

EXCLUS
SIONARY
PLANNING ON EGYPT'S
NORTHWEST COAST

THE CASE OF **MARASSI** BY THE
DUBAI-BASED DEVELOPER **EMAAR**

SUPERVISOR **DAVIDE PONZINI**
THESIS BY **MAHA MANSY**



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

School of Architecture Urban Planning and Construction Engineering
Master of Science in Urban Planning and Policy Design

**Exclusionary Planning on Egypt's Northwest Coast:
The Case of Marassi by the Dubai-based Developer Emaar**

Supervisor: **Professor Davide PONZINI**

Thesis by: **Maha MANSY**

ID Code: 10611717

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Abstract

The ever-increasing population in Egypt's Nile valley and delta has generated a need to urbanize elsewhere- i.e. desert lands, in order to lower the density and avoid the negative consequences that have been arising as a result of this overcrowding. One of the main locations in which this strategy has been taking place is the Northwest Coast. After the public sector initiated by constructing three pilot projects that act as examples (Marakia, Marabella and Marina), the private sector has been erecting walls of more and more privatized coastal touristic villages ever since. This process is still ongoing today, quickly using up the space along the Mediterranean, leaving none for public beaches nor public parks. This leapfrogging of privatized touristic villages used for domestic tourism has resulted in urban segregation that has become unstoppable. Therefore, this research seeks to study this phenomenon, critically analyzing the reasons behind this ongoing exclusionary planning approach and the overall evolution of the coast.

The case study that this research will focus on is the touristic village of Marassi. Marassi was developed by Emaar, the worldwide renowned Dubai-based developer. Emaar's choice of Marassi's prime location and other unique features render it a case that could be further investigated, in order to comprehend the importance of the coast and whether or not the involvement of a foreign investor such as Emaar has made this specific village more exclusionary or not than its surroundings. Also, the contrast with the context is evident and therefore comparing Marassi to Marina (the largest village by the public sector) is a prominent part of the research. This aims at explaining how Emaar has affected the success of Marassi and simultaneously, how exclusionary this new development has become. Furthermore, a general understanding of how the planning processes in the Northwest Coast have instigated exclusionary planning, leading to the current situation will also be explored.

The research's conclusions confirm that the ways in which a foreign developer such as Emaar operates is definitely the main reason why Marassi tends to stand out amongst its surrounding villages as well as ensure its survival as a more 'exclusive trend' even when other projects are completed further along the coast; including the completion of the Alamein New City currently under construction.

Riassunto

La popolazione crescente nel delta e nella valle del Nilo ha spinto a urbanizzare terre desertiche, al fine di ridurre la densità ed evitare eccessive densità e sovraffollamento. Una delle principali località in cui si è concentrata questa strategia è la costa nord-occidentale d’Egitto. Dopo che il settore pubblico ha avviato la costruzione di tre progetti pilota (Marakia, Marabella e Marina), il settore privato ha sviluppato villaggi turistici costieri sempre più isolati e privatizzati. Questo processo è ancora in corso e sta utilizzando rapidamente lo spazio lungo il Mediterraneo, senza lasciare aree destinate a spiagge pubbliche o parchi pubblici. Questo modello per villaggi turistici privatizzati per il turismo interno ha portato alla segregazione urbana che è diventata preponderante. Questa ricerca studia questo fenomeno, analizzando criticamente le ragioni di questo approccio di pianificazione esclusiva e l'evoluzione complessiva della costa.

Il caso di studio su cui si concentrerà questa ricerca è il villaggio turistico di Marassi. Marassi è stato sviluppato dal noto developer Emaar di Dubai. La scelta di Emaar della posizione privilegiata di Marassi e di altre caratteristiche uniche del sito rendono il caso interessante per comprendere l'importanza della costa e il coinvolgimento di un investitore straniero come Emaar e per valutare se questo ha reso questo villaggio specifico più esclusivo o meno rispetto ad altri circostanti. Inoltre, il contrasto con il contesto è evidente e quindi il confronto tra Marassi e Marina (il più grande villaggio del settore pubblico) è una parte importante della ricerca. Questo mira a spiegare come Emaar ha influenzato il successo di Marassi e contemporaneamente programmato l'esclusione in questo villaggio. Questo sarà inquadrato come parte dei processi di pianificazione nella costa nord-occidentale e come questi abbiano di fatto indotto effetti di esclusione di vario tipo, portando alla situazione attuale.

Le conclusioni della ricerca confermano che il modo in cui un developer straniero come Emaar opera è sicuramente il motivo principale per cui Marassi tende a distinguersi tra i suoi villaggi circostanti e garantire la sua profittabilità come luogo "esclusivo". L’analisi mostra come l’esclusione sia modulata tra luoghi aperti al pubblico o più isolati, nella prospettiva di sviluppo della costa e dei nuovi insediamenti di Alamein.

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List of abbreviations

ANC- Alamein New City

CAPMAS- Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

EGP- Egyptian Pound

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

MOR- Ministry of Reconstruction

MOT- Ministry of Tourism

NWC- Northwest Coast

01 | INTRODUCTION

01 Introduction

1.1 An overview regarding the evolvement of Egypt's Northwest Coast

Exclusionary planning has characterized all of the developments on Egypt's Northwest Coast (NWC) since the 1980s. It initiated by the 3 pilot projects (Marakia, Marabella and Marina) developed by the public sector to set an example, followed by the private sectors' leapfrog developments that have consumed the coast ever since, completely neglecting the informal sprawl of the hinterland where the locals (Bedouins) live as well as context and identity. Finally, this approach is currently undergoing completion by an even bigger plan to construct the Alamein New City (ANC) that so far has had the reputation of being anything but inclusive since it is unaffordable, attracting only the elite (mainly foreigners), who can afford a millions of Egyptian pounds worth apartment in extravagant towers along the coast that are characterized by imported architecture- setting the context aside. This project is one of several projects currently under construction in order to attract people out of the overcrowding Nile valley. The population of Egypt in 2019 was 100,388,073 (Worldometer, 2020). 96% of the population live on only 4% of Egypt's total area, along the Nile Valley and Delta. Moreover, in this case it is crucial to create a city that can be inhabited throughout the year instead of acting merely as holiday homes that are not used for more than a total of 2-3 months of the year like the rest of the coast. The reasons behind the privatization of the coast and the leapfrogging that is continuously taking place will be explored and discussed.

The walls of the gated communities in the NWC have been erecting since the 1980s when the first projects promoting the idea of holiday homes were constructed. They have generated urban segregation and made the beach entirely exclusive, resulting in social inequality and a lack of public life. Only those who can afford buying a residential unit in one of those villages (Egyptians refer to these gated communities/compounds on the coast as villages) may enjoy the Mediterranean's sandy beaches. There is absolutely no

harmony among the gated communities, if the walls were to be removed, they would still be completely spatially separated.

One of the current most distinctive 'villages' is Marassi. It is going to be used as a case study to dig deeper into how these villages function and both why and how a foreign investor has decided to develop such an area. The factors that have rendered Marassi so special amongst its neighbouring villages will also be discussed in order to fully comprehend the reason behind the success and popularity of this development. How is the market affecting the production of such projects and therefore attracting foreign investors such as the renowned Dubai-based developer, Emaar, to such locations? This thesis also examines whether or not Emaar makes this development more or less exclusionary compared to the rest of the coast.

Research questions: exploring the North Coast through two different scales

- General question: How have planning processes instigated exclusionary planning on Egypt's Northwest Coast?
- Specific question: Does the presence of a foreign investor (Emaar) make Marassi more exclusionary than the rest of the coastal villages on the Northwest Coast?

1.2 Case study methodology used to understand exclusionary planning of a new coastal development

Firstly, in order to fully grasp how the NWC region emerged, a deeper understanding of how it all started was necessary. The main source used in order to obtain this information was through Amr Attia's PhD thesis completed in 1999. Even though it may seem slightly outdated, yet it has been a very beneficial document that has helped illustrate the full timeline of how and when the NWC came about as well as all the events involved since the planning of this region started. This research therefore aims to briefly fill the 21-year gap by explaining how the NWC has evolved over the years and most importantly, describing its current situation.

Secondly, this study aims to understand how 'exclusionary' planning was instigated in the NWC and simultaneously, whether or not the presence of a foreign investor impacts how

exclusionary a specific 'village' would be as well as understanding the link between the effect the larger scale has on the smaller one. While the regional scale is used to investigate the history and emergence of the planning and constructing of the NWC, the smaller scale is used to determine a more detailed insight on how these villages function today, using Marassi as a case study. Marassi was chosen since it is the only village developed by a foreign investor on the whole coast. Also, the developer being Emaar makes it more distinctive as is it considered to be one of the most 'trendy' villages on the coast today.

Moreover, the research aims to discuss the causes and consequences of planning and policy decisions in the NWC that have resulted in it becoming an exclusionary region as a whole, as well as why key objectives have failed in translating into practice. Afterwards, an insight on the scale of the village aims to explore how exclusionary a specific case study is compared to the rest of the coast and understanding the socioeconomic factors involved. Finally, the research will conclude with a set of recommendations of policies that may improve the current situation and state of the NWC.

In addition, fieldwork has been a crucial part of the research. This is due to the lack of information available online concerning Marassi, the case study. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews held with Emaar employees in Cairo were where the majority of information for the case-study came from. Without this primary resource of information, the research would have probably been impossible to complete. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain as much information as possible about Marassi- understanding both the project itself as well as the decision making processes concerning how such a huge development company functions. The opportunity to arrange these meetings arose from personal contacts. Also, accompanying the meetings, a visit to the site was extremely fruitful since it has helped gain a clear understanding of the region and especially Marassi in specific. This first-hand experience has contributed to an unbiased study that aims at clarifying more details concerning the project that otherwise would have not been obtained. Moreover, a survey has been carried out using a questionnaire targeting users (17 people among both owners and renters) of both Marassi and Marina

(the main case-study as well as the largest pilot project developed by the public sector that will be used for comparison purposes). The target was to test accuracy by checking for consistency between all the different sources of information in order to ensure a reliable product was achieved- only consistent information was used, neglecting the mismatches.

Overall, primary sources were the semi-structured interviews with Emaar employees (see appendix A) and questionnaires taken by owners and renters in the NWC. The secondary resources comprised the relevant published information. In addition, direct observation and photography during the site visit were valuable especially when no other sources were available to obtain certain pieces of information and provided a better understanding of the existing physical environment.

1.3 What is exclusionary planning?

‘Exclusionary’ in the Cambridge dictionary is defined as “causing someone or something not to be allowed to take part in an activity or to enter a place” (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2020). “Planning is control by the local government of the way that land is used in an area and of what new buildings are built there” (Collins Dictionary, 2020). This research will refer to any planning approach that functions via the exclusion of certain groups of people as ‘exclusionary planning’. A form of exclusionary planning would definitely be the so-called ‘exclusionary zoning’. Exclusionary zoning is defined as “a residential zoning plan whose requirements (as minimum lot size and house size) have the effect of excluding low-income residents” in the dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Another definition is that exclusionary zoning is a “policy that keeps affordable housing out of neighborhoods through land use and building code requirements. It’s a legal practice that has been used for decades to keep lower-income people—disproportionately racial minorities—out of wealthy and middle-class neighborhoods...” (The Century Foundation, 2020, paragraph 3). Exclusionary zoning prevents low-income families from obtaining equal access to the job opportunities and education that would typically be found in wealthier areas (The Century Foundation, 2020, paragraph 3). There

are risks associated with planning exclusionary cities. According to the former mayor of Bogotá, Peñalosa, the following is one of them:

“[obstructing access] creates a more segregated city, a more exclusionary city where higher income people leave and what public space should be, a place for all to meet as equals independently of our socioeconomic position, dies” (Galvis, 2017, p. 11)

1.4 Restrictions & limitations in studying Marassi as a case study

This research is based on a case study approach and therefore has the limitations associated with generalizing the findings. Research findings are specific to Egypt and in some cases more particular to the NWC region. Therefore, they may not be easily applicable elsewhere. Even though Emaar works in multiple countries including other ‘Arab’ countries, the dissimilarity between the different cultures and lifestyles entails reassessing strategies and projects accordingly. Also, due to the lack in availability of published information and documentation, the majority of the information used for the case study come from the meetings held with Emaar employees in Cairo.

02 | Exclusionary Planning producing urban segregation

02 **Exclusionary Planning producing urban segregation**

2.1 The right to the city

The urban sociologist Robert Park once wrote that the city is "man's most consistent and on the whole, his most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire. But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself" (Park, cited in Harvey, 2012, p. 4). If we consider this to be true, then the question of what kind of city we want cannot be separated from the question of what kind of people we want to be. The collective choices we make concerning our city, determine our lifestyle, social relations and the aesthetic values we hold (Harvey, 2012).

Cities have emerged due to the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product. Therefore, urbanization is some sort of a class phenomenon in which the control of the surplus typically lies in the hands of a few. This situation usually takes place under capitalism (Harvey, 2012).

Jacobs (1961) recommended physical heterogeneity that would in parallel promote social mixture, which in turn will make cities more economically productive. Other urban scholars regard the value of diversity in enhancing the right to the city, rather than just in its promotion of economic growth. For example, Richard Sennett (1970, 1990) praises the benefits of difference and even those of conflict. Urbanists aim to achieve social diversity through a variety of building types, and land-use planners demand inclusionary zoning that requires the provision of low-income housing in new developments (Fainstein, 2014).

2.2 The model of privatization & segregation

“Segregation – both social and spatial – is an important feature of cities. Rules organizing urban space are patterns of social differentiation and separation. These rules vary culturally and historically, reveal the principles that structure public life, and indicate how social groups relate to each other in the space of the city.” (Caldeira, 2001, p. 213)

Caldeira defines a new pattern of spatial segregation as spaces where different social groups are close to each other but separated by walls and other means of security. These different groups of people also don't mingle or interact in common spaces. The main instrument of this pattern is what she calls 'fortified enclaves'. Fortified enclaves are spaces for residence, leisure, consumption and work they are privatized, enclosed spaces. Essentially, their validation is based on the fear of crime. They generally appeal to those no longer interested in the traditional public sphere of streets; leaving them to the poor and homeless (Caldeira, 2001).

Moreover, closed condominiums (a type of fortified elite housing) are not places one simply just passes by or have a walk to. They are meant to be quite far, they can only be reached by car, only by their residents and their visitors. They are also reached by the servants, who must be kept under control and are let in through a special entrance (Caldeira, 2001).

Fortified enclaves are changing the way in which middle-and upper-class people live, consume, work, and spend their free-time. They are also altering the city's landscape, its patterns of spatial segregation, and the character of public space and of the interaction between different social groups. All fortified enclaves have mutual characteristics. “They are private property for collective use, and they emphasize the value of what is private and restricted at the same time that they devalue what is public and open in the city” (Caldeira, 2001, p. 258). They are physically defined and isolated by walls and fences as well as empty spaces and other design devices. They reject the public life of the street and therefore they are turned inwards, away from it. Moreover, they are controlled by

guards and different security systems, which enforce rules of inclusion and exclusion. Yet, they are flexible because of various aspects such as their size, the embedded security systems and the fact that they constitute autonomous space independent of their surroundings that can be freely situated almost anywhere. Nonetheless, the enclaves tend to be socially homogenous environments, because people who choose to live there, value living among particular people that are considered to be of the same social group. They intentionally avoid the undesired interactions, heterogeneity, risk, and the unpredictability of open streets (Caldeira, 2001).

Furthermore, fortified enclaves are very precise in their creation of separation. Their limits are clearly portrayed by numerous kinds of physical barriers and distancing devices. Their presence in the city renders a clear statement of social differentiation (Caldeira, 2001).

“Advertisements aim to seduce. They rely on a repertoire of images and values that speak to different people’s sensibilities and fantasies and thereby address their desires” (Caldeira, 2001, p. 263). Advertisements and the audience they are targeting must share a common repertoire. If the ads do not succeed in articulating images people can recognize as their own, they fail to seduce. Therefore, real estate advertisements are good sources from which information may be obtained about the lifestyle and values of the people whose desires they help to shape. Residence and social status are noticeably related. People’s homes tend to be a method by which they publicly signify themselves. As a consequence, the building or buying of a home is one of the most significant projects people undertake (Caldeira, 2001).

The image that mirrors the highest status is that of an enclosed, fortified, and isolated residence. It is a secure environment in which one can live exclusively among people who are equally as fortunate and use the various facilities and services it offers. The advertisements present the image of these enclaves as an escape from the city, where one can exclusively encounter a world of pleasure. These ads propose a ‘total way of life’, superior to that of the city, even when they literally exist inside of it. In this case the city

is on the other hand, represented as a deteriorated world not only of pollution and noise etc., but more importantly, of confusion and mixture: social heterogeneity (Caldeira, 2001).

Security and control are essential for keeping the outsiders, outside. They are needed in order to ensure both seclusion, contentment and harmony. To relate security entirely to crime would result in overlooking its other meanings. “The new system of security not only provide protection from crime but also create segregated spaces in which exclusion is carefully and rigorously practiced” (Caldeira, 2001, p. 266).

Finally, the involvement of private interests into public goods and services can affect access for specific groups of people. Sometimes, privatization generates parallel systems in which one system sustained by private interests typically serves people with higher-income, while on the other hand, a second system of lesser quality tends to serve lower-income people. Accordingly, poorer people can completely lose access to a public good. All of these cases have the ability to increase socioeconomic segregation, which tends to result in racial segregation. When public goods are privatized, they can morph into different systems that promote the division of communities, perpetuating inequality (How privatization increases inequality, 2016).

2.3 Gated communities: physical & social exclusion

According to Fainstein (2014), within communicative theory, the planner’s main function is to “listen to people’s stories and assist in forging a consensus among differing viewpoints. Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence” (Fainstein, 2014, p. 7). Leadership is about assuring people that no group’s interest will dominate, no matter what the position of the participants within the socio-economic hierarchy. Even when democratic processes do occur, they can still lead to exclusionary practices. This is because it is rarely possible for all social classes to be equally represented. Even when representatives of the poor do participate, they are sometimes manipulated. This is because planners have little independent power, they will

only be able to improve these minorities' situation if political backing is present (Fainstein, 2014).

For example, although the participation of the local community was stated as a prerequisite in the tourism public policy for the NWC's development, there doesn't seem to be much evidence to support that the participation actually took place. Extensive discussions were carried out with the Bedouins by the planner in the data collecting stage in order to understand their problems and needs. Yet, they were not involved in the decision making at all. The planners were technocratic and assumed that the "ignorant and illiterate societies require guidance and decisions from above" (Attia, 1999, p. 213). The lack on contribution and consultation of Bedouins regarding the decision making restrained the implementation of the policy (Attia, 1999).

Regarding the significance of group differences and the inadequacy of liberalism in dealing with them, Young (1990, p. 47) states in his book within this discipline of philosophy the following (Fainstein, 2014):

"I believe that group differentiation is both an inevitable and a desirable aspect of modern social processes. Social justice ... requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression."

Finally, how does a development become more or less exclusionary? Below are the different forms of exclusion:

1. A development may become more exclusionary due to the process. Participation is a factor that dictates what kind a development eventually becomes. Participation may be achieved via involving potential clients or locals which tend to have valuable input.
2. Another factor is design. Design may promote physical exclusion (private, gated etc.). Unfortunately, intangible aspects in the Egyptian community such as classism has resulted in a demand in producing exclusionary places. This is because people are no longer comfortably able to express themselves in public

spaces since what is 'accepted' highly differs between different people from different social backgrounds. Therefore, people search for spaces where they can feel secure and free from any potential clashes caused by a difference in social classes/beliefs. Public spaces are defined as "...an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. These are public gathering spaces such as plazas, squares and parks. Connecting spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, are also public spaces. In the 21st century, some even consider the virtual spaces available through the internet as a new type of public space that develops interaction and social mixing" (UNESCO, 2017, paragraph 1). 'Social mixing' generally produces unwanted outcomes in Egypt and therefore people have generally opted for separation, hence the production and success of these exclusionary developments. Also, this point is concerned with the internal gates (in the case of 'double gated' communities) and separation of facilities made for different users (e.g. differences between owners and renters). Exclusion is sometimes present even within certain developments.

3. Next, social exclusion is another form of exclusion. This is the avoidance of selling to particular social classes (including people from different origins, culture etc.).
4. Finally, economic exclusion is concerned with money. Economic exclusion applies to the public spaces of the project that will have expensive shops and restaurants. It may make it less exclusionary since anyone can physically enter these spaces, yet not can afford what these spaces have to offer.

03 | UNDERSTANDING THE EGYPTIAN CONTEXT

03 Understanding the Egyptian Context

3.1 Research settings

Egypt has an area of approximately one million square km; and in 2019 had a population of over 100,000,000 people (CAPMAS, 2018). Most of the population resides by the Nile Valley and Delta due to the scarcity of water. This, in return, generates some of the highest densities in the world in these areas (Attia, 1999). Although the total surface area of Egypt equals around 1 million square km (that is about the size of both Spain and France put together), More than 98% of the population live on an area that accounts for about 4% of the country's total area- along the Nile valley and its Delta (World bank, 2012). Consequently, a huge pressure was exerted on the land available for agriculture along the Nile as well as congestion and infrastructure problems caused by the overcrowding. Therefore, in order to accommodate this ever-increasing population, Egypt had to turn to virgin land, i.e. the desert regions. This would be feasible by promoting other alternative economic activities to agriculture (Attia, 1999).



Figure 1 A satellite image of Egypt at night. Source: (NASA, 2011)

One of the most important researchers that has discussed the topic of coastal privatization (the Northwest Coast in specific) in Egypt in depth, is Amr Attia. His PhD thesis 'Planning for sustainable tourism development: An investigation into implementing tourism policy in the Northwest Coast region of Egypt', written in 1999 addresses all the factors that have come into play considering how and why the coast is the way it is and somehow justifies the changes that have been taking place ever since- and therefore will be referenced throughout this research. He tackled all of the necessary aspects and provided essential background information needed to be comprehended by anyone commencing a research concerning Egypt's Northwest Coast (NWC); even if the topic differs- since Attia's research mainly focuses on the implementation of tourism policies. Attia's extensive contribution to literature related to the NWC has been widely recognized and appreciated by almost everyone tackling topics/issues related to this region.

It is essential to briefly discuss Egypt's political historical context in order to fully comprehend what it has led to today. Three main phases may be distinguished that relate to this research, reflecting Egypt's evolution. The first is the 'liberal constitutional phase' 1923-52, when Egypt was still a kingdom ruled by King Farouk, characterized by the existence of political parties. The second is the 'one party phase' (1952-74) after Gamal Abdel Nasser led the 1952 overthrow of the monarchy declaring Egypt a Republic. Egypt then became a socialist country characterized by the centralization of power. Finally, the third phase was the 'controlled or limited political pluralism' (1975-82) that started after the October war and until the assassination of the president at the time, Anwar El Sadat. The results of the war and the events that had taken place at the time, deemed Egypt a capitalist country (Attia, 1999).

One of the policies included in the national development policy called the 'October working paper' that emerged after the 1973 October war needed to resolve Egypt's major issue of the rapidly growing population was: "the creation of new settlements in the desert regions relying on agriculture, industry, agro-industries, and tourism; to cope with the population growth, to ease the pressure on existing cities, to raise the national income and provide Employment" (Attia, 1999, p. 4). According to a Governmental Decree (540

of 1980), the NWC region was included among the new urban settlements (Attia, 1999). Evidently, the privatization of the coast was mainly due to the 'Al-Infitah Al-Iqtisadi', literally translating to 'the economic opening up' which was a new 'open door' economic policy that the October working paper had stipulated in order to achieve Egypt's (at the time) policy objectives such as economic development. In 'Infitah' (open door), the Egyptian economy opened up to the west and to foreign investment. That is in order to increase foreign exchange and expose the country to foreign technology and experiences. The 'Infitah' policy called for the revitalization of the private sector, reducing the involvement of the state in numerous economic activities such as industry, construction and agriculture to name a few. The policy is somewhat divided into two parts: the basic principles and specific economic activity. The basic principles are of economic liberalization, which includes attracting foreign and Arab capital as well as the need to import technology from Western countries, thus sustaining the economic development. Therefore, the government believed that, in order to attract this capital, it was crucial to provide several financial incentives to foreign investors such as offering tax exemptions, establishing incentive rates for the conversion of currency etc. On the other hand, in the specific economic activity, the government took an 'open' approach, via permitting foreigners to have total ownership of specific projects. This was not permissible before the 'Infitah' (Attia, 1999).

Accordingly, this has allowed the flow of foreign capital, moving towards a capitalist approach after Egypt's socialist transformation experienced under former president Gamal Abdel Nasser during 1954-70 (Attia, 1999). Therefore, the Infitah provided the initial push of the opening up of Egypt's coasts to privatization. Sadat¹ introduced a political system that became more reliant on market forces and private enterprises. "And presto, one has the 'Egyptian Riviera', and large swathes of the nation's desert are on the way to being conquered" (Sims, 2014, p. 425). The government's involvement in developing the NWC region was conducted by focusing on the real-estate market like a private developer, rather than implementing strategies that are based on a long term

¹ President Anwar El-Sadat (1970 – 1981)

approach to tourism development (as initially intended). Public sector actors gave great attention to market effectiveness and consequently neglected the more important issues of public interest and social needs (Attia, 1999). This has resulted in the outcome that is seen today: substantial segregation and impermeability.

The Infitah policy had both positive and negative impacts on Egypt's economic development. Yet, the negative impact was specifically on the public sector. Public enterprises were unable to keep up with the competition with the foreign and Arab private investors that were supported by the government, due to a lack in efficiency. The public sector's decline was inevitable as a result of this open door policy. Overall, the policy was more negative than positive, since most of its 'promises' were not kept (Attia, 1999).

Another policy in the October working paper was the 'New Map Policy'. It was a human settlement policy that was all about setting the framework for a "systematic, balanced economic, physical and administrative development" (Attia, 1999, p. 134). The map that this policy required is geographical and demographic as well as economic. It acknowledged the problems generated by the densely populated capital and therefore emphasized the need to move away from the Nile valley and Delta and to start urbanizing and developing in desert lands (Attia, 1999).

"Taking the circumstances of each area into consideration, reconstruction areas should be extended westward along the Mediterranean coast, eastward along the Red Sea coast, and southward around Lake Nasser" where "...the possibilities for mining, industries, fisheries and tourism are largely available in these areas" (President Sadat, 1974).

In the quote above, the president clarified the specific areas where development was proposed (Attia, 1999).

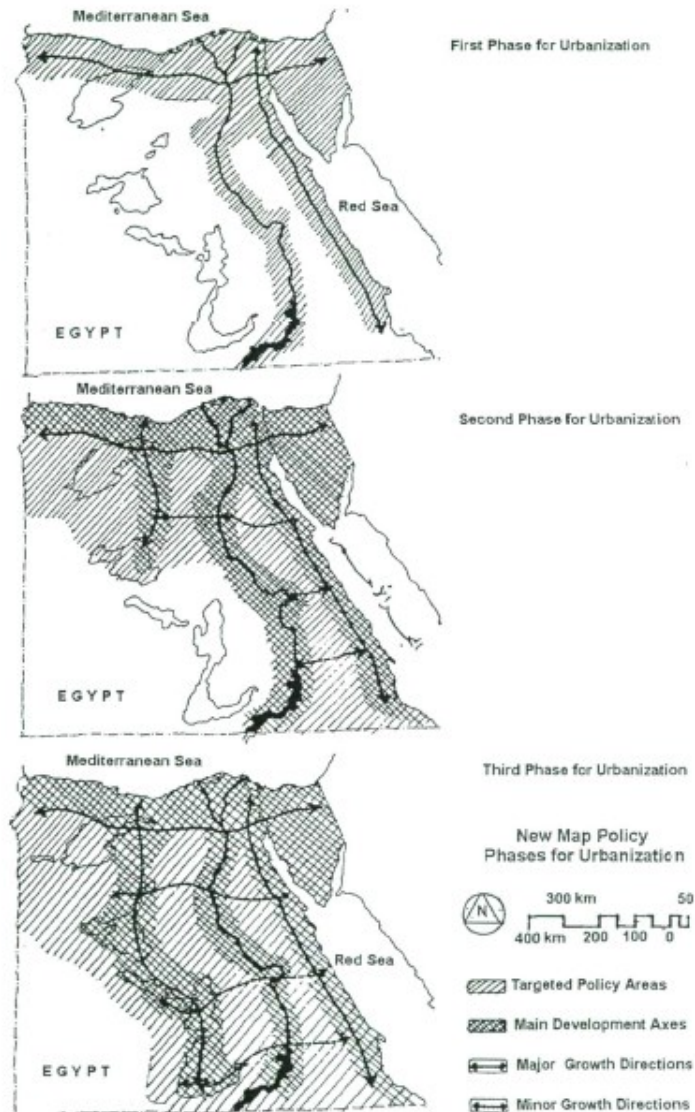


Figure 2 The phases of the urbanization of Egypt as outlined by the New Map. Source: (Attia, 1999)

Next, it is crucial to discuss the different ministries that have been involved ever since the October war in 1973 until the present day in order to understand who was in charge of what and when, and therefore why certain outcomes are the way that they are today. Firstly, ‘the ministry of the canal cities and Sinai’ under Osman A. Osman² was quickly established after the October war in order to commence the program of reconstruction and work on the development of the

Suez Canal zone as well as other areas. Moreover, only a couple of months later, in January 1974, the ministry was named ‘the ministry of reconstruction’. Yet in October of the same year, the ministry of reconstruction joined the ministry of housing to become one ministry and was called ‘the ministry of housing and reconstruction’. Afterwards, in 1978, it was once again modified to become ‘the ministry of housing, reconstruction and

² Osman A. Osman was president, and half owner of Arab Contractors Company. He was also appointed by Sadat as Minister of Housing and Reconstruction in 1974 until 1976.

new communities'. In order to make this research easier to follow, this ministry will be referred to as MOR (ministry of reconstruction). Next, from 1980 until 1993 it became 'the ministry of development and ministry of state for housing, utilities and land reclamation (minister Hassaballah Kafrawy) (Attia, 1999). Currently the ministry is called 'the ministry of housing, utilities, and urban communities' and the minister is Mostafa Kemal Madbouly, serving the Egyptian government as both the minister of housing as well as the prime minister (Attia, 1999).

In 1973, the ministry of tourism (MOT) was allocated the responsibility of developing and managing the country's touristic regions, particularly the coastal regions- within the framework of the October working paper. Therefore, in 1974, MOT provided a national tourism strategy that illustrated the prime, prioritized tourism regions in Egypt- the main region being the NWC. It had the priority out of all six regions for the following reasons:

1. It included some settlements, services and infrastructures, that were only to be modified.
2. It is located between two major touristic cities: Alexandria and Marsa Matrouh.
3. The Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal region were still under military threat from Israel, and as a result would be unattractive for tourists.
4. Its location along the Mediterranean and characteristics (sun, sandy beaches, warm climate).
5. Regional data and surveys were already available for planning due to a comprehensive survey done in the past.

After the war, MOR became very popular, it had a very advantageous position and received support from the president for its role in reconstruction. Until the year 1976, MOR was under the control of Osman A. Osman, and afterwards, the ministry was still under his indirect influence and support. Osman was president of the Arab Contractors Company. It was the largest construction company in Egypt and one of the most remarkable in the Middle East. Also, Osman knew Sadat on a personal level since his son was married to Sadat's daughter. This has in turn increased his power and therefore his ministry had a more advantageous position in the government (Attia, 1999). However, a

conflict occurred between MOT and MOR concerning who had the right over the development of the region. MOT was supported by Law number 2 for 1973, yet as mentioned earlier, MOR was supported by the minister's power and relationship to the president as well as the ministry's dominance. The result was in favour of the MOR. Therefore, the NWC region was declared a 'new community' and that's when the consultants Ilaco and Pacer started the planning process.

NUCA, the New Urban Communities Authority, was founded in 1979 as the official independent juristic authority responsible for the implementing and management of the new towns in Egypt. Unfortunately, it has failed in implementing certain towns. This tends to be the case because NUCA has been working as an executive agency rather than a management authority, responsible for the development of these new towns. This is a result of NUCA being under authority of the MOR. This is the case even though NUCA has all resources provided until the new urban community is handed over to the local government according to law 59/1979. Besides, NUCA is also supported with all required data and research by ministries, local administration and the relevant agencies (ElRashidy, 2019). The overall objective of MOR was to urbanize Egypt, which perhaps is not surprising since all of its technical staff, top management personnel as well as ministers were in the majority engineers. As Attia highlights, "Urban development in general, and managing human settlements in particular should include a much broader approach than just constructing buildings and infrastructure." (Attia, 1999, p. 145). Therefore, the new map policy has failed to achieve most of its objectives, primarily because of MOR and its affiliated organizations (Attia, 1999).

3.2 The Mediterranean region: introducing the study area

The Egyptian Mediterranean governorates consist of (from west to east); Matrouh, Alexandria, Beheira, Kafr El Sheikh, Dakahleya, Damietta, Port-Said, and North Sinai governorates. The study area of this research (Marassi) is located on the NWC in Matrouh Governorate. The NWC extends along over 490 km of the coast from Alexandria to Salloum, on the borders of Libya. The coast is enriched with natural resources and

therefore is currently a prominent domestic touristic destination. It is clearly dominated by a linear coastal ongoing development of privatized touristic villages, which are only used for about two to three months a year, mainly in the summer (Sims, 2014).

3.3 Context: Egypt's Northwestern Coast



Figure 3 The location of Marassi in the NWC on the map of Egypt. Source: Author (2020)

The whole coastline was virgin and completely undeveloped back in 1976. The only exceptions were the beach areas of 'Agami' and 'Hanoville' just outside Alexandria, an isolated hotel in Sidi-AbdelRahman called 'Al-Alamein' hotel (currently located in Marassi), built in the 1960s and finally a couple of other hotels in Marsa Matrouh. Driving along the linear coastal road in 1976 all one would witness is quite an unchanging

landscape- the sea, the beach, the two-lane road, the railway, limestone ridges and scattered olive and fig orchards. There were also the small towns of al-Hammam, Burg al-Arab, al-Alamein, al-Daba'a, Sidi Barani, as well as Marsa Matrouh's administrative town and port. The emergence of some small beach resorts slowly started in the late 1970s, up to around 37 km west from Alexandria. All of which were made up of holiday homes that were only used during the summer. Supply following demand. In Egypt, tradition dictated that Egyptian families flee to the Mediterranean shores in the summer months, especially from Cairo. Alexandria's population was said to almost double in the summer due to this tradition. Over 1 million Egyptians were estimated to have spent their summers on the Mediterranean coast by the early 1980s (Sims, 2014).

There were 3 different studies made on the NWC. The first was the comprehensive study prepared by a private consultant and sponsored by the food and agriculture organization. This study worked on understanding how suitable agricultural activities would be to the region. The second study was a tourism development strategy made by MOT in 1973. This study recommended certain guidelines and building regulations for tourism development in the whole region.

In 1975 the ministry of housing commissioned Ilaco and Pacer, a Dutch consulting firm, in collaboration with an Egyptian design consultant to work on the development of the Northwest region, as well as studying the possibilities of attracting people to that part of the country (Sims, 2014). This was the third study that resulted with the dividing of the region into four sub-regions for tourism planning purposes.

The overall target for intervention in the NWC region was to contribute to solving Egypt's main problem, the human settlement problem, as demonstrated in the following quote: "The primary goal of the regional development planning is to contribute to the government's goal to conquer the desert, to stimulate income and employment growth, to boost agricultural production and to enforce social stability in the region" (Ilaco and Pacer 1976).

As a result, they concluded that around 750,000 people could be accommodated on the coast before the year 2000 (based on the area's economic potentials), and an extra two

to three million could also be absorbed if new economic growth poles were to be created. This was the exact feedback the ministry was hoping to obtain. Therefore, Ilaco and Pacer were rehired 1978 to do the master plan for a new town to be built in the region, named Borg El Arab (the former North Coast capital before the current, Alamein New City). This new town was estimated to have a population of 500,000 inhabitants by 2003. The regional development strategy proposed by the consultants mainly focused on international resort tourism by carefully planning the coast at low densities with wide natural reserves, as well as to develop the immediate inland areas for agriculture, different industries and new urban centers. Surprisingly, summer holiday homes were not part of the plan since they generated almost no permanent employment and therefore would not promote the region's development farther inland (Sims, 2014).

Former minister of housing (1977-1993), Hasaballah El-Kafrawy, pursued the North Coast's development and created the General Authority for North Coast Reconstruction under his ministry and assigned control of pretty much the whole coast. EL-Kafrawy's ministry developed a model resort called Marakia, and soon afterwards developed another 15 km away called Marabella. Although both resorts were initially supposed to set examples for low-density development, including international-standard hotels, it was quickly evident that the real demand was for holiday homes for the Egyptians. Therefore, the ministry decided to concentrate solely on this market segment instead, since it was feasible to cover the costs as well as ensure good profit. Consequently, the number of holiday homes was increased in both Marakia and Marabella and at the same time, similar resorts were rapidly built. Yet, they were high-density private resort compounds that were larger and more expensive and therefore targeted the middle class and the elites (Sims, 2014).

Moreover, these holiday ‘villages’ were being continuously built farther and farther west of Alexandria along the coast. As this ‘leapfrogging’ occurred, owners started selling their villas and chalets in older ‘villages’ and relocating to newer, more prestigious ones located farther west; freeing up the older units for low and middle class families. By the early 1900s, a distance of 80 km was almost fully developed into high density summer resorts. This coastal strip was soon dubbed the “Great Wall of Kafrawy”. The North Coast was also once described in a business magazine (Business Today) in 1998 as follows: “The white sandy beaches and trademark azure blue waters of the Mediterranean could have made the NWC a major tourist destination to rival, for example, the French Riviera, Spain's Costa Del Sol, and the Turkish Antalya. Instead, most of the NWC has been, in most areas, transformed into a barren monument to bad taste and bad design” (Sims, 2014, p. 458).

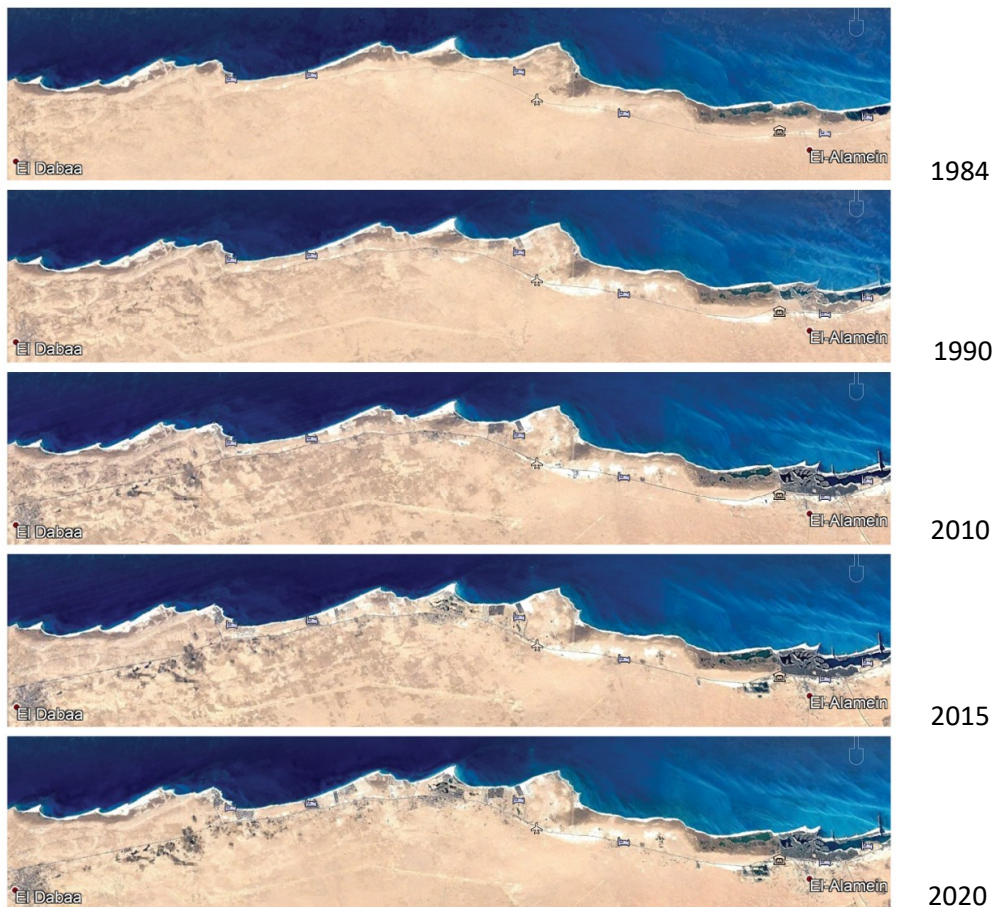


Figure 4 The development of Al Alamein town on the NWC between 1984 & 2020.
Source: Google Earth

Furthermore, these villages were generally made up of both detached and semi-detached villas. Further away from the shore, there were also some garden apartments, that had to be planned carefully in order to ensure that its future residents had at least a glimpse of the sea. Inevitable, villas in the first 2 rows from the beach were most sought after. Of course the main ingredient in any village was its beach, with a width varying between 120 meters to over 2 kilometers. Yet the depth of the villages from the coast were uniformly large, between 600 meters to over 1 km. Other than the residential units and beaches, it soon became trendy to have other elements in the villages such as swimming pools, convenience stores, social clubs and pedestrian routes (Sims, 2014).

In 1989, the ministry of housing had secured a 12 km slice of the coast at Al Alamein (in the same zone Marassi is located) in order to develop Marina, that is the largest village on the whole coast. The first phase was opened in 1992 and was considered as the most prestigious village. Moreover, a new desert highway (135 km long) was constructed. It branched off the Cairo-Alexandria desert road generating better accessibility to Marina and also to the rest of the villages that were to be constructed farther west towards Marsa Matrouh. The westward trend in the erection of villages has accelerated since the late 1990s (Sims, 2014). Today, as the leapfrogging continues, more and more exclusive compounds are being heavily promoted. The most 'trendy' ones being along the 21 kilometer strip in front of the town Sidi-Abdelrahman (including Marassi, as well as others such as Amwaj, Bianchi, Hacienda Bay to name a few). As mentioned earlier, trends are never permanent, it has so far been gradually moving westwards. This this pattern may change as the Alamein new city comes into the picture and hopefully changing the direction of the region's growth and expansion. Nonetheless, these 'trendy' compounds have added things such as international hotels and other amusements into the standard holiday mix, advocating a more 'integrated approach' (Sims, 2014). More compounds are scattered (some still under construction and some just planned) even more west along the coast, and virgin coastline may only be found after the city of Marsa Matrouh.

Overall, there are currently 143 establishments (either functioning or still under construction) between kilometers 21 and 243 west from Alexandria (Dimensions, 2020).

3.4 The NWC region as a touristic destination

Planned economic development on the NWC was based on tourism; this is because tourism has the ability to move development away from the densely populated areas towards less developed regions. The region has the prospective to promote tourism unlike other parts of Egypt that lack the potential and diversity of resources. This is due to its natural physical characteristics and economic features such as the 450 km beach on the Mediterranean (increasing touristic activities), raw materials, the availability of water resources, the nature of the sub-soil, the availability of some cultivated land and the distinct topography of the region. Furthermore, the NWC regional development planning was composed by the combined efforts of an Egyptian and a Dutch private consulting firm: Ilaco and Pacer (1976). The area that 'The Regional Plan of the Coastal Zone of Western Desert' covered was between the 34th km from Alexandria to the Egyptian western borders (450 km. from East to West) and with the depth from the Mediterranean Sea until the contour line of +200 meters above sea level (between 35-50 km from North to South). There were two main objectives: a regional one and a national one. The regional objective was to increase the wellbeing of the locals- i.e. the Bedouins (Attia, 1999). Below is a quote that further clarifies the importance of this objective:

"...the isolated position of the region within the country and its low service level compared to that in the rest of Egypt makes the Bedouins feel that they are treated as a neglected minority group. Their society [has] not been integrated into that of the country as a whole. The main purpose of the regional development plan [is] to overcome this situation of a dual society, in order to dissolve economic stagnation and social frustration" (Ilaco and Pacer, cited in Attia, 1999, p.175).

On the other hand, the national objective was for the NWC to contribute to solving the country's economic and human settlement problems. Therefore, tourism seemed to be the most suitable activity that would help solve all the problems simultaneously. It would achieve both regional and national objectives via attracting people from other parts of

the country (and therefore contributing to the human settlement problem) offering them jobs, speed up the overall development of the region and bring in new inhabitants and tourists in order to end the social isolation of the region's population.

Underneath the scale of the regional planning carried out by Ilaco and Pacer, the tourism planning for the first out of four sub-regions of the coast was then formulated by the combined efforts of an Egyptian and German consulting firm: PUD and ORplan which set the sub-region's development program. In addition, the structural planning for this first sub-region was composed by both Egyptian firms working on the regional planning and tourism planning: PUD and Pacer. All three studies (regional, tourism and structural) were used by the government to constitute the NWC region's politically determined tourism policy. The Ministry of Reconstruction, New Communities, Housing and Utilities (MOR)-representing the government, was fully responsible to implement the urbanization strategies comprised in the October Working Paper. Since the NWC region was considered a new urban settlement by the governmental decree in 1980, this has in return increased the authority and domination of the MOR over the development of the region. Therefore, MOR was the authority responsible for commissioning the planning studies for the NWC region as well as approving and authorizing the regional, tourism and structural plans (Attia, 1999). MOR supported the idea of implementing a tourism plan in the region and therefore agreed to plan and implement the tourism projects in the region, while MOT would be responsible for the management and operation when the projects would be completed. This unwritten agreement between both ministries also included that MOT would be responsible for tourism development along the red sea coast and in Sinai. Nevertheless, MOT had almost no role on the management nor the operation of the projects of the NWC, which increased the conflicts between both ministries. This has resulted in the restriction of tourism development in the NWC. MOR had no experience nor skill to promote tourism and its marketing campaigns. Predominantly, the transformation of the NWC from an international tourism destination to a second-home domestic tourism destination for middle and upper class Egyptians was due to political expediency. This has led to a pattern of development which placed great stress on the

natural environmental resources as well as neglecting other significant markets such as ecotourism. Accordingly, the region only attracted second-home owners and no international tourists because of a lack of hotels, beach facilities and airports.

Moreover, the structure planning of the region was approved by the government in 1983. It proposed the sources of financing and development and also the phasing of the development. It also proposed three types of settlements in order to encourage the growth of urbanization towards the hinterlands. This is in order to prevent linear development and therefore allow for some vacant areas for future expansion as well as to preserve the natural environment. The three types of settlements are as follows:

1. Settlements for tourists on the coastal strip (between the sea and the coastal road).
2. Settlements that would accommodate a mixture of both tourists (seasonal residents) and permanent residents.
3. The upgrading of the existing settlements in the hinterland in order to accommodate the permanent settlers.

Overall, the coastal strip located between on the seaside would be dedicated for the development of tourist accommodation, services, and leisure activities. On the other hand, settlements for permanent and semi-permanent residences would be located on the opposite side of the road. Lastly, the existing settlements in the hinterland were to be upgraded.

Planning vision vs. actual development

Unfortunately, there was a disparity between planning and the implementation. Firstly, only one settlement (out of the proposed 16 new settlements- 8 of which in the south of the coastal road) was established and therefore the growth of urbanization towards the hinterland was trivial. Also, the existing hinterland had no growth control. Moreover, the coastal areas were divided into smaller parcels and sold to developers. The areas that had been reserved for public beaches were replaced with real-estate developments. Although MOR abided by the idea of implementing pilot projects to provide an example

to other future projects and to stimulate the private sector. The pilot projects did not set the intended example as they violated the planning regulations that has been set.

Next, MOR carried out the three pilot projects: Marakia, Marabella and Marina Al-Alamein in the NWC region in order to encourage the private sector's investment, setting an example to the succeeding, future projects. These three projects, as well as all the projects that have followed to date are referred to as 'touristic villages' by the Egyptians. That is because they mainly offer holiday home for mostly Egyptians but also other Arab tourists. Therefore, the NWC mainly targeted domestic tourism, yet ensured the inclusion of hotels in its projects in order to encourage international tourism too. The masterplan was produced in 1983 and the implementation of the policy has been taking place ever since (Attia, 1999).

The public policy for the development of the NWC region has 'promised' to guarantee the following principles (Attia, 1999):

1. Environmental protection: the physical and socio-cultural resources are the region's resource base.
2. Concern for future generations ('futuraity'): to ensure the preservation of the environment.
3. Equity among the population: allowing all sectors of the population to access the region and benefit from its development. Also, ensuring that participation of the community in the decision making takes place anticipating their satisfaction.
4. Efficiency: efficient use of resources by ensuring that the projects would be manageable, feasible and realistic.

However, most of the 'promises' above were not kept. Unfortunately, what we witness today on our coast is a linear development that has failed to preserve open spaces or parks near the beach. The beach is generally deteriorated and eroded. First, the NWC region did not successfully attract people out of the Nile valley and Delta as planned, and thus did not help to sort out the country's human settlement problem. Second, the NWC region failed to attract international tourists and merely remained a temporary

destination for domestic tourism. Third, the regional planning goals were not achieved such as environmental protection and long economic gain. The public sector was almost exemplifying a private developer. Too much concentration was given to market effectiveness rather than to public interests and social needs. Political aspects can be of higher priority than rational policy and consistency. Political values have always overridden managerial values in the public sector. In practice, long term management objectives can always be displaced for short term political advantage. Certain projects and investment may always be approved not having carefully considered its economic and social benefits to the local community (Attia, 1999). This is particularly what took place in the NWC.

3.5 Understanding public policy in the NWC

Attia (1999), has clearly explained Grindle and Thomas' (1991b) typology of policy models that evidently clarified why certain policies would be successful in one place and fail in others. These models attempt to explain 'policy behaviour'. There are two different types of models: society-centered and state-centered models. In the former, explanations of the policy process are based on the relations between social groups, yet in the latter, analysis focuses on decision making within the organizational context of the state. Yet, both models help explaining the performance of the policy process in the NWC (Attia, 1999).

In the society-centered models, the first one called the 'society class' analysis was the one most relevant to the NWC region. It describes policy as the outcome of conflicts between social classes. Policy is seen as the prerogative to the dominant class and is a means of securing the reproduction of the already existing discriminatory societal relations of the capitalist mode of production. The state is perceived as an instrument of the domination used by this class, where policy is a reflection of their wants and interests, completely disregarding the subordinate class (Attia, 1999). Hence why the locals (Bedouins) livings in the hinterland no longer have access to the continuously developing Mediterranean coast and why only the elite can afford living and accessing the privatized, capitalist-

driven region. Attia (1999) found out through discussions with several members of the local community that many locals had identified that their major problem was their inability to access the beach. Attia also mentioned that according to Cole and Altorki (1998), "the walls of the touristic villages along the NWC region block most of the local people from access to areas that, with their development, have been lost to the Bedouin as part of their patrimonial heritage. The walls of the holiday resorts protect the elites from intrusion by 'ordinary' people from the masses who might spoil the scene with crowding, noise, and unstylish appearance" (Attia, 1999, p. 299). Attention was paid to the needs of the holidaymakers, disregarding those of the Bedouins who have lived in that region for hundreds of years (Attia, 1999).

Moreover, in the state-centered models, the most relevant to this Egyptian case study would be the 'state interests' approach. Using this approach, the state defines the societal problems and develops the solutions for them. Public officials suppose that the state is almost the legal guardian and works for the public interest (Attia, 1999).

Both the ideal 'society-centered' model and the 'state-centered' model are non-existent in the context of the NWC. The ideal 'society centered' model is 'pluralism'. The pluralism approach results from conflict and negotiation among a potentially large number of societal groups. This is organized to protect as well as further develop particular interests that are common to the members of these groups. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), power is distributed among a variety of groups, where expression is more viable. Pluralism, as Hall and Jenkins (1995) mention, suggests that power is relatively dispersed in a society where the policy-making institutions consider and are influenced by a wide variety of interest groups. On the other hand, the ideal 'state-centered' model is the 'rational actor' model; where actors are rational choosers between different courses of action (Attia, 1999).

"In its pure form the rational actor model involves a sequence in which goals are identified, translated into objectives and prioritized. Alternative course of action for achieving the objectives are evaluated, chosen, and

implemented. It is the stuff of a perfect world in which there are no constraints in time, resources, and knowledge. It is an ideal type model which is never achieved although we have regularly encountered planners who aspire to reach some approximation of this scientific approach in their own work" (Turner and Hulme, cited in Attia, 1999, p.72).

Furthermore, both society centered and state centered perspectives combined are valid and would promote a better policy process in any country. concerning the study area, the NWC region, Attia's (1999) research findings support the 'public choice view', or what Mackintosh (1992) calls the 'private interest state'. This is where actors (e.g. politicians and civil servants) are all assumed to act solely in their own interests rather than the public interest and benefit. 'They pursue individual gain and not the public good', as explained by Mackintosh (1992). However, he also mentions that this does not assume that politicians and state officials are corrupt (Attia, 1999).

3.6 The Alamein New City: a capitalist loop?

The Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development are currently constructing 20 fourth-generation cities within the framework of the strategic plan for urban development in Egypt. These cities will have a total area of 580,000 feddans to accommodate 30 million citizens and provide job opportunities (Egypt Today, 2018).



Figure 5 A satellite image of ANC in 2020. Source: Google Earth

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly stated that President AbdelFattah El-Sisi pays great attention to the fourth-generation cities in order to provide a better life to the Egyptians as the country is facing rapid population growth (Egypt Today, 2018). The new cities are planned to be established based on high standards in order to generate a new model for life in Egypt that keeps up with the highest levels of global development in this field (Egypt Today, 2019). One of the new cities out of the 20 distributed across Egypt is the ANC (Egypt Today, 2018).

The president inaugurated ANC's first phase in March 2018. The city is located in Marsa Matrouh governorate, specifically in El Alamein town on Egypt's Mediterranean coast. It has an area of 48,000 feddans and designed to include 5,000 residential units to accommodate more than 400,000 inhabitants. The first phase includes the establishment of an eco-city. ANC will also include a national university that comprises a number of applied science faculties, a library, an opera house and a museum (Egypt Today, 2018).

Moreover, ANC will have 16 hotels, a cinema complex, a scientific research center, a yacht marine, a business center and sports clubs. It is designed as an actual city; a continuation of Alexandria, unlike the rest of the coast consisting of private gated communities. ANC has caught the eyes of the world, with many calling it the 'New Riviera' (Egypt Today, 2018).

"New Alamein City will change the map of that part of the country and give a major push to the Egyptian economy" Tarek Shoukri, Chairman and CEO of Arabia Group, told Invest-Gate (Invest Gate, 2017, paragraph 2).

He also added that "the North Coast will no longer consist of only closed resorts that merely work during the summer season. Facilities and services will keep it alive all year long" (Egypt today, 2018, paragraph 63).

"The city will be a starting point for a new generation of new cities as it will rely on making use of natural resources, including water and energy. We will make use of the city's proximity to the coast and provide drinking water through desalination using solar energy," Mona Kamel, spokesperson of the

New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA) has pointed out (Invest Gate, 2017, paragraph 5).

ANC will host a 14-km-long Corniche that will be open to the public, a privilege many summer vacation seekers do not enjoy in the NWC region due to its lack in public beaches and due to it being solely occupied by closed touristic villages with high rental or purchase rates (Invest Gate, 2017).

Hussein Sabbour, chairman and CEO of Sabbour Consulting, said that with the launch of the New Alamein City the government is aiming to revive the Egyptian Mediterranean coast after previous governments have failed to capitalize on its potential. “The government today is working on attracting foreign tourism to our Mediterranean shores and stop focusing only on locals,” Sabbour tells Invest-Gate (Invest Gate, 2017).

Sabbour also says that, according to the government plan, the North Coast is to be divided into clusters starting by its beaches, moving backwards into the desert. “The first cluster will include international hotels open[ing] directly on the coast. The second will include entertainment and retail facilities. The third part will feature permanent housing, followed by acres and acres of agricultural lands” he stated (Invest Gate, 2017).

The expected population of the first phase should be 400,000 out of the targeted one million residents. After supplying ANC with all its basic facilities, a group of projects will also be offered to investors (Invest Gate, 2017).

Furthermore, experts say that if ANC is successfully completed, it would profoundly alter the North Coast and would overall have a very positive impact on Egypt’s future. ANC will be the first of its kind in Egypt in terms of addressing broader global issues such as sustainability, helping create a better, more sustainable future for the country (Invest Gate, 2017).

Today, one can already witness ANC under construction while driving along the main road. Yet, there has been a lot of controversy already over the towers that have been erected by the coast.

“One of the biggest projects being built in the city is the North Edge Towers project. The project represents the first residential project in the city of New El Alamein. Its contemporary design combines modern architecture and the application of durable materials that resist damage from natural causes,” said Yasser Al Beltagy, president of Yasser Al Beltagy Architects, the company behind the design of North Edge Towers (Daily News Egypt, 2018, paragraph 25).

The issue with the North Coast is the amount of money spent on developments that are only used a couple of months a year. Today, the government is working on changing that as they build ANC. The aim is to create a nucleus that instead of expanding along the coast (which is already occupied as the leapfrogging continues), expansion takes place downwards instead, towards the hinterland. Thus, fixing a mistake that has initiated around 3 decades ago by trying to produce an actual city that is occupied throughout the year. This new city is more of a strategy rather than a masterplan. What is seen today is only the first phase, only the nucleus from which this whole concept will evolve.

Amr El-Kady, CEO of ‘City Edge Real Estate Development’ (the development company working on ANC) said that the company's success in ANC has encouraged real estate developers to head to the city and search for investment opportunities to develop new projects. ‘City Edge’ achieved contract sales of 7.5 billion EGP from the marketing of 5 residential towers in ANC, and the price per square meter ranged from 30,000 to 42,000 EGP (Al Borsa, 2018).

Nevertheless, even though this the progress of this new city seems pleasing, there has been a lot of controversy recently due to the project not appearing to be very ‘inclusive’ as stated. The first phase included the construction of the towers mentioned earlier, that were very unaffordable. Therefore, how does this assist in the human settlement issue if the majority of people cannot afford moving there? The government started with the pilot projects that have clearly not gone to plan and set a bad example to the succeeding projects. This project has become the only hope left to deviate from the leapfrogging and

alter the direction of expansion into the desert and fix the state's initial mistake. So far, it seems like a loop, where the government once again has built very expensive towers that are based on making profit. Apparently, the situation will soon change in the next phases of the project that will help make ANC more inclusive and bring about the necessary changes that the region desperately needs.

How are the touristic villages along the coast going to react to the new city? Expansion is going to change direction from leapfrogging that is parallel to the shore, to potentially expansion that moves inwards into the desert. This may or may not bring about a connection between the existing developments along the coast and the new city currently under construction. Yet, the nature of this connection or reaction is still unknown. According to news from Al Borsa newspaper (2018), competition is impossible between the state and other private real-estate developers since the product of these developers being the touristic villages that are only occupied during a very limited period of the year cannot compare to the state's plan to producing an actual year-round city (Al Borsa, 2018). It is also almost impossible for these developments to merge with the new city due to a lack in a strategic plan of the whole region. If the walls between the different touristic villages were to be removed, there would be no interaction whatsoever between the separate entities and they would still clearly lack a visual connection. This is because they were built in complete disregard of each other (i.e. the immediate surroundings), each enclosing a detached 'village'.

3.7 Exploring the Performance of the Public Pilot Projects

The public pilot projects were supposed to be an example for other public and private projects and to stimulate the private sector's initiative. Yet, they failed to generate the anticipated work opportunities needed to attract people into the NWC region (Attia, 1999).

Marakia & Marabella

Marakia was the first project to promote tourism development in accordance with the public policy of the NWC. In 1981, PUD consultants (which was involved in the formulation of the NWC tourism policy) was appointed by the government to design Marakia. The design concept was then approved and the project was to be under PUD's supervision (Attia, 1999).

Marakia was mainly planned to accommodate day-trippers from nearby cities including Cairo (10,000 tourists with only 20% spending the night there) (Attia, 1999).

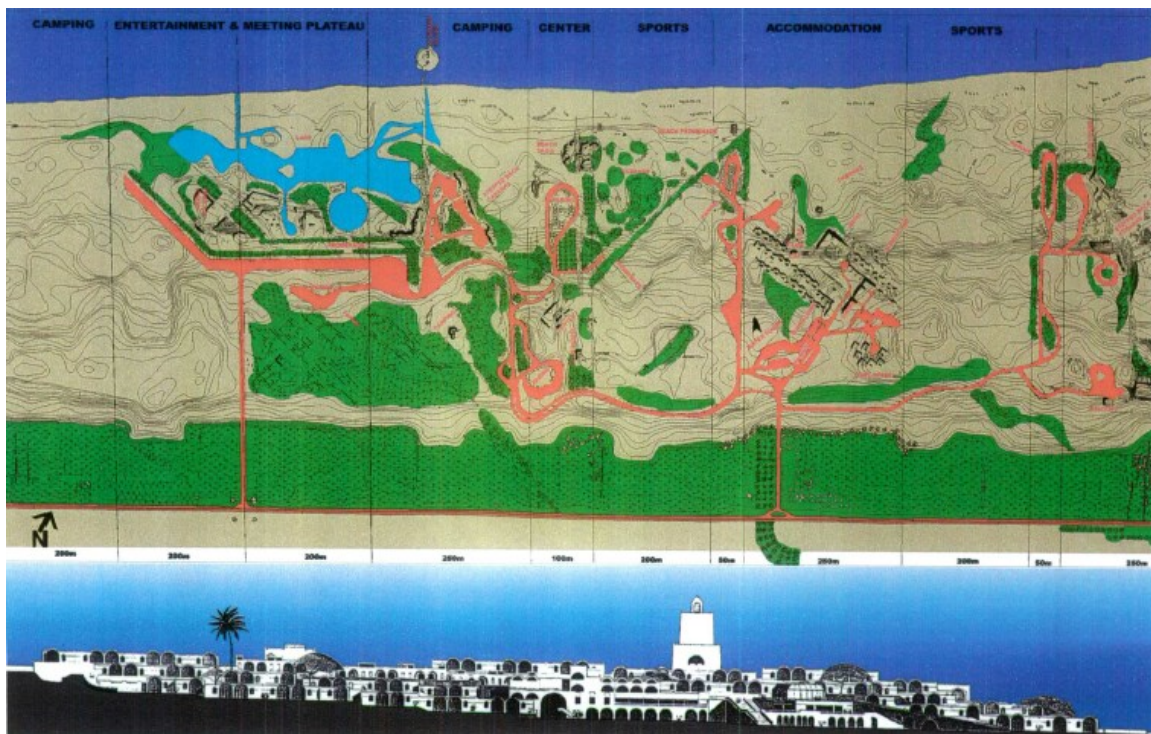


Figure 6 Marakia's initial design concept: site plan and sky-line. Source: (Attia, 1999)

During the construction of Marakia, the project was canceled and withdrawn from PUD consultants and another consultant was asked to re-plan and re-design Marakia. This is because PUD consultants refused to violate the carrying capacity standards that were set by the tourism policy. The second consultant's design concept aimed at achieving the maximum built-up area in order to increase profit (Attia, 1999).

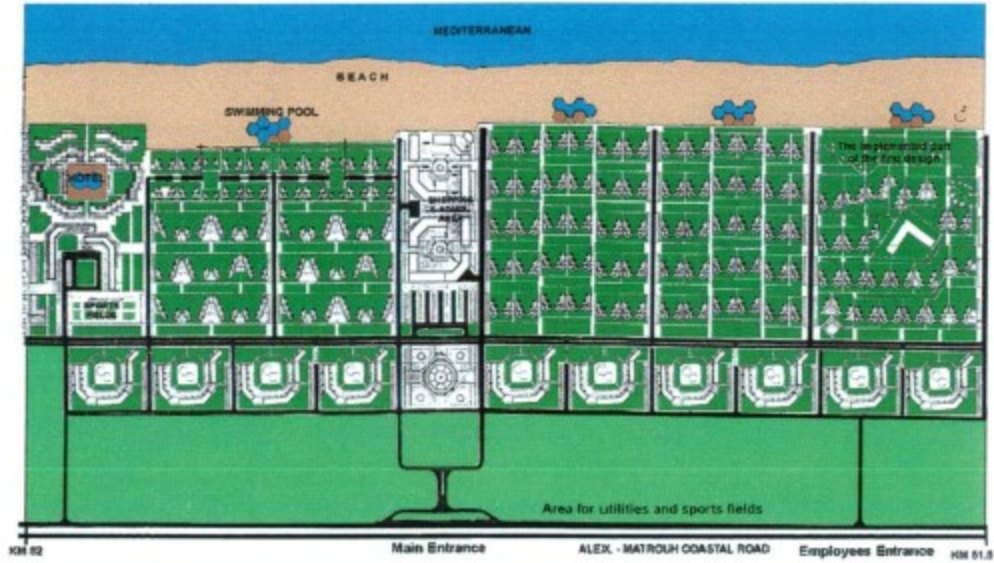


Figure 8 Marakia tourist village: the implemented project's masterplan. Source: (Attia, 1999)

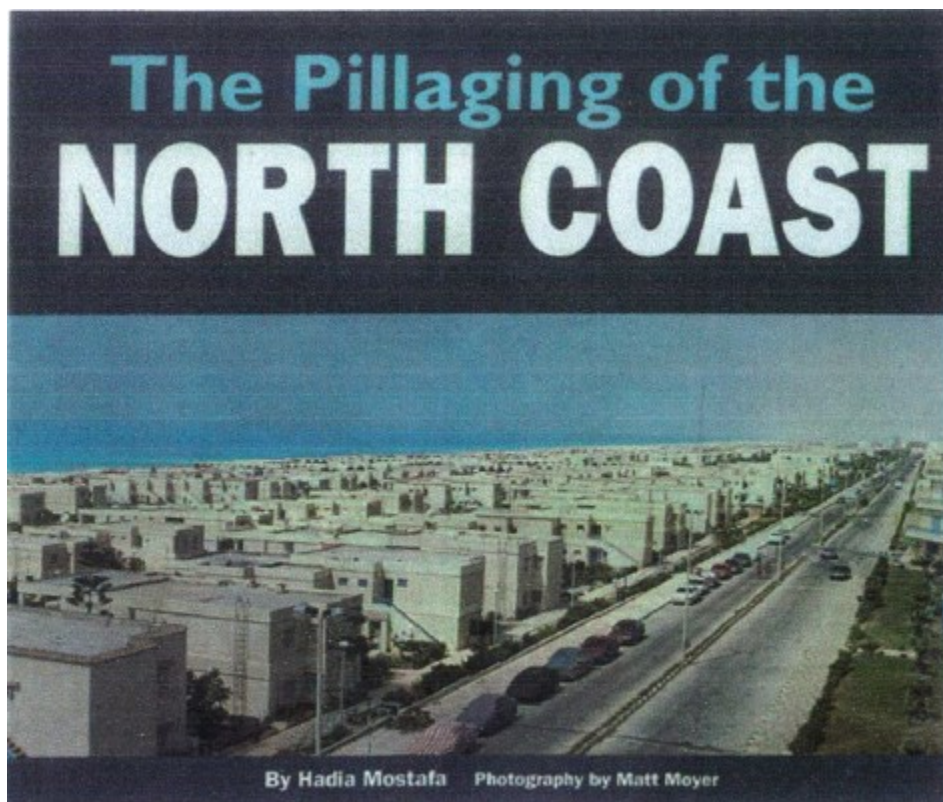


Figure 7 A photo of Marakia. Source: (Attia, 1999)



Figure 9 A satellite image of Marakia. Source: Google Earth

Marakia went from a spacious, low density project that took into account the natural appearance of the site, respecting the environment, into a project that portrays a monotony in the form of both buildings and open spaces. Thus, completely neglecting other important factors that produced positive long term effects and instead focused on the short term profit. The two consultants commissioned by the same government produced entirely different designs for the same settlement. The difference in land-uses and the areas assigned to each has drastically changed. For example, the area given to accommodation in the initial project was less than 4.5% of the total project area, while in the implemented project it equaled about 35%. That is almost 8 times as much. Moreover, the first project was planned to include a diversity of tourism attractions and leisure facilities to attract tourists, while the implemented project concentrated on exploiting the area for holiday homes development.

Accordingly, Marakia set a very bad example for future developments. That is mainly because it failed to abide by the guidelines of the tourism public policy, especially those relating to preserving the natural environment as well as the ones related to creating tourist attractions and facilities that would aesthetically appeal to tourists. However, Marakia actually sold out very well and thus, Marabella, its replica, was constructed using the profit made by Marakia as a result of doubling and event tripling the number of units in the village due to very high demand.

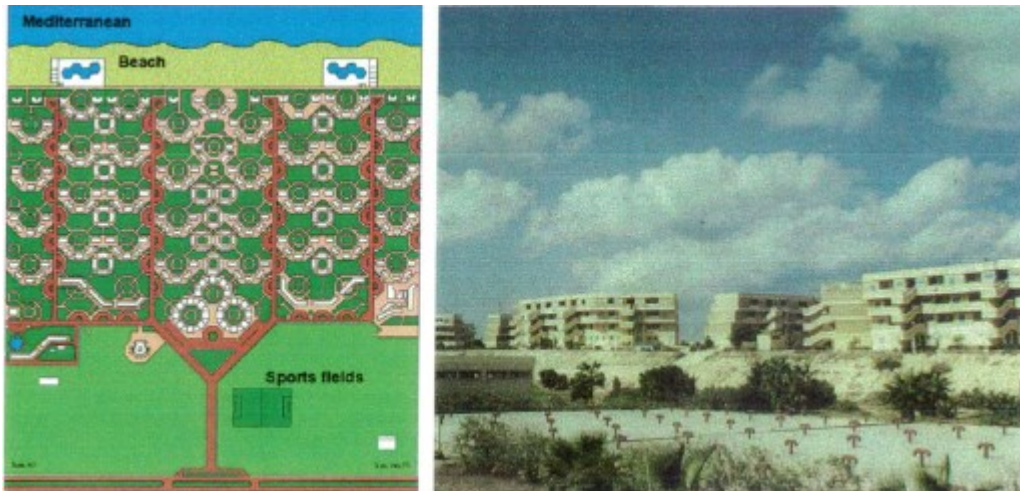


Figure 10 Marabella touristic village. Source: (Attia, 1999)

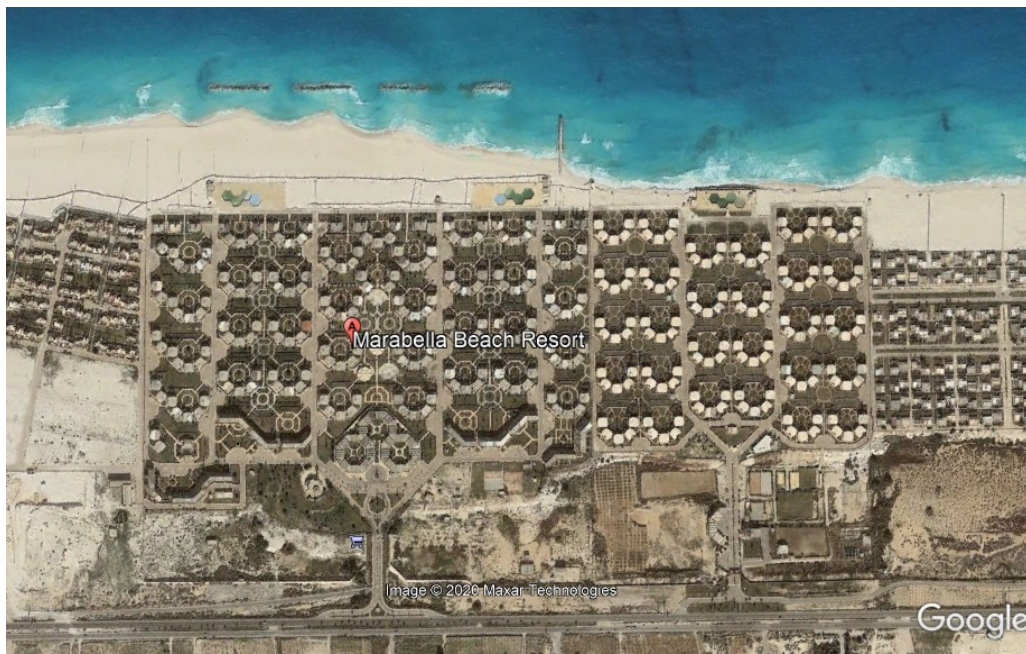


Figure 11 A satellite image of Marabella. Source: Google Earth

Marina El Alamein: the largest pilot project

Since Marakia was poorly designed, the president told the minister of MOR to implement better projects, having seen impressive developments in other coastal regions on the Mediterranean. As a result of terminating PUD's contract in developing Marakia, they were compensated by given the opportunity to respond to the president's wishes by working on a new development, 'Marina', in order to improve the tourism development in the NWC. Therefore, PUD had the opportunity to work on MOR's third touristic village while finally being able to apply the tourism policy's planning prescriptions. These planning prescriptions included "the planning prescriptions included the creation of unique local architectural styles, the implementation of economic activities that would attract permanent residents (hotels, motels, and tourist attractions such as a maritime center, a golf course, etc.), the planning regulations and carrying capacities, and reserved areas for day-trippers" (Attia, 1999, p. 232).

The site selected for the development was located in Al Alamein, which was where a battle took place in WWII, and therefore became very famous worldwide. Accordingly, it became a popular destination amongst a certain type of international tourists, who went specifically to visit museums and the cemetery located there. Marina is located between the 94th and the 114th km west of Alexandria and limited by the Mediterranean coast in the North, extending to around 500 meters south of the coastal road; covering an area of approximately 35 km² (20 km from east to west and between 1 to 2 km from north to south) (Attia, 1999).

Marina is the largest village on the whole Northwest Coast. It has 8 different gates that enclose thousands of residential units and huge lagoons- including the largest one on the coast. There is even a 'ministers' row' on an exclusive island (Sims, 2014).



Figure 12 Marina Al Alamein- phase 1 out of 2: implementation stages. Source: (Attia, 1999)

Marina’s phase one was divided into two implementation stages as shown in the figure above. The idea was design and implement centers 1 & 2 as an experiment- this was the first phase. While the rest of the centers were to be implemented afterwards (Attia, 1999).

The main constituents of the experimental area are as follows (Attia, 1999):

4 Holiday homes to bring a quick return on investment: sold during, and even before construction (220 villas and around 1500 chalets).

5 Two motels (120 rooms each) and a 5-star hotel (150 rooms), to attract international and domestic tourists (as well as providing job opportunities)

6 A marina to serve yachts coming from other countries

7 Fishponds (for fish raising)

8 Cabanas (40 of them, for day-use, in order to encourage day-trippers to visit)

9 A camping area, to attract camping and caravan tourists

10 Employees housing, to attract and accommodate the workforce

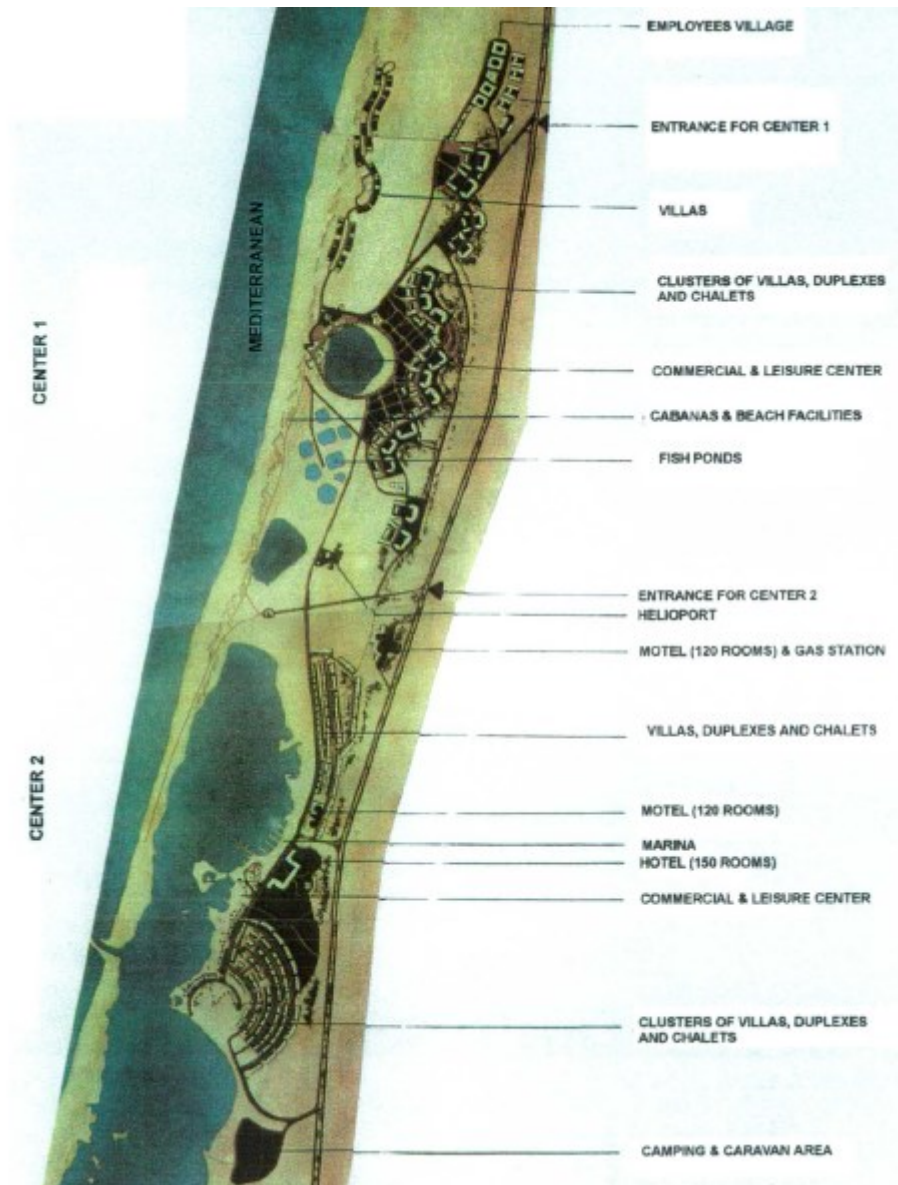


Figure 13 The experimental stage of Marina. Source: (Attia, 1999)

It was estimated that around 12,500 people would be living in the holiday homes of Marina, in addition to around 200,000 tourists per year. Also, this experimental area was estimated to generate more than 10,500 jobs (Attia, 1999).

Nevertheless, during the implementation phase, the minister of MOR requested to double the amount of housing in the experimental stage. The experimental area was completed in 1992. Accordingly, the green and open areas were replaced with more

holiday homes as per the request of the minister. This in turn has negatively affected the design concept of the development. In addition, neither the hotel nor the motels were implemented. Moreover, the cabanas, employees housing, the camping area and the fishponds were also cancelled. Thus, the project could no longer accommodate day-trippers nor international tourists (Attia, 1999).

Furthermore, in terms of employment, the project created 1000 jobs (seasonal jobs) instead of the initial target of 10,500 jobs. In the off-season period, there would be less than 200 employees in the village (Attia, 1999).

Overall, regardless of MOR sole goal of short-term economic gain and thus the negative effects it had inflicted on the development, the project was still under the control of PUD which has produced a unique, local architectural style that was then adopted in many other developments both in and outside of the NWC, and was considered a very trendy touristic village at the time. Even the use of local materials in construction was also replicated in other projects (in the 1990s) (Attia, 1999).

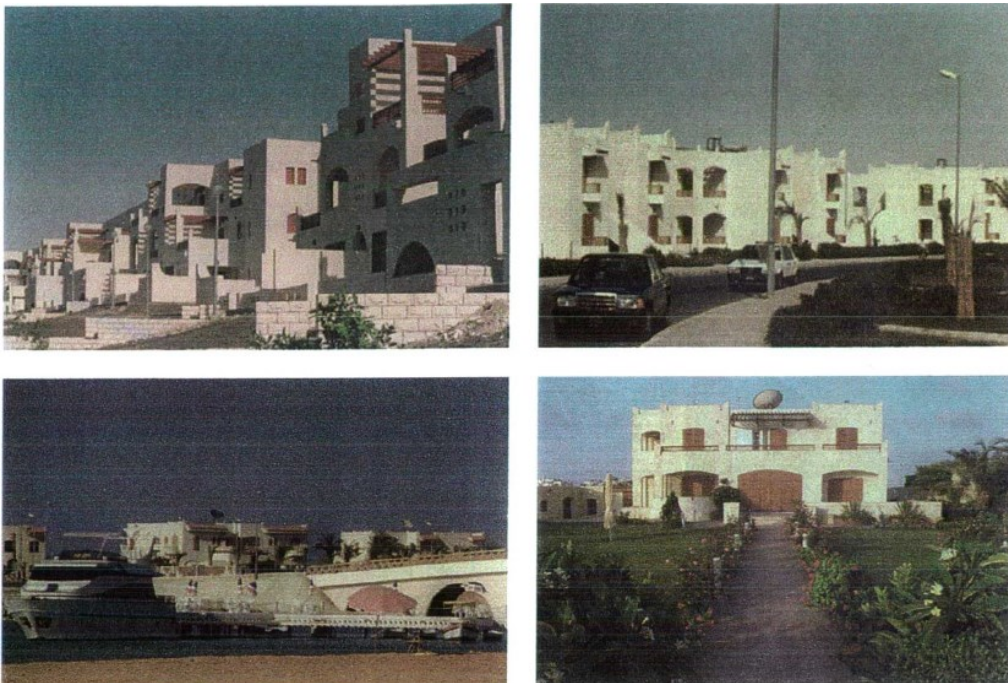


Figure 14 Photos of the experimental area in Marina. Source: (Attia, 1999)

Next, beachfront property in Marina used to sell for 200,000/300,000 EGP in 1992 and the price went up to 2 million EGP and even more by 1998 (Attia, 1999). Today, a beachfront villa in Marina has a resale price of 12,000,000 EGP (Property finder, 2020).

However, the NWC's public projects have failed to attract the population from the Nile Valley and Delta due to the lack in generating employment. Also, the situation got even worse when a different minister was assigned to MOR and demanded more holiday homes for his clan in the experimental area. When PUD consultants objected, they were excluded from supervising the rest of the project. Consequently, the intensification of the holiday homes in Marina continued transforming Marina into a failure after having been a successful, adjusted example to be followed (Attia, 1999).

As a result of MOR making 'big profits' from the NWC's real estate developments, developers became very attracted to the region. The main target of developers became either to create similar projects to those of the government or to buy the land and then resell it when the price increases. In the absence of both the government's control and a good example to follow, developers have only been motivated by quick return on their investment via developing holiday homes and neglecting the tourism policy. "How could the developers be concerned with implementing the policy recommendations while the government had been indifferent and itself had been the first violator of policy regulations?" (Attia, 1999, p. 285).



Figure 15 Marina as seen from the North Coast's main road. Source: Author (2020)



Figure 16 Marina's variety in architectural design. Source: Author (2020)

04 | CASE STUDY: MARASSI – NORTH COAST, EGYPT

04 Case study: Marassi — The North Coast, Egypt

4.1 The origins of the name

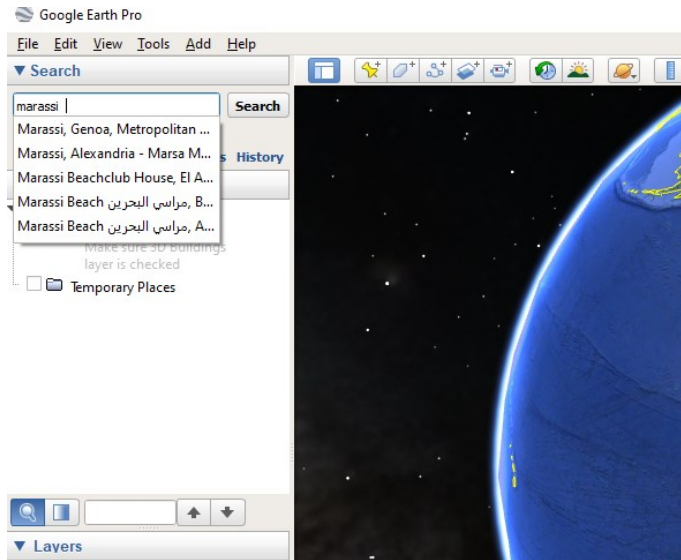


Figure 17 Google Earth search of the word 'Marassi'. Source: (Google Earth, 2020)

The name originates from the Genoese district called 'Marassi'. The toponym 'Marassi' is derived from two pre-Roman terms: 'Mar' and an ancient Ligurian suffix 'asc' - because it is spelt 'Marasci' in Ligurian. 'Mar' means sea and 'asc' indicated a stream. It has an area of 5.82 km², while Marassi in the NWC is slightly larger, 6.2 km²; yet still very similar in size.

In Arabic, Marassi also has a definition.

مَرَايِي: (اسم)

مَرَايِي : جمع مَرَايِي

الْمَرَايِي ، الْمِيْنَاءُ ، أَي مَحَلُّ عَلَى شَطِّ الْبَحْرِ خَاصُّ بِرُسُو السُّفُنِ

‘Marassi’ is a noun that is the plural of the word ‘Marsa’, meaning: Any area on the coast of a sea where it is suitable for ships to anchor. Such as anchorage, port or marina. Other than the Marassi in Genoa, and the one that this research is concerned with in Egypt, there is one more Marassi on the globe located in Bahrain. The Marassi in Bahrain is called the ‘Marassi Al Bahrain’, which is a real-estate development. Recently, construction of its latest addition/extension has taken place: called the ‘Marassi boulevard’. Yet, the Bahraini Marassi has a surface area of less than 1 km².

The three Marassis are all of close proximity to the sea, two of them directly by the sea (African and Asian- both planned) and the third (European) is an existing district that isn’t directly on the coast. The intended definition of the name in this case, was the Arabic definition (Interviewee-3, 2020).

4.2 Emaar: The Dubai-based developer

Emaar properties is a real estate development company located in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), yet operates internationally. Having proved its competencies in producing iconic real estate assets in Dubai, Emaar Properties has expanded to several flourishing markets in the Middle East, North Africa, Pan-Asia, Europe and North America.

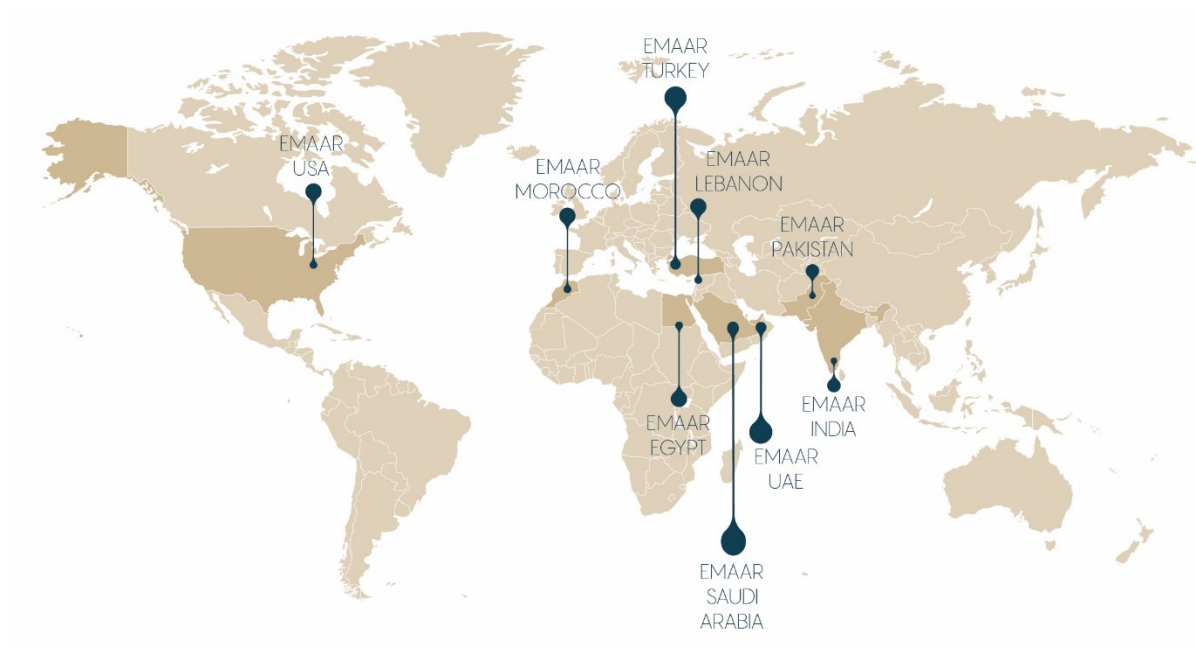


Figure 18 The locations of Emaar’s international headquarters. Source: Author (2020)

Their projects currently stand in more than 20 different cities in 9 different countries worldwide (Emaar, 2019).

"We are sharpening our strategy to be one of the world's most valuable, most innovative and most admired companies" says Mohamed Alabbar, Chairman of Emaar Properties PJSC (Emaar, 2019 webpage).

One of Emaar's most famous accomplishments is building the world's tallest building: Burj Khalifa, located in Dubai. It has been dubbed 'the vertical city' and 'a living wonder'. It is over 828 meters tall and has 160 habitable levels out of a total of 200-plus; exceeding any other building in the world. Overall, it features more than 170,000 m² in residential space, the Armani Hotel Dubai and the Armani residences. Connected to the tower are other facilities including offices and a health and wellness center. Moreover, the tower also offers recreational and leisure facilities including the world's highest restaurant, on the 122nd floor (Emaar, 2019 webpage).

Emaar is all about creating a destination. That is achieved by crafting a unique 'story' or concept behind any of their developments. Even though profit always comes first for any developer in the world, yet the strategies in how to obtain that maximum profit varies from one developer to the other. For example, Emaar spent approximately \$200,000,000 on the fountain of Burj Khalifa, whilst they could have spent this enormous amount of money on something 'more profitable' such as another real estate development. Yet, this was a compromise worth making in order to strengthen their 'story' and emphasize their significance as a world renowned developer, therefore, overall, maintaining their success and popularity. Families and friends visit this extravagant fountain, taking selfies as well as profiting some surrounding businesses such as small ice-cream shops. Emaar has created a 'place' that people experience and enjoy, making it a very 'instagrammable' and 'selfiable' destination for both locals and tourists. This is the exact same idea behind all monuments and top tourist attractions all over the world. The first thing people do nowadays is go to a popular or 'trendy' place to take a selfie to post on social media (Interviewee-3, 2020).

Simply, what Emaar thrives to create is a 'place as a product' as discussed in Lineu Castello's book 'Rethinking the Meaning of Place: Conceiving Place in Architecture-Urbanism'. "...the urban place needs to be understood as an urban concept in mutation. While place was previously a search for materialization of a utopia, it can also be considered as a product made in the image of a utopia today, but to be consumed in loco, as a tourist product or as consumer goods. Place can therefore be considered as an instrument of entertainment and can be constructed to be used as a strategy of urban administration..." (Castello, 2010, p. 82). In this case, the Burj Khalifa fountain would be considered an 'instrument of entertainment' that Emaar created to define the destination. The writer then continues to determine exactly what kind of understanding of a place was to be discoursed: "We are not so concerned with discussing place in terms of local squares and communal parks; or place as neighbouring streets, or place as neighbourhood units, or as places of individuality or community. That will be subliminally embedded in the discussions. The main concern here is to make some progress in the theory accompanying the study of places as products of the fusion of 'placemaking' and 'placemarketing' – resulting in products that can be included in places of cloning and which could form the new theoretical categories of what we wish to address" (Castello, 2010). The writer emphasizes that 'cloning spaces' uses 'placemaking' and 'placemarketing' in order to try reproducing or imitating certain characteristics found in urban spaces that we traditionally consider successful (Castello, 2010, p.83).

Why would a foreign investor/developer affect how exclusionary a development would be?

1. Foreign investors follow the rational of economic maximization and high-end developments yield higher returns per square meter.
2. The planning culture of the developer may highly affect how exclusionary the development becomes. An example would be Emaar's 'double gated' community approach that is in demand in the North Coast. The design concept itself already physically causes a sense of disconnection and detachment.

3. Feasibility is also another factor. The development becomes very feasible in the presence of a foreign investor and the return on investment is guaranteed and therefore the developer has the ability to be pickier when it comes to their customers. Only people that acquire certain criteria are welcome, e.g. old money.
4. Lastly, re-contextualization also plays a role. It is a process that is key for adaptation/improvement in different locations. If projects do not carefully bear in mind certain elements of its local culture, some groups of people may consequently be eliminated/excluded.

4.3 Marassi: The focus area

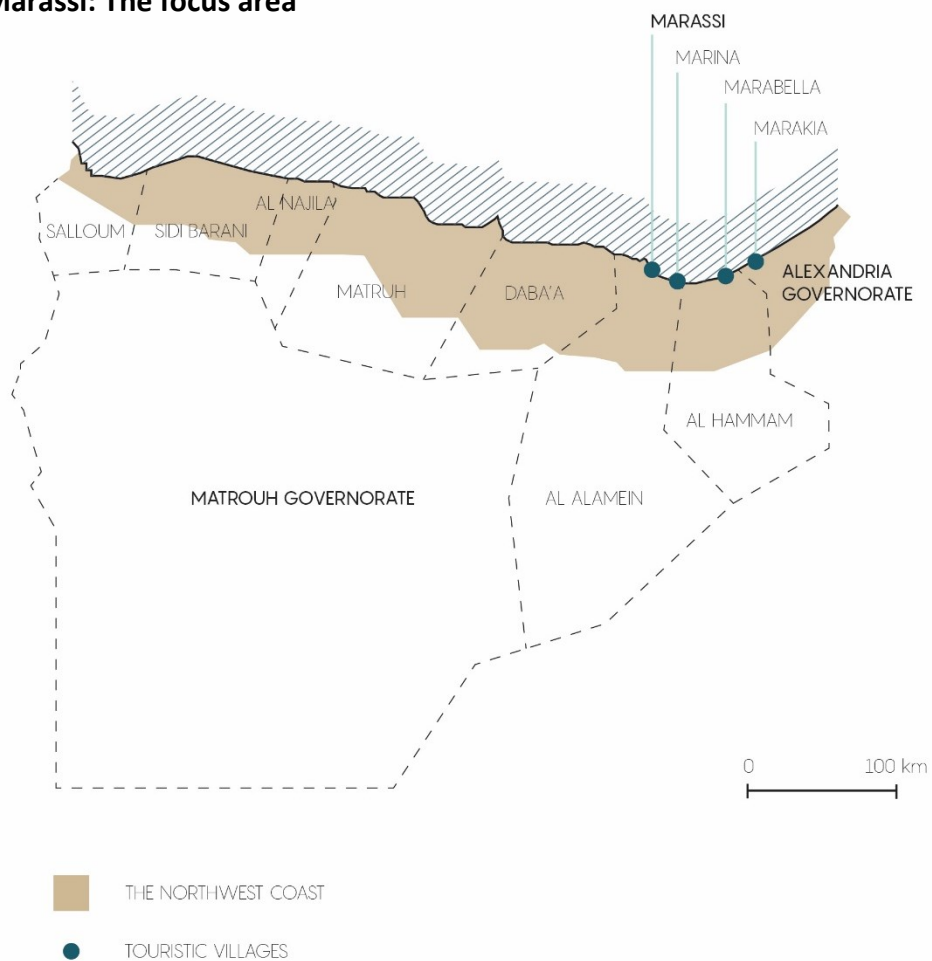


Figure 19 The location of the 3 pilot project and Marassi in the NWC region. Adapted from: (ElRashidy, 2019)



Figure 20 Masterplan of Marassi. Source: (Emaar, 2019 a)

Marassi is a gated community located in Al Alamein on Egypt’s Northwest Coast, with a beach extending 6.25 km along the Mediterranean Sea, 3.5 km of which are on the ‘Sidi-AbdelRahman’ bay. It belongs to Matrouh’s governorate, located exactly 125 km west of Alexandria. It is mainly well known due to its worldwide renowned developer, Emaar.



Figure 21 One of Marassi’s main gates. Source: Author (2020)

Marassi is 1500 feddans (approximately 6.3 km²). This total area represents a so-called ‘village’ that is actually made up of villages; what I would call, a village of villages. Each of those inner villages is gated and controlled, controlling the community inside them, since they are completely different in design, costs and therefore users (Interviewee-1, 2019). The four main gates of Marassi enclose many other gates. Once again, gates within gates.

This gated community is designed as a 'double gated' community. The first gate filters those who can enter and ensures that the place is secured, but the second sets of filters/gates only let in dwellers (whether owners or renters).



Figure 22 Gates inside Marassi/ internal separations. Source: Author (2020)

The importance of these gates emphasizes the value given to this bubble, in which people escape reality and the outside world, where outsiders are definitely not welcome. It may be referred to as a 'fortified enclave' – the term coined by Caldeira (2001) and discussed earlier in this research.

Separating both sets of filters runs a ring road. This ring road basically circulates the entire project. Directions to any facility in the whole project would be: keep going straight. It is simply a loop, surrounded by entrances to different parts of the project, some may be accessible (such as hotels) and some are private (such as the different living 'communities').

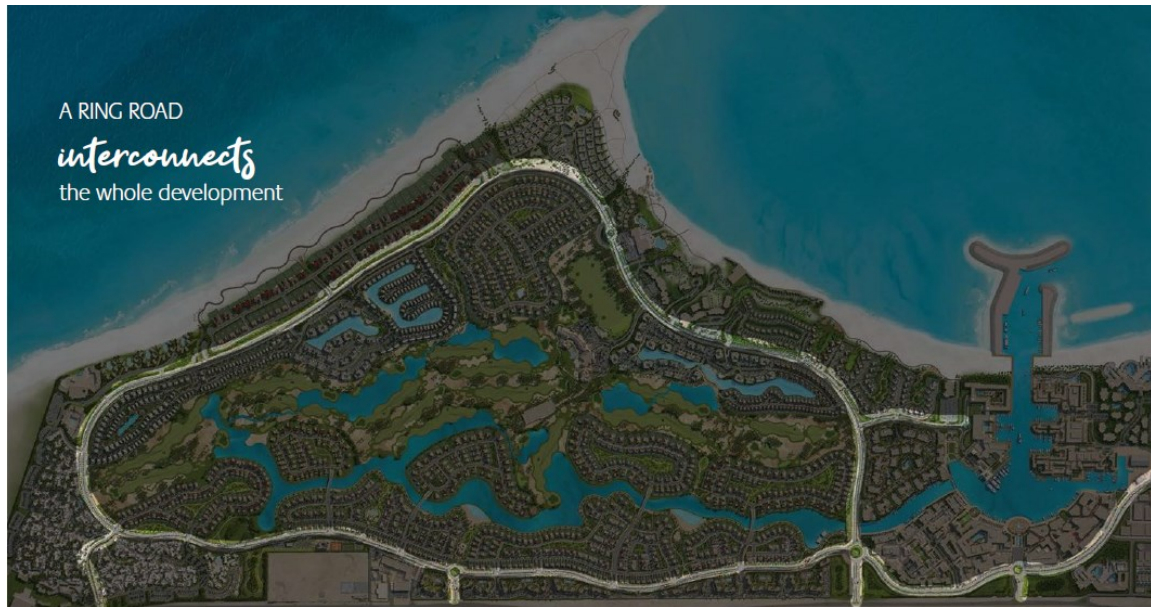


Figure 23 The masterplan of Marassi showing how the ring road circulates the whole project. Source: (Emaar, 2019 b)

The mixed use parts of the project such as 'Mporium' is public and accessible from the outside; and any of the bars etc. inside (in between both gates) are the parts that can be accessed by 'outsiders', otherwise only owners/renters have the authority to enter the specific parcels in which their homes are located (Interviewee-2, 2019).

Some phases of the project consist of chalets while others are just villas. Some villas cost between 100 and 125 million EGP. Therefore, it takes experience (nothing short of such a huge company) to have the ability to control these differences and ensure that every 'phase' or 'parcel' is indicated specific facilities that are designed accordingly, in which the users respect and adhere to these separations. The experience needed in the handling and managing of such a complex project is not easy and still causes issues between current users today; especially causing conflicts between those who own and those who rent, which will be discussed further on in this chapter (Interviewee-2, 2019).

The only requirements set by the state in order for Emaar to buy the land to build Marassi was simply to include 3500 hotel keys. This request is made to oblige the organization to include other services that will ensure that the hotels function always. This of course was required along with the normal obligations that would usually be necessary including the

cost of the land as well as respecting the specified setback from the sea (codes in general). When the Marina was designed, the necessary services that would be required in order for it to operate successfully needed to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the promenade and retail space were integrated. The same concept was applied to the hotels. The same concept was also used in a 5-star resort called Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai, the largest resort in the emirate (Interviewee-3, 2020).

Different parts of the development maintain different levels of exclusion. For example, the retail spaces welcome anyone, while the living communities are kept inaccessible to outsiders. Therefore, there are parts of Marassi that are less exclusionary, more exclusionary and finally, just as exclusionary as the rest of the coast:

1. Less exclusionary: Marassi in general tends to be less exclusionary than the rest of the villages on the coast since parts of it are (or will be once completed) completely open to the public. This mainly includes the mall that is accessible from the main road (Mporium) that has restaurants and shops, and the Marina that will include a lot of retail space (currently under construction). Marassi also has hotels that enable outsiders to access the touristic village (even though it is less affordable than other hotels in the region). Other villages such as Marina, because of the disparity between planning and practice, no longer has anything to offer to the public and therefore no parts of the projects are open for anyone to freely enter. Therefore, even though these public areas of Marassi are aspects that were created in order to make profit, they do serve the region as more inclusionary spaces anyway.
2. More exclusionary: Marassi is not necessarily more exclusionary than other villages on the coast. It is rather more “exclusive”; meaning that even though it does include certain spaces that are accessible to the public, it is still a luxurious project that is not affordable by many. Being permitted to enter a space is not enough if one can’t properly use it (e.g. be able to dine there or shop there).
3. The same as the rest of the coast: If we disregard the public spaces that Marassi has to offer, the rest of the project is somewhat just like the rest of the coast. It

is a closed bubble that exclusively serves and protects its residents, offering them certain facilities that correspond to the amount of money that they spent. Marassi only followed the kind of developments that had already been in demand since the 80s. All Marassi added was a foreign developer's expertise in designing a luxurious project that in turn increased the unaffordability- targeting the elite.

Plan overview: Concept & zoning

Briefly, Emaar does the following as they approach any of their projects (Interviewee-3, 2020):

1. Study the regulations and requirements of the project
2. Market demand/gap is analyzed
3. A feasibility study is conducted;
4. A development brief (i.e. a business plan) is defined,
5. The masterplan is produced (land-use/zoning),
6. Design process commences.

Marassi's masterplan is inspired by the Mediterranean region (Interviewee-2, 2019). It is divided into 21 separately enclosed zones (Emaar, 2019). Overall, Marassi is made up of 13,000 residential units (Interviewee-3, 2020). The units varied between townhouses, chalets, apartments and villas (Emaar, 2019). Most zones were given a name of a Mediterranean city, from which the design was inspired (Interviewee-2, 2019). The zones are as follows: Marassi bay, Vida residences Marassi Marina, Address residences Marassi beach, Marina west, The Greek village, Marina residences, Arezzo, Blanca, Catania, Celia, Isola, Safi 2, Valencia, Vectoria, Veneto Islands, Verona, Verdi, Riva villas, Lea, Faya and Neos (Emaar, 2019). Most of these zones have already been constructed and sold, yet some are still under construction or will be constructed in the near future. Other than the residential part of the project, Marassi is fully equipped with other amenities that deem it suitable as a year-round destination as they claim to be. It is planned to have 9 high-end luxury hotels (as well as other boutique hotels inside different communities),

community centers inside the living communities as well as other services that will ensure that the dwellers are surrounded by everything they need without having to exit their specific community (Interviewee-2, 2019). There are also swimmable lagoons and pools as well as non-swimmable lagoons that just provide 'enchanted' views. Moreover, there are different beaches offering different experiences that extend over 6.25 km of the coast as well as approximately another 11 km of waterfront that have been extended via the Marina. This international marina offers 40,000 m² of retail space and food & beverages (restaurants etc.), that of course once complete, will be open to the public (Interviewee-3, 2020). There is also an 18-hole golf course along with a golf academy. There is also a clubhouse as well as several bars. Also, another part that is accessible to the public is Mporium (the mall). Finally, a ring road interconnects the whole development and a 16.5 km promenade is made for pedestrians.

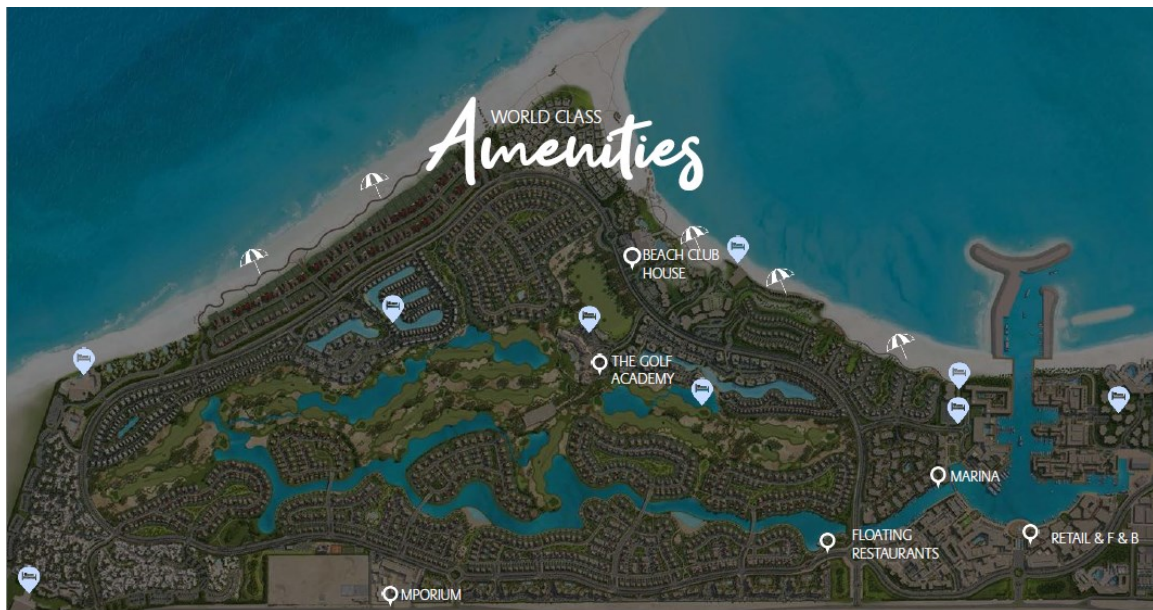


Figure 24 Marassi's amenities' locations in plan. Source: (Emaar, 2019 c)



Figure 26A vision of the Marina. Source: (Emaar, 2019 d)



Figure 25 Marassi's 18-hole golf course. Source: (Emaar, 2019 e)

The masterplan was designed by WATG, an architectural firm from California, U.S. Moreover, each zone was then designed by a different consultant. Even though the architectural design may be somewhat inspired by the city it is labeled as, the designs and landscape are generally very American influenced. Since different consultants have worked on different parts, there is absolutely no visual nor physical connections between

any of these internal communities. Even if there were, it wouldn't have mattered due to the lack of any form of link between them. They are completely independent from each other. Each consultant knew the different uses that surround their plot and the kinds of housing expected to be constructed around it, yet were only shown the actual plan/design if it was previously available. Each division was treated as a separate entity anyway, and therefore communication between neighbouring projects' consultants was unnecessary. All of the consultants were exclusively American, yet local consultants still had a role in double checking that the design output adhered to the local building codes. Once an issue was identified, the local consultant would adjust the design in cooperation with the international consultant in order to ensure that the designs comply with the local codes. The design brief given to the consultant by Emaar already included the slightest details that the designer should bear in mind, such as an extra room for the driver or such. Yet the local consultant checks issues more related to safety and evacuation for example. Aspects such as the distance between the bedroom and fire-escape are addressed and checked (Interviewee-3, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is Emaar that creates the story and sets the scene. Emaar decides the theme, overall concept, the requirements and the overall vision. Then, others produce and execute- under their meticulous supervision (Interviewee-3, 2020).

Also, it is important to note that Emaar has only used local materials throughout the project. Emaar is very cost-conscious and always bears in mind context when it comes to their projects (Interviewee-3, 2020). Materials are a chief element that highly influences contextual, aesthetic and above all economic aspects of any project. Therefore, it follows a 'design-to-cost'³ approach always- that is mainly why only local materials are used.

Next, Marassi is considered one of the most expensive developments on the coast, it is clearly designed for the elite considering the price range of their residential units. The units include apartments, Twin Houses, detached villas or Townhouses.

³ "Design to Cost is an organizational methodology for integrating cost management with decision making at the design stage." (aPriori, 2019)

The table below provides an idea of the price range of different residential units sold in Marassi (Aqar Map, 2019).

Table 1 Information about different residential unit types in Marassi

Residential unit type	Area range (m ²)	Price range (EGP)	Price range (EUR)
Apartments	From 73 to 480	From 2,396,888 to 12,576,888	From 139,475.87 to 731,854.14
Townhouses	From 232 to 327	From 7,211,888 to 11,035,888	From 419,662.65 to 642,182.74
Detached villas	From 322 to 785	From 11,119,888 to 48,241,888	From 647,070.73 to 2,807,214.76
Twin-houses	363	From 8,898,888	From 517,829.85

Furthermore, sales made in 2019 and 2020 so far include units that cost between 1,500,000 EGP and 120,000,000 EGP (equivalent to approximately 84,554.00 EUR and 6,764,319.92 EUR respectively).

To give a clearer idea of how ‘expensive’ these units are since it is quite a subjective matter, below is information on average earnings in Egypt:

The average gross annual salary in Egypt is EGP 245,204 which is equivalent to 13,997.76 euros (Egypt Salary, 2020).

Changes between design and construction phases

Due to the expertise accumulated over many years in many cities, not too many changes took place. Only one part of the project was re-designed, which is the ‘Greek village’ inspired by Santorini (Interviewee-2, 2019).

The phase was launched at the wrong timing and therefore not too much of it was sold due to low demand. It was planned for this phase to take up much larger land but as a result of what happened, the plan was stopped and replaced by a new design that met the market change and demands and was more appealing to consumers due to lower

costs. The new design was of townhouses and chalets called 'Riva', 'Faya' and 'Lia' of smaller surface area units, in order to accommodate to market demands and the need to lower the prices. Even though the original plan and design of the Greek village was beautiful, and even later copied by other developers, it was just too expensive and was launched at the wrong time. Therefore, creating smaller units which reflected on the lower prices was a very successful decision because they were actually sold out very quickly over the course of the 3 months of last summer (summer 2019) due to very high demand. A developer's main goal is of course, to make more profit. Therefore, the priority is always given to the market demand. A developer creates what will be sold and not always what should be sold (Interviewee-1, 2019).

However, this example underscores the importance of phasing a project. The experience Emaar has gained over the years allows them to sometimes stop, take a step back and rethink certain decisions in order to improve them (such as the Greek part of Marassi). Phasing the project for risk management leaves less room for mistakes and losses (Interviewee-2, 2019).



Figure 27 Before: The Greek Village & After: When most of the Greek village was replaced by new zones after not selling out as well as expected. Source: (Emaar, 2020 f) (Emaar, 2020 g).

What makes Marassi special?

- Differences between Marassi and neighbouring 'villages'

There are certain factors that deem Marassi special relative to its surrounding villages on the NWC. There are five main factors:

1. Developer (and the high quality outcome associated with them)

The developer's profile is already sufficient in order to make the project successful. People all over Egypt and the Arab world have a lot of trust in Emaar, and judging by Emaar's very appealing history, a satisfying quality of projects are therefore expected. Thus, although prices in Marassi may be much higher than neighbouring villages, it is always considered 'worth it' because of the very distinctive, high quality product always obtained. Emaar as a company has this positive reputation due to the size of their projects, quality of their projects, the number of sales and the maintenance of their projects (Interviewee-1, 2019). Emaar is also the only foreign development company working on a project on the whole NWC.

2. Facilities

The main attractive facility in Marassi is 'Al Alamein' hotel. The hotel was built by King Farouk in the 1950s and owned by the state. The hotel was a popular destination for many people from the Arab world in general, especially Egypt and the gulf countries (Interviewee-1, 2019). The hotel became a part of Emaar's properties after Mohamed Alabbar (the founder and chairman of Emaar properties) bought it (since it was on the land he bought for Marassi), and renovated it for about 1.5 billion EGP around 2 years ago (Interviewee-3, 2020). As a result, the hotel has become very elite and much more expensive (Interviewee-1, 2019). Even though the hotel's facades are pretty simple and the interior is very 'clean' and Italian inspired; it is the historical connotation that makes it much sought after. After all, it is the place the king used to stay. There are also two villas right beside the hotel that are within the hotel's premises and are rented as part of the hotel that once belonged to former president, Gamal AbdelNasser (served from 1954 – 1970) and his first vice-president, general and political leader, AbdelHakim Amer. Many

of the former visitors of the hotel find Marassi a very attractive choice of destination since it has made it possible for them to be able to permanently own a place there by purchasing a residential unit and gave them the opportunity to spend unlimited time in their favourite place instead of just going to the hotel (Interviewee-1, 2019).



Figure 28 Exterior & interior photos of Al Alamein hotel. Source: Author (2020)

Other than the hotel, there are many other facilities that make Marassi an attractive choice for many people. Other facilities include the huge golf course designed by the Swiss architect Peter Harradine, who is specialized in that. There are also many other facilities such as bars and a café/restaurant complex (that is the only part accessible for the public-the 'mall'). Facilities such as this golf course are exclusive to Marassi in the NWC, and does not exist in any other gated community in the whole Middle East by any other developer (Interviewee-1, 2019).

3. Landscape

The marina designed for Marassi is the largest in the NWC after Marina's (one of the three pilot projects), making it the largest one in a village developed by the private sector (Interviewee-1, 2019). Even though Marina's marina is larger in size, it has far less significance regionally, since it is only designed to accommodate the owners' boats and small yachts. It simply acts as a parking lot for the boats and as a space for leisure where the owners can roam around in their boats or jet skis. It is considered a lagoon rather than an actual marina with enough depth to receive larger boats. On the other hand, the marina in Marassi is an international marina that when complete (currently under construction), will act as a gateway to the Mediterranean. It will become a major access to the country by sea. Therefore, there will be a passport control and visas will be issued from there for international visitors. It is designed in order to be prepared to welcome visitors in larger size boats and ships (Interviewee-2, 2019). The visitors may then be able to stay in one of the hotels in the marina and spend time wandering around the promenade surrounded by the 40,000 m² of retail space. This whole phase has been completely designed to accommodate all the needs of visitors and will be one of the few public phases of the project (Interviewee-3, 2020). Moreover, the Marina is one of the factors of the whole development that makes it more regionally integrated; while in contrast, surrounding villages tend to be completely impermeable. The gates and boundaries of Marassi are kept solid in order to clearly identify and respect the different levels of privacy and therefore allows the development to function smoothly and successfully as a whole.

The large golf course is very unique and exclusive to Marassi. The landscape in general is of very high quality. The streets are full of flowers and the ongoing maintenance ensures the sustenance of the lush greenery and exceptional aesthetic qualities (Interviewee-1, 2019).



Figure 29 Well maintained greenery all over Marassi. Source: Author (2020)

Both the marina and the golf course are two aspects of the development that work towards the goal of making Marassi a year-round destination since people will go there to engage in activities they provide anytime.

4. Size

Marassi is currently the largest village by the private sector on the NWC. This does not bear in mind the villages currently under construction. There will be larger ones constructed in the near future. This makes Marassi the second largest village overall, Marina being the first (Interviewee-1, 2019). Moreover, Marassi has the longest

beachfront on the entire coast (6.25 km) and therefore the longest waterfront on the entire coast (17 km).

5. Location

One of the best unmatched qualities about Marassi is its unique location. Marassi is located directly on 'Sidi-AbdelRahman' bay which is considered one of the best beaches in the Middle East due to the Turquoise shade of its water and calmness of its waves. The beach of Marassi extends over 6.25 km of the coast, 3.5 of which are on Sidi-AbdelRahman bay and the other 3 km are on the normal open sea (Interviewee-1, 2019).



Figure 30 Al Alamein hotel's beach. Source: Author (2020)

Next, ANC is part of the reason why people have become more and more interested lately in buying holiday homes in the NWC. This is because everyone is witnessing the kind of development taking place there as well as the amount of money spent realizing the appreciation that is bound to happen there. Therefore, many consider buying an apartment in that region a good investment. This is the same concept that applies to Marassi specifically. When a world renowned developer decides to invest in that region, the state supports this by building better roads and renovating older ones etc. in order to help nurture this kind of development which in turn encourages people to invest, increasing the demand in the NWC region. People also become more interested when there is good accessibility. Other than the improved roads that encourage people to reach the region by car, there is also the Alamein airport nearby both ANC and Marassi. This airport is predicted to open to the public soon (currently only used for charter flights and private jets, i.e. not commercial), which makes Marassi special because of its close proximity. Nonetheless, the closest airport to Marassi is the one located in the 'old' North Coast capital, Borg El Arab, approximately 100 km away (while Al Alamein airport is less than 40 km away). A good project starts with good accessibility. Emaar creates a destination, demand increases for this destination, and therefore people want to spend their money there. Therefore, the state tries to ease the process seeing this progress and demand and starts to provide better roads (e.g. Alamein Wadi El Natroun road was opened in 2015) in order to help this project nurture. It becomes a win-win situation. (Interviewee-3, 2020).

4.4 A foreign developer's expertise vs. local tacit knowledge

Nowadays, the steady increase in the transnational circulation of ideas that are similar/alike and design solutions in order to obtain tourism-related urban environments, is quite clearly visible (Ponzini, Fotev, & Mavaracchio, 2016). This is especially evident in the projects of huge development companies such as Emaar, that duplicates certain aspects/features of its projects from one city to another. This has of course generated positive effect, but at the same time also generated some problematic consequences.

Even though Emaar is a worldwide renowned real-estate development company that has many years of experience working in over 20 different cities all over the world, it is crucial to involve locals and their knowledge in order to generate optimum outcomes. Emaar has made a huge step forward in incorporating 'tacit knowledge' in all their projects via opening up Emaar branches in all the countries they develop in. Prior to that decision, only sales centers were open in order to manage the sales of the residential units to potential buyers. This major shift took place during the time that Marassi was under construction (specifically during the construction of phase 1). Therefore, a clear change in perspective is vividly visible when comparing the first phase of the project (that was completed prior to that shift) with the rest of the phases to date. Emaar has managed to benefit from tacit knowledge by recruiting locals, duplicating the positions that would have been in charge of these projects abroad from the head office in Dubai. As a result, minor changes during the design process have generated better results and noticeably more sales. This is because no matter how experienced and successful a development company such as Emaar is, this is information that they wouldn't otherwise be able to obtain. It is experience that requires accumulation of knowledge over many years and by those who truly 'live' that specific culture and comprehend its people's mindset. Many would assume that, in the end of the day, Dubai and Egypt are both 'Arab' countries and that shouldn't be too different when it comes to residential preferences. This cannot be more untrue. That is proved by the issues that were later noticed in phase 1 of the project, that actually has certain features 'copied & pasted' from other projects in Dubai, also by Emaar. Only phase 1 of Marassi (Arezzo, Verona and Valencia) had 'copied' features and recycled plans from previous Emaar projects in Dubai. Yet the rest of the development had designs made exclusively for it and therefore the design brief given to the American consultants had to include decisions that were based on culture and lifestyle, that the consultants wouldn't otherwise know. Requirements included specifics to do with the concept of holiday homes for example and how they are preferred to be, the kind of features they should have and a full understanding of how they differ from the normal homes in the city- the design needs to correspond to the change in lifestyle. While it is

normal and expected for such a huge development company to re-use its designs and recycle previously used plans from its humungous library that has been accumulated over the years. This has generated certain implications, and definitely not all of them were positive; hence, the company taking the huge step of transferring the 'brains' (opening up headquarters) in every city they worked on.

Firstly, people from Dubai don't exactly have this concept of second homes, while in Egypt, most families have second homes by the coast where they would usually spend their holidays. Some people even have third homes, because where Egyptians spend their summer holidays is different to where they spend their winter holidays (usually by the Red Sea, where the weather tends to be warmer). The requirements and aesthetics of this second home or holiday home tends to be quite different to their normal/permanent homes. Usually second homes are very spacious and quite lightly furnished. They usually have open kitchens and a full 'open' wall to maximize the views in the living room (an open frontage); whether viewing the sea, a garden or simply to produce an open, breezy atmosphere. In Dubai, and even the rest of the GCC region, the climate is too hot to consider these design aspects. They heavily depend on air conditioning and their facades tend to have more solid than void which of course eases the furnishing process (not an aspect to consider in Egyptians' second homes). This is one of the first issues that were noticed after phase 1 was complete. The windows were too small. This duplicated design element turned out to be quite the opposite of the Egyptians' preference (Interviewee-3, 2020).

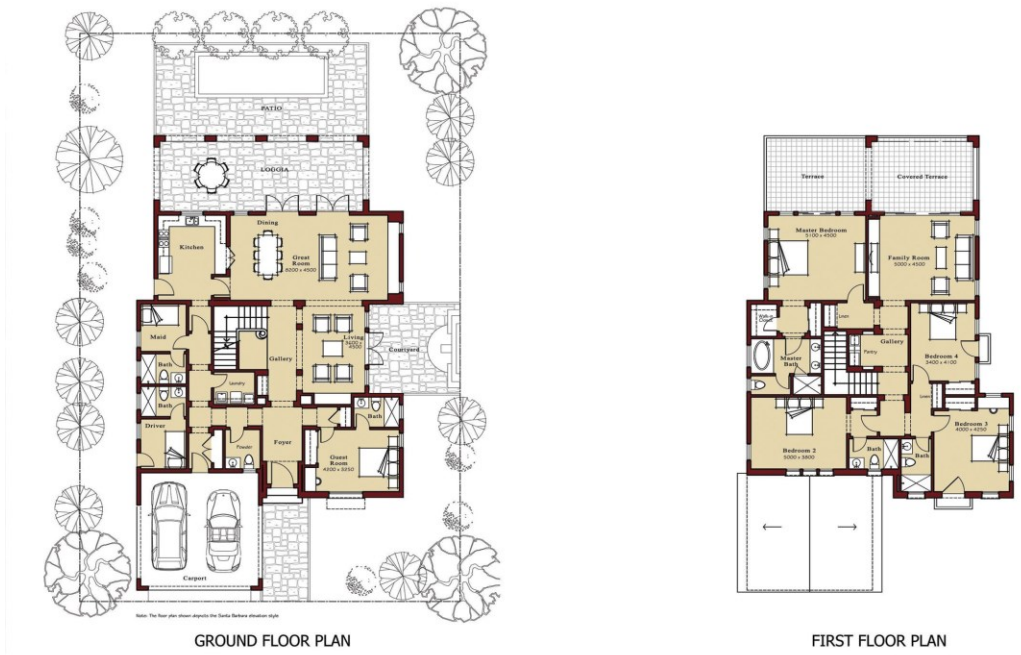


Figure 31 Plans of a villa in Arezzo (part of phase 1 of the project), showing small openings. Source: (My home, 2011)

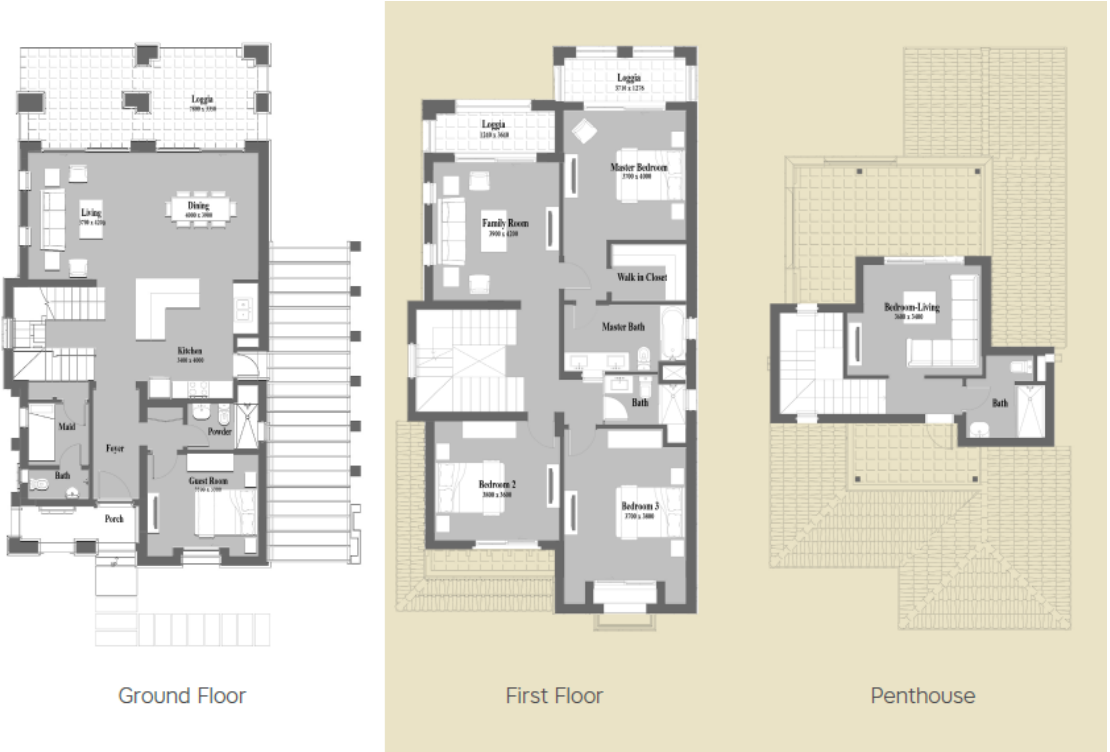


Figure 32 Plans of a Riva golf villa showing large openings (as preferred by the Egyptians). Source: (Emaar, 2019 h)

BUILDING G

1 BEDROOM APARTMENT



Figure 33 Plans of a chalet in Marassi's Marina phase showing large openings. Source: (My Egypt Real Estate, n.d.)

Moreover, Egyptians really care about the wind direction since this will highly affect the level of comfort in their homes as well as making it cheaper for them since they won't have to opt for air conditioning along with all the expenses and bills related to it. Therefore, Egyptians would initially rather pay more and purchase a residential unit that is 'Bahary' rather than 'qebly' and have to deal with the heat later. 'Bahary' simply means facing the north direction where the weather is usually better. The word 'Bahary' literally translates to 'maritime' or 'nautical', in this context usually referring to an apartment or a house facing the sea. This is a word that has been used for thousands of years, since the Ancient Egyptians have geographically divided the country into two parts; the northern region of Egypt (Cairo and above), and the southern part. The river Nile has been taken as an axis, the top part being 'bahary' and lower part of it being 'qebly', also referred to as 'Upper Egypt'. The characteristics of the top part, specifically the coast are that the climate is generally cooler there due to the prevailing wind arriving from the north (from Europe). On the other hand, below Cairo, the other cities generally have a hotter climate.

These labels that were primarily given to divide the country as a whole into two parts, are now used on a much smaller scale, describing the different facades/directions a residential unit is facing. Within the same building on the North Coast for example, a 'bahary' facing unit (one that is facing the north/sea/cooler wind direction) is more preferable and expensive than a 'qebly' facing unit (one that is facing south). In phase 1 of the project, the masterplan design developed residential units that were not 'bahary' which made them much harder to sell. Once this issue was established, the rest of the phases of Marassi took this aspect into consideration in order to provide what would essentially sell better. That is tacit knowledge.



Figure 34 Numbers 12 & 13 representing the living communities of 'Arezzo' and 'Verona' (part of phase 1) showing buildings facing different directions rather than the desired direction of the sea (north). Source: (Emaar, 2019 i)

In addition, roof access is always a plus in villas in the NWC for example, while in the gulf countries, they're usually inaccessible. This is once again, due to the climate. In Egypt, this is generally a feature in a house that people tend to enjoy (Interviewee-3, 2020).

The villas had also been designed 'back to back' which meant that the gardens of both houses would be facing each other which also meant a lack of privacy for the dwellers.

Other than the fact that a lot of women in Egypt are veiled, it is not socially preferred in general to be that exposed to the neighbours. Privacy is an essential factor to Egyptians when purchasing a home. Such issues triggered the big step that Emaar took in opening up a branch in Egypt in order to avoid such problems in the rest of the phases of Marassi as well as future projects in Egypt and worldwide. Transferring the decision making of the company (opening up Emaar headquarters) into every city they work on has allowed locals to pass on their tacit knowledge that has in return improved the projects and made them more suitable locally; benefitting the system as a whole. This has made Emaar a very trusted real-estate 'expert' not only in Dubai, but worldwide.



Figure 35 Number 15 represents a part of the project where the buildings were 'back to back', i.e. gardens facing each other. Source: (Emaar, 2019 j)

Furthermore, in the gulf, houses generally tend to have a 'majlis' (a room to receive guests and sometimes a religious space), yet this is definitely not a requirement in Egypt. Design elements as such as determined and driven by the market, culture, use and experience.

This differs even within the country. For example, since holiday homes in the North Coast are 'second' homes, the villas there include a room for the driver. In Cairo a driver may just go back home at the end of the day, yet on the North Coast, three hours away from the capital, a room needs to be available for them to stay the duration of the trip. Even though this is not always a requirement in Cairo, this is absolutely crucial in the North Coast.

Moreover, another example of the exporting of plans can be witnessed in the 'Arabian Ranches' development in Dubai, also by Emaar. This project has some common plans/features with Marassi that have been taken back to Dubai after they have been deemed successful in the North Coast of Egypt. It is usually a specific person that identifies a 'successful' or admirable feature in a project that they request implementing in another city/project. This example further demonstrates the mobility of plans and how they travel back and forth between the different Emaar destinations. A more specific example that exists within the same country but different cities is 'Vectoria' in Marassi and 'Isadore' in Uptown Cairo. Similar features are visible in those specific zones of both projects. It is never that the whole project is transferred, or even a whole quadrant of a project. It is usually a specific villa, a specific plan or a certain feature that is circulated among other developments. Also, this is usually accompanied by a 'facelift' that therefore provides the different projects with somewhat a different appearance even if the plan is identical. In Egypt alone, Emaar has developed Marassi in the North Coast (13,000 units), Uptown Cairo (8,000 units) and Mivida also in Cairo (6,000 units), and therefore it is definitely worth circulating the plans in order to maximize profit and ease the process for a developer with such a huge library (Interviewee-2, 2019). It is interesting to study such cases of transnational mobility of similar projects since it helps us comprehend their particular features, but it also emphasizes the relevance of the 'local' in both the circulation and more importantly, the adaptation of such projects. Therefore, this process vividly illustrates the extent that global mobility influences urban transformation and place-making. A good reason why some plans are replicated is because they have been successful elsewhere and therefore transferring them to another place reduces the risks

since they have already generated positive outcomes; even though the goals, planning and political arrangements, etc. of the antecedent project could have been different (Ponzini, Fotev, & Mavaracchio, 2016).

Next, since a developer's prime goal is to make profit, the target customer would be anyone who has the money to buy. Yet, in developments such as Marassi, this may be an element of failure for the project. Unfortunately, Egypt's stratification affects the way the real estate market functions in Egypt- classism highly impacts the decision making. Social segregation and discrimination plays a huge role in the choice of who can buy a property in such gated communities. They are gated for a reason. It is what a certain class of people (the elite) have demanded and have interest in paying for. They pay to live in socially divided environments; especially in a country like Egypt where the gap is huge between the rich and the poor. All a developer like Emaar does- is provide. Therefore, as a result, several socioeconomic factors, such as race, appearance, background or education, and not just the financial capabilities of a certain family are taken in consideration when a sales representative sits down with a potential client to discuss the purchase of a property. If the customer doesn't meet the 'requirements' needed to buy a residential unit created for a certain class where they don't fit in, they simply would not be allowed to buy it. The sales representatives in Emaar are fully aware of the consequences that may occur if an 'unwanted' client owns a property in Emaar and therefore are very picky with whom to sell to. The prime goal suddenly becomes not only to make profit, but to make profit from the 'right' people. According to one of my meetings held to gather information about the selling strategies for such huge developers, it has occurred that a residential unit was available in Marassi and even though the customer had the millions to cover the cost, he was told that "this unit is now sold out" in order to avoid him from purchasing it. This is due to him being from a lower social class and therefore has a completely different culture, background and morals. The conflict that this strategy avoids is actually very serious and may lead to issues once these different classes co-exist in the same place, let alone the same beach, for example. The most obvious, classic, recurring example would be a young woman (typically from the higher class) sunbathing

in her bikini, while a middle-aged man continues to make her feel uncomfortable by staring or commenting since this may be against his morals or beliefs or background in general. This simple conflict is the reason that this strategy exists, and also the reason people are more willingly paying tons more, encouraging this form of segregation in order to enjoy comfort, confidence and relaxation. It seems almost impossible to solve this issue, since people's education, social class, background, traditions and morals differ from one person to the other, let alone, one town and one city to the other. Of course, the situation would be even more risky and extreme if a place such as Marassi was affordable to everybody. Hypothetically, even if only the beach was open to the public, the scenario briefly described earlier could generate negative results including sexual harassment as well as numerous other crimes. Finally, it may seem quite unjust to deprive a person of their rights, yet in some cases it becomes the only valid option in order to avoid bigger problems that may occur in the future. Therefore, it becomes their job as 'successful' developers to work on the basis of supplying this exclusionary gated community. It tends to be more oriented towards the elite who have more of a 'western' lifestyle and mindset. Having enough money will not be enough if you are 'nouveau-riche'; only 'old money' is accepted. Also, being one of the destinations the current President of Egypt, AbdelFattah El-Sisi goes to, it has to be secure and always on point.

Also, even though Emaar is Dubai-based, Emaar Egypt on the other hand is actually an Egyptian company and is a different entity yet still falls within the umbrella of Emaar. Emaar Egypt takes the full profit of its developments and therefore money stays in the country essentially benefitting Egypt in many ways (profit, employment rates, overall helps improve the country's GDP). Yet, in return, Emaar Dubai still makes profit indirectly from the Egyptian developments since it is the provider of the brand. They are paid back for their support, yet not directly through the profit made from the projects. Emaar Dubai's main benefit in producing Emaar Egypt as well as other Emaars over the world is the growth and expansion, which of course, still translates into money.

4.5 Owning vs. renting: interviews with users

There has been a clear discrimination and therefore segregation between users of the village. Owners started complaining about those renting residential units in Marassi over the summer or during high season in general (Interviewee-2, 2019). The specific complaint is usually that those renting are not of the same social class or as high level as those who own homes there. Therefore, they are unhappy sharing the same beach or using the same facilities as others who are just temporarily renting. Even though renting a villa during high season in Marassi costs around 25,000 EGP per night (which is just over 1,400 euros), yet owners still find it unfair to have to share anything with them having paid millions of Egyptian pounds. Therefore, Emaar have managed this by separating the entrances of the owners and renters. Owners and renters currently enter via separate gates. There is also a beach specified for those renting; that may also be used by owners if they wish to do so. Otherwise, owners have another 'better', more exclusive beach that is on the Sidi-AbdelRahman bay, which means it has clearer and still water. Unlike the other beach (the 'north beach') used by the renters, which is just on the open sea (Interviewee-2, 2019). Those renting their units in Marassi have also been complaining since the renting rates have decreased since those renting are not interested in using the beach of the open sea, and instead are specifically renting in Marassi in order to enjoy the bay instead, which is what differentiates it from other villages on the coast. Therefore, in response to that issue, the management have split the beach on the Sidi-AbdelRahman bay into 3 thirds: 2 third for the owners and 1 third for the renters.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the project of Marassi has different (clearly marked) levels of privacy with a specific type of users that are permitted to enter/use that segment.

The different levels of privacy include public, private, semi-private and semi-public. Below are some information concerning where these different levels of privacy exist in the project.

1. The public parts of the project that are accessible by potentially anyone, are an aspect that makes Marassi special. This includes Mporium (the mall/café complex) and the Marina that includes a large retail space.
2. The Private area of the project comprises the residential units.
3. The semi-private part of the project is the residential communities, which have limited access to those either owning or renting residential units inside that specific community, i.e. the people who are permitted to enter the 'second set of gates'.
4. Finally, the semi-public areas of Marassi include the ring road and certain bars and facilities accessed by some of the public, that have been filtered and are allowed to enter the first set of gates.

These different spaces listed above involve different users that may be grouped in the following classifications:

1. Firstly, there are two different type of dwellers, either people who own residential units there or ones who rent.
 - a) Owners
 - i- Some owners currently permanently live in Marassi.
 - ii- Yet, there are also owners who enjoy their property seasonally.
 - b) Renters
2. Another group of users are the 'unfiltered' public, i.e. anyone (those allowed into the public spaces of the project).
3. Next, the 'filtered' public are the segment of the public that are neither owners nor renters in Marassi but still have the ability to use certain facilities.
 - a) They may be friends and/or relatives of dwellers in Marassi.

b) Or, they may also be people with good personal connections/relationships with certain actors (e.g. bar owners/managers) that exclusively allow them to enter.

Of course these different classifications of people include a mixture in each between Egyptians and foreigners (the majority being Egyptians).

A survey was carried out to obtain more information on certain aspects regarding living in either Marina or Marassi (whether owners or renters).

Most of the questions (see appendix B) were open-ended. Giving options would have limited the answers to what I already know rather than obtain new information.

17 people took the questionnaire and the majority (more than 70%) stayed at Marina. This was a very expected result since Marassi is way more expensive and also newer and therefore the majority would have probably visited Marina at some point since it is one of the oldest developments on the coast and it is therefore more probable that people have either bought or rented a residential unit there. 10 out of 17 people replied with a 'yes' to whether 'brand matters' or not.

A typical response received from owners in Marina regarding what they disliked about the village was "it doesn't have enough activities and amenities". The village does not have much to offer apart from housing and very minimal facilities. On the other hand, what people like about Marina is that it is 'cozy' and that it is 'old school Sahel' (Sahel means coast in Arabic referring to the Northwest Coast). 'Old school' implies that the place makes people feel nostalgic as Marina was very popular especially to the younger generation that went there when they were kids. Today, there are many new villages that are considered more 'trendy', yet they lack context and this feeling of reminiscence that is mainly due to the unique architecture of Marina. Transnational architecture and the mobility of plans worldwide has generated newer villages that have no identity, and could be placed anywhere in the world. Some owners have also admitted to renting other residential units further along the coast in places such as 'Marassi or Hacienda' (specifically mentioned) in order to be able to enter better 'beaches' and experience a

better 'night-life'. Yet, most of the respondents that own residential units in Marina said that they do stay there and not rent elsewhere.

In contrast, those who own in Marassi have almost all complained about the same aspect: outsiders. The one aspect they disliked the most about the village is the 'standard of people' who rent during the high-seasons.

4.6 Future plans

Marassi is already 80% completed: constructed, sold and used. The leftover 20% belongs to more phases of residential units as well as the most important phase of the project: the marina. The marina will become an international marina that will have a yacht anchorage with the capacity to fit around 400 to 500 boats and yachts. There will be promenades designed and a duty-free with high-end brands attracting many consumers from all over the world since this marina is planned to act as a gate to Egypt from the Mediterranean. 50% of the construction and the sales relating to the marina phase are already completed and by next year the second half will also be launched (Interviewee-1, 2019). There are a total of 9 hotels in Marassi, 4 of which are in the Marina itself. The first two hotels are already completed in the first 50% of this phase (Address hotel and Vida hotel) and the other 2 will be completed as part of the following 50%. There are hotel apartments in the hotels that are currently being sold. All of these hotels at the Marina will be international hotels, all under the umbrella of Emaar worldwide. Also, the most luxurious phase of villas of the whole project called 'Marassi bay', will be under construction in the near future (Interviewee-1, 2019).

In addition, other plans concerning education are currently on the table. Building education institutes such as schools and a university is still a possibility under discussion that would support the main target of making Marassi a year-round destination (Interviewee-3, 2020).

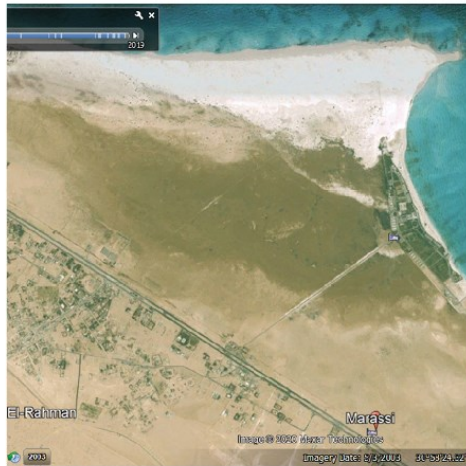
4.7 Marassi vs. Marina

Even though Marina was meant to set an example (and it did, but only architecturally/aesthetically), its failure in applying the tourism policy has resulted in not supporting the region's main goal which is to become year-round. On the other hand, Marassi's main target has been to make it a year-round destination, targeting both domestic/international tourists as well as permanent residents. This is currently Marassi's focus considering all the facilities it has to offer as well as the ones under construction that will soon be available. An example of this could be the marina in Marassi that will act as an entrance to Egypt via the Mediterranean, that will turn Marassi into a hotspot on the coast. In contrast, Marina's marina (even though it is larger in area) has no significant use (is not international and does not have other facilities such as retail space/ hotels etc.), and merely acts as a lagoon for the residents to enjoy their small boats and jet skis. Marina's lack in facilities will not enable it to keep up with new developments taking place on the coast, yet Marassi has the ability to compete due to all it has to offer.

Yet, no matter what happens, or how the coast evolves, Marina will always be the essence of the North Coast, where a lot of people's memories were made. Even if Marina set the wrong example, it was still a lesson from which current developers learnt. Longevity should always be a priority, never the short term benefits.



Figure 36 A satellite image of Marina Al Alamein. Source: Google Earth



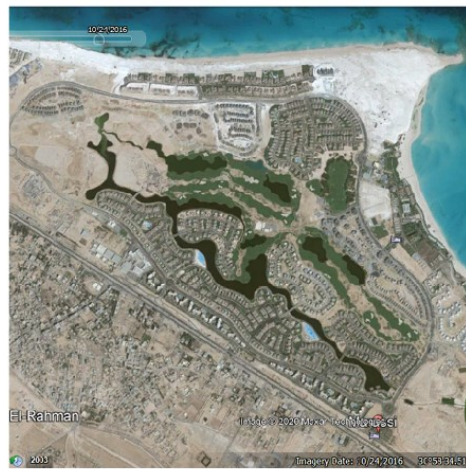
2003



2009



2012



2016



2019



2020

Figure 37 Satellite images of the development of Marassi from 2003 to 2020. Source: Google Earth

05 | IMPORTED EXCLUSION AMPLIFIES THE NORTHWEST COAST'S PLANNING ERRORS

05 **Imported exclusion amplifies the Northwest Coast's planning errors**

5.1 Marassi is more exclusionary in the private areas & less exclusionary in the public areas

Exclusion at the regional scale

In conclusion, planning processes of the NWC have not had the desired outcome. The main issue the NWC was supposed to resolve was the human settlement issue by promoting other alternative economic activities to agriculture. This is because of the overcrowding and high density of the population living on 4% of the country's land, along the Nile Valley and Delta, negatively affecting Egypt's fertile land and therefore, food production. Instead, the NWC has turned into a wall of privatized touristic villages that have almost fully occupied the Mediterranean coast, leaving no public spaces by the beach. This has therefore resulted in an exclusionary region, exclusively targeting the elite, while neglecting the locals. This continuous leapfrogging has occurred following the examples (i.e. pilot projects) set by the public sector that prioritized short term profit and political advantage and gave too much attention to market effectiveness over long term management objectives, neglecting the more valuable issues of social needs and public interests.

Answering the general question, planning processes in the NWC have instigated exclusionary planning by the following aspects:

1. Economically:
 - The October working paper that emerged after the 1973 October war included some policies that took part in generating this privatization of the coast and the erection of these exclusionary touristic villages. One of the policies was the 'Infitah'- this 'open door' economic policy was meant to develop Egypt's economy

by opening up to the west and to foreign investment. Accordingly, this has allowed the flow of foreign capital, moving towards a capitalist approach by providing the initial push of the opening up of Egypt's coasts to privatization. The government's involvement in developing the NWC region was conducted by focusing on the real-estate market like a private developer, rather than implementing strategies that are based on a long term approach to tourism development (as initially intended).

2. Politically:

- After the October war, MOR became very popular, it had a very advantageous position and received support from the president for its role in reconstruction. Since, MOR was supported by the minister's power and relationship to the president as well as the ministry's dominance, it had the right over the development of the NWC region. As a result of MOT not being in charge of this region, the tourism public policy was neglected and more importance was given to maximizing the number of residential units- creating dense pilot projects that set the wrong trend. Predominantly, the transformation of the NWC from an international tourism destination to a second-home domestic tourism destination for middle and upper class Egyptians was due to political expediency. As a result, the coast has become exclusionary, instead of becoming a touristic region.

3. Socially:

- The locals (i.e. Bedouins) were uninvolved in the decision making. The planners were technocratic and assumed that the "ignorant and illiterate societies require guidance and decisions from above" (Attia, 1999). Unfortunately, this has led to their complete detachment as they have absolutely no role in the functioning of the whole region; their lands have been taken off them in return for a trivial sum of money. The lack of contribution and consultation of Bedouins regarding the decision making restrained the implementation of the tourism public policy and therefore generating the current, undesired results. Unlike Dahab for example, in Sinai, where the Bedouins have a huge role in the tourism there. The difference of

the results obtained by two different ministries on two different coasts is humungous (MOR in the NWC and MOT in South Sinai).

Moreover, as a result of the disparity between planning and implementation, the existing hinterland had no growth control. Also, the coastal areas were divided into smaller parcels and sold to developers. The areas that had been reserved for public beaches were replaced with real-estate developments. Although MOR abided by the idea of implementing pilot projects to provide an example to other future projects and to stimulate the private sector; MOR carried out the three pilot projects: Marakia, Marabella and Marina Al-Alamein in the NWC region in order to stimulate private sector initiative, setting an example to the succeeding, future projects. Unfortunately, the pilot projects did not set the intended example as they violated the planning regulations that have been set.

Consequently, one of the many touristic villages built along the coast is Marassi. Marassi was developed by the world-renowned, Dubai-based development company: Emaar.

Exclusion at the scale of the development of Marassi

The presence of a foreign investor (Emaar) made Marassi both more and less exclusionary than the rest of the coastal villages on the NWC. More specifically, it actually tends to be less exclusionary in the parts of the project that are accessible by the public (such as Mporium and the Marina) in order to maximize revenue; unlike other neighbouring developments that don't have many publicly accessible spaces. Therefore, in that sense it is considered less exclusionary than its surroundings. On the contrary, Marassi is also more exclusionary when it comes to the 'living communities' (the private segments of the project). This is because the arrangement of the development is 'double gated' that has internal gates that separate the residential spaces from the rest of the project. Unlike the rest of the developments on the coast, a second set of gates are implemented that tend to maximize both segregation and security- rendering it more exclusionary.

The ultimate intent of this research was to acknowledge the main reasons behind the issues the NWC region is facing today; as well as understand the specific aspects that

deem the coastal touristic developments exclusionary and try to suggest policy recommendations that may help improve the situation. This research was based on the case study of Marassi as it is currently the only development made by a foreign developer. Emaar has opened up Emaar Egypt, in order to closely identify issues and tackle its Egyptian projects in a better way by utilizing tacit knowledge since the Egyptian market is completely different to that of the U.A.E. Examples such as avoiding back to back houses in order to maximize privacy, implementing houses with roof access and ensuring a maximum amount of openings in the frontage of the houses as well as ensuring that the residential units were 'bahary' (facing the northern prevailing winds) are just a few of the findings that support the company's decision hiring Egyptian employees and opening up a branch of the company in Egypt in order to meticulously inspect their projects.

The research also compared Marassi to one of the pilot projects (Marina) which enables us to comprehend how differently a foreign investor tackled the project and how they interfered in the region in comparison to the public sector, and in addition conclude whether or not this makes the development more or less exclusionary. According to this research, the presence of a foreign investor does make parts of the project less exclusionary (as mentioned above) as a consequence of creating publicly accessible places in order to maximize profits. The policy recommendations below aim to improve the overall quality of life of the NWC region by trying to implement aspects that help make it more year-round rather than just seasonal and therefore resolve the initial human settlement issue. Also, the policies aim to benefit disadvantaged social groups, as defined by income or marginality, enhancing equity by providing housing developments also for low-income households. They also aim to ensure that boundaries between different gated-communities become more porous and accessible via the provision of more public spaces and year-round activities that in return will provide permanent employment. Many of these aspects already exist and are inspired by Marassi and need to be integrated in other developments, especially the upcoming ones that are currently still under construction. This does not by any means mean that Marassi is a perfect example, yet it does acquire relatively better qualities that may be replicated, along with some

adjustments that may help improve it. Moreover, policies supporting democracy should include the use of advocates to represent groups that do not participate directly in decision-making such as the local Bedouins.

Policies & recommendations

Below are some policy recommendations grouped in two different scales that would generate a less exclusionary coast- all derived from this research's findings and analysis. The leapfrogging is inevitable, yet compromising between making profit and producing more inclusive projects is the target.

A Regional scale:

1. A policy concerning the involvement and participation of the locals/Bedouins must be designed. This can be done using other successful parts of Egypt as an example (such as Dahab); perhaps even introduce the concept of 'slow tourism'. This will ensure the involvement in the locals, promoting equity in the region.
2. Schools must be included in the new developments/or even a university (as Emaar is currently discussing). Educational institutes are good urban catalysts beyond schooling that will immediately bring people to the coast and support the goal of the coast becoming a year-round destination and a place to live. Also, as a result of this, revitalization and regeneration of the opposite side of the road needs to take place in order to help provide essential amenities needed to support a year-round destination, including a plan for student dorms.
3. Bus rapid transit: providing a good public transportation system that allows people to go back and forth on the linear road with enough stops to ensure that visitors and locals no longer need to rely on private cars in order to go there (currently, for most people, it is impossible to go anywhere without a car and of course the road is not pedestrian friendly and extends over the whole coast; other options such as Uber exist, yet are expensive).

B The scale of the developments:

1. Setting a percentage of the total number of units in new developments to be rented. This will enable a change in the flow of people and contribute to producing a more inclusive project that would be continuously accessible to a wider variety of people. They may still only enjoy certain facilities in the development and the owners (whether permanent residents or tourists) may be given 'more' or somewhat 'better' rights since they are technically partly investing in the project. This would also eliminate problems that we face as a result of classism in Egypt and therefore minimize the communication between the owners and renters since the renters will be dealing with the management of the development itself rather than random individuals- allowing the renters to be the temporary owners in a 'rent only' community. In addition, a suggestion would be to have rent control in this rented parcel/zone of any project in order to ensure its continued affordability. Rent control is quite complex and requires further discussion, especially in a context like Marassi.
2. Every touristic village should be comprised of different types of residential units that should be reasonably priced to target a variety of people from different social classes, different incomes as well as promoting a more culturally diverse environment. This would be achieved by working on the built environment itself. The idea of having different 'communities' such as the ones in Marassi would enable the provision of these different typologies while still having them somewhat separated.
3. The gated communities on the coast are usually 'gated' hence the label, yet Marassi for example, is a 'double gated' community. A recommendation that is inspired by this system would be to use those secondary gates, only. Therefore, the removing of the exterior gates would produce more of a city-like region, where the buildings/streets would be visible from the coastal road, or a set of successive towns that are permeable while still keeping the residential parcels gated. This will keep them secured and still supply the demand of a 'gated' and therefore safer

community while keeping the project as a whole more open and accessible. Therefore, the streets would be accessible, the bars/restaurants/recreational places in general as well as the hotels etc., just not the residential spaces and of course the beaches (since hopefully the ANC will have public beaches). This would already start transforming this area into more of a city, and slowly as the developments move farther away, the more the coast will start evolving into a city rather than a wall. This simply means that, according to the analysis made earlier in the research that concluded that Marassi was divided into private, semi-public, semi-private and public areas; semi-public areas (the ring-road in Marassi) should also become public. Leaving the living communities as semi-private (the secondary walls remain intact) and the residential units, of course, remain private.

4. Public spaces should be an obligation to any new development built on the coast. Emaar provides some of the very few public spaces on the coast accessible to everyone, and this should be a requirement from now on in order to give everyone the right to experience the coast in this 'coastal' region, even if the levels of privacy varies in other parts of the projects.
5. Another policy that needs to be a requirement in every project is the concept of 'phasing', that large development companies such as Emaar have adopted. A division of the project's masterplan needs to be implemented one part after the other with a period of reflection in between in order to carefully assess how each phase performed and adapt it accordingly if necessary. It is crucial to carry out this procedure so that profit would be maximized by ensuring the market demands are being met as well as minimizing the losses. Market changes would therefore be accommodated as previously mentioned in the example of the Greek village of Marassi. After this part of the project didn't sell very well, Emaar paused, took a step back to reassess and revise that particular phase and realized that it was slightly overpriced and therefore redesigned most of that phase by providing smaller and therefore cheaper residential units. It then made sense to move on and carry out the successive phases.

6. Finally, another policy that should be implemented is concerning the year-round activities that need to be integrated within the design of the coastal villages. One of the aspects that make Marassi special is the ongoing set of activities that people can take part in throughout the year. For example, playing golf and spending time in the Marina (going for a walk/shopping/dining). These parts of the project are not seasonal and may be utilized any time. An issue that the majority of the surrounding villages are facing is that they simple comprise of housing and the beach, and minimal services and amenities. This is not enough to promote a year-round destination. Therefore, any upcoming project needs to bear in mind this collective goal via implementing activities that people may engage in any time of the year.

All of the policy recommendations above target more 'open minded' developments that are hence more open to a larger diversity of people (both socially and culturally). They aim at producing a more 'open' city in the sense that it becomes more visually connected and more permeable. These elements will all produce less exclusionary developments and therefore a less exclusionary region. Perhaps it will not become completely inclusive due to the nature of the functions and the general mindset of the majority of users (the market), yet there will be a vast improvement.

Once ANC's nucleus is completed, and hopefully start to expand and grow inwards into the desert, it will be interesting to observe the unknown changes that will occur as the touristic villages react to this change in the direction of expansion and whether or not they will open up and start to merge.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

Since most of the case-study part of the research was obtained via the meetings held due to the lack of available information online, there are still some voids present. This is also because Marassi is not complete yet and therefore more things will change over time. Therefore, I recommend that further research should be conducted once the project is completed. This will also generate more accurate comparisons with Marina that has been completed and inhabited for more than 2 decades ago. Also, the optimistic plans Emaar has for Marassi should be realized (or not) and therefore it will be clear whether or not the destination has succeeded in becoming year-round. Currently, many of the year-round plans Marassi is working on are still under construction. Furthermore, the ANC will be much more developed than it is at the moment, and therefore start to have some sort of effect on the growth pattern of the region as a whole as well as on the individual developments, their progress, and their ability to attract residents. Only then will a vivid result be visible considering how inclusive the new city will be and how the leapfrog developments react to it; and whether or not the whole region succeeds at becoming a year-round destination, attracting both tourists and permanent residents.

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Interviewee-2. (2019, December 25). Marassi by Emaar. (M. Mansy, Interviewer)

Interviewee-3. (2020, January 5). Marassi by Emaar. (M. Mansy, Interviewer)

Appendices

Appendix A

Interviews

Name	Job/position	Where	When
Interviewee 1	Senior property advisor	Online conversation	08.11.2019
Interviewee 2	Senior property advisor	Emaar sales center in Mivida, New Cairo	25.12.2019
Interviewee 3	Head of business development and analysis	Emaar Egypt headquarters in Uptown Cairo	05.01.2020

Appendix B

The questions were the following:

1. Where in the North Coast is your holiday home located?
 - Marina
 - Marassi
2. Do you rent or own?
 - Rent
 - Own
3. Why did you choose this specific 'village'? (e.g. Location, price, value for money, proximity to friends and family, facilities, brand/developer name etc...)
4. What do you like the most about this 'village'?
5. What do you dislike about this 'village'? (something you would want to change, if possible)

6. IF you RENT in Marassi: were there any limitations to using the village's facilities?
(if yes, please specify/ give an example) (If you don't please type: N/A)
7. IF you OWN in Marina: Do you still stay there? Or do you rent another place further west along the coast (while maybe renting out your own apartment in Marina?) (If you don't please type: N/A)
8. Does brand matter? ('Marassi by Emaar' for example)
 - Yes
 - No