

Shifting Visions of Modernity in Cairo

A Spatial Political Economy Approach

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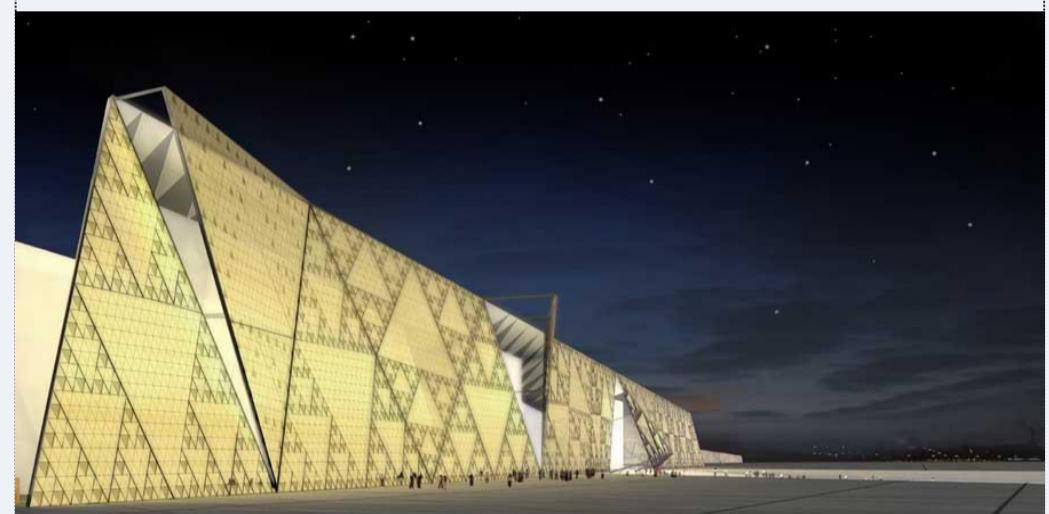
Ever since Egypt's integration into the globalised economic system in the 1990s, new modes of urbanisation appeared, which promised novel visions of modernity. To interpret this process, this thesis explores the effect of political economy on the spatial production process in today's Cairo.

It asks: what visions of modernity do political and economic elites promote and why, and how are these mediated through the built environment?

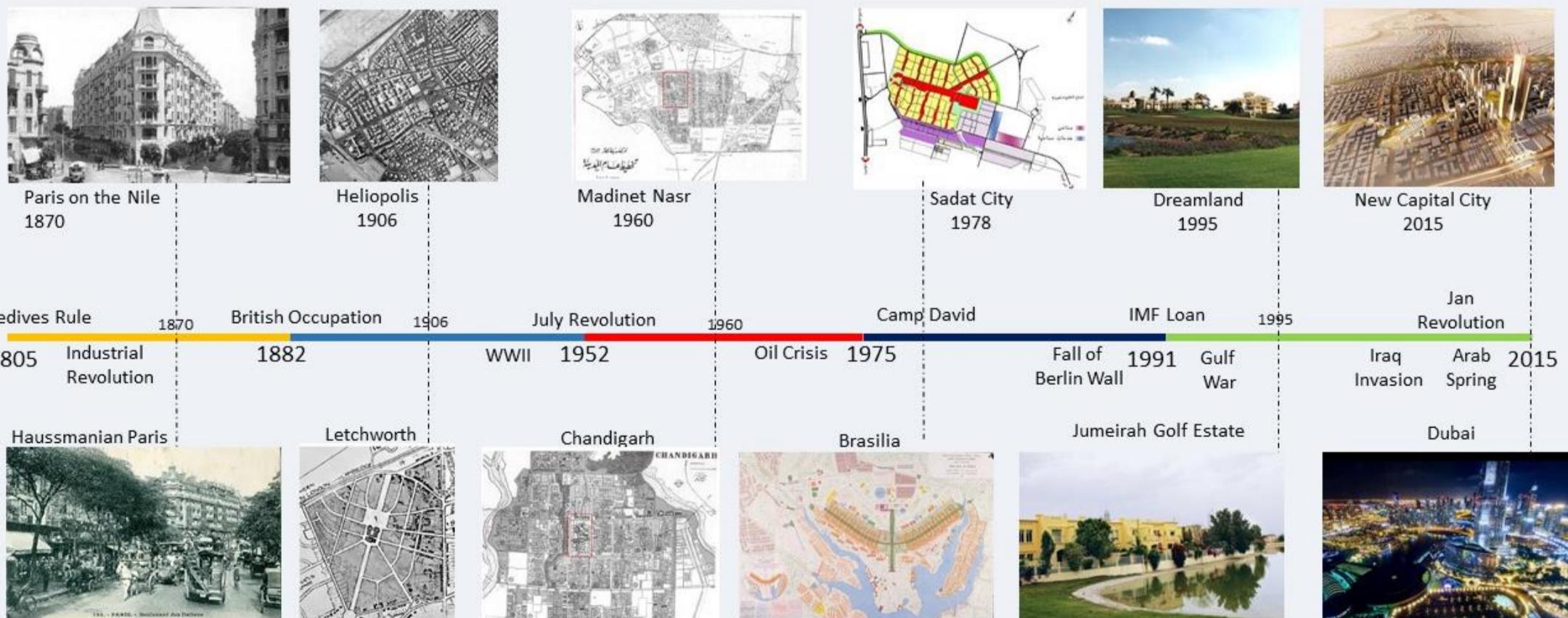
- An analytic framework is developed from the theories of Henri Lefebvre on the social production of space, and Kim Dovey on the mediation of power through space.
- It starts by analysing the stakeholders, the sources of funds, followed by an analysis of the visions of modernity projected by each one which applies to daily life practices, and in large scale state projects..
- The case studies are: The New Giza gated community, west of Cairo and the state-sponsored signature architecture: Grand Egyptian Museum
- The study finds that the pursuit of profit by real estate developers in Cairo leads to the promotion of exclusivity and luxury within the gated communities' design. Meanwhile, stakeholders in state megaprojects seek to represent Egypt as modern through the grandeur and technical competence of its chosen designs.
- Both these visions of modernity share a tendency to stigmatise Cairo as a metropolis of congestion, pollution and security threats, which needs to be escaped.



New Giza is one of the new series of gated communities that began to appear in the early-2000s and involve unprecedented scales of land, facilities and anticipated residents.



The Grand Egyptian Museum is one of the foremost showcase projects involving signature architecture anywhere in the world at the current moment.



Colonial Infiltration / Colonial Domination / Socialist / Neo-Liberal / Global