers see the urban built environment as generative for their political, social, economic and cultural life, and are just as invested in shaping their city spaces as the intervening actors transforming their neighborhoods. Focusing on contention at the moment of urban transformation reveals what it is about the built environment that is at stake for urban dwellers as they struggle for their neighborhood. As they mobilize their everyday tactics urban dwellers are not only shaping their immediate experience of the neighborhood’s spaces but also city spaces and experiences designed for other local and global audiences. I thus trace how urban

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278 Here I am referring to the verb “lived city” in particular as theorized by Henri Lefebvre (1974) to be one of a triad of practices that shape the city’s eco-system of governance. See introduction for elaboration on Lefebvre’s theory.
dwellers produce new nodes and dynamics of power in their neighborhoods and ultimately re-assemble\textsuperscript{279} the global\textsuperscript{280}.

To explore the diversity of everyday tactics practiced in the city, I adopt a methodology that draws on resonant ethnographic encounters across the different neighborhoods in Istanbul and Cairo rather than a rigidly comparative approach. Although urban dwellers practice a large variety of individuated and collective tactics to empower their visions for the city, I focus in this chapter on tactics that are unique to living and contesting space in neighborhoods designated as “historical” and actively rehabilitated to highlight a historical aesthetic. I study everyday tactics rather than the eruption of large-scale protests or coordinated collective action in order to unpack the micro-dynamic processes through which the materiality of the built environment impacts modes of resistance. I argue that the materiality and symbolism of the built environment in “historical” neighborhoods produces unique dynamics of urban contestation, entangled within processes of meaning-making linked to defining and possessing history. Dwellers of historical neighborhoods in Cairo and Istanbul practice everyday tactics including the plastering of murals, making claims to historical architectural knowledge, archiving and displaying headshots of their community’s members and circulating damaging rumors about the transformational projects in their neighborhoods.

**Archive Fever in a Lived City**

I now return to a discussion of the Güneşli family’s covered murals. When Emel Hanım described the family’s decision-making process for covering the murals, she was very aware of the ramifications of the act. The Güneşli family did not cover the murals out of simple ignorance

\textsuperscript{279} The use of the verb “to assemble” here is intentional. I join a growing scholarship (e.g. Latour 1993; Bennett 2005 and 2009; McFarlane 2011) that emphasizes the importance of human-non-human hybrids and urban assemblages in shaping political outcomes on any geographical scale. See longer discussion below.

\textsuperscript{280} This chapter is written in conversation with a larger literature that examines the ways in which the everyday spatial practices of urban dwellers in Middle Eastern cities remake the global (e.g. see Ghannam 2002 and 2006; Elyachar 2005; Mills 2010)
of their value. Rather, as Emel Hanım volunteered her account of the discovery and covering of the murals, she was distraught by a sense of loss of the beautiful and historically valuable murals. The family knew exactly how historically and potentially economically valuable the murals were. Emel Hanım was also aware that plastering over the murals defied the EU’s wishes to restore and celebrate them. Most importantly, she draws our attention to the fact that the family didn’t just plaster the murals in defiance of the EU but because of the EU team’s zeal for restoration. The presence of the EU with the declared purpose of preserving Fener and Balat’s architectural heritage created a new form of tension for the Güneşli family. It created a tension between the need for historical artifact and the need for “anthropological place” in the city. The global processes that had brought the EU to Fener-Balat brought not only an unprecedented zeal for the restoration of the neighborhood’s architectural and artistic artifacts but also brought a new audience that is not only national, but also potentially global, to gaze upon that heritage. It is this new attention through both restoration work and a potential gazing audience that most threatened Emel Hanım’s security in her home and created this tension between the need for heritage and need for place.

Like many of those who hear this story, the Güneşli family experienced a sense of loss when they plastered over the murals. They had a strong predisposition to cherish the historical artifact. In fact, the heritage industry gains immense power to justify the funding of historical preservation projects through capitalizing upon, what is characterized by UNESCO, as a universal acceptance of the moral responsibility to recover and conserve historical traces. An insightful and prolific literature (e.g. Benjamin 1968(1955); Augé 1995(1992); Derrida 1996; Nora 1996) has been dedicated to showing how unnatural the fetishization of heritage really is.

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Instead, they argue that the need for “lieux de memoire” or “places of memory” as coined by Pierre Nora (1996) or “archive fever” as coined by Jacques Derrida (1996) has been constructed as a byproduct of the traumatizing experience of modernity and underlying shift to a temporality marked by secularization and acceleration of historical time. Nora (1996) beautifully describes the process as follows,

“The ‘acceleration of history’ brings us face to face with the enormous distance that separates real memory—the kind of inviolate social memory that primitive and archaic societies embodied, and whose secret died with them—from history, which is how modern societies organize a past they are condemned to forget because they are driven by change…If we still dwelled among our memories, there would be no need to consecrate sites embodying them. Lieux de mémoire would not exist, because memory would not have been swept away by history.”

In spite of its constructed nature the fetishization of “lieux de memoire” has developed into a very powerful societal obsession that empowers the allocation of billions of dollars into these heritage preservation projects worldwide, and warranted such concerted attention from intellectual greats like from Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida and Pierre Nora. The Güneşli family had joined that temporal shift. They did not plaster over the murals because they were pre-modern. It was because their need for “lieux de memoire” suddenly had to compete with another need fundamental to urban experience: need for place. Taking them seriously as knowledgeably negotiating that tension rather than as ignorantly unaware of it allows us to explore the limitations of that fetish. Taking the need for archive outside of the physical confines of the archive and into the bustling city through studying urban heritage preservation projects, I trace how these tensions are negotiated in the lived city.

I’ve claimed that what was threatened for the Güneşli family was their need for place. I turn here to a discussion of Emel Hanım’s home as “place.” Emel Hanım and her husband Kerem Bey had been living in their home for 33 years. Along with becoming a source of stability

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in an ever-changing city like Istanbul, Emel Hanim’s home became what Marc Augé (1995) characterizes as an “anthropological place” for the iterative creation “of identity, of relations, of history.” He builds here on work on place by both Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1976) and Michel de Certeau (1984). The Güneşli family had cultivated an affective relation with not only the physical space and objects that were their home but also the sense of identity, sociability and history that their home embodied and came to cultivate for them over the three decades. Taking into account such an expansive understanding of “anthropological place” brings to view a deeper dimension to this tension: a question about what history means to whom. Emel Hanım’s home had come to embody a history of its own. The history that develops around place is not recognized by the heritage industry as worthy of conserving nor as tangible or intangible heritage. Emel Hanım took a stand to protect it as a “history” to be cherished. Hence, the tension that developed for the Güneşli family didn’t just grow out of an attachment to the physicality of their home, but also developed as tension between different embodiments of what history meant to them.

One may challenge my reading of the Güneşli family’s dilemma and argue instead that it was not their need for place that drove the family to cover the murals but rather a much more immediate economic rationale of property protection. Given recent developments in Turkish politics\(^{283}\), it is not too far-fetched to postulate that the family may have been acting out of fear of losing rights to the economic value of their property. Although new laws passed in 2005 (the “Renewal and Preservation Law” and again in 2012 with the The “Disaster Law”) empowered

\(^{283}\) As discussed earlier, in June of 2005 the Grand National Assembly of Turkey passed Law no. 5366 known in short as the “Renewal and Preservation Law.” Among other things, the law empowered sanctioned state and non-state urban renewal projects in historical neighborhoods to condemn and take private property as they saw was needed by the project. They were encouraged to take properties through negotiations with owners but were given legal powers to take property through “\textit{acil kamulaştırma}” or emergency nationalization with minimal compensation if the negotiations failed. This practice of “emergency nationalization” was extended outside historical neighborhoods through the “\textit{Afet Yasası}” or “Disaster Law” in May of 2012.
the state and its partnering non-state actors to condemn and take private property at minimal compensation to the owner through the practice “emergency nationalization,” the Güneşli family did not see themselves as potentially affected by such changes. First of all, such legislation only came in effect in 2005 a few years after the family covered over the murals. However, if we assume that the Güneşli family had anticipated such laws because of circulating rumors or deliberations about the state’s intentions, we know that the Güneşli family in particular felt very secure about retaining their property’s value. This is because it was clear from our conversations that Kerem Bey and his family saw the EU, and not the state, as the actor in charge of the restorations and any property transfers that may occur because of their project. Kerem Bey fully trusted the EU to be fair in dealing with his property. In fact, Kerem Bey had led a campaign as one of the community’s leaders to urge other residents of Balat to trust the EU with the restorations, and not fear for their property ownership rights during the process. Moreover, it was clear that they reasoned that the restoration of the murals through a fully-funded EU grant would most likely increase the economic value of their home on any real estate market rather than detract from it. It was not the economic value of their home that they were concerned about. It was their attachment to their home as “anthropological place” that embodied their identity, their social relations and their history that drove them to cover their murals.

In sum, an “assemblage” of several contingent forces and actors came together to plaster over the murals, and ultimately delimit the heritage the intended global and local audiences would be able to see. First, the mural materializes on the home’s original walls to change how the Güneşli family experienced the city and their positioning in it. But the murals

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285 I am referring here to “assemblage” in terms of the concept developed through the urban assemblages literature (see e.g. Latour 1993& 2005; Mitchell 2002; Bennett 2004 & 2005; McFarlane 2011) discussed at length in the introduction to the dissertation.
alone were not the source of a new dilemma for the family. Rather, it was the appearance of the EU project and especially its team’s zeal for historical restoration that created tension for the family. Finally it was in negotiating that tension and deciding to protect the sense of “place” their home represented that the family eventually plastered over the murals. It was the confluence of these forces and actors, as heritage preservation left the archive and was practiced in the city, that produced new nodes of power for the Güneşli family and re-assembled the global through their living room.

**Claiming Knowledge, Guiding History**

I’d like to turn now to a discussion of longer-term interventions through which urban dwellers come to cultivate social capital and communal power with the arrival of preservation projects in their historical neighborhoods. “Historical” neighborhoods are classified as historical because they are believed to be places where important historical events took place and to be home to time-worn structures that embody by-gone eras. They thus provide neighborhood dwellers with multiple opportunities to make claims to knowledge of these pasts, built or narrated. When historical preservation projects arrive in a neighborhood they increase the salience of these pasts as they attract a wider audience to the neighborhood. The arrival of outsiders, whether they be tourists, students or activists, asking around the neighborhood and looking for particular landmarks creates many situations in which neighborhood residents have to decide who in the neighborhood would be most suited for guiding the outsiders. With time, neighborhood dwellers converge on designating the same people as neighborhood guides. As I was doing my research in Cairo and Istanbul, I was regularly directed to or given phone numbers by interviewees of neighborhood guides who would tell me the “complete” or “real” history of the neighborhood. Guides do not become guides by accident, however. They put work into it.
The moment I entered Murat Bey’s hardware shop in Tarlabası, Istanbul, I knew why people had referred me to him. Every fixture in his store, from the decaying wooden ceiling to the green wooden shelves to the archaic balance scale he was still using to measure goods, felt like it came from another era. The most dramatic experience of all was seeing the drawers [Figure 14]. There were at least two hundred old green drawers that looked like they were built into these walls the day the shop was originally built and had been in continuous use ever since. It would have been hard for the most ardently immune to nostalgia not to feel at least an immediate feeling of joy creep up at them at the site of the drawers. Not only was it the perfect aesthetic of old fixtures with just the right amount of discoloration and disrepair a relic enthusiast

Figure 14: Drawers from Murat Bey’s hardware store in Tarlabası, Istanbul. Photo taken by author in June of 2012.
might ever hope for, but more importantly the relics were still in use today in the same way that we could imagine them to have been used a century or more ago. Murat Bey had meticulously worked to produce an aesthetic of the past that primed his guests for the historical narratives he was always ready to deliver. As soon as my research associate Cem Bico and I started snapping photographs of the shop Murat Bey narrated its history. The shop was originally a grocery run by a Greek owner in the early-mid 1900s. The shop was attacked during the anti-minority riots of 6-7 September of 1955 (known as the “events” or olaylar). The Greek owner decided to stay in spite of the events but transformed it into a hardware shop because the construction industry was on the rise at the time. Around ten years later, in the mid-1960s, the owner of the shop decided to sell his assets in Istanbul. It was “kismet” or fate because that’s when Murat Bey, had migrated to Istanbul from Diyarbakır in Eastern Turkey seeking a store of his own. The Greek owner transferred ownership to him 45 years ago, and sure enough, Murat Bey kept all the fixtures in place since.286 As he was narrating the shop’s history, Murat Bey went to great lengths to show us that he was using the shop’s furniture and fixtures in the same way that the previous owner had used them.

As we were settling down to drink our tea Murat Bey went behind his desk to bring his historical map of Istanbul as he prepared to narrate Istanbul’s past. Although I had asked Murat Bey about the neighborhood’s history he started his story with a history of nineteenth century Istanbul that he had clearly narrated many times before. His narration came with evidence from the map he was holding in his hands. After a long discussion with Murat Bey about the neighborhood, where he dwelled on its history but not as much on the transformations the neighborhood was undergoing with the implementation of GAP’s urban rejuvenation project, he pointed us in the direction of two shops where we would meet some of the neighborhood’s oldest

286 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 6-8-2012.
and ‘original’ dwellers. At our first stop, the furniture manufacturing workshop we met Dimitri Bey, who identified himself as a Christian Albanian/Greek, and Anoush Bey, who was of Armenian descent. At our second stop we met Mert Bey, whose wife was of Greek descent, at his car repairs shop.\textsuperscript{287} I later learned through a common acquaintance that Murat Bey himself was of Armenian descent. Murat Bey had guided us towards a very particular narration of the neighborhood’s history.

Murat Bey had long invested in creating a reputation as the neighborhood’s history guide. He invested in maintaining strong relationships with neighboring storeowners. He invested in taking every opportunity to share tidbit narratives of the city’s past with clients and neighborhoods alike. But most importantly he invested in his store’s historical aesthetic. He created an aesthetic that carried with it an expectation of historical knowledge and he exerted every effort to lay claim to that knowledge. Laying that claim to knowledge was not only about bringing more clients to Murat Bey’s store, however. More importantly, it was about gaining the communal prestige coveted by many of Murat Bey’s neighbors. It not only gave the guide a chance to narrate his own depiction of Istanbul’s past to far-reaching audiences, but it also helped the guide cultivate new forms of power and influence in the neighborhood. Knowledge of the city’s past signals that the neighborhood guide is also highly knowledgeable of other everyday matters that could empower the guide during dispute resolution and other moments of negotiation. There were many ways through which the neighborhood guides I encountered had cultivated that status. Some cultivated it through an avid ability to narrate stories from the past in public spaces like the neighborhood coffee shop, others through establishing undisputed seniority in the neighborhood, and others yet through a long commitment to archiving.

\textsuperscript{287} Anonymous, Personal Interview, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 6-8-2012.
mustafa and emre bey had become neighborhood guides in tarlabasi through a very different mode of archiving. as cem, and i, left the bustling commercial street at the bottom of the hill in tarlabasi and headed up the hill, the scene quickly changed. we had entered the neighborhood zone designated for gap’s rejuvenation project. the more we walked up the hill the quieter it got until we reached the evacuation zone. as we saw in the previous chapter all the buildings were empty, some pillaged and some had seen recent fires. when cem and i managed to talk to the few functioning stores on the periphery of the evacuation zone we were repeatedly referred to mustafa bey’s barbershop still functioning right in the middle of the evacuation zone. the atmosphere inside the barbershop contrasted sharply with the dead quiet outside its doors. there were several clients under mustafa and emre bey’s razors as well as a friend on another chair chatting with them casually. what struck me most though were the tens of passport-sized
photos arranged side by side on the mirror fixtures of the shop [Figure 15]. When I asked about the photos Mustafa Bey explained that his father had started collecting photographs when he ran the shop and that he and his business partner Emre Bey had continued the tradition. The pictures included extended family members, his father’s friends and clients, as well as their own friends. One of the pictures was of a researcher who had been living in Tarlabası for many years now and came to the barbershop often. They had been working as barbers in this shop and collecting photos for 28 years.\(^{288}\) As Mustafa and Emre Bey explained to us who’s who on the wall of photos and how people had changed or not changed over the last 20-25 years, Cem could not help but exclaim, “Müze gibi ya!” translatable to “Wow! It’s like a museum!”

Mustafa and Emre Bey had long invested in archiving headshots and documenting their community. There is no doubt that commitment helped them establish special status, especially amongst a migrant community. Tarlabası had acted, especially since the 1980s, as the first landing zone for many new migrants into Istanbul, and especially Kurdish migrants coming from Eastern provinces, and more recently a population of migrants from Africa. Although for many Tarlabası becomes their permanent home in Istanbul, there is relatively more turnover in Tarlabası than in other neighborhoods in Istanbul’s city center. The photographs kept track of that movement. It also established their barber shop as an anchoring “anthropological place” in the neighborhood to which friends returned regularly even after moving to other neighborhoods.

The significance of the mirror fixtures and tangible materiality of the headshots took on a very different significance however when Tarlabası became designated an urban rejuvenation zone. GAP’s project was founded upon the idea that Tarlabası would be transformed from its current decline to a luxurious neighborhood that attracts a new upper middle class residential clientele. It planned to disperse its current population, and did so effectively with the forced

\(^{288}\) Anonymous, Personal Interview, Tarlabası, Istanbul, 6-11-2012.
evacuations of 2011, whilst restoring and re-using it’s the historical aesthetic of the building façades. The mirror fixtures stood however as a thorn to such an understanding of history. Their materiality put a different face, or shall we say faces, on what Tarlabası represented and for whom. They became a sudden treasure to both community members seeking refuge in the tumult of transition but more emphatically to urban activists coming from outside working to save a community they had never known. The barbershop became the main stop for such activism. It was no wonder that we, as researchers of that transformation project, were referred here. An urban rejuvenation project committed to preservation of building façades as the only valuable history worthy of preservation in Tarlabası came together with the materiality of the headshots to assemble an urban battleground around the meaning of “history” in Tarlabası. Such contestation juxtaposed a social and anthropological conception of history to that of the physical historical relic in ways very similar to the juxtaposition evoked by the Güneşli family’s plastering over the murals.

As it created this contestation around history the materiality of the headshots also brought the barbershop owners unprecedented social capital and communal power. They not only became the protectors of a social universe of a population that was suddenly scattered around Istanbul, they also became the main mediators between the community and outsiders. They controlled the message outsiders heard about the neighborhood and its community and they controlled access to the faces on the mirror of the people who had forced to evacuate it. They were framing how that history was to be remembered and who would get access to it and for what causes and to who’s benefit it would be mobilized. They became especially powerful during the months after the evacuations when all residents had left but they had remained open in spite of their building owners’ termination of their lease. Mustafa and Emre Bey’s lifetime commitment to archiving
people had suddenly through the contingent advent of GAP to their neighborhood, assembled for them unprecedented power within their now scattered community.

**Guiding Outsiders:**

Archiving wasn’t the only gateway to the coveted status of neighborhood “guide,” however. Some neighborhood dwellers sought after that status through actively working to establish themselves as the best interlocutors with the new influx of outsiders visiting the restored historical architecture of the neighborhood. They didn’t just depend on referrals they also sought after the outsiders themselves. Naji Bey approached us as we stood staring at the gates of an old church in Fener, Istanbul and led us inside, giving us a guided tour of the church and its history. Within the guided tour he added several anecdotes about the neighborhood at large to demonstrate his expansive knowledge. More significantly, during the tour Naji Bey worked to demonstrate his multi-lingual talents. He switched to English several times during his narration and even inserted a few Arabic words into the conversation once he found out I also spoke Arabic. Although our conversation was much smoother when we conversed in Turkish, he was keen to demonstrate his knowledge of other languages to me. At the end of the tour he gave me his card and urged me to call him to arrange a larger tour with my friends, and made it a point to reassure me he would be the best fit to do the tour in Fener since he would be able to communicate with my non-Turkish speaking friends and family. Finally, as we were leaving, Naji Bey solicited money for the tour that went into what looked like an official box full of cash contributions that he claimed was used for the church’s upkeep rather than his own personal gain.  

289 Where the money actually went is beside the point of this argument but what was clear was that we were not the first to be spotted by Naji Bey or given the tour of the church. I

289 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Fener, Istanbul, 5-4-2012.
repeatedly saw Naji Bey sitting outside of the Church spotting passers by during my consequent visits to Fener.

Naji Bey wasn’t seeking out the status of neighborhood guide through archiving the neighborhood’s “past” or even claiming seniority in the neighborhood. He was mobilizing his communication and interpersonal skills. He actively sought outsiders visiting the neighborhood to give them tours and worked hard to demonstrate his multi-lingual skills and best fit for leading such tours in the neighborhood. Aside from the financial gains such tours most likely brought him, they also elevated his communal status. The more he was seen walking around the neighborhood narrating the history of the neighborhood’s buildings and people in languages unintelligible to other neighborhood dwellers, the more he established his unique skills at guiding visiting outsiders. He was marketing himself as the obvious community member to whom outsiders seeking a guide “from the neighborhood” should be referred. Agreement amongst community members that Naji Bey was the best fit referral for guiding outsiders around the neighborhood would not only bring Naji, and similarly self-promoting guides, coveted communal prestige, it would also bestow upon them new communal power. Whoever controls the tours outsiders are making not only dictates the historical narratives outsiders hear but also, and more importantly, the pit stops that outsiders will make during the tour. The neighborhood tour guide asserts where the tour could get the best food and drink, buy the best souvenirs or locally-produced merchandise and enjoy the best entertainment. In other words, the neighborhood guide tour controls outsiders’ access to the neighborhood’s commerce, and gains much power in negotiating where the outsiders should go. The implementation of urban rejuvenation projects meant to multiply the influx of outsider visitors attracted to the
neighborhood’s physical historical aesthetic only multiplies the power self-promoting neighborhood guides such as Naji Bey have in their community.

**Guiding the Architect:**

What I’ve been describing so far is the interaction through which the implementation of historical preservation projects empowers community members who cultivated long durée claims to historical knowledge. I turn now to how historical preservation projects create such neighborhood experts to facilitate the implementation of their projects. There are many ways through which the neighborhood guide is created and here I highlight two. First, the residents of homes that were chosen for rehabilitation as historical homes have the potential of becoming such guides. Can Bey agreed to restore his home through the EU rehabilitation project in Fener, Istanbul quite early on during the first phase of their project. He then became quite engrossed in their project, spending a lot of time with the architects, learning about the history they hoped to restore and the architectural intricacies of the restoration process. With time, Can Bey decided to mobilize his newly acquired knowledge. He thus volunteered to help the EU team enlist more volunteers in the neighborhood willing to renovate their homes, and act as mediator with neighborhood residents. He was going to guide the EU’s architects around the matrix of neighborhood relations and politics in Fener-Balat. Thus, he would appear with the EU team at neighborhood meetings as a member of the community with knowledge of the intricacies of the project and mediate one-on-one negotiations. Can Bey received his greatest endorsement when the EU team chose him as one of three members of the Fener and Balat community with deep roots and intricate knowledge of both its history and the project to be featured in a short documentary film promoting the EU’s project, aired on Turkish television. When I visited Can Bey, the most important element of the visit for him was showing me the entire documentary
film. As we watched, he demonstrated that only important members of the community were featured in the documentary and explained that other community members who spoke on air were recognized community leaders, who had gained importance through extensive property ownership in the neighborhood. Can Bey’s strategy of capitalizing on the opportunity created by the EU’s project to become a neighborhood guide was quite successful as several people referred me to Can Bey as one who had intricate knowledge of both the project and the neighborhood. His role as guide brought him recognition as a community leader as well as power vis à vis the EU’s experts.

Employment was another way through which historical preservation projects created neighborhood guides. Gaber was hired as a foreman to oversee construction work commissioned by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo in the year 2000. Before working with the AKTC he had been a reformed drug dealer for six years working with organizations that facilitate pilgrimage trips to Saudi Arabia. Gaber is a resident of Darb El-Ahmar and inherited the apartment he now owns. As a foreman Gaber had access to many of the inner workings of the AKTC’s project, and as an inhabitant of Darb El-Ahmar was relied upon as a liaison in negotiations between the AKTC and the community. Like Can Bey, Gaber was also guiding the AKTC’s team around the intricacies of neighborhood politics. Over time, Gaber also developed a reputation as an expert of the neighborhood’s history, as he had learned, on the job, about many of the historical treasures and narratives of the neighborhood from the AKTC experts. He also derived status as a leader through his constant importance in Aga Kahn-community negotiations. Moreover, both Aga Khan architects and community members regularly referred interested outsiders to Gaber for tours of the neighborhood and an insider’s

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290 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Fener, Istanbul, 5-17-2012.
perspective on the Aga Khan project. With time, Gaber’s combined access to the role of the negotiator and claimant of historical knowledge transformed Gaber from the position of a mistrusted neighborhood criminal to that of a community leader [for most members of the community].

Such empowerment and creation of neighborhood guides occurs at the expense of other potential and current community leaders, who had gained their status through other means such as property ownership or affiliation to particular families. This, I argue, creates contestation over establishing actual knowledge of the neighborhood and the proliferation of counter-narratives of the neighborhood’s history. In sum, what we see is that the material and symbolic experience of living in neighborhoods undergoing restoration of their historical aesthetic produces diverse avenues for the empowerment of neighborhood dwellers to reassemble communal hierarchies and nodes of power in ways only possible in the “historical” neighborhood.

**Rumors as Everyday Tactic:**

Finally, I would like to dedicate the last segment of this chapter to a discussion of rumors circulated about historical preservation projects as a prevalent mode of resistance to these projects. Three of the six projects I study in the dissertation were met with strong rumor campaigns that effectively stalled their project in one way or another. I argue that the material and narrative experience of living in a historical neighborhood creates particularly empowered rumors.

In Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, I was initially surprised by how receptive members of the community were to the urban rehabilitation project that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture was funding and implementing in the neighborhood. The positive enthusiasm with which the project was received by the community’s women and men suddenly came to a halt when I started talking

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291 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-22-2011.
to male youths ages within the rough age range of 20-40 years old, who were either born, raised and/or working in Darb El-Ahmar. They all shared the same suspicion of the Aga Khan Foundation: they were stealing national treasures buried under their neighborhood.

I was first confronted with this theory by Samir, who lives in a building that was renovated by the AKTC. After I visited with the different families in the building to learn about the renovations, Samir led me to their shared and newly renovated roof. There, out of earshot from family members, he shared with me what he thought was the true nature of the AKTC’s project. Samir insisted that the AKTC was not in the neighborhood to selflessly develop it. Rather they were there out of “masslaḥah” or self-interest. According to Samir, the AKTC was actually in the neighborhood to steal the antiquities in the neighborhood beneath people’s homes. He had personally seen from his roof (and he pointed to the exact spot) workers digging into the ground at 2:30am to produce boxes from the ground surrounding the Ayubid Wall. [This is a historic wall that the Aga Khan Foundation unearthed and restored while building the Azhar Park.] He then narrated that he saw bullet-proof (mosafaḥah) trucks pull up to take the boxes at around 3am that night. He was sure that if any of these antiquities were being recovered above board, the transport of the boxes would have occurred in daylight. Finally, Samir argued that the Aga Khan Foundation was so bent on stealing treasures that they would kill for them. He then recounted the story of his friend Anwar’s death. Anwar had worked for the Aga Khan Foundation in the Azhar Park. One day Anwar told Samir that he had found a statue that he described as small [and he gestured to around eight inches of height], made of gold and of Pharoanic origins. Anwar told him that he was going to report the statue to the authorities the next day. Samir relates that Anwar was found dead the next day, and that the AKTC claimed that he had died from an accident with exposed electrical wires. Samir, however, argued that the truth
of the matter is that the Aga Khan Foundation killed Anwar because he wanted to report the
discovery to the authorities and they wanted to steal it instead.292 At a later interview during my
fieldwork, Dr. Ashraf Botrous related the story of a young man from the neighborhood who had
decided to work with the Aga Khan Foundation and was later tragically found dead in a garden
near Cairo’s Citadel. According to Dr. Ashraf the police then reported the death as a suicide. Dr.
Ashraf’s opinion, and he emphasized it is not a scientific opinion but rather his own
observations, is that the young man’s suicide was a product of his confusion after working with
the AKTC for a few years. The young man was somewhat conservative and according to Dr.
Ashraf his sudden exposure to different worldviews and experiences that he could not reconcile
with his background may have eventually led him to have a psychological break and commit
suicide.293 It is most likely that Samir’s friend Anwar is the same young man that Dr. Ashraf
referred to. The contested narratives surrounding the young man’s death are at the heart of what
this section interrogates. For Dr. Ashraf, the tragic suicide is part and parcel of the effects of a
developmental project seeking to achieve both urban rehabilitation and communal development.
He argues that, “this is one aspect of developing society, that you open people up to ideas that
are not their own, and then it ended up that one day we found [the young man] dead in a park
near the Citadel.”294 To Dr. Ashraf the suicide is a symptom of the psychological tensions of
intense developmental projects in underdeveloped and under exposed communities. Samir, on
the other hand, links Anwar’s death to a larger narrative of corruption and criminality of the Aga
Khan Foundation. I argue that living in a historical neighborhood gives Samir a particular kind of
resource through the physicality of the historical treasures and antiquities for challenging the
Aga Khan Foundation.

292 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-5-2011.
293 Dr. Ashraf Botrous, Personal Interview, Smart Village, Giza, Egypt, 12-20-2011.
294 Ibid.
Samir was not alone in propagating the theory that the Aga Khan Foundation was stealing treasures. On a completely different occasion, four young men in their twenties and thirties expressed the same opinions as I interviewed them while they worked in a furniture workshop in Darb El-Ahmar. Before expressing their treasures theory however two of the young men, Ramy and Waleed, described the ways in which their personal interactions with the AKTC led them to mistrust the organization. Ramy and Waleed, now in their early twenties, were born and raised in Darb El-Ahmar. They were young teenagers when the project first arrived in the neighborhood with the turn of the millennium. As discussed in chapter one, Ramy and Waleed joined many fieldtrips that the AKTC’s social program arranged for children from Darb El-Ahmar when they were young teenagers. They went to museums, the amusement park called Gero Land, and finally went on a four-day field trip that included accommodation and food to Alexandria, Egypt. Waleed and Ramy explained that they had initially enjoyed the fieldtrips until they saw their pictures in the AKTC’s brochures and in their headquarter offices. Waleed expressed with indignation that, “we later learned that they took pictures of us and put the pictures up on their office walls and brochures…as if we were street children (‘Eyal tassawol) and the Aga Khan was feeding us, whereas we are educated and working.” They were indignant at how the AKTC was representing them. Ramy then explained that the AKTC was not really interested in the well-being of the community. In fact, they only restored homes “because they wanted to beautify the Azhar Park’s façade” or interface with the neighborhood. Ramy explained that if they really cared about the families, “they would have reconstructed the homes with sturdy structures rather than leaving them without structures and needing constant maintenance. What they really care about is the park’s façade.” Ultimately, Waleed interjected that “only the people near the park benefited, and many people in Darb El-Ahmar in other alleys such as Harret El Roum and many
others didn’t benefit because the housing reconstruction was only done on the interface with the park because when the tourists exit the park, they will only see houses on the path from Bab El Wazeer to the Hospital (at the exit from Darb El-Ahmar).”

Ultimately, the conversation between the young men showed that they all to some degree or another mistrusted that the Aga Khan Foundation’s project was really ultimately designed for the neighborhood’s own good. The young men’s mistrust however was a direct product of the political logics that the AKTC deployed and resulted in variegated visual hierarchies and a particular presentation of neighborhood’s children to the outside world. The young men’s contestation of the project was rooted in the specific logics of the project and not a vague mistrust of foreigners or struggle against neighborhood “commodification.” Ramy finally brought this self-interest in concrete form when he interjected that “we have all seen with our own eyes [and Waleed nodded] the Aga Khan digging out the treasures and we saw planes come and lift the antiquities out of the neighborhood.”

Like Samir, the young men in the furniture workshop believed that the Aga Khan Foundation was stealing their neighborhood’s treasures.

Finally, Amin and Tarek who worked in a shoemaking workshop in Darb El-Ahmar shared the same theory about the Aga Khan Foundation’s interest in the neighborhood. Amin in particular, also in his early twenties, argued that the Aga Khan chose to work in Darb El-Ahmar because they knew of the treasures underneath. He then described the treasures in detail. Amin argued that “if you dig you’ll find gold. There was a well in the courtyard of one of the mosques where we used to play as children. If you dug under that well, you’d find gold…Darb El-Ahmar has tunnels (saradeeb) that could connect you to other gates [of the old city]…The Aga Khan has unearthed a lot of antiquities from under the park, and they have another park in Aswan. They

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295 Ramy and Waleed here express their indignation at the unevenness of the Aga Khan Foundation’s project that I discussed in chapter two in relation to their focus on the visibility of their achievements to outsiders.

296 Anonymous, Personal Group Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-8-2011.
are doing all this to find antiquities.” Amin then compared the Aga Khan Foundation’s project to that of Gamal Mubarak’s (the son of the recently deposed Hosni Mubarak). Amin narrated that Gamal Mubarak had bought the whole of Upper Egypt looking for treasures but didn’t find anything satisfactory. Like Gamal Mubarak, the Aga Khan won’t be very successful in Darb El-Ahmar because according to Amin the treasures are enchanted. In particular, Amin explained that under his grandmother’s home, where he lives, there is gold, “the home brings blessings to those who enter it but hurts those who try to dig.”

Living in a historical neighborhood where building such a narrative framework about the existence of gold (whether based on facts or not) is much more plausible than in other neighborhoods in the city provided Amin, Samir, Ramy and others with the resources necessary to create a substantive challenge to the AKTC’s project. The theory and circulating rumors that the Aga Khan Foundation is stealing the neighborhood’s gold and treasures is much more plausible in a neighborhood that sits in the core of Fatimid Cairo with easy access to the Cairo Citadel. The materiality of the historical neighborhood mattered.

This is certainly not the first work to study the importance of circulating rumors as a source of power at moments of conflict. James Scott (1990) argued that rumors are one of the main “hidden transcripts” through which the “the weak” are empowered in asymmetrical contestations such as that between the AKTC and discontented members of the Darb El-Ahmar community. Through the analysis of the substance of the rumors I just described I build upon such literature to interrogate how rumors become assembled through human-non-human interactions and especially the importance of the materiality of one’s environment in empowering the rumors. It is very likely that disgruntled members of any neighborhood will formulate rumors to contest the implementers of an urban rejuvenation project in their neighborhood. I argue here however that not all rumors are created equal. I argue that

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297 Anonymous, Personal Group Interview, Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo, 12-12-2011.
specificities of Darb El-Ahmar as a neighborhood located in the core of the old city dating back to Fatimid Cairo and within an area that has a long archeological history of unearthing antiquities provide the young men with the resources necessary to create powerful and plausible rumors that resonate not only with residents of Darb El-Ahmar but with Egyptians at large steeped in struggles over national-level corruption.

Rumors in Comparative Perspective:

Even though the material experience of living in historical neighborhoods provides its residents with unique resources for cultivating resistance to urban rejuvenation through rumors, the resources that build these rumors differ dramatically from one historical neighborhood to the next. Through comparing the rumors circulated in the three neighborhoods, I show here that the choice of potential rumors is shaped by how material experience of a specific neighborhood interacts with societal cleavages and political-economic struggles the community experiences.

Unlike the rumors circulating in Darb El-Ahmar about the AKTC, rumors that circulated in defiance of the EU in Fener-Balat did not reference the organization’s corruption in any way. Rather the EU was here to bring back the Greeks to Fener-Balat. As I wrapped and stuffed grape leaves with the same group of women we encountered in chapter two, Emine Hanım asserted that the EU project was not to be trusted because they were restoring homes so as to return them to the Greek populations that used to live in the neighborhood [before the 1955 anti-minority riots]. Moreover, she argued that the EU project was in collaboration with the Patrikhane or Patriarchate [the Greek Orthodox Patriarchal Church has been located in Fener since 1601] to turn Fener and Balat into an isolated Christian stronghold in the middle of Istanbul in the same fashion as the Vatican. Özlem Hanım was in agreement nodding as she heard Emine’s warnings. Melek Hanım vehemently retorted that this allegation was not even logical. She explained that
the EU project was actually so keen on ensuring that the current residents of the homes continue to reside in their homes after the restorations that they have the residents and especially owners sign a contract that ensures that they would not sell the home in the five years following the restorations. Melek Hanım thus declared that the EU project could not possibly be working to bring back the Greeks or Armenians if it did not allow owners to sell their homes for five years after restoration. To that Emine Hanım responded that this was a long-term project meant to attract the Greeks back to a rejuvenated Fener in the next decade or so. In short, Emine and Özlem Hanım were both convinced of the circulating allegations that the EU project was plotting a Greek resurgence in the neighborhood. This rumor was quite widespread in Fener and Balat and unlike the treasures rumors in Darb El-Ahmar was articulated by community members across gender and class groups.

Even those who did not believe the rumors about the EU project itself referenced the rumors as one of the main obstacles faced by the EU project in the neighborhood. Kerem Güneşli Bey, whom we encountered in this chapter’s introductory anecdote, and his friend Tuna Bey explained to me that it was very difficult for them, as community leaders, to convince other residents to volunteer to restore their homes with the EU. Tuna Bey exclaimed, “We could not convince these people (from the community). Everybody maintained that the project would take your homes from your hands [evlerinizi elinizden alacaklar].” They then explained that the rumor circulating posited that the contract being signed with the EU was actually a contract to take a mortgage on the home and that the EU would use the mortgages to then take the homes. This rumor was bolstered by the fact that the EU was restoring the homes at no cost to the residents, and so the residents argued that it was through these mortgage arrangements that the Project was getting its funds. Both of the gentlemen resorted to their lawyers to investigate the

298 Anonymous, Personal Group Interview, Fener, Istanbul, 6-14-2012.
allegations and found them to be false and that the contracts did not involve any mortgages. Then both Tuna Bey and Kerem Bey restored the outsides of their homes with the EU. Kerem Bey did, however, argue earlier in the interview that the Patriarchate was in fact working to create a stronghold and bring back its congregation to Fener, just not through the EU. Kerem Bey explained that “it was the Patriarchate in particular that started [the buying of houses in Fener and Balat]. [Unknown buyers] would say, you want 10 lira then we will give you 20 for the house but they would not tell you for whom they were buying it.” Thus, Kerem Bey as many other people I met in the neighborhood believed that the Patriarchate had become emboldened in the past 15 years or so and was actively hoping to resettle the neighborhood with Greek Orthodox members of the Church. Kerem and Tuna however disconnected that theory from the EU’s Project to restore residential homes. Others in the neighborhood like Emine and Özlem Hanım did not make that distinction.

Nurcan Atalan, one of the members of the EU team who worked on the social aspects of the project, found that the rumors were a real obstacle to the project. She explained that the rumors were an obstacle to getting people to sign with the project for their home restorations and that the team dedicated many hours to group and one-on-one meetings to build trust and dispel the rumors “because [neighborhood residents] were actually afraid that they would lose their houses.” More frustrating was the fact that many people would withdraw from the project after having initially agreed to restore their homes with the EU. According to Nurcan, the most poignant force behind these withdrawals was that “they heard from their neighbor or they heard from a real-estate speculator that we [the EU team] would buy their house and give it to the Patrikhane.” Regardless of whether these rumors were circulated by community members

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300 Nurcan Atalan, Personal Interview, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, 7-5-2012.
marginalized by the project, community leaders actually in fear of a resurgence of the Patrikhane or real-estate speculators hoping to buy the properties before residents signed with the EU, the fact of the matter is that these rumors were quite powerful and stood as a real obstacle to the realization of the EU’s urban rehabilitation project in the neighborhood. As with the treasures rumor in Darb El-Ahmar, the rumors linking the EU project to a revival of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Fener, Istanbul was empowered by how plausible these rumors were given their material experience of the neighborhood. Many of today’s residents know that their buildings were previously owned by Greeks, and many are people who bought, or somehow attained, their building directly from a Greek owner. The rumor gains further potency from being linked to a larger national narrative of identity-based struggle to which all Turks can connect. In short, both the specific materiality of the historical neighborhood and the narratives that connect it to larger national struggles provide Fener’s residents with a strong rumor resonant beyond the boundaries of their neighborhood to resist the EU’s intervention.

The rumors that circulated in Wust El-Balad or Downtown Cairo were similarly geared towards an identity-based struggle. The Ismailia Consortium was rumored to be a Zionist organization. When the Ismailia Consortium started buying up buildings in Downtown Cairo in order to implement its rejuvenation project, it started its buying campaign under a cloak of general secrecy. They approached each building owner as individual buyers without revealing the extent to which they hoped to be buying buildings in the area or the holistic revitalization project they had planned for Downtown. Once they bought any building they entered into negotiations with building tenants to either buy them out or renegotiate their lease. Some renters hoped to benefit from having new owners in changing the terms of their lease. According to Karim Shafei, the CEO of the Ismailia Consortium, the owners of Café Riche, a café with a long
history in Downtown and a continuing favorite amongst Cairo’s intellectuals, hoped to improve their lease terms in ways that the Consortium would not agree to. They quickly reached an impasse. The owners of Café Riche then investigated the Consortium and realized the extent of their buying campaign in Downtown. They then decided to reveal the magnitude of the project to a wider public, but realized that they knew little about the project. Karim then postulated that the café’s owners decided that the best way to extract information was through the circulation of rumors that would lure Ismailia into a public debate.\textsuperscript{301} In a fashion similar to the residents of Fener-Balat, rumors circulated that that the Ismailia Consortium received funding from Zionist organizations aiming to bring a Jewish population back to Downtown Cairo. Mahmoud, the neighborhood tailor, explained to me that the Consortium was acting like the Jewish National Fund had done in Palestine in the 1920s and 30s to buy land from absentee landlords in Palestine and populate the land with Jewish populations. In fact, he pointed to several buildings within view and named Jewish residents who had lived there in the 1940s and 50s, before the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis and Tripartite Aggression that led to massive exodus of Egypt’s Jewish population. He was sure the Consortium was hoping to bring them back.\textsuperscript{302} Within weeks of the circulation of the rumors in media outlets, the CEO of Ismailia Consortium, Karim Shafei, appeared on national television and conducted interviews with the largest newspapers in the country to explain the Ismailia Consortium plans for Downtown Cairo, and attempted to dispel any myths about their alleged Zionist connections. Within weeks the rumors had hurt the Ismailia Consortium, where it mattered most, in their profit margins. Knowing how large the Ismailia Consortium’s operation was and how much it depended on buying out clusters of adjacent buildings, asking prices from building owners immediately skyrocketed. In spite of the

\textsuperscript{301} Karim Shafei, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 7-31-2011.
\textsuperscript{302} Anonymous, Personal Interview, Downtown Cairo, 1-6-2012.
Consortium’s counter-campaign, the rumors remain potent in Downtown where several residents, like Mahmoud, shared with me their weariness of the Consortium’s Zionist connection. The rumors also remained potent outside the immediate environs of Downtown. A prominent conservationist, once told me, off the record, that she had to actively distance herself from the Consortium’s project, although she knew them and trusted them personally, because she wanted to make sure that her work wouldn’t get tainted by similar rumors of a Zionist connection. The Arab-Israeli conflict is a topic that has enough resonance in Egyptian discourse so that allegations of Zionist linkages do in some cases pose actual threats to the credibility of public figures. Yet, as we saw with the Darb El-Ahmar rumors the Zionist linkage isn’t always the trope evoked for such resistance tactics. It was the specific material experience of living in Downtown where people still knew where some Egyptian Jews used to live in the neighborhood that gave this rumor potency against the Ismailia Consortium. It would not have been as resonant for Darb El-Ahmar residents, nor would it have been effectively potent in a neighborhood inhabited mostly by the city’s Muslim populations for centuries.

Given how powerful the corruption-based and identity-based rumors what explains why the former was mobilized in Darb El-Ahmar while the latter was mobilized in Fener and Wust El-Balad? This is a particularly striking question given the obvious identity-based struggle that the community of Darb El-Ahmar’s residents could have mobilized: the threat of a Shi’ite resurgence. As mentioned above, the Aga Khan is royalty to an Isma‘ili group of the Shi’ite sect of Islam. A large proportion of the Aga Khan Foundation’s financial resources come from the Aga Khan royal family. Most Egyptian Muslims are Sunni Muslims who consider Shi’ite Muslims to be heretics. The Fatimid dynasty, whose monuments are prevalent in Darb El-Ahmar was a Shi’ite dynasty. Many of the monuments restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture are of

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303 Anonymous, Personal Interview, Giza, Egypt, 10-26-2011.
Fatimid heritage. If we put these facts together it would not be difficult to circulate rumors and base the challenge of the Aga Khan Foundation’s project on the identity they represent. It would have been very plausible for the young men to circulate rumors that the Aga Khan Foundation was not in Darb El-Ahmar to provide the neighborhood with developmental assistance but rather the foundation’s project is part of a larger project to glorify Shi’ite history in Egypt and fund a Shi’ite resurgence. Interestingly however of all the Darb El-Ahmar community members I had a chance to meet and interview (around forty in total), only two mentioned the Aga Khan’s faith at all and they did not do so negatively let alone accuse the Aga Khan Foundation of plotting a Shi’ite resurgence in Egypt. All the negative rumors I encountered were related to allegations of corruption and especially of stealing national treasures rather than plausible identity-based struggles as were circulated in Fener-Balat or Downtown Cairo.

The variation we see between the rumors circulating in the three neighborhoods can be traced to the ways in which the material everyday lived experience of the neighborhood interacts with larger societal cleavages and struggles. In Fener-Balat the present material experience of living in Greek homes that were once owned by Greek owners that many of the neighborhood residents can still identify by name today is similar to Wust El-Balad’s inhabitants’ relation to former Jewish residents but quite different from alluding to an illusive and distant experience of Fatimid Shi’ism as experienced by Darb El-Ahmar’s residents. More importantly, the material experience of searching for gold and treasures and underground connections to the Citadel as children connects powerfully with a pressing struggle residents of Darb El-Ahmar feel they are waging against corruption on a daily basis. Corruption is far more salient for Darb-Al-Ahmar residents than fighting the revival of Shi’ism. On the other hand the material experience of

304 It is of note that at almost all talks I’ve delivered regarding the Aga Khan Foundation’s project in scholarly circles, I’ve been asked about the possibility of a linkage between the rehabilitation project and a Shi’ite project.
knowing where Jewish residents used to live interacts strongly with the nationally resonant Arab-Israeli conflict to empower the rumors circulated by Wust El-Balad’s community. Similarly, in Fener Istanbul the experience of knowing former Greek residents and being the current seat of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate resonates with strong ethnic and religious cleavages in Turkey, and the violence of the nationalist project engineered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s at the inception of the Republic of Turkey. Hence, although there are a menu of plausible societal cleavages and salient issues that rumors may resonate with, the material experience of living in the neighborhood shapes the ways in which people relate to these larger national struggles and eventually different rumors are assembled in three neighborhoods. Such comparative analysis allows us to unmask the ways in which contingent human-non-human assemblages shape power struggles while heading Brenner et al.’s (2011) critique that “the descriptive focus associated with ontological variants of assemblage urbanism leaves unaddressed important explanatory questions regarding the broader (global, national and regional) structural contexts within which actants are situated and operate—including formations of capital accumulation and investment/disinvestment; historically entrenched, large-scale configurations of uneven spatial development, territorial polarization and geopolitical hegemony” \(^{305}\), and more emphatically that, “the social relations, institutions, structural constraints, spatiotemporal dynamics, conflicts, contradictions and crisis tendencies of capitalism do not vanish simply because we stop referring to them explicitly.” \(^{306}\) Careful tracing of assemblages within a comparative framework does provide a modality through which we can unmask the role of structural coherences as suggested by Brenner et al. (2011) whilst paying attention to the intricate contingencies that assemble everyday tactics of urban resistance. Today,

\(^{305}\) Brenner et al. (2011), 233.
\(^{306}\) Brenner et al. (2011), 230.
I mobilized this comparative approach to reveal the assemblages that came together to produce rumors that stalled three powerful and well-funded historical preservation projects in Cairo and Istanbul and in turn reassembled global heritage.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this chapter was dedicated to unmasking the variety of ways through which urban dwellers contest, reappropriate and subvert historical preservation projects to empower their visions for the city. In particular, the chapter demonstrated the ways in which the material and spatial experience of living in “historical” neighborhoods shaped the everyday tactics urban dwellers mobilized to capitalize upon and resist urban rejuvenation projects. Most importantly it traced the importance of that materiality to the assemblages that come to shape everyday tactics and the production of new nodes of power and communal hierarchies in rejuvenated neighborhoods. It worked to establish a clear linkage between urban dwellers’ material experience of their neighborhoods and the everyday tactics they mobilize to capitalize upon and resist urban rejuvenation projects. In addition, as they intervened to transform the city, urban practitioners also actively memorialized some local, national and global histories over others. We saw them repeatedly invoke such historical fragments in their struggle to establish “place” in the city, gain communal status or renegotiate a rental agreement rather than with any interest to create the ethnic or religious strife so many scholars of the Middle East focus on in their study of memory in the region. They reminded us of how entangled the memorialization of history is in the everyday practices of living the city and the struggle over the political logics underlying the transformation of that lived city.
Conclusion

“Our purpose was that you learn to coordinate with your neighbors. So, for example when we installed water pumps we would find that, in a building with six residents, each of the residents wants to install their own water pump. We would refuse such requests because if they can’t resolve issues around using a water pump or water pipes, then there is no sense in them restoring the house altogether. In other words, they have to talk to each other.”

_Kareem Ibrahim, architect formerly with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Cairo

As the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s (AKTC) team installed new water pumps and pipes funded through AKTC grants, their main concern was the design of the water pump they were installing. The potential of the pump to perform political work and mold a more collaborative community was just as important, if not more so, as the numbers of low-income families granted new water and sewage systems that they tallied for their donor reports or the characteristics and identities of the people who benefitted from the Aga Khan Foundation’s grants. In other words, the AKTC did not simply see the water pump as a redistributive public good. Rather, they funded and installed new water pumps in Darb El-Ahmar’s private residences because they believed that a carefully designed water pump would perform the political work of producing a collaborative community.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture was not the only organization investing millions of dollars with the belief that careful redesign of the urban built environment could be mobilized as a powerful political tool. Throughout the dissertation we saw a sample of six international organizations, private corporations and state agencies craft and implement the redesign of the
urban built environment in Istanbul and Cairo in order to produce very specific and deliberate political outcomes. In Downtown Cairo we saw the entrepreneurial Ismailia Consortium place restrictions that would bar high-paying tenants from renting space within the parameters of their rejuvenation project because they were not seen as producing the commercial and cultural activity that would cultivate the specific cosmopolitan Egyptian nation the Consortium was working to revive. We saw the private corporation GAP İnşaat also place restrictions on the characteristics of individuals and businesses that would be able to own or rent property within their project parameters in Tarlabası, Istanbul but with the intent of producing a very different political outcome. For GAP such restrictions would keep many groups including workshop owners, transvestite populations and hair wig galleries out of Tarlabası and cultivate the exclusive differentiated community of upper middle class professional Turks and transient global audiences that would fit into the Turkish state’s project to create a city with differentiated neighborhood communities designed to manage the multiple and paradoxical audiences attracted to a globalizing Istanbul.

Political agendas also shaped a different architectural design feature. In Gamaliyyah, Cairo the state agency Historical Cairo Organization decided to harmonize all façades on El-Mu’ez Street to produce the same historical aesthetic on the totality of the street at the expense of historical accuracy and private owners’ control of their building exteriors. They adorned the facades of concrete buildings built in the 1960s with traditional wooden latticework or mashrabiyya to produce the totalized historical image they believed would generate international prestige and revenue for state coffers through attracting tourism and foreign direct investment. The AKTC and EU made the exact opposite design decision and only restored private buildings where owners and residents consented and volunteered their homes for the restorations. They
decided to forego both the power of a totalized historical image and, more importantly to them, the opportunity to restore centuries-old buildings to their original architectural aesthetic for the sake of their political goal to cultivate an initiative-taking self-governing community that was ensured to directly benefit from historical preservation. The EU went as far as only restoring historical buildings whose owners would agree to sign away their rights to sell or rent their property as they pleased for a period of five years to ensure that existent residential communities remained to live amongst and benefit from their restored historical buildings.

Time and again we saw the sponsors of urban rejuvenation resolve scientific and technical questions about the proper architectural design and planning of buildings, spaces and infrastructure according to evidently political logics. More precisely, rejuvenation sponsors saw that the science of urban planning was about matching and crafting the perfect urban design for producing a specified political outcome. There was no such thing as a purely scientific urban plan. Urban redesign was an inherently political tool that could be variously manipulated to produce different political outcomes. They invested their millions in order to manipulate the city’s built environment into the design that would best produce the political outcomes they aspired to.

Illuminating the ways in which urban redesign is being mobilized as a political tool, this dissertation challenges the almost universal treatment within the discipline of political science of the investment in rejuvenating and servicing urban infrastructures and spaces as one form or another of distributive politics. It challenges us to think of the investment in water and sewage systems, restoration of private and public buildings, re-routing traffic patterns, construction and deployment of urban security apparatuses not just as the provision of urban ‘public goods’ and services that can be ranked along a continuum of excellent to terrible. Moreover, it pushes us to
think beyond the distributive politics through which one electoral constituency, ethnic grouping, or socio-economic class is getting access to such ‘urban goods’ over another in the form of material resources such as access to clean water or even as symbolic resources such as the memorialization of a particular history over others through selective monument restoration. Rather, I’ve demonstrated that the technical designs of these ‘goods’ are just as crucial to our understanding of the political logics that motivate these investments. Installing new water pumps is not just about access to clean water but the specific design of the water pump that aims to increase communal collaboration is just as crucial, if not more so. The sponsors of rejuvenation believe that careful urban designs are capable of performing political work that includes molding societal behavior, creating new power hierarchies, constructing new ‘imagined communities,’ arbitrating conflict and eradicating crime that goes beyond favoring one group with coveted resources over another. In other words, this dissertation project is pushing us to go beyond asking which territory and groupings receive urban services of varying quality to instead interrogating how these ‘goods’ are being technically designed and deployed to mobilize political outcomes in order to fully appreciate the political logics motivating the transformation and governance of cities.

As the sponsors of urban rejuvenation endowed the redesigned built environment with such expansive political responsibilities, we saw them work to protect their careful designs from human behaviors, nature, and unadulterated markets. In Gamaliyyah, Cairo the state agency HCO installed new water and sewage systems that mapped onto the locations of monuments, not citizens of any group or another, to ensure that high water levels don’t damage the monuments. They also installed security apparatuses that prohibited urban dwellers from praying in these mosques and closed them down in early afternoons before two of the daily prayer times in order
to protect the mosque’s new restorations from the damage that may be caused by urban dwellers praying inside five times a day and opening that space to tourists. In Fener-Balat, Istanbul and Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo the EU and AKTC respectively required building owners and residents receiving home restoration grants to sign contracts that decreed that they would be liable to repay the EU and AKTC the full amount of the grant if the building residents alter the aesthetic of the building interiors or exteriors in any way. In Cairo several agencies including NADIM and the Aga Khan Foundation funded educational programs with the specific aim of teaching residents of Historic Cairo the set of proper behaviors for the treatment of their historical and monumental surroundings. Moreover, commercial activity was repeatedly restricted in historical neighborhoods. In Tarlabası, Istanbul GAP planned to restrict any workshops that produced and stuffed mussels or *midye dolma* from the neighborhood because they brought rats to the neighborhood. In Gamaliyyah, Cairo the HCO closed down and relocated a historical lemon and onion market and carpenter and iron works workshops from the neighborhood because the onion leaves and wood shavings created debris that damaged the stone work on neighboring monuments. Finally, as we saw in chapter three, almost all projects devised mechanisms that would manipulate free market exchange of buildings that would undermine the goals of their project whether through GAP’s restrictive deeds, Ismailia’s rent-only policy or the EU’s contracts ending all market exchange for a period of five years. The sponsors of rejuvenation dedicated extensive resources to protecting their carefully designed buildings from forces or practices that may alter or damage them and the political outcomes they were designed to produce.

As they devised protections that repeatedly disrupted the daily livelihood and violated the rights urban dwellers expected from their state, ranging from property rights to urban
infrastructures, the sponsors of rejuvenation worked to justify these protections as rights that buildings should be entitled to. We saw each of the sponsors hail the political outcomes they hoped to mobilize through urban redesign as outcomes that worked to further the ‘public’s interest’ and entitlements to rights that would ensure the production of these outcomes as by extension in the ‘public’s interest.’ Rejuvenation sponsors not only discursively worked to justify the city’s rights, but more importantly as they committed millions of dollars to implementing these protections and effectively transforming private property regimes, the routes through which urban infrastructures are installed in the city and the curricula of educational programs, they changed the reality of urban livelihood on the ground in favor of new rights for the city’s buildings. They worked to construct new political personhood for the city one street cobblestone, one electricity wire and one legal code at a time that mapped on to their specific political agendas and not the logics of the city as a lived space. Because of the diverse and conflicting set of political agendas motivating the construction of such personhood, the specific set of rights that the city should be entitled to remain fiercely contested within the set of actors funding rejuvenation, let alone the many groups and dwellers who struggle against the campaign to grant the city’s built environment political personhood as violating their own rights and interests. Although the city’s built environment is yet to be entitled to a fully arbitrated set of legal rights and a clearly defined legal persona, this dissertation demonstrates that Istanbul and Cairo are rapidly witnessing a well-funded campaign to construct a new set of rights and political personhood for the city’s built environment motivated by a mobilization of the city as a technology of rule.

The development of such rights for the city’s built environment poses yet another challenge to the scholarship analyzing the political logics behind investing in urban upgrading
and servicing as distributive politics. The dissertation demonstrated that what this scholarship characterizes as urban ‘goods’ or services are being distributed not only to different citizen groupings but also to non-human buildings and spaces. The physical structure of a building (not its inhabitants or patrons) is gaining access to urban services and protections instead of and at the expense of citizens. Importantly, these buildings are not receiving these services because they are seen as providing direct resources to a particular group. Rather, I have demonstrated that these buildings are being privileged with these protections and services because they are seen to perform political work that ultimately advances a particular political project. Although the political logic motivating the distribution of services to the buildings does hope to further a particular set of interests I argue that it does so through viewing the buildings as capable of producing expansive political outcomes rather than inanimate resources being immediately transferred to a particular group. Rejuvenation sponsors’ belief that buildings are productive of political outcomes rather than being simply transferable resources challenges the distributive framework. It pushes us to think of the political logics motivating urban transformation as expansively acting through the logics of molding societal behaviors, constructing new ‘imagined communities’ and producing new nodes of power rather than exclusively through the logics of resource distribution.

Comparing the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool and the construction of political personhood for the urban built environment across Istanbul and Cairo, the dissertation demonstrated that urban redesign was deployed to perform different governmental roles in Cairo and Istanbul. In neo-liberalizing Cairo, where the state had retreated from governing the city, non-state actors and independent state agencies mobilized the urban built environment to perform political work that would replace the ruling technologies once deployed by the now
retrenched state. We saw the Aga Khan Trust for Culture designing an urban built environment expected to produce local autonomous communities to self-govern Darb El-Ahmar neighborhood without reliance on the state and the Ismailia Consortium designing Downtown buildings and alleys that were expected to revive a unified cosmopolitan Egyptian nation they saw necessary for reinvigorating the now defunct nation-state. Urban rejuvenation was repeatedly mobilized to perform political work that would replace the state as a governing organization. Each of the actors saw that their interests would be best served through the empowerment of a different political agenda, however. Hence, the influx of investment in the rejuvenation of Cairene neighborhoods generated a mosaic of urban design and planning visions that produced different governing regimes from one fragmented neighborhood to the next.

In Istanbul on the other hand, the revival of a strong state in the 2000s led to the proliferation of rejuvenation projects after the codification of the “Renewal and Preservation Law” of 2005 that aimed to mobilize urban redesign as a complement to the state’s governing regime rather than replacing it. Although we saw the EU’s pre-2005 aim to design a historical built environment in Fener-Balat that would produce a local autonomous governing community that directly benefited from restorations without resorting to the then retrenched state, the projects in Tarlabası and Sulukule designed congruent projects that complemented the state’s governing regime. In particular we saw the state initiate bids for the renewal of fragmented urban neighborhoods as a means for grappling with the paradoxes of globalization through bypassing democratic municipal institutions. Urban renewal at the fragmenting scale of the neighborhood was expected to produce a new mode of differentiating governance that managed and negotiated the multiple local and outside audiences attracted to a globalizing Istanbul. We saw both the private corporation GAP in Tarlabası and the state agency TOKİ in Sulukule mobilize urban
redesign to foster differentiated communities within the neighborhood bounds of their project parameters that served to entrench the state’s new regime of differentiating governance. In other words, with the revival of a strong state in Istanbul only non-state actors that espoused political agendas congruent to those adopted by the state would gain the authority necessary to transform Istanbul’s neighborhoods. Although globalization as a force incentivizes state and non-state actors to invest in the rejuvenation of urban neighborhoods as a technology of rule, it is only in the context of neo-liberalization and the retrenchment of the state, as in Cairo, that it produces a mosaic of divergent governing regimes mobilizing urban redesign to perform political work that would replace the state at the fragmenting scale of the neighborhood.

Whether in Istanbul or Cairo, however, the dissertation demonstrated that the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool disrupted urban livelihood and “de-socialized” the city’s lived spaces in all six neighborhoods. The relocation of neighborhood residents and businesses in four of the neighborhoods dispossessed entire communities of urban dwellers from their sources of livelihood, networks of sociability and places of belonging in the city as we saw with the sterilization of the once vibrant Beit El Kharazaty rooftop in Darb El-Asfar Alley of Gamaliyyah, Cairo. The expansion of the gaze of outsider visitors seeking restored heritage upwards to the balconies and protruding windows of private residences and deeper into neighborhoods disrupted existent modes of communal sociability and especially women’s livelihood and navigation of the city as I traced in Fener-Balat, Istanbul and Darb El-Ahmar and Gamaliyyah neighborhoods in Cairo. Communal modes of securing their neighborhood were compromised with the removal of the Lemon and Onion Market in Gamaliyyah, Cairo. The privileging of some neighborhood residents as community liaisons to the well-funded rejuvenation projects and the creation of new visual hierarchies between adjacent restored and
unrestored private residents were two of the many ways that the EU and AKTC projects transformed communal hierarchies in Fener-Balat, Istanbul and Darb El-Ahmar, Cairo respectively. The EU’s zeal for restoration threatened a family’s sense of “anthropological place” and stability at home so pressingly that they plastered over centuries’ old murals, burying a historical trace and losing the prestige that comes with displaying such historical murals in one’s home and the opportunity to appreciate its beauty. Whether it was as violent as forced relocation or as seemingly benign as offering private owners access to grants for restoring their historical homes, the techniques mobilized by sponsors of urban rejuvenation to mobilize their political agendas disrupted urban dwellers’ everyday practices of urban livelihood. Such disruption dispossessed urban dwellers in many ways including of sources of livelihood, networks of sociability and political engagement, place and communal identities and established positions of power within their communities.

I argue that such disruptions generated with the implementation of rejuvenation projects in Cairo and Istanbul since the 1990s not only transform but ultimately “de-socialize” the city’s lived spaces. “De-socialization” is a unique byproduct of two main characteristics of the transformation of Istanbul and Cairo in an era of neo-liberalization and globalization. First, in their search for political tools that would replace the state and devise new governing regimes in a globalizing world, the sponsors of rejuvenation mobilized urban redesign as a tool that prioritized the realization of political outcomes over the management of the city as a lived space. They thus crafted plans that restricted urban dwellers’ everyday spatial practices in the lived city, and by extension dispossessed them of important modes of urban livelihood and political engagement. Second, the sponsors of rejuvenation were especially keen to avoid the pitfalls of modernist and socialist urban planning. In particular, they were disillusioned by the socialist
belief in the productivity of societal collectives and their efforts to design cities that would foster such societal collectives. Instead, contemporary planners saw the city’s built environment as a tool that has the potential to shape a far more expansive array of political, economic and cultural outcomes alongside societal engineering. As they expanded the array of outcomes that the built environment was expected to produce, contemporary urban planners de-emphasized the linkage between a built environment and its societal context. As such we saw rejuvenation sponsors repeatedly adjudicate the status of the city’s buildings above that of their inhabitants. In its least dismissive manifestation we saw the AKTC and EU de-center the importance of human dwellers in the governance of their community and linking their fate to the fates of their neighborhood’s productive built environment. The prioritization of the logics of politics over the logics of the lived city combines with the expansion of the role of urban redesign beyond strictly the engineering of societal collectives to ultimately “de-socialize” the city’s lived spaces.

It was in response to such “de-socializing” dispossession that we saw urban dwellers devise a wide array of everyday tactics to resist rejuvenation projects in chapter four. In Istanbul urban resistance eventually coalesced and erupted into countrywide protests against the redevelopment of Gezi Park in central Istanbul in the summer months of 2013. What turned into the largest mass protests and most violent police brutality the country had seen in over a decade had been initiated at the site of an urban redevelopment project. Istanbul’s dwellers had come to realize that the Turkish state was building a new authoritarian regime of differentiating governance that bypassed local electoral institutions with the bricks and mortar of urban rejuvenation. In turn, the Turkish state deployed its most violent repressive apparatuses to protect its prized technology of rule. The politicization of urban redesign and development of political

307 I argue that similar protests revolving around the redevelopment of the city’s built environment are less likely to erupt in Cairo where neo-liberalization has fragmented both the divergent political projects shaping the rejuvenation of its neighborhoods and the resistances to those projects.
personhood for the city’s built environment that mapped onto political agendas rather than the city’s dynamic as a lived space produced violent disruption that raised a set of alarming questions for Istanbul’s dwellers as to the future of both their urban livelihood and parameters of citizenship.

The construction of political personhood for the city’s built environment based on a logic that prioritizes the empowerment of political agendas over the management of the city as a lived space raises a number of pressing questions about citizenship and political voice. How does the construction of rights for the city’s built environment based on a political logic that systematically dispossesses urban dwellers of the spatial practices they see as essential to their daily livelihood and political engagement impact their rights and obligations as citizens? Moreover, as more and more funding is invested towards constructing such political personhood for the city’s built environment, whose voice will represent the city’s buildings within a legal and legislative system based on the language of its human inhabitants and patrons? How will political institutions adjudicate between the many voices vying to represent the city? Will the city itself as a lived space impose its own voice on the processes that will come to shape its political personhood?

The Gezi Park protests represent the beginnings of a long political struggle over adjudicating these questions that will only intensify as the mobilization of urban redesign as a political tool is further entrenched in Istanbul, Cairo and globalizing cities worldwide.

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308 Saskia Sassen (2013) “Does the City Have Speech?” poses a similar question.
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