Reinventing the Urban Past:
Sustainable Conservation in Islamic Cairo

By
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A Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
of
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Abstract

In response to both crumbling infrastructure and a heavy economic dependence on tourism, the Egyptian Government embarked on the Historic Cairo Restoration Program to conserve and promote Cairo's traditional Islamic architecture. Simultaneously, a broad-based, integrative planning approach was introduced in Islamic Cairo by the Aga Khan Trust. It emphasized the conservation of the heritage character of the area and community involvement in planning practices, but viewed tourism as detrimental to the integrity of the historic city.

This study of Islamic Cairo planning initiatives focuses on the tensions created within the planning profession in attempts to achieve sustainable heritage conservation. The questions posed include: what are the tensions between Western concepts and practices of conservation and preservation, and those observable in the Islamic world (as manifest in Islamic Cairo); and how do these tensions play out in the two case studies? Through literature review and first-hand observations, recommendations are proposed for the mitigation of critical issues and the achievement of a shared vision for the conservation of Islamic Cairo.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Rae Bridgman and Dr. Ian Wight, my practicum advisors, along with committee members Dr. Susan Frohlick and Michael Dudley, for their support and guidance in writing this practicum.

Dedication

I would also like to express my gratitude to my husband, Travis Krawchuk, for his help and encouragement along the way, and for missing Christmas to go to the other side of the world with me.

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Glossary of Terms*

Amir	Arabic word for prince; high-ranking military commander
Arabesque	ornament based on vegetal forms in which leaves and stems form a reciprocal, continuous interlacing pattern
Ayyubids	a dynasty that lasted in Egypt from 1171 to 1250 A.D. and was named after its founder Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi who declared independence from the Caliphate and established himself as Sultan in Egypt. Upon his death, his wife Shagar al-Durr ("Tree of Pearls") joined the rare breed of female rulers of Egypt. The Ayyubids were succeeded by the two consecutive Mamluk reigns.
Bab	gate or door
Bahri Mamluks	A succession of strong Mamluk sultans, originally Mamluk slaves based on barracks in Rhoda Island and hence named Bahri (Arabic for river), who took over control of Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1382 A.D. Their reign was characterized by relative stability and prosperity on the internal arena and powerful military control on the external level defeating enemy threats.
Bayt	House; dwelling
Burgi Mamluks (Circassian)	The turbulent Circassian Mamluk regime that took over the Bahri Mamluks from 1382 to 1517 A.D. was also known as Burgi Mamluk since they were based in the towers (Burg) of the Citadel. The reign was characterized by epidemic outbreaks and heavy taxation to make up for the decline in revenues that followed the discovery of a new trade route to India.
Caravanserai	rectangular structure that provided lodgings for merchants and space for commercial transactions
Comité Classification	A small green oval plate with Arabic white numerals nailed near the entrance of the building indicates the numerical classification of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe. The Comité's dating, conservation and indexing activities began in 1880 and remained in place through 1940. The Supreme Council of Antiquities continues the Comité's activities.
Dar	house, mansion, palace
Darb	path, way, alley
Fatimids	A Shi'a dynasty originating in North Africa that ruled Egypt from 969 to 1171 A.D. Faithful followers of Caliph Ali, the fourth "Rightly Guided Caliph" in Islam, Fatimids rivaled the Abbassid Dynasty, then ruling the Islamic world, by claiming their rightful legacy to the Caliphate based on their direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad. The Fatimids' first action was to lay the foundation of a new fortified royal city al-Qahira whose core was Sharia al-Muizz.
Hammam	bath, private or public
Khan	place where goods were produced, sold, and stored that also provided accommodations for travelers and merchants; caravanserai
Khanqah	residential institution specially endowed for Sufis, Muslim ascetics who were committed to a communal life of prayer and poverty
Kuttab	Quranic school, usually for young boys or orphans; neighbourhood

	elementary school
Madrasa	literally, 'place of study', particularly a theological school
Mamluk	Literally means "owned by another". These former slaves were imported from central Asia, trained, freed and recruited in military service. The Mamluk state consisted of the Bahri Mamluks, then later the Burgi Mamluks.
Mashrabiya	the alcove in wooden lattice windows where water in porous earthen bottles exposed to air currents was cooled by evaporation, and extended to designate the projecting window or screen with a lattice-work grille. It is a typical feature of Cairene domestic architecture and also appears in some religious architecture. Mashrabiya refers both to the structure and type of woodwork
Maydan or midan	originally a polo ground, now an open space or square in the city
Minaret	literally, "beacon'; the tower from which the call to prayer is given five times daily
Ottomans	Western Asian tribes of Turkomen who besieged Constantinople and established themselves as a powerful empire in present day Turkey during the 15th century. The Ottoman Regime in Egypt went on from 1517 to 1800 A.D. Egypt, governed by a succession of appointed viceroys who bore the title "Pasha", became a dependent province of the greater Turkish empire in Istanbul.
Qasr	fort or palace
Rab'	apartment building or tenement for middle- and lower-class tenants. Usually upper floors of a wikala
Sabil	public drinking fountain
Sabil-Kuttab	A structure combining a public water dispensary on the ground floor and a Quranic school above it. The structure was first introduced to Cairene architecture during Mamluk times as an attached part of mosques. Later during Ottoman times, sabil-kuttabs became a free-standing favourite charitable endowment.
Stucco	Carved plaster used as low-relief decoration on ceiling or walls. Also plaster applied to entire facades to simulate stone.
Sultan	The highest ranking ruler in a Muslim state
Waqf (pl. awqaf)	an assignment of revenue in perpetuity to some religious, educational, or charitable purpose; a religious endowment that cannot be alienated. The Western legal equivalent of waqf (literally, 'stop') is mortmain.
Wikala	bonded warehouse for storage of goods, with upper floors for rent; caravanserai

*Williams: 2002a; American University in Cairo: 1990

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Prologue

September 11, 2001

This journey begins on September 11, 2001. It was my first week of planning school and the day before my very first class – theory, as it happens. The events of what came to be known as 9-11 would shape my worldview throughout my planning education and, at the time, I had no idea how profoundly or how far it would take me.

Perhaps I had been completely oblivious to the world at large prior to this monumental date, but I could not comprehend the motivations that would generate such an insidious attack. I became attentive to the frequency of extremist confrontations and incidences of terrorism, and was struck by the regularity with which these acts centered around the built heritage – the structural manifestation of cultural identity itself.

Heritage as an embodiment of history and culture was a passion of mine, and its conservation was one of the reasons I had chosen planning as a career path. Therefore, the symbolism of these assaults motivated me to action. As naïve as it sounds, I felt compelled to direct my work towards learning about a culture completely foreign to me – call it Arab, Islamic, Middle Eastern, or whatever label one wishes to apply – because I hoped that knowledge of the "other" would persuade us to find ways to get along.

My decision to study Cairo had come as a reduction in a number of heritage-related topics that I had stumbled across within literature on the subject of the Middle East. What caught my attention in particular was the introduction of a planning program that sought to manipulate Islamic heritage for the comfort of Western tourists. I was immediately disquieted by this idea and decided to explore it further…

Blast Rocks Bazaar in Cairo

Islamic militants detonate bombs in Sinai Resorts
Cnn.com, October 7, 2005

Arab News

Blaze destroys 120 shops in Cairo Market
The Sydney Morning Herald

A city in danger
Al-Ahram Weekly

Bomb in Cairo tourist area kills four
Daily Times, April 7, 2005

Bomb kills scores in Egyptian
resort town cnn.com, July 2005

Tourists now a global target
LexisNexis.com

Islamic militants kill 58 foreign tourists and four Egyptians at Temple of Hatshepsut
— Cnn.com, November 17, 1997

Cairo blast blow to tourism
iafrica.com

Will they come back?
Cairo Magazine

Was it possible for a place to be reduced to these headlines? Could this region (one that had witnessed the birth of civilization, that held such profound religious artifacts, and that was architecturally revered for millennia) not be peacefully shared as a common global heritage in this day and age? Are our differences still so insurmountable? Why should we not be able to make concessions for each other to share in something so extraordinary, without detriment to the people that continue to inhabit these places or to the people who want to experience them?

I made the decision to travel to Cairo, to experience this supposed site of contestation for myself as a planner, tourist and student.

I had numerous reservations: As a North American/Western planner, what right did I have to pass judgment on the planning and conservation practices of a foreign nation? How could I begin to understand the daily life experiences of these people, their

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views on their environment, their belief systems, let alone the production of their 'heritage'? I knew that as nothing more than a tourist, albeit an educated one, my comprehension of this community - these communities - would be superficial at best. But I continued to feel that the trip would be invaluable, in that although I might not fully understand, I would at least become more aware.

I arrived with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. I had never before ventured out of Canada, let alone anywhere as exotic as I believed Egypt would be. From the airport, my husband and I were driven across Cairo to our hotel by a driver and a tour company employee, neither of whom spoke enough English to offer us any explanation as to what we were taking in. It was overwhelming – the scale of the city was unfathomable to someone who had never seen a city approaching this size, heaving with a population it obviously struggled to contain; traffic weaved and honked and sped with apparent lawlessness and competed for space with donkey-drawn carts; uniformed officers carrying weapons lined the streets and guarded the gates of compounds. The air was thick with pollution, and noise, and a language that I could not decipher.

We were taken to Islamic Cairo and dropped in the Midan Al-Hussein. Negotiating the narrow corridors of the medieval bazaar we came to one of the few hotels in the area – the Hotel Al-Hussein. After a whirlwind introduction to the city, my first comfort came from the desk clerk of the hotel who offered the following: "This is the *real* Cairo. You will love it here."

At that moment, I knew that this journey would be worthwhile.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Cairo (Egypt) in the twenty-first century is a mega-city plagued by rapid urbanization, extreme poverty and environmental degradation. In a city struggling to maintain basic provisions for residents, heritage conservation (the long-term maintenance of culturally and historically important sites and items) is often a remote concern.

While globalization processes can intensify these injurious effects, they can also present compelling arguments for the conservation of heritage. Among these are a renewed interest in the establishment of a national identity, the recognition of heritage sites on a global scale, foreign investment in conservation projects, and the economic profitability of the tourism industry.

A city such as Cairo, which garners global attention for its wealth of heritage assets, attracts individuals and organizations internationally with an interest in its conservation programming. Heritage conservation, as both a concept and a practice, thus becomes complicated by the differing views of the various professionals, levels of government, stakeholders, and residents involved.

The State has an interest in promoting economic development through tourism, but also undertakes conservation as an exercise in nation-building through the retention of 'Islamic' cultural identity; single monument conservation is undertaken by foreign missions with vastly different motivations and credos on heritage, conservation and authenticity; international organizations seek to preserve what is believed to be a common 'world heritage'; whilst local residents continue to occupy these spaces with a

pragmatic worldview, looking to conservation to improve their quality of life without imposing negative impacts or ideals.

Increasingly mobile tourists, predominantly from Western nations, yearn for escape from homogenous urban centres and therefore seek exotic experiences in cultures and settings unlike their own. The challenge for planners and conservationists then is also to package cultural uniqueness in a tourist-friendly format and to market it on a global scale (AlSayyad: 2001, 2).

While this venture may appear to be a viable solution in terms of economy and job creation, socially and politically the manipulation of heritage can be problematic. In many cases, community members are displaced to make room for reconceived "uses" of heritage structures, or are marginalized by their newfound role as the "foreigner" or exotic "other" in a living museum. Authenticity of interventions is often questionable, and can diverge greatly from everyday cultural practices and beliefs. This is indicative of the domination of the State agenda, emphasizing the need for economic benefit at a national level, and in so doing, prioritizing the commodification and marketing of heritage resources above the needs of the local community (Aplin: 2002, 17).

1.2 Problem Statement

This practicum focuses on the tensions that arise between the various stakeholders involved in efforts to achieve sustainable heritage conservation. These tensions are explored through an examination of two conservation programs underway in the district of Cairo known as Islamic Cairo.

Heritage conservation is not a new concept to Cairo, it has been practiced by numerous leading factions and by Cairenes themselves for centuries (Behrens-Abouseif: 1996). Early conservation practices catered to the beliefs and tastes of the current ruling faction. In modern Cairo, conservation efforts tend to be that of single-monument preservation; in other words, historic buildings are painstakingly brought back to their original forms, but little consideration is given to context or long-term maintenance (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 103). Unfortunately, this exercise leaves completed restoration projects unused by both locals and foreigners, as buildings are often locked-up to protect the work that has been undertaken. As a result, buildings are allowed to fall back into disrepair, and are left under-appreciated and unseen.

My goal in this practicum is to examine the ways in which tensions must be played out between the various stakeholders involved in planning programs in order to ensure that Cairo's conservation practices have long-term viability, while still allowing public accessibility and minimizing displacement.

In order to accomplish this, several ingredients are key – adaptive re-use of structures, maintenance programming and on-going funding. But there are other critical issues that must be addressed, including the state of local infrastructure, the effects of tourism, the impacts of extremism and terrorism, and the ineptitude of municipal government.

1.3 Research Objectives

My primary goals in undertaking this practicum are as follows:

1. To examine the role of planners in the conservation, management and maintenance of Islamic Cairo's built heritage; and

2. To understand how the objectives and practices associated with heritage conservation can be more successfully integrated into sustainable planning approaches for Islamic Cairo.

Broadly, I aim to understand the planning process undertaken in order to both conserve heritage resources and to make sites a viable component of the urban fabric. I am therefore also investigating ways for heritage conservation to achieve a balance between commodification and holistic approaches.

Throughout the study, I emphasize the ongoing need for proper management and maintenance of heritage sites. This is most successfully accomplished when buildings are not preserved as single monuments (the approach that currently predominates), but when they are integrated as part of a conserved historic city in which residents become stewards of their built environment (Bianca: 2004, 72). This requires the adaptive re-use of buildings not only as museum-inspired tourist sites, but as vital and functional components of daily life.

In Islamic Cairo, numerous agencies and organizations are undertaking planning programs with highly divergent stances on conservation. My primary purpose in this practicum is to offer recommendations that may aid planners in the generation of a sustainable conservation plan, one which preserves the opportunity for visitors to partake

in the traditional ambience, unrivalled beauty, and warm-hearted welcome of this historic city.

1.4 Research Questions

My research is directed by the following questions:

1. What are the tensions between Western concepts and practices of conservation and preservation, and those observable in the Islamic World (as manifest in Islamic Cairo)?

2. How do the tensions play out in the two case studies – that of the Historic Cairo Restoration Program and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme?

3. What other critical issues impact the achievement of sustainable conservation in Islamic Cairo?

1.5 Key Concepts

The key concepts used in this practicum are: *heritage, conservation, cultural heritage tourism, and sustainable conservation.* Below are the working definitions of these terms as used throughout this practicum. Further elucidation on each of the terms can be found in Chapter Two. Additional terms are defined in the "Glossary of Terms" section.

1.5.1 Heritage

ICOMOS defines *heritage* as a broad concept that includes tangible assets, such as natural and cultural environments, including landscapes, historic places and sites and

built environments, as well as intangible assets, such as collections, cultural practices, knowledge and experiences (ICOMOS).

For the purpose of this practicum, I will use the term *heritage* to describe the <u>built</u> heritage, which includes sites, structures and/or monuments of historical, cultural, spiritual or architectural importance or uniqueness.

<u>1.5.2 Conservation</u>

As per the Parks Canada Historic Places Initiative (2001), *conservation* is defined as "all acts or processes that are aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of a cultural resource so as to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life."

Fielden (1994, 8-12) describes seven degrees of intervention, including: prevention of deterioration; preservation of the existing state without significant alteration; application of supportive materials to the building fabric; restoration to an 'original' state; rehabilitation through modernization or adaptive alteration; reproduction of extant artifacts; and reconstruction using new materials.

Cohen (1999, 65-67) defines the essential qualities for conservation, including a clearly defined urban setting, a sense of place, spatial elements and scale, style and design and workmanship. He states that "these five central qualities assist in the formulation of guidelines to be used in selecting conservation areas."

<u>1.5.3 Sustainable Conservation</u>

Sustainable conservation refers to conservation processes which reflect the long-term viability and safeguarding of heritage resources. In order for conservation to be sustainable, planning must be in place to protect monuments from threats such as pollution, vandalism, degradation and environmental hazards; to ensure ongoing

maintenance and management; to facilitate repair and restoration work as needed; to provide funding; and to assure the integrity and authenticity of the built heritage (McKercher: 2002, 56-57).

1.5.4 Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism is a distinct product category in which travelers seek a deeper understanding of the heritage of a destination (McKercher: 2002, 1). It involves the commodification of heritage assets into consumable products for the public, specifically non-local visitors.

1.5.5 Commodification of the Historic Cityscape

"Commodification is the process by which objects and activities come to be evaluated *primarily* in terms of their *exchange value* in the context of trade" (Watson & Kopachevsky 1994, 646-47 in Judd: 1999, 26). For the purposes of this practicum, the term commodification will be applied to the use of historic buildings for commercial purposes, i.e. tourist activity. It describes the aim of conserving historic buildings with the intention of selling visits to the building or for using the buildings for tourist-related services, such as hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops and other related uses.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Approach

This practicum is based primarily on a case study approach, supplemented by field observation and literature review. It is complemented by more objective data evidenced through the details of planning approaches being undertaken, existing

conservation regulations and practices, and statistical and informal data collected on Egypt.

This practicum entails a controlled comparison of two cases that share a common parameter in conservation. The two initiatives that comprise the case studies are the Historic Cairo Restoration Program (HCRP) and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme. Both are conservation programs being currently undertaken in Islamic Cairo, and both have disparate stances on community involvement, adaptive re-use, and the incorporation of tourism development in the conservation process.

1.6.2 Site

The chosen case study site for this practicum is the Islamic Cairo district of Cairo, Egypt. I chose this district because of its proximity to copious heritage sites, the recent urban restoration programs being undertaken and the apparently diverse reactions of stakeholders to its impacts, as evidenced in media reports and conference papers addressing these programs. Information (i.e., conditions of monuments, socio-cultural environment, etc.) about the site, both before and after the interventions, is readily accessible, as are reports of the perceived and real impacts on the various stakeholders involved through the media and Internet. The subject is therefore timely, and a valuable example of the manifestation and processes of the Tourist-Historic City, a concept that will be explored further in Chapter Two.

As a global mega-city, Cairo epitomizes the challenges and exemplifies potential benefits to cities in similar situations. Tourism has been proselytized as an economic saviour for impoverished nations looking to capitalize on globalization for its positive

impacts. Also, the broader Middle East area poses unique challenges to tourism and heritage conservation because of its political instability, historic occupations, and cyclical (un)attractiveness to global travelers.

1.6.3 Field Observations

In December of 2005, I spent a three-week period in Cairo. During this time I visited numerous sites and conservation projects, in various stages of completion, undertaken by a range of organizations. I also had access to numerous publications regarding planning and development in Cairo that are not available outside of Egypt. I was able to observe other foreigners in the area, noting their interactions with the built environment and with local residents. I gathered information through informal conversations, personal impressions, photographic evidence, and through the collection of promotional materials describing the case study site. I will attempt to relay the experience of Islamic Cairo from a foreign planner's perspective in terms of educational quality, accessibility, security and sustainability.

My experience of Islamic Cairo was, of course, compromised by my social location. As a Western female, I stood out to local residents and was approached more and assisted more than I had expected to be. I traveled with my spouse, and toured around with numerous guides before venturing out on my own. As a result of these measures, I felt better-prepared for the medieval quarters of Cairo. I was challenged at all times by my assumptions both culturally (i.e., how I expected to be treated as a woman in an Islamic community; how Cairenes would respond to and interact with tourists, etc.) and physically (i.e. the state of disrepair the monuments appeared in; the accessibility issues

in getting to/finding historic sites; etc.). Ultimately, I felt that it was a worthwhile excursion to understand the broader context for the study I was undertaking.

1.6.4 Literature Review

The literature review involves a synthesis of studies in heritage conservation and urban development, specifically related to Islamic Cairo. The sources for this information include academic works, peer-reviewed publications, as well as documented stakeholder interviews, organization websites, conference papers and media reports.

This research draws on an extensive survey of literature, and has thus been limited to studies surrounding heritage conservation, urban planning and development, and information specific to Cairo and its region in these respects. These fields each have substantial literature, but only recently have begun to reference each other. This practicum builds on the momentum by drawing planning principles from the accumulated resources.

Information regarding the specific case studies of the Historic Cairo Restoration Program, Historic Cities Support Programme and Islamic Cairo has been acquired from the various organizations involved and from the publications of authors such as Antoniou (1998) and Williams (2002), who have written extensively on the subjects. Additionally, the proceedings of the 2002 and 1993 conferences entitled "International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Cairo" have been acquired. Also important to this topic is the extent of media coverage on the planning initiatives and their resultant impacts. Numerous articles have been written by local news services, and are available in English via agency websites. Stakeholder interviews published in the media during and

following the interventions are included to provide a sampling of the viewpoints of community members, business owners, and local planners and conservators.

Cairene city history has been drawn from the Institut Francais D'Architecture's brochure on Cairo's history and planning, from Bulletin Architectural Information (1984), *Islamic Architecture in Cairo* by Doris Behrens-Abouseif (1989), *Historic Cairo* by Jim Antoniou (1998), and A *Practical Guide to Islamic Monuments* in Cairo by Caroline Williams (2002a).

Supplementing the information specific to the Islamic Cairo area is general literature on regional (Egyptian and Middle Eastern) history, religion, culture and identity.

The theories and conceptual tools supporting heritage conservation are drawn from the fields of architecture, archaeology and planning, from such authors as Caple (2000), Cohen (1998), and Tung (2001). The literature includes the practical skills of structural analysis, design interventions, and revitalization methods (Tiesdell: 1996), as well as more extensive examinations of the relevance of cultural resources (Conference on Cultural Preservation: 1986; Serageldin: 2001). Not to be underemphasized is the influence of tourism, a major consideration in the managerial aspects of heritage conservation (Cleere: 1989; Cossons: 1994; Pickard: 2001; Schuster: 1997).

Many institutions and their representatives have been vocal, as to their opinions, in the local and international media. Interviews with residents, business owners, tourists and other stakeholders in the community have already been published in the media as well.

Due to the international nature of many of these organizations, most of the documents regarding heritage conservation in Cairo are available in English.

Tourism literature covers such topics as the development and management of tourist attractions, marketing, economics, and tourist behaviour. This practicum targets specifically the tourism literature focusing on the 'tourist-historic city' (Ashworth: 1990; Orbasli: 2000; Boniface: 1993), which seeks to amalgamate the formerly divergent literatures of tourism development and heritage conservation to describe a proliferating trend in globalizing cities. Judd (1999, 264) provides a description of the 'tourist-historic city,' as a place where "tourist sites and uses are built into the fabric of the city, and tourists mix with residents and workers rather than restricting themselves to purpose built spaces." This focus will narrow the scope of the tourism literature review to only the subjects most pertinent to tourism in historic areas.

1.6.5 Analysis

The analysis involves a critiquing of the two chosen planning initiatives. This includes an examination of the current conservation scenario in Islamic Cairo from the literature which highlights the viewpoints of planners and conservationists (Western and Islamic), tourists and local inhabitants of the area. Secondly, I remark on the associated issues which have an impact on conservation, such as sustainability, maintenance, management, adaptive re-use, and accessibility. Supplementing this is a discussion of issues within the community (e.g., infrastructure deficiencies, service provision, tourism and nationalism) directly affecting conservation programs. In the conclusion, I offer insight into the differing stances of planners and their concepts and practices of conservation in Islamic Cairo.

1.7 Limitations

The scope of this project deals broadly with the issue of sustainable conservation of heritage resources. However, the scale of this project requires that the study be limited. Therefore, I have limited my exploration of urban heritage to two specific case studies within the Islamic Cairo area. These are the Aga Khan's Historic Cities Support Programme and the Historic Cairo Restoration Program. While these two cases fall at extremes on a spectrum of conservation planning objectives, there are numerous other programs and organizations ongoing in the Islamic Cairo area. This practicum seeks a consensus between the two aforementioned initiatives, but recognizes that there are many other initiatives in existence that share similar characteristics and are worthy of study beyond the scope of this practicum.

Within the Islamic Cairo district itself, numerous zones are excluded from the case study because of their geographic location or level of development. For example, the Citadel is not included because it is a stand-alone heritage site geographically outside of the confines of the Islamic Cairo neighbourhoods. The Northern and Southern Cemeteries are also excluded from this study. The focus is on the core areas of Islamic Cairo, including Al-Gamaliyya, Al-Ghuriyya, Al-Darb Al-Ahmar, and Bab Al-Khalq (See Figure 1).
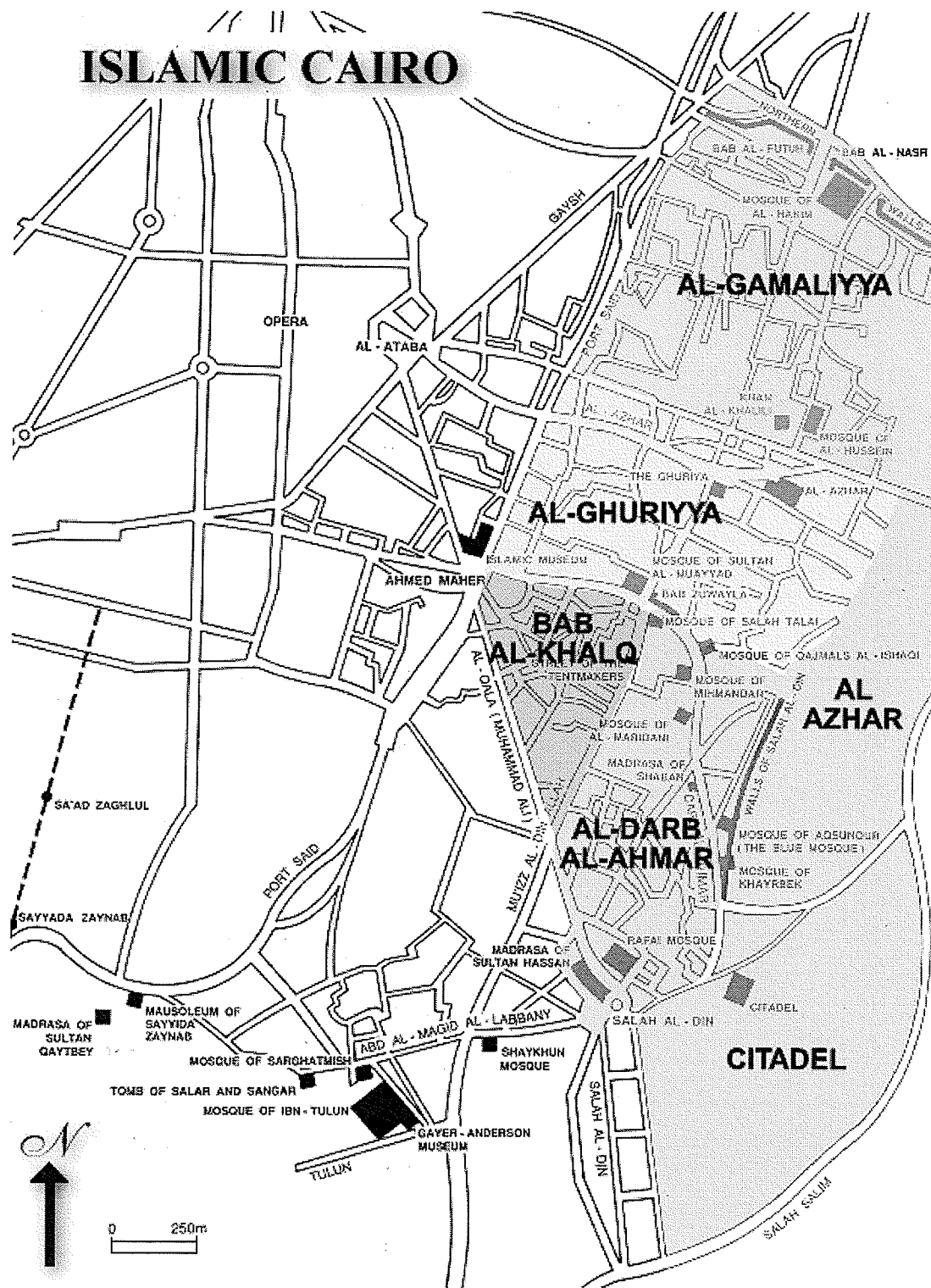
Figure 1. Islamic Cairo Neighbourhoods. (Source: American University in Cairo,
http://www.aucegypt.edu/walking%5Ftours/cairo/cairo.html)

Methodologically, the timeframe of the fieldwork was a limitation to the amount of information that could be gathered. The absence of interviews and the reliance on published materials for stakeholder viewpoints also limits the depth with which the opinions of key respondents (i.e., tourists, municipal officials, non-profit administrators, etc.) can inform the case studies examined. As a result, this practicum focuses more so on the physical impacts of the planning initiatives being undertaken in Islamic Cairo and suggests that the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and conservation be reserved for future research.

While the term "heritage" can be construed as including both cultural and built resources, this practicum focuses primarily on the built form (see definitions on page 5). Cultural heritage issues are referenced, but only through their relation to the built environment.

International and local policy review in regards to heritage conservation is limited to the most influential material. Influence is assessed through the mandates and conduct of the organizations and agencies involved. Socio-economic and environmental policies and initiatives beyond the scope of the heritage conservation program are not examined.

The views and positions of the numerous parties affected and involved in such a planning intervention cannot be completely covered within the scope of this practicum. Therefore, the focus will be limited to the published accounts of views held by the organizations behind the planning initiatives being explored.

1.8 Overview of Practicum

In Chapter One of this practicum, I outlined the problem being addressed and the means by which the research and analysis was undertaken. In Chapter Two, I review the relevant concepts surrounding the subjects of conservation and sustainable planning initiatives. Key concepts such as commodification, the Tourist-Historic City, and integrated planning methods are also examined. Chapter Three presents the case studies being examined, namely the Historic Cairo Restoration Program and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme. A history of the Islamic Cairo area, and past and present conservation and planning practices are presented. Chapter Four provides an analysis of the issues that, in addition to differing worldviews on the notions of conservation as a concept and practice, impact the viability of attempts at sustainable conservation programming. Finally, in Chapter Five the implications of the tensions and critical issues to planning practices in this area are identified, as well as future directions for research.

Chapter Two –Conceptual Framework

"As hopes of progress fade, heritage consoles us with tradition."

Lowenthal: 1998, xiii

2.1 Emergence of the concept of 'heritage'

Heritage can be defined most fundamentally as that which is considered worth preserving and sharing with present and future generations. According to Aplin (2002, 1), "it also helps define the various groups of which we are part, including nations and, ultimately, humanity. Not surprisingly, then, heritage can also be intensely political as well as intensely personal." With respect to the political nature of what constitutes 'heritage,' it is typically the dominating political leadership which establishes the official definition for its nation (Aplin: 2002, 1). Tunbridge and Ashworth, as quoted by Aplin (2002, 28) state that "Surviving buildings and objects… are inevitably the heritage of governments and social elites, whereas everyday heritage is discernible only in the predispositions, habits, attitudes and behaviours of the common people."

> It was a combination of industrialization, urbanization and the destruction wrought by two world wars that made people alert to the loss of the past. Lowenthal (1996) argues that it is "the loss of the past, or the threat of loss, which is the primary mechanism for making people value their past" (Caple, 2000, 22).

Aplin (2002, 20) provides three criteria on establishing whether or not a building is significant enough to be constituted as a part of 'heritage.' The first is determining at what scale a structure is important – at the community, regional, state or global level? Secondly, its importance at this scale must be ascertained in terms of its uniqueness or representativeness. Finally, a statement should be derived justifying the need for it to be kept.

Moreover, as described by Fielden (1994, 1),

> "an historic building is one that gives us a sense of wonder and makes us want to know more about the people and culture that produced it... It has architectural, aesthetic, historic, documentary, archaeological, economic, social and even political and spiritual or symbolic values; but the first impact is always emotional, for it is a symbol of our cultural identity and continuity – a part of our heritage."

Heritage, as a concept, must be differentiated from history. History, as defined by Lowenthal (1996), is factual; a detailed description of the past. On the other hand, heritage is the past as used in the present. It is biased and personal, and is therefore reinterpreted by each generation. Objects are constantly re-examined, and their meanings change with the motivations and beliefs of the interpreter (Caple: 2000, 19).

These meanings are assigned to heritage objects on the basis of emotional (identity, continuity, spirituality), cultural (historic, aesthetic, symbolic) and use (economic, social, political, ethnic) values (Fielden: 1994, 6).

> For tourists, heritage takes on a much broader definition and may not be so imbued with meaning or value. Any past becomes important. Caple (2000, 15) explains that "many of the tourists found wandering uncomprehendingly around ancient monuments are unable to identify what they are seeing and where it fits into history. For them it is simply the act of veneration, seeing the past – a heritage – which appears to be important."

2.2 Conservation movements

Fielden (1994, 3) defines conservation as "the action taken to prevent decay – it embraces all acts that prolong the life of our cultural and natural heritage, the object being to present to those who use and look at historic buildings with wonder the artistic and human messages that such buildings possess."

Conservation became the subject of debate in the nineteenth century, when Enlightenment notions of 'progress' called into question the role of the past in the modern city. Two preservationists in particular, Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin, were the foremost theorists of the time.

Prior to this period, buildings were either allowed to deteriorate or were informally maintained by local craftspeople. Viollet-le-Duc, a master builder, changed the public attitude towards conservation through his own restoration work, and a series of books addressing methods, technology and philosophy of preservation activities (Tyler: 2000, 18). Viollet-le-Duc's concept of conservation was that buildings should not necessarily be brought back to their original state, but to the way that they 'should have been' (Tyler: 2000, 19).

Alternatively, John Ruskin believed that buildings should remain untouched, arguing that a society had no right to attempt to improve or restore the buildings of another era (Tyler: 2000, 21). He also saw the aging of a structure as the addition of character and felt that to reverse the aging process would result in something artificial.

The modernist period in planning and architecture saw a break from the past, with architects such as Mies van der Rohe promoting the stripping away of ornament and nostalgia in a "less is more" approach. However, Architect Robert Venturi rejected sterile Modernist design and in the 1960s sought to reestablish "a conscious sense of the past" (Tyler: 2000, 30). His argument, as noted by Tyler (2000, 30), was that "The past should again become part of the present, for… Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. To see oneself only in one's own time period, and as a product of that time period, is to deny the richness of history and the meaning of that history to one's own time."

Tyler (2000, 30) continues on to write that Venturi, through his landmark book "Complexity and Contradiction," urged architects to envision an architecture that was inclusive, "with room for improvisation, for fragments, and for the tensions these produce..."

The emergence of a Postmodernist movement in architecture brought back classical styles to design. This movement, led by architect Robert A.M. Stern, "represents a blending of the old and new and attempts to counter the sterility found in architecture from the 1950s and 1960s... It is inspired primarily by classical styles, but with classical elements reinterpreted in contemporary terms" (Tyler: 2000, 30). Postmodern urban planning emphasizes the significance of the local context and 'sense of place' through the continuity of local character, identity, character, historic fabric and street pattern (Tiesdell: 1996).

Tyler (2000, 31) writes,

"Stern observed that postmodernists share an interest in three aspects of architectural design: (1) *contextualism*: the possibility for the future expansion of a given building and the desire to relate it to the immediate surroundings; (2) *allusionism*: references to the history of architecture that somehow go beyond "eclecticism" to a somewhat vague category called "the relationship between form and shape and the meanings that particular shapes have assumed over the course of time"; (3) *ornamentalism:* the simple pleasure in decorating architecture."

Underpinning the postmodern paradigm is the supposition that built heritage conservation has intrinsic value to communities. Bianca (2004, 69) reinforces the importance inherent in preserving the built heritage, specifically in Islamic communities:

"Exposed as they are to ever increasing pressures of modern urban development and to creeping globalised uniformity, the historic cities of the Islamic world represent a rich cultural legacy worth preserving as a reference and source of inspiration for future generations. Unlike most of their Western counterparts, many of them managed to survive as

authentic living cities, in spite of physical decline and economic depression. Their skillfully adorned monuments, whether made of stone, brick or timber, carry the imprint of timeless spiritual messages which still speak to present users. The cohesive patterns of their historic urban fabric embody meaningful modes of social interaction and tangible environmental qualities, which transmit the experience of past generations and are still able to shape and support contemporary community life; for the values inherent to their spatial configurations transcend short-lived changes and fashions.

Such contextual values, sadly absent in most of our planned modern towns, constitute the cultural essence of historic cities."

But Kevin Lynch (1981, 258) cautions that we must choose what we should keep. He criticizes that preservation projects often displace residents in restoration areas, that they convey a false view of history, and that criteria values are based on the opinions of politicians or so-called 'experts.' He promotes the practice of conservation over preservation, as the adaptation of buildings can provide economic and social benefits and create a more variegated and interesting urban context (Lynch: 1981, 259).

2.3 International conservation agents

Numerous agencies have developed throughout the twentieth century with an interest in the conservation of the built heritage. Guiding these agencies are several documents and charters which have been put in place in an effort to guide international conservation practice. Chief amongst these are the Athens Charter and the Venice Charter.

Adopted at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, the Athens Charter of 1931 defined the basic principles of restoration for the first time (Irwin: 2003, 205).

The Athens Charter made seven main resolutions. Among them, it dictated that: international organizations be established; restoration projects be open to criticism so that lessons can be taken; preservation problems of historic sites be solved by national legislation; modern techniques and materials could be used in restoration work; historical sites be given strict custodial protection; systems of maintenance should be initiated to ensure the long-term preservation of buildings; and excavated sites not immediately scheduled for restoration work be reburied (Irwin: 2003, 205).

A second charter was enacted at the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Venice in 1964, the "Venice Charter." McKercher (2002, 55) identifies the key features of the Venice Charter:

- historic buildings now extended to the wider urban setting,

- conservation with restrictions on modification,

- restoration with authenticity in mind, i.e. no reconstruction,

- archaeological investigation to be professionalized, and

- any action should be documented systematically and a public record kept.

The Venice Charter also dictated that monuments should be maintained on a permanent basis, that monument conservation should be facilitated by a socially useful purpose, that conservation practices should be well documented, and that contributions from of all periods to a monument should be considered valid, as unity of style is not the aim of restoration (Irwin: 2003, 212-213).

A number of international bodies have developed their own charters and policies, including UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), specifically its Physical Heritage Divisions and its World Heritage Center; ICCROM

(International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) based in Rome; the World Bank Environmental Office; the World Monuments Fund, a private non-profit organization based in New York; and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) (McKercher: 2002, 55; Barthel: 1996, 142). Chief among these in terms of its influence on the recognition and management of heritage assets is ICOMOS. Founded in 1965, ICOMOS brings together international professional expertise and serves as a clearinghouse for information on preservation techniques, principles and policies (Barthel: 1996, 141).

Clearly, there is a strong international movement with respect to the built heritage. It is these organizations and charters which, together with national and municipal heritage policy, govern the conservation and ongoing management of heritage assets throughout the world. Most recently, the actions and policies of these groups have begun to address the need for a sustainable approach to conservation, and have re-examined conservation practices themselves not as isolated from other planning activities, but as a vital component of them.

2.4 Sustainable Conservation and Integrated Planning Approaches

Reid (2003, 4) refers to sustainability as the competitiveness and longevity of the social and physical environment. Physically, sustainable conservation requires the long-term maintenance of heritage sites, and the protection of these sites from threats such as rapid urbanization, pollution and other environmental degradation, and incompatible activities. Socially, sustainable conservation requires holistic planning, regard for the integrity and authenticity of heritage resources, and community involvement in the ongoing management of sites.

Conservation as a planning practice focuses on place-making, in which heritage has been elevated in importance as a key element in the urban landscape. Authors such as Serageldin (1995, 1997, 2001) theorize that heritage conservation planning has the potential for alleviating social issues (i.e., poverty, lack of civic pride and involvement in community issues), common to urban areas. Therefore, integrated planning approaches to conservation are vital, to improve the lives and experiences of those who live and work in and visit the impacted spaces. As well, community participation can guarantee local support for conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources more generally (Reid: 2003, 10).

At a seminar held in 1978 regarding the revitalization of Islamic Cairo, an integrated approach to conservation planning was described as one in which "social and infrastructure problems are treated simultaneously with problems of architectural conservation" (Meinecke: 1980, 1). The belief was that such an approach would both preserve historic structures, and ensure the integrity of the socio-cultural community.

The findings of this seminar echoed the then recently proclaimed "Declaration of Amsterdam" (1975) as well. The Declaration suggests that "the rehabilitation of old areas should be conceived and carried out in such a way as to ensure that, where possible, this does not necessitate a major change in the social composition of the residents; all sections of society should share in the benefits of restoration financed by public funds." The Declaration of Amsterdam goes on to describe in greater detail the intricacies that such an approach entails: "Regional planning policy must take account of the conservation of the architectural heritage and contribute to it. In particular it can induce new activities to establish themselves in economically declining areas in order to check depopulation and

thereby prevent the deterioration of old buildings. In addition, decisions on the development of peripheral urban areas can be oriented in such a way as to reduce pressure on the older neighbourhoods; here transport and employment policies and a better distribution of the focal points of urban activity may have an important impact on the conservation of the architectural heritage (Declaration of Amsterdam: 1975)."

"Integrated" has become a catchphrase in current planning philosophy. Leonie Sandercock (1998) writes of integrating "literacies" – technical, analytical, multicultural, ecological, and design-based – into planning programmes, and describes 21st century progressive planning as a conjunction of feminist + postcolonial + postmodern thinking (Sandercock: 2003, 2). As a society, it has become evident that issues are not dealt with in isolation. Nowhere does this tenet become more applicable than in the field of conservation planning, which has moved from a mentality of "single monument conservation" to an understanding of the interconnectivity of the urban landscape. Sandercock (2003, 2-3) describes the potential urban landscape as "the city of memory, of desire, of spirit," in which "local knowledges [are] written into the stones and memories of communities."

An integrated planning approach is achieved through people-centred planning, in which an understanding of other ways of knowing, and community participation and empowerment are key (Sandercock, 2003: 34-35). These 'other ways of knowing' are described through dialogue, experience, symbolic evidence, contemplation, action-planning, and listening to relevant stakeholders and to the displaced (Sandercock: 2003, 76). The new planning model is characterized by Sandercock (2003: 208) "as an always unfinished social project whose task is managing our co-existance in the shared spaces of

cities and neighbourhoods in such a way as to enrich human life, to work for social, cultural and environmental justice."

2.5 The Tourist-Historic City

Aside from reinforcing the social and cultural legacy of communities, economic and environmental reasoning is often sought to justify the expense and restrictiveness of conservation efforts. The premise of merging tourism development and conservation efforts can provide the pragmatic justification for the restoration and regeneration of historic cityscapes. The use of historic buildings for tourism is also a comparatively low-impact activity, when properly managed and maintained, as opposed to alternative commercial and industrial enterprises. As illustrated by Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990, 3), when describing the model of the "Tourist-Historic City," history is used as a tourism resource, and the use of tourism is a means to support the maintenance of the built heritage, "justifying attention to the historicity of cities." This sentiment is echoed by Berriane (1999, 30), "there is a mutual dependence between tourism and the architectural heritage. The latter needs tourism which can justify restoration, maintenance or renovation work. In exchange, tourism needs the architectural heritage in the Arab countries."

The tourist-historic city model (Ashworth and Tunbridge: 1990) is premised upon a conjunction of tourists, the historic and the city. According to the authors, "history has become heritage, heritage has become an urban resource, and this resource supplies a major 'history industry' which shapes not merely the form but the functioning and the purpose of the 'commodified' city (Ashworth and Tunbridge: 1990, 2)." They identify

the most fundamental task to planning for the tourist-historic city as the bridging of theory and practice gaps "to confront the activity of tourism, with the conservational philosophy of management, within the city, which is itself more than a stage upon which these processes occur and actively contributes a distinctly urban set of characteristics, active variables and management objectives and constraints to the tourist-historic city (Ashworth and Tunbridge: 1990, 4)."

The Tourist-Historic City encompasses an urban morphology and urban activity. It differs from sites built purposely for tourism in that tourist uses are built into the existing architectural fabric, and tourists mix with residents and workers in non-demarcated spaces (Ashworth and Tunbridge: 1990, 3). This interaction becomes complicated by the dichotomy between East and West; the imposition of western conservation and planning methodology on the eastern realities of poverty, further aggravated by the orientalist vision of the western tourist visiting the imagined exotic (Orbasli: 2000, 3). But tourism also presents a unique opportunity according to Orbasli (2000, 3), who states that "tourism potentially brings vitality and economic and cultural dynamism to a place and for heritage, the benefits of appreciation, preservation, and conservation."

Fainstein and Judd (1999: 264) state that "The appeal of tourist-historic cities is not a direct result of their mere existence as restored historic sites; rather, promoters "manipulate" these sites to attract tourist business, and in the process, change their character." The city thus becomes a commodity that can be marketed and sold (Hall: 1994, 7).

Traditional societies are now encouraged to retain their cultural practices for the sake of tourism. Their 'heritage' comes to be defined in terms of its profitability, its part in the 'package of tourist services,' and its restoration becomes intrinsically tied into the development of tourism (Lanfant: 1995, 37).

Thus, a balance is required. If heritage is to be commodified and commercialized, it must be done so in a sensitive manner. Sensitivity and care refers both to the asset itself and the people who have a cultural relationship with it (Aplin: 2002, 57).

Robinson (2001, 35) believes that "tourism has become an increasingly significant driver of cultural remaking and reinvention." He adds that "tourists, by virtue of their ability to 'gaze', effectively reaffirm the cultural dominance of consumption and its capitalist framework. Indeed, one can cynically argue that inequalities – the very presence of poverty, underdevelopment, and the perceived threat of environmental degradation – can add to the tourist experience" (Robinson: 2001, 38).

Commodification is defined by Robinson (2001, 43) as a process by which "traditions, rituals and 'ways of life' are packaged, imaged and transformed into saleable products for tourists." Fainstein and Gladstone (1999, 26) quotes Watson (Watson & Kopachevsky 1994, 646-47) to define commodification as "the process by which objects and activities come to be evaluated *primarily* in terms of their *exchange value* in the context of trade, in addition to any *use-value* that such commodities might have." They go on to specify that in the case of tourism, the tourist experience itself is contrived, and staged authenticity replaces the genuine. Cultural commodification can erode cultural practices until they become meaningless. In a tourism setting this erosion occurs as people and their cultural symbols (craft products, architectural heritage, etc) are treated as

commodities that can be bought, exchanged or sold. As commodification occurs people

begin to perform exclusively for the tourists' benefit, and events may lose their value as a

cultural and spiritual manifestation. As a defensive mechanism, some communities try to

limit tourists' intrusion by keeping separate cultural manifestations closed to tourists, and

offering "staged authenticity" performances to visitors, including appropriate

interpretation and explanations (Pedersen: 2002, 34).

However, commodification need not be the prime generator of conflict if the host

cultures are not trivialized, if they are involved in the processes of tourism development

and are able to benefit economically. As indicated by Robinson (2001, 44), "it is too easy

to ignore the involvement of host communities in the commodification of their own

cultural traditions in legitimate attempts to secure economic advantages." He adds that

few host cultures are unwilling to adapt to the needs of tourists, and reciprocally, few

tourists seek total immersion in a different culture (Robinson: 2001, 54).

As part of an integrated planning approach to sustainable conservation, the role

and impacts of tourism must be taken into account, as summarized by Orbasli (2000, 4):

> "Visiting historic towns is not about going to a museum or reliving
> history, and urban conservation is not about preserving the past as an
> archaeological ruin; it is about enhancing an area which has qualities built
> upon from the past, as a contemporary living environment. Tourism has to
> be made to work for historic towns, enhance rather than destroy, support
> rather than siphon, most of all value the depth, the heart and the spirit of a
> place. For tourism too, it is the local distinctiveness that is the added
> value. A valued environment in which people want to live and work is also
> going to be appreciated by visitors."

2.6 Conceptual Framework Implications:

The findings from this review have resulted in the following conceptual framework that will guide the remainder of this practicum:

1. The definition of heritage will differ for different people/cultures/organizations, based on their own beliefs and motivations;

2. The conservation of historic monuments is a valuable undertaking;

3. In order for conservation to be sustainable, planning consideration must be given to the long-term economic, physical and social viability of sites;

4. An integrated planning approach, rather than single monument conservation techniques, is required;

5. Tourism development can be done in a sensitive, beneficial manner for the sustainable conservation of a site; and

6. Special attention must be given to maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the historic cityscape.

The following chapter will examine the evolution of the Islamic Cairo area, the planning practices that have shaped its current state, and its newfound role as a 'tourist-historic' city. Chapter Three also provides an examination of two conservation planning programs being undertaken in the area: the Historic Cairo Restoration Program and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme.

Chapter Three – Case Study: Islamic Cairo

This chapter examines the formation and history of Al-Qahira, the city that through many incarnations would become the modern-day World Heritage Site of Islamic Cairo. In tracing its origins, I began to see the history of occupation and foreign influence that has dominated its existence. I was also able to begin to perceive the manifestation of Islam in the urban form.

Through this historical overview I was better able to understand the present day interventions being undertaken in Islamic Cairo, and how they both suit and oppose the ideals of this community - historically, physically and socially.

3.1 History of Al-Qahira

Arab Era Begins

The Arabs arrived in Egypt in 640 AD, led by the commander of the Orthodox Caliph Omar's army, 'Amr-Ibn-al-As. After centuries of Roman oppression, the conquering Muslim Arabs were welcomed by the Egyptian people as liberators of their nation (Humphreys: 2002, 10; Noweir: 1984, 78). 'Amr-Ibn-al-As began his rule in Egypt by choosing a site on the east banks of the Nile to construct the town which would be his base and foundation for the future city of Cairo. This town was built around the 'Amr Mosque (641-642 AD), the first mosque in Africa, which served not only as a place of worship, but also as council chamber, law court, post office, travellers' caravanserai and military barracks. In fact, the whole of the settlement took the form of a military camp, hence becoming known as *al-Fustat* ("the camp") (Freeman-Grenville: 1981, 12).

Four Orthodox Caliphs later the Umayyads came to power, ruling from Damascus for almost ninety years. But al-Fustat remained an unimportant hub within their territory, and as a result there are no Umayyad monuments in Egypt (Antoniou: 1998, 21).

In 750 AD, the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad, who quickly abandoned al-Fustat and founded *al-Askar* ("the cantonment") just north of the former town (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 14). In 868 AD, under the new governor of Egypt, Ahmad Ibn Tulun, the settlement of *al-Qata'i* ("the wards") also began to take shape around a mosque to the north east (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 14). Eventually, al-Qata'i and al-Askar merged into a single town. This town continued to grow northwards, as the centre of power continuously changed with each new ruling faction. Growth also followed the changing configuration of the Nile.

Ibn Tulun is described by Antoniou (1998, 22) as a generous patron of architecture. His best known structure is the Ibn Tulun Mosque, the oldest surviving Islamic monument in Cairo today. The mosque was the only part of al'Qata'i to survive its destruction by Abbasid troops in 905 AD. The Tulunid dynasty also saw the construction of a palace, government offices, a race-course and polo ground, a hospital, a zoo, baths and markets (Freeman-Grenville: 1981, 13).

The fortification of al-Qahira can be attributed to the fact that the Fatimids were a Shi'ite power from Tunisia, and felt hostile towards the predeceasing Sunnite Caliphs. As a result, they imposed radical changes to the town form.

The Shi'i trace their descent from the Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima and her husband 'Ali. The Fatimids were Shi'i (from Shi'at 'Ali, or *the partisans of 'Ali*). They believed hereditary succession to the caliphate should be through divine leaders (*imams*) drawn from the Prophet's family.

In contrast, the Sunnis (from the term *sunna*, meaning *the path of the Prophet*), who made up the other, larger branch of Islam, favoured succession by consensus.

(From Antoniou: 1998, 23)

Fatimid Period

In July 969AD, Al Mu'izz li-Din Allah arrived in Egypt with the Fatimid army from Tunisia, beginning their rule of Egypt which would span the next two-hundred-years. He again shifted the central core of the existing settlements to a site even further north than the first three towns. The new town, *Misr al-Qahira* ("the triumphant"), was built on a square-shaped plot of land between the *Muqattam* ("hills"), the *Khalij* ("canal") and the towns of al-Fustat and al-Qata'i (Noweir: 1984, 78). The town, which came to be known as *al-Qahira* ("the victorious"), was constructed on the basis of a well-conceived plan (Staffa: 1977, 53).

Built parallel to the Khalij, the new city was structured around a main thoroughfare which ran the length of the town, with side-streets cutting across at regular intervals and a provision of large open spaces. The Fatimid city of Al-Qahira was the seat of power, home to the wealthy and to military leaders. Al-Fustat, on the other hand, was the regional commercial centre, housing commoners and traders (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 19).

Unlike other Muslim cities, the centre of the town was dominated by two palaces instead of the mosque, which had historically been the seat of political and religious power. The larger of the palaces was that of al-Muizz, with a smaller one built for his son al-'Aziz. The section of the street that ran between the two palaces was called *Bayn al Qasrayn* ("the street between two palaces"). Although these palaces and their adjacent royal park became the new town's centre, al-Qahira also contained two mosques – al-Hakim in the north and al-Azhar in the south. The remainder of the town was comprised of houses which formed a defensive barrier to the palaces causing al-Qahira to quickly

take on the characteristics of a fortified town, an unprecedented transformation at the time (Noweir: 1984, 79).

Fortification walls were eventually constructed surrounding the town, comprised of several gates: in the north Bab al-Futuh and Bab al Nasr; in the south Bab Zuwayla; and in the west Bab al Mahrong. With the increasing growth of the town, the walls and gates had to be rebuilt numerous times. Under Badr al-Gamali, the city was enlarged and the walls were reconstructed in stone by Armenian architects (Staffa: 1977, 78).

Salah al-Din

In 1168, European Crusaders began to advance on Egypt from Jerusalem. For fear that al-Fustat, which lacked protective walls, would be occupied by the invaders, the Fatimids evacuated the city and set it on fire. The city burned for nearly two months, and it remains a pile of rubble to this day (Antoniou: 1998, 27; Humphreys: 2002, 12).

To defend Cairo from the Crusaders, the Sunni ruler of Damascus sent Salah al-Din in 1169 with his Syrian army, forcing the Crusaders out of Cairo. He abolished the Fatimid caliphate in 1171, and restored Sunni rule, and a new ruling dynasty, the Ayyubids (Humphreys: 2002, 12).

From this period on, it was no longer the location of the town that changed, but the seat of political power. Salah al-Din abandoned the seat of Shi'i power at the heart of Cairo to construct a fortress, *Al Qala'a* ("the Citadel") (1167-1207) on the Muqattam hills to the south of the Fatimid town (Noweir: 1984, 79).

During his short eight years in Egypt, Salah al-Din introduced new educational and religious institutions, including *madrasas* (schools of Islamic law) and *khanqahs*

(Sufi monasteries). As a result of these innovations, Sunni eminence in the town was ensured for centuries (Freeman-Grenville: 1981, 17). Shrines, palaces and residences continued to be built as per the Fatimid custom.

Residents of al-Fustat who had abandoned their ruined city were allowed to build in al-Qahira. The City of Cairo, while in full expansion and overflowing its walls, was unified and gained full stability (Antoniou: 1998, 28).

Perhaps the most important change to al-Qahira during this time was the introduction of commerce. Antoniou (1998, 28) writes "commerce, which hitherto was kept outside the city walls, was…introduced into the city. Particularly along the main thoroughfares of al-Mu'izz and al-Gamaliyya, it became the custom to build shops on the ground floor of buildings, irrespective of the use above. Thus an impressive and unique urban setting was created along the main street, without the need for the traditional market areas that were usually found in other Muslim cities."

> "It was during this period that certain changes took place which have permanently marked the appearance of Cairo. In 1395 the Mosque of Mahmud al-Kurdi displayed the first carved dome, with a chiseled zigzag pattern. A generation later, in 1432, the Mosque of al-Ashraf Barsbay displayed the first dome with arabesques carved in stone, and art which reached its supreme expression in the reign of Qait Bay. At the same time the minaret developed, and under the later Mamluks reached a daring and airy lightness. No other city in the world has stone domes carved with arabesques (save a single example of a fountain built by Qait Bay beside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem), nor minarets with the elegance of Cairo. The pencil-like minarets of Istanbul are of a wholly different order. The Mamluk tradition ws maintained to the end, in the buildings of the Sultan el-Ashraf Qansuh el-Ghury. Sadly, his mosque, and his mausoleum across the street from it, have suffered greatly from injudicious restoration." (Freeman-Grenville: 1981, 19)

Mamluk Cairo: 1250 - 1517

Salah al-Din's officers were known as *mamluks* ("those who are owned"); slaves who had been purchased and made into soldiers in his army. Educated in martial arts and Islam, mamluks were eventually freed and could go on to become prominent members of

society. Although they were known as tough and hardened soldiers, the mamluks had a passion for art and building, and their legacy remains in the fine architecture of this period (Antoniou: 1998, 29).

The Mamluk era was an important period of construction and urbanization in Cairo. The Mamluks created large multifunctional complexes with integrated building components, including the complex built by Sultan Qalawun (1284-85) which spanned seventy meters (Antoniou: 1998, 29).

A cruciform plan for madrasas was developed, with living accommodation for students provided in each corner, which culminated in the monumental mosque built by Sultan Hasan in 1356-59 (Antoniou: 1998, 29).

"Since poor people in the Muslim world could not afford cisterns in their homes, it was considered a pious act for elite citizens to endow places for free drinking water. Poor women in the neighbourhood could fetch water freely from public cisterns called *sabils*. On the floor above the cistern was a *kuttab*, a school where young children learned to chant the Quran. Such two-story buildings, known as *sabil-kuttabs*, were a favourite charitable endowment and a uniquely Egyptian form of architecture. In the eighteenth century, there were more than three hundred such buildings, often combined with mosques, mausolea, and madrasas." (Antoniou: 1998, 31)

The city spilled past Bab Zuwayla and towards the Citadel (the present day neighbourhood of Darb al-Ahmar).

Commerce gained greater importance with the construction of the Khan al-Khalili and a large number of wikalas, caravanserais and khans to accommodate foreign traders. Other important additions to the cityscape were sabil-kuttabs and *hammams* ("public baths") (Antoniou: 1998, 31).

It was during this period that Cairo was largely destroyed by an earthquake. According to Freeman-Grenville (1981: 17), "of the monuments in Cairo listed by the Antiquities Department, only 66, or 10.6% were built before and survived the earthquake

of 8 August 1303." As a result, much of the Cairene heritage seen in the Islamic Cairo area is of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

Ottoman Cairo: 1517 - 1798

The appearance of Cairo did not change very much under Ottoman rule. Antoniou (1998, 33) writes, "under the Ottomans, Cairo declined from the center of a powerful empire to a mere administrative center that was medieval in character. After the discovery of the Cape route around Africa in 1498, which improved trade with the Far East, Cairo gradually began to lose much of its wealth and trade, and it lost its status as a major city in the world. Cairenes were virtually unaware of the colonization of the Americas, or the Age of Enlightenment that swept through Europe." During the Ottoman period, both the population and economy declined steadily, resulting in the abandonment and blight of the built environment (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 51).

The Ottomans relocated many of Cairo's talented artisans and professionals to their capital (Constantinople) along with all trading revenues and the heavy taxes imposed on the Egyptian population (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 121; Humphreys: 2002, 13).

Any urban development that took place was a result of surges in economic activity. Sustained growth continued, and surrounding areas became urbanized, including Sharia Port Said and Azbekiyya.

Napoleon arrived in 1798 with his French army, advanced on Cairo and utterly defeated the Mamluks, who had re-emerged as rulers of Egypt in 1796. Although accustomed to foreign rule, the occupation by a non-Muslim army caused the citizens of Cairo to revolt. This combined with the alliance being created between the British and the

Ottomans in Syria, caused Napoleon to leave Egypt after occupying the country for only three years (Humphreys: 2002, 14).

After Napoleon's evacuation in 1801, the Macedonian Ottoman army officer Mohammed 'Ali arrived as the appointed pasha (1805). Humphreys (2002, 14) describes the Cairo that 'Ali inherited: "900 years of continuity had been brought to an end by the invasion of Napoleon. His reign marks the beginning of the city's entry into the modern world."

'Ali began his reign by murdering the remaining influential Mamluks in 1811. He encouraged talented foreigners to come to Cairo and build a modern city. New Turkish styles were introduced to the architecture (Williams: 2002, 15). Streets were widened for wheeled carriages.

It was also during this time that the aristocratic suburban neighbourhood of Azbakiyya grew in popularity with elites. The move away from the area surrounding the Citadel was the result of the emerging insecurity of the region. Napoleon himself chose a home in this area, in fact the most beautiful home of all (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 51).

The reign of 'Ali also saw an influx of Western travelers, including Mark Twain, Gustave Flaubert, Florence Nightingale, and artist David Roberts. Their images and descriptions of Egypt and Cairo became hugely popular with readers who romanticized the land with tales of temples, harems and bazaars (Humphreys: 2002, 15).

3.2 Overview of Planning Practices in Modern Cairo

Mohammad Ali was the first Egyptian leader to attempt to modernize the nation, through institutional reforms and technological advancements. The municipal government of Cairo was reorganized and all government operations were centralized at the Citadel. Large-scale development projects were undertaken, employing 400,000 construction workers, including public facilities, industry and suburban development. Road systems were also constructed to accommodate modern transport vehicles (Azadzoi et al.: 2001, 95).

Despite the modernizing efforts of Mohammed 'Ali, Cairo still retained its medieval appearance (Noweir: 1984, 85).

In the 1830s, Western influence became manifest in domestic architecture (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 93). The streets of Cairo, which had come to be called the 'dirtiest in the world,' were targeted for sanitary and aesthetic reform (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 91).

The emergence of Modern Cairo was marred by the fragmentation of the modern and traditional urban patterns, as well as a fragmentation of social and economic groups. The resulting division of the city left it ill-suited to the demands of modern transportation, infrastructure and housing requirements, and the city's administration ill-equipped to institute reform to alleviate these problems (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 56).

The most important project of the age was the Suez Canal, which opened in 1869. It was built to the specifications of French engineering designs but with borrowed foreign capital and forced Egyptian labour. The Canal proved indispensable to England, serving as a link between the Crown and her colonies. Although it was a success the Suez Canal and other modernizing projects of the nineteenth century left Egypt dependent on the

Western powers to whom they were indebted for the capital borrowed to fund these development projects (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 121).

Under the reign of Khedive Ismail, who came to power in 1863, the transformations taking place in Cairo began to gain momentum. The town grew to 1218 hectares, and would continue to increase to 1630 hectares in 1897 and 3,177 hectares in 1911. The population also rose from 350,000 in 1873 to 790,000 in 1917. By 1927 it surpassed one million (Noweir: 1984, 85).

According to Sawsan Noweir (1984, 85), this phase of Cairo's growth can be divided into four distinct periods:

- o 1870s – Creation of the "New Town";
- o 1880-1900 - Town reorganization;
- o 1900-1925 - Large-scale public works projects; and
- o 1925-1950 - Town Planning and Reconstruction.

1870s - New Town Plan

In 1867, the Khedive traveled to Paris for the Universal Exhibition, where he was introduced to the achievements of Baron Haussman. Impressed by his work in Paris, the Khedive conceived a similar project for Cairo (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 104-05).

With Haussman as his inspiration, the new district of Ismailiya was constructed on the plantation of Ibrahim Pasha according to the designs of a French architect. This district (presently the city centre) was made up of large plots of land and wide boulevards, linked by roundabouts. Large public parks were constructed, with new green

space covering 185 hectares of the city. Public squares at Bab al-Hadid, Azbekiya, Abdine and Sayida Zainab were also built (Noweir: 1984, 85; Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 95).

Numerous architectural landmarks were also added to the cityscape under the new master plan, including the railway station at Bab al Hadid, the Opera House at Azbakiyah, the government palace at Abdine, and the mosque of Sayida Zainab (Noweir: 1984, 85). European hotels, department stores and boutiques were also constructed. These new landmarks were connected to the old town via grand boulevards (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 95).

By 1872, the Europeanizing of Cairo was evident. Of the three hundred thousand people populating the city of Cairo, 85,000 were non-Egyptians and 25,000 were complete foreigners (mostly European settlers) (Aldridge: 1969, 195).

1880-1900 – Town Reorganization

Under British rule (1882-1952), Islamic Cairo continued to deteriorate and the needs of its residents were ignored. The result, according to Farha Ghannam (2002, 27) was the creation of a "dual city: the old part, which represented the Orient and its "backwardness," and the new part, which represented the West and modernity."

In 1889 new laws were laid out concerning the width of streets, their lay-out and the strict control of projecting facades. A general social services department was also created. Its duties included cleanliness and upkeep of streets, building permissions, building of roads, plantation of trees and public lighting (Noweir: 1984, 86).

Additional rules were instated to regulate the preservation of Arab monuments, expropriations, taxation and public hygiene (Noweir: 1984, 86).

During this period the urban morphology changed very little, but the city itself continued to broaden. It began within the modern areas of the city – roads were widened on a grid pattern, cul-de-sacs were unblocked, and the entrances to mosques were cleared (Noweir: 1984, 86). The result of these improvements served to divert economic investment from Islamic Cairo, further advancing its deterioration (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 96).

1900-1925 – Public Works Projects

The construction of bridges across the Nile, in addition to transportation improvements that included the creation of the Tramway Company in 1895, advanced the development of housing in the north-east suburbs and west bank (Noweir: 1984, 86; Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 96).

Expansion projects were no longer undertaken by the government, but left to individual entrepreneurs (Noweir: 1984, 86). With the influx of foreign capital and the emergence of mortgage loans, a number of private business people were able to construct suburban developments, including the areas of Heliopolis, Shubra, Rawd al-Faraj, Zamalik, Sakakini, Ghamrah and Qobba Gardens. With the exception of Heliopolis (which was built on a garden city model), little care was given to the overall planning and organization of these areas (Noweir: 1984, 86).

Azadzoi (1985) describes the state of municipal services, infrastructure and housing at this time:

> "By 1927, Cairo's population had reached one million, creating serious problems in the provision of municipal services and housing. Water consumption nearly doubled between 1906 and 1928. Construction of the

first sanitary sewer for Cairo, designed to accommodate a population of 960,000 by the year 1932, was…in no time overloaded.

Three areas suffered from increasingly high densities and deteriorating housing conditions: the middle class mixed zones which were the immediate destination of those seeking to escape from the old city, the migrant reception areas, and the traditional quarters (such as Al-Azhar) which continued to attract population. In the old city, buildings which had once been the homes of the rich and the powerful housed dozens of families crowded into rooms in the subdivided structures, and shacks in the courtyard and on the roofs. Pack animals and carts continued to provide the only means of transportation in these areas, although by 1931 a new bus system was operating under a franchise in other parts of Cairo. Densities mounted, rents soared and the earnings of unskilled labourers were progressively depressed by the influx of rural migrants competing for the same jobs."

1925-1950 - Town Planning and Reconstruction

In the 1920s Egypt achieved independence from foreign rule and came under the power of a figurehead king (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 122). Despite the image of independence, planning in Cairo continued to be heavily influenced by European urbanism (as a result of European expatriates and the training of Egyptian professionals in Europe) (Volait: 2003, 20).

In an effort to counteract the disorder of Cairo's rapid growth, town services were reorganized into two new departments – the Town Planning Office, responsible for new projects, and the House Inspection Office, which listed homes in need of repair or demolition. Despite this move, the town's complex organizational structure continued to hinder attempts at rational planning methodology and the enforcement of restrictions (Noweir: 1984, 86).

By 1929, Cairo services were divided amongst five autonomous governmental departments: Tanzim (streets), the Metropolitan Police, the Department of Public Health, Sewers, and Public Buildings. A high commission was instituted to coordinate the

departments, as a municipality structure would not be implemented until 1949. The overall system was slow, making broad-based projects and master planning efforts infeasible. The result was a reconstruction boom in older areas of the town (Noweir: 1984, 86).

In 1952 the monarchy was deposed by the Free Officers Revolution. The nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 eventually led to a negotiated withdrawal of all foreign troops (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 122). It was the first time in Cairene history that the nation was led by Egyptians themselves (Aldridge: 1969, 247).

1960-1984 - Greater Cairo

Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser adopted national socialist and economic policies that aimed to provide land, education, and housing for peasants and the working class. He believed that Egypt could be modernized "without selling out to the West" (Ghannam: 2002, 27).

As a result of his policies and economic reforms, the Nasserite era saw another rush of urbanization in Cairo. The population grew between 1950 and 1960 from 2.5 million to 3.9 million, and ultimately reached 6 million in 1972 (Noweir: 1984, 88).

The expansion of the urban area occurred primarily on the west side of the Nile, causing the city to spill out onto agricultural land. This rapid and constant urbanization was characterized by the development of highway networks linking suburbs, the launching of low-cost housing projects, and the emergence of satellite towns in the desert. To absorb traffic, expressways and raised decks were constructed (Noweir: 1984,

88). Villas and green spaces were replaced by high-rise apartment blocks and office towers constructed in an International Architecture style (Azadzoi et al.:1985, 97).

Three master plans have been created since 1956. The 1956-7 master plan proposed the construction of highways and the development of desert satellite towns to absorb population from the city. It also established the creation of industrial zones, further attracting rural migrants to Cairo in search of employment (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 97-98).

The second master plan was created between 1965 and 1970. It was undertaken by the newly created Greater Cairo Planning Commission (1966), and sought to address the city's uncontrolled and informal growth (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 99).

The third master plan was created in 1980 and was called the "Long Range Urban Development Scheme." It suggested two ways to manage the growth being experienced by what had become the Cairene megalopolis. First, it suggested the construction of a ring road that would provide growth boundaries for the city (Noweir: 1984, 88), and would simultaneously conserve valuable agricultural land being consumed at a rate of 600 hectare annually by the expanding urban area (Azadzoi et al.: 1985, 100). The second suggestion was to create three different kinds of new towns – desert towns 50 to 100 kilometres from Cairo; satellite towns nearer the industrial and commercial centres; and twin-towns in the Nile Valley. All three included proposals for low-cost housing, industrial infrastructure and communal facilities, in the hopes that these new towns would not simply become bedroom communities to the city (Noweir: 1984, 88).

Recognizing that the United States was becoming the new powerhouse on the international scene, then President Anwar Sadat inaugurated the newly devised policy of

infitah (open door) which would open the Egyptian economy to foreign investment.

Infitah was initiated in 1974, and according to Abu-Lughod (2004b, 123), introduced to

Egypt "unregulated capitalist investments, foreign-guided production in joint ventures,

tax-free export industrial zones along the Canal, and growing dependence on remittances

and tourism" which resulted in "the greater income inequalities that often accompany

such policies in semi-peripheral Third-World countries."

The result of these new policies was the revitalization of neglected downtown

neighbourhoods in the hopes of attracting wealthier customers and the construction of

first-class hotels on prime real estate along the Nile by the Ministry of Tourism. The

Ministry oversaw the construction of first-class hotels on prime real estate The Ministry

also developed the Pharaonic sites in Upper Egypt and built two resort destinations along

the Red Sea coast (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 123).

In 1965 special planning agencies were created, including a high executive

committee and "The General Organization for Physical Planning of the Greater Cairo

Region." The latter was tasked with creating long-range plans for the region, and has

since created a succession of plans addressing the improvement of mass transit and

circulation throughout the metropolitan region, the encouragement of construction on the

desert fringes of the city, and the need for control over the rising issue of "informal"

settlements and construction (Bayat: 1997).

The results of this organization's efforts have been the construction of a new

subway system and the introduction of additional raised deck flyovers; satellite cities

were designed; laws were adopted prohibiting construction on agricultural land; and

some attempt was made to remove or upgrade informal settlements (Abu-Lughod: 2004b, 130; Pagés: 2002, 40-41).

Present: Modern Megalopolis

By 2000, the conquest of the desert had gained momentum. Plans for the city of 'New Cairo' to the east of Cairo proper are intended to regroup the eastern 'new settlements' and implies a new city more than twice the size of the present Cairo city in the valley (Pagés: 2002, 41)

The population of the city of Cairo has increased from three million to nearly twenty million in the last 40 years. Maria Golia (2004, 47, 19) describes the contemporary urban landscape of Cairo that has materialized as a result of this rapid growth:

> "It was never conceived or organized as a whole, because its bursts of growth and present size were unimagined. The city arose and exists largely by virtue of interactions of varying degrees of spontaneity, synergies of necessity, creativity and the presence and absence of power...
>
> Cairo is an architectural pastiche of whimsical artistry, cheap functionalism and unflinching kitsch. Rows of government-sponsored shoeboxes and multi-storey brick piles are interspersed with monuments of sublime proportion and texture. A third of the world's antiquities are in Egypt; the Cairo governorate alone claims responsibility for restoring and maintaining 500 historic sites, many comprising multiple monuments. The work is executed by foreign and local agencies using a variety of techniques, from the meticulous to the criminal...
>
> Given the seasonal sandblastings and corrosive pollutants, even the marble towers of the nouveau riche swiftly acquire an unasked for patina of age. As for the gimcrack constructions with which Cairo is rife, they look old and broken before they're even occupied. Cairo is expert at making things and people age before their time. Indeed, nowhere is the process of erosion so eloquent as in Egypt, which is

made of sand, the final stage of rock before it enters the atmosphere as dust."

The overriding planning ideology in Cairo continues to be modernist in approach. In order to deal with massive urban growth, planners have resorted to the construction of new housing projects in satellite developments, moving mass numbers of people to the outskirts of the city. Green spaces and historic buildings are mercilessly razed in order to make room for the construction of utilitarian structures – providing little more than over-crowded shelter to residents and businesses. Most visually distressing are the freeways, tunnels and raised decks that are an eleventh-hour attempt to keep traffic moving through the congested, auto-dependent city.

Bianca (2004, 71) describes the inherent planning issues in greater detail:

"Unfortunately, in most surviving historic cities in Islamic countries – and Cairo is no exception – funding sources and local expertise have become equally rare. Both the public and the private sector suffer from inherent weaknesses, are not used to cooperating efficiently, and tend to keep their limited investments for the further development of modern urban districts. Imported modern Western planning procedures tend to disaggregate previously integrated urban and social structures, thus dissolving the contextual values which constituted the strength of the historic urban fabric. While modern, Western-type city administrations exist (and often tend to block the traditional self-management of local communities which used to function in the old times), they rarely have the tools to deal with the intricate and complex problems in the old city. Here, focused grass-roots involvement, qualified plot-by-plot decisions and permanent feed-back are required, rather than simplistic top-bottom implementation of abstract planning schemes which are too remote from the realities on the ground."

Foreign organizations have been attempting to introduce contemporary Western planning principles to the overwrought communities of Cairo, emphasizing such values as conservation, allocation of green spaces, place-making, community

involvement/bottom-up planning, and capacity-building, with varying degrees of success. One of the focus areas of these initiatives has been Islamic Cairo at the heart of the city of Cairo.

The old city, now called Islamic Cairo, has been preserved almost intact and functioning virtually as it did hundreds of years ago. Unfortunately, rising pressures from population, environmental degradation and neglect have caused the groundwater level to rise, coupled with pollution, dust and intense traffic, all taking their toll on the area's historic monuments (Pagés: 2002, 42).

Pagés (2002, 47): "one can only 'reconcile past and future' by resolving to make heritage the basis for the city of tomorrow, with the conviction that everything, even the most contemporary of buildings, will ultimately embody a heritage value linked to the age and culture of the place in which it appears."

The Islamic Cairo area features many of the elements that planners in Western nations are trying to implant in existing cities – an impressive urban culture, teeming crowds creating round-the-clock activity, and commercial vitality.

3.3 Conservation Practices in Historical Perspective

3.2.1 Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe

The Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe was created in 1881 by the Khedive Tawfiq with a mission to record and preserve more than 600 monuments in historic Cairo. The Comité was established as a body of the Ministry of Awqaf (*charitable endowments*) and was therefore an Egyptian institution, although known by a French name (El-Habashi: 2003, 156). It was comprised of both Egyptian and foreign members in the architectural professions, although it was largely dominated ideologically by its European members (El-Habashi: 2003, 155).

The Comité prioritized the conservation work that needed to be undertaken –

Fatimid monuments were first, followed by Mamluk and Ottoman, corresponding to the

age of the structures and the damage incurred by Fatimid monuments which had since

survived two major earthquakes (1304 and 1992).

The Comité developed a series of actions to safeguard the Islamic and Coptic

heritage. Hampikian (2004, 209) describes it as follows:

> "buildings with historic value were registered as monuments; monuments
> were rescued from urban invasions that would eventually have led to a risk
> of their expropriation and the parasite structures built in, on and around
> them were removed; damaged or missing elements of monuments were
> restored; details and decorations of historic buildings were documented,
> preserved, bodies involved with the different aspects of monuments –
> ownership, craftsmanship, and financing; finally, the whole process was
> published in the *Bulletins* – yearly publications by the Comité."

In many cases the Comité advocated *preservation* only – i.e. reinforcing structural

elements, cleaning of monument building fabrics, etc. *Restoration* was undertaken only

when practically necessary. The most notable restoration projects include work on the

Sultan Qalawun complex and the funerary complex of Sultan Qaytbay in the Northern

Cemetery. In cases where monuments were found to be structurally unsound or devoid of

their original architectural features, no conservation work would be done (Islamic Art

Network: 2002).

In 1961 the Comité was dissolved after numerous years of conflict over foreign

versus Egyptian architectural preservation ideologies (El-Habashi: 2003, 160), neither of

which was in keeping with the local utilitarian view of the built form. Its functions and

responsibilities were transferred to the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO)

(recently renamed the Supreme Council of Antiquities). The EAO was comprised only of

Egyptians (mostly local elites) and purposely excluded foreigners, in keeping with a local

law established in 1936 that the Egyptian Government was "not to employ any foreigner unless an Egyptian equivalent was not available (El-Habashi: 2003, 174)."

According to El-Habashi (2003, 175), "Even after political independence, Egyptians continued adopting the same preservation doctrines which were the Comité's legacy. The power is currently in their hands, but oddly enough, Egyptians still praise these doctrines, and blindly feel obligated to implement them."

Following the 1952 revolution, fewer restoration projects were undertaken as the government shifted focus to economic issues. Revitalization had become a low priority, until the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when a new wave of nationalism and desire to preserve the Egyptian heritage surged.

In 1973, foreign missions began to move into the area and began the process of bringing the historic city back to life. In the past 25 years, many of the conservation projects have been undertaken by teams from France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and the United States. These missions follow a western, purist approach to conservation: minimal intervention; preserving the building in its original state where possible; incorporating local, traditional materials; and avoiding the use of modern materials (Aslan: 2006).

According to Aslan (2006), approximately 450 monuments are considered "historic" and thus deserving of restoration. He also states that more liberal estimates have indicated that this number could be as high as 630. "Monuments are added monthly to the records of the Ministry of Religious Endowments and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. In addition, more than 500 private houses have received a historic status."

3.4 Planning Initiatives in Islamic Cairo

3.4.1 Introduction

According to the Organization of World Heritage Cities, "Islamic Cairo illustrates the Fatimid conception of urban planning, which encourages the integration of monuments as well as their artistic quality. Although an artery had to be developed for practical reasons, the medieval layout of the city, with its numerous lanes and courtyards, has been maintained to this day." Today, Islamic Cairo is recognized among the great monuments of Egypt for its historic importance, and has become one of the destinations obligatory to a well-rounded tour of the country.

Inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979, Islamic Cairo has for many of the intervening years endured the stigma of being one of the agency's most "endangered sites." World Heritage sites are placed on the endangered list when the site is threatened by existing or potential threats - in this case, from degradation resulting from rampant urbanization (Pedersen: 2002, 15). Decades of neglect, negligent restoration efforts, and the immense pressures created by globalization on cities in the developing world, have taken their toll on the historic district (El-Aref: 2002b). The population has increased to approximately 310,000 residents and, economically, the area has become one of the most destitute in the city. One of the most vivid illustrations of this is Islamic Cairo's Northern Cemetery (also known as the City of the Dead), which has become a squatter settlement with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants (Nedoroscik: 1997, Hamza: 2000).

Living conditions in the Islamic Cairo area are especially poor, the result of health problems consistent with air and noise pollution, immense amounts of solid waste,

frequent building collapses, absentee landlords allowing the dereliction of residences, and intense poverty. Psychologically, the residents of Islamic Cairo resent conservation programming, feeling that the support of conservation is consuming public funds that could potentially improve the quality of life in their communities (Golia: 2004, 20). Compounding this is the predominance of western planning ideologies, creating negative prejudices and attitudes towards the depressed image of historic districts (Bianca: 2004, 71).

In an effort to counteract this downward spiral, Egypt's Ministry of Culture, in association with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, created a new planning body called *al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya* (Historic Cairo). The group devised a scheme for the conservation of the area with two goals:

1. The conservation of single monuments according to conventional practice; and

2. The urban planning of the historic core, in an attempt to address the context of the single monuments (Hampikian: 2004, 211).

The first goal was addressed with the introduction of a massive restoration and conservation campaign for Islamic Cairo in 1998. With completion scheduled for 2006, the "Historic Cairo Restoration Program" (HCRP) would restore 157 buildings and monuments in the area (Llewelyn Leach: 1999). In the interest of making the area more "tourist-friendly," stringent building codes were introduced to enforce the removal of "offensive" sites. President Mubarak issued directives, including the removal of all governmental, commercial and urban encroachments from both inside and outside Islamic monuments. Recorded encroachments numbered 1,510 and affected 313 Islamic monuments in the historic area (105 cases involving governmental offices, 274 residential

encroachments, and 1,131 for workshops and bazzars) (El-Aref: 1999). The elimination of all encroachments to date has resulted in the uprooting of approximately 50,000 people and businesses (Humphreys: 2002, 109).

The second goal, addressing the contextual issues that impact historic buildings, has never been successfully tackled by local planners.

Simultaneous to the Historic Cairo Restoration Program, the Governor of Cairo developed the Darb al-Ahmar Rehabilitation Project in conjunction with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (Hampikian: 2004, 210). This project, according to Janet Abu-Lughod (2004, 29), has tried to be "more sensitive to the needs of living inhabitants… to preserve not only the monuments and street patterns, but to upgrade housing while preserving much of the area's economic base in labour-intensive handicrafts. The Egyptian government, particularly the Ministry of Tourism, has been both supportive of these efforts and simultaneously pressing in an opposite direction as it seeks to enhance the exotic appeal of the areas in question."

Abu-Lughod (2004b, 141) names three major "interests" in Islamic Cairo:

1) The claims of the world to its cultural heritage (as a UNESCO world heritage site);

2) the claims of the Egyptian state, with its legitimate interest in reaping maximum benefits from tourists attracted by the city's older bazaars; and

3) the claims of current residents, many of them poor and living in substandard housing, who depend on jobs in the production and vending of handicraft items that appeal primarily to tourists.

Abu-Lughod (2004b) further describes the impact that planning interventions have had on the residents and business owners in Islamic Cairo:

> "In order to widen the east-west thoroughfare (Sharia al-Azhar) that bisects the quarter, flanking shops and houses were demolished and a new tunnel connecting the modern downtown with the eastern ring roads has been constructed; in connection with the renovation of major mosques along the main north-south street (Mu'izz al-Din Allah), structures that were obstructing the approach views have also been removed. The major bazaar area of Khan al-Khalili has been "gentrified" and cleared of residual residents; the tendency has been for all improvements to the area, whether undertaken by the Egyptian government or the United Nations/UNESCO, to reduce the spaces available for informal production and low-cost housing."

3.4.2 Geography of the District

Islamic Cairo comprises 3.87 square kilometres and twenty percent of the population of the city of Cairo. It is comprised of five *qisms* (security jurisdictions), including Bab al Sharia, Gamaliyya, Darb al-Ahmar, Khalifa and Sayyeda (Antoniou: 2004, 38). This small area contains 313 listed monuments, the largest set of remnants of any Middle Eastern medieval-styled city (Abu-Lughod: 2004, 29).

A legally defined geographic area does not exist. As such, the geographic boundaries for the purposes of this practicum will be defined as follows, and are diagrammed in Figure 1 (page 17).

The Islamic Cairo area is a hub for small-scale production activities and the sale of goods, especially those of interest to tourists. Forty percent of district workshops manufacture aluminum, while other commercial and industrial activities (namely, metal welding, copper smelting, timber yards, marble cutting and vehicle repairs) account for an additional 40%, and the remaining 20% of sales are in produce (El Safty: 1998, 107).

According to El Safty (1998, 108), informal labour is the norm, in a wide range of industrial, commercial and touristic activities. Touristic activities constitute the primary employment sector, providing jobs in commerce, restaurants and hotels.

Tourists to the area, as I perceived personally, tended to be Asian or Arab in ethnicity, with a smaller proportion of visitors from European countries. The group least represented appeared to be North Americans. Most tourists were visiting specific sites, such as the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, the Citadel, the Mosque of Ibn Tulun and the Gayor Anderson Museum. The majority of tourists however came by tour bus to the Midan Al-Hussein, where they would be dropped off in large groups and given a finite amount of time to visit the Khan al-Khalili bazaar before returning to their tour buses and leaving the area.

Hotel accommodations within Islamic Cairo are limited. In the hotel in which I stayed, most of the guests appeared to be from other Gulf nations.

Vehicular access in the area is limited due to the narrow and winding street pattern. Typically, these narrow streets (*'aftas*) end in dead-end alleyways called *zuqaqs*. The result of this has been the evolution of self-sufficient quarters, each with its own mosque, school, public bath and local market.

Physically, the buildings are decaying due to age, pollution and poor maintenance. The narrow streets are overcrowded with pedestrian and vehicular traffic, produce and goods stands, animal herds and various other activities. Empty lots are littered with garbage, streets are coated with sitting water and sewage, and collapsed building rubble blights the streetscape at regular intervals. Informal structures are common; sixty two percent of all housing built in Cairo since 1950, and 80% of all the housing since 1980,

was built illegally (Tung: 2001, 116). Antoniou (2004, 40) attributes many of the

problems to local building owners:

> "The majority of the entrepreneurs in the historic city are not
> environmentally oriented and their interests are limited to the use of the
> ground floor of buildings. Absentee landlords, as a result of rent control
> rules, do not maintain their houses, which are occupied by employees. In
> turn, residents, due to their low income and poor status, are more
> concerned with affordable housing and employment opportunities and less
> with the deterioration of their residential environment. The city contains
> some thirty thousand squatters (almost ten percent of the population),
> without security of tenure, living in shacks, on vacant plots and ruined
> buildings."

In addition to the physical deterioration of the communities of Islamic Cairo,

there is an overall shortage of services available, including such necessities as schools,

libraries, and community centres.

The residential community lives a traditional existence. Janet Abu-Lughod

describes this traditionalism as "the persistence of economic activities, forms of social

relationships, and systems of values which were once typical within the Cairo of a

hundred years ago (El-Messiri: 1978, 57)."

El Safty (1998: 108) describes the social fabric of the area as a "dynamic

interaction between the residents who are typical of those in a traditional urban

community of old Cairo: owners of shops and workshops who are not necessarily

residents of the district; workers and craftsmen working for the workshops and shops;

and visitors to Gamaliyya whether for the monuments or for shopping, both tourists and

Egyptians."

A sizeable proportion of the population of Islamic Cairo is comprised of rural

migrants and the formerly nomadic people of the Bedouin culture. These groups tend to

take limited care of property, as their nomadic nature combined with the constant threat

of displacement to satellite cities by the state does not inspire improvements and, in many cases, ongoing maintenance to one's home is simply unaffordable.

The residents are predominantly of the Islamic religion and there are very few foreigners, at least in the sense that North Americans would consider 'foreign' to a city or country. The sentiment in Cairo is that although one's family may have lived in the city for generations, they are still considered foreigners and not true "Cairenes" (El-Messiri: 1978, 58).

While income levels in the area are mixed, the predominance of the population subsists in poverty. Shop and workshop owners constitute the higher income group in the area. Older generations tend to stay in the area, while younger people move out, finding few opportunities in terms of housing and employment.

There is also a significant population of 'roof dwellers,' informal labourers who reside on rooftops in shabbily constructed shelters.

Residents and business owners express frustration in the situation they face in Islamic Cairo. There is a realization of the importance of the monuments, both historically and to tourism, but there is dependence on foreign organizations and the government to restore and maintain the structures. Additionally, the district's infrastructure and services are poor, although taxes are paid by residents and business owners, and it is felt that it is their right to receive these services. There is little organization in the community as far as participation, or ability to coordinate grass roots type interventions – many residents are too concerned with providing for their daily subsistence in terms of food and shelter to be concerned with the broader planning of their community.

While they may not support an ideology of conservation from an institutional

perspective, identity and legacy are very important characteristics of Cairene culture.

Residents and business owners within the neighbourhoods of Islamic Cairo describe the

importance of passing on their traditions to their children and to future generations.

3.4.3 Historic Cairo Restoration Program

> *"For centuries Cairo's Islamic architectural heritage has lain like
> Sleeping Beauty in a deep and almost undisturbed slumber, virtually
> ignored except by 19th century Western artists or by small groups of
> dedicated Islamic art specialists. Now, suddenly, the Prince of Tourism
> has kissed Islamic Cairo awake, and it is about to be transformed into a
> new urban artifact." (Williams: 2002b, 457)*

The Historic Cairo Restoration Project (HCRP) was announced by Egyptian

President Hosni Mubarak in 1998, with a launch set for May of that year. With a budget

of £E1 billion (approximately $195,000,500 CAD), it was the largest ever restoration

program in Egypt in terms of number of officials, supervisors, planners, and workers

involved. The project was coordinated by an inter-ministerial body comprised of seven

ministries and the Governor of Cairo. An Advisory Committee, under the supervision of

First Lady Mme. Suzanne Mubarak, was simultaneously launched as the "Historic Cairo

Studies and Development Center," employing 250 people (Williams: 2002b, 458).

The goal of the HCRP, nicknamed the "open-air museum scheme" (MacDonald:

1999), was to restore 149 listed monuments between 1998 and 2006. The motivation for

the program was a combination of the recognition of the profitability of the district as a

tourist site, and the 1992 earthquake, which caused considerable damage to the already

neglected monuments.

Selected monuments were examined by a consulting committee comprised of experts, after which prequalified contracting companies bid for the work to be undertaken (Williams: 2002b, 461). The responsibility of restoring Fatimid monuments was given to the Bohra, a Shi'ite community which is accused of engaging in "historically inauthentic and culturally self-serving recreations," as described by a petition in response to the conservation efforts (El-Aref: 2001).

Local architect and leading conservationist Nairy Hampikian stressed the necessity of the Historic Cairo Restoration Program at the time, stating that intervention was desperately needed on a huge scale. She also felt that, despite international criticism, the Supreme Council of Antiquities was forced to take action or Cairene monuments would have continued to deteriorate at a rapid pace. Foreign critics had done nothing to help, aside from condemning actions taken by Egyptian officials. "It's as if you have a doctor who is full of compassion and is trying to cure his dying patient, while a specialist is telling him what he is doing wrong and yet won't do anything to help the patient himself," she remarked. "Cairo was sick and dying, and Egypt didn't have an army of conservators and art historians, so the government agencies had to start from somewhere" (Aslan: 2006).

An International Symposium on the Restoration and Conservation of Islamic Cairo was held from 16-20 February 2002. The HCRP was met with open hostility and criticism from many individuals and groups. The conservation community raised concerns about the respect for the authenticity of historic buildings and the traditional social fabric of the city. The program did not address the continuity of life for the residents of Islamic Cairo, both during and after the restoration work. The HCRP also

failed to address the most practical issues of ground water levels, infrastructure provision, pollution, dust, traffic, garbage accumulation, housing and economic development for local residents. The lack of a comprehensive plan, poor institutional coordination, and administrative corruption has caused the HCRP to be considered a failure to protect the heritage resources of Islamic Cairo by many of the stakeholders involved. Above all, it is felt that Cairo's monuments belong to the Egypt of today, and cannot be treated like an outdoor museum, for which sustainable support in a city already saturated with tourist sites is questionable (Williams: 2002b, 473).

The experts participating in the conference summarized the following concerns (Williams: 2002b, 463):

- The rising water table was noted as the most significant problem affecting the district.

- The contracting companies were not documenting the work being undertaken, and were not conserving the structures with a minimum of intervention or reversibility.

- Portland cement was used to strengthen the foundations and as mortar. All international conventions ban the use of this artificial mixture. Its use in combination with limestone, the primary building material used in the construction of the medieval monuments, causes dark spots, salt efflorescence, and is highly rigid. The cement expands and contracts at different rates than limestone, causing the masonry to crumble.

- The contractors were not skilled or prepared to deal with the delicate work of architectural restoration. According to Islamic architecture expert and HCRP

critic Caroline Williams (2002b, 461), the contractors employed in the work have in the past employed questionable restoration practices.

◎ The experts were suspicious of the Egyptian government, feeling that the work being undertaken was not motivated by a desire to preserve the cultural heritage, as it was more of an effort to stimulate the Egyptian economy.

◎ Many of the restorations being undertaken were not authentic, in that modern construction techniques were being used and that projects were geared towards creating tourist attractions.

Following the symposium, many of the expert groups involved came together in an effort to condemn the potential irreparable damage being done. A letter was sent to Mme. Mubarak signed by international and Islamic architectural specialists condemning what was being done to the historic district's monuments (Williams: 2002b, 465). It cited poor overall planning and implementation in contravention of the Venice Charter of 1964 as the major problems. Experts included James Allan, professor of Islamic Art at Oxford; Princess Wijdan Ali, president of the Jordanian Royal Society of Fine Art and Dean of Research at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy; Oleg Grabar, Aga Khan Emeritus Professor of Islamic Art at Harvard University; and Andre Raymond, Professor Emeritus at the University of Aix-en-Provence and former director of the Institute for Research and Study of the Arab and Islamic World (El-Aref: 2001). One of the groups, the Center for Islamic Architectural Heritage (CIAH), sent documentation of the restoration work being done to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which advises UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. The criticisms became public, and the media grabbed onto the topic. UNESCO also sent a team of experts to inspect the work being done. In an

interview with Al-Ahram Weekly, Caroline Williams explained that the petition was addressed to Mrs. Mubarak "because her sympathy and interest in matters of culture is well known and it seemed appropriate to ask for her active assistance" (El-Aref: 2001).

In response to the petition, Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni stated that restoration was being done according to the latest techniques, as approved by several international committees. He suggested that the petition was written to serve personal interests, and Abdallah El-Attar, head of the Coptic and Islamic Antiquities Department at the Supreme Council of Antiquities added that many of the international expert signatories took no interest in the conservation projects until major financial resources were involved. Gaballa Ali Gaballa, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, added that the petition misrepresented the actual state of restoration work, for example, alleging that Portland Cement was being used to restore monuments when in fact restoration on those monuments had yet even begun (El-Aref: 2001).

Ayman Abdel-Moneim, director of the ministry-directed project for the rehabilitation of Islamic Cairo, claimed that efforts were actually being made to correct past restoration mistakes. Workers removed Portland cement from monuments, excavated areas that had been blocked off with concrete, and took action to correct "serious architectural errors" that had been committed to monuments in past centuries (El-Aref: 2001).

The foreign intervention, according to Williams (2002b, 466), had positive results. The pace of construction was slowed down; the use of Portland cement banned; and technical analysis and documentation of the work was done to a higher standard. The concern remained, however, what was planned for these monuments after restoration was

completed? Williams points out that "the healthy maintenance of restored buildings also requires a clear plan as to their future use, and how they will continue to participate in the living community of which they are a part" (El-Aref: 2001).

Many of the Mosques continue to be used for religious functions, and to use them otherwise would be inappropriate. Other buildings, however, including wikalas, sabil-kuttabs, and historic residences, are not being re-used and therefore also not being maintained. The policy of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture ensures that painstakingly restored buildings should not be reused for anything other than cultural and touristic activities, such as museums, galleries, and bookstores (Williams, 2002b, 466). The Ministry of Awqaf, which owns 137 of the monuments, is not interested in the monuments in terms of their architectural or historical qualities, and provides no funds for their maintenance or upkeep (Williams: 2002b, 467). Ministerial officials are not concerned with the authenticity of restorations, preferring instead "newness," a sentiment shared by the communities they represent.

This attitude is not in keeping with the traditional Islamic system of building endowment and income productions of *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*; endowments). The earliest surviving evidence of the waqf system is in the Fatimid mosque of Salih Tala'i' (1160). Twelve shops were built into the façade of the mosque; rent collected from shopkeepers went towards personnel and maintenance. The building was therefore an active part of the community (Williams: 2002b, 467). Other buildings, such as wikalas, helped produce income to sustain sabils and kuttabs, which served charitable functions. Awqaf was formalized as a ministry in the 1830s by Mohammed Ali (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 76-78).

Another problem complicating the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the historic structures is the lack of authority. Activities are controlled by various government departments, including Awqaf, Culture, Housing, Tourism, Utilities, Urban Communities, in addition to the Governorate of Cairo and the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), a federal agency (Williams: 2002b, 467). There is no single agency charged with overseeing the activities of these departments for Islamic Cairo. The result is a highly fragmented bureaucratic system which makes top-down planning initiatives difficult (Bianca: 2004, 76).

Emad Abd al-Azim, a Supreme Council of Antiquities inspector in Darb al-Ahmar, sees the restoration activities as having both positive and negative impacts. Citing specifically the restoration work done to Bab al-Zuweila by the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), Al-Azim believes that the conservation of the monument itself has improved the area immediately around the gate, but feels that this impact is not felt by local residents who are still faced with poor infrastructure and housing provision. Al-Azim thinks that foreign missions, such as the ARCE, should do more to revitalize surrounding communities when undertaking conservation projects (Aslan: 2006).

Aslan (2006) presents a rebuttal to Al-Azim's argument:

> "In defense of the common complaints that foreign missions concentrate merely on ascetic qualities of certain buildings, while ignoring the people who live among these buildings, one architect who requested anonymity, works with the American Research Center in Egypt and argues, "it is not for foreign missions to interfere in Egyptian society. Grants which are given by the USAID to the Egyptian Antiquities Project of the ARCE to complete various conservation projects on monuments around Egypt are just that – grants for conserving brick and mortar structures, not sewage systems and health clinics."

3.4.4 Historic Cities Support Programme Integrated Approach

The Geneva-based Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) was established in 1992 to implement the initiatives of His Highness the Aga Khan in the field of conservation and urban rehabilitation. Since its inception, the Historic Cities Support Programme has built up experience in a variety of geographical regions of the Islamic world, in both urban and rural settings. (Bianca: 2004, 75)

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Cairo is part of the Historic Cities Support Program which "promotes the conservation and re-use of buildings and public spaces in historic cities in the Muslim World." The AKTC is known for its holistic approach, incorporating restoration of historic structures while improving social and economic conditions of the local community (Aslan: 2006). This belief is shared by project funding partners including the Egyptian Swiss Fund for Development, the Ford Foundation and the World Monuments Fund.

The original plan to be undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) was to reclaim a former landfill which had become a drug haven, and turn it into an urban park for local communities as a catalyst for further development. During the construction of what would be called Al Azhar Park, the AKTC uncovered part of a 12th century Ayyubid period wall that they subsequently restored. The discovery of the wall and its restoration led the AKTC to begin research of the adjacent Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood. This research eventually evolved into a major project encompassing the restoration of several mosques, palaces, and historic houses (Monreal: 2004, Aslan: 2006).

In keeping with their mandate, the AKTC also established social and economic programs to assist local residents. The Aga Khan Trust believes that restoring and rebuilding where necessary is more appropriate than more traditional conservation approaches (Aslan: 2006). According to an article appearing on Worldpress.org, "We rebuilt the minaret of the Mosque and Madrasa of Umm al-Sultan Shaaban based on research and studies on the previous minaret which collapsed during an earthquake. We rebuilt it in order to show people what it looked like, in order to recreate the past which might be lost forever otherwise," said Dina Bakhoum, site manager for the project. "We not only restore monuments, but we also aim to make them functional and beneficial for the users" (Aslan: 2006).

Unlike the more conservative restoration approach undertaken through the HCRP, the AKTC's conservation methods combine traditional design with new technologies. Where the HCRP seeks to return monuments to their original state and to preserve them as such, the AKTC realizes the need for some modernization to occur if buildings are to continue to be used. For example, according to Aslan (2006), "modern style glass windows are installed…increasing environmental comfort and energy efficiency while incorporating a contemporary feeling."

The Cairo project is part of the AKTC's Historic Cities Support Programme Integrated Approach. With respect to historic buildings, their programme includes provisions for documentation and interpretation of structures, the use of appropriate planning technologies, architectural conservation and adaptive re-use. The AKTC's strategy, however, is not limited to structures alone. The broader urban landscape and the lives of the community members that reside in it are also considered. The Historic Cities

Support Programme integrates the improvement of housing and infrastructure conditions, public open-space enhancement, socio-economic development and institutional support into its revitalization approach (Bianca: 2004, 72-75).

According to AKTC architect Stefano Bianca, "When funding is short, it may not always be possible to conserve or restore the architectural heritage in full. Priority must be given to projects that can foster a sense of ownership and solidarity in the local community, and that can become catalysts for corollary urban conservation and renewal processes. The best way to achieve this is to combine the restoration with an appropriate type of adaptive re-use which is socially relevant to the community and generates an income basis capable of ensuring the long-term maintenance of the restored building" (Bianca: 2004, 75).

On the basis that the tourist industry is too volatile and potentially destructive, efforts in the revitalization of al-Darb al-Ahmar have prioritized the adaptive reuse of monuments in ways which are socially relevant to the community. The hope is that these projects can foster a sense of ownership and the long-term maintenance of restored buildings (Bianca: 2004, 80). Representatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture criticize the tendency to value historic areas only for their potential as a tourist venue. "While sustainable tourist development can stimulate al-Darb al-Ahmar's economy, the type of tourist development generally envisioned for historic Cairo is to replace viable local industries with souvenir shops and bazaars. Such an idea is driven by the desire to turn what remains of the medieval city into an Orientalist painting come to life – an unrealistic, socially destructive, and economically unsound proposition (El Rashidi: 2004, 65)."

The restoration of Bab Zuwayla by Nairy Hampikian, which was discussed in the case study of the HCRP, was not viewed as beneficial to the community by AKTC consultants. The source of disdain towards the project was a statement which announced that the government was "planning to transform the whole area into an open-air museum, as part of the larger Historic Cairo rehabilitation project. One aspect of this project would involve the removal of slums and workshops which, it had been assured, would take place in cooperation with the area inhabitants and traders. 'Compensation will be provided for every family and trader because we do care about people, and not just about monuments,' a representative said (Jodidio: 2004, 235)."

The mandate of the HCRP to create an open-air museum is in contradiction to the intervention being undertaken by the AKTC in Darb al-Ahmar. The AKTC seeks to reintegrate monuments into the community, believing that the conservation of historic cities cannot be accomplished through single monument conservation alone (Bianca: 2004, 70). Historic cities and their monuments cannot exist simply to act as living museums, they must become part of the broader cultural tradition. This is evident in the case of their conservation of the 12th century Ayyubid wall – connections were opened through the wall to the new Al Azhar Park, and housing and monuments adjacent to the wall were revitalized.

The AKTC promotes the continuous maintenance, repair and adaptation (as opposed to demolition and new construction) of the traditional vernacular structures which, with historic landmarks, comprise the urban landscape. Their integrated approach to conservation is based on the context surrounding monuments, where social facilities, public services and open spaces become key components to the overall strategy. "Current

efforts, including those being assisted by the Aga Khan Foundation…have built on the work of their non-Islamic predecessors, but with a real difference. More sensitive to the needs of living inhabitants, they have been trying to preserve not only the monuments and street patterns, but to upgrade housing while preserving much of the area's economic base in labour-intensive handicrafts (Abu-Lughod: 2004, 29)."

The AKTC views community development as essential to processes of urban rehabilitation and as a tool for the sustainability of physical improvements (Siravo, 2004, 179). The result has been an emphasis on public participation and NGO enhancement, and the development of numerous socio-economic projects including training programmes, health clinics, and women's and children's education. These programmes are housed in restored historic buildings (Bianca: 2004, 80).

The AKTC also opposes the relocation of residents and workshops, choosing instead to take on the training of local craftsmen in the traditional arts of carpentry and stonework (Jodidio: 2004, 235).

Historically, housing and work spaces have advanced onto derelict properties, including historic buildings. The idea of clearing these encroachments from monuments became popular and codified in Egyptian Antiquities Law. The outcome was the belief that all monuments should be free-standing, isolated structures, resulting in the mass demolition of buildings adjacent to any buildings deemed to have historic value – despite the fact the architectural tradition of the area was based on high urban density (El Rashidi: 2004, 62).

Planning schemes over the last century have been developed by government officials unfamiliar with the value of historic urban environments. Conservation policies

favoured single monument conservation over the protection of the broader urban cityscape, resulting in haphazard street-widening programs, and the destruction of the traditional urban fabric, something El Rashidi (2004, 62) calls "a text-book example of 1960s planning ideology."

Building codes required that new construction be "sympathetic to the architectural traditions of historic Cairo" (El-Rashidi: 2004, 63). Unfortunately, this has been interpreted to mean the incorporation of Islamic-esque elements, such as superficial arches and stuccowork.

Bianca (2004, 71) explains that the shortcomings of heritage planning in Islamic Cairo revolve around an embrace of Western planning procedures by the administration. He indicates that these models are poorly equipped to deal with the problems of the old city, block the traditional self-management of local communities, and dissolve contextual values.

Western Modernist ideals of how a city should look and function prevail, making the decline of Islamic cities at times more a psychological than a physical problem. A mood has developed of disinvestment and distrust amongst residents – who feel constantly threatened by impending demolition and displacement from their homes and livelihoods (Bianca: 2004, 72).

The AKTC's next steps in the fulfillment of their strategic objectives in Islamic Cairo include the restoration of the Khayrbek complex (including the thirteenth-century palace of Alin Aq, Khayrbek Mosque and sabil-kuttab, two Ottoman houses, and surrounding open space); restoration of Umm al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque; and the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the former Shoughlan Street School (Siravo: 2004,

189). These developments will be undertaken through special agreements between the AKTC and the SCA, with completion scheduled for 2014.

3.5 Summary

In summary, the case studies exemplify the disparate approaches being taken towards heritage conservation within the Islamic Cairo area.

The HCRP's reliance on single monument conservation does not address broader socio-economic and infrastructure issues, while the AKTC focuses more so on these broader issues, with a lower priority on traditional monument restoration. The objectives of the AKTC raise valid concerns about the long-term maintenance of the buildings in question and the cityscape in general, and thereby promotes the adaptive re-use of structures. On the other hand, buildings restored by the HCRP are used as tourist sites or are locked up in an attempt to prevent further damage through public use.

It is evident from this comparison that the HCRP has attempted to create a 'tourist-historic' city, even though the potential tourism market in Islamic Cairo is limited. It also ignores the needs of local residents, in direct contrast to what Sandercock describes as an integrated planning approach that incorporates community participation and empowerment (see Chapter Two). On the other hand, the AKTC has embraced the incorporation of the community in its planning activities, and uses local residents as a resource for the adaptive re-use and long-term maintenance of historic assets.

The definition of heritage adopted by these groups and the motivations for conservation are also controversial. The HCRP focuses on the Egyptian government's definition of what constitutes Cairene and Islamic heritage, and many feel that the

motivation for the introduction of the HCRP has more to do with economic benefit than conserving the built heritage. Also, no broader vision for the area has been addressed, and conservation programming varies widely based on the organization undertaking specific projects. But experts both foreign and local feel that the conservation work is in direct contravention with international conservation policy, such as the Venice Charter. They also question the authenticity of approaches taken by groups like the Bohra, who transpose their own heritage and beliefs in the recreation of monuments.

In Chapter Four, conservation programming for the Islamic City is addressed directly, and the tensions that this creates when western planning notions are introduced are explored. Also discussed are the other factors that create tensions within conservation planning programs, such as tourism, terrorism and the infrastructure and accessibility issues that plague the Islamic Cairo area.

Chapter Four – Further Challenges

"The past, being over and done with, now falls prey to our invention."

Boyer: 1994, 6

4.1 The Islamic City

Islamism is described not as a style, but as a governance of organization, growth and production (Abdelhalim: 1985, 46). A number of forces served to shape the traditional Islamic City – in addition to terrain and climate, which were inherent to the North African and Middle Eastern regions – specifically production technology, distribution, transportation, social organization, and a distinct legal/political system (Abu-Lughod: 1993, 19).

The political system of management of Islamic cities was highly centralized. Local initiatives, such as the system of *waqf*, were developed to attend to the needs of residents (Amirahmadi: 1993, 7).

Especially significant was the impact of social order, based on family, ethnicity and beliefs. Islam's encouragement of gender segregation required a spatial division of functions and places on the basis of gender, and a means by which to screen them (Abu-Lughod: 1993, 20). Autonomous neighbourhoods were also organized on the basis of religious affiliation, family units, and ethnic origin. As a result, land-use separation of homes, workshops, and commercial outlets was virtually non-existent, as autonomy required self-sufficiency (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 64).

Abu-Lughod (1971, 64) describes in detail the form that these autonomous neighbourhoods took:

> "The city of Cairo was divided into 53 *harat* [quarters], each of which in turn consisted of several *durub* [alleys], i.e. perhaps 30 dwellings grouped around common access alleys which were barricaded nightly. In the more

commercialized sections of the city, each *darb* or group of *durub* was
devoted to a particular craft or product. Not only were goods produced and
sold there, but, in addition, residing there were some of the individuals
involved in production and distribution. Hence, the same unit might
contain the luxurious home of a prosperous merchant, the humbler but still
substantial dwelling of the master craftsman, and poorer quarters for
apprentices, porters, unskilled labourers, and menials. Within the same
unit were shops and dwellings for small tradesmen catering to the needs of
residents, at least one coffee shop for recreation, and in the larger units a
public bath, a small mosque with an associated *kuttab* (Koran school),
possibly a meeting hall, and warehouses and inns for the convenience of
visiting merchants."

The most visible spatial formations in the Islamic City are the court complex, the

mosque-madrasa, the bazaar, semi-private spaces, and introverted houses (Amirahmadi:

1993, 3).

The architecture of the Islamic City is also a distinctive element. The tenets of

Islam forbid representational art, and as a result, builders traditionally resorted to

decoration to enhance buildings. This decoration includes the use of calligraphy,

geometry and foliation, which covers the structure in geometric patterns in a variety of

materials. Colour and the use of texture are also devices of Islamic architecture, as are

floral motifs, scroll patterns and endless-line arabesques (Antoniou: 1981, 22-23).

Design solutions were thus embedded within the context of local cultures and

Islamic values (Amirahmadi: 1993, 1).

Abu-Lughod cautions that Islamic structures become retrogressive if used as a

planning guideline for contemporary life (Amirahmadi: 1993, 6). She indicates that

planners try to re-create these Islamic cities, neglecting to realize that as a process rather

than a product, Islamic cities provide a poor model for day-to-day operations. The impact

on conservation, the success of which is highly dependent upon maintenance, is

especially detrimental (Abu-Lughod: 1993, 31).

Westernization, Modernity and the Struggle for an Egyptian identity

Historically, although Cairo had had a successive string of foreign leaders, it had developed a strong Islamic identity. It wasn't until the last decade of the Ottoman era under Mohammad Ali, and his attempts to westernize the nation, that an identity conflict emerged (Abdelhalim: 1985, 46).

Amirahmadi (1993, 3) writes that "the process of "creative destruction" associated with the institutions of modernity has generated disjuncture and discontinuity in Islamic societies, leading to a deep sense of civilizational shock among a number of social groups." Modern institutions – capitalism, industrialization, administrative rationalization – have created a spatial crisis within traditional Muslim urban forms. Amirahmadi adds that "an important factor contributing to this crisis has been the inability of planners to integrate the sociospatial, political and economic institutions of modernity into local structures. Furthermore, planners have failed to generate a creative dialogue between the modernist and traditionalist visions of the city" (1993, 1).

Amin (2000, 45) explains that one of the failings of all post-revolution Egyptian governments was their "lack of an original vision of how Egypt's cultural revival would develop." He adds that the leaders of the revolution could not rid themselves of the western conceptions of "progress" and "modernity."

Amin cites the case of Nasser's modernization of Al-Azhar, a prestigious educational and religious institution where teaching methods varied greatly from Western models. However, Nasser's revolutionary government transformed Al-Azhar into a replica of the modern national universities – including subjects such as medicine, agriculture, and economics in addition to traditional teachings in Islamic law, theology

and classical Arabic. The appointed deans had western educations. As Amin describes, "Instead of graduating students who were proud of their heritage but able to reinterpret it in the light of contemporary needs, it brought together students who suffered from an inferiority complex because of their inability to reconcile the old religious teachings with the modern sciences (Amin: 2000, 48)."

What Amin describes is symptomatic of the state's handling of the nation's heritage in general. The drive for westernization, be it in education or architecture, has caused a mass neglect of incorporating Egypt's own heritage into a vision for the modern age. After Nasser's death, the trend towards westernization increased under Anwar Sadat, who held an open fascination with western technology and styles of living (Amin: 2000, 51).

The result was the creation of a modern Cairo based on the models of Houston and Los Angeles in the United States (Ghannam: 2002, 28). The unmistakable symbols of the modern era, namely "international" architecture, modern transportation systems, shantytowns and squatter settlements, industrial complexes, and informal markets materialized (Amirahmadi: 1993, 1). Sadat even began a campaign to create 'productive citizens' by relocating lower class groups to modern housing in satellite cities (Ghannam: 2002, 2).

Under the presidency of Hosni Mubarak, and specifically in the 1990s, the nation-building project had changed both context and orientation. New agents had emerged, including UNESCO, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development and international tour operators and tourists, all of whom claimed to have a stake in the development of a national Egyptian heritage (Mitchell: 2001, 222).

Mitchell (2001, 212) writes that "one of the odd things about the arrival of the era of the modern nation-state was that for a state to prove it was modern, it helped if it could also prove it was ancient. A nation that wanted to show it as up to date and deserved a place among the company of modern states needed, among other things, to produce a past."

The result of the nation-building project has been the introduction of the Historic Cairo Planning Program, which has been criticized for creating a living museum for display to Western tourists and for displacing the homes and businesses of locals.

Municipal Administration and Planning

Administrative functions in Cairo have historically been dominated by the national government, and have been notoriously corrupt and inefficient. Municipal planning and management has thus been highly fragmented with no overseeing entity concerned with the long-term implementation of community goals (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 151). In fact, an independent municipal government for Cairo was not created until 1949 (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 79).

The Planning Department that was formed lacked any official power, although by 1965 a building code and a law governing land subdivision were put in place. Also enacted was an architectural control ordinance to preserve the historic character of Islamic Cairo (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 228).

The Planning Department faces several issues in the management of Cairo's new construction and existing buildings. First, the rapid growth of the population makes it difficult, if not impossible, to create or implement master plans, zoning and subdivision laws. Informal structures are common. This is one of the largest problems faced by the

Planning Department, and it is rampant both with city dwellers and with other governmental departments. In the city's centre, the worst offender for commencing construction prior to approval was the Ministry of Tourism, which began construction of tourist accommodations to promote the industry without consulting the Planning Department (Abu-Lughod: 1971, 229).

The fragmentation of the administrative system is another major impediment to the Planning Department. Most historic buildings are owned by the Ministry of Awqaf, and others have been turned over to the Ministry of Education. Maintenance and restoration is the responsibility of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, which is also responsible for all of the nation's heritage assets, including its Pharaonic sites. Additional authority lies with the Cairo Governorate, Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Public Works, the Ministry of Traffic, and numerous utility services (Schreur: 1999, 18). Departments are a mixture of national and municipal government levels, making coordination exceedingly difficult.

Religion

In recent years, a resurgence in Islam has intensified. While the rest of the world becomes more secular, in Egypt "a growing number of Mosques are being built literally within yards of each other. The amount of women who are wearing *hejabs* increases daily, while younger generations absorb religion at an alarming rate. Ironically, the rest of the world is becoming less and less concerned with religion" (Ibrahim: 2005).

Ghannam (2002, 118) describes the role of religion in Cairo as:

"a powerful discourse in articulating and socially grounding the various identities: displaced families... rural immigrants, *Fallahin* (peasants who

come from various villages in Lower Egypt) and *Sa'ides* (immigrants from different areas in Upper Egypt), who are largely pushed from their villages to Cairo in their search for work and a better life, as well as residents who have moved from other areas of Cairo, can all find commonality in religion."

This religious intensification has resulted from two factors – firstly, waning economics, especially in the tourism industry after September 11, 2001, and secondly, a feeling of lack of belonging amongst those who are new to the city (Ghannam: 2002, 167-168). The resulting frustrations have left Cairenes with a feeling of hopelessness, and thus vulnerable to "radical speakers who preach of attacks against Islam" (Ibrahim: 2005).

This renewal of faith may also prove to result in a renewal of interest in the Islamic heritage. Leading Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, led the challenge to the Egyptian government to pay attention to the country's Islamic heritage following the 1992 earthquake (Schreur: 1999, 18). With growing influence over the religious communities of Cairo, these could potentially be the groups that define a popular definition of Islamic Cairene heritage.

4.2 Tourism

Tourism is Egypt's highest foreign currency earner. In 2000, 5.5 million foreign tourists spent $4.3 billion in revenue, representing 11.3% of Egypt's GDP. An informal survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture estimated that the daily ticket intake from all sites in Egypt was approximately £E3 million (Williams: 2002b, 459).

Tourist sites charge additional fees for the use of cameras, video recorders, and for presentation permission. In addition, tourist visa fees and the 22% tax on tourist-related services is also collected and applied to national expenditures.

Most monuments in Islamic Cairo are not on the tour circuit (i.e. monuments are not included amongst the site visits provided by most tour providers). Within and around the Islamic Cairo area, only the Citadel (the fortress compound located to the southeast of the area) and the Khan al-Khalili bazaar (a major shopping district in traditional souk style) are typically visited. This may be because of accessibility issues and the state of disrepair of monuments. Also, given the short duration of most tours of Egypt, scheduling preference is given to visiting Pharaonic monuments.

In a country that is rich with historic sites, many of which are of the Pharaonic era (a major draw to international tourists), it is important to determine what market would be interested in an extensive visit to Islamic monuments. From personal experience and through the literature review, it would seem that the area would appeal to those with a strong interest in historic architecture or those interested in the area for religious reasons. The character of the area and the traditional ways of life in Islamic Cairo lead the historic district to appear as it would have centuries ago. Traditional souks and craft markets are a draw to both locals and tourists, and the conglomeration of mosques makes it a religious hub of the greater Cairo area.

There is a great deal of criticism from the international community and from the media regarding a fear of the sterilization of the environment in an attempt to create an "open-air museum." The area, however, has not been sterilized, and can be daunting to both tourists and locals. There are obvious issues with regards to infrastructure, lack of

signage, pollution, poor service provision, deficient garbage collection and low housing quality. Residents themselves express concern with their health and quality of life.

Egyptians have mastered the art of packaging and selling "Egypt," contradicting the image of locals as passive and guileless (Nasr: 2003, xii). There are systems of commission in place for Egyptologists, tour providers, and runners, who recommend certain shops to visitors and then make a profit on the purchases. Pharaonic names and history are exploited by modern Egyptians, who know enough about ancient Egyptian history to dazzle tourists.

There is no overt promotion of Islamic heritage to outsiders. It is not sold in trinkets as are ancient Egyptian items. There are no books on the subject available in a variety of languages for the visitor to peruse back in his/her home country. Tour givers are hesitant to discuss the Islamic religion before the topic is brought up by the tourist. As a result, an overabundance of pharaonic history in the Islamic surroundings gives the area an inauthentic feeling.

Few accommodations and services are available to tourists in Islamic Cairo, such as hotels, restaurants, information centres, etc. In fact, the Lonely Planet guide (2002) could only recommend one hotel in the area.

Monuments are very difficult to find, and when they are located, they are often locked up or in a state of disrepair and/or construction. Local residents and business owners are able to offer little information. The information one receives is either inconsistent, or locals are entirely unaware of a monument's existence.

Ongoing maintenance of conserved historic structures is necessary to ensure that a building never again falls into a state that compromises either its structural integrity or its

architectural elements. The high cost of undertaking conservation and restoration projects on a massive scale is in large part due to the condition that a building has been allowed to fall into over a long period of neglect.

Although maintenance prevents the need for large sums of capital to undertake conservation work, ongoing maintenance does require money to employ staff and fund repairs as needed. Structures thus require an independent flow of income in order to ensure that maintenance can be subsidized.

4.3 Sustainability

4.3.1 Maintenance and Management Programming

Conservation programming can be ascribed to two driving forces in Cairo: firstly, the derelict conditions of much of the area, coupled with an earthquake in 1992, have left many of the monuments in a state of structural and architectural instability; secondly, the demand for tourism has been recognized as a vital industry to the national economy and as such the monuments have been seen as potential economic earners.

The conservation being undertaken by the Aga Khan agency for this project has been geared towards the adaptive re-use of buildings. The government's Historic Cairo Restoration Program can be described as being at the opposite end of the spectrum, undertaking instead the restoration of monuments such that their use is limited. Because of the growth pressures on Islamic Cairo, the use of buildings solely for the purpose of study and visitation is uneconomical and unsustainable.

Development of an appropriate and long term management mechanism is vital to the long-term sustainability of the conservation efforts. This includes an identification of

values, long-term planning, on-going enhancement, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation. Special considerations must also be given if tourism is a factor in the viability of the monument, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✤ restricting access to certain areas;

- ✤ restricting group numbers;

- ✤ closing and securing certain areas of a site to prevent entry, vandalism and theft;

- ✤ increasing fees or charging different fees at different times/seasons;

- ✤ instituting zoning in areas at risk;

- ✤ moving threatening activities away from monuments (i.e. industrial activities); zoning for compatible activities;

- ✤ monitoring visitor activities at all times; and

- ✤ protecting monuments from pollution.

In Islamic Cairo, there are two additional means by which conserved buildings may be maintained over the long-term. The first is to consider the re-use of these buildings for the same or new activities. The second is to address the contextual issues, such as infrastructure, that have plagued the monuments of Islamic Cairo and have contributed to their deterioration. These two items are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.2 Adaptive Re-Use of Historic Buildings

Figure 2. Adaptive re-use of former wikala for shops and housing. (Source: L. Sveinson, 2005).

In an area with a population density as high as Islamic Cairo's, it is not feasible to consider conserving buildings designated "historic," and attempting to keep them unoccupied for perpetuity. Not only do population pressures not allow for it, buildings not in use will fall back into disrepair, creating an ongoing and expensive cycle of conservation work. One way (suggested by numerous professionals in the field and by critics of the Islamic Cairo planning initiatives) to maintain historic buildings in the long-term is through adaptive re-use of the structures.

Saleh Lamei, director of the Centre for Conservation and Preservation of Islamic Architectural Heritage, says that the adaptive re-use of the monuments themselves can be a good way to get people involved and interested in their history. According to an article in the Cairo Times, "he praised the Ministry of Culture's decision to rehabilitate the Zeinab Khatoun house by transforming it into a cultural center. But too often, he says, the option of adaptive re-use is not considered by Egyptian authorities. 'People aren't used to this idea yet, and government officials are usually wary of opening buildings to the public or turning them over to public uses' (McClure: 1999)."

Lamei also notes that other countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa have been successful in reusing historic buildings for reconceived purposes. He states that "Turkey and Tunisia have had some success farming their Islamic monuments out for carefully monitored commercial uses. Syria has also begun to explore the

possibilities of adaptive re-use; a current project in Damascus aims to utilize a medieval wikala (inn) as a hotel. In Istanbul, sabils have been a major focus for conservation through integration into urban life. The city abounds with Ottoman sabils, many of which have been restored and are now rented out to businesses. And history [has] come full circle – some sabils, appropriately enough, are being used for distributing water" (MacDonald: 1999; Schreur: 1999).

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture's programming in Islamic Cairo has specifically targeted the rehabilitation of historic structures for new purposes, including incorporating modern technologies where appropriate. However, the Historic Cairo Restoration Program has not considered long-term maintenance and use of structures, and as such, numerous completed restoration projects sit with chained and locked doors today.

Historic building re-use can serve two purposes in Islamic Cairo, and as such serve the objectives of both the HCRP and the AKTC. Firstly, historic buildings can be adapted to house the residents and businesses of Islamic Cairo. Wikalas specifically are suited to this purpose, with former stables and bays on the ground floor ideal for shops and upper floors suited for housing. This sort of conversion is visible in some buildings scattered throughout the area. Secondly, some historic buildings can be made more viable by being re-used for services and accommodations for the benefit of both tourists and locals. This action would serve to boost both employment and spending in the area, and would improve the appeal of the area as a tourist destination.

Additional uses as cited by the AKTC (El Safty: 1998, 109) can include: workshops for manufacture, support services such as cafeterias, restaurants, and convenience shops catering to the average tourist at reasonable cost.

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4.4 Contextual Issues and Accessibility

Sewer & Water

Sewer and water infrastructure are a major impediment to both the conservation

of buildings in the area and the urban development of the neighbourhoods. Many

residences are not connected to the water system, and an inadequate sewer system has

created leaching issues into the ground water table. The result has been that this waste

material is absorbed into the foundations of historic buildings.

Although numerous advisory reports from foreign experts called for sewers to be

installed and/or repaired in Islamic Cairo, the Egyptian government largely ignored the

recommendation (Tung: 2001, 121). This was exacerbated by the inability of the local

population to operate rudimentary plumbing (Tung: 2001, 124).

The pictures below show sewer work being conducted on a major thoroughfare in

the Khan al-Khalili bazaar. In order to by-pass the construction, one must walk across

planks that cover the hole in the ground.

Figures 3 & 4. Sewer repair work being undertaken on major pedestrian route in Khan al-Khalili
bazaar. (Source: L. Sveinson, 2005.)

Waste Removal

Garbage is a serious problem in

Islamic Cairo. There is no garbage

collection in most of the area and, as a

result, residents and business owners dump

waste into the street or in vacant lots.

Figures 5 & 6. Garbage and rubble accumulation surrounding Islamic Cairo buildings. (Source: L. Sveinson, 2005).

Serious health issues have arisen as a

result. As well, the garbage has become a fire-hazard to nearby monuments and

businesses.

Additionally, when buildings in the area collapse (which is a frequent occurrence

in Cairo), the rubble is not cleared away. This is aesthetically unappealing, and poses a

serious safety threat to the public. Fires in the area are not uncommon. It also detracts

from conservation work and limits the ability of local residents and business owners to

use the lots for construction of new buildings.

Drainage

Ground water and the soluble salts that it contains are the most damaging factors in stone decay (Abd El-Hady: 1993, 115). A lack of proper drainage in the area and a high water table have caused stone foundations to absorb a great deal of water, and have also irreparably damaged public roads.
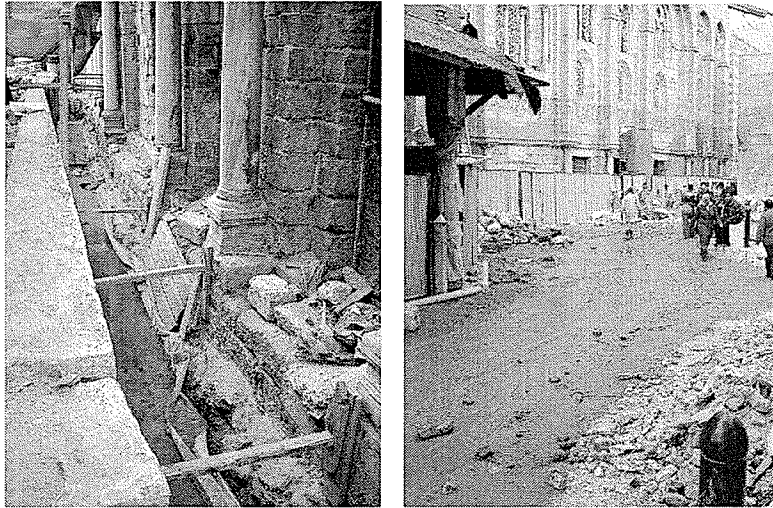

Figure 7 (above). Standing water on street. Figure 8 (below). Foundation exposure to groundwater. (Source: L. Sveinson, 2005)

This is an issue that has been a criticism of the HCRP numerous times, and to date has not been successfully addressed.

The majority of the problem is due to leaking pipes and sewers in a system overtaken by the influx of new residents; furthermore, this water, containing sewage and waste, is full of acids that also attack the masonry of the buildings. The Ministry of Utilities estimates the cost to be about £E300 million to re-do the pipes of historic Cairo.

Public Roads

The condition of public roads has been highly impacted by the drainage issues in the area. As well, modern traffic pressures have created deterioration in the historic quarters, on top of the impacts of industrial pollution from craft and manufacturing shops.
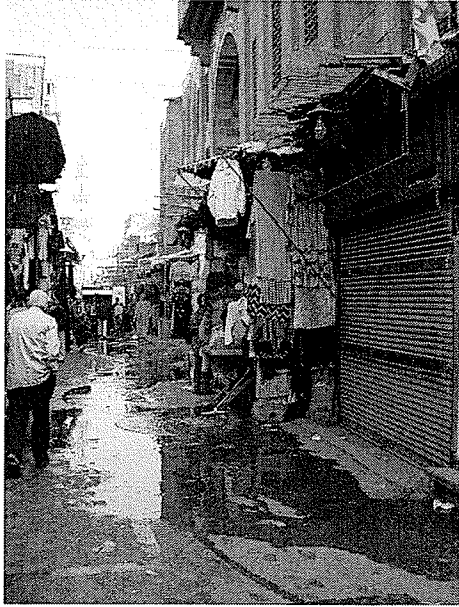
Figure 9. Poor road conditions, caused by drainage issues and traffic impacts.

Traffic Control & Access

In an effort to combat the deterioration of existing roads, in addition to the lack of room for most automobiles to pass, access to many side streets in Islamic Cairo is limited.

Tour buses are allowed to pull into the Al-Hussein Square where they may drop off tourists and then must immediately leave the area. While this has reduced traffic in the highly fragile areas of Islamic Cairo, it has also meant that most tourists on group tours are restricted to a small zone of the larger area.

Signage

Signage in Islamic Cairo is a major hindrance to tourists. Romanization of the Arabic language is inconsistent; therefore, there can be innumerable spellings of a word, or in this case, of a location, making it very difficult to find sites or to establish direction. Street signs are hard to locate, and many are not bilingual.

Figure 10. Signage at the historic site oriented towards tourists. (Source: L. Sveinson, 2005).

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Due to the medieval nature of the cityscape, entrances to buildings are often times concealed from main streets. In other cases, monuments are well demarcated, but as in the case below, the doors are locked and no further information about access is given.
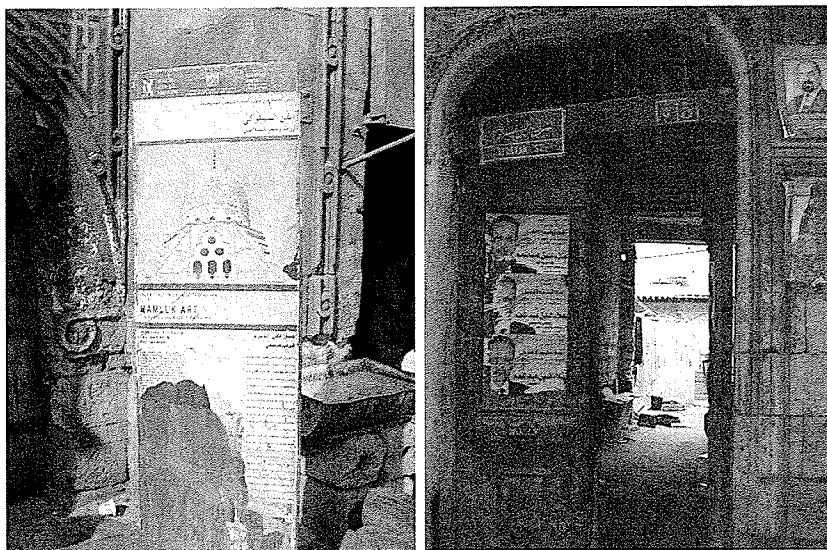
Figure 11 (left). Museum With No Frontier's signage at historic site in disrepair.
Figure 12 (right). Typical street signage in Islamic Cairo.
(Source: L. Sveinson, 2005).

Air Quality

In a recent report published by Yale and Columbia Universities, Egypt ranked 130 out of 133 countries in terms of air quality (IRIN: 2006). Air pollution plays a major role in the deterioration of buildings. (El Zaher: 1993, 100). The seriousness is heightened by the proximity of industrial uses to monument sites in Islamic Cairo.

4.5 Summary

As evidenced in Chapter Four, there are numerous additional challenges to conservation programming in Cairo. These challenges are not only physical in nature, but political motivations also challenge the very notions of Cairene heritage, identity and modernity. The city itself has been the focus of multiple initiatives seeking to mold or reinvent it to suit the vision of the current ruling faction. Current reinvention programs in Islamic Cairo also bring new challenges and tensions to an already complex planning dilemma

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in the Egyptian capital. In Chapter Five, I will describe how these challenges, combined with the broader tensions within the case study approaches, must be mitigated in order for sustainable conservation to occur.

Chapter Five – Conclusion

This final chapter summarizes the findings from the conservation case studies – the Historic Cairo Restoration Program and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture Historic Cities Support Programme. In this chapter, I examine the case studies in relation to the conceptual framework described in Chapter Two, highlight the implications for the role of the planner and for planning practice and propose suggestions for future research.

5.1 Findings from the Case Studies

A comparison of the case studies of the Historic Cairo Restoration Program (HCRP) and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme (AKTC) showed that the programs had few similarities, aside from their conservation focus in Islamic Cairo and the time period in which they were conducted.

The HCRP approach to conservation was geared towards single-monument projects, with no provisions for enhancing the larger community or for long-term planning. The AKTC, on the other hand, engaged an integrated approach to conservation, involving community members, using projects as catalysts for socio-cultural and economic benefits, and ensuring longer-term planning was in place.

Another difference between the two initiatives was the stance that the programs took on the issue of tourism. The HCRP endorsed the use of historic structures as tourist sites, and, as some would claim, sought to reinvent Islamic Cairo as a living museum. The AKTC, however, felt that the inclusion or promotion of tourism within the communities of Islamic Cairo would marginalize and alienate the population, and commodify the historic resources.

While the AKTC best reflects the conceptual framework presented here in terms of an integrated approach to conservation planning, it leaves no room for the integration of tourism in its objectives, and does not see tourism as a potential catalyst to further development and sustainability over the long-term.

The HCRP has no integrated planning, is negligent in ensuring the integrity and authenticity of both the monuments and the neighbourhoods as a whole, and has no long-term plan for the ongoing maintenance of the restored structures. While the program endorses the use of buildings as tourist sites, it does not present a clear plan of how these buildings should be used, and does not address the broader contextual issues which would hinder the development of tourism in the area.

Tensions in the Historic Cairo Restoration Program are evident: between the practices of local contractors versus the 'best practices' as defined by local experts and international policy; the practices of the nation in a top-down approach to governance versus the participation and empowerment of the local residents; administrative tensions between various government departments; and the pressures put upon the Egyptian government by international organizations.

Tensions in the Historic Cities Support Programme manifest between the top-down approach of national government versus the bottom-up, participatory approach adopted by the Aga Khan Trust; between the AKTC and the Ministry of Tourism, which has been supportive while pressing in the opposite direction. Also evident is the tensions in the objectives and motivations of the HCRP as opposed to those of the AKTC.

For both programs, there are also the physical tensions inflicted by the infrastructure and service problems; the impact of tourists on heritage sites and on local

residents; and the tensions between the desire for modernity and the attachment to the traditional.

5.2 A Rationale for Conservation in the Islamic City

It has been argued by Orbasli (2000) that the 'idealized' western model of conservation may not necessarily be relevant to non-western cultures or developing nations where:

- ✿ "sufficient funds and commitment are not available for urban conservation;

- ✿ political preferences and even corruption are unavoidable and can play a significant part in conservation and planning decisions;

- ✿ inhabitants are often unaware of 'historic value,' but desire better living conditions, modern amenities and services; and

- ✿ historic value may not be regarded with the same 'object'-based values as apply in the West."

In the absence of their own conservation model and conceptualization of what constitutes 'heritage,' Egyptians become susceptible to the involuntary adoption of Western models. These western ideals are prevalent throughout the practice of conservation in Egypt, as a result of the influx of Western organizations and specialists taking an interest in Cairene heritage.

Although concepts of 'heritage' and 'conservation' may be underdeveloped or disagreed upon by Egyptians, conservation, as opposed to preservation, is a good fit for Islamic Cairo for the following reasons:

1. Residents continue to live a traditional existence, with segregation based on gender, family unit and religious affiliation, and in terms of preindustrial forms of manufacturing and commercial enterprise.

2. Population and infrastructure pressures make adaptive re-use and rehabilitation a more logical choice than restoration in its purest sense.

3. A resurgence in the Islamic religion and nation-building exercises based on an Islamic platform give renewed value to the Islamic heritage.

4. Tourism is an unavoidable and profitable industry in Egypt. With an integrated planning approach which takes into account the needs of residents and principles of sustainable conservation, tourism development could occur without being detrimental to local communities.

In the case of Islamic Cairo, the role of the planner may be to help communities define what constitutes their own vision of 'heritage,' and from this find appropriate conservation models to implement it.

5.3 Implications for Planning Practice

Community acceptance of conservation practices depends greatly on the impact it has on local people. In the case of the HCRP, people have been removed to isolate single monuments for the purposes of conservation and tourism. As Saleh Lamei states, "We must awaken public awareness, which is zero right now, and we have to encourage people to take part in the conservation effort. The problem is that the government never asks the people about what it's doing." Lamei refers to the still-not-finalized plan to move residents and businesses in Medieval Cairo to other parts of the city to create an

"open air museum" in Fatimid Cairo. Although he feels strongly about the need to preserve the monuments, he says he sympathizes deeply with those who may be uprooted, with the loss of both their livelihood and their social ties: "With such treatment, people are going to hate the idea of heritage conservation. They will think heritage is an enemy because it has forced them out. They don't profit from it," he says. "Sometimes the authorities say, 'The people are illiterate, what can we do?' But the people should at least be engaged in the decision on some level" (McClure: 2000).

For conservation to be viable in Islamic Cairo, people must be invited to participate in the industry and in the planning process, and be integrated into its ongoing management. There needs to be a sense of stability for residents and business owners, who feel that they will be ejected from their property at any time. Little attention is therefore given to private property in the area because there is a sense of distrust and volatility, as people are unsure of their future within the community. In contrast, the creation of jobs both in conservation and the tourism industry and the influx of income into the neighbourhoods are other factors that can contribute to community acceptance (Pedersen: 2002, 34).

Incentives must also be given for the financing and construction of local services, including schools, clinics, and wells within the Islamic Cairo area.

The AKTC approach recognizes the importance of a sense of community and of the incorporation of traditional values in revitalization programming. Siravo (2004, 179) states that the AKTC's mandate is based on a "belief that synergy between physical improvement schemes and community development is essential for launching a genuine process of urban rehabilitation, capable of producing results that can become sustainable

and eventually independent of external inputs." The AKTC strategy sees preservation as part of a comprehensive approach, but feels that there is still a place for tourism development to be included amongst its key planning objectives.

This practicum further emphasizes the importance of an integrated planning approach, be it for conservation, tourism or other forms of planning. As has been shown, conservation cannot simply be directed at single monuments. There are overriding issues within the surrounding environment which can be detrimental or even totally negate work undertaken. Also, and specifically with Islamic Cairo, it is the cityscape as a whole that creates the area's ambience and historical integrity.

It also reinforces the need for community involvement in planning initiatives, and for capacity-building within communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of projects. Conservation projects require on-going management and maintenance, and involving the community in these activities is a way to minimize costs and to improve quality of life for residents.

Finally, the Islamic Cairo case study provides an interesting glimpse of international initiatives involving professionals from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The result reinforces the need for planning to address needs locally, but also proves that there are important contributions that can be made from outside experiences.

5.4 Mediating Tensions

While conservation becomes increasingly globalized, as Barthel describes (1996, 139), "through international conventions, meetings and conferences, and training programs and exchanges," the preference in current planning practice is to emphasize

local qualities and national diversity. She adds that "both trends reflect tensions within this emergent global professional culture as it works out contradictions within its own ideology and in its relationship with national political cultures (Barthel: 1996, 140)."

Jim Antoniou, a British architect and urban planner who has written numerous books on the conservation of Islamic cities and Cairo in particular, states that "ultimately, it is the role of Islamic architects and city planners to deal with the many facets of conservation in their own countries... It is not only morally right that Islamic architects should be involved in conservation projects in their own countries, but it is also right from a practical point of view, as proposals have to be implemented over a long period of time involving continuous monitoring and maintenance (Antoniou: 1981, 10)."

Nasr, however, feels that while planners and architects may arrive in a city with preconceived ideas, they often leave with a changed conception as a result of their experiences and interactions with locals (Nasr: 2003, xiii). These locals include a wide variety of stakeholders, from the elites of society to the most displaced urban poor.

Planning as it exists in Islamic cities has always attempted to impose order, rather than drawing on local experiences and encouraging public participation. Amirahmadi calls Islamic planning "at best an undefined field (1993, 8)." He sees it as imperative that planners in Islamic societies more fully engage their traditions, a lesson which can be taken from postmodern western planning ideals.

There are both pros and cons to being a foreigner. For example, as a foreigner, one's viewpoint is simpler and thus easily stated (Jackle: 1987, 9); what Janet Abu-Lughod (1971, v) refers to as seeing with "undulled eyes." Being an outsider presents the ability to break from local conventions, and the capacity to consider honestly, candidly

and completely the strategies and actions undertaken by locals (Nasr, 2003, xxx). It is also an opportunity to share with foreign cultures strategies and interventions that have been successful in similar situations, but in other parts of the world. On the reciprocal side, as a foreigner, one may be limited by language and custom, and may never be fully accepted or supported by local groups.

The tensions between Western and Islamic conservation practices will never be fully mitigated. That they are not is an indication that global heterogeneity continues to exist amongst cities and nations. It is my contention that the tensions that exist amongst local and foreign planners comes more from the definition of the planner's role and practice within a community than it does from cultural or ethnic difference.

The role of the planner is to serve as a conduit between residents, government, and organizations. It is to facilitate a holistic and integrated approach to planning, allowing the input of both foreign and local, elite and poor, government and NGO, to be of value and to provide multiple ways of knowing about a community, its heritage and its conservation. The role of the planner is to involve residents in the planning process, and to help decipher the important issues that need to be addressed. It is also to engage specialists to attend to the technical details, but to provide a process by which strategy may be implemented and a broader community vision achieved.

5.5 Directions for Further Study

One of the greatest limitations of this practicum has been in addressing the social aspect of integrated planning. Community involvement and capacity-building are vital to the ongoing viability of the planning initiatives presented here, and should be further addressed.

To date, there has not been an ethnographic study done in Islamic Cairo regarding the real impacts on residents from tourism activities and/or conservation activities. To truly understand the impact of commodification on communities, these studies should be conducted within the various neighbourhoods of Islamic Cairo.

A tourism development program is required for Islamic Cairo, if attracting tourism is going to be a focus of conservation efforts undertaken by the national government. This tourism program must address issues of sustainability, long-term maintenance, commodification, and authenticity, as well as being coordinated in conjunction with local residents and business owners.

Finally, Cairo at times faces serious security issues surrounding tourist sites. In what ways these threats can be better addressed is another topic for further study.

EPILOGUE

September 11, 2006

> "To the student of modern urbanism... Cairo presents primarily problems
> and an enormous challenge. Here admittedly is a city with pressing
> problems of land use chaos and inefficiencies, of human and vehicular
> congestion, of social disorder and poverty, striving vigorously to create a
> utopia. But here also is a complex city, a blend of old and new, of East and
> West, which must not be allowed to achieve its new order at the expense
> of its unique and poignant beauty nor its human warmth. The problem is
> one of balancing conservation and progress." (Abu-Lughod: 1971, v)

I presented my defense on September 11, 2006 - five years to the day that the idea

for this practicum first came to me. Cairo was an enormous challenge, as Janet Abu-

Lughod warned it would be.

While in Cairo, I asked numerous people how they felt about the presence of

foreigners in their communities, and the answer I received was always a variation on the

same theme – "we are a very friendly people; we love to make new friends and to

socialize with people from all over the world; everyone is welcome here." The sense of

community pride was pervasive; even in the poorest medieval alleys, I was greeted with

an enthusiastic "Welcome to Cairo!" Hospitality is characteristic of Cairene life, and

when in Cairo, you are compelled to acquiesce. When brought mint tea, you cannot say

"No, thank you." A helpful Cairene is always on hand to lean over and whisper, "Please,

you cannot refuse. This is our way." As a planner and an outsider, it was a comfort and

an inspiration.

"The historic city remains the crumbling core of the largest city in Africa. Yet, literally hundreds of impressive monuments still remain standing along the thoroughfares, although many have already been lost. Here, liveliness, charm and a rich variety of visual delights are available to the visitor. With its medieval flavour, the historic city remains a place where local people take part as characters in a never-ending novel by Egypt's famous novelist, Naguib Mahfouz. Here, are found noisy children from a nearby school, black-clad women shuffling to and fro, mean in rumpled galabiyyas making exaggerated gestures and pretty girls smiling shyly down from broken mashrabiyya windows. Sadly, in Europe's historic cities, similar scenes have long since been 'restored' through gentrified facades and smart boutiques. But a walk through Cairo's medieval core can be the same exhilarating experience it must have been centuries ago."

Antoniou: 1998, 41

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