

COMPARATIVE STUDY FOR DEVELOPING CLOSED VERNACULAR SETTLEMENTS IN EGYPT

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Abstract

From the observation of the urban settlements in Egypt from the past to the present, within research, it was monitored the closed vernacular communities developing in Egypt. Therefore, the core of the research was directing towards comparing between the two vernacular settlements; one from the past, the establishing of Cairo city, the other from the present, Al-Rehab City. Architectural principals are the main features of the comparison, then the followed by urban components that include; residential buildings, public buildings, and urban fabric as well. Consequently, the paper covered the social and culture factors that encouraged people to residence within the past and the present in the two eras, which will reflect positively upon solving people urban problems and avoid creating slum areas. This paper includes two stages to compare between the two vernacular settlements in the different era; a theoretical background in the literature provides architectural and urban features and social criteria for establishing of Cairo city, in 640 AD. Then, it comes to the analysis of the collected data in the current era for Al-Rehab City. The paper incorporates two methods of data collection. First, a field surveys among Al-Rehab City and obtained maps to determine the principal architectural and urban components. Second, a questionnaire survey of the residences was done to explain the factors that encouraged them to live in this closed vernacular settlement in the current era. Consequently, the paper compares between the two settlements to guide the planners to develop interactive vernacular settlements in Egypt.

Keywords: vernacular settlements, urban isolation, social fabric, urban fabric.

1. Introduction

During the last fifteen years, Egypt witnessed the spread of several and different types of urban development projects. The most successful projects of vernacular settlements are the closed communities; which are compounds, gated communities, or gated housing estates. These closed vernacular settlements are primarily considered main two concepts. The first concept as a gear to counter the sense of fear, low crime rates, plus insecurity for some and the consequent lack of a sense of stability, the desire of enhancing privacy, and getting a different quality of services, as well as a wish to achieving the various aspects of activities. The second concept is increasing levels of social class distinction and type of luxury and higher social level, which is considered a less obvious reason for this development. These vernacular settlements contain many distinct houses and multi-story residential apartments, which follow maxim high of no more than 6. In addition to the apartments, there are large villas at the highest level of luxury, the availability of shops, public services, and recreational activities. However, the accommodations units are expensive in these settlements.

The different issues of freedom of wider access to the vernacular settlements, social integration, and territorial justice concerned the people of the closed vernacular settlements since they are just a homogeneous class of the population and fear. This attempt is to control their property and personal safety. The agglomeration mode may engender an improvement in the lives of its members; unfortunately, it does not achieve a homogeneous life of the nation as a whole.

2. Research Aim

The main aim of the research is to determine the guide steps for the planners to develop the vernacular settlements in Egypt, to achieve the needs and requirements of the various members of the society. Moreover, to avoid the urban problems that the residents created related to the social and culture problems.

2.1 Research Hypothesis

The current approach of designing the architectural and urban features in the closed vernacular settlements in Egypt will lead in the long run to the emergence of new social problems. The increasing isolationism of particular society classes and the disintegration of the social fabric of the country affect the coming generations. Then it should take the advantage of this phenomenon to develop quid lines to deal with it so that it does not turn into an isolated society far from the standing one.

3. Research Methodology

This paper includes a two-stage that approach comparison between the two vernacular settlements in the different era. A theoretical background in the literature provides architectural and urban features and social criteria for establishing of Cairo city, in 640 AD. Then, it comes to the analysis of the collected data in the current era. The paper incorporates two methods of data collection. First, a field surveys among Al-Rehab City and collected maps from the implementing company and buildings owners. This survey aims to determine the principal architectural and urban components, second, a questionnaire survey among the residences in the city to explain the social and culture factors that encouraged the people to live in this type of vernacular settlements in the current era. Consequently, the paper is designed to generate qualitative data to compare between the two settlements to guide the planners to design interactive vernacular settlements.

4. Action Plan

Working on the research consists of the following steps:

- Theoretical background of vernacular architecture
- Properties of architectural and urban features for Ancient Cairo since 640 AD
- Properties of architectural and urban features for Al-Rehab since 2003

- Comparative analyses for developing closed vernacular settlements in Egypt
- Conclusion

4.1 Theoretical background of vernacular architecture.

The term vernacular is derived from the Latin word “vernaculars”, meaning "domestic, native, and indigenous" (Andrey, 2007). Allen Noble presents scholarly opinions that folk building or folk architecture is built by "...persons not professionally trained in building arts..."; where vernacular architecture is still of the common people but may be built by trained professionals such as through an apprenticeship, but still using local, traditional designs and materials. Traditional architecture is architecture is passed down from person to person, generation to generation, particularly orally, but at any level of society, not just by common people. Noble discourages use of the term primitive architecture as having a negative connotation (Noble, 2007).

Brunskill (2000) has defined the ultimate in vernacular architecture as

...a building designed by an amateur without any training in design; the individual will have been guided by a series of conventions built up in his locality, paying little attention to what may be fashionable. The function of the building would be the dominant factor, aesthetic considerations, though present to some small degree, being quite minimal. Local materials would be used as a matter of course, other materials being chosen and imported quite exceptionally.

The Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World (1997) defines vernacular architecture as:

...comprising the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources they are customarily owner- or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet

specific needs, accommodating the values, economies and ways of life of the cultures that produce them (Oliver, 1997).

Vernacular architecture is influenced by a vast range of different aspects of human behavior and its environmental situation. Consequently, these aspects lead to the way of building construction, materials and the size of their dwellings.

More influences on design can be that of the size of families, the way the shelters / buildings shall be used, who will use or share which spaces and how food is prepared and eaten. All of the above will determine the size and layout of certain dwellings. Climate also plays a role in vernacular architecture, obviously depending on the on the area in which the building is situated.

For instance, buildings in a cooler climate range will have a high thermal mass or insulated significantly. There will be very few openings to prevent heat loss but in the case of an opening being present, it will most likely be smaller than average. So understandably, in warmer climates the situation will be quite the opposite. Buildings would be built in much lighter materials than that of the cooler climates, more openings will be incorporated for the necessary cross-ventilation and fabric may also be used rather than solid non-porous materials. Vernacular architecture in the Mediterranean and that of the Middle East, often include courtyards with a fountain or pond on their dwelling. By doing this the air is then cooled by the water mist and evaporation and drawn through the home through natural ventilation incorporated in the building form. Whereas in Northern Africa vernacular building usually have a high thermal mass with small openings to prevent the heat from entering the home, thus keeping all cool air inside. All of the above does not necessarily come from design, but rather through trial and error over the generations of building, which often existed before science was brought in to develop new building theories (Strickland, 2011).

The value of housing raised the people vision in shelters which are in some way intimate is seen to provide reassurance and comfort often following very hard times. As the needs change from protecting and saving lives to providing comfortable internal space for long-term shelter, that includes the construction of locally appropriate and accepted housing can be significant.

Recently, the nature of peasant society, by all means, has changed. In former times, it was a communal society based on the extended family. It has become more individualistic and now the nuclear family is the norm. Partly this change reflects the penetration of the rural world by capitalist modes of production and consumption. It had happened due to the ardently promoted through globalization and the contribution of modern education. Therefore, it has released individuals from family bonds, and located them in dispersed workplaces. Effectively, the traditional agriculture-dependent settlement and its coherent, self-sustaining, land-to-people system are in terminal decline (Dayaratne, 2010).

The researchers deal with the Vernacular architecture as it is a category of architecture based on the local environmental consideration, using existing materials and construction methods, and respecting the residents' social and culture needs and requirements. Historically, the development process of residential neighborhoods in old settlements has always considered privacy, climate, and security as important factors, which affect to a great extent the urban built from planners, urban designers, architects, and environmental designers are convinced that architecture could or should be vehicle for attaining social, economic, and political objectives (Saleh, 2001).

In Egypt, in the past, the vernacular architecture did not use formally-schooled architects, but relied on the design skills and tradition of local builders in which it tends to expand over time to reflect the environmental, cultural, social, and economical context in its locations. However, since the late 19th century many professional architects have designed the buildings in international

cement blocked style. Architecture designed by professional architects is usually not considered to be vernacular. Indeed, it can be argued that the very process of consciously designing a building makes it not vernacular. This changing in the design, building materials, and construction methods resulted from the concrete revolution in the construction industry. This style becomes the vernacular architect of the settlements since the beginning of the 20 century.

4.2 Properties of architectural and urban features for Ancient Cairo since 640 AD.

The vernacular settlements in Egypt had many conflicts and invasions since the Islamic conquest (640 AD), and there may have been many security measures in the architectural and urban structure of these settlements, villages, and communities.

The history of Cairo has started since the Arab conquest of Egypt 29 AH / 640 AD. Amr ibn Al-Aas constructed the capital Fustat town, by 31 AH / 642 AD, then the establishment of El-Askar town 139 AH / 750 AD and Alktaea town 257 AH / 868 AD. These towns are installations of the ruling families in the era of the Abbasids and Ataiwlaunayn. Finally, Cairo was created by the Fatimids coming from Morocco and for the old Cairo established by year 358 AH / 969 planning to be the capital of the Fatimid Caliphate. Ancient Cairo was consisting of Mosque and Dar emirate / Palace Caliph, and surrounded by streets, lanes and alleys special accommodation for compounds soldiers. Ancient Cairo was wrapped around with high wall peppered with towers and gate to protect those inside and determine the inside and outside. The first project for Jawhar Al-Seqqely was the wall that surrounding the Ancient Cairo, which was the first wall of the city in ancient times. It was made of big size adobe. Jawhar Al-Seqqely commanded to bring an iron gate. It was for the fence of Cairo, included dug a trench in front of the wall of the fence from northern to protect the settlement. The access to the Ancient Cairo was through only one gate, which can easily prevent enemies from entering it, immunization and defense. Ancient Cairo also

included neighborhoods that called the locality and then turned to the alley; these neighborhoods were relatively closed and can be accessed through secret doors. Empty spaces separated them. After that, Saladin built a wall in the year 566 AH / 1171 AC to be able to surround Cairo and the capitals of Egypt earlier (Fustat, Alaskar, and Alktaea). But there were many entries to the big city at that stage gates because of the widening of the total area after the accession of the previous capitals of Egypt (Raymond, 1994) Figure1. The architecture and urban features that were characterized the Ancient Cairo are; residential buildings, public buildings, and urban fabric.



Figure 1. The walls of ancient Cairo (Raymond, 1994)

4.2.1 Residential Buildings. From studying the residential archaeological buildings of Ancient Cairo, which was for above middle social class like merchants, clerics and princes (House Al-omesely, House Zainab Khaton), we find that their facades have mostly broken angles doors. So, no one from the street can see inside the house. Also, the windows of the ground floor are shaped in form of narrow slots so the animal riders in the street cannot see inside the house, and the windows roles top shall be covered with large sheets of turned wood or Mashrabyat to organize entry of light, and to avoid seeing the inside of the near houses. Normally the houses were consisted of several floors contain guests rooms separated and isolated from the compartments of house owners and all are wrapped around an open interior patio, which is one of the most important architectural elements in the Arab old cities (Ragetta, 2003). It was found that all the architectural elements like Mashrabyat, access doors, windows and courtyards have been used and adapted to confirm the specificity of house owners with an emphasis on spatial separation spreads depending on the degree of privacy, Figure2.

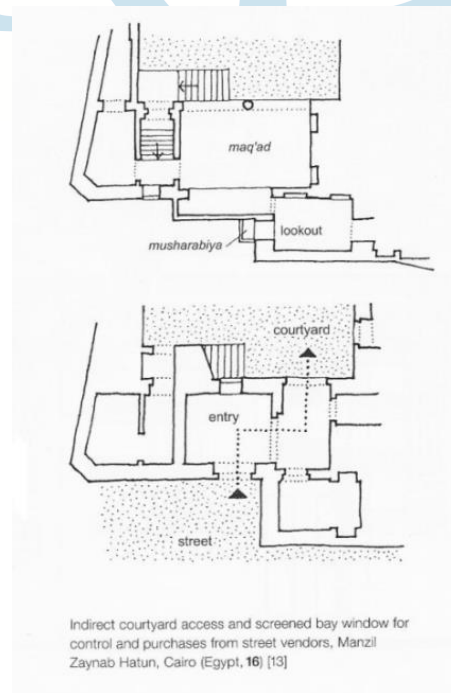


Figure 2. Access Axis to the inner patio of the house Zainab Khaton (Ragetta, 2003)

4.2.2 Public Buildings. The most important public buildings in Ancient Cairo is "Wekalat and Khans" They are an urban pool (Residential Commercial craftsman) located inside or outside the Ancient Cairo. So, those that are outside the vernacular settlement were protected by towers for security reasons, and only one door protected the ones that are inside the colonies. The most important thing that urban studies of Wekalat and Khans refer to the respect and consideration of the security and privacy of each element of the Wekalat users and the Khan Residents, visitors or workers. Each has his allotted space to avoid any infringement on the others space, and this confirms interest in spatial separation in the spreads and movement reasons of security and respect for privacy. That is one of the most important features of the ancient vernacular settlement in Egypt; the name of Wekalat comes from procuration of a particular commodity; it has been spread to the settlements, Figure 3.

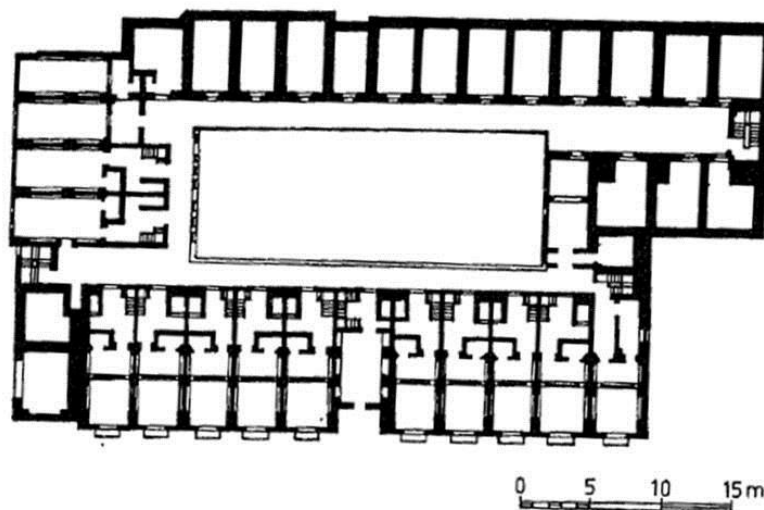


Figure 3. Wakalat Kaitbay (Raymond, 1994)

Most of the Khans are on the trade routes. In the architectural design for Wekala, there are shops to view the goods brought from abroad in the interfaces, and adorned with only one gate in the center of the interface. This gate controls inside and outside to and from Wekala. Where only enters specialists' workers to the yard or courtyard in the center_ Exposed, wrapped around

warehouses for storing the goods. Also, there is a staircase to the upper floors beside one corner of the interface, as is the case in the Wekala of Sultan Bey by 9-century AH / 15 AC. The Khans have been characterized by not having shops in the interfaces. The entrance was through the main door, leading to a patio or a courtyard in the center. It was surrounded by warehouses for the storage of passenger's goods, and have the stairs which leads to upper floors in one corner of the courtyard Middle, as is the case in the Wekala of Ghouri that returns for a century 10 H / 16 AC (Raymond, 1994). The upper floors of Wekala and Khans were made up of several floors, this is called the quarter, a name that means in Arabic place housing, participate in the Wekala, Khan, the quarter consists of residential units that contain several floors each housing unit, or from one floor only, topped with another housing unit (Ragette, 2003). The quarter's residents are considered to be from the middle classes and the poor ones, but they are often a high degree of self-management of the gathering where the residents are caring daily by fixing maintenance of the yard or open courtyards, facilities and services.

4.2.3 Urban Fabric. The urban properties of Ancient Cairo include the alley or the narrow lane, which are commonly used as a physical expression to retreat from public life (Glasze, 2006). This alley includes residential houses of two floors or three painting a solid building that interrelated, painting a solid building. In addition, it represents geometric models, carrying technical specifications significantly different from modern construction; every house dovetails and collaborates with the other. So, the houses kept coherent internally, Figure 4. It is clear that, the attention and emphasis on the privacy of each family are in the old city. There was a desire for a sense of security, safety, and stability. But there were cohesion and collaboration in the urban structure of the building as a whole, and cohesion shown by the urban fabric of the city is reflected positively on the social characteristics anciently in the vernacular settlements, Figure 5.

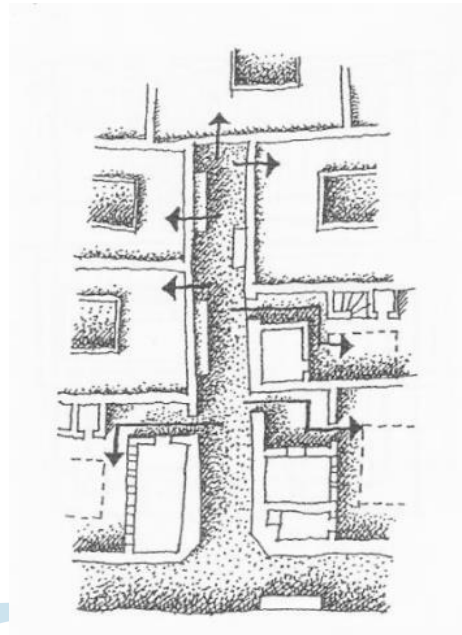


Figure 4. The Alley previously in old city (Ragetta, 2003)



Figure 5. Cohesion and solidarity in the old urban fabric (Ragetta, 2003)

The residential buildings in various classes fit together through one urban fabric integrated. This integration affects the social dimension and the interconnection between the various classes where it is easier for wealthy classes to see the poor and help them. Consequently, it makes it easier for the poor to work with the wealthy classes to participate. This integration in the urban fabric

helps the all in the formation of one compound. The integrated and interdependent based on mutual participation and mutual benefit, help each other and it makes sure that privacy does not mean social isolation, separation of members of the compound and the lack of social solidarity.

4.2.4 Finding of studying Ancient Cairo. After reviewing the architectural and urban characteristics of the vernacular settlement for the ancient Cairo, the researchers found that:

- The concept of closed communities is not a new phenomenon in Egypt.
- This type of gated vernacular settlement has roots in our history that makes the impact of security and privacy, a strong influence on the design of urban cities and neighborhoods in that historical period.
- Consequently, there were stratified social, spatial and material urban patterns anciently through a small and distinct configurations, the division in the ancient city was remarkable.
- The case of many social groups, these residential closed vernacular settlement mainly depends on the structure of ancient families that existed in this period and its extensions in the offspring of mating and housing with the same basic family.

However, this did not prevent the separation of class strength cohesion and collaboration between the all types of buildings (residential / municipal / commercial ...) into a single entity. In addition, the urban fabric has a lot of social life care and human dimension of city's high-income classes to low-income classes.

4.3 Properties of architectural and urban features for Al-Rehab since 2003

Cairo, like many cities in the less-developed world, experienced rapid population growth in the latter part of the 20th century and is now the largest city on the African continent. Cairo's metropolitan region has been hampered by a lack of statistical land-use data with spatial reference. Although intermittent censuses have recorded the increase in population, the resultant change in the extent and spatial configuration of the urban area is poorly understood (Stewart et al., 2004).

Abaza (2011) refers to the new patterns of space segregation that have been created by developments advertised as “islands of luxury,” with privatized security guards. At the same time, the city’s overwhelming sprawl of slums and informal housing is expanding astoundingly. The rich have opted to move out of the center of Cairo to the outskirts, and to new satellite cities on the eastern and western parts of the Egyptian desert. A new up-market, Disneyfied Cairo with Dubai as its ideal model, is in the making in the eastern desert zone. These new cities created on both sides of the desert mainly consist of walled and gated communities, landscaped compounds, and condominiums connected by highways which make Carrefour megastores, shopping complexes, and shopping malls easily accessible. In the recent years, these new settlements attract all social classes to live in, not only the rich inhabitants. The social, economic, and political objectives push people to search for the safety, security, and good living in these communities.

The idea of the establishment of the closed vernacular settlement in Egypt started in the early sixties of 20 century. Where the one of the development companies state “Al Maamoura Company for Housing and Development” went to establish a residential closed seasonal settlement called "Al Maamoura" in Alexandria. Then, the governmental sector in the form of “Authority of New Urban Communities”, had established and implemented many closed communities and resorts. Consequently, that were have many restrictions on access for non-residences to that closed communities, where these types of residences were provided by the privileges and services meet their needs, to encourage them to buy either apartments or houses to live in.

However, these gated resorts were very different from the closed vernacular settlement in the process studied in this research because these resorts come under tourism development, and it is seasonal housing where housing at specific times of the year.

On October 1997, the private sector in Egypt, “Talaat Mustafa Group Holding”, tends to invest this urban idea and create a gated vernacular settlement for permanent residence. This real state created Al-Rehab City, which is the first permanently gated vernacular settlement built by the private sector in Egypt, with total services to meet most the economic, social and culture needs and services requirements of the residents. The success of Al-Rehab City as a grouping gated vernacular settlement has motivated many different real estate companies across Egypt to the establishment of other gated vernacular settlement on the edge of the cities with sizes and prices varieties.

Al-Rehab City is a part of Greater Cairo, in Cairo Governorate. Al Rehab City is a fully fledged community, which creates a comprehensive integrated residential scheme within the New Cairo plan. It covers an area of 10 million m² to accommodate 200,000 residents (Al-Rehab, 2015). There are 10 phases; also, all the facilities are interconnected throughout these phases to include educational, medical, commercial, sports club, recreational and maintenance facilities,

Figure 6.



Figure 6. Al-Rehab City as a closed vernacular settlement in Egypt (Al-Rehab, 2015)

4.3.1 Residential Buildings. The researchers cover in this paper an area of 5 phases (approximately 1250 fedan). These phases are complete districts offering two kinds of residential arrangements: villas and apartments. They were classified into groups surrounded by green areas and were connected by footpaths, Figure 7. Urban open spaces and parking areas separate between each residential group. Villas areas were built and located to 8 meters streets' widths that have green areas extending from each side. The green areas and gardens surround the villas provide quietness, security, and privacy.

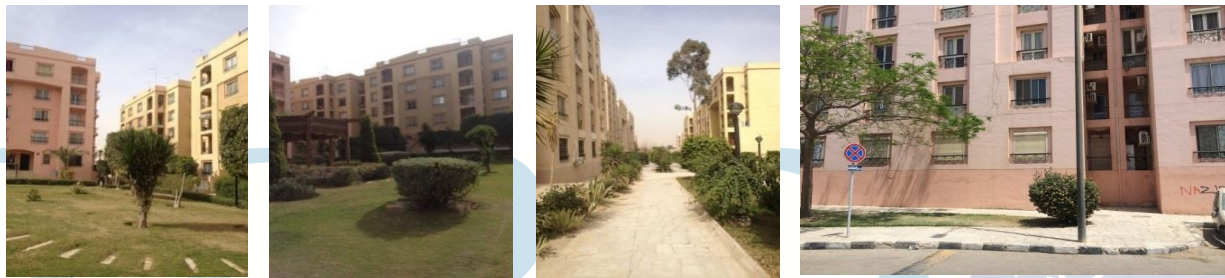


Figure 7. Samples of the residential buildings

4.3.2 Public Buildings. Al-Rehab City provides public buses transfer to link the districts with each other and to connect the city with Cairo. Services and utilities which service the residential areas are distributed along an inner ring road. Also, services are separated by function: the market, food court, and malls, in addition to other administrative, educational, religious, medical, and recreational activities, Figure 8. Al-Rehab has ample places for car parking with crafts. The maintenance area contains shops to provide all facilities maintenance products. Also, the necessary services and the required needs of the residents are available in the city in the mediate of each stage, where it is easily accessible. There is a social club, which is available with the different sports.

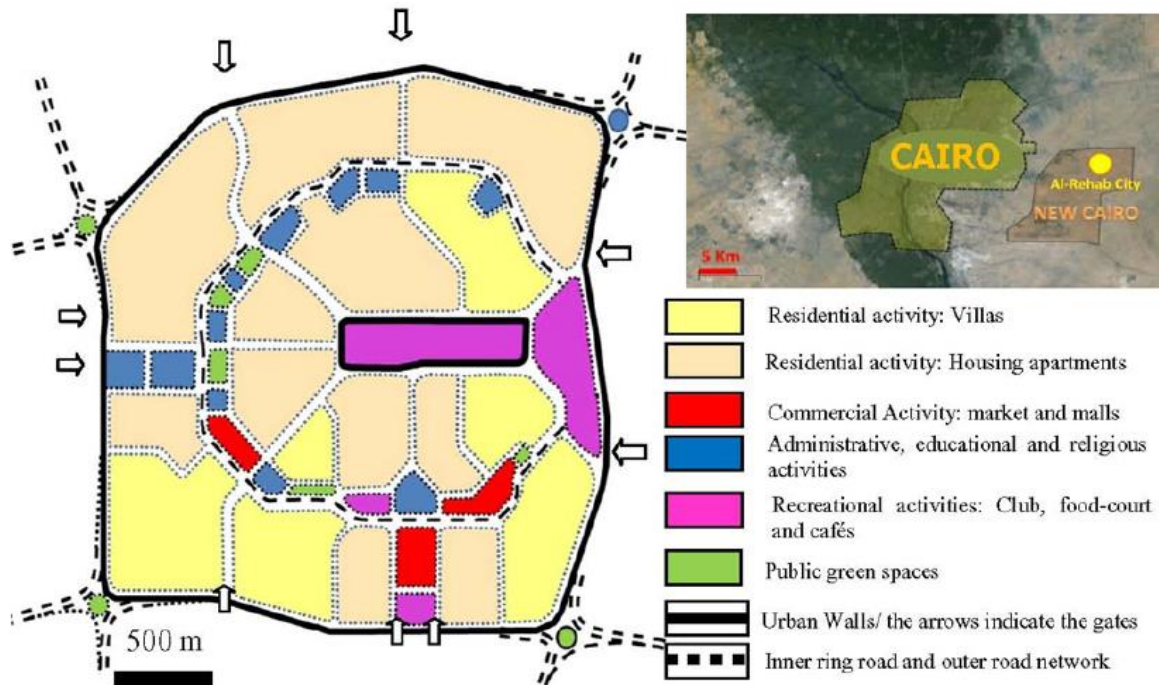


Figure 8. Al-Rehab City map of uses (Said, 2013)

From an architectural point of view, each of these spaces has its form and sensory phenomena which combine to produce a particular mood. The shifting mood experienced during the commented walks is mainly due to the sound and bodily qualities of the various spaces, with olfactory and imaginary aspects taking second place. In this minor scale of analysis, the city is perceived as a calm backdrop in which patches of animated micro ambience appear. It seems that the design process set out to create pre-designed moods which are somehow imposed on users and change their perception and affective state as soon as they enter each zone. The sensory journey readily illustrates this variation, witness the various micro ambiances (Said, 2013).

4.3.3 Urban Fabric. Spatial organization is based on zoning, in which the city is divided into islands; each island; each island corresponds to a single function. In this context, walls seem an important urban component, repeated at several scales: a wall surrounding the city; another one around the club at the heart of the city (Said, 2013). The wall surrounding Al-Rehab City is the main urban element in the vernacular settlement, Figure 9. Also, the zoning and residential clusters

is the main concept prevailing its spatial organization and inner urban arrangement. Al-Rehab City is consists of one-track zones, forming several islands surrounded by roads. Consequently, the road is an important unit for the urban fabric that divided the zones of the settlement. This closed vernacular settlement has a very extensive landscape with fragile communication between the neighbors. The architect design a big social club in the middle of Al-Rehab City as a focal point to meet the social and culture needs, unfortunately, joining this club is very expensive for the regular residences. The principal of public urban open space has gone, replaced by inner green areas with pathways for the walkers and outer transportation passages for cars, Figure 10.



Figure 9. Al-Rehab City Outer wall, inner ring road, and city gates (Said, 2013)

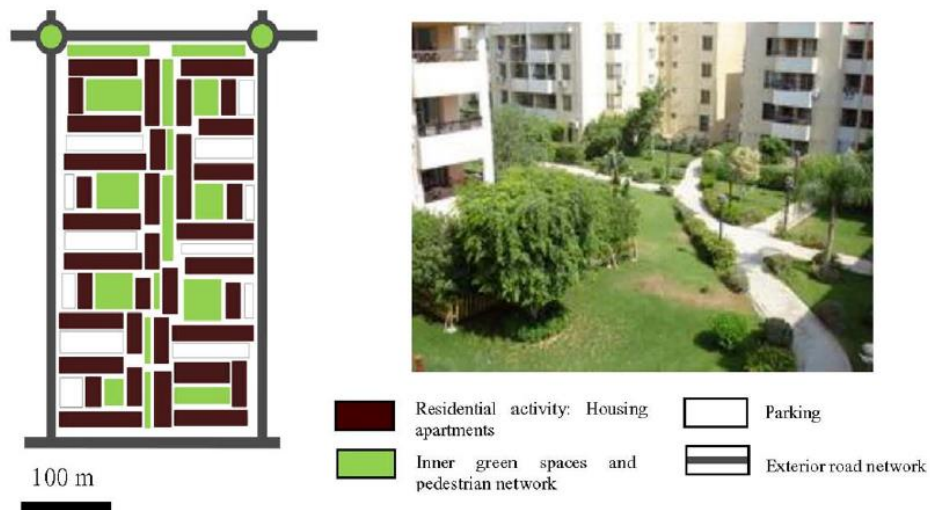


Figure 10. The western part of Al-Rehab City (Said, 2013)

4.3.4 Comparative analyses for developing closed vernacular settlements in Egypt.

What are the reasons that attract the Egyptians to build walls to protect themselves in a secure vernacular settlement like Al-Rehab City? In this respect, according to a questionnaire survey among the residences in the settlement, investigating the essential criteria set by the residences into account when choosing to live inside the closed vernacular and determining their priority in the way of live. They highlight these reasons to live inside closed vernacular settlement; associated to privacy, Social Class Homogeneous, and Safety and security.

The researchers study the comparative analyses of the architectural and urban features to speculate the effect of current urbanism on Egyptian closed vernacular settlements. These features include; residential buildings, public buildings, and urban fabric. The comparison is between past and present vernacular settlements. The researchers connected these features in the past and present with the motivation reasons that attract the Egyptians to live in closed vernacular settlements in the current period.

Table 1. Comparative analyzes for developing closed vernacular settlements in Egypt

Features	Ancient Cairo (Past)	Al-Rehab City	Purpose
Residential buildings	Ground floor windows were narrow, and the upper floors windows are big covered with Mashrabiya.	Large open spaces between the residential buildings	Privacy
	The exposed inner courtyard, which emphasizes privacy.		
	Spatial separation between different areas according to the users.		
	There is social diversity in the community; the low-income residences served the wealthy families, and the high-income people, in return, support, and care of the poor ones.	Rise in the prices of the residential buildings compared with the others in the open settlements cause non-Social Diversity.	Social Diversity
	Indirect entrance through a small hall.	Ground floor windows are covered with Wrought Iron	Safety and Security

	Separate spaces for each of the users of Wekala or Khan; of residents or visitors or workers	No	Privacy
Public buildings	Diversity in sociality in all the services and public areas and buildings.	The products' prices in Al-Rehab City are more high than outside.	Social Diversity
	Have gates to control the entrance and exit to the court yard of Wekala and Khan.	Have gates to control the entrance and exit. Security guards for the public areas	Safety and Security
	Narrow alley and warm, which is commonly used as a physical expression to withdraw from public life	Residential buildings are distributed in groups surrounding open space.	Privacy
	Diversity in sociality in all neighborhoods, leading to balance social solidarity and cohesion of the community	No Cohesion or solidarity in the urban fabric	Social Diversity
	Cohesion and solidarity in the urban fabric		
Urban fabric	Surrounded by walls Accessed through gates The division was based primarily on the structuring of the prestigious families and their extensions in the offspring by mating and housing with the same basic family.	Surrounded by walls Accessed through gates Security guards on gates to control the movement. Increase the separation distances between the villas and residential buildings in the fabric of the city The installation of cameras at the gates of the monitor	Safety and Security

Closed vernacular settlement can be described as isolated communities in Egypt. Being in a vernacular settlement surrounded with a wall, explain how much the fear and unsafe feeling effect on the community structure. The residences isolated themselves inside the walls. They limited themselves by class homogenous which prevent the other social classes in the community to merge with them. Guests are exposed to negative feelings of exclusion and they feel elimination from their community. The gates along the outer wall considered as a barrier between two countries.

After passing through the wall, people experience a momentary shock due to the stark contrast between the ambiance of the desert outside and the green spaces within. The latter are visually dominant, changing certain characteristics of the moisture and air circulation, sounds and smells.

Entrance to the city is marked by a strong emotional transition to a state of calm and tranquility (Said, 2013)

According to a review of Ancient Cairo in the past, the problem of social isolation in old Cairo did not appear. The residences in Ancient Cairo took the security measures into account, respected for the privacy in the vernacular settlement, and appreciated of social, religious and physical disparity, each according to its kind. In the past, the vernacular settlement included social diversity, where there was no rejection of one of the classes, and care of the social human dimension. The separation of the classes did not prevent the power of cohesion and solidarity between the urban potentials buildings of all types (residential/ municipal/ commercial), instead, it strengthens it. The stability of the ancient Cairo resulted from the strong communications between the social diversity in urban fabric; there were no security guards in the past to prevent various classes from entering in the places. While in the current closed vernacular settlement, the privacy became from the spatial distance between houses and villas, which reduces communication between residents.

5. Conclusion

Closed vernacular settlements introduce a new urban vocabulary in the urban map in Egypt. This type of settlement emphasizes an aesthetic of which the main characteristics are an enclosure, luxury, and wealth. Unfortunately, the increasing number of closed vernacular settlement in the past few years reflects that Egyptians feel unsecured towards large cities. The idea of a closed vernacular settlement is well suited to the elite, which wants to escape the urban ugliness which takes over Great Cairo. The residents pay a lot of money to construct their dream and surround it with walls.

In the present form of closed vernacular settlements, they are the result of isolationism which creates an artificial reality in their residence. This isolation affects negatively on the social fabric

of Egypt and increases the gap between community classes. Also, because of the high-security level in the closed vernacular settlement, the prices of the residential units increase. These groups increase the concentrations of high-income conglomerates; it appears to be private prosperity. Consequently, the lack of social justice in the closed vernacular settlements expansion and the high real estate prices the residential units with fake prices which would be more than their actual value. The gates and walls weaken the links between the outside and the inside in the closed vernacular settlement. These communities appear to be controlled by specific regulations governing the settlement.

The gated communities could be considered an effective treatment in the country to resolve many of the problems that neighborhood can face. The community should be willing to deal with the new changes intelligently. There should be a balance in achieving the wishes and aspirations of the residence in the closed vernacular settlement as a whole and that the residence outside the closed settlement. There should not be a preference in the eligibility of services for a class to another class because of the level of income or the difference in the economic or social level. The community must be paying attention to the current circumstances in the country and the chaos of the bid prices of residential units in Egypt. The status of the closed vernacular settlement should improve the lives of all its members.

6. Acknowledgement

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