

The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**THE NEOLIBERAL DREAM OF SEGREGATION
RETHINKING GATED COMMUNITIES IN GREATER CAIRO
A CASE STUDY
AL-REHAB CITY GATED COMMUNITY**

A thesis submitted to

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology & Egyptology

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

by **Safaa Marafi**

under the supervision of **Dr. Mark Westmoreland**

May/2011

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Has been approved by

Thesis Committee Supervisor/Chair Dr. Mark Westmoreland
Affiliation: SAPE, The American University in Cairo

Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner Dr. Mona Abaza
Affiliation : SAPE , The American University in Cairo

Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner Dr. Khamal Fahmi
Affiliation: SAPE, The American University in Cairo

Dept. Chair/Director

Date

Dean

Date

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For further discussions and Inquiries, please contact: safaa [at] aucegypt [dot] edu

Abstract

New suburbs such as New Cairo received strong support from President Mubarak, the government, elite businessmen, and a group of members of the National Democratic Party, who surrounded the president. I argue in this thesis that urban segregation has existed in Cairo for quite some time. However, since the last decade's adaptation of neoliberal policies by the government, the implementations of these policies have sharpened the dichotomy in the urban fabric, which is crystallized in the support given by the Egyptian government to local and foreign construction companies to build gated communities in the suburbs Cairo. Private security systems and various other neoliberal pulling factors have motivated individuals and families to move to gated communities in Greater Cairo. This thesis argues that unlike during the last decade, people now relocate to gated communities for class and safety reasons. However, living in one of these secured and privatized gated communities in the suburbs of Cairo, in this case Al-Rehab City, intensifies the mood of moral panic felt toward 'the other', as found in interviews with my participants. Neoliberal policies have encouraged classed-based urban segregation, leading to polarization in the urban fabric. In addition, the thesis argues that despite the residents' usage of extra security measures to protect their homes within the gated community, the residents' sense of moral panic is not alleviated. By taking the gated Al-Rehab community as a site of symbolic consumption, where people go to symbolically consume other lifestyle and cultures, the thesis demonstrates how the community stimulates the desire and practice of consumptive habits for both its visitors and residents. I also argue that the new markets of commercial activities in this gated community enforce isolation among the residents from the greater city of Cairo. By examining the relationship between political events occurring in Egypt, I argue that the residents are politically detached due to the Egyptian governments' neoliberal policies. During the Egyptian Revolution of 25th of January, some of Al-Rehab's youth however do want to be part of the world outside their gated community.

Key Words: Gated Community Egypt, Urban Segregation, Consumption, Moral Panic, Aesthetic Security, Egyptian Revolution.

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Chapter One: The Neoliberal Dream of Segregation

Introduction

Gated communities rely on security as a major marketing tool for attracting new residents. These enclaves suggest social inequality and urban polarization. Social scientists have studied the phenomenon of gated residential areas in various venues in the world with some reference to their residents' sense of security (Low 2003; Caldeira 2000; Quintal and Thompson 2007), but this important focus has been lacking in regard to Cairo. Egypt, mainly the greater city of Cairo,¹ is witnessing a boom in the construction of gated residential areas. It is therefore important to examine some factors that may lead to urban segregation, and how these factors affect the sense of security of the residents of gated communities.

Taking one of greater Cairo's gated communities as the case study of this thesis is crucial for examining the role of security in the motivations people have for moving to gated communities. In addition, this research scrutinizes the sense of security felt by the residents living in this gated community. In this thesis I explore how local reported crimes affect decision-making to move to those communities. I assess the peoples' sense of safety based on their social view in Cairo,² their sense of being protected by the private security infrastructure, and how they perceive 'the other'. In addition, I study the effect of private protection services on residents' behavior inside their neighborhood. I also present the sense of security felt by residents of the

¹ Greater Cairo consists of five governorates: Cairo, Giza, Qalyubia, Helwan and 6 October. (Sims 2010: 6). On April 2011, the governorate of Helwan and 6 October are merged the former under Governorate of Cairo and the latter under Governorate of Giza. Shorouk News. April 14, 2011. "Numani: No one of the Workers Will be Harmed in the Provinces of Helwan and 6 October." <http://www.shorouknews.com/contentdata.aspx?id=432178>, accessed April 24, 2011. And, Abdulghfar, Alam, and Heba Hossam Eldeen. April 5, 2011. "The Egyptian Cabinet of Ministries is Considering Cancellation of October 6 and the Provinces of Helwan." <http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=384526>, accessed April 24, 2011.

² Cairo City is the capital city of Cairo Governorate. Official Website of Cairo Governorate <http://www.cairo.gov.eg/EnglishPortal/default.aspx>, accessed April 13, 2011.

community which occurred during the ‘6th of April day’ riots in 2010, and then during the Egyptian revolution beginning on January 25, 2011. From studying the latter event, I shed light on the relationship between living in a segregated, suburban residential neighborhood and the political participation of its residents.

This chapter is organized as following: First, I present the research problem which will be addressed in this thesis. Second, I state the research questions, which expand upon the problem introduced earlier. Third, I provide details for the conceptual framework and theoretical standpoints used, and define and operationalize the key concepts which will assist in understanding the complexity of the phenomena considered in this thesis. Fourth, I present the research design and methodology adopted in my fieldwork. Finally, I present the organization of the following chapters of this thesis.

Statement of the Problem



Figure 1: Outdoor advertisement of one of the gated communities in New Cairo

The marketing campaigns of gated communities seek to convince potential buyers that outside of the gates, fences, and walls of these closed venues lies a dangerous world

(Kuppinger:2004). Although the gates, fences, walls, and private security guards are all meant to provide an image of security and are intended to instill a greater sense of safety, it is notable that residents further barricade themselves even within their gated community. There are in fact many villas and some ground-floor apartments in Al-Rehab gated community that have added iron bars on their windows and balconies. In addition, numerous residents have replaced their wooden gates—provided by the company—with stronger, and more stylish, iron ones. Indeed, Eric Denis tells us that the premise of security in the marketing of gated communities in greater Cairo is fragile and superficial, compared to closed residential areas in places like Latin America, for example (2006:64). This demonstrates that there is significance behind the phenomena of security and marketing taking place in Cairo which deserves a closer look.

If the residents install stronger bars for added protection, then they are active agents in their protection. This action by the residents challenges the premise of provided safety and security as publicized by the real estate agents of the gated communities. In this case, the contradiction may reveal a lack of confidence in the standard of security provided in Al-Rehab, or a heightened state of paranoia—or their paranoia may lead the residents to feel that the security is not enough. Therefore, I believe it is vital to investigate the choices people make to protect their homes from perceived threats within Al-Rehab. It is important to learn what the residents perceive as threats within Al-Rehab, as a perception of threat from within, rather from without, undermines the idea behind segregation, that is, the implied security that is supposed to come from segregation, according to neoliberal segregation.

Research Questions

In my thesis, I investigate the fear of crime and violence in relationship to the residents' decisions to move to gated communities. I also examine the relationship between this class residential segregation, which is reinforced by neoliberal segregation, and the sense of security felt by living in these closed venues. In addition, I explore how Al-Rehab City can be seen as a site of symbolic consumption by its residents and outsiders. Moreover, I study the relationship between its residents' sense of security and the political events that were associated with riots occurring in the city of Cairo. Furthermore, I investigate the relationship between increased reporting by local media of topics concerning moral panic and fear of crime, and the sense of safety felt by the residents within their gated communities. The central questions that I answer are:

1. How does fear of crime determine peoples' decisions to move to Al-Rehab gated community?
2. In what way(s) does the reporting of local crime and violence by the Egyptian mass media affect peoples' decision to move to Al-Rehab gated community?
3. In what way(s) does this localized fear relate to the sense of insecurity felt among Egyptian society at large with specific reference to moral panic (the exaggerated fear felt by the rich toward the poor—the 'other', such as those who inhabit Cairo's slums, and who are criminalized by the media.)?
4. Does moving to Al-Rehab gated community help alleviate these anxieties?
5. In what way does Al-Rehab serve as a place of symbolic consumption for its residents and visitors/outsideers?

6. In what way(s) does the political events in Cairo affect the sense of security felt by Al-Rehab's residents?

7. In what way(s) does living in Al-Rehab affect the political participation of its residents?

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

I have borrowed Mona Abaza's phrase "the neoliberal dream of segregation,"³ in order to understand the phenomenon of change taking place in Egypt, which brings together economic interests with social perceptions held by the elites toward the lower classes. "In the late 1990s, Egypt underwent a process of structural adjustment guided by international financial organizations, which led to further privatization and liberalization of the economy" that "coincided with the birth of a new business class and tycoons, who are restructuring Egypt's economy" (Abaza 2006:31). "The most visible outcome of structural adjustment has been land speculation, which led to the enrichment of property owners while increasing social inequalities" (Abaza 2006:33). The neoliberal dream of segregation can be defined as a political-economic agenda adopted by the Egyptian government, which fostered and supported rich local and foreign investors in building gated communities in Cairo's suburbs. By constructing these enclaves for the richest layer of Egyptian society, these development projects created a physical segregation in Cairo's urban fabric. This segregation is evidenced by the way the residents of these hinterlands are protected by private security systems, walls and/or fences, gates, and private security guards. In short, I conceptualize the neoliberal dream of segregation as the urban polarization between the rich and the poor layers of the society which has occurred due to

³ Abaza, Mona. 13 December, 2008. "التعليم الخاص والاستهلاك والموت" [Privatized Education, Consumption and Death]. <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=190111>, accessed, January 8, 2010. Abaza's phrase is: [The Neoliberal dream of Segregation] translated from Arabic 'الحلم النيو- ليبرالي لتقسيم أو فصل المدن'.

adaptation of neoliberal policies by the Egyptian government. I conceptualize the neoliberal policies taken by the Egyptian government as the practices which foster free trade and an open market and, additionally, require the government to secure property rights and foster privatization of public assets (Harvey 2005:2 and 2007:145). Neoliberalism, as I conceptualize it, is a political economic ideology (Harvey 2005:2, and 2007:145) adapted by the Egyptian government. I define the neoliberal dream (independent from segregation) as the implementation of the neoliberal policies which contributed to growth in Egypt's economic level on the government's financial statements, and benefited a narrow portion of Egyptian society, mainly the local investors who accumulated wealth. This growth however has not positively reflected or echoed in the everyday life of most Egyptians, that is, the lower classes, who constitute the largest layer of society.

Since the mid-1990s, new forms of physical segregation have occurred in Egypt, specifically in the city of Cairo (Meyer 1999; Denis 2006). This segregation began when the Egyptian Ministry of Housing sold massive amounts of desert land, situated at the margins of Cairo, to private corporations. Approximately 320 private corporations purchased portions of this land and planned projects for a potential 600 thousand housing units (Denis 2006:52). This expansion process resulted in the construction of numerous gated communities in the suburbs of greater Cairo. Mona Abaza posits that there is an obvious segregation occurring in Cairo, since these gated communities offer the upper and middle class people inhabiting these satellite cities exclusive seclusion and "protection from the riff-raff and rampant poor" (Abaza 2006:40). Although the level of accessibility differs from one gated residential area to another, all gated communities restrict the access of the lower class. A gated community can be defined as Abdelhamid Hatem Touman (2005) puts it:

An urban settlement surrounded by walls with several entrances. These entrances are controlled by gates and they are guarded by security agents. Sometimes these gates are under video surveillance. The access to these settlements is strictly reserved, generally, to the residents and their visitors. These settlements are usually equipped by big shopping centers and malls, cinemas, recreational facilities, parks, swimming pools, beaches, and artificial lakes. [Touman 2005:2]

Eric Denis argues that the relocation of the elite to gated communities relates to the discourse of “urban risk” (Denis 2006:61), which can be defined as identification of the city of Cairo and its poorer inhabitants with pollution, disorder, poverty, violence, criminality, and terrorism (Denis as cited in Singerman and Amar 2006:11). He maintains that this discourse is fueled by exaggerated fears of terrorism, which is itself an invention of the state’s current neoliberal order (2006:61). Referring to the work of Jutta Weldes, et al, Denis notes that the normalization of collective fears is due to the apparition of risks, which is projected via the media (2006:51). In this context, the development of gated communities in the outskirts of Cairo can be seen within a larger phenomenon of urban flight that is a crucial step towards the neoliberal dream of segregation.

An important term used to tarnish and de-legitimize the Islamist militant activists in the late 1980s and early 1990s, *baltaga* (thuggery), has remained an important word in the vocabulary of neoliberal discourse, and has been used to legitimize the continued use of emergency law.⁴ Salwa Ismail (2006) demonstrates that the notion of *baltaga* was reinvented by the state. In the late 1980s, Egypt’s unofficial and official state media assigned the epithet *baltaga* to Islamist leaders (Ismail 2006: 140). More recently in Egyptian media, the argument has been made that (civilian) *baltagiyya* (thugs) are as dangerous as the militant Islamists (Ismail 2006:139-146). The notion of *baltaga* denotes a wide range of illegal activities carried out by a

⁴As the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights pointed out, “this has been taken from the new laws integrated into the legal system, as for example, Law 97 of 1992, known as the law for combating terrorism.” “This law gives greater powers to the security apparatus and further limits the liberty of citizens” (Ismail 2006:151).

“social actor” who destabilizes the order of society (Ismail 2006:140). As defined by Ahmed El Magdoub, a professor of criminal law at the National Center for Sociological and Criminological Research in Egypt, the *baltagi* is “a young, unemployed, poor, illiterate man” who “lives in a shanty or slum area, but usually works in middle and upper class districts where people need his services to replace the rule of law” (Ismail 2006:143). In Cairo, besides the Islamist thugs as named by the government, there are regular street criminals, and the paid-thugs or state agents who are sometimes used by the government (Ismail 2006:139-146). The media has taken issues of “law and order” and raised them to the level of national security (Ismail 2006:140). The representation of both the civilian and Islamist thugs has been “articulated within a wider public discourse engaged in the production a moral panic” (Ismail 2006:143). Moral panic can be understood as defined by Stanley Cohen (2002):

A condition, episode, person or a group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests, its nature presented in stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media. [2002:1]

Building on Cohen’s definition, I operationalize the notion of moral panic as exaggerated fear felt by the rich toward the poor—the *other*—such as those who inhabit Cairo’s slums, and who are criminalized by the media. As Egyptian society witnesses social tensions between the rich and the poor, at the political level there are also serious tensions between the government and its opposition. In the last four years (2006 to 2010), the city of Cairo has been witnessing an increased number of strikes,⁵ acts of large-scale vandalism and violent riots,⁶ all of which the

⁵ Egypt issues strike warning. 2008. Aljazeera English Online. <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/violent-riots-hit-egypt/>, accessed Nov, 14, 2009.

⁶ “Angry demonstrators have been clashing with police as a nationwide strike has turned into a protest against the government of President Hosni Mubarak”. Violent Riots Hit Egypt. 2008. PJTV. <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/violent-riots-hit-egypt/>, accessed Nov, 14, 2009.

government has tried to control.⁷ Specifically for this thesis, the notion of moral panic is useful for understanding how localized fear of ‘the other’, if it exists among the residents of Al-Rehab, relates to the sense of insecurity felt in general in Egyptian society.

The point of intersection between urban risk and moral panic is that both involve the sense of fear, yet the former is linked to a mood of *uncertainty*, whereas the latter is linked to a mood of *certainty*. To clarify, Denis builds his argument on Ulrich Beck’s Risk Society, in which the notion of urban risk raises a fear which itself contains a mood of uncertainty about the future (2006:52). Moral panic implies that there are *certain* agents. In Cairo, the wealthy classes assume that these criminals are the inhabitants of informal settlements in the city. As will be shown below, this exaggeration of fear is a product of the deliberate stigmatization of the lower classes, mainly the inhabitants of slums, by the Egyptian media.

Unlike the case in other large cities in the world, such as Los Angeles, São Paulo and Johannesburg, Kuppinger does not believe that fear of crime was a decisive factor motivating Egyptians to move to gated communities during the early emergence of these communities. Nevertheless, she does not deny that fear of crime is increasing in Cairo (Kuppinger 2004:50). But while increased levels of crime may not have been a factor in Cairo’s past for moving to gated communities, today it may indeed be a factor. A possible explanation for the absence of academic research dealing with fear as a determining factor to move to the newly-built enclaves in Cairo could be related to the new role of media coverage of crime and violence.

In this thesis, I relay on the role of media in reporting crime and violence as a factor since it is the only channel, which people learn about this news. This is because the Ministry of Interior Affairs stopped publishing *taqreer alamn al’am* (the general security report) since 1997.

⁷ Al Malky, Rania. Reflections: Bread or freedom? 2008. Daily New Egypt Online. <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=12918>, accessed Nov, 14, 2009.

At the same time the slogan of the police force was changed, from *al-shurta fi khidmat al-sha'ab* (the police are in the service of the citizens) to *al-shurta wa alsha'ab fi al-khidmant al-watan* (the police and the citizens are in service of the nation). This change took place immediately after Habib al-Adly assumed responsibility of the ministry. The reasons behind these changes were never stated by any official party. However, speculation was that these changes signified a dictatorship policy which entailed suppression of information, among other things. Having said that, the only source for learning about crime and incidents of violence since that time has been the media.

During the period between 2004 and 2010,⁸ the Egyptian media increasingly reported incidents of crime and violence taking place in Cairo. The United Nations' Common Country-Egypt-Assessment states that, "in recent years... crime rates have been increasing."⁹ The same assessment informs us that the increase in crime is associated with deteriorating economic conditions among the poor in Egypt. Thus, the assessment supports the implicit conclusion made by the media, that there is in fact more crime.

In general, people are inundated by the large amount of media coverage of violence, and this prevalence of violence and crime in the media then creates a 'culture of fear'. This is the case, for instance, in the United States. Yet, when one is consulting the actual statistics of crime in the United States, the reality is not, in most cases, as devastating or severe as the television and newspapers portray (Glassner as cited in Low 2001:47). It is not necessarily that people take everything they hear, read, or see in the media as truth; yet for people who do not have direct experience with crime, the repetition of crime reports in mass media become their "social reality

⁸ UN Common Country Assessment, 2005. "Embracing the Spirit of the Millennium Declaration", United Nations, Egypt. <http://www.un.org.eg/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=oOc7rF2Nbj8%3D&tabid=54&mid=439>, accessed July 26, 2010.

⁹ Ibid.

of crime” (Miethe 1995:17). Thus, the effect of crime or violence coverage in Egyptian media, and how this contributes to the discourse of segregation, is another vital factor that I explore in my thesis. I operationalize media, for this thesis, as the national and independent online and printed newspapers, and local Egyptian television channels and Egyptian satellite channels. Crime, as I operationalize it, is the crime against persons, in particular murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, sexual harassment and assault, and crime against property, mainly robbery and robbery involving death of the victim.

Hence, my ethnographic study investigates the security infrastructure of the Al-Rehab gated community, and how it plays a role in the choices people make to further protect their homes from perceived threats within Al-Rehab, for example by adding security bars on windows. Furthermore, concerning visible security bars on windows, doors, gates and balconies on numerous villas and ground-floor apartments in Al-Rehab, I will reflect on the notion of “aesthetic security”, coined by Teresa Caldeira, as a status marker (Caldeira 2000:291-296). I operationalize ‘aesthetic security’ as different protective architectural designs, such as fences, walls and gates, in addition to technological surveillances, such as security cameras, and electronic gate openers (Caldeira 2000:292).

Moreover, I assess the choice to move to Al-Rehab through the conceptual framework of neoliberal social segregation. This is a segregation based on class and not, for instance, on ethnicity. This segregation is founded on “economic neoliberalization” (Denis 2006:60), which serves the upper and middle classes at the expense of the poor.

I find that the theories belonging to Mona Abaza (2006) and Teresa Caldeira (2002 and 2005) respectively provide the finest framework to assess my research questions. Both researchers use the consumer culture perspective. In sum, consumer culture can be described as

“the relationship between people and material goods,” which is a social arrangement wherein the selling and buying of products and services is not only a main activity of people’s everyday life, but also a vital arbiter of social significance, organization, and meaning.¹⁰ And thus, the notion of class is a key player in moving to gated communities, and will be explained further in this thesis.

In her ethnographic work on Cairo’s shopping malls, Abaza informs us that “the obsession of the rich of Cairo today is to push away the unwanted poor as far as possible.” (2006:256) A useful way to understand this “push” is to look at the strict security procedures, exemplified by the constant monitoring of the public in luxurious shopping malls via security cameras, controlling access to these malls by the masses through the use of private security guards, who filter the malls’ visitors based on their demeanor, and hence prevent “riff-raff” and shabbily dressed poor from entering the premises (Abaza 2006:40, 275; Singerman and Amar 2006:12). The same applies to the numerous gated communities in the suburbs of greater Cairo. As mentioned earlier, Abaza states that there is a noticeable segregation occurring in Cairo because the gated communities offer the Egyptian upper and middle strata inhabiting these satellite cities exclusive seclusion and protection from members of Cairo’s lower classes (2006:40).

Close attention to Abaza’s assertion above helps in understanding broader dimensions of contemporary Cairo. Within the city, a single line symbolically differentiates the neighborhoods of the upper and middle classes from the slums, and so it is impossible for the rich to keep a distance from the slum areas and their inhabitants (Abaza 2006:40). As the rich cannot push away the poor from their upper middle class neighborhoods within the city, they instead move to

¹⁰ The Online Encyclopedia . “Defining Consumer Culture”.
<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6480/Consumer-Culture.html>, accessed August 7, 2010.

live in the suburban gated communities. There, the rich can limit the accessibility of the poor from entering their closed communities and luxurious spaces, with a mechanism similar to that which is utilized in the luxurious shopping malls, lavish hotels, and exclusive social and sports clubs.

At the same time that the rich are limiting the accessibility of the poor, the rich are pulled by the neoliberal policies adopted by the Egyptian government, to move to newly built gated communities. This ideology encourages physical segregation. The government permits the transformation of Cairo's desert suburbs to private ownership through low costs; it encourages developers (capitalists) to build profitable projects such as residential enclaves, and it supports these developers by constructing new bridges, roads and other basic infrastructure "in record time" (Kuppinger 2006:52-54) and at the government's expense. Caldeira, speaking of a different context, notes that well-off people in São Paulo choose to live in closed communities away from the city and its inhabitants who are considered by the rich as inferior (2005:330). This discourse of inferiority is a significant model that I use in my thesis in the context of Cairo.

Research Design and Methodology

My research is based on a qualitative approach, which helped in conducting semi-structured, informal, and unstructured interviews. Because my research project is related to urban anthropology, I chose the participant-observation method: It is a good method for conducting rich ethnography, and has been demonstrated to produce good results in the works of other urban researchers (Bernard 2005:346).

I was inspired by Farha Ghannam's (2002) use of the participant-observation method in her fieldwork in Al-Zawiya, Egypt, and I decided that it would be beneficial to adopt her approach. The experience of Ghannam demonstrates the usefulness of the participant-

observation method. Though Ghannam strove to follow the aphorism that “a good anthropologist... stays twenty-four hours in the field to observe and participate in every activity” (2002:11), she was unable to secure living arrangements in the field. However, she discovered several advantages in commuting to the field. She asserts that, “I also came to learn different things about Al-Zawiya by being outside it” (2002:11). Her daily commute to and from the field served as a constant reminder that Al-Zawiya, the area under research, was connected to the city and was an integral part of it (2002:11-12). Following this inspiring model, I remained an outsider-insider for six months. This period gave me a chance to come to the field with a fresh eye and enabled me to capture and observe the community without totally being an insider. However, I managed to reside in a house in Al-Rehab during the last six months of my research.

The Field Site

My fieldwork took place in Al-Rehab City. It is part of New Cairo.¹¹ As its official website explains, “Al-Rehab is located ten minutes from Heliopolis and Nasr City, on the Cairo Suez Road, and 20 minutes from downtown Cairo via the first ring road which intersects the Cairo Suez Road.”¹² I selected Al-Rehab as my case study because it accommodates around 200 thousand residents varying in terms of social and financial status and educational background. This diversity is meant to enrich the results of the research, since the sample will include a wide range of members from Egypt’s middle and upper classes.

¹¹Al-Rehab City official Website. <http://www.alrehabcity.com/newrehab/index.aspx>, accessed November, 14, 2009.

¹²Al-Rehab City official Website. “Location”. <http://www.alrehabcity.com/newrehab/Location.aspx>, accessed November, 12, 2009.

Duration and Ethical Consideration

The duration of the fieldwork was around one year. It began upon the approval of the American University in Cairo's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The fieldwork started on February 13, 2010 and ended on Feb 26, 2011. I followed the human subject consideration¹³ as stated in my IRB proposal. The following is a summary of the ethical considerations of my research:

This research aimed to include a diversity of people living and working in Al-Rehab City. I did not exclude people based on sex, ethnic background or age except if it were to put them in a high-risk group. The interviewees were all over 18 years of age. All of the informants received detailed explanation and clarification about the research and the reason why their participation might be appropriate for this project.

The American University in Cairo and its researchers have been portrayed lately in Egyptian media as spies providing confidential information about Egypt and Egyptians to the United States' governmental agencies.¹⁴ This claim was made by the Egyptian newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm. Thus, signing a consent form might cause worry, doubts, anxieties and suspicion among informants. For this reason, I orally read the consent form to the participants and made sure they understood it. The identities of the informants are anonymous. In addition, none of the informants were forced to be part of this research; they participated voluntarily. I

¹³ Please see appendix for the ethical considerations followed in this research.

¹⁴ Al Masry Al-Youm Online. 2009. Issue 1751 (March 30). American University in Cairo Signed Contract with the Pentagon to Provide Confidential Information about Egypt <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=204939>, and it also published in Arabic, which reached wide range of Arabic speakers and readers: [المصري اليوم تكشف: الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة تعاقبت مع «البنساجون» لتقديم معلومات سرية عن مصر] <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=204919> , accessed December, 1, 2009.

explained to the informants that the consent form would not bind them to anything and that they had the right to withdraw at any point from the interview without any harmful consequences. Both psychological and physical risks were not expected for any of the informants in this research.

The Study Population and Sampling Methods

The main participants of this study were chosen based on two sampling methods in order to avoid a biased sample. I selected the informants by using both probability and non-probability sampling methods (Babbie 2007:203-207). These two methods helped reach a greater number of diverse informants. I used the chain referral, or snowball technique (Babbie 2007:205), as a probability sampling method helps find informants interested in being interviewed. The chain referral helps find interested informants without the need to spend much time on persuading them, since the referring person helps in carrying out part of this task. Referrals also help the researcher appear trustworthy to potential interviewees.

Since the population of Al-Rehab is diverse in terms of educational background, financial status, occupational positions, and nationalities, I did not limit the referrals to certain groups, characteristics, or traits. I wrote a short description of my research and explained that I was seeking informants, and disseminated this description via email and through my Egyptian cellular phone contacts to people living in Cairo, and requested those people to forward the message to their contacts as well. In addition, I sent a message to the various groups and pages of Al-Rehab City on Facebook, an online social network. The message included a brief description of the research and a call for interested members of the community to participate.

For my research, I relied on available subjects as a non-probability sampling method (Babbie 2007:203). This technique allowed me to approach potential participants on the streets

and at other locations within Al-Rehab (Babbie 2007:335). I chose different locations within Al-Rehab in order to find and question a diverse sample of potential informants. Locations included coffee shops, commercial areas, a food-court, open spaces, such as around various buildings and villas, and shopping malls. I asked people if they were interested in being interviewed. Some interviews took place on the spot, while in other cases I exchanged my contact information with the interested informants and we met at a later time according to their availability.

Some argue that this method puts the researcher at risk (Babbie 2007:335) due to the unfamiliarity of the subjects and the process of stopping and questioning them. However, I found this method appropriate. I did not consider myself to be at risk, especially by the potential informants who were not risky members of the community, such as drug addicts, and so on.

It was easy to identify people living in houses whose windows, doors and balconies have iron bars and iron gates. These iron bars actually helped me to identify a segment of potential informants. For this reason I used purposive/judgment sampling, which is another non-probability sampling method.

As Earl Babbie states, “It is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population,” because in some cases the researcher wishes to examine a segment of the population where many of its members are “easily identified” (2007:204). Using the purposive/judgment sampling method, I was cautious not to limit the segment of this sample to a certain group of people. Therefore, I sought potential informants who belonged to different phases or blocks, with buildings ranging from villas to apartment buildings.

Interview Methods

I used semi-structured/in-depth interviews when interviewing the informants. This method “works very well” as Russell Bernard states, “in projects where [the researcher is]

dealing with high-level bureaucrats and elite members of a community” (2005:212). It shows that the researcher is “fully in control of what [he or she] wants from an interview but leaves both the researcher and respondent free to follow new leads” (Bernard 2005:212). This method also demonstrates that the researcher is “prepared and competent, but that [he or she] is not trying to exercise control” (Bernard 2005:212).

Participating in the field opened a path to conducting informal and unstructured interviews. Throughout my various trips, I conducted informal and unstructured interviews with various informants who provided me with insightful data.

Accessibility

It is worth noting that being a female researcher helped me interview women living in Al-Rehab. Sexual harassment is very common in Egypt.¹⁵ And, because of this, women are apprehensive about men approaching them, and thus male researchers would likely have difficulty carrying out research through this method. Additionally, language was not a barrier since I am a native Arabic speaker and speak English fluently. My language skills allowed me to communicate easily with the informants, as the majority of Al-Rehab’s residents speak Arabic and English.

The Organization of the Thesis

In chapter two, I give a brief overview of the significant scholarly works that discuss the political and economic changes led to reshape Cairo’s urban sphere. The chapter also supports the conceptual and theoretical framework of my thesis. In chapter three, based on the accounts of the residents, I present the various reasons for their move to Al-Rehab. I also show to what

¹⁵ The Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights. “Sexual Harassment Against Women has Become a Pervasive Problem in Egypt.” http://ecwronline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=259&Itemid=64, accessed December, 6, 2009.

extent the role of the media's coverage of crime and violence, and fear of crime are factors behind the residents' relocation. Additionally, I demonstrate via the stories of the workers in Al-Rehab and its residents how each of them view the other. Also, derived from the accounts of the residents, I explain how 'aesthetic security' became a phenomenon of 'conspicuous consumption' among the residents. Moreover, throughout chapter three, I discuss the notion of moral panic and to what extent the fears of the residents are alleviated by moving to Al-Rehab. In chapter four, I argue that Al-Rehab is similar to a giant shopping mall, and draw attention to the tension that exists over its accessibility, which is revealed through my interviews with the residents, businesses owners in the neighborhood, and outsiders. I also demonstrate how *Jehaz Al-Rehab* (Al-Rehab's management Company) took actions concerning the accessibility of the community by outsiders. Furthermore, I show how Al-Rehab creates consumer desires among its residents and outsiders. In addition, I discuss how the traditional services that are offered in the city of Cairo have changed and modernized for the residents of the community. I take this point for further discussion concerning the impact of these alterations on people from the lower-classes and the residents. In chapter five, I investigate the relationship between political events tied to the recent riots in Cairo and the sense of security felt by Al-Rehab's residents throughout those events. Additionally, I show the relationship between living in a suburban segregated residential neighborhood and the political participation of its residents. From this I explore how the implementation of the neoliberal segregation plays a role in isolating the residents of Al-Rehab from the city of Cairo's political sphere.

Chapter Two: The Discourse of Urban Segregation in Contemporary Cairo

Introduction

Cairo has transformed into a cosmopolitan, globalized city, attracting internal migrants. The neoliberal government has neglected the housing needs of those catering laborers. The government focuses on branding the city of Cairo through a process of gentrification that hides and relocates the slums areas from the view of tourists. Parallel to this process, new suburbs such as New Cairo received strong support from President Mubarak, the government, elite businessmen, and a group of members of the National Democratic Party, who surrounded the president. In this chapter, I argue that urban segregation has existed in Cairo for quite some time. Yet, since the last decade's adaptation of neoliberal policies by the government, which encourages urban segregation based on class, the result is acute polarization in the urban fabric of the greater city of Cairo. This sharp dichotomy crystallized in the support given by the Egyptian government to local and foreign construction companies to build gated communities in the suburbs Cairo.

In this chapter I first briefly give an overview of the urban discourse of Cairo through a review of relevant scholarly works. This will show how political and economic changes led to reshaping its urban sphere. In "Globalized Cairo", I discuss how Cairo became a globalized metropolis, in an attempt to understand the process and effect of neoliberal segregation. In "Segregation Discourse in Cairo's History", I argue that the segregation discourse has always been present through Egyptian history and continues to the present. Yet, in each era, it takes a different form. In "Cairo's Neoliberal Urbanism", I show how the neoliberal policies adopted by

the Egyptian government favors the rich and neglects the poor. In addition, I discuss the illegalization of land ownership of some gated communities by the Egyptian High court. In “President Mubarak’s Visit of Al-Rehab”, I raise important questions regarding President Mubarak’s visit of Al-Rehab gated community. In “Neoliberal State as a Privatized Territory”, I show how the adoption of neoliberal policies was a fruitful tool for turning the state into a private territory, where wealth is monopolized by political elites and businessmen, and the larger portion of Egyptians (the poor) do not benefit from the state’s adoption of those policies. In “The Creation of the Other”, I discuss the slums and their residents, ‘the other’. These areas and their people are in ways products of the state, as the state detaches itself from the creation of these slums, and avoids solving the problems which exist within them. In addition, I demonstrate how the media have played a supportive role in stigmatizing the inhabitants of slums as dangerous beings. In “Urban Risk, Remote Enclaves, and Conspicuous Consumption”, I discuss the relationship between urban risk, conspicuous consumption, change in Egyptians’ purchasing powers and the move to suburban gated communities.

Globalized Cairo

Cairo is a globalized, urban space which reflects a cosmopolitan city within a certain economic, political, and social context. It is a city that is rich in its cultures, heritage, and social, political, and economic institutions. Thus it is no surprise that the “increased regional and global flows of labor, investment, foreign aid, migration, media, and political and legal activism” have affected the dynamics of the urban fabric which makes up the city (Singerman and Amar 2006:9). These factors shaped the formation of Cairo as a late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century globalized and cosmopolitan city.

As Amar and Singerman note, one of the ramifications of globalization is that it brings with it a “high degree of segmentation in the spheres of both production and consumption” (2006:11). This can be observed in the consumer-class distinctions that are created when foreign franchises enter international markets to satisfy a certain class or community (Singerman and Amar 2006:11).

Since the *Infitah* (Open Door Policy) during President Sadat’s years in the early 1970s, many Egyptians travelled to oil producing countries for work seeking better income (Abaza 2006:157-158), while at the same time many rural youth migrated to cities, mainly Cairo, seeking jobs with higher salaries (Zohry 2009:7). The migration of Egyptians that caused these demographic changes can be divided into two major trends: “the hundreds of thousands of citizens who left Egypt to go to the Persian Gulf, Europe, or the U.S” in search of jobs; and the local migration of Egyptians to satellite cities or to touristic areas within the country, thereby redefining the social and cultural connections of urban communities (Singerman and Amar 2006:11). This also created new urban and transnational identities, as well as religious, gender- and class-based identities in the process (Singerman and Amar 2006:11).

Following the *Infitah*, the popular-masses were demonized due to the state’s adoption of a neoliberal order, whereas the political elites argued that the density of the population delays economic growth, and thus building satellite cities in the desert lands helps productively redistribute the population (El Shakry 2006:93-94).

Over the last few decades, *ashwa’iyyat* (slums) have doubled in size, particularly in the historically Islamic areas of the city. According to David Sims, around 11 million of greater Cairo’s population of approximately 17 million live in areas “developed informally or extra-legally since 1960” (2010:91). At the same time, there has also been an increase in construction

of shopping malls, gated communities, roads, and renovated areas in historical Cairo in order to draw increased tourism (Singerman and Amar 2006:15). In addition, “the slums are hidden by walls from the tourist gaze” (Abaza 2006:22).

Gated communities in New Cairo are microcosms of greater Cairo. The spatial city of New Cairo has transformed the city’s landscape, creating new circuits of distribution and transportation that are made possible by new technologies and services (Singerman and Amar 2006:15). “Neoliberalism’s new circuits of distribution and consumption have relocated important markets for wholesale food and textiles out of the urban core” (Gertel as cited in Singerman and Amar 2006:16). For instance, the relocation of *Rod al-Farag* market, the main vegetable market in the city of Cairo (Ghannam 2002:114) to the suburban, modern wholesale area of al-Ubur, resulted in violent confrontations between the police forces and merchants in 1994 (Gertel 2009:385- 386).

Many Egyptians, mainly low-income men, live abroad (especially in Gulf countries) for many years in order to earn and save money for marriage, or to achieve a prosperous lifestyle which is usually unachievable for them in Egypt. When these men return home to Egypt they bring with them new concepts of global consumerism (Ghannam 2006:255-265). As Singerman and Amar demonstrate:

Today, Cairenes daily, literally and virtually transcend national boundaries, surf the internet, become migrants, and interact with tourists, shop in global tax-free zones or informal markets of pirated commodities, seek refuge from wars or volunteer to fight in them, learn foreign languages and internet technologies, drink cappuccinos in malls, eat at MacDonal’d’s, revolt against their government alliance with Israel and are tortured with implicit help of U.S. military assistance and anti-terrorist intelligence services. [2006:30]

In the classic definition, cosmopolitan means “belonging to a world community whose universalist humanitarian ideals would ensure peace” (Singerman and Amar 2006:30). Yet, in the

book *Cairo Cosmopolitan*, the scholars of this volume of the Cairo School of Urban Studies adopt the definition of cosmopolitan as being a place with “an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates” (Singerman and Amar 2006:30). In this logic, Cairo is specifically a place of cultural interconnectedness, economically interdependent, and politically protected “into a more universalistic economic and legal order (such as the international, bilateral, and regional conventions on trade, investment, intellectual property rights, or human rights laws); it becomes more globalized” (Singerman and Amar 2006:30-31).

Segregation Discourse in Cairo’s History

The idea of spatial segregation in Cairo is not new. Historically, Egyptians segregated themselves physically within the city. One example is the *hara* (alley), where a large gate would be closed at night to control the entrance of strangers. This gate was later replaced with some of the *hara*’s residents, who controlled the access of strangers in order to create a safe environment for their families (Nadim and Lane as cited in Younis 2005:9). By the early 18th century (during the French colonial power), gates on the entrance of the *harat* (alleys) were dismantled (Abu Lughod 1971:98) and taken away for security reasons (Said 2009:12).

From 1881 to 1922, during the British colonial power in Egypt, the British constructed modern districts mainly for Europeans and a small number of the Egyptian population, who had special advantages under the British power (Gahnam 2002:27). While these modern developments were in process, the old part of Cairo witnessed a rapid deterioration, and the needs of its residents were disregarded. Mitchell states that this resulted in creating a *dual city*: The old areas represented “the oriental and its backwardness”, while the new, modern districts represented “the West and its modernity” (Gahnam 2002:27). Similarly, Janet Abu Lughod tells

us that at the beginning of the twentieth century Cairo was divided into “European Cairo” and “Egyptian Cairo” (1971:98) by a long street, which starts from the railway station and continues past the large [old] hotels to the Palace of Abdiin.¹⁶ Abaza, discussing Abu Lughod’s work, states that the city of Cairo presented two split communities showing discontinuity, as “the native pre-industrial city was juxtaposed to the colonial city [where] the architecture, lifestyle, related to the *harat* and *durub* (narrow alleys), was left aside and *rond point*, *maydans*, and grid-iron street pattern [were] adopted” (Abaza 2006:39). Consequently, the distinction between the two communities, Egyptian and foreigner, were sharpened (2006:39).

In contemporary times, the upper and middle classes voluntarily segregate themselves within the city. This materializes in living in privately guarded expensive housing units, utilizing private door-to-door limousine service, shopping in privately guarded luxury malls, and sending their children to private schools or universities (Gottdiener and Hustchison 2006:142). In addition, this Egyptian stratum enjoys exclusive memberships in expensive social and sports clubs within the city, such as the Gezira Club (Abaza 2006:40-41,146; Oppenheim 1999).

By living in gated communities at the edges of the city, “the benefits of isolation are more readily enjoyed” by Egypt’s upper and middle classes (Gottdiener and Hustchison 2006:142). The upper and middle classes of gated communities sustain their isolation with segregation mechanisms, such as expensive homes, private security, fences, and guarded gates (Gottdiener and Hustchison 2006:143). These elements lead to greater degrees of isolation mechanisms utilized in the city.

¹⁶ Located in downtown Cairo near the Bab al-Looq area.

Cairo's Neoliberal Urbanism

As Khan *et al.* note, between 1890 and 1907, the development of many elite neighborhoods, such as Garden City, Zamalek, Heliopolis, and Maadi, were accomplished via the influx of foreign funds for infrastructure like roads, tramways, bridges, and electricity networks (El Shakry 2006:82). However, the developments were achieved at the cost of the old city and its lower-income inhabitants (El Shakry 2006:83). The contemporary achievements of what might be seen as the urban triumph are also accomplished at the expense of the lower class. For instance, the World Trade Center was built on land which used to hold *ashwa'iyat* (slums). This, and other land, was sold by the government to tycoons at very low prices (Abaza 2006:246-247). This process is parallel with another practice, namely, gentrification—the massive restructuring of numerous parts of greater Cairo (Abaza 2006:247). Gentrification is a term coined by Ruth Glass (1964). According to Glass, gentrification is a process of renovating old living space: Through gentrification, rental property is often replaced with property for sale, while rents on rental properties are raised, driving out lower-income tenants to be replaced by tenants from the middle classes (Lees *et al.* 2008:5).

Supporters of gentrification view it as “improving cleanliness and embellishing the city,” while critics see this process as an elitist move achieved at the expense of the poor who inhabit the popular quarters, dislocating them and “hiding them away” (Abaza 2006:246-247).

In the same manner, the Egyptian government's neoliberal ideology serves the rich and abandons the poor. Hence, the ideology that fosters the process of gentrification also favors the construction of gated communities. To clarify, gentrification reclaims older parts of a city for the elite and pushes out the poor, while gated communities leave the poor behind as the elite

participate in urban flight. Thus, both gentrification and constructing gated communities favor the elite at the expense of the poor.

Gated communities, according to Denis, are “inscribed in stone and real estate, from wealth extracted from public patrimony and from public lands in a context of strong monetary devaluation” (2006:61) since “major public stakeholders,” such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, and the Ministry of Housing and New Communities, “give private actors access to land and property while avoiding market competition” (2006:62). Talat Mustafa Group¹⁷ (TMG) for example is one of the largest real estate developers in Egypt. The company owns and has constructed the two largest and pioneering gated communities in New Cairo: Al-Rehab, and Madinaty.¹⁸ Interestingly, the latter project’s land ownership was recently determined to be illegal¹⁹ by the Egyptian High court since it was allocated by direct sale and not by public auction.²⁰ The contract was made by Hisham Talat Mustafa, the former chairman and head of the Real Estate Branch of TMG, and Ibrahim Mohammed Soliman, the former minister of housing.²¹ To avoid causing problems for the units’ owners and other investors in the project, the land was reassigned to TMG by the New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA), a housing ministry body, with a higher price than the first contract which had been deemed illegal. Not only did TMG face this illegalization of the project’s land, but other developers, such as the one behind

¹⁷ The official website of TMG. “About TMG”.
<http://www.talaatmoustafa.com/newtmg/showpage.aspx?ID=61>, accessed April 4 2011.

¹⁸ Its location is 33 Kilo Al Suez Road, New Cairo. 15 minutes away from Al-Rehab.

¹⁹ Basal, Muhamud. October 4, 2010. The State Council Resolved a New contract of Madinaty. Shorouk Newspaper online. <http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=307340>, accessed October 6, 2010.

²⁰ Hassan, Bahy. October 26, 2010. “Administrative Justice Postponed Issues (Palm Hills) and (Toshka).
<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=321546>, accessed October 27, 2010.

²¹ Basal, Muhamud. October 4, 2010. “The State Council Resolved a New contract of Madinaty”.
<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=307340>, accessed October 6, 2010.

the Palm Hills gated community, also faced the same fate.²² Why did the authorities not give attention to the laws of public auction from the beginning? Why were the laws concerning public land likewise not enforced? And why did the authorities only now give these contracts such attention? The answer to these important questions is not yet publicly known.

President Mubarak's Visit to Al-Rehab



Figure 2: President Mubarak's visit of Al-Rehab on December 16, 2003. Source: http://www.alrehabcity.com/alrehab_arabic/madinyat-1/page1.html, accessed March 30, 2011.

²² Reuters. Egypt Court Postpones Hearing TMG, Palm Hills Suits. October 26, 2010. <http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFLDE69P12420101026>, accessed October 27, 2010 and Reuters. April 26, 2011.2011. “The Administrative Court’s Rule Renders Palm Hills Contract Invalid” [القضاء الإداري تقضي ببطان عقد بيع أرض لشركة بالم هيلز]. <http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=440750>, accessed 26 April, 2011. And, El Madany, Sherine. 26 April, 2011. “Egypt court scraps land sale to Palm Hills”. <http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFLDE73P0PD20110426>, accessed 26 April, 2011.



Figure 3: Al-Akhabar Al Youm (one of the national newspapers) on July 29th 2006: Page 5 and 8: articles delivering and nationalizing news about new privatized towns and cities in the suburb of New Cairo, mainly TMG's Madinaty's project

On December 12, 2003, President Hosni Mubarak visited New Cairo and Al-Rehab City.

While there, Mubarak called for more advertising to encourage Egyptians to go and reside in the new suburban communities, in order to decentralize the population from the congested city of Cairo.²³ When Mubarak was visiting Al-Rehab City, he asked Hisham Talat Mustafa,²⁴ "If I

²³ Ashour, Hassan. December 17, 2003. "Mubarak Visits Al-Rehab City and the Housing Projects in New Cairo" [مبارك يتفقد مدينة الرحاب ومشروعات الإسكان بالقاهرة الجديدة]. <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2003/12/17/FRON9.HTM>, accessed 30 March, 2011. And, Alrehabcity.com. N.d. "Mubarak Visit Crown the Achievements of Year of Hard Work" [زيارة الرئيس مبارك تتوج انجازات أعوام من العمل الدؤوب]. http://www.alrehabcity.com/alrehab_arabic/madinaty-1/page1.html, accessed March 30, 2011.

²⁴ Hisham Talat Mustafa is an Egyptian real-estate mogul. In around 2007, Hisham became the chairman of TMG, which is established and owned by his father. TMG's net worth at that time was an estimated eight hundred million dollars. In 2004, he was appointed to the Shura Council, Egypt's upper legislative house, as the head of the housing committee. He is also a member of the NDP. Stephey, M.J. May 22, 2009. "Hisham Talaat Moustafa: Egypt's Condemned Tycoon". <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1900311,00.html#ixzz1HIVHfDeT>, accessed March 31, 2011. Around 1992, Hisham applied for a membership in NDP and in a short time became a member in the party's policy committee. Alhofy, Nashwa and Hisham Alaa, September 4, 2008. "Profile of Hisham Talat Mustafa: The Youngest Family Member and the Creator of its Milliard" [بروفایل: هشام طلعت مصطفى.. أصغر أبناء العائلة وصانع ملياراتها]. <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=131969&IssueID=1153>, accessed March 31, 2011.

appoint you to be a minister will you be able to develop the country as you did in your [Al-Rehab] city?” Hisham answered “Yes”. Mubarak’s then replied that it must be Egypt’s ministers who were not doing their jobs well, and the president then reportedly gave Mustafa a pat on the shoulder,²⁵ a gesture that can be interpreted as Mubarak’s blessing of the Al-Rehab City project. In the Egyptian culture this act reflects trust, an act of encouragement, and responsibility. President Mubarak was apparently unhappy with the inadequate work of the ministers overseeing Cairo’s development projects. Mubarak’s comments during his Al-Rehab visit, particularly regarding the need for advertizing these types of projects in order to decentralize the city of Cairo, again raises some important questions. Where were the government institutions in charge, while thousands of *feddans* (acres, approximately) of public land were sold by the government to Hisham’s TMG to build Al-Rehab for the low price of 10LE per meter?²⁶ The state, which was concentrated in the person of Mubarak, was blessing and nationalizing²⁷ these projects, including Al-Rehab and Madinaty. Mubarak’s visits and public display of admiration of New Cairo and the suburban enclaves demonstrated his support for the neoliberal policies of privatization, and were gestures of welcoming and attracting foreign investors to take a place in building privatized communities.

Neoliberal State as a Privatized Territory

In an article published in Britain’s Guardian newspaper, Salwa Ismail, a professor of politics with reference to the Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and author of *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the*

²⁵ Ibid. I translated the dialogue from Arabic to English.

²⁶ Alsheweki, Amr. September 11, 2008. “Arresting of Hisham Talat: Thank You United Arab Emirates” [القبض على هشام طلعت: شكراً للإمارات]. <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=178104>, accessed March 31, 2011.

²⁷ El-Husseiny, Momen. N.d. “CAIRO’s Megaproject Projecting “Gated Communities” as a National Housing Project”. In *Urban Megaprojects: A Worldwide View*. MIT Press. Unpublished.

Everyday State, argues that in the last two decades the alliance of politics and money manifested itself in businessmen virtually replacing ministers in the government. That their agendas met their own private interests was obvious.²⁸ The widespread privatization enabled a small number of businessmen to seize public assets. These businessmen monopolized important commodity markets, for instance in steel and iron, wood and cement. Parallel to the boom of crony capitalism, Ismail explains, the local industries which were previously considered as the backbone of the Egyptian economy were abandoned.

The government did not give sufficient attention to the negative environmental impact that resulted from the private industries and their harmful products. “[C]eramics, marble and fertilizers have expanded without effective regulation”, Ismail explains, and came “at a great cost to the health of the population.”²⁹ This underscores how the health of Egyptians was not in the calculations of those leading these privatized industries. The government ignored its responsibility to secure the health of its residents, which is one of the basic needs the state and its government are responsible to provide. The political elite favored privatization over the nation’s health. As Ismail says, a small group of “economic elite controlling consumption-gearred production and imports has accumulated great wealth.”³⁰ This elite group includes real estate developers responsible for the boom in the construction of gated communities and luxury resorts. However, as Ismail notes, the land used for this development was often acquired at low prices without being subjected to the proper tendering or bidding procedures. One of the recent popular examples is illegalizing the land contracts of Madinaty and Palm Hills, mentioned above.

²⁸ Ismail, Salwa. February 6, 2011. “A private Estate Called Egypt”. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/06/private-estate-egypt-mubarak-cronies>, accessed March 24, 2011.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Mubarak allowed the national wealth to be passed to the hands of a select few. Thus, privatization led to the deterioration in public services, such as education and health sectors, which affect the larger layer of the society—the poor—leading them to send their children to work rather than to school. Their unskilled labor adds income to their households that the families would otherwise lack. She states that at the same time, poverty was rampant with more than “40% living below the poverty line of less than \$2 per day, rising rates of unemployment, and job opportunities for the young blocked.”³¹ As Ismail emphasizes, the protests broke out towards the end of 2010, with demands that the minimum monthly income be raised from \$100 to \$240. However, the neoliberal government, which instituted a single unified income tax instead of progressive taxation, rejected these demands despite the fact that under this government there was also a dramatic increase in the cost of food staples and utilities.³²

The Creation of ‘the Other’

The vocabulary used to describe Cairo’s poor is a useful lens into the process of creating ‘the other’. Ashwa’iyyat (slums), for example, is an invented concept used as a political category. It creates spatial segregations (Bayat and Denis 2000:197) which turn out to be a new sign of urbanism in Cairo. Despite the fact that colonialism ended in Egypt at the beginning of the 1950s, Singerman argues that, “the discursive practices of colonialism continue to be reiterated in contemporary administrative discourse,” as these practices “operate within the postcolonial states, as a sort of internal colonialism” (2009:11). She points out that the colonial powers made the same arguments in their civilizing missions. The colonial powers stated that they would bring progress, modernity, and “order to backward civilizations” (2009:116). This

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

mindset mirrors the current public discourse of the modern neoliberal Egyptian state (Singerman 2009:116).

The government and the national media present *ashwa'iyat* as districts of rural migrants, who have ruralized life in the city, turning Cairo into a “city of peasants” (Bayat and Denis 2000:185). In addition, in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Wafd*, an Egyptian journalist states that *ashwa'iyat* are zones of extremism which generate a “culture of violence” and an “abnormal” mode of life (Bayat and Denis 2000:185). Thus, *ashwa'iyat* are described as an endemic social disease, which demonstrate “anomie, poverty, crime and thus political violence” (Bayat and Denis 2000:185-186). In official discourse, the national media (owned and dictated by the government) portray *ashwa'iyat* as “black stains” and places of “social ills— crime, drugs, and backwards behavior” (Sims 2003:7). In the last decade the Egyptian press has stressed the discourse of *ashwa'iyat*, and in the official Egyptian discourse *ashwa'iyat* turn out to be the equivalent of un-civilization, chaos, violence, and crime (Abaza 2006:244). During the early 1990s, the lawlessness, poverty, moral depravity, disorder, illiteracy, and misery in the unplanned areas of Imbaba and other informal areas and its inhabitants came to be labeled as “the other” (Singerman 2009:118).

The state presents the notion that poverty in the informal neighborhoods is to blame for producing thugs, such as militant Islamists, who are depicted by the state as terrorists, backward, agitators, and troublemakers (Singerman 2009:116). The usefulness of this discourse, according to Singerman, is apparent, since once the nature of the informal districts are recognized as the root of terrorism, their entire populations turn out to be responsible for the “major offenses in the eyes of the government’s security forces and the rest of the society” (2009:116). Thus, the modern Egyptian state identifies itself in “distinction to the terror and savagery produced in

informal [areas]" (2009:118). Galila El-Kadi tells us that there is a "tacit agreement" taking place under the umbrella of the state, which feeds the creation of "the other" (Abaza 2006:244).

According to El-Kadi, this is because the development of informal areas is a consequence of hidden and informal agreement between the local administrator and the state, which informally allows their construction (Abaza 2006:244). This demonstrates the role of the state in producing "the other" while the state is detaching itself from these areas and their residents.

The most basic approach "to differentiate oneself from the threatening masses [and] to prove one's moral and civilizational superiority, is to construct the other as primitive, as a savage, in fact as a nonhuman" (Singerman 2009:119). As Singerman further explains:

The discourse of Imbaba is replete with references to residents as wild animals. The denial of the humanity of these residents and the humanity of Islamist activists allows arguments about their inherent, negative biological qualities. From there, one can demonize one's enemies, allowing those in power to ignore the norms of human treatments. [2009:119]

In the public discourse created around Imbaba's siege, "various tropes emerged that served to differentiate informal housing areas, their residents, and Islamists from the supposedly modern, rational, civilized, orderly, and acquiescent dominant group" (Singerman 2009:118). As Denis quoted in Singerman (2009) explains, the consequence is that:

Imbaba is not Cairo, it is 'something else'; it's the elsewhere, the outside with regard to which Cairo exists; and its inhabitants are 'the other', in relation to whom it is possible to define oneself as an urbanite, as belonging to the city. [Denis as quoted in Singerman 2009:118]

According to Mike Raco, the creation and definition of "otherness" is "an active political process with particular socio-geographical imaginations adopted and used to facilitate, legitimate and justify the operationalisation of economic policy" (2002:28).

As places in which diversity and coexistence are maximized, metropolitan areas are in their material, social and political expressions, the product of responses and reactions to the dangers that are negatively associated with diversity. [Denis 2006:51]

Denis informs us that risk discourse legitimates social distance (2006:51). Risk is a “social and political construct that crystallizes, sorts, and normalizes dangers, fear and anxieties” in the society (Hacking as cited in Denis 2006:50). Supported by the ideas of Weldes et al, Denis tells us that it is “the specter of risk, projected through media and representational structures,” that “normalizes collective fear” (2006:51). Anthony Giddens meanwhile describes risk society as a place where there exists “a new moral climate of politics, one marked by a push-and-pull between accusations of scaremongering on the one hand and of cover-ups on the other” (1999:5). Giddens further says that in risk society:

If ... [a] government official... or lay person takes any given risk seriously, he or she must proclaim it. It must be widely publicized because people must be persuaded that the risk is real... a fuss must be made about it. However, if a fuss is indeed created and the risk turns out to be minimal, those involved will be accused of scaremongering. [1999:5]

Referring to a different context, particularly North America and Europe during the 1970s, Elke Krahnmann argues that risk cannot be understood as merely the unintentional result of the current “globalized modernization hazard,” but that risk society is a creation of private corporations that initiated the commodification of risk and insecurity (Krahnmann 2008:2). The Egyptian market is witnessing an emergence of private security companies owned by retired army officers. Due to their experience and qualifications in their previous positions, they are able to enforce law, order and control in the luxurious shopping malls, gated communities, and luxurious hotels (Abaza 2006:271). Based on Krahnmann’s argument above, it seems clear that

these private security companies promote the commodification of security in Cairo. This phenomenon should be studied on its own, in contemporary Cairo, focusing on whether it is demanded in the Egyptian market or if it is an “American import” to the “Egyptian society” (Abaza 2006:271).

Urban Risk, Remote Enclaves, and Conspicuous Consumption

Denis argues that the move to enclaves on desert land is legitimated by an exaggerated sense of urban fear (2006:61). He believes that, while the phenomenon of gated communities in Cairo seems motivated by an increase of “urban risk”, the move to the desert should not be understood as a mere “evasion of risk” (2006: 61). Denis further explains:

Projection of the spectacle of the elite distinction from city street to desert gated city enables speculation and spectacle in the same way as does the migration to summer resorts on the shore of (the) Mediterranean, or driving a tinted-glass Mercedes through a downtown traffic jam. [2006:64]

Car ownership by the well-off residents of gated communities plays a key role in facilitating their move. The cars facilitate their accessibility and ability to commute to and from their homes in the gated communities, while “the distance from the city allows them (the residents) to enjoy the power of these automobiles” (Denis 2006:64) which have become their ideal solution to the problem of distance (Abaza 2006:266). In contrast, new cities built on desert land are viewed by the poor workers as a burden, as the commute requires long rides on public or private transportation to reach their jobs in remote areas. Abaza argues that the lack of public transportation excludes the poor due to the chaotic urban planning of the suburb of Cairo (2011: 1076). Thus, to live in the distant desert has become a luxury only for those who own cars (Denis 2006:64), and who have the purchasing power to fuel their cars with increasingly costly gasoline. In addition, the existence of monopolized and exclusive private bus services offered by

some gated communities to their residents supports and legitimates the discourse of distance. These services, for those who do not own cars or who do not desire to drive long distances, enable residents to commute easily to and from their closed residential areas and thus enable them to live in distant places.

From a consumer culture perspective, Mark Gottdiener and Ray Hutchison state that a vital way the rich manifest their status and purchasing power—which opens the door for their access to housing units in closed residential communities—is “by isolating themselves as much as possible from the rest of the population” (2006:142). In other words, the upper and middle classes are thus segregating themselves voluntarily. As noted by Denis, earlier, the premise of security and protection are part of the marketing for gated communities, yet in the greater city of Cairo this is “fragile and superficial” compared to marketing in other parts of the world (2006:64). In Cairo, these residential areas are gated, but the walls materialize to be relatively “fragile, rather low, and especially open, with grillwork that allows one to glimpse the luxury of villas from outside” (2006:64-65). Denis explains that, “the buyer purchases a protected residence with a plan to create a sense of distance, of filtering, but he desires at the same time to be seen” (2006:65). From this consumer culture standpoint, Denis’s observation brings to mind Thorstein Veblen’s concept of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 2007:49-69). Veblen showed that consuming and displaying commodities serve as means for showing wealth and status (2007:49-69). Abaza meanwhile argues “that conspicuous consumption is not a typically Egyptian cultural trait, although it certainly takes a particular cultural and local shape,” but “conspicuous consumption has a long history in Egypt” dating back to Khedive Isma’il’s efforts to design a modern Cairo (2006:156). Egypt has witnessed a new period of conspicuous consumption since the era of President Anwar Al-Sadat, due to the adoption of *Infitah* (Open

Door Policy),³³ a period that saw the emergence of a new class with strong purchasing power (Abaza 2006:157-158). In addition, it is obvious that “the urban remaking of the city of Cairo is taking place at the expense of visually excluding the mass of unwanted poor,” due to the Egyptian government’s neoliberal ideology (Abaza 2006:288).

Conclusion

The Egyptian government and the clique of businessmen along with some NDP members surrounding Mubarak, who adopted and encouraged the vast privatization policies, considered Egypt as their own personal territory. They spoiled its resources and distributed it among the few elites, depriving the majority of the Egyptian population from access to money.³⁴

The risk in the city that is populated by “the other” is perceived as dangerous, uncivilized, disordered, poor, filled with criminal dwellers in its slums, according to the media’s representation of them. This has led to wealthier Egyptians retreating to enclaves away from the city. And thus, this has created urban segregation. Therefore, it is essential to hear the voices of the residents of Al-Rehab City, one of Cairo’s suburban gated communities, concerning the discourse of ‘otherness’ and how they view ‘the other’. In chapter three, the first four research questions of this thesis along with analysis will be provided.

³³During the open door policy Egypt “was geared towards global markets and intensive foreign investment” which is opposed to its previous era of President Nasser that “was based on socialism, nationalizing and the Egyptianizing foreign companies, import substitution and industrialization through state monopoly” (Abaza 2006:101). The Open door policy gave many Egyptians the chance to migrate to oil producing countries which led to the emergence of new classes with stronger purchasing power (Abaza 2006:157-158).

³⁴ Ismail, Salwa. February 6, 2011. “A private estate called Egypt”. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/06/private-estate-egypt-mubarak-cronies>, accessed March 24, 2011.

Chapter Three: Within the Gates

Introduction

Throughout my interviews with the residents of Al-Rehab, as shown in this chapter, there were multiple justifications regarding their move to Al-Rehab City. Particular attention is given in this chapter to the pulling factors which contributed to their move, based on the narrators' personal accounts. Along with this, I shed light on the role of media coverage of crime and violence as a factor in their move, and on their sense of security felt within their privatized guarded neighborhood. Also, based on the interviews of the workers in Al-Rehab and its residents, I present how each of them in turn views the other. In addition, I point to the emergence of 'aesthetic security' as a phenomenon of Egypt's middle and upper classes, and the relation of this to conspicuous consumption and the commodification of security in this enclave. Furthermore, I illustrate the extent to which the residents of Al-Rehab's fears are/are not alleviated by living in a gated, privatized suburban community.

Multiple Pulling Forces and Private Security

The idea of gated communities in the desert was first advertised in Al-Ahram³⁵ newspaper in the 1980s (Abaza 2006:110). In 1999, after reading about Al-Rehab in *Al-Ahram*, Adam's father, Hani, purchased a 90-square-meter apartment in Al-Rehab before many homes were even built. The advertisements and the news of the newborn suburban neighborhood in a national newspaper, whose content is partially controlled by the government, demonstrates that

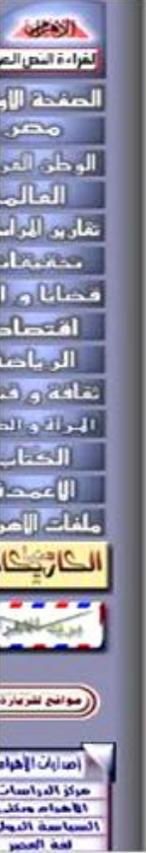
³⁵ Press Reference: Egypt. "The Egyptian government owns a controlling stock in Al-Ahram Egyptian newspapers". Its daily circulation is estimated at around 900,000. It is "one of the largest circulation newspapers in the world". <http://www.pressreference.com/Co-Fa/Egypt.html>, accessed Feb 19, 2010. Also, Al-Ahram's content is "controlled by the Egyptian Ministry of Information." <http://www.mondotimes.com/1/world/eg/306/5036/13021>, accessed Feb 19, 2010.

the Egyptian government and the President Hosni Mubarak, deliberately blessed and publicized the projects of these gated communities in New Cairo.

الصفحة الأولى

الأربعاء 23 من شوال 1424 هـ 17 ديسمبر 2003 السنة 127- العدد 42744

مبارك يتفقد مدينة الرحاب ومشروعات الإسكان بالقاهرة الجديدة
الرئيس يطلب تشجيع المواطنين علي الإقامة بالمجتمعات الجديدة





متابعة: حسن عاشور
قاد الرئيس حسني مبارك أمس بجولة في مدينة القاهرة الجديدة ومدينة الرحاب في إطار متابعة الرئيس للمجتمعات والمشروعات العمرانية الجديدة الواقعة شرقي القاهرة. وقد بدأ الرئيس مبارك جولته التفقدية بزيارة مدينة الرحاب كأول تجمع سكني متكامل يشتمل القطاع الخاص حيث كان في استقباله لذي وصولة أمس الدكتور محمد إبراهيم سليمان وزير الإسكان والمرافق والمجتمعات العمرانية والسيد هشام طلعت مصطفى رئيس مجلس إدارة الشركة العربية للمشروعات والتطوير العمراني المالكة لمدينة الرحاب.

وقد رافق الرئيس مبارك خلال جولته أمس الدكتور عاطف عبيد رئيس مجلس الوزراء والمشير حسين طنطاوي وزير الدفاع والانتاج الحربي والسيد صفوت الشريف وزير الإعلام والدكتور حسين كامل بهاء الدين وزير التربية والتعليم والسيد حبيب العادلي وزير الداخلية والدكتور حسن خضر وزير الترميم والتجارة الداخلية والدكتور عوض تاج الدين وزير الصحة والدكتور عبد الرحيم شحاته محافظ القاهرة. وقد استمع الرئيس الي شرح من رئيس الشركة الذي أوضح أن مدينة الرحاب تقع في مدينة القاهرة الجديدة وتبلغ مساحتها 6 ملايين متر مربع حيث تعد نموذجا مثاليا لمجتمع حضاري متكامل الخدمات قائم بذاته.

وقد استفسر الرئيس مبارك عن المشروعات المستقبلية للمجموعة المالكة لمدينة الرحاب فقال رئيس الشركة إن المجموعة تعزم إقامة مشروع سياحي كبير في منطقة سيدي عابد الرحمن سيرفض علي الرئيس مبارك خلال فترة تسعة أشهر.

وقال إن المشروع يقام علي مساحة 6 ملايين متر مربع في منطقة سيدي عابد الرحمن.



الرئيس حسني مبارك يتفقد تيار مستقبلية
الرئيس حسني مبارك يتفقد تيار مستقبلية

Figure 4: President Mubarak visits Al-Rehab as Reported by Al-ahram (one of the national newspapers), online, on December 17, 2010. Source: <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2003/12/17/FRON9.HTM>, accessed 30 March, 2011.

The unit prices in New Cairo, mainly in Al-Rehab, were lower at that time compared to current prices. These relatively low prices motivated people to move to the remote suburban neighborhoods in the early period. “The prices of apartments at the time were much lower than they are now, which attracted us”, Adam says. The smallest villas sold by Al-Rehab’s developers, Talat Mustafa Group, for 600 thousand LE in 1999 increased to around 2 million LE

by 2010.³⁶ Adam's father purchased the apartment because he predicted that within ten years many people would inhabit the desert land of Al-Rehab and its surrounding areas and that, like all newly populated places, essential shops and services would also be established in the area. And thus, Hani anticipated that the price of the units would increase once those services existed. Adam and his parents envisioned that Al-Rehab would be perfect in the future because a number of reputable companies had relocated to the suburb by 1998. For the family, the presence of these companies was a sign that the area was good, and so the family was motivated to move there. His story is similar to many other families living there now.

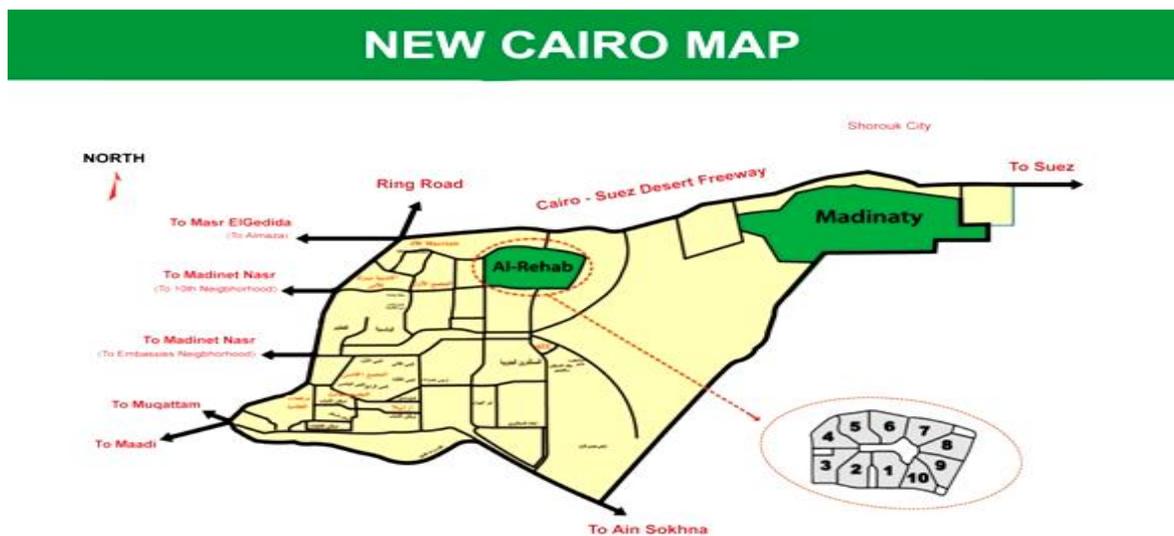


Figure 5: Modified map: New Cairo adopted from <http://www.alrehabcity.com/newrehab/Location.aspx>, accessed Oct 24, 2010

The Egyptian government attempted to decentralize the city of Cairo by encouraging the private housing real estate companies to invest in Cairo's suburbs, pulling those who have

³⁶ Around \$107,142 to in 1999 to around \$357,142 in 2010. From a personal conversation with a representative from Al-Rehab's sales department (April, 2010). In 1999 Egyptian pound exchange rate to US Dollar was 3.4; in 2010 it is 5.7.

purchasing power to relocate to the city's newly-created suburbs. Brand new private language schools and other academic institutions are now located in New Cairo. Furthermore, the private academic institutions, private grade schools, and multinational companies which had previously existed elsewhere in Cairo, relocated to the suburb of New Cairo, which is not far away from Al-Rehab City (Singerman 2009:14). The privatization wave that prevailed in New Cairo has acted as a catalyst for the flow of people moving to privatized, gated neighborhoods. This is parallel to the increased purchasing power of the middle class due to the migration of some Egyptians for employment abroad, such as work in the oil producing countries since the time of Sadat's *Infitah* (Open Door Policy) (Abaza 2006:157-158).

Despite the increase in price, demand for the units has also increased. Since the prices have kept getting higher and higher, without ever decreasing, Al-Rehab began to be seen as an elite neighborhood, which now attracts well-off people. It can be argued that the move to Al-Rehab for some people in its early stages was not a retreat from the city for class reasons (Younis 2005), but this eventually became a reason for some people to move there. With rising prices and reputation, it appears to have become over time a place the upper classes can look to as an escape from the rest of the city and its problems. One way to understand the latter is, on a macro level, that it shows the success of the neoliberal dream of segregation. Another way to see it, on a micro level, is as a new consumption pattern, namely, conspicuous consumption, while this itself is crystallized in an obvious physical segregation.

Various private academic institutions, besides the American University in Cairo, found their place in New Cairo.³⁷ These include the German University, Future University and Modern Academy, as well as a variety of private primary and secondary schools, such as the American International School, Cairo English School, and International School of Egypt. The fees of these private universities and schools are extremely high and out of reach from the major layer of Egyptian Society. The location of these private education institutions is a pulling factor encouraging the flow of many well-off families with children who attend private schools in New Cairo.

Mayada's family is one such example of the pulling force of academic institutions in New Cairo. Mayada is a 22-year-old Egyptian-Dutch undergraduate student at the American University in Cairo (AUC). She has lived with her parents and her 11-year-old brother in Al-Rehab since 2008, when they decided to move to "*makan raqi* (a classy/high-class neighborhood) in New Cairo." The usage of vocabulary such as *makan raqi* indicates that the move to Al-Rehab is a retreat based on class purposes. The family wanted to be close to the new campus of AUC, and also to Mayada's brother's private school, both of which are located in New Cairo. Mayada explains that commuting from their old villa in Al-Qanater district to the new campus consumed around two hours per day. Mayada's brother also spent long hours commuting to and from school. Because of this, the family decided to move to New Cairo to be within a close distance to both her brother's school and her university. From Mayada's point of view, the relocation of her university from downtown Cairo to New Cairo was a great idea. She complains about the traffic congestion in downtown Cairo streets, and says that, "Driving to and

³⁷ According to Abaza, "The campus of the American University in Cairo (AUC) moved in September 2008 from the central Tahrir Square to the Quattameyya heights on the outskirts of the desert, an area now designated the New Cairo" (2011: 1076).

from the old campus in downtown was horrible.” When the campus was relocated, her family decided that the best option to avoid the long hours spent commuting to New Cairo was to move to one of its neighborhoods.

Another example is that of Nora, an Egyptian housewife in her mid-fifties. She has lived in a villa with her two sons, Ahmed and Kareem, since 2007. Her husband, Magdy, works as a construction engineer and carries out projects in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Dubai. The location in New Cairo of her sons’ schools attracted the family to move to Al-Rehab. Ahmed is an undergraduate student majoring in business administration at the Modern Academy, and Kareem is an undergraduate student majoring in computer science at the German University in Cairo. Nora and her husband were always worried about the long distance their sons drove to school. They often hear from their friends about the deaths of youths in car accidents while on the way to their private universities in New Cairo. She justified their move to Al-Rehab with the shorter distance her sons would drive, which would supposedly reduce the risk of road accidents. Yet this can be seen as illogical, since most of these accidents happen on the roads of New Cairo itself, where Al-Rehab is located.³⁸ The family’s explanation raises some questions: Is the move of the whole family really just for the few years that their sons will spend at university? Are there not other motives that they are not expressing?

It could be that Nora was also driven by class-based motivations, as seems to be the case with other participants interviewed. The family used to live in the Mohandesiin district. After three months of living in Al-Rehab, Magdy and Nora decided to sell their apartment in Mohandesiin and bought another one in Al-Rehab for their son, Ahmed. Earlier in 2006, they

³⁸ Afify, Heba. August 29, 2008. “Cairo’s Ring Road: Public Enemy Number One.” *Daily News Egypt*. <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=16108>, accessed October 10, 2010.

also purchased an apartment in Al-Rehab for Kareem. It is common among well-off Egyptian parents to purchase housing units for their sons to reside in when they get married—*ye' ameno mostaqbalhom* (to secure their future). Nora says, “We wanted our sons to live in *makan nedeef* (a clean neighborhood) when they get married.” Nora further expresses her views regarding her move to Al-Rehab, and about the districts in which they used to live in Cairo:

Mohandesiin *rahet aleha* (became old fashion), *lammet* (collected or populated by the lower classes) and *bayeat* (polluted). Al-Rehab is a *nedeef* (clean) place, and in it reside *nas nedeefa* (clean people). Our neighbors are *nas mouhtarama* (respectful people)... I mean *wilad nas* (literally means sons of people and figuratively means decent people)... *nas raqeya* (civilized people).

The prejudicial connotations of these elitist, classist notions of newness, civilization, cleanness and decency indicate a desire for urban segregation and a keeping of distance from “the other”: the dirty, polluted, and uncivilized. Nora’s decision-making shows an elitist, class-based behavior and view. The verbalism expressed by the rich shows us the desire to push away the unwanted poor. Verbalism such as *wilad nas* (sons of people), demonstrates a classist notion. If they are not sons of people, who are they sons of? Are not the rest sons of people as well? Or are they sons of non-humans? Indirectly, this phrase connotes negative stigmatization of the others living in the city of Cairo.

In the early stages of Al-Rehab, the people were worried because the area was surrounded by desert. Their worries, however, were met with the feature of private security. Although the fear has remained, its nature has altered. Now that the area is more developed the residents desire the continued presence of private security, but now it is in order to further monitor the neighborhood from the undesired outsiders. These outsiders come to Al-Rehab’s recently opened commercial areas, such as the food-court and shopping malls. In the early period fear emerged because the surrounding areas of Al-Rehab were undeveloped and the existence of

private security helped in dealing with this fear. Later on, its residents became afraid from the outsiders along with the workers within their community. For Adam and his family, the private security services are another attractive feature of Al-Rehab, alleviating their worries about living in a suburban neighborhood. In Adam's words, "The entire area and its surroundings were basically a desert land... Since no one knew when exactly Al-Rehab was going to become populated, private security services were essential right from the beginning." The public police presence was not extensive at the start, unlike today due to low density in the early stages, according to Adam. In fact he is of the opinion that the need for private security is more crucial than before, due to the many new commercial activities in Al-Rehab that attract outsiders. Also, the various commercial areas employ numerous workers who, he thinks, need to be monitored by the private security guards. Adam's statement, like others of my participants, demonstrates that there is a wide-spread state of moral panic toward "the other", those who work in Al-Rehab. This was also made apparent as the residents I interviewed repeated the same verb: "need"— they *need* to monitor the workers.

Another case is that of Zeyad, a 43-year-old Egyptian who works as a tourist guide. Zeyad has lived in Al-Rehab with his Italian wife since 2001. He remarks that along with the increase in the number of inhabitants and commercial activities in Al-Rehab, more private security restrictions are being imposed to screen the outsiders. Zeyad recalls that when he purchased his apartment, security was one of the main marketing tools used to attract people to Al-Rehab; and it attracted him as well.

Mayada too is very enthusiastic about narrating the significance of private security. She informs me that the security service in Al-Rehab was another incentive to move there:

The security guards around my building know all the residents. They know both the owners and the renters of the apartments. The security guards are vigilant about asking people entering the building—no matter whether they are deliverymen, servants, visitors—where they are going.

Mayada tells me in a proud and confident tone that if a person tries to enter Al-Rehab by taxi, the security guards at the gates only allow the vehicle to pass through a certain gate. If the person in the taxi wants to enter from one of the restricted gates, then he or she would first need to get out of the taxi. Only then would the person be allowed to enter through the gate on foot. She elaborates that the taxi driver entering Al-Rehab from the restricted gate must provide the security guards with his identification card. In an overconfident tone, Mayada expresses how happy she was when she noticed that the private security department started monitoring the gates by using security cameras and car sensors. She states excitedly, “The constant attention to enhancing the quality of security services in Al-Rehab makes me feel safer every time the security department adds a new security measure.”



Figure 6: Vehicle sensor located at the Gate-13 entrance to Al-Rehab City

There is a strong desire among my participants to limit the accessibility to Al-Rehab of people who belong to lower socio-economic classes. This desire is not only concerning Al-Rehab's residential venues but also its commercial areas. In an exasperated tone Nora tells me how angry she was when she ran into Samya, her former maid, in one of Al-Rehab's shopping malls. She then questions the accessibility to Al-Rehab by outsiders:

I met Samya in Al-Rehab's shopping mall during one of the weekends. I was really annoyed because we pay a huge amount of money to maintain our quality of life...the quality of life of the residents...and then you find, unexpectedly, your former maid betetfasah (strolling) in the mall. I am talking about the same maid that used to complain about the long hours and cost of commuting to and from Al-Rehab. Sebnalhom gam'at Aldewal gayeen warana Leah? (We left them Gamet Al Dowal Street in Mohandesiin area. Why are they following us?) Al-Rehab is now distributing a questionnaire via the security guards to ask our opinion regarding its accessibility. I filled it out and requested that they impose stricter restrictions concerning access to Al-Rehab... We do not pay maintenance fees to Al-Jehaz (Al-Rehab's management Company) to let outsiders benefit from the same advantages we enjoy... Especially since outsiders are crowding the shopping malls and the food-court during the weekends and leave us with no spaces to park our cars.

Nora assumed that her former servant was only strolling through the mall, and did not think that she was possibly searching for a job in one of the shops there. This tells us that she can only judge from one dimension which feeds and mirrors her strong desire to limit the accessibility to the entire neighborhood, to allow only the privileged insiders to enjoy its commercial features.

Nora predicts that if *Jehaz* Al-Rehab does not impose stricter restrictions against accessing Al-Rehab, it will eventually resemble Mohandesiin,³⁹ a busy commercial area. In Nora's opinion, visitors who want to enter Al-Rehab should pay at least 100LE each time. She asserts, "I am strongly against allowing entrance to outsiders." Nora adds, "The ones who want

³⁹ Mohandesiin became one of the most crowded areas in Cairo. It is full of commercial activities. In particular, Gama'at Al-Dowl Al-Arabia Street, where people from nearby slums frequently stroll and window shop.

to perform Friday prayers⁴⁰ in the mosques can go to any other mosque outside Al-Rehab. There are numerous mosques in New Cairo.” She thinks that since the church is located close to gate 13, Al-Rehab’s administration should also limit the accessibility of the churchgoers. The administration should create a path for the church visitors (the outsiders) which would allow them to enter and leave the church without entering Al-Rehab itself.

In addition to the issue of accessibility, Nora fervently demands replacing the fences, which surround Al-Rehab, with high walls similar to those constructed around other gated communities in New Cairo. She believes that criminals can easily climb over Al-Rehab’s surrounding fences. From her point of view, walls are a more effective security measure than mere fences. She criticizes Al-Rehab’s administration for refusing to replace the fences with walls. She states that Al-Rehab’s administration claims that constructing walls around Al-Rehab would place it under the category of a resort, and thus the company would be required to pay higher taxes. Yet, she informs me that “numerous residents are strongly demanding high walls to protect the neighborhood.” From this, her request for high walls instead of fences can be seen as either a means of conspicuous consumption, a desire to imitate other upper class enclaves in New Cairo (since she draws the comparison), and/or it tells us that there is state of moral panic among those who have this demand. It seems most likely that it is a combination of all of these interpretations.

As I touched upon in Denis’s argument in chapter one, he states that the marketing of security measures put in place in Cairo’s closed communities is shallow compared to the ones he finds more credible elsewhere (2006:64). The research for this thesis confirms the relevance of conspicuous consumption, as mentioned above, and amplifies Al-Rehab’s strategy of using very

⁴⁰ Muslims go to perform prayers *gam’a* (collectively) at noon on Fridays.

lightweight measures to trigger the desires and needs for security and status-marking to realize high profits. This is because the city's management is using these superficial means of security and segregation, and not embarking on construction of truly effective measures to help extinguish the fears of residents like Nora, who speaks of her need for walls, not just fences. The demand for high walls is a materialization of the idea of limiting accessibility of the stereotyped, undesirable, poor, and criminal other. At the same time the higher the walls are, the higher the status of the residents. Thus, the walls symbolize the desire for both securing their community from "the other", poor potential criminals from their rich neighborhood. The walls also function as status markers, and are an example of conspicuous consumption.

Screening or filtering the outsiders by private security guards clearly demonstrates the desire for restricting the access of the unwelcomed poor from the rich neighborhood. Zeyad asserts that it is rather unfortunate that, in order to maintain Al-Rehab's greenery, it is necessary to apply further restrictions against outsiders accessing the area. However, Zeyad believes this must be done. Outsiders, mainly the lower class ones, can access the *raqi* (elite) neighborhood and act in an "uncivilized" manner. They may even commit criminal acts there against the residents and their properties, as it is well-known to be a rich neighborhood. Zeyad adds, "When the society is *raqi* and well-developed, the society does not need walls." Zeyad's classist words stigmatize "the other", the outsider, the poor, and those living outside the gates, all as uncivilized people; they are potential criminals, threatening Al-Rehab's rich inhabitants in their rich neighborhood. Zeyad seems conflicted within his opposing ideas, as he wishes that the lower-class outsiders could be welcomed in his neighborhood, yet he thinks they lack the sophistication to act in civilized ways, and some of them might even be criminals.

Many of the residents within Al-Rehab are placing additional security measures, such as security bars, on their homes. Based on my interviews, this demonstrates a distrust of private security guards who come from lower classes. This is either because the residents are afraid that someone can simply get passed the private security guards, or they distrust the guards themselves. The distrust of the poor private security guards materializes, according to the participants, in the placing of security bars within the already guarded community. This shows that the rich cannot get far enough away from the lower-class outsiders. Adam has not placed additional security bars on his home, and explains the phenomenon by saying that some of these Egyptian residents in Al-Rehab question the integrity and trustworthiness of the lower-class security guards themselves. They think that the guards are the ones who may rob them, and “*yetma3o fehom*” (commit a crime out of greed against them). Are there not among the rich, people who would also commit a crime out of greed? Of course, rich as well can commit such a crime. Yet, the state of moral panic is dominating the participants’ perceptions and expectations.

Adam’s observation of the distrust in private security guards overlaps with the story of Nora. She believes that private security is an insufficient means of protection. Private security relies on guards, and as they are humans they might fall asleep while on the job. Moreover, Nora states that there are some cases where private security guards collaborate with criminals. The guards themselves live in poor areas and work for long hours, on average around 12 hours per day, six days a week, and for low wages. Each of them earns around 900 LE per month (around US\$150), as I learnt from Belal, a security guard in charge in the commercial area. And as Nora remarks, “The prices of goods are increasing and wages are too low to satisfy the needs of these young men, even to get married”. Although Nora is sympathetic with the guards and their

economic condition, she sees in this a risk that these guards may become motivated to collaborate with criminals.

The Voices of “the Other”: Private Security Guards

The private security guards themselves are aware of the distrust felt by the residents.

Hanafi, a security guard in his early-thirties, works in Al-Rehab. He told me about Sara:

Madam Sara drives every night and checks the kiosks of the security guards located around her villa. If she does not find a security guard in any of these kiosks, she takes a picture of the empty kiosk with her camera and sends the picture to the security department. The security department trusts her word over the security guards and punishes those guards who were not in their positions or patrol areas. Also, she reports to the security department if she finds any of the security guards falling asleep, and she also takes pictures of them as evidence.

Sara is obsessed about the quality of the security service. She acts like a commander inspecting the battalion. Hanafi understands Sara’s obsession with security, though, and he tells me that some security guards do not take their jobs seriously. They prefer to gather together during their shifts and chat. Hanafi seems to support Sara’s position. He is disappointed that these guards give a bad image to the rest. Gated communities like Al-Rehab provide a great opportunity for employment, in Hanafi’s opinion. Rich people need others to serve them, and poor people need jobs with good incomes, Hanafi explains. He himself earns just 900LE per month. He thinks that someone working for 12 hours each day, six days a week deserves a higher salary—at least 1200LE. The security guards raised this issue with the security department, Hanafi explains, and they are still waiting for the response. He tells me that, “I see that we [the residents and the security guards] are all helping each other”. Therefore Hanafi believes that Sara has the right to investigate the performance of the security guards in her area since she pays money for the service. While Sara has the right to want good service for her money, her behavior seems obsessive.

And it is not only Hanafi who notices the distrust among residents. Other security guards interviewed have similar experiences. Mahmoud is in his mid-twenties. He tells me that new residents usually take a long time until they trust him. Only after they observe his work performance enough do they start to show some trust. This is displayed through their exchanging cellular phone numbers, so that they can reach each other easily in case of any problems. Emad, another security guard in his mid-twenties, finds that some residents trust him, but this is then undermined whenever stories are spread of robberies occurring in the community. If any names of guards are somehow linked, this makes the residents distrust all of the security guards. This is followed by more complaints of guards being away from their kiosks. But as Emad explains, the guards are not meant to just sit in the kiosk at all times. In fact it is their responsibility to patrol certain areas, and must therefore leave the kiosk. “We are ordered by the security department to patrol the areas which we are responsible for”, Emad says. This is the area around the kiosk where the guard is usually sitting. “Most of the resident want a security kiosk in front their houses... we are not *bawabeen* (traditional doorkeepers⁴¹)...many of us are well educated. Some of us earned diplomas, while others earned bachelor's degrees, as in my case.” While Emad thinks the general distrust is not justified, he understands that in Egyptian society the rich always distrust the poor, “Merely because of their poverty”, he says.

The distrust in the private security guards is also seen in the case of Adam. Throughout the six years that Adam has lived in Al-Rehab he has noticed a rise in the number of security guards. Adam has heard stories from different residents about the various robberies perpetrated

⁴¹ Many *bawabs* come from rural areas and settle in Cairo with their families, where the house or apartment-building's association gives them a small room with bathroom in the ground floor or in the basement. Many of them are uneducated or have some basic education.

by security guards, and provides me with accounts of some of these events, which include gold, laptops, and money stolen from houses.

Adam, on different occasions, has heard stories about deliverymen working in Al-Rehab who were suspected of theft. Yet, he is content that workers in Al-Rehab must be permitted by *Jehaz* Al-Rehab to work in the neighborhood. Adam is happy as permitted workers, the outsiders, can be quickly banned if they cause any sort of problems, violence or criminal acts. However, his fear is not alleviated, and he himself does not use delivery services because of this. This again indicates that there is a state of moral panic, an exaggeration of fear, toward the lower classes for those who are living in a gated community labeled as a rich neighborhood. This labeling is contributing to a mood of moral panic among its well-off residents as they think that it is targeted by criminals.

Internal Migration



Figure 7: The Youth Housing in First District, nearby Al-Rehab

As a worker in Al-Rehab, Adam narrates his own experience concerning the internal migrants, working as deliverymen at the pharmacy where he works in Al-Rehab. The ten deliverymen who work with Adam in the pharmacy live together in one apartment in *Iskan Al-Shabab* in *AlTagamo'a Al-Awal* (Youth Housing in First District). The youth housing is very close to Al-Rehab, though not inside the community itself. The owner of the pharmacy rents the apartment for the ten employees. The rent is 600 LE – around 100 US dollars per month. The deliverymen commute from this district to gate six in Al-Rehab by microbus,⁴² a ride that costs them between 75 Pt. and 1LE. Then, they take Al-Rehab's internal bus service from gate six to the commercial area where the pharmacy is located.



Figure 8: Motorbikes owned by deliverymen in the souk (commercial area)

Adam explains that the deliverymen work in two shifts. The duration of each shift is twelve hours. He informs me that their salaries vary from one person to another, with the monthly salary depending on whether or not the deliveryman owns a motorbike or a bicycle, or

⁴² Nkrumah, Gamal. 2003. "In the Fast Lane" *Al Ahram Weekly Online*. "Microbuses in Egypt, as distinguished from the government-run mini-bus services, are among the most popular modes of transport, precisely because of their speed and reliability. They are widely considered one of the best options for increasing public transport capacity in the short-term." <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/648/feature.htm>, accessed Feb 20, 2010.

whether he uses one of the pharmacy's motorbikes. The owner of the pharmacy pays the person who owns a motorbike 3LE per hour (approximately 50 US cents) and 1.5 LE per hour to the person owning a bicycle or using the pharmacy's motorbikes.

Regarding the origin of these men, Adam states, "Some of the deliverymen come from cities far away, poor villages or rural areas...They prefer to work the entire month without vacation and take long vacations to be able to spend a longer time with their families." The duration of their vacations varies between one to four weeks. The deliverymen schedule their vacation amongst themselves without the interference of the owner. He goes on to say that:

The good amount of tips the deliverymen make in Al-Rehab, added to the basic salary and free accommodation provided by the pharmacy, are major incentives for wanting to work in Al-Rehab. Unlike other areas in Cairo, Al-Rehab is more attractive, as it allows the deliverymen to save more money and take longer vacations to spend with their families in the remote, poor areas.

Adam often listens to the deliverymen's conversations. They know numerous details about the customers. Adam finds the detailed information in their conversations "alarming". Hence, he never uses any delivery service in Al-Rehab:

When I hear the conversations of the deliverymen, I am always surprised by the details they know about the clients. They know whether or not they have watchdogs, whether or not they have children, how many children they have, the age of the clients and their children, when they are available at home and when they are not, how many cars the clients own and the types of cars they have, the nationalities of the clients, and when they travel. They can also determine the client's financial status based on the tip they receive... Actually, this is alarming. It makes me not use delivery services when I am at home.

Adam has internalized the fear of 'the other' from his listening to the details shared by the deliverymen in their conversations. These are in addition to the stories he hears from other residents. In his interview recalls again and again that these deliverymen are poor, demonstrating class-based prejudice.



Figure 9: Dry clean in Youth Housing district nearby Al-Rehab

The decision made by these deliverymen fits a new term used to describe internal migration in Egypt: *survival migration*. According to Ayman Zohry,⁴³ an expert on Migration Studies, survival migrants in Egypt are “rural youth, who represent the surplus of the agriculture sector[s] [and who] have no way to survive other than migrating to cities” (Zohry 2009:7). Their motivation for migrating is mainly economic, as the cities, such as Cairo, offer higher wages (Zohry 2009:7). In this context the availability of employment opportunities in New Cairo’s suburbs become pulling factors as well for these internal migrants. However, this raises a question: Is New Cairo prepared to cater to these migrants for their basic living needs? In the Youth Housing district there is a dry-cleaning shop whose only customers are men, as its laundry service is only for men’s clothing as shown in Figure (9).

Is it possible that these rural migrants might bring their families to reside one day in New Cairo’s suburbs? And is the government prepared to provide housing and services for those who cater this gated community and others like it in New Cairo? This seems very unlikely. Since the

⁴³ The development impact of internal migration: Findings from Egypt. Paper presented at International Population Conference, Morocco, September 27, 2009 to October 2, 2009. <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=90245>, accessed February 22, 2010.

government did not keep this in mind at the beginning of planning, and did not prepared the area to be inhabited by a large number of migrant workers and their families, this is likely instead to lead to the creation of slums in New Cairo. Despite the escape of the rich to live away from the poor, lower-class migrant workers again live in close proximity. This will lead to similar consequences as creation of slums in the city of Cairo. The rich areas are always magnetic to labors. This healthy for the suburban fabric, however, which will help to give space for mixing, even if on a small scale, and to re-balance the dichotomy in the urban coherence. However, without the intervention of the government to seriously provide adequate housing for such people, it will likely turn dramatically, as in the case of slums in the inner city.

Aestheticizations of Security



Figure 10: An advertisement of one of the designers of iron bars stressing on taste: “serve your will”

Not only security bars function as a protection instrument but also as a status marker. Nora justifies the placing of bars on her ground-floor and upper-floor windows, and on the front gate and around the back yard as a security measure. Yet the words used to describe her action, in fact, demonstrate her upper-class status to others, such as her neighbors and visitors:

It is common knowledge that in Al-Rehab reside nas mestrayaheen (its direct translation is ‘relaxed people’, which in the vernacular means financially well-off people)... We live in a villa, which means we have money... I mean we are perceived as rich... It is well known that rich people are targeted by criminals. The bars are a good security measure. Additionally, you can design the bars as you like... based on your own taste.

Although Nora justifies putting security bars on her house to secure her from the feared and undesirable ‘other’, her statements tell us that these security bars democratize and liberate her moral panic by designing them in a high-class taste. The security bars bring to the residents of the house the idea of fear since the bars are meant to protect. Redirecting Nora’s thoughts from the internalized moral panic to un-trap the latter to focus on the designs of bars is one way to mentally escape from the primary purpose of these bars. Designing these bars, which symbolize fear, allows the residents to direct their symbolic meaning from moral panic to “aesthetic security” (Caldeira 2000:291-296) and status markers. In other words, the taste of the residents in designing their security bars becomes a way of “conspicuous consumption” (Veblen 2007:49-69).



Figure 11: Versace logo and design on a villa’s gate



Figure 12: White security bars

Designing these security bars connotes a sign—an upper-and middle-class status marker. Some of the residents design security bars using branded logos, such as Versace. Others, for instance, paint their security bars in different colors, such as white, to differentiate themselves from others. Putting bars as a security measure is problematic because in case of a fire, the windows, for instance, cannot be used for escape. While these bars can keep potential criminals out, they can also trap the rich residents inside and potentially lead to their death.

The notion of ‘aesthetic security’ will be discussed further in chapter four, presented along with other security products used by the research participants to protect their homes within their gated community.

Media and Internalizing Fear of ‘the Other’

The perception of crime and violence among the residents of Al-Rehab has been influenced by more than a few important factors. It seems apparent that the media has played, and continues to play, a critical role in the internalization of moral panic among the upper class residents of the neighborhood. Zeyad mentions that the marketing campaigns stress *al’amn*

(safety) and that it has become one of the gated communities' most significant features. He asks, "Don't you read the newspapers?" Without waiting for my response, he continues, "Violence in Egypt has become a phenomenon. The streets are full of violence. Simply notice what happens when a car merely touches another car in the crowded streets of Cairo, the drivers will most likely be fighting." He adds, "People in Egypt now tend to claim their rights *bel eed* (by hand). They have become more aggressive and use fighting as a means to resolve their disputes rather than go to the police or resort to courts." The reporting of violent crimes in newspapers, and the internalization of the images of *baltaga* (thuggery) which Zeyad captures in Cairo's streets, are explicitly two major factors drawing him to appreciate the important role of private security in Al-Rehab.

Another consequence of media is its role in stereotyping "the other" as criminals. Thus, this stereotype can lead to an internalized fear of "the other". Nora's reference to media is clear as she earnestly narrates her experience with Egyptian domestic servants. She is uncomfortable dealing with them and believes they are potential sources of information for criminals, as she has learned from the media, in particular, newspapers.

Every day, we read in the newspapers about robberies and murders committed by servants' relatives. There has become a pattern in these types of crimes... The servants know many details about what takes place in the house, as well as the valuables inside it. Moreover, they are eager to know even more details about us. For instance, the servant, Samya, asked me once if I knew a nearby currency exchange office. Samya claimed that she needed to exchange US dollars for her relative. The truth of the matter was that she did not want to exchange dollars, but wanted to know whether or not I had US dollars or any other foreign currency. The reason behind the question was alarming. I have now become an expert in interpreting servants' questions.

Nora elaborates on another situation concerning her domestic servant that worried her:

On another occasion, Samya told me that I should get locks for the bedroom closets and dresser. She asked me in a sly manner, whether I was afraid of having

my gold and jewelry stolen. I told her that I do not keep gold at home and prefer to wear simple silver jewelry. The maid keeps asking me questions all the time to gather any sort of information about us.

Nora says, “Most of the servants come from ‘*ishash* (literally means nests, referring to the deteriorating slum areas), where drugs are widespread... drugs are a main motive for them to commit crimes.” The classist word ‘*ishash*, which Nora uses to describe the areas where the servants live in, shows that the media plays a great role in stereotyping the residents of slums as it uses the same term. Nora’s story is a good example of how media coverage of crime contributes to internalizing fear of the servants who live in slums, ‘the other’. The noticeable outcome of this internalizing of fear is exhibited in moral panic.

Like Nora, Adam was also concerned about the issue of safety when the Egyptian media, and in particular the nightly *Al-Bayt Beytak*⁴⁴ program reported an increase of incidents in local crime. The incident that affected him the most was the murder which occurred in one of the private compounds in the Sixth of October City.⁴⁵ However, he was reassured and appreciative of the increased presence of private security guards following the media’s coverage of the crime. In a dramatic way, the national Egyptian television broadcasted the arrested man, who lived in a slum area, re-enacting how he climbed up to the apartment-building in the Sixth of October incident. This is another example that shows how the media is sensationalizing the crime and

⁴⁴ It is one of the most popular night-time television programs on Egyptian television. Its name has been changed to *Masr Al-Naharda* (Egypt Today).

⁴⁵ Al-Sayed, Emad. 2008. After one week, the “police arrested Mohamed Hafez Abdel-Samei...for the murders of Heba El-Akkad and Nadine Khaled in Sheikh Zayed’s Al-Nada compound.” Abdel-Samei was a blacksmith in the residential compound and, according to security sources, confessed to the crime after his arrest. He allegedly committed the crime using a knife and iron bar. Abdel-Samei came from a poor area of greater Cairo, Al-Farag Road. <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=18216>, accessed Feb 22, 2010. It is worth mentioning that “the Court of Cassation...annulled a death sentence handed down earlier by a lesser court for Mahmoud Esawy, [the poor dweller of the slums] accused of murdering.” *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, Feb 3, 2010. <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/retrial-ordered-heba-and-nadine-murder-suspect>, accessed Feb 22, 2010.

playing on people's fears and thus it is instilling moral panic among the well-off residents of gated communities.

Almost everyone in the commercial area was talking about it (the murder), and they were closely watching any news or updates surrounding this incident. But, the occurrence of such incidents in Al-Rehab seems unlikely. The presence of the public policemen, police officers, and the official police station alleviate my worries and concerns. Of course, this is in addition to the presence of the private security guards and the newly added security cameras on the gates. Moreover, the immediate response of increasing and intensifying security in Al-Rehab in the wake of this murder greatly reassured me.

Adam too is constantly experiencing a state of moral panic. This panic is crystallized in his internalization of fear of 'the other' from local media, especially as the crime he pointed to was committed by a poor construction worker in a compound where rich people live, just like the one Adam lives in, and is similarly secured by private security guards. The extra private security measures and changes, which the security department in Al-Rehab applied, contributed to the alleviation of Adam's worries. The alleviation of fear maybe superficial or at least existing along with a persistent fear that perpetuates Adam's need for additional security. Adam elaborates on his feelings regarding the matter of safety in Al-Rehab. He brings up the example of having to work the night shift in one of Al-Rehab's pharmacies.

One night while I was working the night shift, a driver jokingly asked if I could sell him a drug called Tramadol. This drug is generally prescribed to cancer patients in high doses to relieve their pain. However, the drug is abused by some drivers, as, if taken in small doses, it will allow them to stay awake for longer periods of time. It is an addictive drug and cannot be dispensed without a prescription from a physician. Pharmacists, in many areas in the central city of Cairo, face potential risks and are sometimes subject to real violent acts especially during the night shifts. Dangerous situations arise, when addicts try to get some addictive drugs without having the required prescriptions. Regarding the case I have mentioned, to avoid any dangerous developments, I played it smart and told the driver, in the same joking tone, that the pharmacy did not have permissions from the Ministry of Health to buy and sell drugs in this category.

Even though there is the potential for dangerous and threatening situations during the night shift in Al-Rehab, he still feels safe due to the existence of the private security guards.

‘Nas Nedeefa’ and the Commodification of Security

Classist phrases, used frequently by one of my participants, signal that being protected by private security guards and systems creates a sense of superiority. Mayada’s sense of self-importance is apparent in her words: “The workers in the commercial area and in the food-court know very well the type of customer they are dealing with. As for the shop owners and renters, they are *nas nedeefa* (literally means clean people)”. Mayada defines the meaning of ‘*nas nedeefa*’ as the *crème de la crème* (the elite). Is her sense of importance encouraged by her use of private security? The importance of one’s self and being part of an elite neighborhood perhaps leads to her perception of ‘the other’. The use of private security companies also becomes a status marker, and eventually this, along with the media, leads to a discourse of inferiority, by seeing ‘the other’ as polluted, worthless, and dirty.

If the shop owners and renters in Al-Rehab are clean people, then what about the other shop owners and renters in the city of Cairo? What type of customers are they dealing with? Are they unclean people, polluted, and unimportant?

Mayada’s admiration for private security, expressed in a classist tone, demonstrates that the commodification of security while living in a private neighborhood has become a status marker, and another form of conspicuous consumption. As mentioned in chapter two, Caldeira (2002) states that the fear of criminality is a factor which has led people to move to gated communities, where the “new aesthetic of security imposes its new logic of surveillance and distance as a means for displaying status” (2005:328-329). When security becomes a commodity

which only well-off-people can pay for, while others with low purchasing power are unable to afford it, then the display of private security as shown by the participants above connotes a sense of conspicuous consumption. The existence of greater numbers of private security companies is a result of the rise of neoliberal policies in Egypt. The occurrence of private security companies is due to the Egyptian government's support of privatization in various sectors (Denis 2006: 58-59).

The Uncivilized 'Other'

Residents' evaluation of strangers visiting the community depends to a great degree on the outsiders' demeanor and appearance. One way that this can be sensed is from their perception of threat from lower class outsiders, particularly in the case of sexual harassment. The prevalence of sexual harassment in Egypt is endemic. According to the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, "83% of Egyptian women have been exposed to sexual harassment."⁴⁶ The residents of Al-Rehab take pride in the heavy security measures in place, and the high-quality residents who live beside them. They feel that Al-Rehab is not like other neighborhoods in greater Cairo, especially not like downtown or Mohandasiin. However, while the residents view Al-Rehab as being an exception, incidents of sexual harassment are still mentioned by my participants. The way my interview subjects speak about the subject reveals stigmatization and class-bias.

Sami, a 23-year-old Egyptian student at the American University in Cairo, has lived in an apartment in Al-Rehab with his parents since 2006. Sami says that, "though the residents of Al-Rehab and its visitors (the good looking outsiders) belong to upper and middle classes, sexual harassment does exist in Al-Rehab, but it is done by outsiders." How does he know it is only

⁴⁶ Women Newsletter. 2009.
http://ecwronline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&lang=en&id=402, accessed March 11, 2011.

done by outsiders? Sami's judgment of strangers appears to be based on a class prejudice. When relating an incident concerning his sister, Jasmine, who was sexually harassed, Sami explains that "Jasmine did not think that the man was a resident of Al-Rehab. This is because we both believe that a resident of Al-Rehab would never behave in such a manner." Sami clarifies his statement, saying that, "Since the residents of Al-Rehab are educated and belong to upper and middle classes, it is almost impossible to think that a person from these strata would exhibit such offensive behavior." They both, therefore, assumed that the harasser was either a driver, during his working hours in his boss's car, or an outsider in his own car visiting Al-Rehab. Because of this experience and perception, Sami demands more measures restricting entrance to outsiders. But Sami's justification for limiting the accessibility of the uncivilized poor, 'the other', by implementing stronger security measures signals that some of the residents assume that those who did the harassing are outsiders when in fact they might not be. This assumption is likely based on class-bias, which links positive assumptions and associations toward the residents' class, and negative thoughts about other classes who are assumed to behave in uncivilized ways.

'Wilad Nas'

Another example of harassment comes from Noha, a 19-year-old Egyptian undergraduate student at the American University in Cairo. She says that she was sexually harassed by two young men in a car, near the food-court area, when she was on her way to one of the cafés. She says, "I am *mestaghraba* (surprised) that this behavior came from *wilad nas* (sons of people)." When asked what she meant by *wilad nas*, she elaborates that, "*Wilad nas* is often used when referring to young people who are *meta'almeen* (educated), *metrabeyeen* (well brought up), and *mestrayaheen* (rich)." Noha explains that she can tell whether a person is *ibn nas* (single of *wilad nas*, literal translation is 'a son of people') "*Min shaklo* (from his appearance)." Noha mentions

several times that she is shocked that *wilad nas* can behave in such a manner. She goes on saying, “These two young men were in a new car, a Nissan.” She emphasizes that it was an “*a’rabeya mouh’tarama*” (a respectful car). When asked to clarify what she meant by the term, she answers, “*a’rabeya mouhtarama* is... a new car belonging to a certain class.” She also informs me that one of the young men was wearing designer Gucci sunglasses. Moreover, she noticed a sticker on the car belonging to one of the private universities near Al-Rehab. She says, “Many young students come to the food-court area to hang out during the day. They have usually either skipped classes or want to study together in one of Al-Rehab’s cafés.” Unlike the case of Jasmine, Noha tends to accept this sexual harassment although she did not state that frankly.

But, this acceptance of the two young middle-upper class men can be viewed clearly when comparing Noha’s and Jasmine’s definition of ‘the other’. These two different positions of both girls are best analyzed by borrowing the words of Anouk de Koning:

A look might be part of an appropriate and desired visibility, or might be harmful and defiling, depending on social level. In contrast to the unwanted gaze of men of a lower class, those of classy others were invited, even desired. [2009:544]

One of my participants’ perceptions of threat is linked to vulnerability of the women in the streets of Cairo. Mayada thinks sexual harassment incidents are much less common in Al-Rehab compared to downtown Cairo and Nasr City. She says, “People in Al-Rehab, whether they are residents, visitors, or workers, think a million times before harassing anyone. Unlike the case in the streets of Cairo, the security guards in Al-Rehab will promptly intervene.” Mayada continues,

If a woman or a girl was sexually harassed in Abbas al-Aqad Street in Nasr City, for instance, who would she call for help? Of course, no one...But, in Al-Rehab, calling one of the security guards is an available option. Several actions can be taken against the person, such as taking him to Al-Rehab police station and preventing him from entering Al-Rehab for good.

A further example is found in the story of Adam. During the Egyptian national football team's victory in the African Cup, Adam saw girls among the crowd in Al-Rehab celebrating without being harassed. He adds, "Though the cars were honking loudly, no girls were being hassled." Adam contrasts the festivities of the African Cup in Al-Rehab to the ones that had taken place in the district of Heliopolis,⁴⁷ with specific reference to Al-Thawra Street. He says, "There were almost no women or girls taking part in the celebration. Most of the celebrators were men and boys." Adam thinks that private security plays a role in reducing the sense of threat of sexual harassment among the women in Al-Rehab, since it is a privatized gated community. In contrast, there is an absence of women during the same type of event in the public streets of Cairo, and this is due to the streets there being unsecured public spaces, where women are vulnerable to harassments, according to my participants.

Private Security versus Public Police

Private security guards and services sustain the exclusion of the unwanted 'other' which the public police cannot entirely exclude, since it is not their personal responsibility. Based on the residents of Bulaq Al-dakrur⁴⁸: "[A]ccounts of relations with the police emphasize the latter's abuse of authority and use of violence and humiliation... at the same time, they express a desire to avoid dealing with the police even when there may be a need for their intervention as in the case of street fights and disputes between residents... [A]s such a great deal of conflict goes unreported and is settled internally whether peacefully or violently" (Ismail 2006:157). From the observations of participants in the research for this thesis, it is clear that there is public distrust in the police. This makes it complicated, as these participants also distrust the private security staff,

⁴⁷ Heliopolis is located approximately ten minutes from Al-Rehab city.

⁴⁸ It is located in Giza. Giza is located on the west bank of the Nile River, around 20 km southwest of central Cairo.

even as they claim to feel safe. Indeed, they demonstrate an actual, underlying fear when they state how they feel more secure by having both private and public security in Al-Rehab, an already gated community.

To Adam, the existence of public police helps in making him feel safe. He asserts that the presence of governmental police officers from Helwan governorate⁴⁹ is indeed an asset. Nonetheless, it does not detract from the significant role of Al-Rehab's private security guards and services. As he says, "Having them both in the same location is an advantage." Adam humorously asks, "Who would hate having two types of security in place?"

The example of Adam shows an underlying mistrust in both the public and private security. He and other residents say that they feel safe, yet at the same time they say they are worried within Al-Rehab; this despite the gates, fences and private security guards and public police. According to anthropologist Setha Low, who conducted an ethnography of residents in different gated communities in Texas, San Antonio and Long Island: "[T]here is a false sense of security," as "gates [and private security systems]...may contribute to placing residents at increased risk by making the community [become seen] as a wealthy enclave" (2003:130-131). Gates and fences intensify the residents' fear of the outsiders in general, and even the 'outsider' workers within their community. Protected by private security, fences, and gates—all of this results in the internalizing of fear among the participants, as these tools symbolize protection and give them a sense of being important people who must therefore be in need of protection from the undesirable, poor outsiders.

⁴⁹ On April 2011, Helwan Governorate was cancelled and it is no longer a governorate, and Al-Rehab City was placed under Cairo Governorate

Adam greatly admires the collaboration between the private security guards and the public police officers. As a case in point, he cites the celebration that took place in Al-Rehab after the Egyptian national football team won the African Cup.

Public police officers were removing all banners insulting Algeria or Algerians, while Al-Rehab's security guards and policemen were directing traffic to ensure its smooth and safe flow. Both security forces were collaborating to guide celebrators and fans to certain squares to avoid any disturbance to other residents.

Adam contrasts the festivities of the African Cup in Al-Rehab to those that took place in the Heliopolis⁵⁰ district, with specific reference to Al-Thawra Street.

Most of the celebrators were men and boys. The Algerian flags were burned. Men were shouting offensive slurs against Algerians and Algeria. There was also a number of insulting banners to Algeria and Algerians. The traffic was horrible and the cars were barely moving. There was an obvious absence of police officers in the street.

Adam compares these two different situations. On the one hand, Al-Rehab is a civilized neighborhood. It is owned by a corporation concerned about its reputation because people from various nationalities reside there. On the other hand, Heliopolis is a district open to the entire Egyptian population.

Al-Rehab should be safeguarded from this uncivilized behavior... Al-Rehab is a privately-owned company that does not want to upset any of its residents, or potential clients. Al-Rehab strives to establish and maintain a good reputation. The security guards and the police officers were controlling and organizing the celebration within Al-Rehab. Since there are various Arab and non-Arab nationalities residing there, the police and security officers were trying to avoid any clashes breaking out between Egyptians and fans from other countries.

Mayada, relates a similar sentiment. People near the food-court area noticed a man in his mid-fifties walking while deep anger appeared in his facial expressions. In the beginning, people along with private security guards encircled him in order to protect others and prevent a fight

⁵⁰ Heliopolis is located approximately ten minutes from Al-Rehab city.

from breaking out between him and the celebrators. Yet, they were afraid and stepped back as he raised a gun and it seemed like he was going to shoot them. Mayada states that in less than five minutes, the private security guards had reported this incident to Al-Rehab's police station. Policemen came immediately and arrested the man. The people were reassured and their worries subsided after the man was arrested. The police later discovered it was a fake gun.

While Adam and Mayada discuss the role of public security, Zeyad tells me a nostalgic anecdote, as if he is persuading himself how great the sense of safety was that existed decades ago, and provided by public security:

Zeyad: Do you know the Egyptian actor Ismail Yaseen⁵¹ or not?

Interviewer: What about Ismail Yaseen?

Zeyad: I will tell you something. In one of his movies, there is a popular scene where askari eldarak (policeman assigned to a certain area and patrolling especially at night). When he suspects something or hears the footsteps of someone walking in the street at night, he loudly shouts, MEEN HENAAK? (WHO IS THERE?).

In a bitter tone, Zeyad comments, "This was a long time ago. The role of *askari aldarak* was abolished. Private security guards emerged." The trust in the public police in that era has turned to distrust and dissatisfaction with the current condition of the public police, and security is now enforced by private companies.

Conclusion

When interviewed, the resident participants stated various answers regarding the motivating factors which contributed to their move to Al-Rehab City. As shown in this chapter, these various motivating factors are based on the effects of neoliberal policies, which pull the

⁵¹ Ismail Yaseen was an Egyptian comedic actor. He is famous for a series of movies, which literally hold his name in movies' titles. He was born on September 15, 1915, and died on May 24, 1972.

participants to relocate to Al-Rehab. Some of the participants' reasoning for their move was based on family requirements: they wanted their children to be close to the newly established private schools and universities. The government and its neoliberal policies encouraged these schools and universities to build new campuses in the suburban New Cairo. In addition, the advertisements in national newspapers, in which the pictures of President Hosni Mubarak conveyed to the public that these suburban enclaves are blessed by the government, also encouraged some of them to move there. This blessing reached Egyptians abroad working in oil producing countries, drawing attention to Al-Rehab. This publicized image gave the participants a trust that the government would encourage and support the provision of basic needs like everyday services and shops in the suburb. Also, the low prices of units at the time Al-Rehab was first built (when compared to those in the city) was another key factor for those buying units there especially. This seems especially the case for those who had worked abroad in the oil producing countries and who have stronger purchasing power compared to many other Egyptians.

The prices later on increased when Al-Rehab became more populated, yet the demand on purchasing and relocating to Al-Rehab also increased. However, the motivation to 'retreat' to Al-Rehab became one based on class reasoning. Evidence of this is found in many of the resident participant's own words, such as *makan raqi*, *nas nedeeffa*, *nas raqeya*, *nas mouhtarama*, and *wilad nas*. Furthermore this is evidenced when they compare the pollution, disorder, and 'uncivilized' people and traffic congestion in Cairo to the way of life in Al-Rehab.

Private security is another important incentive that attracted many of the participants to relocate to Al-Rehab. The gates, fences and demanded high walls, as found in their words, are all essential to protect them from 'the other', the poor and potential criminals. There is a state of moral panic from "the other"—both the outsiders and those who work in Al-Rehab's service

industry, such as the security guards, deliverymen, and servants. This mood of moral panic within their community leads many to use extra security measures to protect their houses, such as additional security bars, real and fake security cameras (discussed in chapter four), and watch dogs. All of these extra security measures can also be seen as a new phenomenon of ‘aesthetic security’. The private security system and the private guards can be comprehended and interpreted based on the participants’ words as a status marker and a way of conspicuous consumption. Despite all of these aestheticizations of security, the participants’ mood of moral panic still exists. This can be understood from their words concerning their distrust in private security guards and systems as well as their distrust in public security.

Some of the participants desire having both public and private security in the community. They believe that the private security guards should be monitored by public police, as the private security guards are coming from poor areas and receive low wages which might lead them to get involved in criminality with “the others”, the outsiders, or by committing crimes by themselves ‘out of greed’. Yet, at the same time, the private security guards themselves believe they are powerless. From interviews with them, they say they feel unequipped. And hence the existence of the equipped public police is essential in case of any violent crimes. Some of the participants admire the collaboration between the public police officers and the private security in certain events that take place in the community. Interestingly, there is a mood of distrust because the ones working in both the private and public security divisions receive low wages. Yet, the private security guards of Al-Rehab receive higher wages than the ones in the public police, particularly among the lower rank employees. And while the residents distrust the private security guards, the latter are aware of this distrust. The voices of the private security guards

express their awareness of this distrust, and that is due to their poverty. They also feel that the residents ignore the fact that some of these guards are well educated.

From some of the interviews of the resident participants it is apparent that the media reports about crimes and violence by ‘the other’, the poor and slum-dwellers, where the media contribute in stereotyping them, played a great role in internalizing fear and contributed to intensifying the mood of moral panic among them. Despite all the security measures taken by the participants, the private security department of Al-Rehab, and the public police, the participants’ fears are not alleviated. Living in a community labeled as rich, protected by gates monitored by security guards and security cameras and car sensors, fences, and private security cars as well as public police cars patrolling their community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, contributes significantly in making the residents feel that they are important people. They feel that they should be protected from “the other”, the poor and potential criminals. In sum, this shows the negative consequence of what is called the triumph of the neoliberal dream of segregation.

Chapter Four: Al-Rehab as Giant Shopping Mall

Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that Al-Rehab is to a great extent similar to a giant shopping mall. First, I show the tension that exists over accessibility, as can be seen through interviews with the residents and businesses owners in the community, and also through the views of outsiders. Second, I give an example of how the media used criminal acts, which occurred in Al-Rehab, for propaganda about ‘the other’. Third, I present the actions taken by *Jehaz* Al-Rehab regarding the accessibility to the community by outsiders. Fourth, I discuss the ways in which Al-Rehab creates and stimulates consumer desires among both insiders and outsiders alike. Fifth, I discuss how Al-Rehab’s outsiders consume symbols of exclusivity and cultural capital. Lastly, I discuss the changes that have come to traditional services, typically offered in Cairo, which have been altered and made modern for the residents of Al-Rehab. The impact of these changes on lower class Egyptians who have traditionally filled these service roles is also considered.

Purchasing a residence in Al-Rehab is naturally the first step to living in this giant mall, and the entry point to a special lifestyle. The components of this lifestyle in Al-Rehab are fed by desires of consumption, which in turn stimulate further consumptive habits. The presence in Al-Rehab of two shopping malls, a food-court, banks, a commercial area, commercial exhibitions, social and sports club, and a continuous demand for further commercial activities are all elements of further isolation from the city and stimulating consumptive desires. Private foreign language schools, a private hospital and clinics in Al-Rehab are also examples of isolating the residents from the city. Furthermore, such elements show us how the residents of Al-Rehab are

buying into the neoliberal dream of exclusivity, and are trying to escape the city and those who dwell there.

Tension over Accessibility

Al-Rehab's residents are discontented with the many outsiders who enter and use their community's space, including the cafes, malls, places of worship and even parking spaces. These outsiders use the private community as a public space. Thus, these outsiders are taking advantage of the privileges which the residents of Al-Rehab pay for. Also, the outsiders enter the protected, privatized space that the residents want to keep protected from the unwanted 'other'. Nader, one of the security guards in Al-Rehab, tells me that "some outsiders come to park their cars in Al-Rehab before travelling, and these people are taking advantage of the private security." As a result, "most of Al-Rehab's residents were angry and demanding extra security measures to restrict the entrance of the outsiders." Nader's story overlaps with another participant, Hind, a housewife in her mid-thirties, who has lived in Al-Rehab since 2006. She complains that, "In the parking (area) of the apartment building where I live, some outsiders park their cars for more than two weeks during their travels, as I learnt from my neighbors." Hind believes that the people who park their cars in Al-Rehab are probably either relatives of other residents or their friends. She tells me that the security department is giving special attention to this issue now, and is carefully monitoring the parking areas. This attitude is another element making Al-Rehab become something like a giant shopping mall, with its large parking lots similar to those found in the luxurious shopping malls in Cairo and other cities. Hind is pleased that the security department surveyed the residents regarding accessibility of the outsiders. The results of the survey showed that the residents wanted to limit accessibility, and so the security department,

collaborating with *Jehaz Al-Rehab*, responded by taking action. They now collect entrance fees from outsiders, much like the fees charged for parking in a mall's parking lot.



Figure 13: Al-Rehab's Visitor Card valid for one year

Along with these fees are new forms of security. In August, 2010, *Jehaz Al-Rehab* announced the launch of new security systems and further regulations regarding entrance through the gates. These changes were based on the residents' feedback (*Al-Rehab City Magazine* 2010:3-4). The regulations limit the access of outsiders, with visitors now grouped into three sections. Each of the outsiders (desirable visitors) pays parking fees between 5LE to 20LE per three hours, depending on the type of vehicle. In addition, each unit owner or renter is allowed to issue a maximum of ten cards (valid for one year) to his or her visitors.



Figure 14: Al-Rehab City, outside Gate -13: a sign indicates the entrance for visitors and for residents



Figure 15: First Issue of Al-Rehab City Magazine illustrates in detail the regulations for accessing Al-Rehab

The visitors of the church and mosques are also allowed to enter by a temporary permission card, which includes the time of entrance and the allowed duration. These fees are not only imposed to rise funds to maintain the community, but also these fees are intended to further limit the access of the outsiders. This is another way of limiting the accessibility of the undesirable others. So, along with the 10 visitor cards from *Jehaz Al-Rehab*, some visitors are acceptable to pay and enter, but only if they are of the allowed type, which can be recognized by their expensive cars and their 'good appearance'. This is quite similar to the screening practices of the luxurious shopping malls in Cairo, which allow entrance of this category of people of 'good demeanor'.

'Thief of Al-Rehab' and the Code of Entrance

Al-Rehab symbolizes a site of consumption in which there are dedicated consumers (residents). In addition, due to the public image of Al-Rehab as a rich area where the well-off

live, it may be as some of my participants claim, that it is a potential area for criminals from among ‘the other’. However, on the other hand the rich can also include potential criminals. Like any area in Egypt, there are many criminal acts happening. Yet, when a man such as the thief of Al Rehab gated community enters Al-Rehab and commits criminal acts, the media has used it for propaganda about ‘the other’. One example is a man whom the media called “the thief of Al-Rehab”.⁵² This man understood that to enter Al-Rehab one must have a modern, good looking car, and be very well-dressed. By this man’s understanding of the code of entrance, he was able to deceive the security guards and steal valuables from some of Al-Rehab’s residents. He was accused of stealing gold jewelry worth over one million pounds, from eight housing units in Al-Rehab City, before the recent security changes were implemented. According to “the thief of Al-Rehab”:

I do not steal from the poor- just from the rich, and that is why I went to Al-Rehab City, where there are many wealthy people. There, I watch their coming and going, and as soon as I am sure that there is no one inside the home, I make my way up. By dressing well, none of the security people ask me where I am going, as they assume that I am one of the residents of the area. Then, I break the door and take gold jewelry, laptops, and anything else inside the apartment that is easy to carry. I hide whatever I take under my clothes, and go down unnoticed, and later I pawn the stolen items at a goldsmith in the Sharqiyyah Governorate⁵³ where I live.⁵⁴

While slums are stigmatized by poverty, gated communities are labeled by their richness. It is not that one group should be victimized over the other, but they both ought to be understood as victims of the implementation of the neoliberal segregation policy. This policy contributed to the division of the urban fabric, into rich and poor. This is also not meant to criminalize one of them

⁵² *Al-Gomhoriyyah*. Crime News page. December 23, 2009.

⁵³ Located in the north of the Egypt. Its capital is Zagazig, <http://www.sharkia.gov.eg/>, accessed April 29, 2011.

⁵⁴ As quoted in *Al-Gomhoriyyah Newspaper*, December 23, 2009. I personally translated from Arabic into English.

over the other. However, it should be noted that the rich layers of society are social actors, and thus they do have agency on their actions. Likewise it is not to judge or deprive the rich from their right to consume. All layers of the society are victims of the spatial segregation which the neoliberal policy adopted and promoted, and through this created the notion of ‘the other’. The discourse of ‘the other’ is not only in the sense of exclusion of the poor but also the other in the sense of inclusion of the rich. This comes from the ones who are supporting the ‘neoliberal dream of segregation’, which has led to polarization in the urban fabric of the city.

Outsider-Insider Dilemma

Interestingly, a letter to the editor published in Al-Ahram newspaper presents the view of an outsider on Al-Rehab’s exclusion of outsiders. The letter is one vivid example of the perception of Al-Rehab as a public space in the minds of outsiders: “Congratulations to the residents of Al-Rehab City: Those who transform their city into a museum”, he writes in sarcastic tone. He then raises an important dispute, the controversial topic of outsiders visiting places of worship inside Al-Rehab. He argues that *Jehaz Al-Rehab*, Al-Rehab’s security department and Al-Rehab’s residents, do not have the right to prevent any Christian or Muslim from entering Al-Rehab’s church or mosques for prayers, as these are community worship venues. Others have stated the same view. It is apparent that non-residents/outside of Al-Rehab see Al-Rehab City as a public place. This might show that some these Egyptian outsiders are rejecting the new phenomenon of residential exclusivity that is based on class segregation.

The Conflict over Accessibility: Business Interests versus Residents

Unlike residents, business owners in Al-rehab are against limiting the accessibility of outsiders. The visits and, more specifically, the purchasing power of the well-off outsiders who visit Al-Rehab’s shops are welcomed by the shop-owners. Ironically, the additional new

restrictions against accessibility by outsiders—implemented by *Jehaz* Al-Rehab—are raising great concern among Al-Rehab’s business-owners. This is for the fact that their profits rely not only on the high-value customers who are residents of Al-Rehab, but also the revenue that comes with the influx of outsiders coming into Al-Rehab and stimulated by the consumer atmosphere that exists in the community.

Zena, who rents a clothing shop in shopping mall number two and pays 9000LE per month, is worried that the profits of the shop will decrease if access to the area is limited to non-residents. Although most of Zena’s customers are from Al-Rehab, many are outsiders. Mazen, who rents a hairdresser’s shop and pays 7000LE per month, offers a similar example. Although most of Mazen’s female customers are from Al-Rehab, he is also worried that he might lose his well-off customers who live in New Cairo. Unlike residents, who are seeking exclusivity as they paid an enormous amount of money in the pursuit of that advantage, it is obvious that the business owners are against limiting the accessibility of outsiders in order to gain more profit. Since Al-Rehab authorities limit the accessibility by asking the ‘good looking people’ to pay entrance tickets to go into the community and enjoy its commercial activities, I argue that Al-Rehab is a corporation, whose ultimate aim is to gain as much money as possible. As manifested earlier, it is also trying to compromise the residents’ need of exclusivity while maintaining its own entrepreneurial spirit. To clarify, the commercial activities in Al-Rehab are generating massive profits for those who rent business venues from the company; therefore, the company tries to compromise its residents’ desire of exclusivity with the need to allow those who have a strong purchasing power to enter the community for the commercial activities to flourish.

The New Market of Surveillance Products

Privatization of security has not only been manifested in Al-Rehab's security services such as private security guards, but also in the creation and growth of a new market for security products that can be bought and used by the residents themselves. There is now a demand for advanced home security products from the residents, with businesses now selling various security tools that help the residents secure their homes. Security cameras, intrusion alarms, extra secure locks, as well as guard-dogs, can all be observed in the community. In addition, there are some shops which sell extra-large security lamps to be attached onto the roofs of villas.

In many villas, the use of such lamps as security tools makes the villas look more like military buildings at night, rather than family residences. According to interview participants, residents use these lights so that private security guards or neighbors can spot any stranger who might try to enter the house, and to deter potential intruders. This mechanism of security costs between 1000LE to 1500LE each month in electricity bills and each lamp costs from 450LE up to 700LE depending on its size and quality, as Hani, who lives in a villa and uses such spotlights, explained.

One of the surveillance instruments used by some of my participants is guard-dog. There is great demand now for guard-dogs, according to workers in the local pet shops. This is in spite of Islamic tradition, where dogs are considered to be polluted and impure, and are especially not welcome to live inside a person's home. The costs of just one of these dogs may reach up to 20 thousand Egyptian pounds. Then of course there is the cost of food for the animal. Some of my participants tell me that they hire a trainer to train their dogs, and this costs 100LE per hour. Many owners of these watch-dogs are Muslims, and the watch-dogs stay in the garden, rather than inside the house itself, as some of the participants explained.

Yet, there is also now high demand for normal dogs, to be owned as pets and allowed to enter the homes of the residents. Many participants are in their first experience with having a dog inside their homes, as this was not traditionally a normal practice in Egypt. The price range for these dogs is from two thousand pounds up to more than 20 thousand pounds, according to various dog-owners and three different salespeople interviewed in pet shops in Al-Rehab. This new phenomenon of owning dogs signals that some of the Egyptian residents in Al-Rehab are imitating and buying into practices that are more likely seen often in western societies. This phenomenon can be also seen, symbolically, as the manifestation that these dog-owners are emulating the practices of other cultures. Owning watch-dogs is not common elsewhere in Cairo, though it exists now in some villas in the Maadi district, a middle and upper class neighborhood in south Cairo. Also, this practice existed in around mid-sixties as Abaza's narrates that the villa where she and her family lived, in Zamalek, another middle and upper class district in Cairo: "In ... [the] villa, after eight O'clock....The large dog was....released to frighten outsiders."(2006: 139).

Inspired by the way Abaza applied the work of Georg Simmel on fashion and clothes in Egypt (Abaza 2006: 189-190), I argue that Simmel's work on fashion can be applied to the phenomenon of owning normal and watch-dogs among the residents. I also argue that the desire to own dogs became fashionable as I observed lately among the residents in Al-Rehab, which signals a desire for differentiation of others. As Simmel explained, "imported fashion occupies a higher value within a group because it comes from somewhere else and is therefore a rare good" (Simmel as cited in Abaza 2006: 190). And, since this uncommon idea or practice is imported from abroad, it occupies a high value among the dog owners in Al-Rehab and a way of imitating Western societies. It also bestows on these owners a sense of superiority towards others, and

connotes a class status marker. It is argued that Carirenes have a *khawaga* (foreigner) complex, which means they have an “urge to imitate the foreigners” (Golia as cited in Abaza 2006: 186). I argue that the symbolic meaning of owing a dog can be understood as a reflection of this *khawaga* complex, which enforces the discourse of superiority among some of the dog owners and assures their superior consumptive habits.

In addition, surveillance real and fake cameras are among other security methods implemented by other participants. Based on some of interviews with the resident, security cameras are not trusted enough for ensuring security because of the risk of electricity outages and the need for continuous monitoring. Fake cameras are sold in at least one of the most popular electronics shops in the *souk* of Al-Rehab. Using fake cameras by some residents is not a safe tool but is a way to trick potential criminals, according to the same participants. However, if potential intruders think these fake cameras are real then they may be deterred, thus they are somewhat useful. Fake cameras belong to the notion of ‘aesthetic security,’ as presented in chapter three. Security cameras remind us of the notion of ‘panopticon’, which Michel Foucault (1995:195-230) discussed in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. The notion which Foucault points to is Jeremy Bentham’s architectural model designed in the last period of the eighteenth century (Danaher et al 2007:53). It is a tower that is centralized in the middle of a prison; the guards in the tower can observe every cell in the prison while the prisoners cannot know if they are being observed by the guards or not. Yet, they assume that the guards are observing them at any moment, and hence they adjust their behaviors (Danaher et al 2007:53). In modern societies, one can observe how modern surveillance, such as security cameras in luxurious shopping malls and gated communities have become a fundamental tool to watch over and monitor people’s behavior (Danaher et al 2007:54).

As mentioned in chapter three, the desire of residents to design their security bars using their own tastes, such as adding branded logos and painting their security bars in different colors than others. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1984),

Like every sort of taste, it unites and separates. Being the product of the conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others. And it distinguishes in an essential way, since taste is the basis of all that one has -people and things- and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others. [Bourdieu, 1984: 56]

This indicates a desire to differentiate and distinguish themselves from others via their consumptive habits of decorating security bars according to their personal preferences.

Consumer Behavior in Al-Rehab

There are many factors motivating the residents of Al-Rehab to shop within the confines of their own community. Naturally, many of the same factors also attract New Cairo's residents to Al-Rehab in order to shop there. One thing that makes Al-Rehab more inclusive is that one does not need to leave Al-Rehab in order to shop. Many commercial exhibitions are regularly hosted in the giant Layal-lak ("Your Night") Hall, in which various commercial vendors sell their products. Many of these products are from Pakistan, Syria, China, Turkey, and also from within Egypt.



Figure 16: An example of an outdoor advertisement within Al-Rehab of exhibitions that sells Syrian products in Layal-lak Hall

The businesspeople who rent space in this hall are happy to bring their finest goods to Al-Rehab's customers, because Al-Rehab's customers are happy to spend their money there. According to one of these businessmen, Bashar, who sells Syrian fabrics, "I buy the best fabrics from my country (Syria) and by the end of the exhibition all of the goods are sold." The residents even exchange their phone numbers with him to order further goods after the end of the exhibition. Again, the residents do not need to go outside of their community to shop. According to the exhibitors, Syrian and Chinese women's lingerie and clothing are sold quickly in the early days of the exhibition, as are the finest quality Syrian *abayaz* (traditional women's robes). According to one Chinese saleswoman who sells women's lingerie at the hall, her prices and quality are demanded by the residents. She adds that Chinese products are imported and sold in popular downtown areas such as the *Ataba*⁵⁵ district, but only the best products are selected and brought to the residents of Al-Rehab, who do not go to such busy, crowded areas downtown. Such items include women's head scarves, children's toys, Syrian and Turkish *abayat*, Chinese and Syrian women's lingerie, and luxurious bed covers sewn with shining stones. One Egyptian exhibitor, Ola, tells me that Egyptian and foreign women enjoy her traditional body and facial beauty products.⁵⁶ She makes these products herself, using *baladi* (traditional/local) components and then packages them in more attractive jars, boxes, and bottles. The labels for her products

⁵⁵ A very active popular commercial area in downtown Cairo in which shops there sell unlimited products (whatever comes in one's mind exists there) either local or imported and with lower prices comparing to other areas in Cairo. Usually the lower classes are the main customers of the shops there and some middle classes people.

⁵⁶ As I investigated, many of the exhibitors do not have legal company commercial tax registrations (*segel*, a registration with the Egyptian commercial authority). Some exhibitors do have these legal documents (especially those located in Nasr city, who sell decorated goods, carpets, and furniture in the exhibition halls). But those without these legal documents sell their goods at more competitive prices, as they do not pay taxes, instead only paying the cost of their booth rental. While it is true that these competitive prices are a type of unfair competition, this should arguably be weighed against the benefits that the businesses bring. In a country like Egypt unemployment is very high, and such exhibitions give Egyptian youth a way to earn money and use their time in a productive way.

are created by a small print-house in *Ataba*, in downtown Cairo. Interestingly, the residents are willing to pay higher prices for *baladi* products when they are sold in a non-*baladi* environment. I argue that these exhibitions are ‘*Ataba deluxe*’. The area of *Ataba* might be seen as symbolic of Cairo. Al-Rehab however is unlike the crowded, vulgar, polluted, unclean, chaotic and noisy streets filled with shoppers haggling over prices, displaying goods crowded together, poorly dressed salespersons and shoppers, and sexual harassment in *Ataba*. The exhibitions in Al-Rehab have a modern atmosphere which encourage buying even when the products are at more expensive prices than popular areas of downtown. This is because the booths are well-organized, goods are displayed in an orderly way. Shoppers bargain over the prices in a low voice, and the clean hall is extremely less crowded. Salespersons are well-dressed and smiling, and floors are covered with nice, clean carpets. The shoppers, both women and men, are very well-dressed and wearing perfumes. They seem to enjoy shopping. In this way these exhibitions further isolate many of the residents from the more traditional shopping venues in Cairo by limiting their need to even visit the city. Why bother going to shop outside the community when the best products come to your own exclusive community?

These exhibitions bring a heightened type of consumer stimulation right to the residents. They increase the residents’ desire to consume imported products from different countries, and of a quality and style not available to most Egyptians. The residents’ consumer practices are similar to what is seen in shopping malls, especially the newer upscale malls in Cairo, with the intensive display of products (many of them foreign) that generates desire and increases consumer behavior. Virtually any product that comes into your mind can be found in Al-Rehab, and this fact plays a role in isolating the residents from the rest of the city. Indeed, it even means that they no longer need to commute or drive amongst Cairo’s traffic to Cairo’s luxury shopping

mall. The residents as well will be disconnected socially from the public in the city of Cairo. This could eventually reconstruct and reshape the social and cultural urban fabric of the city in the future.

One of the resident participants describes her own family's consumptive habits, and demonstrates other ways in which this isolation and distance from the rest of the city is reinforced. Hind, a housewife in Al-Rehab, spends more money buying groceries than she used to when she lived in Nasr City. She says, "I used to spend around 5000LE but now I spend at least 7000LE... The shops' owners know that the customers from Al-Rehab are *mestrayahiin* (rich) and they are abusing us... Even though I do have a car and my husband, Tamer, also (has a car), it is hard for us to drive every weekend to Nasr City to buy groceries... And, the shops' owners make use of this well." To Hind the quality of fruits and vegetables available in Al-Rehab is better than what is available in Nasr City, and she also saves time by not driving so far. Her husband works in Six of October City and drives long hours during his five workdays each week. For Hind and her family it is a matter of convenience and allowing for more time for the family to spend together. Hind says, "I prefer to buy from inside Al-Rehab during the workdays so all the family members can enjoy the weekends... We meet our friends, who also live in Al-Rehab, in the club⁵⁷ where our two kids practice some sports activities." The combination of all these commercial activities within one community, even with their higher prices compared to areas outside the gated community, and the strong purchasing power of the residents, leads to families such as Hind's to voluntarily detach themselves further from the city outside. They are not the ones to be blamed since the community which they are living in contains all their needs. The

⁵⁷ A life-time membership in Al-Rehab Sports Club costs 30 thousand LE with approximately 300LE renewal fees each year for each member. Those who rent housing units in Al-Rehab can join the club by paying around 3000LE per year. This is based on an interview with a salesman in Al-Rehab's club.

supporters of the neoliberal segregation are the ones who should be blamed. As Denis says, “...this lifestyle of living separately, among one’s own class and clans, in elite microcollectives that are protected, subsidized, and ‘democratically’ self-run... This nascent mode of partitioning crystallizes the true logic of current neoliberal reforms, all the while hardening the social landscape against multiple counter-effects, alternatives, and resistances” (2006:67). This urban class segregation is unhealthy on a social level since the poor people in the city get left behind, facing its deteriorating conditions while the residents of this gated community become more like shoppers in a giant shopping mall.

Modernizing Traditional Roles

The example of Hind and Tamer demonstrates the fundamental change taking place that affects traditional Egyptian society. A particular example is the traditional role of the *bawab*, or doorkeeper. The traditional *bawab* in Cairo comes from the rural areas, and is therefore an internal migrant. Almost all apartment-buildings in Cairo secure a small room along with a bathroom in the basement for the *bawab*. In many cases, the *bawab* brings his wife and children to live with him in Cairo. They also sometimes help him in his tasks while he rests, or is busy helping the residents. Bawabs help with services like handling the payments of utility bills or delivering rent money to landlords, and so on. In Al-Rehab however, instead of using a *bawab*, Hind and Tamer (and many other residents) use new, private companies. One example is the car-care delivery service for cleaning their car. While such a menial job would have been included in the tasks of the *bawab*, or given to another worker, with this new service an employee comes to clean their cars twice a week. Hind says, “This is a great service which replaced the role of the doorkeepers... When we were living in Nasr City, the doorkeeper or his wife used to clean our cars every day... Although it is more expensive, having this service does not consume our time

to go to clean our cars in the gas stations; instead, it saves our time.” Hind says, “Another service which replaced the need of the doorkeeper is home delivery of bread on a daily basis. It costs 1LE per day.”

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- 50 LE سقف
- 50 LE ارضيات
- 60 LE فرش
- 60 LE ابواب وقوابم
- 75 LE بولش واكس
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- 220 LE كار كبير شامل
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جميع الخدمات المستخدمة SONAX

Figure 17: An advertisement distributed in Al-Rehab of Car Care Delivery Service

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 Auto Care

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 الآن بالرحاب
 بصلك مندوبنا لغسيل السيارة
 4 مرات شهريا ويخيدها اليك انيقة
 ونظيفة مرة اخرى

فقط 25 جنيه

للاشتراك اتصل على 19365

Figure 18: An advertisement says “good bye to the waste of time...Now in Al-Rehab...our employee will come to take your car to be washed and return it to you clean and neat...four times per month for only 25LE.”



Figure 19: Advertisement of Daily Home Delivery Bread in Al-Rehab

The traditional workers in the city of Cairo, such as *bawabs*, are now excluded from this type of job in Al-Rehab. The job of a *bawab* is most likely not required in this enclave; thus, the residents of Al-Rehab are yet again disconnected from a traditional aspect of Egyptian society. However, Al-Rehab's need for private security guards represents a great opportunity for a number of unemployed lower class educated young men. These men typically come from different areas in or nearby the city of Cairo, such as Shubra El-Kheyma.⁵⁸ Working as a traditional *bawab* is not feasible for these young men, as most of them are unmarried. Based on my research, one of the main qualifications of a traditional *bawab* is to have a family, so that his wife and children can help him fulfill the demands of the many residents of the apartment-building. In addition, many of the security guards I interviewed believe that, since they are well educated, working as a *bawab* would be beneath them. Traditionally speaking, most of the *bawabs* are uneducated or poorly educated people.

The security guards also believe that working as *bawabs* for a maximum wage of 300LE is unfair because of their education. However, they are happy and willing to work as employees in private companies, since this kind of job provides them with better salaries. The average

⁵⁸ It is located in the Al Qalyubia Governorate. The city is located in the north of Cairo and is part of greater Cairo.

monthly salary for a security guard is around 900LE. Currently, security guards are requesting that their monthly salary be increased to 1200LE. Indeed they are exploited, due to their salaries being very low and their working hours extremely long (12 hours a day, six days a week).

Another factor that motivates these young men to take on the job of a private security guard is the social image. They believe that with their education, working in a private company creates a better social image amongst their families and neighbors. According to some of them, working as traditional *bawabs* undermines their image among their families and friends. This is especially the case when they plan to get married. Many of the brides turn down their proposal, as they are unwilling to take on the tasks of a *bawab's* wife, which entails helping out the *bawab* with his duties. While some traditional jobs are excluded in the suburban gated communities, new markets have opened for services that now find a demand among the residents of these communities. As Bauman quoted in Abaza (2006),

The idea of luxury makes little sense, as the point is to make today's luxuries into tomorrow's necessities, and to reduce the distance between today and tomorrow to the minimum- to take the waiting out of wanting. [Abaza 2006:10]

And so if some residents in gated communities do not have time or energy to commute in order to wash their cars in a nearby car wash center, or to buy their own daily bread, newspapers, or even to pay their own bills themselves, then the demand for these modern services becomes not simply a 'want' but a *necessity*. And this then opens up new markets for further demanded services. For example, a newly established company in Al-Rehab, called Egy-Service,⁵⁹ offers services for paying residents' landline and cellular phone bills, as well as handling other governmental services and general services that require commuting outside the city. This can be

⁵⁹ Reda, Mahmood. January 20, 2011. وزارة التنمية الإدارية تشيد بالمركز الخدمي بنادي الرحاب. <http://www.rehaby.net/articles.php?pmain=10&ID=797>, accessed March 11, 2011.

for anything from issuing birth or death certificates, arranging visas from embassies, national identification cards, marriage and divorce certificates and renewal of automobile licenses. They can collect internal bus and train tickets, and local or international flight tickets, among various other services. Although such services can be important and useful for the residents, from an anthropological and sociological perspective, it can be seen as another way of isolating the residents of Al-Rehab, by further removing reasons for them to commute to the city and interact with its people. Eventually, the residents of gated communities will be disconnected from the city, not only in terms of physical distance, but also in terms of social distance. They will become detached from what is occurring in the city and what is happening with its inhabitants. This might result in an indifference or unwillingness to become embroiled with the major issues of the city. The residents of the enclaves might be more interested and concerned about their own problems within their own communities. Over time, this attitude will affect their political interests, which might be at odds with the inhabitants of the city.

The Daydreamers

As discussed above, some visitors to Al-Rehab are deemed acceptable by the residents, but this is based only on them being of a certain acceptable type, which is demonstrated by their demeanor and appearance and often their expensive automobile. For these desirable visitors, Al-Rehab is a great place to window-shop, or enjoy a stroll around its private, secured green areas while enjoying the unpolluted weather, and the quietness which tickles their imaginations. Some of these visitors are daydreaming of a house in a green area protected by private security guards, driving a famous-brand car, taking their dog for a walk, and sending their children to one of the private schools. One of Al-Rehab's visitors, Lila, who I met in Al-Rehab's club, says: "I feel as if I am in a virtual life... People here are living so differently than those who are living in the

inner city of Cairo.” Lila’s daydream mentality is manifested in the example of Akram. Despite clearly calling in my messages posted on Facebook and web pages only for participants living in Al-Rehab, I received an interesting email from one of its enthusiastic visitors. Although in my messages I did not request any opinions, nor did I conduct online discussions pertaining to my research topic, Akram’s fist sentence shows that he believed that I had. In his email, Akram wrote the following:

Dear Ms. Safaa,

I received a message on Facebook requesting opinions from people living and/or working in Al-Rehab. Well, my views are a little different than that. I am an undergraduate student at Future University, not far away from AUC. When our university opened, the area was utterly deserted and consisted of sand dunes. That was around the year 2006. So, the nearest place for a bite, brunch, lunch, or breakfast (other than the cafeteria) was Al-Rehab food court. Al-Rehab is the perfect place to hang out, meet with friends, smoke sheesha without getting caught, and an excellent place to photocopy and print projects at regular prices (as opposed to the overpriced shops of New Cairo). I still dream of living there, especially that many of my friends live in Al-Rehab. The greenery is the key to the whole thing. I love the trees, flowers, and lawns. When my ex-girlfriend deeply hurt me emotionally, I would roam around these gardens, sitting under these trees and behind the hedges. It had a huge effect in stabilizing me emotionally. All my family members, with almost no exceptions, would like to live there. We live in the Mokatam district. It's good, but is not taken care of like Al-Rehab City. I remember the last time I visited my aunt at the hospital; she was planning to move from Mokatam to Al-Rehab as soon as she was discharged from the hospital. She even told me to check out the prices of apartments there, especially those with a private garden. She died four days later. I couldn't think of moving out to Al-Rehab for a while...but now after several months, I am seriously contemplating moving either to Al-Rehab or to Madinaty, its twin sister, after graduating. I would be extremely pleased to see my future wife and children living in a neat and green place like Al-Rehab. Thank you for giving me the chance to express my affectionate love for this city...

Akram’s words bring to the mind Abaza’s statement that, “Walter Benjamin’s flâneur is a melancholic loner and daydreamer whose final aim is to get lost in the labyrinth of the city...

Defiantly alienation can be experienced in any place in the world...” (Abaza 2006: 291). While daydreamers get lost in the city, visitors of gated communities (including a daydreamer like Akram) desire and consume the exclusive tranquility of Al-Rehab. The presence of private security guards within a secured neighborhood serves an important role for my interview subjects. Their views also highlight the possible security risks and harassment that a woman can face while in a public street within the greater city of Cairo. Their points are supported in an article published in the independent Egyptian newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm.⁶⁰ The author reports that girls are escaping the harassments in downtown and in Cairo’s old, lower-class shopping malls by going to Al-Rehab. Women view Al-Rehab as privileged and favored. It has natural spaces and is less crowded; they can feel safe when they are there. The author quotes a young woman, who “escaped” to visit Al-Rehab during the Eid Al-Fiter⁶¹ vacation in 2009. Al-Rehab is described in the same vocabulary used by my participants: The community is described by its *raqi* (classy) residents, and the *wilad nas* (sons of people) who live there; the people living there are described as *metrabeyeen* (well brought-up). In the public imagination, Al-Rehab is a place of leisure. It is akin to the luxurious shopping malls, where they can go to escape the harassments and insecurity commonly found in the public and semi public areas of Cairo.

Outsiders and Consuming Symbols

The outsiders (the desirable visitors) consume symbols of exclusivity and cultural capital when they visit Al-Rehab. This is due to that fact that these outsiders lack the economic capital and cultural capital which are the major components of the lifestyle of Al-Rehab gated

⁶⁰ Rashwan, Huda. Sept 23, 2009. «الرحاب» والصواريخ تضىء مارينا والعين السخنة. "الفتيات هرين من تحرشات القاهرة إلى «الرحاب» والصواريخ تضىء مارينا والعين السخنة" ومرسى علم ("The Girls Escaped Cairo's Sexual Harassments to Al-Rehab and Firework Sparkling in Marina and A'ain Shokhna and Marsa Allam"). <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=226770>, accessed March 11, 2011. I personally translated from Arabic into English.

⁶¹ It is a Muslim holiday for three-days. It marks the end of the Islamic holy month of fasting: Ramadan. *Eid* is an Arabic word means festivity, while *Fitr* means breaking the fast.

community. Yet, the outsiders are partially consuming symbols of the components of the lifestyle of Al-Rehab, such as ‘flâneur-ing’ in its greenery areas, enjoying window shopping in its shopping malls or *souk* (commercial area), walking in unpolluted area, enjoying the scenery of fountains and the harmonious architecture of the housing units and commercial arenas. This type of atmosphere also exists in Cairo’s luxurious shopping malls, where some of its visitors with low economic capital/purchasing power consume symbolic exclusivity and cultural capital (lifestyle), and hence, in their imagination, they acquire a higher social and class position. The latter is applicable in the case of Al-Rehab. This is because the outsiders do not actually fulfill a class position, instead they symbolically consume the lifestyle/culture of a different class. Even if the outsiders pay entrance fees, it is relatively inexpensive and somewhat affordable for them. For example, the outsiders can go to MacDonal’d’s in the food-court area of Al-Rehab or other restaurant or café shop in its *souk*, which does not require a minimum charge, and order a cheap food or drink item. This consumer attitude can be seen as the outsider’s desire for being part of the community. This attitude also reminds us with observations in luxurious shopping malls. This sort of consumptive habit provides the outsider with a false feeling of belonging to this lifestyle. However, it fulfills the outsiders’ desire of belonging and gives the visitor a sense of being in a higher social and economic class. Akram, who I presented his message in the above section, is a clear example that shows the desire of belonging and the desire to be part of Al-Rehab’s lifestyle.

When the visitor spreads the word among his/her family or friends that he/she was in Al-Rehab, indeed this will give him a higher image among the people who belong to his class position or lower ones. And hence, the act of telling here could be seen as a medium suggesting ‘conspicuous consumption’. An example is found in the previously mentioned article published

in Al-Masry Al-Youm.⁶² The girls chose to escape the other shopping malls in the city of Cairo and preferred to go to Al-Rehab which they describe it as a *raqi* (classy) community that is characterized by its greenery spaces and less crowded streets than the city. Using such vocabulary to describe Al-Rehab shows that visiting Al-Rehab in vacations is a way of ‘conspicuous consumption’ and a way of consuming symbols of exclusivity and cultural capital.

Al-Rehab’s Migrant Community

Al-Rehab also appears to be a good refuge for migrants to establish their businesses and live. I met an Iraqi man in his mid-forties in Al-Rehab’s souk. Aziz owns a bakery shop in which four other Iraqi men, all in their early twenties, bake Iraqi breads. He has been living in Al-Rehab for two years. Aziz was not friendly when I tried to interview him, and when he learned that I am a student at the American University in Cairo, he aggressively said: “You are working in an imperialist institution... if you want to interview me, first you must ask your university to let me give a lecture about *al-batal* (the hero) Saddam Hussein, who the Americans with their Iraqi alliance, *nah’aroo ho na’her* (slaughtered him).” Aziz’s eyes were full of tears. A young Egyptian woman interrupted our conversation and asked for some delicious Iraqi bread. When she tried to give tips for the young men working in the shop, Aziz refused, and told the woman, “We do not accept tips. We have dignity and gain our money from our work.” Aziz then started to open up, and he explained that many television channels come to interview him because he had worked in Iraq’s diplomatic sector (he was an ambassador of Iraq in a European country during the regime of Saddam Hussein). He speaks English, French and Dutch fluently. He speaks

⁶² Rashwan, Huda. Sept 23, 2009. “The Girls Escaped Cairo’s Sexual Harassments to Al-Rehab and Firework Sparkling in Marina and A’ain Shokhna and Marsa Allam” [الفتيات هربن من تحرشات القاهرة إلى «الرحاب» والصواريخ تضيء مارينا والعين السخنة ومرسى علم]. <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=226770>, accessed March 11, 2011. I personally translated from Arabic into English.

in an Iraqi accent most of the time even with his Egyptian customers, as I observed. When asked why he opened a bakery shop, he justified that by saying: “Bread is life, and I am proud to present my Iraqi culture here in Cairo... Also, in order to have a resident visa in Egypt, I must open some sort of business activity here in Egypt.” Aziz learned about Al-Rehab from another Iraqi man who owns a real estate agency in Al-Rehab.

Aziz lives in an apartment in Al-Rehab, and chose Al-Rehab as the place to open his commercial activity because it is a flourishing market where he can earn good money, and also live near other Iraqis living in Al-Rehab. Due to the economic damage and insecurity in Iraq since the time of the Gulf War in 1991/1992 a great number of Iraqis migrated to Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Because the cost of living in Egypt is lower than in the others, many more have come to Egypt. Thousands of Iraqis live in Cairo’s suburbs (Roman 2009:3). “The residence (permit) can be granted to Iraqis that have investments in Egypt, estimated at 50 thousand Dollars” (Roman 2009: 4). Around 100 thousand to 150 thousand Iraqis refugees live in Egypt (Roman 2009:4). Two types of economic activities they tend to invest in are “Services projects, such as café shops, bakeries, restaurants, and production firms whether in industry, agriculture or real estate investments”(Roman 2009:7). Iraqis that targeted October City and Giza urban districts have tended to invest in services and small enterprises, such as cafes, restaurants, and bakeries (Roman 2009:7).

There is a diversity of people from different nationalities, upper and middle classes, and ethnic groups. There are Moroccans, Sudanese, Kuwaitis, Saudis, Yemenis, German, British, and Lebanese. Moreover, these diverse residents have different purchasing powers. The Kuwaiti, Saudi, and Yemeni participants explain that they are living in Egypt to study in private or public universities. Most of them are studying in private universities located close to Al-Rehab. For that

reason, they find Al-Rehab is a very convenient place to live. And, as they are all from middle and upper classes, they can afford to live in Al-Rehab.

The Moroccan participants are all seeking to establish businesses in Cairo, and through that to obtain a residency visa. For them, Al-Rehab is the ideal place to open restaurants as the purchasing power of the community is strong, meaning they will help in the continuity of business. In addition, the diverse people who live in Al-Rehab appreciate the food of other cultures. For Moroccans the benefits are the same as for the Iraqis like Aziz, the bakery owner. Living in Al-Rehab is ideal. It means they can be near their business, and they can be connected with other Moroccans living there. They find living in Al-Rehab better than living in the ‘chaos’ of Cairo. They prefer the exclusivity of Al-Rehab.

This is similar to the story of the Lebanese participants. Salem is in his early-forties and owns a factory with an Egyptian partner that produces clothes. It is one of the famous brands of clothing sold in Egypt. Salem also established a business in Egypt in order to obtain his residency-visa. He finds there is great demand on name-brand clothing in Egypt, especially in Cairo. Moreover, he prefers living in Cairo because Lebanon is less secure from a political standpoint. He also finds business in Egypt more financially rewarding than in Lebanon, which allows him and his family to be more financially secure and enjoy a higher quality of life. Salem admires Al-Rehab’s exclusivity, as he and the rest of his family members do not wish to live in the disordered, unclean and polluted area of Cairo. The achievements of the neoliberal policies did well in attracting foreign investors like Salem.

Conclusion

In many ways, Al-Rehab is similar to giant shopping malls as I argued. Furthermore, I explained the tension over the community’s accessibility, but even still many business owners

would rather have outsiders come if they buy products from the local services. The resident business owners and security struggle to balance their own need for exclusivity with the economic needs of selling to outsiders. Moreover, I showed how Al-Rehab encourages and inspires greater consumer desires in the residents and visitors. Also, I discussed how the outsiders of Al-Rehab are partially consuming symbols of the components of its lifestyle. In addition, I demonstrated how the new businesses and exclusive level of quality are effecting traditional ways of life in Egyptian society, such as in the case of *bawabs*. The political and economic agenda of Egypt's neoliberal policy has been successful, but the residents and outsiders are still struggling with the consequences.

Chapter Five: Beyond the Gated

Introduction

This chapter will explore the relationship between political events in Egypt and the associated riots occurring in the city of Cairo, with the sense of security felt by Al-Rehab's residents during those events. In addition, this chapter presents a hypothesis on the relationship between living in a segregated residential suburban neighborhood, and its residents' political participation. The ways in which neoliberal segregation plays a role in isolating Al-Rehab's residents from the political sphere in the city will be examined. Additionally, the ways in which political and social protests in the city affect Al-Rehab's residents' sense of security while living in a gated, suburban community, will also be questioned. The answer will be found in the interviews of the residents themselves as they articulate their views of the events of '6th of April' day, and the dramatic Egyptian revolution of Feb 11, 2011.

A Brief Look at Political Life in Egypt

The political voice of Egypt's citizens have been criminalized by the state. The government crushed social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) using emergency provisions, anti-terror laws and other restrictive mechanisms against association in order "to justify the arrest of even the most moderate of dissident journalists, scholars, journalists, and activists" (Singerman and Amar 2006:5). A particularly noteworthy instance of such policies was the arrest and imprisonment of professor Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who was jailed in 2000 for over a year. Ibrahim is an Egyptian democracy and human rights activist and founder of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies.⁶³ The center studies democratization and

⁶³ Its official website.<http://www.eicds.org/>, accessed March 30, 2011.

issues of social development. According to the official explanation, he was arrested because of his NGO's alleged illegal receipt of international funding. But in truth he was arrested because of the organization's pro-democracy agenda. After his release, Ibrahim lived in self-imposed exile, fearing that he would be arrested again.⁶⁴ He returned to Egypt on August 11, 2010, stressing that his return was merely for a family visit.⁶⁵ Ibrahim was a peaceful academic who was jailed under false accusations due to his pro-democracy activities. He was made to be an example to Egyptians so they would not try to follow in his footsteps.

In the last decade, series of trials against NGOs, journalists, and opposition party leaders “have ravaged the notions of citizenship and colonialized the private and public bodies of Egypt's people” (Singerman and Amar 2006:5). Other recent and notable examples of political oppression in Cairo include the arrest and imprisonment of citizens like Ayman Noor, leader of the Tomorrow Party (Hizb al-Ghad), who was stripped of his parliamentary membership and imprisoned⁶⁶ for allegedly forging signatures to launch his political party (Singerman and Amar 2006:5-6). While all of these political tensions were occurring in Cairo, the government and National Democratic Party (NDP) were dominated by businessmen, who encouraged economic privatization of public land which paved a way for New Cairo and the construction of gated and privatized residential areas, schools and universities. The elite members of the NDP and the Egyptian government supported the invasion of public, suburban desert land in order to achieve their neoliberal dream, while neglecting any serious engagement in developing informal areas.

⁶⁴ Lyon, Alistair. October 4, 2007. U.S. Democracy Push Makes Middle East Liberals Cringe. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/10/04/us-rights-mideast-usa-idUSDIS44464320071004>., accessed February 26, 2011.

⁶⁵ Samaan ,Magdy. August 13, 2010. Saad Eddin Ibrahim: Egypt is on the Brink of a Revolution. <http://thedailynewsegypt.com/people/saad-eddin-ibrahim-egypt-is-on-the-brink-of-a-revolution-dp1.html>, accessed 26 February, 2011.

⁶⁶ Noor was released 2009.

Of Egypt's population, "almost two-thirds of the current population of greater Cairo" (Sims 111:2010) live in these informal areas.

Political Participation in Al-Rehab

Based on interviews with residents, it seems clear that their political participation is low. This is likely a result of the neoliberal segregation which enforces a detachment from the city. According to an email interview with political scientist Nael Shama⁶⁷ regarding the political participation of the residents of gated communities, the residents have "a sense of detachment from the myriad political activities that take place in the heart of the city." Shama believes that the discourse of neoliberal segregation "could foster an isolationist, inward-looking attitude among these residents," since their basic needs of public services, such as electricity, water, and security are "steadily provided". This brings to mind Denis' point that residents in gated communities enjoy private democracy. All their basic needs of their lifestyle, including as protection, are provided by their own private management department, with which they can make demands or discuss needs and the problems of their private communities (Denis 2006:60). Yet, on the "national social scale", as Denis argues, "Political exclusion and repression has intensified" (Denis 2006:60).

Gated communities represent the socio-political results of economic neoliberalization. Here private democracy metalizes. While estimating that public institutions cannot assure the well being and the defense of the collective, a restrained community of like-minded people itself takes charge of the residents of the gated community of Mena Garden City, for example, manages shared spaces, lighting, and the roadways. [Denis 2006: 60]

⁶⁷ Nael M. Shama. Political researcher and freelance writer based in Cairo. His writings have appeared in a number of Egyptian and Arab publications. The email interview was conducted and received on October 21, 2010.

..

As Shama argues, this isolationist attitude contributes to individuals to feel a “public malaise that affects, in fact overwhelms, the lives of the vast majority of Egypt's population.” Shama’s view seems accurate: That a lower level of political participation among the residents of the suburban residential enclaves will be found compared to the city of Cairo’s neighborhoods. However, this does not denote a total disinterest in what occurs beyond the gates of these enclaves, since the residents there “have a vested interest in witnessing an improvement in economic conditions, [and] an upgrade of public services.”

A Glimpse of the April 6th Movement

On April 6th, 2008, the city of Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra (located 120 kilometers north of Cairo and home to the largest public sector textile factory in Egypt) witnessed a call for strike on April 6 by labor leaders, along with the support of regime opposition parties, against the low wages for laborers and the increase in the prices of basic goods.⁶⁸ In April 2008, a new opposition movement of young educated Egyptians (the 6th of April Group) emerged, and soon did it create a Facebook group that attracted around 100 thousand members.⁶⁹ This movement is not a political party and it does not aim to take part in elections but it has since its creation called for economic and political reform.⁷⁰ Despite the fact that “plainclothes security agents surrounded” factories in an attempt to prevent the strike from taking place, workers went ahead and started their strike at the end of the day-shift.⁷¹ The laborers and thousands of Al-Mahalla

⁶⁸ Egypt: Investigate Police Use of Force at Protests: Security Forces Arrest Pro-Democracy Movement Leader. Human Rights Watch April 10, 2008 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/04/10/egypt-investigate-police-use-force-protests>, accessed March 14, 2011.

⁶⁹ Beinín, Joel. January 31, 2011. “Egypt at the tipping point?” http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/31/egypt_at_the_tipping_point, accessed May 8, 2011.

⁷⁰ Official website of 6th of April Movement. “About Us” <http://6april.org/us.php>, accessed May 8, 2011.

⁷¹ Egypt: Investigate Police Use of Force at Protests: Security Forces Arrest Pro-Democracy Movement Leader. Human Rights Watch April 10, 2008 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/04/10/egypt-investigate-police-use-force-protests>, accessed March 14, 2011.

Al-Kubra's residents went into the streets to demonstrate, and they stayed there until the next day.⁷² It did not end smoothly, however, as the police used force against the protesters, with "rubber bullets and live ammunition as well as tear gas".⁷³

Two years later, on April 6th, 2010, Egyptian security forces controlled a demonstration scheduled to be held in central Cairo by the 6th of April Movement. The streets and squares of central Cairo, including Tahrir Square and Talaat Harb, were filled with thousands of security personnel.⁷⁴ Security forces spread to the rooftops and hotels. The security forces imposed strict security measures when surrounding the Association of Journalists, the Association of Lawyers, and the Supreme Court. The police forces feared that the protesters, who began their march from the center of Cairo, would cause a repeat of the riots which occurred during 6th of April 2008 strike in Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra.⁷⁵ When the members of the 6th of April Movement declared their intention publically online to organize demonstrations in Cairo and other governorates in 2010, demanding an end to the emergency law,⁷⁶ this gave the opportunity for security forces to brace themselves and pre-empt any demonstrations.⁷⁷ The result was the arrest of dozens of youths on suspicion of belonging to the movement, and alleged intent to demonstrate near Talaat Harb square in downtown Cairo.⁷⁸

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Masrawy, April 6, 2010. "Security frustrates demonstration (6 April) in the Center of Cairo and Clashes with the Protesters and Arrested Dozens <http://www.masrawy.com/News/Egypt/Politics/2010/april/6/6April.aspx>, accessed June 7, 2010.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Elections in Egypt: State of Permanent Emergency Incompatible with Free and Fair Vote. December, 2010. Human Rights Watch. Page: 4. <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/11/23/elections-egypt-0>, accessed March 14, 2011.

⁷⁷ Masrawy, April 6, 2010. "Security frustrates demonstration (6 April) in the Center of Cairo and Clashes with the Protesters and Arrested Dozens <http://www.masrawy.com/News/Egypt/Politics/2010/april/6/6April.aspx>, accessed June 7, 2010.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

These arrests and blocking on demonstrations are based on the emergency law which has been in place since 1982. This law permits the government to “ban strikes” and “demonstrations.”⁷⁹ The government promised to cancel the emergency law but has instead renewed it many times, the latest in May 2010, for two more years. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW),⁸⁰ although the government declared that the law would be limited to drug related crimes and terrorism, security officials are still using the emergency law to arrest citizens in cases which do not relate to terrorism. It is used rather as a means to “target political dissent,” arrest activists, members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and activist bloggers.⁸¹ The existence of the emergency law plays a great role—in many venues—in violating human rights and continues to contribute, as Ibrahim states, “to a collective sense of insecurity among the Egyptians” (2004:169). Therefore, it is important to investigate the relationship of this event and how the sense of security is felt by Al-Rehab’s residents. In addition, it is useful to explore the relationship between their living in a segregated residential suburban neighborhood and their political participation. In other words, two questions need to be answered: In what way does neoliberal segregation play a role in segregating Al-Rehab’s residents from the political sphere in the city? Secondly, in what way does the protests in the city affect residents’ sense of security while living in their gated, suburban community?

⁷⁹ Leila, Reem. June 2010. “Ongoing Emergency.” *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*.(No. 1001), 3-9. “The emergency law” has been operating “since President Anwar El-Sadat's assassination in 1981”... [It] “allows the government to ban strikes, demonstrations and public meetings, censor or close down newspapers and other media, and monitor private telephone calls.” <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/1001/eg4.htm>, accessed on June 12, 2010.

⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch. March 10, 2010. “Egypt: Government Renews State of Emergency.” <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/11/egypt-government-renews-state-emergency>, accessed on June 13, 2010.

⁸¹ Ibid.

6th of April Movement in Al-Rehab

There is a noticeable sense of detachment from any involvement with the 6th of April movement among the participants who live in Al-Rehab. Indeed, no plans for any protests were announced in Al-Rehab. Yet on April 6, 2010, many residents of Al-Rehab observed an intense presence of ordinary policemen and high ranking officers close to gate 13, near the police station. The large trucks of the *a'mn al-markazy* (the Central Security Forces) were also there. I had the chance at this time to conduct informal interviews of male and female residents along different streets and also at the food-court.

Most of the participants had similar reactions of surprise at the security presence, and similar views on the type of people they believe reside in Al-Rehab. For instance, Khaled, a man in his mid-thirties, says: “We (the residents of Al-Rehab) are peaceful people and I do not know why [the Central security forces] are here...” Khaled is not the only one surprised. Silvia, a woman in her mid-twenties, says, “I do not know the reason for having these security forces in Al-Rehab.” Silvia tries to find justification for their presence in her community by guessing: “Maybe they are aware that some of the regime’s opposition lives here, such as the lawyer Montaser Zayat of the Muslim Brotherhood... For that reason, they may expect members of the Islamist movement to demonstrate here!” It is apparent that Silvia does not know much (or anything) about the 6th of April movement, and instead simply links the idea of protests with Islamists and justifies the police presence this way. Silvia does not think of others, such as a secular, cross-sectarian, progressive democracy movement. This shows yet another example of the successful efforts by the government to instill moral panic about the Islamists, as mentioned in chapter one.

Meanwhile, others find the presence of the security forces in their community to be unjustifiable. One example is Farah, a woman in her late-twenties, who says: “The Central Security Forces are choosing the wrong place, since most of the residents, like me, are not part of such movements.” The 6th of April movement is stereotyped by the participants, who see them virtually as evil, away from their paradise community. For instance, Mustafa, a man in his mid-twenties, says: “Thanks that we are living in Al-Rehab away from this chaos in other parts of Cairo, but I do not know why the security forces are here.”

The residents are aware of the consequences of the emergency law, and the abuse of authority by the police, including during demonstrations. Marwa, a woman in her late forties, says: “Thanks to God that the demonstrations are in downtown... If I were still living near downtown (she refused to say in which area exactly), of course, I would ask my sons to stay at home to avoid being mistakenly taken by the police forces...” In even the best situations Egypt’s police do not abide by the principles of human rights, and in chaotic conditions are especially likely to make arbitrary arrests of people on the streets. Passers-by could be arrested even if they did not take part in the demonstrations. Marwa adds, “I doubt that any of Al-Rehab’s residents will be involved in these demonstrations.... People in Al-Rehab are very peaceful.... But, it is good to have the Central Security Forces in Al-Rehab to prevent any of the outsiders from demonstrating here.” To Marwa and others like her, the presence of police forces in the community is a good thing, as they will be able to keep away any intrusions or undesirable disorder, such as protests, within their peaceful community.

The fear of the chaotic other can be understood from the use of the description ‘peaceful people’ when referring to the residents of Al-Rehab. This demonstrates that the others outside their gates are un-peaceful and troublemakers. The only reason for the presence of the security

forces in their view is for protecting them from outsiders. However, the presence of the police forces might also be a sort of reminder, a concealed message, or signal, to the members of the community that, 'We are here, so do not even think of protesting'. This could be contributing to the creation of a 'culture of fear' among the residents, from the danger they might face in case of protesting, such as having violence used against them under the umbrella of the emergency law. The participants feel secure in their peaceful community, away from the troublemakers and disorderly outsiders from the city. Their sense of security is based on and fed by the neoliberal segregation that sustains their isolation from the chaotic city and its inhabitants.

A Short Description of the Egyptian Revolution

I really do not understand what the interior minister, before he goes to sleep at night, thinks he is doing to us. Does he realize that we are educated, well brought up people? Does he realize how much we are abused by his policemen on the streets? When his head's on his pillow, does he realize that we are done for taking it. We are killing ourselves to make a living, and the Interior Ministry treats us as criminals, and liars of course. We are all liars as far as any police officer is concerned. It is clear they teach them that at police college, that human beings are born liars, live as liars, breathe as liars and die liars. [Khaled al Khamissi 2008:128]

On January 25th, 2011, Egypt's official Police Day holiday, a group of young protestors took to the streets of Cairo. The idea of protesting on this specific day started when a page on Facebook, a social networking site, titled 'We Are All Khaled Saeed', called for a mass protest.⁸² Khaled Saeed was a 28-year-old Egyptian blogger from the city of Alexandria.⁸³ He was killed in June 2010 by two policemen after he exposed police corruption. The officers dragged him from

⁸² El-Hennawy, Noha. August 4, 2011. "We are all Khaled Saeed: Redefining political Demonstration in Egypt" <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/61266>, accessed March 17, 2011.

⁸³ Ibid.

an internet café in Alexandria and proceeded to beat him to death.⁸⁴ That month, photos of the young man's "deformed face and bashed head" were circulated online.⁸⁵ These photos contributed in motivating many young people who later participated in protests calling for bringing the two policemen to justice for his murder, and demanding the state to stop using the emergency law.⁸⁶ Eventually, Saeed's cruel murder was recognized not only in Egypt but also internationally as an example of Egypt's police brutality. This resulted in charging the two policemen with torturing and beating Saeed to death.⁸⁷ Online activists of the '6th of April Youth', and 'We Are All Khaled Saeed' groups created a page on Facebook calling⁸⁸ for mass peaceful protests on January 25th, 2011, against poverty, corruption and police brutality. It was no coincidence that this was to be held on the national police holiday.⁸⁹ In "the ferment of the moment," however, the protesters added four additional demands: the resignation of Interior Minister Habib Al-Adli; a fair minimum wage, the end of the Emergency Law, and a two-term limit on the presidency."⁹⁰ The protestors were not limited to one group of people but came from all layers of Egyptian society in terms of age, political affiliation, religion, class, and gender.⁹¹ There was a great solidarity among all of these strata. Many of the demonstrators who were there

⁸⁴ Aljazeera. Middle East. 16 November, 2010. "Egypt Police Blamed for Death". <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/11/2010111516111485865.html>, accessed March 17, 2011.

⁸⁵ El-Hennawy, Noha. August 4, 2011. "We are all Khaled Saeed: Redefining political Demonstration in Egypt" <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/61266> , accessed March 17, 2011.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Aljazeera. Middle East. 16 November, 2010. "Egypt Police Blamed for Death". <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/11/2010111516111485865.html>, accessed March 17, 2011.

⁸⁸ Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious? Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa. 24 February 2011. Report Number 101. Page: 3.

⁸⁹ "Egypt: End Crackdown on Peaceful Demonstrations". January 27, 2011. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/01/27/egypt-end-crackdown-peaceful-demonstrations>, accessed March 17, 2011.

⁹⁰ Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious? Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa. 24 February 2011. Report Number 101. Page: 3.

⁹¹ Rizk, Philip. February 15, 2011. "Egypt and the Global Economic Order". <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201112148356117884.html>, accessed March 17, 2011.

that day did not leave Tahrir Square until President Mubarak stepped down, on February 11th, 2001.⁹²

Asef Bayat states that this newly found freedom from the fear of persecution has allowed working people themselves to aggressively pursue their complaints.⁹³ He cites examples such as laborers who are calling for independent unions in order to achieve change, freedom, and social justice; small scale farmers who are organizing independent syndicates; and still others who are fighting for better wages and conditions. As Bayat notes,

The first Organization of the Residents of Cairo's Ashwa'iyyat (slums), established recently, has called for the removal of corrupt governors, and for the abolition of regime-sponsored 'local councils'. Youth groups organize to clean up slum areas, engage in civil works and reclaim their civil pride. Students pour into the streets to demand Ministry of Education to revise the curricula.⁹⁴

A study conducted by the Ministry of State for Administrative Development, before the revolution, revealed a high sense of injustice felt among Egyptians (Zayed 2009:8-9). Almost half of the participants of the study felt injustice due to the poor quality of life, low wages, and a sense of worthlessness (Zayed 2009:8). A portion of the participants declared that they believe the state is being unjust, as firstly it serves only a certain layer of society; and secondly, it does not give sufficient services for the poor; and lastly, the state does not implement the law (Zayed 2009:9). The sample of the study believed that the state's injustice is revealed in the giving of rights to some groups more than they deserve. These groups are businessmen in the first place, governmental officials in the second place, and the police in the third place (Zayed 2009:9). According to Ismail, a police government controlling many areas of social life was instituted to

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Bayat, Asef. March 03, 2011. "Paradoxes of Arab Refo-lutions".
<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/786/paradoxes-of-arab-refo-lutions>, accessed March 30, 2011.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

suppress resistance to these economic and social policies.⁹⁵ She explains that their responsibilities went beyond maintaining security and public order, intruding upon the life of ordinary citizens by exercising jurisdiction over outdoor markets, the use of public utilities, and enforcing compliance with municipal building codes. Ismail also states that the arbitrary powers of the emergency law allowed the police to engage in extortion and use violence to suppress any who might question their powers. She recounts how security checks and roadblocks were a “daily reality” for the citizens of Egypt, whereby “drivers and pedestrians were randomly stopped, arrested, and subjected to arbitrary investigation.” Ismail notes that these practices targeted those who were “feared by the regime for their potential for activism and resistance.” She also notes that the humiliating treatment they received from the police “fuelled the youth’s opposition and rejection of the regime and its coercive arm, the police.”⁹⁶ Based on participants’ accounts in Al-Rehab during the ‘6th of April day 2010’ and the ‘Egyptian Revolution’, it is apparent that these events are widely reported by the media, and this media coverage and the human rights violations of the police using the emergency law contributes in intensifying the mood of moral panic and urban risk among the potential and the current residents of gated communities.

In Al-Rehab, the Echo of a Revolution

At around 4pm on January 28, 2011, all sign of police disappeared from Cairo’s streets.⁹⁷ Some of the police force’s members—its thugs—worked to create a state of lawlessness. Those whom I interviewed rightly perceive this as an attempt to create *gaw min alkhof* (this literally

⁹⁵ Ismail, Salwa. February 2011. “Egypt’s Dignity Revolution”.
<http://www.tni.org/article/egypt%E2%80%99s-dignity-revolution>, accessed March 22, 2011.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Abou Taleb, Hassan. March 11, 2011. The Egyptian Army and the Revolution.
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/7418/Opinion/The-Egyptian-army-and-the-revolution.aspx>, accessed March 17, 2011.

means an atmosphere of fear which can be described anthropologically and sociologically as a 'culture of fear') among the Egyptian people. These thugs' aim was to use that lawlessness as part of their strategy to distract the people from the main national event. They tried to distract the people away from protesting, and instead to focus on protecting their houses, their families, businesses, and other assets. However, the tactic of lawlessness contributed instead to the creation of an innovative institution, one which tried as much as possible to maintain law and order in Cairo's streets, and did so effectively. I call the action of these committees "nationalizing law and order," showing a great solidarity among a majority of the Egyptian population.

The sense of moral panic intensified among participants in Al-Rehab. This was especially so after the sudden and mysterious withdrawal of the public police force from Cairo and Egypt in general.⁹⁸ Yara, in her mid-forties, is a resident in Al-Rehab. I met her in the *souk* of Al-Rehab, where she tells me she noticed the absence of police from Al-Rehab's police station. This makes her feel afraid about how the un-equipped private security guards of Al-Rehab will be unable to protect the community. Yara wishes they were equipped with guns. She is afraid that thugs will come from their *'ishash*, and is also afraid of the criminals who escaped from prisons⁹⁹ during this event. Another participant, Fady, who is in his early-thirties, also spoke to me at the *souk*. Fady says: "I am extremely afraid that the thugs from *'izab*¹⁰⁰ (villages of very deteriorated

⁹⁸ Hendawi, Hamza. Feb17, 2011. Security Remains Shaky in Egypt after Revolt. http://www.denverpost.com/ci_17411810 , accessed Feb 25, 2011.

⁹⁹ AFP, February 2011 "Egypt: Hundreds Escape Cairo Prison During Riots" <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/5453/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-Hundreds-escape-Cairo-prison-during-riots.aspx>, accessed March 29, 2011. And, Zayed, Dina and Sherine El Madany. January 29, 2011. "Egypt Vigilantes Defend Homes as Police Disappear". <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/29/us-egypt-vigilante-idUSTRE70S3AQ20110129>, accessed March 30, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ According to Abaza, citing Mohammed Riad, "*'izbas* [plural of *'izba*] are conglomerations of peasant's huts, originally made of mud brick." Abaza adds, "*Izabas* and *'Izba* systems are also the old "haciendas" which were owned by larger landowners and which have been today dismantled after the successive agrarian reform... *'izba* thus carries two meanings... One related to the affluence, the owner of an *'izba* is a large owner who was in the past called *'ayaan* and thus did not really work since he lived from his land. Today it connotes utmost destitution if one today live in an *'izba* in the region of Greater Cairo" (2006:242).

slums) will come, as they are armed with weapons and might kill or rob us... I brought a *shoma* (metal bat) and some huge knives to join the neighborhood committee to help in protecting our residential area... Yet these tools do not help much as thugs are armed with guns." The commercial area of Al-Rehab was crowded, as the people hurried to buy tools which could be used as weapons for self-defense. They bought metal bats and wooden bats. The grocery stores were full with people buying great amounts of food to store. They seemed worried that there would be a shortage of food during this uncertain time. Maybe they also thought it would become too dangerous to go out to the stores.

Residents of Al-Rehab set up neighborhood protection committees. Some of them were equipped with licensed guns. They taught the un-familiar residents in the committee how to use these guns, as they handed the guns over to them for the next shift. Men armed themselves with knives, garden hedge-trimmers, and other tools that could be used as weapons and created checkpoints. They stopped everyone and checked people's identification cards, and asked them about their destination. Residents who own watchdogs brought them to the committees too for protection. I joined one of these committees. All of the others were men. Women prepared tea and coffee along with light snacks all through the night. They arranged to separate themselves into two shifts. One shift was at night and the other was during the day. Chats about the moment of uncertainty, about the future of Egypt, consumed most of their conversations, while building a fire to warm them from the cold night weather. Through interviews and observation, it was apparent that the people began to feel safer once the army troops surrounded Al-Rehab. When the military tanks and armored vehicles crossed the streets of Al-Rehab, the residents' fears were alleviated. Through the course of two days, January 29 and 30, 2011, army troop transports began patrolling the streets of Al-Rehab. This came after media reports of people's calls, asking

for protection from thugs, on programs such as *Al-Ashera Masa'an* on Egypt's Dream satellite channel,¹⁰¹ reporting frightening incidents of violence and thuggery targeting rich areas, such as Al-Rehab.



Figure 20: Three pictures showing weapons, different types of tools, and a watch-dog in one of Al-Rehab's neighborhood protection committees

¹⁰¹ Mona El Shazly, host of *Al-Ashera Masa'an* on Dream channel. The channel is owned by Egyptian businessman Ahmed Bahgat. He also owns Dream Land gated community in 6th of October city.

In Al-Rehab, the gates and the fences were patrolled by the committee members comprised of Al-Rehab's own residents, along with some private security guards. Some of the guards were provided with guns by the residents. And from the early time that the army entered Cairo they were surrounding and protecting these rich communities. The rich neighborhoods were protected first, as they were the target of the thugs. There were some intrusions in Al-Rehab by thugs wearing army uniforms. According to three participants, they learned from others at different neighborhood committees in Al-Rehab that these thugs were eventually apprehended by the neighborhood committee members while walking in the streets of Al-Rehab. They were then handed over to the army. Afterward, talk about how the thugs were able to obtain army uniforms was a central topic of discussion among a neighborhood committee that I joined. Almost all of the members believed that the thugs were given the uniforms by some corrupted members of the public police. The distrust in public police intensified. The residents soon demanded qualified private security guards, equipped with guns. This topic then consumed their conversations. And they were all willing to pay additional fees to achieve this. The mood of moral panic, and the distrust in private security, remained in the community during the days of these events. The residents showed that their trust in them was due only to the presence of the army, as the security guards would not dare to do any criminal activity while knowing that they would be handed over immediately to the army. This demonstrated that the state of moral panic toward 'the other' within their own community still existed among my participants, but in this moment the presence of the army, and not the public police, helped in alleviating their fears.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this unexpected revolution, none of my participants showed interest in joining the peaceful protests. On February 10, 2011, after the last speech of President Hosni Mubarak,¹⁰² one of my participants who served during the night shift with a committee, told the rest of the members that they should now join the protests. Some of them were still not interested, but others now considered joining. I later learned that some residents did join the protests after Mubarak's final speech, but it was in low numbers, and almost all were men. Some sons had participated from the start of the protests, but their families were afraid for their safety. They were extremely worried that the public police would harm them. There was some participation in these political events by residents of Al-Rehab, but in low number. I did not learn of any women or girls who went to protest. Yet, as I learned, a few of Al-Rehab's youth are active agents in this revolution. The neoliberal segregation plays a role in detaching many, but not all, of the residents of Al-Rehab. The youth especially were the ones participating in the political sphere. The young residents of Al-Rehab are the ones participating most in the political sphere. I learnt this information by the end of the revolution because it was difficult for me during the early days of the revolution to interview more residents due to the lack of security. In the early days of the revolution, residents were more concerned about securing themselves and their families, and had no interest in being interviewed.

¹⁰² The speech shows: "How stubborn Mubarak remained. He announced he would transfer at least some powers to his vice president". Yet, people were demanding him to resign. Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious? Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa. 24 February 2011. Report Number 101. Page: 13.

Similar to the “euphoria that swept the crowd gathered in Tahrir Square”¹⁰³ after the announcement of President Hosni Mubarak’s resignation on February 11, 2011,¹⁰⁴ Al-Rehab’s residents went to celebrate in the streets of their community. It looked like a massive, ecstatic festival. Young parents carried their infants to have photographs with the soldiers there in Al-Rehab’s streets. Colorful fireworks decorated Al-Rehab’s sky. Loud music, national Egyptian patriotic songs, could be heard coming from cars. Children and their parents carried the Egyptian flag (the flags they have used at international football games). Various people, walking or in cars, stopped and cheered the soldiers. Youth danced in groups in the streets, while others carried banners with slogans against the Mubarak regime. Young boys and girls cheered loudly for the martyrs killed by the police: “The blood of the Martyrs was not in vain!”

“[The] Mubarak era will be remembered as nothing but the consolidation of crony capitalism and monopoly of wealth in a handful of families.” [Abaza 2006:159]

¹⁰³ Mahmood , Saba. February 14, 2011. “The Architects of the Egyptian Revolution”. <http://www.thenation.com/article/158581/architects-egyptian-revolution>, accessed April 17, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ “At 18:00 on 11 February, Omar Suleiman issued a brief statement that Mubarak had given up his post and transferred his powers to the military.” Ecstatic celebrations took place in and “around Tahrir Square”. Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious? Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa. 24 February 2011. Report Number 101. Page: 14.



Figure 21: Celebrations in front the food-court area in Al-Rehab City



Figure 22: Celebrators of Al-Rehab carry banners stating: “The Nation liberated Egypt”, while another says “Goodbye” in several languages.



Figure 23: Residents of Al-Rehab and their children have their pictures taken with the army

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Urban segregation has existed previously in Cairo, however, the adaptation of neoliberal policies by the government in the last decade and its support for class segregation has led to a sharp polarization in the urban fabric of the greater city of Cairo. This dichotomy is revealed in the strong supportive position set by the Egyptian government to both local and foreign construction companies to build gated communities in the suburbs of Cairo.

In the last decade Cairo became a globalized and cosmopolitan city. Thus, it magnetizes internal migrants. The need of housing those migrant laborers, who are serving and working in the city, was abandoned by the neoliberal Egyptian government rather the focus of the government is directed toward the processes of branding and gentrifying the city of Cairo by hiding and relocating the slums areas from the eyes of the tourists. At the same time, suburban areas and gated communities in New Cairo and other suburbs were strongly supported by the President Mubarak. The president's privatized territory exemplified in the Egyptian government, elite businessmen, and a group of members of the National Democratic Party, who surrounded the president, were key factors in creating the urban segregation. Later, the ownership of some gated communities was illegalized by the Egyptian High court. I argue that this shows the fragmentation, fragility, and gaps of the Egyptian laws concerning the public land ownership which paved a way to corruption. The state is turned into a privatized territory due to the monopolization of wealth by a few political elites and businessmen, while the poor layer, which is the majority of Egyptian society, did not receive any advantage from the neoliberal policies.

The state and the media are two main factors that contributed greatly in creating the notion of ‘otherness’ and stereotyping ‘the other’ as criminals, uncontrollable, polluted, poor, and barbaric. Indeed, neglecting the development of these slums is a product of the state.

I found that living in a privatized secured gated community, in particular Al-Rehab City, intensifies the mood of moral panic among some of my participants. This is because they believe that their community is labeled as a rich one and therefore may be a target of potential criminals. In their imagination those are the people living in slum areas. In addition, the mood of moral panic intensifies among some residents due to the presence of ‘the other’, such as domestic servants, private security guards, and deliverymen, who are working in and catering for their community. Thus, some residents have applied additional security measures, such as security bars, real and fake security cameras, and large lamps on the tops of the roofs of their villas. Despite all of these extra security instruments, their sense of moral panic is not alleviated.

Concerning the use of decorated security bars on their windows, gates, and balconies, I argue that the decoration of these bars according to the residents’ own tastes democratizes their sense of moral panic and transforms it into a symbol of ‘conspicuous consumption’. It is a way of ‘differentiating’ themselves, and a ‘status marker’.

The residents of Al-Rehab City were motivated to move there for various reasons. The reasons were based on the pulling effect of the implementation of the neoliberal policies, such as parents wanting their sons and daughters to be nearby the new campuses of their privatized educational venues. The government encouraged relocating to the area, and supported establishing new schools and universities. The publicity made by the national newspapers,

including pictures of President Mubarak visiting and blessing the suburban gated communities as a national project motivated some residents to live there. This publicity attracted portion of Egyptians, who were working in Gulf countries and who have strong purchasing power. In the early stages of the emergence of Al-Rehab, the lower prices of its units comparing to the ones in the city of Cairo was an attractive feature. Yet, when Al-Rehab became populated and gained a reputation as an elite/classy community, the prices of its units increased massively. I found that unlike the early stage of its emergence, people started to retreat to Al-Rehab for class reasons.

The private security system of Al-Rehab was one of the key incentives which attracted its residents since the early days of its emergence. The early residents claimed that the need for private security systems was vital, since the surrounding areas of the community were desert land. Now the residents are reasoning their need for even extra security systems to limit the accessibility of ‘the other’, the poor. In addition, the residents also want the privatized security system, a good method to monitor ‘the others’ who are working in their community. None of this or the additional security measures, which many of them use, alleviated their mood of moral panic. Furthermore, the residents distrust the private security guards; therefore, they are happy with the presence of the public police. Ironically, this is because they believe that the public police can monitor the private security guards, who are also ‘the other’; they belong to slums, and thus, the private security guards can get involved in criminal acts with other potential criminals from ‘the other’.

The trust in the public police felt decades ago has turned to dissatisfaction with the current condition of the public police. Hence, security is currently enforced by private security companies. Yet the residents also distrust the private security guards in protecting their

community since they are unarmed and powerless, unlike the public police. The private security guards are aware of the distrust by the residents. The security guards believe that there is no need for this distrust, however, since they are well educated. This means they belong to a good social standard. And, the guards I interviewed feel that the residents should not stigmatize them because they merely come from poor areas, since this is not an indicator of being criminals.

I have argued in this thesis that Al-Rehab is symbolically similar to a giant shopping mall; it stimulates consumptive habits among the residents of Al-Rehab and also among its visitors. I have shown through interviews that there is a tension over the accessibility to the community. However, the business owners want the outsiders to enter easily, so that they can gain extra profits. On the other hand, the residents showed their strong desire to limit the accessibility of the outsiders. Yet, some residents do not mind accepting the ‘good looking people’ to enter their community. Furthermore, I argue that Al-Rehab is like a corporation, based on the action taken by the administration of Al-Rehab to limit the accessibility to only ‘good looking people’, who must pay an entrance ticket in order to enter the community. This tells us that the administration of Al-Rehab is keen to strike a balance between its residents’ needs of limiting the accessibility and exclusivity with the needs of its business owners regarding the entrance of the potential outsiders/customers. As I argued, paying tickets is the method to create this balance. The outsiders are consuming the exclusivity and taking advantages of the private security system, as some of them park their cars in the community during their travels to ensure their safety. The outsiders’ attitude, in this context, is another element that makes Al-Rehab turn out to be somewhat akin to a giant shopping mall, with its huge parking lots similar to those found in the lavish shopping malls in the city of Cairo and other cities around the world.

I have demonstrated also that Al-Rehab is a symbolic site of consumption, stimulating changes in the traditional services found in the city of Cairo by modernizing these services within the community. In this context, the demands of some residents in Al-Rheab for modern services turn out to be not simply a 'want' but a 'necessity'. Furthermore, some new privatized modern services enforce isolation and detachment of the residents from the city of Cairo. That said, it demonstrates how the supporters of the neoliberal dream of segregation have succeeded in creating urban segregation.

Numerous commercial vendors sell their goods from Syria, China, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt, and these exhibitions increase the desire of Al-Rehab's residents to consume imported products of a style and quality which are not available to the majority of Egyptians. The consumer practices of the residents remind us with what is seen in the new lavish upscale shopping malls in the city of Cairo, with the intense display of local and foreign products generating desire and stimulating people to consume. There is an availability of all types of goods and services in Al-Rehab, and thus, it has a great role in isolating the residents from the city. This may lead to social distance as the residents become detached from the society and politics of the city. Political dissociation can come from this, as the residents focus on their own gated community. The interests of the residents might over time be at odds with the interests of the inhabitants of the city.

I have also explored the relationship between political events in Egypt and the associated riots occurring in the city of Cairo, with the sense of security felt by Al-Rehab's residents during those events. I found that the residents are detached from these political events mainly in view of the '6th of April' day event in 2010. This showed how the implemented neoliberal policies that

encouraged segregation plays a key role in isolating the residents from the political sphere in the city of Cairo. While during the dramatic Egyptian revolution of February 11, 2011, I found that the residents were detached from the political events while they were taking place in the heart of Cairo City, especially among residents above the age of forty. Yet, I learnt afterward from many parents in the community that their children (youth) were active participants in the Egyptian revolution. Optimistically, this tells us that some of the youth of Al-Rehab want to be part of the world outside their gated community.

Suggestions for Future Research:

After the Egyptian Revolution, it would be important to question the following in future researches:

- A. In what way(s) does the political events in Cairo affect the sense of security felt by the residents of gated communities in greater Cairo?
- B. In what way(s) does living a gated community affect the political participation of its residents?

Limitation of this Thesis:

- A. Time did not allow for a comparative analysis of the perception of the residents of Al-Rehab gated community's sense of security before and after the Egyptian revolution.
- B. The course of work of this thesis did not provide a good chance to perform a comparison between the different perceptions of security among females versus among males, who are living in Al-Rehab gated community.

C. The course of work of this thesis did not provide a good opportunity to determine the perception of security among the various nationalities that are living in Al-Rehab gated community.

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