

The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN NEW
URBAN COMMUNITIES**
Case Study: New Borg Al-Arab City

A thesis submitted to

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology & Egyptology

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Masters of Arts

in Sociology-Anthropology

by

FATMA HELALY

under the supervision of **Dr. KEVIN DWYER**

May, 2005

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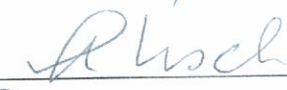
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DEDICATION

To my dearest

FATHER, whose love for books and knowledge enriched and shaped my life

MOTHER, for her patience, encouragement and support

SISTERS and BROTHERS IN-LAW,

who gave me physical and emotional support

With deepest love and gratitude

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ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo

Thesis Title: THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN NEW URBAN COMMUNITIES

Case Study: New Borg Al-Arab City

Student Name: Fatma Mohamed Roshdy Helaly

Advisor: Dr. Kevin Dwyer

New communities have not yet received the attention of researchers, and especially, sociologists, as they are considered to be 'less authentic', nor has the concept of social networks in such new communities been dealt with yet. What the different types of social networks are, and how they are formed in such communities is the main objective of this thesis, taking the city of New Borg Al-Arab as a case study. The formation of social networks is affected by social status, such as urban/rural background, age, gender, educational level, life cycle, etc... Some examples of new communities in Egypt and other countries are given compared to the community of New Borg Al-Arab City. There are also different types of social networks that have different bases, like family ties, kinship relations, friendship, etc..; this thesis explores the different factors affecting the formation of social network in New Borg Al-Arab City as well as the various types of networks that emerge within this new community. In order to carry out this study, data were collected from different sources with the main source being the Administrative Body of the city itself, participant observation, interviews, and direct observation. The study reveals that the formation of social networks amongst this new community of New Borg Al-Arab City is different than in other new communities in Egypt. Unlike other communities in Egypt, social networks in New Borg Al-Arab City are not based on neighborhood relationships. Moreover,

there are no social life in the city streets, unlike most of the urban communities. Finally, the thesis concluded that New Borg Al-Arab City is unique in that it is a rural community within an urban setting.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the government's efforts to improve economic and social conditions in Egypt, comes the establishment of new urban settlements. The objective of these settlements is mainly to open up new job opportunities to solve the problem of unemployment, and to house the ever-increasing population.

The construction of new cities is considered to be a main hub of the urban development strategy adopted by the Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities in Egypt, in that it has assumed responsibility for its implementation, through the agency of the New Urban Communities Authority. The Authority belongs to the construction sector, and its goal is to create new urban centers that would provide social and economic stability, the intention being to re-distribute population by preparing modern centers of attraction outside the orbit of the existing cities and villages (GOUP 2002).

The Ministry's plan is to construct new cities and communities within the context of an urban and regional plan derived from a general national plan whose objective is to increase national income and provide jobs for citizens; and to establish industries in specific planned zones so as to benefit from the economic output of the industrial projects.

Independent cities internally are structured so as to absorb population and industry in appropriate proportions according to their own specific economic rules and factors. These are erected on sites at a sufficient distance from existing cities to allow them to be independent entities and self-supporting with regard to existing cities in terms of services, jobs, resources, etc. These independent cities are set up deep in the desert and far from the Nile Valley strip. Examples are: 10th of Ramadan, Sadat, New Borg Al-Arab, New Nubariyya, and New Salihyya (<http://www.newborgalarab.com>. 2002).

New Borg Al-Arab City is one of the new cities whose establishment is mandated in the national plan of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the establishment of new urban communities, with the aim of absorbing the current and future rise in population in the city of Alexandria and of putting an end to the use of agricultural land for building. It is mainly meant to be an industrial center.

I focused my study here on New Borg Al-Arab as one of these new settlements. I am interested in knowing how such communities are formed, and the main motives and incentives that attract people to move to settle there. But, my main interest is on how do people of different origins and of different backgrounds create social relations, hence form social networks. I will focus my study on the issue of the formation of social networks in new urban communities taking New Borg Al-Arab city as a case study.

In the very recent past, the governorate of Alexandria has expanded westward and incorporated communities such as Al-'Amreya and Borg Al-Arab that were formerly part of the northwest coast but have now been "lost" to the Nile Valley. The city of Alexandria itself plays an important role in the social and economic lives of people in the northwest coast, among whom are people of Old and new Borg Al-Arab Cities. They often go there to shop, to study, to see the doctor, to visit relatives, and for many other reasons. They maintain strong social and cultural ties with their relatives there. But what about their social life in their new community? This is what I will examine through my study.

SELECTED THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In order to explain the formation of social networks within this new community, I believe that the main theories that mostly explain this notion of social networks are exchange theory and rational choice theory, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter two.

MAJOR HYPOTHESES

It is human nature to form some kinds of social relationships with other individuals in the same settlement, whether be it rural or urban, since people cannot live in isolation. So, my main hypothesis is that urban life, specifically, imposes certain types of social ties and relationships, i.e. social networks that are new to rural communities, like, for example, neighborhood ties, friendship relationships, membership in political, social or cultural institutions, or NGOs, etc., whereas social ties in rural communities are mostly based on family ties and kinship relations. I am going to examine the different types of social relationships that are formed in an urban city, focusing on new urban cities, taking New Borg Al-Arab as a case study, and see what different types of social networks such an urban setting encourages.

Since people cannot live in isolation, they voluntarily recruit themselves in social networks through rational choice, and sometimes unconsciously. However, in some instances, they seek help from others, like social support, so they are (in the case of the poor and the needy) recruited involuntarily in social-support networks through charities and NGOs.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The idea behind this study is to focus attention on the formation of social networks in new urban communities/cities thinking that this topic has not been dealt with as yet in Egypt.

As a physical planner, myself, and now a sociologist, I believe that the social interaction of the inhabitants in a new setting depends to a great extent on its physical planning, as well as on the facilities and services provided. I also believe that urban communities encourage social relationships that differ from those formed in a rural setting. I will focus on these differences and how they

affect the social life and, consequently, the emergence of specific social relationships, and the formation of social networks within the whole community.

I will also study the impact of the social status on the formation of social networks and the types of social ties, like, the impact of rural/urban background, age, gender, education level, and social class.

In chapter three, I briefly review the literature on the notion of social networks, giving some examples on how specific types of social ties are formed and the ways through which individuals recruit other individuals and are recruited themselves in social networks within their own societies.

In chapter four I discuss, albeit briefly, the different types of social ties that are formed in urban and rural communities, focusing on the physical planning and urban elements that influence the formation of specific types of social ties, hence influence the whole social network within an urban community.

And, in chapter five I focus on some examples, within the Egyptian society, of new urban communities comparing them with the case in my research area, New Borg Al-Arab City.

Through my study, I tried to figure out the nature of the new population, and their composition. I am also concerned with whether this new community constitutes a homogeneous population. Do the new inhabitants, or will they, succeed in building social capital or social solidarity among themselves? As such, the study attempts to give a brief description of the physical, social and demographic environment of the city, including the available services focusing on how these factors could affect the formation of social networks amongst the residents.

Chapter six gives data on physical, demographic and social characteristics of New Borg Al-Arab City, according to availability, considering that the construction of the New Borg Al-Arab was relatively recent, hence such data are not necessarily available.

Chapter seven includes a field study, with the objective of assessing the

actual existing social networks in the community, and the perception of the people towards these social networks. I will analyze and synthesize my findings to give a whole picture about the community, the types of social relationships and how social networks are formed. I will also include all my findings analyzing the data collected whether through interviews and short conversations with my respondents, or through my own observations.

The target population here refers to those segments in the community that are likely to be involved in the process of composing social networks, those who are recruited to social networks, or those who are subject to be recruited in any of those networks, and those who recruit other individuals to their own networks, whether they be personal networks, or networks through any of the community institutions.

Social relationships among community residents, no doubt, are a valuable and necessary social resource for the community, since these relationships help in building social capital in the community. Thus, my focus will be on defining, locating and measuring different forms of social relationships and ties which constitute social networks within the community. Moreover, I will focus on the types of social networks in urban communities addressing how urban life imposes specific types of ties and relationships, hence specific types of social networks.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

I have chosen this community specifically because newer communities like New Borg Al-Arab have not yet received the attention of researchers, and especially, sociologists, as they are almost considered to be "less authentic"—using the words of Farha Ghannam when she first started to study the new community of Al-Zawiya Al-Hamra (Ghannam 2002). Besides, the issue of social networks in new communities has not been dealt with yet, whether the different types of social networks or how they are formed in such communities.

I agree with the world famous Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy who believes that the social ethnographer is not generally recognized as an essential contributor to town and regional planning; and that "he is as important as the demographer." He is also right when he says:

"Today nearly all planners are dealing with communities in the process of change, and no planner can claim from his own limited experience and untrained observation to understand the changes in culture that are taking place even in his own society. Far less can he claim to understand an alien society, as planners often have to. Only a social ethnographer can provide this understanding, which may prove vital to the success of a plan. It should be as unthinkable for town planning to do without a socio-ethnographic survey as to do without a demographic record of the community" (Fathy 1989: 53).

WHAT RESULTS DO I EXPECT?

From my first-hand observation, I thought that the community would be totally isolated, since the people are all newcomers and strangers to each other. When you walk in the street, the normal scene is empty streets; streets and green areas void of people, except for some children playing near their homes. However, after some digging in the literature about social relationships in urban areas, I found an interesting study about East York in Canada, where the authors had similar experiences to what I found. However, through further studies, Wellman, Carrington & Hall (1988) found that there are strong social networks within the community; people prefer to visit their friends in homes, or gather at institutions, like sports clubs, or community associations. I realized that more effort should be done from my side. So I decided to make some changes in my methodology. I started to participate in some events to see more clearly how people interact with one another. I also amended my questionnaire to include some questions about where people prefer to meet others, and why are the streets, almost, empty, especially regarding women. Hence, after in-depth study and comprehensive interviews with different categories of the population, and with more participant observation, I realized that there are many types of social networks within this community, which will be my focus of analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

METHODOLOGY

The basic methodology I applied, in order to find answers to these questions, is based on primary and secondary data collection (statistics and reports) and field work (observation and interviews).

Data Collection

I have collected data about the city, the people and the services available from different sources: primary and secondary. The primary sources include data collected mainly from the Administrative Body of the city. Demographic data are collected from CAPMAS based on 1996 census. In addition, some data are collected from the internet, since the city has a website, which is part of the secondary sources.

Field Study

My field study was based on direct observation and on conducting open-ended, unstructured interviews with the sample.

I preferred to use direct observation rather than "unobtrusive observation," in which to study "people's behavior without their knowing it", in order not to cause any ethical problems (Bernard 1988: 271).

Furthermore, I have also done some participant observation in intervals. I have participated in some of the social events in the city, like a football tournament at the Youth Center which was played through the month of Ramadan, and a play at the Cultural Center directed and acted by the youth.

The Sample

The sample selected was a purposeful sample, based on criteria of selection relevant to each respective target population, meaning that the boundaries of selection were only those identifying each respective group, with no other particular specifications.

Therefore, I have selected as much diversified a sample so I could get a general view about the city covering all categories of the population. The study depended on interviews conducted with the following groups:

- Owners of business/industrial establishments in the city, five in number.
- Employees in the business/industrial establishments, eight in number.
- Employees in governmental organizations in the city, six in number.
- Members of the Investors' Association, two in number.
- Members of the Board of Trustees, three in number.
- Members of the Community Development Association, two in number.
- Members of NGOs, three in number.
- Members/Employees of the Youth Center, four in number.
- Employees/visitors of the Cultural Center, three in number.
- Fruit and vegetable street vendors, four in number.
- Shop owners (grocery, bookshop and pharmacy), three in number.
- Wednesday market (*Suq El-Arba'*) vendors, five in number.
- Bedouins, old Borg and Bangar Al-sokkar residents, five in number.

Many of the interviews are members in more than one or two categories.

Moreover, in addition to these interviewees, I had short conversations with laypersons in different places and different situations. My study, also, depended on my own direct observation as well as some participant observation in events over time.

When I first entered the field, I was concerned about whether I would be accepted by the people, as a stranger; would I succeed in building rapport with them? Would they be helpful and supportive, and not suspicious?

I thought then to start with someone as my key informant. I had with me some phone numbers of some of the most active residents in the city to contact—some males and some females. I thought it would be easier to start with female informants to facilitate my access to other members in the city.

Although my key informant was supportive and introduced me to my second key informant, who gave me valuable information, both started to complicate matters when I told them that I intend to meet some of the residents. They told me that this is not legal and that I might put myself in trouble with the police. Before doing any further interviews, they asked me to bring a statement from the university about the reason of my study, then get a permit from the administrative body of the city to conduct my research.. So, I packed my things and went home, upset. After having the statement from the university, I started, then, my real fieldwork.

In the beginning I went to and came from the field as for preliminary investigation for about three times. Then, after having the permit and legalized my presence there, it took me about six month to do my fieldwork.

To protect confidentiality, I will not use the real names of my informants, though some of them did not mind to have their names published. But for those who do not want to have their names mentioned, I changed all the names of my informants and interviewees as well.

I met with a number of residents and some others who reside in nearby areas, but have some contact with the city. Some work in the city, others sell

fruits and vegetables, especially during the Wednesday Market, others seek some services in the city, like health and educational services—those are mainly the residents of Old Borg Al-Arab. There are also those who come for entertainment in the city, especially in summer—whether to attend cultural events at the cultural center, or sports tournaments held at the Youth Center (the Club). There are also some affluent individuals who visit the city for banking services—they are the holiday makers in nearby tourist villages along the north western coast. The most significant of all my informants/interviewees are those whom I met at the local weekly market— the Wednesday Market. There are those who come from Old Borg Al-Arab, or *Sokkar El-Bangar*, or other rural areas to sell their goods at the market. Considering this market as one of the major events and a part of the significant social life in the city, I will assign a special paragraph for describing the life in the market (*Suq*) later in chapter seven.

There are three key informants, on whom I will focus here, and whom I contacted more than once whether through phone calls or some visits in their work places or in other public areas in the city. I will refer to them using the names Karima, Gamal and Tarek. Karima is the most active woman in the city, Gamal is the people's representative in the City's Board of Trustees, and Tarek is a typical public-sector employee.

I was introduced through a friend of mine to Karima, a very active woman in the society and has a lot of connections. Through her I was introduced to some of her acquaintances and members of her social networks. And through her also, I could recognize some types of networks within the city, in which she is involved, to examine how social networks could be formed in such a new community. She helped me to some extent and most importantly, she introduced me to a powerful man in the city, the People's Representative at The City's Board of Trustees, Mr. Gamal Mahmoud.

Mr. Gamal is familiar with the history of the city, though he himself does not reside there. However, he is the people's representative on the Board of

Trustees of the city, and he is the one who established the Youth Center (Club).

My third key informant is Tarek, who works in the engineering department at the Administrative Body of New Borg Al-Arab City (*Gehaz Al-Madina*). I was introduced to Tarek through the head of the engineering department through the president of *Gehaz Al-Madina*. All were very supportive and gave me all the information I wanted, mostly physical data about the city, like planning, services, and so on. For social data, I focused my attention on Tarek as a representative of a very important strata of the society—the youth, and more specifically, the strangers—those who reside in the city without their families (*Al-Ghoraba*).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

I will examine the concept of social networks through a number of theoretical perspectives. For example, the relationships of family and kinship, especially in small communities, could be explained through Toennies notion of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Toennies argues that in small communities, which he labels "*Gemeinschaft*", the basic unit of the social structure is the family, and the social networks are based on family ties and kinship relations. However, in larger communities "*Gesellschaft*", the social structure is more complex and relationships are not based on kinship and friendship, but on rationality, calculation, and contractualism (Schwab 1992: 337-8).

On the other hand other types of social relationship like friendship ties and work relationships could be explained through the exchange theory and rational choice.

Exchange and Reciprocity

A number of sociologists believe that interpersonal relations are based on social exchange. "The glue that binds individuals to one another is the norm of reciprocity, which demands that we respond in kind to certain behavior." For

example, when an individual gives another a gift, assistance, advice, compliments, intimate revelations, or even love, the giver expects to get something of equivalent value in return. By the same token, when a person accepts a gift, invitation, admiration, etc., he or she is obliged to reciprocate (Gelles 1999: 206).

Wilson & Schulz (1978: 171) explain social relations within the context of exchange theory. They argue that "social relations are thought of as profitable, and therefore continued, if they are perceived of by the participants as having benefits which exceed their costs".

As Gelles (1999) argues, the norm of reciprocity is far more pervasive, and powerful, than we realize. For instance, neighbors exchange favors, children exchange toys, colleagues exchange assistance, and so on. Gelles (1999: 206) explains this notion of reciprocity in social relation in a very simple example, as he says "Because of the norm of reciprocity, you are not free to ignore a greeting from a friend you meet walking across campus, for example... We feel uncomfortable in the presence of someone who is far more (or less) physically attractive, intelligent, sophisticated, wealthy, or talented than we are in large part because the exchange is unequal. We (or the other person) cannot repay in kind, and so we are less likely to form a lasting bond."

Moreover, Gelles (1999) argues that social exchange differs from purely economic exchange, since in social exchange the terms are subtle and diffuse, whereas in economic exchange, terms are specific and concrete.

In economic exchange, individuals seek to maximize their profits and minimize their losses. However, in social exchange, Gelles points out three types of "currency" that he sees involved in process of social exchange. He categorizes them as material rewards that include money, labor, goods, information, and prestige; intrinsic rewards which may be presented in the satisfaction of doing a good job, bodily pleasure, or even a simple joy; and the third category is identity support which indicates confirmation of one's self-image. Furthermore, Gelles

believes that some exchanges are primarily material, as people cannot live on imagined role performances alone, but in order to pursue their goals and plans they require material resources. Moreover, people tend to gravitate toward the situations and relationships that offer material rewards, intrinsic satisfaction, and identity support.

In his social theory, Simmel believes that in city life social relationships are based on monetary exchange and are less binding than are more traditional loyalties (Smith 1980). On the other hand Simmel (1971: 43) believes that most relationships among men can be considered under the category of exchange. He argues that 'exchange' is the purest and most concentrated form of all human interactions in which serious interests are at stake. Furthermore, John Scott (1999) believes that in social interaction, individuals are involved in mutual reinforcement, that the behavior of each participant rewards or punishes the other, and that their joint behavior develops through this 'exchange' of rewards and punishes. He also believes that the most fundamental human goal is approval, since he sees it as parallel to money; both are means of exchange in social interaction—money in economic exchange and approval in social exchange.

Following the economic model, Scott (1999) says that "the rational choice theorists see social interaction as a process of social exchange. Whereas, economic action involves an exchange of goods and services, social interaction involves the exchange of approval and certain other valued behavior".

Finally, Gelles (1999) believes that some social exchanges, such as close, warm interactions between friends, are intrinsically rewarding because of the pleasure they provide.

Rational Choice Theory

One of the theories employed in this study to explain the composition of social networks is the theory of rational choice, which states that people, after assessing the costs and benefits of all possible alternatives, choose the most

profitable course of action. When applying this method to the subject of this study it means that people build their personal networks by assessing the costs and benefits of all available personal relationships and selecting the most profitable ones (Poel 1993: 1-6).

Schwab (1992) argues that when we create our social networks we tend to choose friends, co-workers and associates from people like ourselves.

Furthermore, the ground rule of rational choice theory says that individuals choose their course of action in a rational way. For example in the selection of friends, Poel (1993: 23-30) argues there are two mechanisms thought to be at work: the 'mating' approach and the 'meeting' approach. The 'mating' approach or the mutual attraction is stressed by the psychologists, while the 'meeting' approach which is influenced by the social structure is stressed by the sociologists. Since friendship relations tend to be homogeneous in terms of age, gender, race and socioeconomic status, so, according to the 'mating' argument, people are more attracted to others who has similar socio-structural characteristics because they are more likely to share the same interests and opinions, whereas, the 'meeting' argument claims that people have a higher chance of meeting similar others, because the social contexts from which friendships are drawn tend to be homogeneous with respect to age, gender, race and socioeconomic status.

Poel (1993:144-45) believes that in applying this approach to the subject of social networks, we can say that in building a social network, people are constrained by their pool of available associates, like for instance, the number of siblings in the personal network which is restricted by the number of brothers and sisters a person has. Furthermore, he argues that the availability of a partner, acquaintances, fellow members of organizations and friends can be most easily influenced, since, for instance, one can become a member of as many sports clubs, political parties, and voluntary organizations as one likes, while the number of potential acquaintances and friends is infinite. He believes, however, that since

it takes time to develop such relationships, in the short run one will have to make do with the partner, acquaintances, friends, and fellow members one already has. Although in these cases the availability can actively be altered, it does act as a constraint at that particular moment. However, he found an exception to this idea of availability, which is social network, or social ties, amongst the neighbors. He found that people living in flats or apartment buildings and people in the town center have more neighbors available in the immediate vicinity, but they have less, rather than more, personal relationships with neighbors than people living in terraced or detached houses and people in the suburbs or outside the built-up area. Perhaps those who live in town centers have other sources of personal relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

"A society cannot exist outside of communication. It emerges in society as a means of uniting individuals and along with this a means for the development of these very individuals" (Andreyeva 1990: 76).

Much has been written about the concept of social networks and much of the analysis has been done by sociologists, the most renowned of whom is Clyde Mitchell.

In this chapter I will discuss this notion of social networks, since it is the main focus of my study, from different perspectives. I will first give a brief historical background about the emergence of the notion and how different sociologists analyze it. Then I will discuss the different types of social networks, and how social networks are formed, what are the major factors that affect their formation, and how the life style of the community influences the formation of some types of social networks, for example, the differences in life styles between rural and urban communities. I also found that urban communities and city life impose special types of social networks, like, membership in sports clubs, or in political institutions. All this will be discussed in some detail in this chapter.

THE NOTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Nobel (1973) found that the best way to explain why social networks are formed is Locke's assumption that man is by nature a social creature experiencing an innate need to establish relations with others of his kind.

Poel (1993) defines a community as where the people are strongly

integrated by many intimate social ties, when people feel they belong there. He argues that when this happens there is a 'sense of community'.

Despite the fact that social networks are similar across most urban communities, people's behavior and attitude within different types of social networks differ according to the cultural differences between different societies. For example, through their study of East York—a new community in Canada, Wellman, Carrington & Hall (1988) found that East Yorkers interact much less often in contexts that would expand their networks or forge new ties among network members; few members of the networks ever interacted with each other on neighborhood streets and verandas; and very few are active in voluntary organizations. Those groups in which they are active are mostly built around informal get-togethers of a few intimate and routine contacts for sports, social visits, hobbies, and childcare. On the other hand, the studies conducted on different Egyptian areas shows that the street in Egypt plays a pivotal role in the community social life, particularly, in low class and '*Sha'bi*' areas. For instance, as Hoodfar (1999) found through her in-depth study of some Egyptian '*Sha'bi*' areas, children usually play in the alleys since they have no other option, while women perform their domestic chores and chat with friends at their doorsteps. Other women who have balconies overlooking the street prefer to sit there holding conversations across the balconies or haggle over prices with street vendors below. Women, moreover, make up the largest group of petty traders of the daily vegetable markets. There are also numerous itinerant vendors who make daily visits to the neighborhoods, peddling items ranging from cheap plastic toys to drinks and household wares, with most of their customers being women, forming a type of network based on daily bargaining with the street vendors. However, against my expectations, I found that the type of social networks in my area of study "New Borg Al-Arab" is more similar to that of East Yorkers than it is to other Egyptian new communities, which I will discuss further in chapters five and seven.

Furthermore, Assaad and Rouchdy (1999) while studying poor areas in

Cairo, reveal that members of poor households tend to rely on internal or external relations of solidarity and social connectivity, mainly to support a marriage for their offspring, for example—families rely on social networks to select a better-off husband for their daughters to help sustain the family. Another example of social networks is the frequent use of collective forms of savings—*gam'eyyah*, which is usually organized through women, mostly, in *sha'bi* areas.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL NETWORK?

"Individuals' bonds to one another are the essence of society. Our day-to-day lives are preoccupied with people, with seeking approval, providing affection, exchanging gossip, falling in love, soliciting advice, giving opinions, soothing anger, teaching manners, providing aid, making impressions, keeping in touch—or worrying about why we are not doing these things. By doing all these things, we create community" (Fischer 1982:2).

The term network refers to individuals who are linked together by one or more social relationships, thus forming a social network (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology 1998: 446).

As Gelles (1999) argues, 'Networks are a familiar part of our everyday lives'. We can sense it in our everyday activities, like for example, when we are at a business meeting or at a party, we exchange our business cards, or even at a sports club, sometimes when meeting new people we may exchange cards with them. Doing so, we are expanding our social networks. Also, when we apply for admission to a university, or apply for a job, we try to find some of our acquaintances who know someone who can give us inside information and perhaps open doors. Thus, Gelles argues that people are more likely to get a job through their networks than through other formal means, like employment offices or newspaper ads.

Therefore, he defines a '*network*' as is "the web of relationships that connects an individual to many other people, both directly and indirectly", and he believes that someone's actual social network would include hundreds of

connections, some close and multifaceted, like having a friend who might be a neighbor, and their fathers and mothers might be friends too; and many more loose and distant, like a friend of a friend's second cousin (Gelles 1999: 207).

Also useful is Simmel's definition that "A society is a structure which consists of human beings who stand inside and outside of it at the same time" which he finds a fact that "forms the basis for one of the most important sociological phenomena, namely, that between a society and its component individuals a relation may exist as if between two parties" (Simmel 1971: 14-15). Moreover, he believes that "At any given moment, we consist of interactions with others" and that "Society exists where a number of individuals enter into interaction."

Boissevain & Mitchell (1973) argue that human beings are interacting social beings manipulating and being manipulated by each other. They indicate that people are dependent on one another rather than on an abstract society.

In 1961 Epstein put forward new terms to describe social networks. Thus, he classified social networks in a community as effective networks and extended networks. Whereas effective network comprises those people who are known to ego and to each other, extended network includes people who are known to ego but not to each other (Nobel 1973).

Mitchell (1973) argues that both Bott and Barnes also adopted an identical definition of social networks that is mainly based on kinship, friendship and neighborliness.

On the other hand, Cooley categorized social networks into 'primary' and 'secondary' instead of 'effective' and 'extended' networks, yet giving the same meaning. By 'primary groups', he refers to our intimate face-to-face association and cooperation, arguing that they are primary because they provide us with a sense of social unity (a 'we'-feeling) and they are relatively stable. Examples of these primary groups are the family, the playgroup of children, and the neighborhood or community group of elders. Moreover, he states that now the

intimacy of the neighborhood has been broken up due to the growth of wider contacts. For example, people now can easily form clubs and fraternal societies based on shared interests and common beliefs, and that are less bound by place, which can give rise to real intimacy and can therefore be considered primary groups (Poel 1993).

Barnes, in his study of a Norwegian community, as Mitchell (1969) mentioned, argues that individuals usually make use of personal ties of kinship and friendship. He categorized the types of networks as total network and partial network. By total network he refers to interconnected links or communications, and that contains as much information as possible about the whole of the social life of the community to which it corresponds. And by partial network he means "any extract of the total network based on some criterion applicable throughout the whole network". Barnes gives as examples of partial networks the networks of marriage, political networks and religious networks. Furthermore, he divided the total networks into three categories, which he called territorial system, industrial system, and 'networks of social ties between pairs of persons arising from considerations of kinship, friendship and acquaintance'. By this division, he wanted to differentiate between relationships that are imposed through the framework of bounded institutionalized groups or categories, like the hamlet, the factory, and so on, and relationships that develop from 'ever-ramifying web' of cognatic kinship, affinity and friendship."

On the other hand, Simmel (1971: 23-7) sees 'sociation' as a unity that has very different degrees, according to the kind and the intimacy of the interaction in which one obtains, and that it "ranges all the way from the momentary getting together for a walk to the founding of a family, from relations maintained 'until further notice' to membership in a state, from the temporary aggregation of hotel guests to the intimate bond of a medieval guild". Moreover, he argues that "neither hunger nor love, work nor religiosity, technology nor the functions and results of intelligence, are social. They are factors in 'sociation' only

when they transform the mere aggregation of isolated individuals into specific forms of being with and for one another, forms that are subsumed under the general concept of interaction." Therefore, he sees 'Sociation' as "the form in which individuals grow together into a unity and within which their interests are realized." He elaborates:

"A collection of human beings does not become a society because each of them has an objectively determined or subjectively impelling life-content. It becomes a society only when the vitality of these contents attains the form of reciprocal influence; only when one individual has an effect, immediate or mediate, upon another, is mere spatial aggregation or temporal succession transformed into society. A given number of individuals may be a society to a greater or a smaller degree. With each formation of parties, with each joining for common tasks or in a common feeling or way of thinking, with each articulation of the distribution of positions of submission and domination, with each common meal, with each self-adornment for others—with every growth of new synthesizing phenomena such as these, the same group becomes "more society" than it was before. There is no such thing as society "as such"; that is, there is no society in the sense that it is the condition for the emergence of all these particular phenomena. For there is no such thing as interaction "as such"—there are only specific kinds of interaction. And it is with their emergence that society too emerges, for they are neither the cause nor the consequence of society but are, themselves, society. The fact that an extraordinary multitude and variety of interactions operate at any one moment has given a seemingly autonomous historical reality to the general concept of society."

Several sociologists refer to networks as finite or infinite, where finite networks, as Barnes put it, are those containing limited number of persons, whereas, infinite networks contains indefinitely large number of persons (Mitchell 1969).

Weeldon (1969) used the theory of personal networks to analyze political processes in a small minority group in Southern Africa. He used the concept of networks in analyzing the way individuals participate in one important voluntary association. He believes that every individual has social relationships with a large number of friends and acquaintances, which constitute what has been called personal network. He agreed with Epstein in classifying the social networks in which each individual is involved into two main categories; the effective and the extensive networks. Each individual has some intensive interactions with some

persons, while having regular relations with others, i.e. that a part of the total network shows some degree of connectedness, whereas, the extended network is wider than the effective network, but with less intensive interaction amongst its members.

HOW ARE SOCIAL NETWORKS FORMED?

"All of us know social networks because we live in them" (Schwab 1992). We find ourselves recruited in social networks, but, we do not know how social networks are formed.

Simmel (1971) argues that the interaction between individuals in a society always arises on the basis of certain drives or for the sake of certain purposes, like erotic, religious, or merely associative impulses; purposes of defense, attack, play, gain, aid, or instruction, etc.

Moreover, Mitchell (1973) believes that in any social situation there is in fact a series of social actions in which people perform activities and undertake tasks, and exchange information among themselves based on shared set of beliefs, values and ideas they share, forming through this process a set of networks.

As Poel (1993: 16) argues, people who share a particular focus are more likely to form a relationship than people who do not have a focus in common. To explain his idea he addressed 'focus theory' of Feld, in which he argues that relationship opportunities are created by the "social, psychological, legal, or physical entities around which joint activities are organized (e.g. workplace, voluntary organizations, hangouts, families, etc.)".

Furthermore, Mitchell dealt with a very important aspect of how do individuals recruit members to their networks. As he believes, empirical research shows that the bases of recruitment in social networks vary according to social situation and social position of the individuals. Empirical researches, like that of

Wheeldon on an inter-ethnic community, shows that in small communities personal networks were located within the community itself, and its members were recruited to networks mainly through kinship links and membership in voluntary associations. However, people living in towns build up relationships in many social contexts, and they may become part of a social network (Mitchell 1969). I will discuss this issue in some detail in the next chapter.

Epstein (1969: 80) examines the social ties and networks evolved in small new communities, where the population is from different areas; hence a cultural diversity emerges in the community as well as differences in manners and behavior. Because a small town usually has specialized factions, economic and administrative institutions are been formed which introduce some level of social order. Epstein found that within this framework, the residents "elaborate a complex system of organizing social relationships among themselves", and each individual is involved in a network of social ties. He stated the types of relationships that are found in such communities: the first type of social relationships he argues is associated with neighborhood and locality, which inferred, as he argues, that physical contiguity and proximity are major factors in building up social ties despite the diversity amongst the residents in terms of tribal origins, and in terms of occupational and other criteria. However, this is not the case in New Borg Al-Arab, since the strongest ties are amongst people who are of the same place of origin, i.e. people who are originally from Beheira, for instance, have social networks amongst themselves rather than amongst other neighbors.

Also, problems in the area link people together. Epstein (1969) found that, in Ndola, women gather to fetch water. Despite the fact that water taps are a source of quarrel, they also provide an opportunity for people to build up social ties. This issue of water tap is also found in rural areas in Egypt and in some *sha'bi* districts in Cairo, as will be discussed in chapters four and five of this study. Epstein also found that the neighborhood plays a significant role in the formation

of social networks, especially, amongst women than amongst men, which I, too, find is true in many areas in Cairo, since men go to work during the day having no attachment to the neighborhood, whereas, women are mostly attached to their neighborhood, since they spend their time in or around the house.

The second type of network that is found in new small communities was based on kinship relations. Epstein found that, in a small African town, for example, kinship provides one of the most important principles for ordering social relations amongst residents in the town, and that ties of kinship are permanent and enduring for they are fixed by the system of descent. He found also that membership in tribes forms close relation like that based on kinship.

Moreover, associational life in the town also gives rise to new sets of ties and builds up different types of social networks. Formal institutions, i.e. political, economic and other sectors of urban life institutions, play an important role in 'recruitment' to social networks (Epstein 1969).

In a later study, also, about the African community of Ndola, Epstein (1969: 117-227) used new dimensions in figuring out the formation and the effect of social networks in the society. He mentioned briefly the main types of networks that were formed in such a new community, as he found that the major networks were formed amongst neighbors, then those networks amongst school mates, especially amongst youth. There were also the networks that resulted from the membership in sports teams that belong to local clubs.

Boswell (1969: 254) argues that the social network of an individual, during his/her life, 'will be liable to expansion due to recruitment from different social categories, and be further influenced by social and geographic mobility', and by changing familial status as well, like marriage and parenthood. Moreover, he argues that in crises and different life events, like death, marriage and child-birth, for instance, the individual is unable to cope with such events alone, hence come the role of social networks. For instance, in crises, like death, the use of extended network as a recruitment field is more helpful than the effective network.

From his study of several life situations and crises within the community of Lusaka, Boswell (1969) concluded that the network of an individual, at different stages of his/her life, is 'composed entirely of kinspersons, to which are added schoolfellows, workmates, associational members, affine, etc.' during the stages of life, the individual's social networks expand due to recruitment in various categories of networks. Schwab (1992) also agrees with Boswell as he argues that when we were children, our networks were centered in family, and we had no control, then, over this choice. But as we grew older we choose our friends, co-workers and associates, and by time of our adulthood our social networks are forged.

TYPES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

"Personal networks are constrained by the social structure, and they are constrained by the local community. They are constrained by the schools we attend, the jobs we hold, the places we shop, and the organizations we join" (Schwab 1992: 354).

Social networks are not of one type; they vary in type as well as in the bases on which they are formed. As mentioned before there are the total and partial networks, according to Barnes' classification; loose-knit and close-knit relationships as categorized by Bott, and so on. And, on the other hand, there are networks that are based on family ties, kinship relations or neighborhood relationships, etc...

Barnes through his study of the social structure of a small Norwegian island parish of Bremnes addressed three types of social relationships that he argues subsumed most of the interactions of that community. Two of these fields could be fitted into the set of categories conventionally used by sociologists. "These were the relationships based on friendship, kinship and neighborliness and the particular feature of them was that they were likely to be distinctive for each person in the community, being based as they were to a large extent on the

personal choices of the individual concerned" (Mitchell 1973: 2).

Furthermore, Mitchell (1973: 28) argues: "the contents of the links in a social network, therefore, are not immediately apparent but exist in the understandings that the actors have of the implications of the relationships among them for their behavior. To label a link as 'friendship' or 'clanship' or as any other type of social relationship, this means that the actors construe the behavior to be expected in relation to that link as that indicated by the label they give to it."

Family Ties

In most societies relationships with family members are the most important relationships individuals have (Poel 1993).

In small and rural communities, family ties are the main social relationship that exist, and on which social networks are based.

Kinship ties

Kinship relationships are similar to family ties. However, kinship ties are based on extended family and relatives, whereas family ties are those amongst the member of the immediate family.

Nobel (1973) sees that understanding the kinship system in any society explains the most fundamental relationships in that society. Moreover, kinship system is also important in the process of socialization.

Friendship ties

A third group of important personal relationships is friendship. Poel (1993) agrees with Knipscheer's (1980) definition of friendship ties that contrary to family and neighborhood ties, friendship ties have an 'achieved' character instead of 'ascribed'. Whereas family ties result from birth and marriage, and neighborhood ties come with place of residence, friendship ties do not emerge

naturally. Instead, they must be actively formed. Therefore, they are based on choice. In a nutshell, whereas family ties and neighborhood ties are natural relationships, friendship ties are voluntary.

Furthermore, Poel (1993) found that the most distinctive aspect of friendship relations is the exchange of emotional support. Moreover, he argues that people of the same social status can form friendship ties more easily because they have many more things in common. People are also more likely to form friendship ties with others of the same age, occupation and race.

Furthermore, Wellman, Carrington & Hall (1988) found through their study of the community of East York that contacts between friends are often considered intimate and active ones. They argue that friendship arises from social structure and not sheer interpersonal attraction. Moreover, they found that when greater intimacy and more diversified strands of the relationship developed among the East Yorkers, former neighbor and coworker ties changed into friendships, and some friendships endured when former neighbors and coworkers changed homes and jobs.

Neighborhood Ties

Poel (1993) argues that the neighborhood has always been the key basis of personal relationships, since the individual is born into a community or a neighborhood and stays there for almost the whole of his/her life. Therefore, he believes that relationships with neighbors, who were often also relatives, are the ones most readily available, and that until recently there were very limited alternatives to these relationships. Moreover, he believes that since the definition of neighborhood and neighbors depends almost entirely on geographical proximity, this is the most important aspect in which neighbor relationships differ from other personal relationships.

Moreover, many studies emphasize the limitations of the neighborhood as a sociological unit. Besides, several authors describe the role of the neighbor as

basically providing mutual aid and assistance, informal visiting, and exchange of advice. Thus the neighbor may be one from whom another borrows tools or food, or relies upon to take care of children during emergencies. However, in more serious crises of life, people usually call upon relatives and friends. "In some neighborhoods, there is an overlap of the roles of relative, friend, and neighbor, because these persons are one and the same" (Schulz 1978: 148).

In most societies neighboring tends to be a woman-to-woman or couple-to-couple affair, as Wellman, Carrington & Hall (1988) found through their study of the community of East York in Canada. They also found that homemakers usually have higher proportions of neighbors in their networks than employees or workers, whether amongst men or women. The major activities involved in such relationship are child care, exchanging goods, services, information, and emotional support.

Schulz (1978) compared the three main social networks: kinship relations, friendship ties and neighborhood ties. He believes that underlying the interaction within such ties is always a set of norms, values, statuses and roles. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the roles of friends, neighbors, and kin. He argues that kinship relations may require personal sacrifice, whereas, friendship role emphasizes mutual tastes, entertaining, comradeship, and limited helping, borrowing, babysitting, etc. However, the neighbor role is much more constricted than either the friendship or kinship roles, since it is different in that geographic proximity is the primary basis for the relationship. Moreover, he argues that the role of kinship is rooted in a set of well-defined cultural norms, whereas friendship relationship is dependent upon a social contract between two individuals, and the role of neighbor is dependent upon the norms of the local neighborhood.

In *sha'bi* communities in Egypt, neighborhood ties are very strong and in most cases replace family ties. However, this is not the case in New Borg Al-Arab, where neighborhood ties are weak and, in some cases do not exist. This is discussed in more details in chapter seven.

Workplace Networks

Kapferer studied networks through the workplace, paying attention not only to the content of the social exchange between workers, but also to the normative content of the links. He found that workers, apart from job activities, exchange many other things, like conversations, cash assistance, personal services and joking (Mitchell 1969).

While focusing on the networks within workplace, Kapferer (1969) found that individuals have two types within the workplace, which is similar to the idea of effective and extended networks of Epstein and Weeldon. He found that the employee has direct relationships with coworkers who are doing the same job, like workers in the production area in a factory for instance, whereas, in the extended network, the employee has indirect relationships with other employees, like those in other areas of the organization.

Political and Voluntary Association/Organization Networks

Harries-Jones through his empirical research shows how political associations build up from links that already exist in the community. He believes that having a common 'home' origin is the key point in building up such a relationship (Mitchell 1969). I believe that this is most likely to be true, especially, in a new community, like the one I am studying here, since I found that people from Al-'Amreya, for example, or from any village form some type of social networks among themselves.

Barnes, through his study of an African village, focuses on political processes and the networks that occur accordingly. In the community he studied, the council was a multi-functional body. It was not only concerned with political task, but its function expands to administration, justice and religion as well.

On the other hand, Schulz (1978) believes that most associations between people are informal, like neighboring, for instance, since the relationships are not

structured through an organization with an official structure and process. Moreover, he argues that there are also a large variety of formalized relationships that may emanate from *voluntary associations*. These associations are termed "voluntary," because the individual decides whether to participate in the association or not with free will, i.e. it is based on rational choice. These voluntary associations may range from civic and neighborhood associations to fraternal and religious groups. Moreover, Schulz (1978) addressed another type of networks that is based on organizational relationships. He believes that organizations usually have specialized purposes that revolve around a single issue, like, neighborhood beautification, and that almost all members are from a distinctive social strata. He argues that for many families or individuals who are in a state of transition from one social class to another, i.e. social mobility, membership certifies and strengthens their identity and solidarity with a new social stratum. Examples of urban organization are clubs, labor unions, professional associations and syndicates, political parties, and so on.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Poel (1993: 16-22) outlined some factors that affect the composition of social networks almost universally. However, there are differences relative to each culture.

Life-cycle stage

Poel argues that the most important factor influencing the number and types of personal relationships seems to be the stage in the life-cycle. He concluded from various studies done by a large number of sociologists, like Lowenthal & Robinson, Fischer and Oliner, Marsden, Phillips and others, that with advancing age there is a decline in the number of roles and thus in the number

and variety of personal relationships, and that the overall network size dropped with age at an increasing rate. He also realized that older people were much more likely to be relatively isolated (through death of friends, relatives or spouses), which means that they tend to have small networks of personal relationships. Moreover, the number of colleagues in the personal network sharply declines at the age of retirement. On the other hand, older people tend to belong to more voluntary organizations (mostly religious ones), consequently having more fellow members in their networks.

In New Borg Al-Arab, the life-cycle is apparently affecting the size of the individual's social network with the youth having the biggest social networks.

Marriage

Poel found that married people are more involved with neighbors than single, or divorced individuals. Having younger children is also found to enhance neighborhood contact. However, in New Borg Al-Arab, I found that, on the contrary, single and divorced women usually seek the support of neighbors and form neighborly ties than do married people.

In *sha'bi* areas in Cairo, women form neighborly ties as they spend more time together during the day while their husbands are at work. Poel, also, argues that the number of friendship relations is largest for the young and the never married.

Parenthood

Furthermore, parenthood diminishes the number of friends. With marriage and having children, childhood friends are being replaced by colleagues and neighbors. Again, the elderly, who have retired, or older have the least of friendship relations.

Age

Age is a major factor on which based the formation of some types of social networks, like friendship, children play-groups, and school mates relationships.

Gender

The division of labor imposes types of relationship that are gender-related. In this regard, Andreyeva (1990: 71) argues that 'social relations have an impersonal character: their essence is not found in the interactions of specific individuals, but, rather, in the interactions of specific roles'. For example, the effects of marriage and having children are different for men and women. Being married and having children, Poel (1993) argues, enlarges kin involvement for men, and reduces the number of non-kin relations, like colleagues and friends for women. Widowhood also has different effects on men and women. In the Egyptian society, I believe, widowed women are most likely increasing their social relationships, since they have more free time to go out. They acquire new friendship relations, in most cases other widows. However, widowed men are most likely reducing their relationships. Elderly men are more likely to be members in religious groups.

There are also the female headed house holds, which are found in extreme numbers in poor areas and *sha'bi* districts in Egypt. This group usually seeks social support; hence they recruit themselves in social support networks.

Furthermore, a number of studies have investigated possible differences between men and women in the number and sort of personal relationships they have. On average, men and women have the same number of personal relationships. However, the type of personal relationships differs, as women tend to be more involved with kin than men, while men have more non-kin in their personal networks than women. Moreover, men are more likely to have relationships with colleagues at work than women do. Women tend to have more

neighbors in their networks than men do. In general, men and women have an equal number of friends. However, in the early stages of life men have more friends than women, while in the later stages the reverse is true. And, women have more personal relationships with fellow members of religious organizations than men do. I will examine if these hypotheses apply to my target population, new communities in Egypt.

Gender-based networks in Egyptian communities

Hoodfar (1999) describes the social life in three urban lower-class areas in Giza. In her description, she focused on the social life in the different setting of these areas. These areas, she notes, have developed in traditional Cairene style with narrow and winding alleys running through rows of narrow terraced brick buildings of four or five stories. The main streets are the official traffic routes used by buses, minivans, and the occasional taxi. Many well-constructed shops and buildings are built along these main roads and are occupied by higher-income households, whereas, the narrow, unpaved alleys, are the site of many different social and economic activities. Men are notably absent, particularly during the day, because most spend both their working and leisure time away from the neighborhoods, whereas women and children are the primary actors.

Most of the women's contacts are in the nearby main streets, where they do errands and shopping, like the cooperatives '*gam'eyyat*', other bigger shops, hospitals, pharmacies, and schools.

Division of labor also played a role in forming social networks. It was almost always women who bought the vegetables from the local market, and men who bought fruit and meat. This division is still reflected at the local market, where the vegetable vendors are generally women (Hoodfar 1999).

Furthermore, Hoodfar argues that the centrality of the role of women is a prominent feature of the social networks and the informal associations in the neighborhoods of Cairo, and that this is partly due to the nature of ascribed

gender roles, which brought women into frequent contact with each other and with kin in the course of performing their responsibilities. In contrast, men were often away at work, sometimes out of the country. This gives an indication that kinship relations are more apparent between women than between men.

Moreover, women form effective horizontal and vertical networks in their neighborhoods and sometimes with their colleagues. One of the most significant informal associations within these neighborhoods that are run by women is the 'saving clubs', even though they often included male members. Moreover, women are very aware that their access to effective networks give them power in their marital relations. Diane Singerman (1997) while conducting her research on *sha'bi* (popular) quarters in central Cairo also found that these rotating credit associations (*gam'eyyat*) are probably the most significant neighborhood networks in urban Cairo. Singerman referred to these associations as a parallel banking system through which huge amounts of money exchanges hands while escaping state control. In urban Cairo, Singerman believes that these networks also formed the basis of many other informal associations through which the less powerful helped one another. There is also another informal social association, the gift exchanges, which take place on occasions such as the birth of a child, an engagement, or a wedding (Hoodfar 1999).

Hoodfar, moreover, found that neighborly relations and neighborhood leadership, dominated by women, have historically played a very prominent role in Cairo. Whereas men are, removed from their neighborhoods for most of the day due to socioeconomic changes and employment opportunities, women are tied more closely to their neighborhoods through gender roles and responsibilities even when they too are employed elsewhere. In the newly urbanized residential areas of Cairo, women's presence is even more prominent, for these neighborhoods lack artisan workshops or other trade activities prevalent in old Cairo, which provide job opportunities for men. She argues that the primary determinant in the intensity of women's interactions was the physical proximity

because the primary function of these neighborhood relations is to provide support with day-to-day chores and problems, and that is why women often recounted reasons that good neighbors are better than relatives. Moreover, they relied on one another, beyond emotional support, for services, borrowing household goods and clothing, giving each other advice, and mobilizing networks to find jobs for their husbands and children. Generally women's neighborly networks are differentiated at several levels; the inner circle made up of a few friends is the most significant and intense, while there are much wider networks in which the frequency and nature of interaction varied greatly. The friends of the inner circle usually share similar standards of living and similar values, and they usually live in the same building or within a few blocks of each other. They spend much time together and often perform their domestic tasks in each other's company. For instance, they usually help each other with queuing up to shop for subsidized goods like bread and goods from the cooperatives, sharing information about cheap places to shop, and child care, and so on. These inner circles of friends, Hoodfar observed, were very important for the basic daily survival of the households and in times of crisis.

On the other hand, men, also, often develop networks with workmates. The employees stay in touch with their networks through work place, while others, like construction or casual workers often met in teahouses. Traditionally, in old Cairo, men meet at the local teahouse since their neighborhood is also the site of their economic activities. However, in newly urbanized areas men, even when they are unemployed, spend much time outside their neighborhoods. However, in the case of the New Borg Al-Arab City, it is different, since people are not of the same social strata, or most likely, as I have been told by my informants, they are reluctant to reveal their real social class.

The teahouses have a central role for male networking and employment opportunities; the very poor who do not have enough money to go to the teahouses lose such opportunities. Middle class and working class men spend

their time at teahouses. Thus, teahouses are almost male domains, where men's interactions often take place. Men almost never entertain their friends at home unless they also happened to be neighbors. Hoodfar also reveals that men's relationships, in contrast to women's friendships, do not extend to ties with other household members.

Nawal Nadim (1985) in her ethnographic studies on a *hara* (alley) in *Aaddarb el-Ahmar*, one of the oldest and most densely populated districts of Cairo also analyzed the role of gender distinction in urban areas focusing on the social networks and relationships. In the *harah*, Nadim observed that there are informal women neighborly social networks; for example, neighboring women often eat their breakfast or lunch together, usually when their husbands are absent. On the other hand, husbands usually spend very little time in the house and do not greatly care about its appearance. It is acceptable, for example, for women to move freely within the *harah*, but, other than trips to a nearby market for daily purchases, they must acquire their husbands' permission to leave the *harah* premises. Thus, the *harah* is the women's domain.

Socio-economic status

Poel found that people with low incomes and low levels of education are more likely to be isolated, i.e. having small social networks, than those with higher incomes and education. Moreover, he also found that people in poorer economic conditions and of lower intelligence are less active with respect to social contacts and interaction. Furthermore, he argued that kin relations are thought to be more important for people from low socio-economic strata, while people from higher socio-economic strata are more involved with non-kin. In general, lower classes have less social relations than middle and higher classes. Also, Poel found that the proportion of kin relations in the personal network falls with education and income, and that people with more kin than nonkin relations tend to be less educated. Furthermore, there are differences in friendship patterns between

working and middle-class people, since they recruit their friends almost exclusively from family, work, and neighborhood.

Degree of Urbanization

Finally, the degree of urbanization has effects on the type of social networks. For instance, the more urban the community, the more that non-kin relations emerged. Furthermore, urbanites seem to have a more 'modern' kind of network focused on work, clubs, friends, and others, while the networks of people in more rural areas are 'traditional', oriented on family, kinship, and religious organizations, to some extent. As Schulz (1978) argues, urbanization may adapt individuals for participation in the new social order.

In the next chapter I will discuss the different types of social networks that emerge in urban and rural communities and the factors that affect the formation of such specific types in an urban or a rural community.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN URBAN/RURAL COMMUNITIES

The interaction between social relations and space in urban life is extremely important, where personal relationships create specific social patterns that shape and are shaped by the urban space. In rural settings, limited types of social networks exist, whereas city life encourages the formation of different types of social networks.

URBAN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Wirth (1938: 18-9) argues that "Urbanism as a characteristic mode of life may be approached as a system of social organization involving a characteristic social structure, a series of social institutions, and a typical pattern of social relationships.

My argument here is that life in cities imposes specific types of social networks, which matches Jacobs (1992: 133) argument that, "the first relationships to form in city areas, given any neighborhood stability, are those in street neighborhoods and those among people who do have something else in common and belong to organizations with one another," like religious institutions, businessmen's associations, political clubs, ... sons of such-and-such a village,.. and so on. However, Schulz (1978) believes that neighboring is, by necessity, far more important in a rural frontier than it is in a city saturated with social services of all types.

Wirth (1938) defines the city, from a sociological perspective, as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals. Due to large numbers of heterogeneous individuals in the city, the relative absence of intimate personal acquaintanceship, the segmentalization of human

relations, which are largely, anonymous, superficial, and transitory, are associated characteristics.

Moreover, Wirth believes that the city has a great influence upon the social life of the individuals, for it is not only their dwelling-place and workplace for them, but it is the initiating and controlling center of economic, political, and cultural life.

Wirth (1938) differentiates between types of city and their effect on the social life of the individuals. For example, he sees that an industrial city differs significantly in social respects from a commercial, mining, fishing, resort, university, and capital city.

Moreover, Wirth (1938) argues that "the extreme degree of interdependence and the unstable equilibrium of urban life are closely associated with the division of labor and the specialization of occupations."

By virtue of their different interests arising out of different aspects of social life, Wirth (1938) believes, individuals acquire membership in widely divergent groups, each of which functions only with reference to a single segment of their personality.

Moreover, those who live in urban areas have far more social relationships. There will be some persons with whom the interaction is purely impersonal and solely in terms of a formal role, as, for example, with sales personnel or bureaucratic officials in banks or government offices. These 'structural' relations also constitute an element in the day to day activities of townspeople but play a less important personal and emotional role than those in the personal network. Furthermore, Mitchell argues that a large number of a townspeople's contacts with others in the city will be even more superficial—merely with people in the streets, concourses, and other public places where external characteristics such as gender, class, race, or ethnicity index these people socially (Mitchell 1987).

Moreover, the townspeople will relate to a set of other people, many of them in the same town, in terms of a variety of different social contexts. He/she

will construe this immediate social environment in terms of sets of expectations and norms, which help him/her in defining the relationships towards these others. For example, there are some social definitions of the rights and duties amongst neighbors; to be a neighbor implies close residential proximity, as well as some social obligations. Kinsfolk are similarly marked off from friends and acquaintances by some special obligations that should exist amongst kinsfolk, likewise friendship, membership in any association and so on (Mitchell 1987).

Moreover, Mitchell (1987: 308-9) argues that urbanism rests on three network characteristics: mesh, multiplexity and intensity, where mesh links conjugal role segregation with close-knit networks and joint conjugal roles with sparse networks; multiplexity indicates that relationships arising in different circumstances may coincide in particular dyadic links; and intensity, which is potentially significant in urban social relationships, is 'the degree to which individuals are prepared to honor obligations, or feel free to exercise the rights implied in their link to some other person'. Mitchell argues that the more intense the relationship, the more demanding the obligations will be, the more certainly they will be met (Mitchell 1987).

Furthermore, Schulz (1978) argues that primary ties in urban areas have been weakened, and have been compensated for by membership in formal organizations. Moreover, he believes that formal organizations of cities may not substitute friendship and family ties, rather they supplement these ties. However, some organizations serve purposes, which are particularly important in coping with the specialized problems of urban areas. Furthermore, he believes that the government in urbanized areas usually exists as a large, complex bureaucracy which is resistant to the needs of individual citizens.

Also, Wilson & Schulz (1978) argue that the city has broken down traditional life-styles and consequently, new styles have emerged, where urbanites, freed from their parents and kin are given greater freedom of movement. Thus, new types of social networks emerge within urban societies.

Wirth in "Urbanism as a Way of Life" argues that social and personality differentiation increase with the increase in population size, and that such increase, with time, weakens the traditional bonds of kinship, neighborhood, and family structure (Smith 1980: 13).

Moreover, Smith (1980) agrees with Wirth that in city life contacts are extended, heterogeneous groups mingle, neighborhoods disappear, and people are deprived of local and family ties, and that with the increased social mobility, the significance of neighborhood declines as an arena of social interaction.

In urban settings, Smith (1980) believes, there are many ways of life, and that the settings of family, workplace and neighborhood are overlapping structures of interaction.

URBAN COMMUNITIES IN CAIRO

There is a rich literature written about different urban settlements of Cairo, ranging from very poor areas, to low-class, middle-class and upper-class areas, by foreign as well as Egyptian sociologists/anthropologists. Through my literature review, I examine ethnographies of different types of urban settlements, i.e. poor, middle-class and upper class areas in different districts, all of which deal with social ties and relationships, i.e. social networks in urban communities in Egypt.

Singerman (1997) in her studies on *sha'bi* (popular) quarters in central Cairo, found another type of women's network organized by *iddallalaat* (female peddlers), who are generally illiterate female brokers. They collect ration cards from neighbors and kin, bribe local employees of government food cooperatives, and endure raucous crowds outside cooperatives in densely populated areas in order to obtain a large volume of government-subsidized and distributed food, and then resell their products at a profit to people in *sha'bi* communities whose demand for the goods is not satisfied through official channels. Moreover, Singerman believes that informal women's social networks in *sha'bi* quarters are

representatives of an important avenue of political participation for the public, and that these networks are the political lifeline of the community, allowing individuals and groups to cooperate with other members of the community to achieve individual and collective goals.

Rugh (1979) almost found similar pattern in Bulaq, a low-class neighborhood in Cairo. She believes that cramped living quarters encourage inhabitants to move out in the streets to spend their leisure time. In Bulaq, there are numerous coffee shops where male customers, overflowing into the streets at almost any time of day or evening, take their tea at small tables, with older men predominating during the early day, playing backgammon or domino, to take advantage of the sun or shade depending on the time of year, while younger men usually join in after work and in the evenings. Children, too, spend much of their time in the streets, where boys play soccer with rag balls, and girls chase small children around or run errands for their mothers, while mothers disguise their own social activities with the same semblance of propriety by busying themselves with some essential of food preparation as they squat in a doorway and shout back and forth to neighbors. The household is home, the private space where people come at night to sleep, and the center of the woman's world where she can move freely. Leisure activities for the lower classes are more likely to be sexually segregated, as men usually go to coffee/tea houses or visit male friends, and women congregate together in social groups. However, the middle classes, couples or families are more likely to enjoy leisure activities together either at home or with relatives and friends.

Rugh (1984) also made a comparative study between a low-class area, Bulaq, and a typically middle-class area, Shubra, where she found relatively different patterns. She provides us with in-depth description about the two areas, which draws exactly the social patterns of both areas showing the social relationships and networks, and formed special patterns emerged among women who are neighbors.

In Bulaq, she noticed that by nine or ten o'clock Bulaq becomes virtually a community of women until two in the afternoon. The household brigade is everywhere—some women bringing water; some running errands; others baking bread in ovens beneath the stairways; some rocking babies and chatting with their neighbors between tasks. They shout across the alley addressing each other, while older women, usually, take up accustomed spots on street corners, sitting cross-legged to sell the products of their morning efforts, like stuffed squash and cabbage, aromatic fried fish, or eggplant. They form solid social networks; when they hear news of the death of someone, or a birth, or a marriage in trouble they flock to the scene dropping everything to offer condolences, to give help, and to dispense advice. When it is time for midday prayer, the mosques are filled up with men emerging from work. The women retire this time at home for preparing dinner for the family, and small girls appear again in the streets with their enameled bowls bringing back dishes to supplement the family fare or to provide the main dish for families too poor to cook. At about two or three o'clock, the men return and the family consumes its biggest meal of the day, then the pace relaxes and several of the family members drift off to sleep until late afternoon. However, it is time for children's activity, as school children join in the soccer games or general rowdiness of those who stayed at home and now are released from their tasks of the morning, and young girls take on the task of trailing small sisters and brothers around outside. Then, by late afternoon and evening activity picks up again for the mostly male coffee shop crowd, while women chat quietly in doorways. By ten or eleven the streets are empty and grown wider as shopkeepers draw in their displays and close up for the night. Also, in slum areas, the *hara* is the main social unit (Nadim 1985).

However, in Shubra, Rugh observed that the tempo and atmosphere are different. "The crowds are still ever present, and activity is continuous and varied, but the tone is different. It is the waves of workers—most of them modest government employees—that catch the attention first in the morning, streaming

through the streets and massing at intervals" (Rugh 1984: 24).

Most of the residents are employees, particularly government employees, with most women working too. The working day lasts from about nine until two. Women are responsible for housework, child care, and supervising the homework, while men, in many families, use the afternoon and evening hours for second jobs to supplement the meager salaries of government employment. Those who work in small businesses usually return for evening hours, and teachers usually give private lessons. Through her observation, Rugh found that the neighborhoods of Shubra, with the exception of the main thoroughfares and business areas, clear out more completely during the day compared to Bulaq, because almost all children go to school, men are at work, and a large number of women also work, and also those women who remain at home focus their attentions on the interior of their homes, though they may do brief shopping errands. Life is more private than in Bulaq, and homelife does not spill out in the street as it does in Bulaq. Conversations with friends on the street are very short, and there is almost no visiting, and there is no open doors among neighbors like in Bulaq. Moreover, the middle classes feel a moral disdain for the adult who spend long hours on the street with no apparent reason, and parents feel an almost moral responsibility to keep their own children from the "bad" influences of children whose parents are the kind that let them play freely in public areas. Those who are fortunate of the middle-class and can afford a membership in a sporting club usually go there in weekends and summer holidays, where the parents sit there drinking tea or soft drinks, and sometimes meet with friends, while children meet their friends, playing, or go for a swim. However, most of the weekday afternoons and evenings the children are doing their homework, usually, supervised by their mothers. Only the older boys who can "take care of themselves" may occasionally escape to play ball in the street with their friends. This does not mean that the streets are wholly devoid of activity during the day, which would never happen since the density of Cairo population is too great for that, but there is an

atmosphere of calm and restraint that characterizes the middle-class neighborhoods. Although women still interact with street activities, they do so in a way that puts a respectable "frame" around their actions. They may be watched shaking out carpets or hanging wash, or sometimes sitting at greater lengths of time helping an infant or toddler to get a little sunlight or fresh air while watching events below. At times they may be dealing with occasional peddlers of vegetables and fruits from above, letting down their baskets for their products (Rugh 1984).

However, in upper-class areas, there are different social patterns, though some similarities exist. El-Ramly (2000) surveyed a sample of women in Maadi, one of the upper-class areas in Cairo, where the affluent most reside. Her survey shows that Maadi respondents spend their leisure almost at Maadi Club, playing sports, reading, socializing with friends, listening to music, or watching videos or television.

Moreover, in upper-class areas, the streets are mostly empty of pedestrians; only traffic is there. However, there are also women's associations and social groups; they used to meet in clubs, in coffee shops—modern style, not the traditional coffee shops or teahouses of lower-class areas. Women also do a lot of shopping, where they usually meet friends and neighbors in shopping malls.

RURAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

In rural society, the individual's network consists of kin, clan and tribal members, while in the town, 'there are more fields of social interaction and they may be less inclusive of each other' (Boswell 1969: 287). Moreover, Kamel & Hifnawi (1976) argue that in rural communities the family is the basic unit. Three generations may be living under the same roof forming one unit that is known as extended family, which then could form a larger family or clan, and which is the case in most small villages in Egypt, where there are one or two clans.

In rural communities, social relations between clans are seen in social occasions, like weddings and funerals (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976), whereas, in urban communities, there are various situations where social relations are shown, like parties, dinners on the weekend, and so on. Some farmers socialize while having lunch, usually, under a favorite tree (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976).

The role of the woman in rural communities is usually confined to being a housewife. Of her duties is supplying the house with drinking water, which is considered a part of women's social life, as they usually gather around the water pump, a public tap, or a canal to fill their jugs and gossip. Thus, water sources in villages are considered social centers, or I may say gendered social centers (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976).

Moreover, social networks are influenced by the mode of production and gender roles within the community. For example, in rural communities, preparing food is a woman's task that is usually done in the house courtyard or in front of the house door joining other women neighbors. Also, making milk products to sell in weekly local markets allows for establishing social ties among women in the countryside (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976).

Children usually socialize in the country house, or in the alleys, or they might fish or swim in the canal. Men usually meet their guests in front of the entrance of the house in evenings. For the whole community, social meetings, i.e. family gatherings on special occasions, are a major recreation source to village people due to the absence of recreation services. Another important social occasion in the village is the Friday mid-day prayer, as men usually meet after the prayer and discuss problems or issues concerning the village (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976). Furthermore, in rural communities, mixing between men and women is against custom; girls are usually kept at home until marriage. There are no friendship ties between boys and girls (Kamel & Hifnawi 1976).

Comparison between urban and rural social networks

There are obvious differences between the structure of the interpersonal relations in simple and complex societies (Mitchell 1973). Durkheim also compared social relationships in simple societies with that in complex societies. He argues that relationships in simple societies are based on family and kinship, whereas in complex societies, there are different types of social networks, where family relationships and kinship ties declined.

"[Individuals in the city are] dependent upon more people for the satisfactions of their life-needs than are rural people and thus are associated with a greater number of organized groups, but they are less dependent upon particular persons, and their dependence upon others is confined to a highly fractionalized aspect of the other's realm of activity. This is essentially what is meant by saying that the city is characterized by secondary rather than primary contacts. The contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental" (Wirth 1938: 12).

Furthermore, Wirth (1938:42-3) believes that "the bonds of kinship, of neighborliness, and the sentiments arising out of living together for generations under a common folk tradition are likely to be absent or, at best, relatively weak in an aggregate the members of which have such diverse origins and backgrounds." He, thus argues that "characteristically, urbanites meet one another in highly segmental roles."

Park, Wirth and Burgess addressed some of the characteristics of the networks in both city life and village life. In village life individuals are in "contact with one another at practically 'all points of their lives'; everyone knew everything about everyone else, and canons of conduct were absolute, social control omnipotent, and the status of the family and individuals fixed." In city life there is another set of social relationships; a multiplexity in social relationships, which means that two individuals may relate to each other in a number of different social contexts. For example, two men may be, employer and employee of each other, members of the same religious group, members of the same political party, play golf together at weekends, and so on (Mitchell 1987: 302-03).

In small-scale societies, Bott argues, nuclear families are encapsulated in local groups. In these circumstances she argues:

"The division of labor in small-scale societies is relatively simple, whereas, in an industrial society the division of labor is exceedingly complex. In a small-scale relatively closed society, since most of the services required by a family can be provided by the other families in the local group and in the kin group. However, in an urban industrialized society, such tasks and services are divided up and assigned to specialized institutions. Whereas a family in a small-scale relatively closed society belongs to a small number of groups each with many functions, an urban family exists in a network of many separate unconnected institutions each with a specialized function. In a small-scale relatively closed society the local group and the kin group mediate between the family and the total society; in an urban industrial society there is no single encapsulating group or institution that mediates between the family and total society."

The immediate environment in Bott's analysis, Mitchell (1973: 16-7) believes, was the set of personal contacts which members of the family had with others — the friends, neighbors and kinsfolk. Moreover, Poel (1993:11) agrees with Parsons that in traditional agricultural societies, large-scale kinship units dominated the social structure, since they were economic units in the consuming and producing sense, living in the same locality. These large kinship groups have been replaced by a system of isolated nuclear families. Poel also stated that in line with the functionalist views of Parsons, he concludes that the isolation of the nuclear family is an adaptive response to the modern industrial economy. Thus, with industrialization, the focus of economic production shifted from kin groups to non-familial organizations. Moreover, he argues that modern societies select people for occupational positions on the basis of personal qualities rather than family connections, which gives rise to social and geographical mobility that further weakens the ties with relatives outside the nuclear family. Furthermore, Poel (1993: 12) argues that in modern industrial societies the nuclear family is more isolated from the larger kin group than in agricultural societies.

Schulz (1978:105) believes that in primitive societies, the differentiation between work and leisure is less apparent than in urbanized and industrialized societies. For example, "in hunting and gathering cultures, work and leisure melt

in a total pattern of life, encompassing subsistence activities and other traditions which are not often separated conceptually by the members of the culture. Work is usually ritualized to the extent that harvests and hunts become associated with ceremony and with magic or religion".

Smith (1980: 15) argues that urban dwellers have contacts with many more people than do rural dwellers, although their knowledge of their contacts is less intensive; they have more acquaintances, but fewer friends.

Wirth, Simmel and Roszak all agree that urbanization leads to the decline of primary social networks that are strong in rural communities. Wirth, also, argues that urbanization leads to the decline in the social significance of the family and the weakening of kinship bonds (Smith 1980).

URBAN PLANNING AND THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Wirth (1938) argues that the pattern of land use, of land values, rentals, and ownership, the nature and functioning of the physical structures, of housing, of transportation and communication facilities, of public utilities-these and many other phases of the physical mechanism of the city are not isolated phenomena unrelated to the city as a social entity, but are affected by and affect the urban mode of life and, consequently, affect the formation of social networks.

Within the principles of urban planning, there should be public parks for holidays and weekends. Then, the planning of urban areas should provide areas for sports facilities, and other leisure outlets (Allam 1991). Parks in the city allows for social contacts and building social ties for instance, mothers take their children to the park to socialize with each other thus building social ties (Jacobs 1992). Also, the public library is one of the major social spots within the city since it provides cultural facilities as well as social relationships (Allam 1991).

Although there is more privacy in the city than in the village, city life

allows for more social relations and ties than does life in village. For instance, streets and side walks in the city allows for greater social contacts outside the family and kinship relations of rural life.

Physical Elements that Play a Social Role in Urban Settings

There are some urban features and elements that encourage the formation of social relationships. Examples of such elements are the street, the balcony, the mosque, the market, the coffee shop/teahouse, the shopping mall, the club, public parks and green areas, etc...

The balcony for instance, especially, in *sha'bi* areas plays a significant social role. It is "used for the communication with others and to present the self in public. Women often read the news of other families, such as the birth of a child or the arrival of a family member from abroad, from the objects and clothes displayed on the balcony's laundry ropes. On the balcony, young men and women subtly exchange love messages." It is also "the stage where neighbors exchange standard insults when fighting" (Ghannam 2002). The staircase is another element for socialization, where women "squat to hollow out and stuff eggplants and squash with the help of some neighbors" (Ghannam 2002).

In Boulaq, for instance, there are many physical elements, like "the open area around the public tap, the roof top, the narrow lane, the cornice of the Nile, and the local shrines, which are important sites of socialization and where women 'eat together', a signal of closeness and strong relationships. Also spaces that are used to raise domestic animals are also the locus of interaction between women. While taking care of their domestic animals in the morning and evening, women meet on the rooftop to discuss daily affairs, the latest news of the neighborhood, and national and international news" (Ghannam 2002).

RURAL MIGRANTS IN URBAN SETTING

Mitchell (1987: 34) argues that people from rural areas lured by what

appears to be wage-earning job opportunities in towns, hence better life styles, are forced to adapt to a new mode of production and new administrative, legal and economic dimensions, hence a new behavior. They are likely to be involved in the urbanization process, where a set of social relationships is established. Moreover, Mitchell adopted a strategy in his study of urban social relationships that the setting in which the relationships are located should be specified first, since it defines the 'framework within which these relationships must operate'.

This shift from a rural to a predominantly urban society, which has taken place within the span of a single generation in industrialized areas, has been accompanied by profound changes in virtually every phase of social life (Wirth 1938).

Mutual-aid networks have been found and are necessary for the poor and unskilled rural migrants to major cities as they facilitate the adjustment of newcomers to the new conditions and their orientation into a set of social networks (Smith 1980).

In *Bulaq*, for example, "immigrants from the countryside continued to come to *Bulaq* over the years. Usually, however, they came in relatively small numbers and were already linked to relatives or people from their villages. Not only did this facilitate their immediate integration into the existing social network, but the presence of the relatives and village connections in *Bulaq* made it obligatory for the newcomers to abide by the rules of the community" (Ghannam 2002).

In the next chapter, I will examine how the social networks are formed in new urban communities and what are their types, and more specifically, how rural/urban background affects the formation of social networks in these new communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN NEW COMMUNITIES

There are many ethnographic studies about urban settlements in Cairo as well as new communities in the developing world. I examined them to see the relation between social relationships and urban space. I focused on three main studies covering new communities in both developed and developing countries: one on a new community in Canada "East York", the second is on a new community in Cairo "Al-Zawiya Al-Hamra, and the third is on an African small town "Ndola".

Ndola is an African small town, which is, to a great extent, similar to my area of study, whether with regard to functionality and social characteristics. It began as a small administrative post, railway junction and trading settlement (Epstein 1969). It is a small town of about 50,000 inhabitants (the same size as my research area – New Borg Al-Arab City). A small proportion of such population were born there, while others were residents for some fifteen years or less, who have come from other towns and neighboring communities. Senior citizens were very few in numbers. Most of the residents came in the last five years.

Wellman, Carrington & Hall (1988) when they started studying the community of East York (a densely settled residential area of central Toronto in which much of the working-class and lower middle-class population owns small homes) in 1968, they were curious about the emptiness of the streets that gave little public evidence of community life. They were expecting, however, to see visible, almost palpable communities; they expected to see neighbors chatting on front porches, friends relaxing on streets corners, others gathering for Sunday dinners, etc. But all they found were merely a few signs of active neighborhood life. Then, they realized that they were focusing their attention only on obvious

physical signs and that they were seeing only a part of the picture. However, after further in-depth studies, they realized that the residents were heavily involved in community networks, despite that emptiness of the streets; people visit, communicate, share information, and exchange help with each other. East Yorkers were finding community in ties, not in public places. Furthermore, they started to look for the social essence of community through analyzing social networks and studying the ways in which networks of informal relations fit persons and households into social structures. They focused their research on the characteristics of community ties, informal links of companionship and aid between individuals, and on the patterns formed by these links.

In addition, Tekce, Oldham and Shorter (1994) have done a detailed ethnography on Manshiet Nasser, one of the highly dense new urbanized low-income neighborhoods in Cairo. Their study reveals almost the same patterns of other old low-income neighborhoods.

Obtaining sufficient water for drinking and other domestic uses is a major preoccupation of households in Manshiet Nasser, since there is poor or no water supply, and it is usually the role of women to allocate considerable time and often money to the acquisition of water—from dawn to dusk there are long lines of women and young girls patiently waiting their turn to draw water in front of buildings along the main street. There are a large number of tiny grocery stores along the streets of the area that have become the sites for social interaction among women. Since public taps are at a distance and women mostly buy from water trucks, do their laundry inside the houses, and rarely if ever visit the homes of non-relatives, so their visit to the grocery shops becomes an important part of their daily social life. Each grocery has a regular clientele who never go elsewhere unless there is an urgent need for an out-of-stock item. This is also another type of social networks which is based on exchange theory, i.e. the agent-client relation. Moreover, relationships at the grocery are cemented by credit, which usually is extended only to the end of day, and rarely beyond another day or two.

Thus, grocery shops are a socially acceptable setting for women to meet one another, gossip, exchange advice, and establish or extend a social network. The grocery visits are so important that women typically spread their purchases over the morning hours when men are at work, thereby maximizing the time that can be spent with other women at the store without incurring criticism. Also, a wide range of information is exchanged in women's conversation at the grocery shops, and news about events in the homes of nearby neighbors who are not personally visited comes to women in this way, as well, keeping them well informed about their immediate neighborhood. Here also, the savings group is a common urban form of informal associations, which are mainly organized by women, who are also the main participants, though men are increasingly entering into these associations. Men also have strong and wide networks of social relations, where they interact at least as much with co-workers as with neighbors and relatives. These social networks are likely to extend far beyond the borders of the Manshia, into many quarters of the city (Tekce, Oldham and Shorter 1994).

Ghannam (2002) argues that in new areas social networks are formed through "working together, going to the same school, or attending the same mosque."

New Borg Al-Arab Compared to Another New Urban Community

One of the significant studies on new urban communities is that done by Farha Ghannam on the community of Al-Zawiya Al-Hamra. I chose this area to compare it with my research area, as there are some common factors between the two areas.

In urban areas in Cairo, like Al-Zawiya, people usually use the green areas that are in the middle of a group of apartment block to socialize. In Al-Zawiya, they use these areas for weddings, funerals (Ghannam 2002). However, in Borg Al-Arab, the Youth Center is the main place for all these occasions.

When comparing Borg Al-Arab with other new settlements like, the new settlement of Zawiya Al-Hamra, I found a few similarities and some differences.

In the new neighborhood of Al-Zawiya Al-Hamra, there are strong friendship ties amongst the women, and they usually visit each others' homes. Mothers, usually, are accompanied by their children. In New Borg Al-Arab, this is not the case, however, women friends do not visit each other at home. They refer this to the difference in social class. However, in my opinion, it is not only the social class that affect their closeness, but the fact that they are still strangers and do not form close social ties, which I sense through my interviews, especially, with women. In Al-Zawiya, young women tend to prefer more privacy in their future homes and like the idea of being separated from others so that their activities will not be scrutinized (Ghannam 2002), which is, to some extent, the case in New Borg Al-Arab City, where young women do not welcome home visits, and rather prefer some privacy.

In Al-Zawiya, people see it as missing both the authenticity and close relations of *baladi* areas and the 'modernity' and privacy of established (*raaqi*) neighborhoods. I believe this is true for new areas, with New Borg Al-Arab one of them. Moreover, since most of the residents of new cities are originally from villages, thus new cities, and in particular, New Borg Al-Arab city are neither rural, nor urban; they are something in between urban and rural. In other words, they are rural residents adapting to an urban setting.

In new areas, like in Al-Zawiya people used to use the word '*lamma*' to describe the new society, which indicates that different people with diverse backgrounds, and of different social classes gather in the same area; "people from different towns, villages and religious come to live in the same place, hang out at the same coffee shops, visit the same markets, ride the same transportation" (Ghannam 2002).

I agree with (Ghannam 2002) that the homogeneity of these places is not based on similar economic activities, a common place of origin, or the absence of

differences among their inhabitants. Rather, it results from the familiarity or intimacy (*ulfa*) created through the gradual rootedness in a specific place over a long period of time. This explains to some extent why in New Borg Al-Arab neighborhood ties are not close ties. Most of the social relations in New Borg Al-Arab, especially, those amongst neighbors are based on, or controlled by social class. Moreover, Ghannam (2002) argues that the familiarity between residents of a particular locality secures social capital that facilitates mutual understanding and the formation of many social relationships. Also, she believes that knowing others and being able to place them is central to vital economic and social processes such as forming savings associations (*gam'eyyat*) and arranging marriages (Ghannam 2002). In Borg Al-Arab, these rotating savings associations are not as common as in other areas in Cairo, since neighbors have no close ties, hence no strong social capital. Such "rotating savings associations are impossible between people who do not know each other" (Ghannam 2002).

"Marriage, for instance, is preferred between families who 'know each other'. This means that the family of the bride is familiar with the economic conditions as well as the character, manners, and reputation of the groom and his family" (Ghannam 2002). In New Borg Al-Arab, most marriages are arranged through families. In most cases the fathers have some friendship relations, either through work or through the mosque. In some instances, it is the mothers who arrange the marriage with their friends or co-workers. And, in some cases, the youth know each other through cultural activities, or they may go to the same university. In all cases, however, the families are involved, since marriage in Egypt is between families, and not only the bride and the groom. I believe that the social situation in new areas is almost the same. For example, in Borg Al-Arab, like in Al-Zawiya the relocation, or migration, as in the case of Borg Al-Arab, of thousands of families, simultaneously, from different parts to the same area makes it difficult to maintain social control, acquire enough knowledge of the people around, and recreate the social support and trust that existed in old areas.

Life in the street is central to the distinction between *raaqi* and *sha'bi* areas. In the latter, the street is central to many activities, including weddings, death observances, playing, socializing, and selling various foods and goods. Similarly, the shared space between *murabba'at* in *el-masaakin* is the site of extensive social interaction that ranges from women selling vegetables and fruits while taking care of their domestic animals to men conducting various economic activities in small workshops that spill out from the first floor of many residential units. In *raaqi* areas, "There are no people in the street, and nothing is sold there." Women in particular expressed fear because they do not feel safe walking in empty streets. While upper-class neighborhoods are silent (*huss huss*), people in al-Zawiya prefer *zeeta*. The word *zeeta* literally means noise, but this usage signifies the noise that accompanies joyful atmosphere created by intensive interaction. "To have fun", laugh, dance, sing and sit for hours cracking jokes are central to the daily life of lower-classes (*sha'bi* people). It is interesting to note that the differences between upper-class and *sha'bi* areas, the United States and Egypt, al-Zawiya al-Hamra and Bulaq, and Cairo and the village are constructed in similar ways. While relationships between people in *sha'bi* areas are intense, direct, and personal, relationships between upper-class people are seen as impersonal and superficial.

In al-Zawiya, one will not find Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Such places can never profit in areas like this. I did not see any of these franchises in New Borg Al-Arab, because, I believe, most of the residents are still recent arrivals from rural areas, so they either have no desire of, or cannot afford food from these chains.

New symbols, desires, dreams, and expectations are continuously produced by the growing globalization of Cairo. All these changes challenge various mechanisms used to regulate relationships and structure identities. One

example can be found in the notion of '*asl*'¹ and how its role has changed in positioning people and structuring relationships.

Moreover, one's place of birth (a village, a town, or a neighborhood) plays a prominent role in shaping one's '*asl*'. Those who are born in the village differ from those who are born and raised in Cairo. A forty-five-year-old woman who was born in the countryside and has been living in al-Zawiya al-Hamra for more than twenty years, but who still thinks of herself as a "stranger," explains that she prefers to befriend women who were born and raised in rural Egypt. She trusts them more than those who were born and raised in Cairo. *Fallahin* (rural people), according to her, do not play games; they respect traditions, are loyal to their friends, and can be relied on. "People in my village," she emphasizes, "are honest. We do not know *ilawwa'* [how to play games]. Women of Cairo act deviously and change colors all the time. You can never trust them."

'*Asl*' by itself is not always sufficient to organize practices. The social context is necessary to enable the individual to manifest his or her '*asl*'. Again, this can be seen in how people perceive the difference between the village and the city. In the village, the '*asl*' can be clearly detected and can indicate how a person is going to act. Kinship and direct knowledge of each other in the village make it difficult for individuals to escape social control. "In the village," as one woman explained, "no matter where you go, you will find someone who knows either you or a member of your family. If you do something that violates the norms, someone is prone to report what you did to your relatives and neighbors." In comparison, the anonymity of the city, especially in areas such as al-Zawiya al-Hamra, secures freedom for its inhabitants that makes it harder to control their actions and pressure them to conform to certain collective norms.

Women's access to public spaces is in general limited and controlled by their male relatives. In New Borg Al-Arab City, women's social networks are based

¹ '*Asl*' means origin literally, and is usually used in describing one's good origin and behavior

on friendship ties through school. There are also some ties formed through courses and events held at the cultural center, like sewing classes and computer courses.

Ghannam (2002: ch 4) argues that in urban settings the coffee shop and the vegetable market have special social meanings that she linked to the "increasing tendency for people from different groups to mix in the same area." Also, the mosque and the market place are considered centers for socialization and the formation of social relationships, and where, usually, men interact. The *hara* in *sha'bi* areas is the focal point for women's interaction and social life. However, women may be encouraged or allowed to frequent some public spaces, like the mosque. On the other hand, young males have to struggle with their families to secure access to public spaces, like the coffeehouse.

Reasons for Women's Absence from the Street

While men have more freedom touring the city and enjoy less restricted access to various public spaces, women's movement is structured by several factors such as age and dress code and is restricted to certain times (for example, day or night and times of the absence of menstrual and birth blood). While men can and often go out almost at any time (day and night), women do not usually go out late at night without being accompanied by a male relative or a female friend (Ghannam 2002). In Borg Al-Arab, young women are not allowed to go out on their own after evening-time. In contrast to young women, older ones have more freedom and can walk safely without the threat of harassment.

Almost all women I saw at the local weekly market (*suq al-arba'*) in New Borg Al-Arab were old to middle-aged women. Young women were usually in groups. Children and young girls were always accompanied by their mothers.

During Ramadan, women are allowed more freedom to stay outside late at night (Ghannam 2002). Many attend the night prayer (*tarawih*) at mosques.

In most cases social support networks (which in most cases help in the

formation of social networks) are forged by women, as is the case in Al-Zawiya (as Ghannam argues).

The presence of children often restricts women's movements (Ghannam 2002). This is also true in Borg Al-Arab, as most of my informants reported that they are stuck at home during school days because of their children. Also those who have younger children who are under school age and are not yet enrolled in schools are not free in their movements because of taking care of their youngsters.

In new settlements, like Al-Zawiya for example, Ghannam (2002) reports that in the workplace young women meet from different parts of Cairo, " and the site seems to foster solidarity among them, bringing them together to exchange stories about their lives. Young women often feel and see the suffering of other female fellow workers," "they 'eat together,' a notion that usually designates strong solidarity between people, and their relationships extend beyond the workplace to include the home and occasional trips to areas around Cairo. They may also meet their future husbands through one of their female co-workers. In New Borg Al-Arab, female co-workers—usually workers in factories or employees in the public sector, like *Gehaz el-madina* and the public schools—form their social networks through work. However, their relationships do not extend to home visits. They may go out together to the local weekly market, to social events, or they may attend cultural events together, mostly at the cultural center. They may also accompany their children to some lessons at the cultural center. Also, through their social networks, women may arrange marriages for their sons or daughters.

How Social Networks are Formed

In some new settlements, like Al-Zawiya al-Hamra for instance, as described by Ghannam (2002), the utilization of empty lands, mostly by women—selling fresh vegetables and fruits, home-made food or home-based industries—

facilitates women's interaction and provides them with the chance to socialize with others, and consequently, expand their social networks.

In new Borg Al-Arab, during weekdays the streets are almost empty, except for middle-aged and elderly men who occupies the coffeehouses. Some, also, gather in front of some shops or workshops, like the car repair workshop. However, in weekends, formal holidays and in summer, people go out either to restaurants and coffee shops—mainly males—or to the Youth Center and the Cultural Center.

The Coffee Shop

“Although there are coffeehouses in other parts of Cairo where women are allowed, in al-Zawiya coffee shops are open only to men. They gather there to drink sweet tea and to play chess, cards, and dominos inside the shop during the winter and in front of it during the summer. For many young men, the coffee shop is one of the few spaces where they can socialize with other male friends away from their families” (Ghannam 2002). Like the workplace and the street, the coffee shop brings people of different social classes together.

The Weekly Market

“Opinions—about people and about politics—take shape in the network of communications in the *suq*; even the most severe government censorship cannot stand up against the whispered asides which pass from person to person in the *suq*” (Ghannam 2002- from Robert Fernea, *Suqs of the Middle East*).

I hardly see street vendors or peddlers in the streets of New Borg Al-Arab. There is the local market and shops or stores in the city hub, with some small shops in the neighborhoods. There are a small number of street vendors at the transportation center at the end of the city hub, who are almost all from outside the city. Many of them are from Al-Amereya. They chose this part of the city mainly to serve those who come to and go from the city on a daily basis. The other shops in the neighborhoods of the city range from small groceries, to pharmacies and a few bookshops.

In Al-Zawiya, as Ghannam (2000) reported, the vegetable market is a busy place, where women from nearby villages bring baskets full of seasonal products; there is hardly a place to move, as merchants have to move their goods to allow a car to pass through the market; products are piled on carts, and their sellers are shouting describing the taste of the fruit, announcing the prices of vegetables, and calling upon people to inspect their merchandise and compare prices. Life in the *suq* of Al-Zawiya is similar to that in the local market of New Borg Al-Arab.

Ghannam (2002) argues that studies of the *suq* also tend to focus more on the merchants than on how the people, especially women, interact and view it. Little attention has been devoted to the study of local vegetable markets that women visit to buy their daily vegetables and fruits. Unlike the central markets and bazaars that have attracted the attention of researchers, the *suq* in al-Zawiya al-Hamra is dominated by women. They are the majority of the sellers and buyers. Although there are other closer options that could save them time and effort, such as peddlers and women who sell vegetables and fruits on the corner of the street, women normally prefer the more distant local markets to secure lower prices and fresher products. Because women are expected to be engaged in such arguments and disagreements in the *suq*, they have to learn special verbal skills as part of their socialization, which includes visits to the market from early childhood, as young girls accompany their mothers to the market during school vacations and are allowed to go alone to buy some simple things as they grow older (Ghannam 2002). This is not the case in Borg Al-Arab, especially, that the *suq* is not within their residence area. No one reported about theft or violence. Relationships in general are safe in Borg Al-Arab. However, most women prefer to buy their supplies from the Wednesday market because of the availability of a large variety of goods and with less prices at the same time.

Ghannam (2002) argues that the vegetable market, like the coffee shop and the street, brings people together from different areas in the neighborhood.

Whereas the coffee shop is a man's domain, the vegetables market is a woman's domain.

The Mosque

The growing importance of religious identity is clearly manifested and reinforced in the increasing centrality of the mosque as a space that brings members of different groups together, facilitates their interaction, and promises to establish a unified collectivity out of a heterogeneous neighborhood. The mosque is open to all Muslims, and differences between people are at least temporarily dissolved through their gathering as equals in the same space. Compared with the market and the coffee shop, where people's interactions are characterized by distrust (as is the case in Al-Zawiya al-hamra), the mosque is the most acceptable and safest social space where various groups can meet and interact. The mosque is the 'House of God' that both men and women are encouraged to visit. The mosque is actively utilized to frame the interaction between members of different groups as well as to empower emerging meanings, identities, and relationships. In fact, the word *gaami'*, used to refer to the mosque, is from the root *gama'*, which means 'to bring together.'

In areas like al-Zawiya al-Hamra, the mosque plays an important social role for both men and women. For instance, women form strong relationships with each other. If one of them does not attend the prayer, other women go to ask about their absent friend. Their friendship is based on trust. At the same time, the elderly are attracted to the mosque because they have more free time, besides, for them, it is considered a place for socialization. And, for women, by being part of the collectivity in the mosque, they forge friendships and create support systems that they can draw on during their daily life. Moreover, Ghannam reported that many marriages, especially between residents in *el-ahali* and *el-masakin*, are being arranged through the mosque networks. Furthermore, the mosque facilitates the interaction of different groups and helps creating a unified identity based on equality and solidarity (Ghannam 2002).

CHAPTER SIX

THE RESEARCH AREA²

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CITIES

The national plan of the government of Egypt for the construction of new urban communities aims at absorbing the ever growing population in major cities, like Cairo and Alexandria, and creating new urban centers that would provide social and economic stability, the intention being to re-distribute population by preparing modern centers of attraction outside the orbit of the existing cities and villages. The City of New Borg Al-Arab is one of these urban centers with the objective to absorb the over-population of Alexandria and to create a new industrial zone to stop construction on agricultural land.

Government's Plan

The government's plan is to build on a number of considerations, of which the most important and of concern with regard to this study are:

- Attract individuals to new areas to reduce population pressure on the existing cities;
- Construction of new cities and communities within the context of an urban and regional plan derived from a general national plan whose objective is to increase national income and provide jobs for citizens;
- Efforts to establish industries in specific planned zones so as to benefit from the economic output of the industrial projects;
- Fostering an appropriate climate for the attraction of capital to the new areas

² Information in this section is based on data collected from the Administrative Body of the City of New Borg Al-Arab.

and cities through the provision of facilities and incentives for investment in projects, so that the latter may perform their function in the field of industrial production and the provision of necessary services; and

- Other plans including the provision of services for these new centers and connecting them to existing main cities.

The site of New Borg Al-Arab City is chosen so as to permit:

- Independence of the city that is internally structured so as to absorb population and industry in appropriate proportions;

To be erected on a site at a sufficient distance from Alexandria to allow its independence and self-support.

The mission statement of New Borg Al-Arab City

"To create an urban environmental entity that is self-contained—self-dependant—economically, socially, etc., and to absorb population migration to Alexandria Governorate and the over-population of Behaira Governorate, and also, as a service center to the coastal area and a regional center to West Delta in general", according to the government reports in regards to the planning of the city.

The city was planned in the late 1970s, and was named New 'Amreya (*Al-'Amreya Al-Gedida*). And, due to its geographical adjacency to Borg Al-Arab, now called Old Borg, President Mubarak has changed its name to New Borg Al-Arab.

The schematic planning for the city was based on establishing an industrial base and a residential base, see Figure 1.

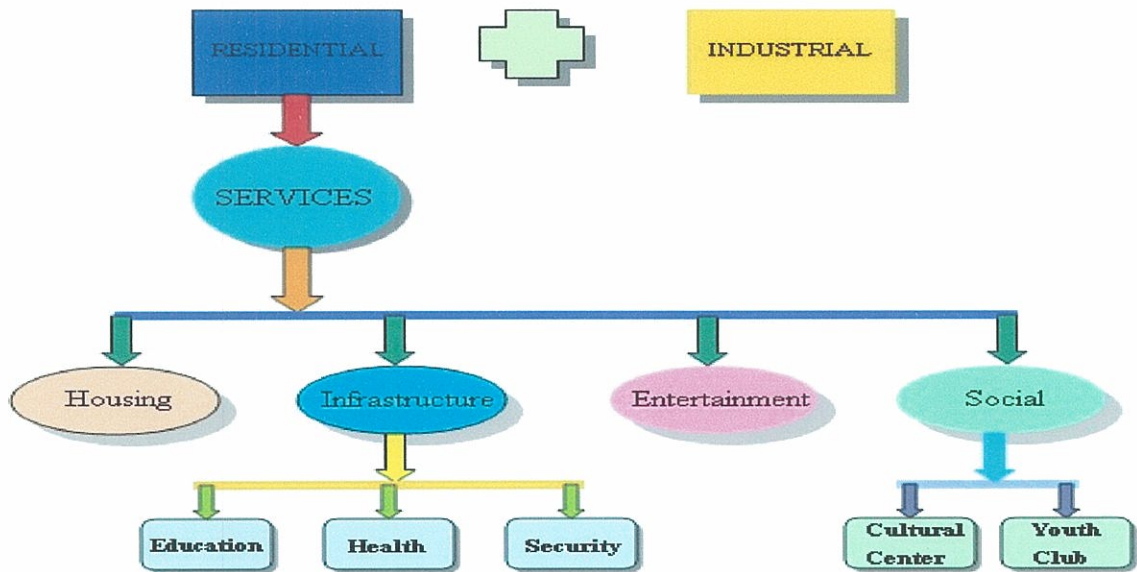


Figure 1: Schematic Planning for New Borg Al-Arab City

LOCATION OF NEW BORG AL-ARAB CITY

New Borg Al-Arab City lies 60 kilometers to the southwest of Alexandria, some seven kilometers from the Mediterranean coast, see Figure 2. The location is on high ground and the area enjoys a particularly healthy climate all year round. New Borg Al-Arab City is seen as the natural extension of Alexandria.

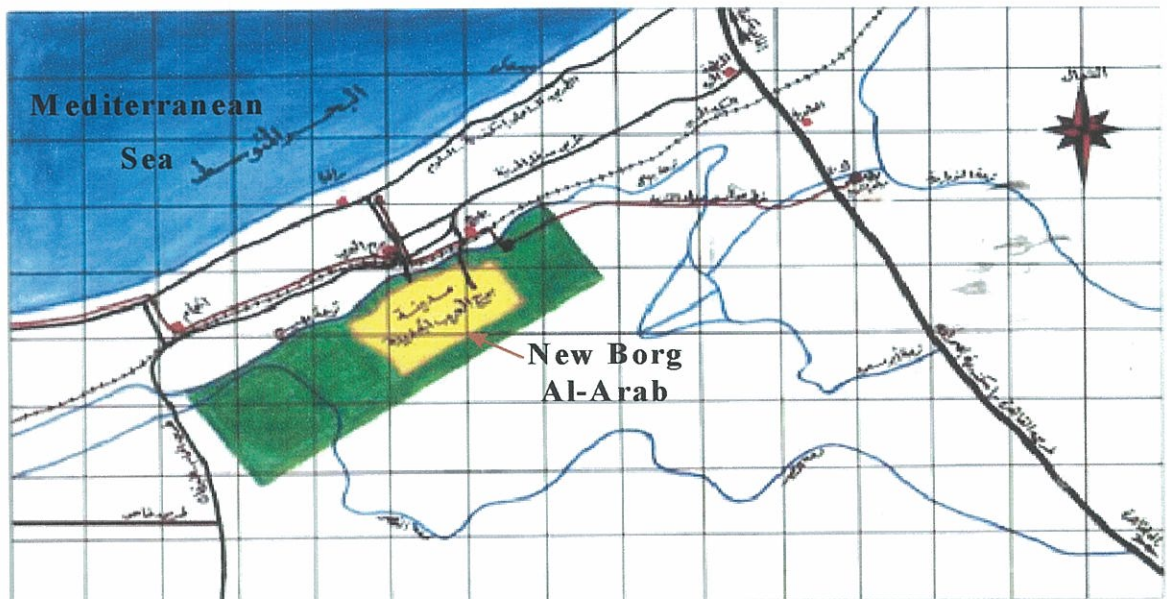


Figure 2: Location of New Borg Al-Arab City

GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY

The city has a total surface area of 200 square kilometers, of which the built area occupies 102 square kilometers. It is comprised of ten residential districts and five industrial districts, each residential district containing eight to nine neighborhoods. The central hub of the city, in which the main services are concentrated, is situated in the middle. The city is planned to absorb 570,000 inhabitants at its fullest extent and provide approximately 160,000 employment opportunities, with 122,000 housing units.

The Ministry of Construction has built residential units and allocated lands for the investors, and established all the infrastructure and services to serve both the residential and the industrial activities. It has built schools, kindergartens, a hospital, and police station; established water and wastewater services, electricity supply, telephone network, and transportation network; and constructed a central market, etc. The Ministry also sold some plots for those who prefer to build their own units. However, most of these lands are owned by wealthy people from Cairo and Alexandria, who built very nice villas that are closed most of the time.

The Main Activities in the City

Residential: to absorb the over population in surrounding areas, especially, Alexandria and its suburbs, and other governorates, like Behaira and Gharbeya.

Industrial: to absorb industrial activities from Alexandria and the surrounding areas, since it is heavily dense with industrial activities.

Residential Area

- The First Residential District with utilities and phase one of the Third Residential District are complete;
- The Second Residential District, the rest of the Third, and the Fourth Residential District are under construction;

- 8,241 housing units (above-average, low-cost, and economic) have been completed and most have been handed over to their owners; and
- The construction of 560 middle-income housing units in the Third Residential District is underway.

Industrial Zone

- The industrial zone of the city has been located to its east and south to avoid any environmental impact on the city. The zone consists of 22 square kilometers currently distributed among four districts. Two further districts are planned in addition to areas set aside for workshops and small industries.
- There is also an Industrial Zone Services Center, which includes a training center. Factories in production provide job opportunities for approximately 21,000 workers.

INVESTMENT IN THE CITY

- Investors are encouraged to invest in the city and are granted a period of three years to prove their seriousness and complete the establishment of their projects for the agreed purpose. Otherwise, the allocation will be cancelled.
- Investors enjoy all custom and tax exemptions permitted by law.
- Owners of industrial projects enjoy priority in reserving housing units and in reserving plots allocated for housing in the city.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Some 530 million Egyptian Pounds have been invested to equip an area of 19 million square meters. The construction of a water purification plant, three water-pumping stations, five water reservoirs, three sewage-pumping stations, and a sewage treatment plant has been completed. The completion of the

remaining utilities is proceeding according to the authorized plan for the city.

Drinking Water

The city is supplied with water from the Maryut Canal, whose source is the Nobareyya Canal. Water supply networks are constructed in phases: Distribution networks for the First District and first and third phase networks for the Second and Third districts have been constructed in full; and the construction of the second phase for the Second, Third and Seventh districts are under construction.

Sewage Disposal

The construction of sewage pump stations, networks, and pipelines for first Residential District and Central Hub, industrial districts, and discharge lines and the first and third Phases for the Second and Third districts has been completed; and the construction of sewage disposal networks for the second phase of the Second and Third districts and the Seventh District is under construction.

Electrical Works

Electricity grids cover the First residential district, the Second, Third, and Fourth industrial districts, the extension of the Fourth District, the workshop area and the second and third industrial warehouses has been completed; and the implementation the second and third phase electricity grids of the Second and Third residential districts, the central hub, and the Seventh District is under construction.

Road works

The city is connected with a main road to the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road, and to Borg Al-Arab Airport. There is a network of primary and secondary roads connecting the different residential as well as industrial districts with the main hub of the city, where all services are provided. Also, a network of main

roads linking the city with the Matrouh Coast Road and the Sugar Beet Project (Bangar El Sukkar), as well as Alexandria International Airport to the West. Moreover, the construction of the ring road linking the city to the outer roads is in process. The city now is connected to Alexandria and other neighboring urban centers. However, there are studies for the construction of railroad and underground metro to connect the city with Alexandria with fast means of public transportation. Inside the city, there are private and collective taxis that run 24 hours a day.

THE CITY TODAY

According to governmental sources, the City of New Borg Al-Arab has made significant progress over the past four years in increasing its growth average. With the increase in services offered, the population has increased and the gap between the volume of completed infrastructure and housing (on the one hand) and the number of permanent residents (on the other) has decreased.

The city has become an area attractive not only to those who work there, but also to young people looking for a better life style far from the overcrowding of Alexandria and other nearby cities, and to escape the deteriorating life conditions in some rural communities.

The number of working factories in New Borg Al-Arab's industrial zones has increased from 279 to 394 over the past four years.

The services offered in the areas of education, health, and commercial activities not only serve the residents of the city but extend to serve those of nearby communities such as Bahig, Bangar El-Sukkar and Old Borg Al-Arab.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOS

One of the major factors influencing the formation of social networks in

the city is the political associations and NGOs; the most active of them are the following:

City Development Agency

The New Borg Al-Arab City Development Agency belongs to the New Urban Communities Authority. The Agency is responsible for the construction of utilities and services in the city as well as for overseeing the building of residential areas and the apportioning of the industrial zones.

Board of Trustees

New Borg Al-Arab's first Board of Trustees was formed in 1997. Terms are three years. The Board of Trustees is composed of representatives from the City Development Agency, the Investors' Association, the various service ministries, and representatives of residents, youth, and women.

Community Development Association

The Community Development Association (CDA) has participated in overcoming some of the shortcomings in city services. In the health services field, for example, the CDA has established the Guweili Health Services Clinic to provide daily 24-hour service. In child services, the CDA has established a number of kindergartens to care for the children of the city's workers, and in the education field the CDA has established reinforcement classes to school students (where curricula are taught for those who need some sort of reinforcement). Literacy training classes have been opened and a Women's Club has been established through which family planning services and cultural and other services are offered to the families. For youth, the CDA has organized sports leagues and cultural activities. The CDA has also established a city market.

CDA Ongoing Activities:

Kindergarten: Five kindergartens have been handed over to the CDA by the Ministry of Social Affairs and have been equipped by the Board of Trustees and by contributions from investors and residents.

Children's Club: the Club is open to children above kindergarten and below school age. During the summer vacation, the Club is open to all children of school age, for whom cultural and sports activities are arranged, as well as competitions with prizes, and field trips.

Women's Club: the Club offers cultural and social activities, trips, and developmental activities for women.

Workshops: trains young women in all types of domestic work.

Private Medical Center and X-ray Center: offers 24-hour service at minimal prices; a laboratory for tests is provided.

Supervision of the City Market (Weekly, Non-permanent): New Borg Al-Arab City has a weekly market (Wednesday Market) where the various commodities needed by residents are offered for sale. The market includes products from various areas, such as Bangar El-Sukkar, Al-'Amreya, Old Borg Al-Arab, etc...

The CDA has varied sources of income, including members' subscriptions, donations and gifts, revenue from the medical center, revenue from the weekly market, and revenue from the kindergartens.

Investors' Association

The Association was registered in 1990. It has a Board of Directors elected by the General Assembly and consisting of 15 members. The Board is charged with the choice of the head, general secretary, and treasurer of the Board by nomination and election from among the membership. The Association has different committees to carry out its work. Among these are health, education, environment, small industries, membership, services, women's committees, etc...

The Board of Directors is composed of 15 members: Head of the Board, Deputy Head of the Board, General Secretary, treasurer, and eleven board members. It is considered to be one of the oldest non-governmental organizations in the city, in addition to having assisted with the founding of other non-governmental organizations in New Borg Al-Arab City. Its presence through its representatives on the Board of Trustees also helps to activate its participation and support for the improvement and development of services in the city.

Investors in New Borg Al-Arab City believe that a flourishing and lively city provided with services is a basic condition for maintaining the value of their investments. Thus the city's reputation, in terms of the presence of services, reflects on the value and significance of their investments. They also believe that these factors help to increase the stability of the population, as well as attracting greater numbers to live and work in the city. They are convinced that their contributions to the invigoration and improvement of services, whether in the field of education, health, recreational and cultural services, or transport and communications will reflect positively on the residents, whether workers or salaried employees. However, the investors themselves are not living in the city. Some of them own villas, but are not living permanently there.

The financial resources of New Borg Al-Arab City Investors' Association consist of the members' annual subscriptions, as well as contributions of Association members and whatever administrative charges the Association collects from members who do business with it.

Association's Goals, Functions and Roles:

- Development of investment in New Borg Al-Arab City.
- Combating any difficulties investors might face.
- Engaging responsible ministries and relevant parties in discussion to surmount impediments faced by investors.

- Studying laws connected to investment, holding seminars, and encouraging export.
- Assisting with the services side of the development of the city.

The Association has a permanent headquarters consisting of an administrative building with a space for the exhibition of products of the city's industries.

Contributions of the Investors' Association to services include:

- In education, the Association has contributed to the implementation of the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for the preparation of qualified, highly trained technical cadres. The project absorbs 60 students a year, whose practical training takes place in the factories of the city, with the aim of graduating a workforce highly trained in the fields of industry, mechanics, industrial electronics, and ready-to-wear clothing. The Association has also undertaken to support the schools of the city by providing school furniture and has participated in the construction of classrooms for literacy training for workers in the city.
- The Association has participated in the equipping and finishing of the city's Youth Center. The Association also has entered into an agreement in principle with the Social Development Fund to establish a Small Industries Development Project in the city with a loan worth 10 million Egyptian Pounds, in order to bring into being 200 small projects providing 2000 employment opportunities for young people.
- In the security services field, the Investors' Association has contributed towards the construction of police stations in the industrial zones.

In the following chapter, I will discuss how these organizations help forming special types of social networks in the research area.

POPULATION

Since the city is both a residential and industrial center, it includes both residents and those commuters who come on a daily basis. Statistics show that the number of residents has increased from around 7,000 in 1996 to around 50,000 in 2002. This is a clear positive indicator of a high average increase of settlement in New Borg Al-Arab City over the years since its establishment, especially the last four or five years. In addition to the permanent residents, there are also around 25,000 workers in the factories and other establishments of the city who come to New Borg Al-Arab City on a daily basis and make use of a great many of the services available there.

The business/industrial establishments were mostly started in the last decade—i.e., dating back to the nineties, having been established at different points of this period. The owners come from different parts of Egypt, and are not necessarily residents of the city of Borg Al-Arab.

The establishment of the city of New Borg Al-Arab has attracted a sizeable population that has been growing over the years. The industrial zone, in particular, has played a major role in creating job opportunities for many from outside the city, not only from Alexandria—although its share from the residents is very high—but also from other governorates.

Most of the residents are originally from Alexandria, Beheira, or Gharbeya Governorates, with a small portion from other governorates, like Aswan, Minia, Cairo, and Sharqeya. There are also a number of resident who are originally from old Borg Al-Arab and moved to New Borg Al-Arab for better living conditions; some of them still work in old Borg Al-Arab while reside in New Borg Al-Arab. Also, there are a number who still live in old Borg Al-Arab, but work in New Borg Al-Arab. A great number from Al-'Amreya and other surrounding areas also moved to New Borg Al-Arab for better dwelling and living conditions. There is a small portion of the permanent residents originally from Cairo.

The origin of the employees in the establishment is also diversified. Whereas some of them live in the city of Borg Al-Arab, many live in Alexandria or the neighboring areas, such as Al-'Amreya.

Children of the residents in New Borg Al-Arab city study in the local schools. For higher education, they go to institutes in Mariut, or the universities in Alexandria.

There is also another category of population that should be considered when studying New Borg Al-Arab city, as it may have some impact on the city and its social settings. This category is the Bedouins, who live in the desert adjacent to the City of New Borg Al-Arab.

Bedouins are spread out in the neighboring desert land. They have been living in the area for generations, their ancestral line going back generations. The living conditions of this group are deteriorated, as seen in a high level of crowding and a low level of education. They are engaged in herding and agricultural activities, for the most part. They should be considered because many of them are business owners in New Borg Al-Arab, like groceries, coffee shops, restaurants and other shops.

The number of household ranges from four to six on average for the city dwellers, whereas it sometimes reaches 40 in Bedouin households.

Another group of population in Borg Al-Arab is the workers in factories who come from faraway places and are provided group residence, where they cannot bring their families to the city. This helped them to form their own social networks, and they usually help facilitate job opportunities for newcomers. This also resulted in a great number of unmarried residents in the city, and who are named '*al-ghoraba*' (the strangers) by the original residents of the city. These strata of population have some impact, mostly negative, on the social life and social networks within the city, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Those who are originally from nearby cities within the governorate of Alexandria are provided with transportation facilities.

Moreover, there are a number of young male farmers who come to the city from nearby governorates either seeking new jobs, or residence. Those mostly are employed in factories as workers, and are provided with group-residence (where about ten persons live in one apartment).

Demographic Characteristics³

The demographic characteristics of the city are classified here into age, sex, and education distribution, employment status and economic activity of the population, since I believe that those are the major characteristics that influence the formation of the social networks in the new city.

Age Distribution

Figure 3 shows the age distribution in the city of New Borg Al-Arab.

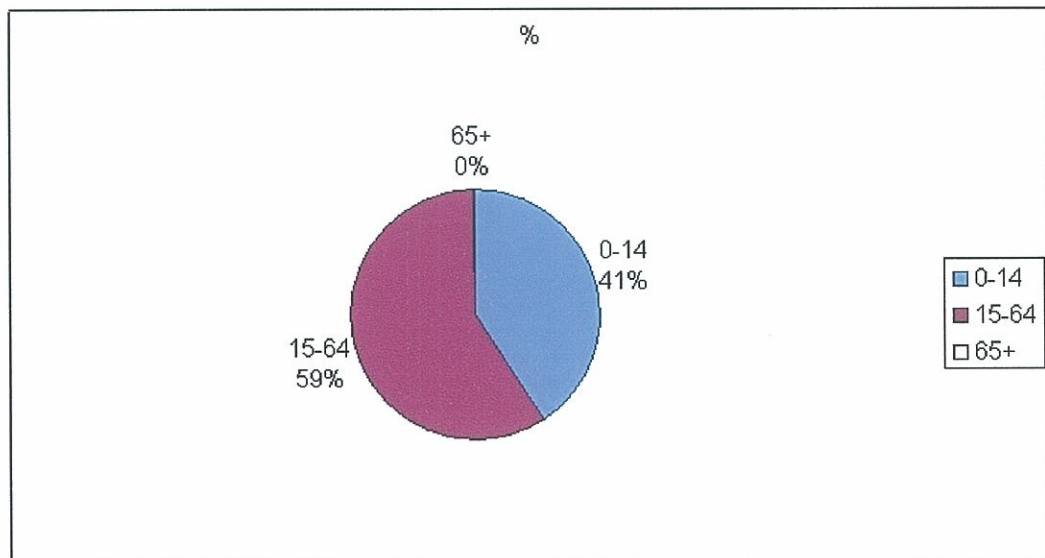


Figure 3: Age Distribution

The age distribution as such is consistent with the nature/history of the city, since as a business/ industrial community, the largest representation in the age groups consists of those in the active working age—namely, between 15 and 64. The young age bracket is included as the children in the families, while the old

³ Demographic analysis is taken from a study prepared by Dr. Madiha El Safty within the EIA study for Borg Al- Arab International Airport prepared by ECG Engineering Consultants Group in the year 2004.

age bracket is practically nonexistent, since the community is predominantly work-oriented.

Sex Distribution

Correspondingly, the sex distribution is dominated by the male sex, considering it is an industrial/business community where employment is mostly for males.

Moreover, not all employees have their families in Borg Al-Arab, but may live elsewhere and commute, or have not accompanied their families in the first place. It follows that males represent 56.16% of the population, while females include 43.84% of the total. The following figure (Figure 4) shows the sex distribution:

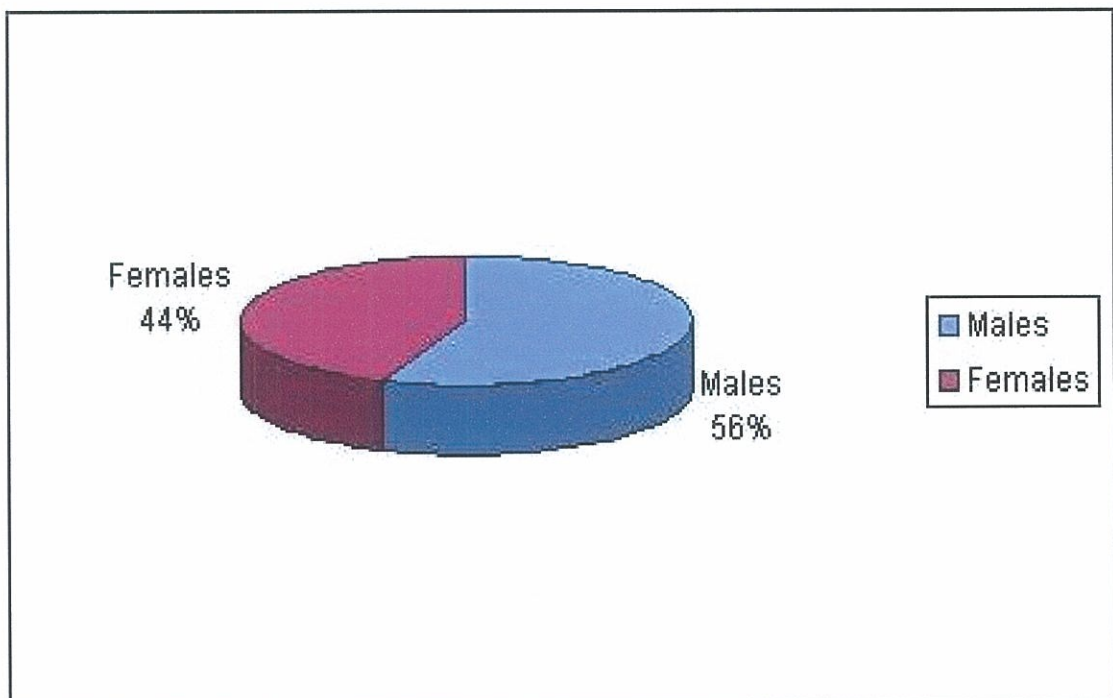


Figure 4: Sex Distribution

Data for 2003 from the City Council estimate the number of males as constituting 26894, while females represent 23963.

Educational Distribution

The following figure (Figure 5) gives the educational distribution:

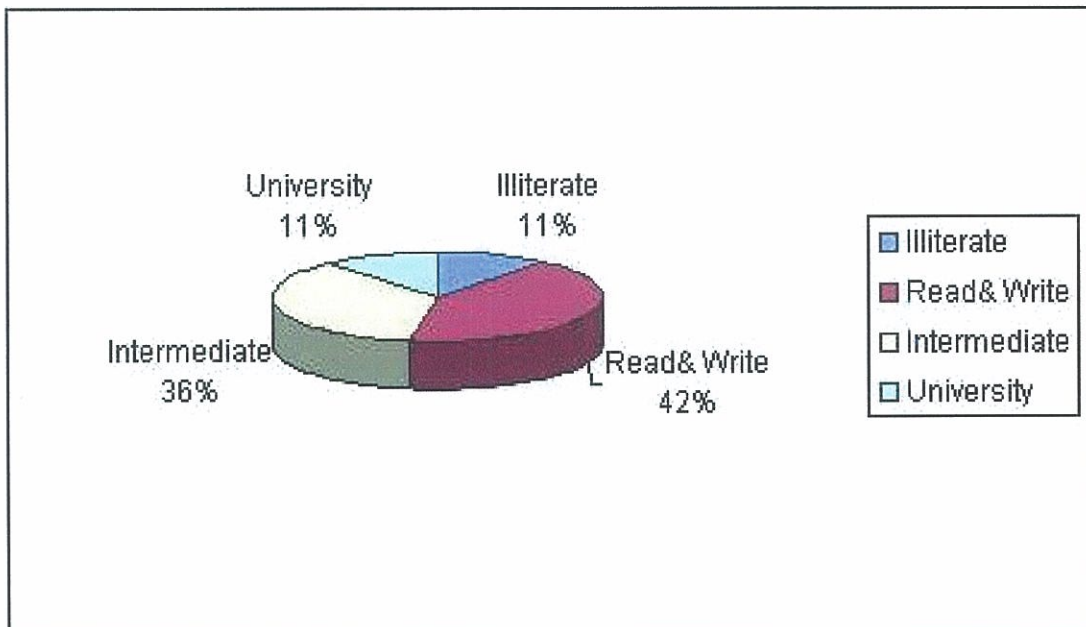


Figure 5: Education Distribution

The distribution as above given is consistent with the educational distribution on the national level, where the category of the illiterates and those who read and write only is high in representation, the category of intermediate education is relatively high, and that of those with university degrees is low.

Employment Status

The employment status of the population includes a low unemployment rate, since, for the most part, it is employment opportunities that attract job-seekers. Estimates are here given for the population aged 15+ in the labor force. The unemployment rate is only 1.32%. Those working for wages represent 94.33%, while the self-employed represent 4.31%. This situation can be understood in the light of the business/industrial sector that provides job opportunities for the population, hence the low unemployment rate.

The employment status can be seen in the following figure (Figure 6):

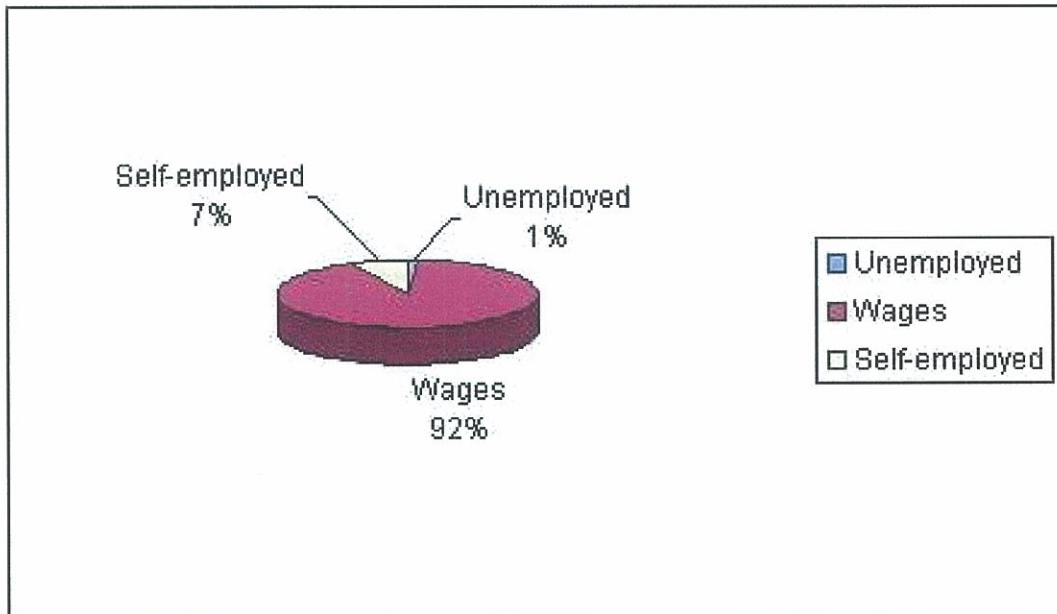


Figure 6: Employment Status

Economic Activity

In line with the above, the economic activity in the city centers mostly around the business/ industrial sector. 28.50% of the population are workers operating machinery and production components. Second in number are technicians and assistant specialists, who represent 16.63%. Skilled workers consist of 15.01%. The professionals are 14.46%, while those that provide the services consist of 8.45% of the total population.

The economic activity is shown in the following figure (Figure 7):

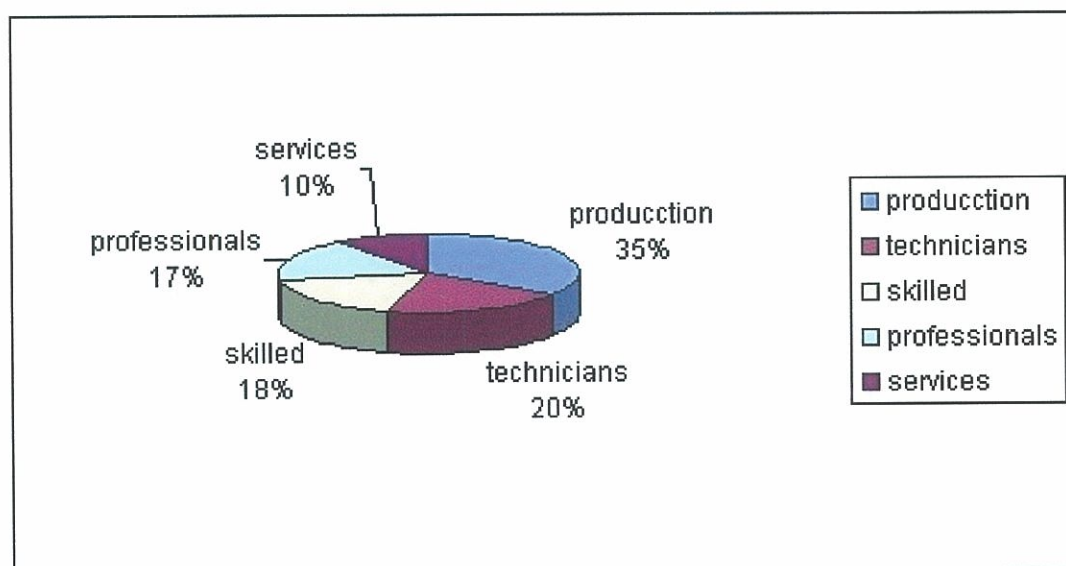


Figure 7: Economic Activity

LAND USE

Since the city of Borg Al-Arab is both a residential and industrial center, its total surface area of 200 square kilometers consists of a built area which occupies 102 square kilometers. The city comprises ten residential districts, in addition to five industrial districts. Each residential district includes from eight to nine neighborhoods. The center of Borg Al-Arab is the nucleus, where the main services are located.

The industrial zone has been planned to lie on the east and south of the city, to avoid negative environmental impact.

Factories in production provide job opportunities for approximately 21,000 workers, having increased from 14,200 in 1996. Moreover, the number of working factories has increased from 297 to 394 over the last four years, see Figure 8 "Land Use" in the following chapter.

AVAILABLE SERVICES

There are quite a number of services in operation in the city, and some are under construction. The following services are installed and already in operation:

Education

There are seven kindergartens, two schools for basic education, one experimental school (language), one secondary school, one vocational training center, two Al-Azhar elementary, preparatory, and secondary schools and institutes, Mubarak City for scientific research, and one industrial zone service center, which includes a training center. Schools include 1292 pupils and 39 teachers. The availability of schools at different stages in the city shows that educational opportunities are provided for the population.

Mubarak City for Scientific Research

Mubarak City for Scientific Research and Technology Applications was established by Presidential Decree 85 of 1993 to be a bastion of excellence in the sciences that can contribute to placing the research, discoveries, and technological progress achieved by science and scientists at the service of the various fields of economic development in the Arab Republic of Egypt and to keep abreast of global technological progress. The concept is similar to that found in a number of other countries, such as Silicon Valley in the United States, the Tsukuba Complex in Japan, and the Bangalore Complex in India. It includes 12 technological institutes and centers, which are being established in stages.

Health Facilities

There is one general hospital with 50 beds, one medical center under the administration of the Ministry of Health, seven private pharmacies, one health insurance clinic, one private medical center, one private laboratory for medical analysis, one X-ray center, one public hospital under construction, and one teaching hospital for the University of Alexandria, under construction. Moreover, forty-nine doctors are provided by the government to serve the health needs of the city.

Cultural Facilities

There is one integrated cultural center with a cinema, where cultural events usually take place; one youth center for cultural, social and sports events, and a family center, which is mostly a women's center, where sewing lessons are provided, in addition to women-related issues, like child care and so on. The center also provides computer courses for the youth.

Youth Center

The New Borg Al-Arab Youth Center was registered in November 1988.

Then a Board of Directors of seven members, as well as an administrative structure for the Center drawn from the Department of Youth and Sports and including a center director and social, sports, and administrative supervisors, was formed. The Board of Trustees allocated a monetary subvention to found the club, complete its recreational equipment, form its teams and the facilities that the Center needed, and purchase the tools and equipment necessary for the recreational equipment. Membership has been made open for the residents of the city and the members now number approximately 8,500. The center usually holds many social events, like parties and social gatherings in official holidays, in addition to the following activities:

- Sports activities, including soccer, handball, basketball, table tennis, and karate. Teams have been formed and swimming pools built. The Youth Center also has a gymnasium, a tennis court, and a billiard hall, as well as weights, shooting, discus, shot put, javelin, and running teams.
- The Center also organizes field trips and recreational activities.
- The Center supports scouting and cultural activities, including a children's library and a children's club. There are also women's activities under the aegis of the Young People's and Women's Committees. Teams have also been formed for arts (and, especially, folklore shows), and a group for choral and individual singing has been formed. The Center also boasts a covered multi-purpose hall in which open-air celebrations are held in the summer, since the Center has a large yard.
- The Center seeks to contribute to confronting the problem of illiteracy and has opened a class for literacy training. There is also a computer center where training sessions in various programs are offered to the residents of the city.

Cultural Center

The Cultural Center was inaugurated officially in 2001. It is under the

administration of the Ministry of Culture. The Center holds a number of cultural events and competitions on the governorate level. It has a cinema, and a stage, where some plays and other cultural activities take place. There are special cultural competitions held in the month of Ramadan each year. Moreover, the Center organizes computer courses for the youth, as well as some art activities, like acting and drawing.

Shopping Facilities

There is a number of vegetable and fruit shops, mini markets, bakeries, butchers, bookshops, mainly for stationary, and clothes and shoe shops. Besides, there is one major local market: the Wednesday market that is held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and a smaller market that held on Fridays. Most people, especially women, prefer to buy all their household goods from those markets.

Security Facilities

The city has security facilities that guarantee providing safety and security for the inhabitants, which include: one district police station, one utilities police, one state security investigation department, two fire stations, one conscription office, one border guards office, six fire trucks, and a civil defense water reservoir. The city also includes emergency services.

Other Diversified Services

There are some other services, like the Social Affairs office, eleven banks, three insurance company offices, and cemetery area.

It is important to mention in this respect that planning for the city has tried to develop a well-planned scheme for the provision of services, with the objective of creating a full- functioning, self-sufficient community.

Transportation facilities

There is no public transportation network within the city. However, there are some private projects, like taxis (*Toktok*), and minibuses. The government only provides public transportation to major centers, like Alexandria and Al-'Amerya.

Toktok: The taxi in the city, called '*toktok*' is a private project, since there is no public transportation in the city. It is owned by one of the former employees in the former Misr Cement Company. After the closing of the company, most of the employees and workers left the country, especially that the company was providing residence to its personnel. Some started small private business and stayed in the city—only those who could afford owning or renting their residence. The '*toktok*' owner was one of them, and his business is not legal yet, but due to the lack of public transportation, he is left alone.

Some of my informants reported that there is no need for public transportation in the city. They say that the reason for that is that it is not feasible, since the city is not big enough and the population is relatively low.

In the following chapter, I will examine how the structure of the new community of New Borg Al-Arab City affects the formation and the types of social networks in the city.



Eye-View of the city



**The Residential Zone and the Wednesday Market (at the bottom)
[a green belt separates the residential zone from the Market]**



The Entrance of the City



The Main Hub



The Administrative Body of the City (*Gehaz El-Madina*)



The Banking Complex



The Transportation Center



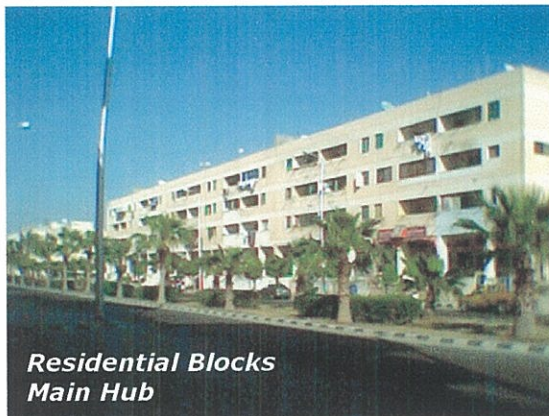
Wide Green Areas between Residential Blocks



The Youth Center



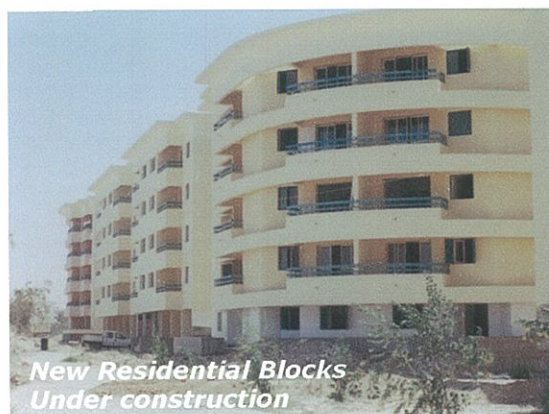
The Cultural Center



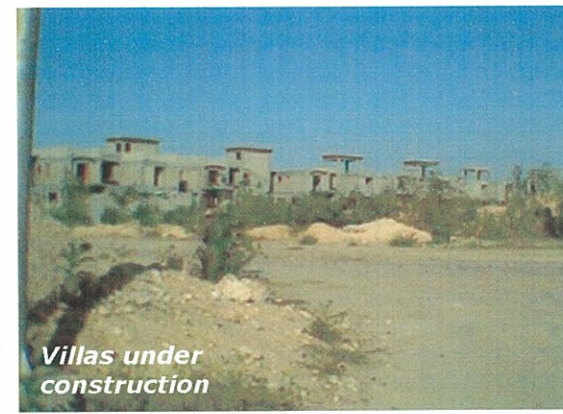
*Residential Blocks
Main Hub*



*Unknown Soldier
Memorial Square*

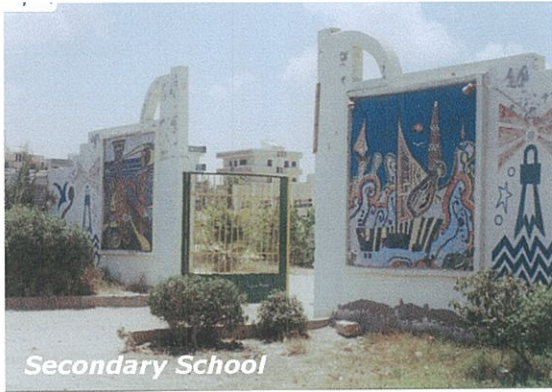


*New Residential Blocks
Under construction*



*Villas under
construction*

Types of Residential Areas



Secondary School



Industrial Secondary School



Basic Education School



Al-Azhar Institute



Mubarak City for Scientific Research

Educational Facilities



Factories in the Industrial Zone

CHAPTER SEVEN

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN NEW BORG AL-ARAB CITY

Findings and Analysis

INTRODUCTION

It was around 11:00 a.m., the streets were almost empty. I stopped to ask about some places that I have been told are the landmarks of the city. I felt like a stranger, and I think people considered me that too. Their gazes at me depressed me as I thought they would never help me and that it would not be an easy job for me to build rapport with them.

THE SETTING

I was surprised by the elegant planning of the city, especially, the banking complex that welcomes the visitors to the city, which gives me the impression of affluence. However, I later discovered on that very first visit and through my interviews and my later visits that the residents are mostly middle to lower classes.

Taking a quick tour in the city reveals how the streets are very clean and wide, unlike other major cities in Egypt. The number of green areas and public small parks are everywhere. The city center is the main street in the city, the hub of the city, which has the major services—commercial, recreational and other services. There are quite a large number of coffee shops, teahouses and restaurants, where people could gather at their leisure, the matter that facilitates the formation of social networks. The coffee shops and teahouses are run by men and are mostly, if not totally, for men. There are always very loud loudspeakers; I

think mostly to attract potential customers. All of the coffee shops are using the pedestrian pavement as an extension, where people prefer to use rather than in-house. However, these places are almost empty most of the time, except at the evenings and holidays, where, some, though few, men would gather.

Along the hub there are also different types of shops that provide the essential needs for the residents, like groceries, pharmacies, bakery shops, bookshops, and a shopping center. There is also a health unit and the Society Development Center, where some courses are provided, especially, for women, like sewing, childcare and other family-related courses. At one end of the street located the Administrative Body of the city (*Gehaz el-madina*), and at the other end there is a transportation center which connects the city to major cities in the governorate, like Alexandria and Al-'Amreya.

Figure 8 shows the land use of the city focusing on the major activities, like residential and industrial; and services, like educational, cultural, health, sports, etc.

Most of the residential blocks are middle to low cost, or economy units. However, there are a number of very nice villas, owned by affluent factory owners, mostly Cairenes, who do not permanently reside in the city. They only come occasionally, especially on holidays, and the villas are closed most of the year. Most of the residents own their units, except of a small portion who rent the units since they can not afford to buy them, or they are residing on a temporary basis. Streets are almost empty most of the time, with some crowdedness, especially, at rush hours, i.e. 8:00 – 10:00 a.m., and 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., at the bus station. From 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., and from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., streets are almost empty. Life starts at about 5:00 p.m. till midnight in summer and holidays, whereas in winter, they are almost empty after 8:00 p.m. Women do some shopping, though rare compared to many places in Cairo and Alexandria; whereas men usually spend their leisure time at coffee shops or tea houses. There are a relatively few cars in the city, and there is a special transportation network

connecting the city with other nearby governorates. There is also a special type of taxis-- three-wheel cars-- which is called "toktok", that run almost 24 hours daily throughout the city; and a number of minibuses for group transportation.

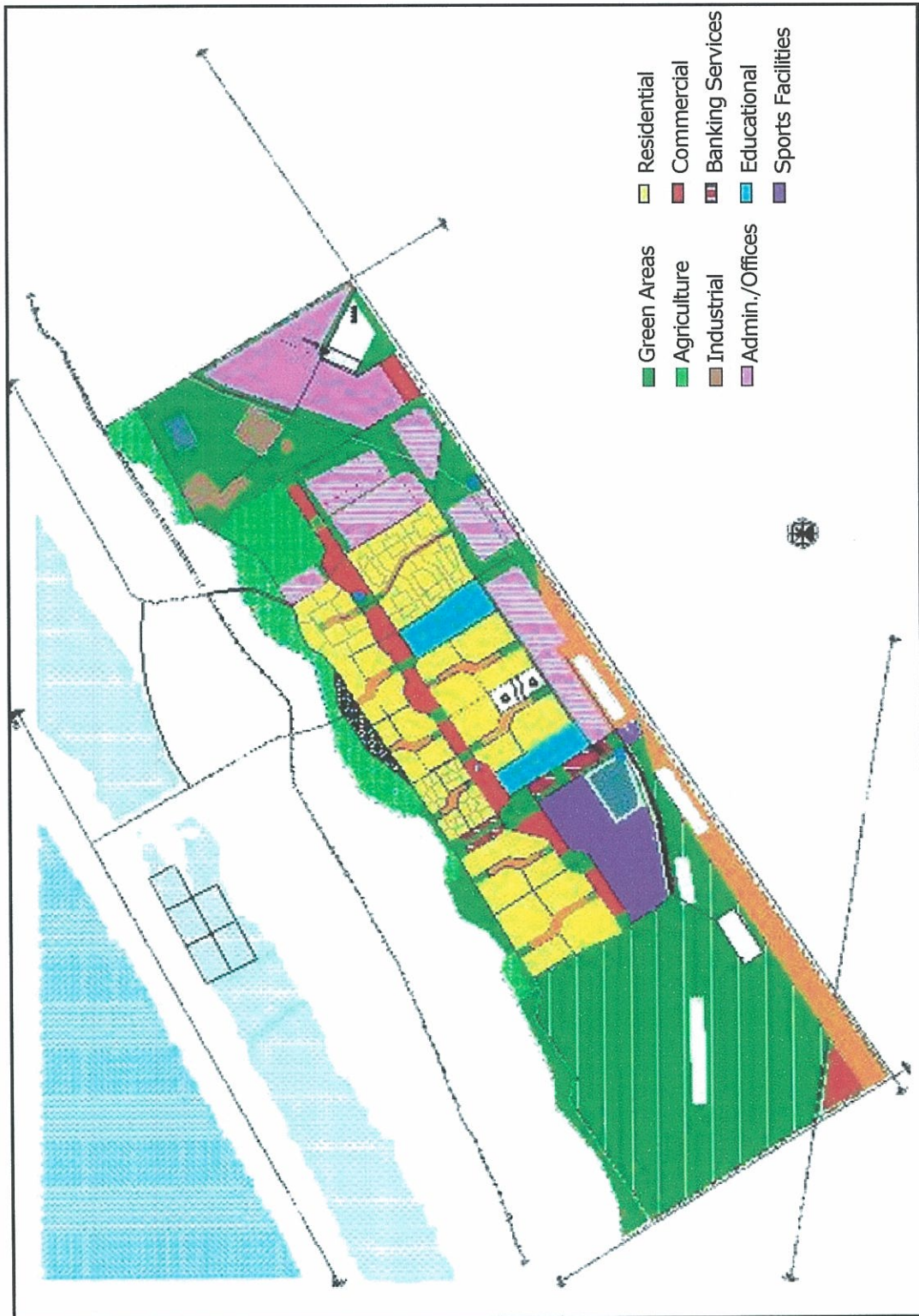


Figure 8: Land Use

It is very important when planning these new communities to include all major axis of urban planning, such as services including educational, health, cultural, entertainment and social services. Such services are the main features that distinguish urban communities from rural ones, hence help in the formation of new types of social relationships and networks.

The construction process is very active in the city, where a large number of above average to high-level units are under construction, especially those who would serve members of professional associations and syndicates, like the syndicate of engineers, for example.

Moreover, most people reported that the city is environmentally clean, and safe for their children, and it provides better living conditions than did their original residence.

THE PEOPLE

The people of Borg Al-Arab could be categorized to three main groups, according to my informants. The three main categories are: old comers, newcomers, and *Al-ghoraba* (strangers==those who are the workers in the factories who live in the city without their families).

The old residents were those who could not afford a living in any other city, those who were unemployed and unskilled labor. This gives an idea about the population composition of the earlier residents, who are supposed to be the community leaders at the present time.

During the last five years, the newcomers were not great in numbers, but they are better educated than the old residents; they include doctors, engineers, accountants and other university graduates. Some of them were, originally, delegates from governmental authorities and were assigned jobs in the governmental offices in the city, and many others were migrants who were

searching for better opportunities and better residence. There are some who also moved to the city because they have some kinship relations there. Some of those who were assigned jobs by the government preferred to stay there leaving their original places of residence, since, as they say, New Borg Al-Arab City provides better living conditions, and healthier and safer environment than the over-crowded cities provide.

Many of the residents, especially the old comers, have their private businesses in the city, like bookshops, coffee shops, restaurants, clothing and other household equipment. However, most of the groceries and basic food stores are owned by Arabs—Bedouins—who are not necessarily living in the city; most of them live on their land which is not far away from the city.

For my analysis, I found a different basis for categorizing the population in the city, which is based on socio-economic aspects. I classified people as: business owners, private sector employees, public sector employees, workers, shop owners, street vendors, and the unemployed, including housewives. My three key informants represent different categories of population: Karima represents old comers to the city (original residents), activists, the middle class, women and NGOs, whereas, Gamal represents people's representative, activists, the upper class and non-residents in the city, while Tarek, represents the typical public employees, middle class, and *the ghoraba*. My other informants represent other categories including investors, female heads of households, street vendors, shop and private business owners, and the youth.

Karima, my key informant, is originally from *Beheira*, and she studied law at Alexandria University. She came to New Borg Al-Arab City thirteen years ago. She and her husband own a small-scale shopping center where they sell men's, women's and children's items, like clothes and foot wear, as well as some household items. Karima's center is considered as a landmark in the city as well as a social focal point, especially for women. Men also used to gather outside the store hosted by Karima's husband. Since she is of the very first comers to the

city, she has established very good social relations there. She considers herself as one of the original residents of the city, and therefore, she has every right to be one of the community leaders. In fact, she is.

Most importantly, Karima is amongst the few, who started the social activity in the city, and now she is the head of one of the most active NGOs in the city—the Community Development Association (CDA). Moreover, she is deeply involved in charity and social work. She established a number of small community help societies. For example, she collects donations for female-headed households, and for poor families to pay their children's school fees. She also established a small society where young male residents are hired for a monthly stipend to deliver freshly packed bread to households due to the scarcity of bakery shops in the city. There is another charity for delivering Ramadan *Iftar* to poor families. Through all these charity and social work societies, she established large social networks amongst women, youth and families. Karima is very active; she is not only engaged in social work, but also in cultural and sports activities. She has a wide network, she and her husband, through the Youth Center (club) and the Cultural Center.

Gehaz El-Madina

New cities are under the administration of the authority of new communities. The city's administrative body is '*Gehaz ElMadina*'. It is, also, responsible for building new residential and housing units, and selling lands for construction.

To cover all aspects of social life in the city, I was quite convinced that those who work in the administration of the city would be of great significance and would add significant information to the whole picture. Those who work in *Gehaz El-Madina* are usually thought of as *Mowazafin Hokouma*-- meaning those who work in public sector-- which indicates a special attitude different than that of other private sector employees. I interviewed two of the employees and had a

brief conversation with three others; two women and one man.

Tarek, one of my key informants, has worked in the engineering department for about three years. He is originally from Al-'Amreya, and he shares a flat with three others. He is, to some extent, conservative. His social network is limited. It is limited to those whom he got to know from the club and his co-workers. He believes that people in New Borg Al-Arab do not socialize except through some social activities in the club, where some of them participate in sports activities and some participate in cultural activities at the cultural center. He himself, though not a member of the club, used to go there frequently, where he can meet with his friends. He also, occasionally, participates in the sports events that take place in the Club, especially, in summer and the month of Ramadan. Tarek, as he thinks of himself as conservative, does not like to socialize with the other *ghoraba* because of their bad reputation and the social problems they cause.

Tarek, because he himself is well educated, was very enthusiastic towards my research and was very supportive. In addition to the physical data he provided to me, he gave me a lot of social data about the city, and how people get to know each other in this new community. Moreover, Tarek, like almost all of my informants, believes that the Youth Center is the social focal point in the city. People meet there in almost all occasions and events, whether they are private or public. The Center holds many social, cultural and sports events, in which everyone of any age finds a place, either as a participant or attendant, or even as a spectator. Furthermore, Tarek believes that people build social networks through work, where many social events may take place, like trips, small parties, and some informal gatherings for breakfast or lunch, and mostly through transportation means provided by *Al-Gehaz* to its employees. The weakest type of social ties in New Borg Al-Arab, Tarek believes, is that amongst neighbors. In fact, this is how many of my informants, especially those who are considered as middle class, think about neighborly ties.

Furthermore, the head of the engineering department has been mandated to work in *Gehaz Al-Madina*, and he preferred to reside in the city. He likes the environment of New Borg Al-Arab. He had his family move to the city, and his children are enrolled in the public schools. He also believes that the Youth Center, and the Cultural Center, plays a pivotal role in forming social networks amongst the residents of the city. Following that is the role of work, followed by the neighborhood, and then the public areas, like shopping stores and Wednesday Market.

The two women I met, with whom I had a short conversation, both reside in the city, and have minimum social ties. Mostly, their social ties are limited to some friendship relations with co-workers, and very limited neighborly ties. Both reported that they do not have time to socialize, because they have children of school age and most of the time they have to check for their homework. In summer, they sometimes go to the club. However, their children have wider networks through their schools and other activities within the club.

I also met the head of community development department, named Magdy, since I believe he would be an important informant to me. I met him once, and continued to contact him through his mobile phone. We had many conversations through the phone about the city, the *Gehhaz Al-Madina*, and other nearby communities to New Borg Al_Arab city that have some impact on the city, like *Bangar Al-Sokkar* community and Old Borg Al-Arab.

Magdy lives part time in New Borg Al-Arab and part in Old Borg where his extended family lives. Magdy, unlike the others, believes that people have social ties more at work, then at the Youth Center and the Cultural Center. He himself has his own social network through work. Being responsible for community development, he is exposed to almost all sectors of the community. But most importantly, he has his private business—a family business in plant nursery. During this type of business, and in order to sell to others, he has formed social relations to the extent that he sometimes shares with others in their special

occasions, like engagements, weddings, birthdays, and graduation parties.

Magdy sees that the best social networks in the city is that amongst the youth, whether through schools, or through the Youth Center and the Cultural Center. I myself believe is true through my own observations. I also observed some strong networks amongst the children, especially those of the same area. They play together during their leisure time in the public green areas that are everywhere in the midst of the residence blocks.

Gaber, an employee in the city's Administrative Body, lives in the city with his family. He sees that the services in the city are improving, the matter that affects the social life as a whole in the city. He finds that the social networks in the city are mainly formed through the Youth Center and the Cultural Center, followed by the networks through coworkers, and then those through neighborhoods.

Al-Ghoraba

There is a complex composition of population in New Borg Al-Arab City. Of this population there is a group that is called '*Al-Ghoraba*', meaning strangers. These are the factory workers, who do not have their families living in the city. They are either provided residence through their employer, or they, themselves, rent flats. They are usually groups of ten persons, on average, living in one unit. There are flats for female workers and others for males. According to my informants, this situation has caused a lot of social problems since these people, males and females, are living with no familial control; they have freed themselves from traditions, which has resulted in the formation of some social relationships that are not approved by the whole community, which caused social problems in the city, since, as my informants argue, the people of the city, unlike those strangers, are not involved in such shameful relationships.

THE PROBLEMS THAT FACE THE CITY

Urban problems

Due to the low population density in the city, especially, in the very first years since its establishment, there was no or little attention given to the city regarding services through governmental authorities. The city was totally neglected, the matter that resulted in deteriorating conditions of services, which in turn played a role in ejecting the population instead of attracting more population from other areas, until very recently, when some active people decided to improve the services through private efforts. They established NGOs to provide some services, like the CDA, mentioned before. There are also many efforts exerted by the powerful individuals to encourage more public services, like the actual official opening of both the Youth Center and the Cultural Center.

Under-population is one of the major problems in the city. The reason for this phenomenon goes back to 1978, when the authority of new communities was first established. Back then, there were laws and decrees to solve the problem of over-population in most of the major cities of Egypt, like Cairo and Alexandria. Also, in this period, exactly, there was a breakthrough in the construction industry as a new era of high-rise buildings started. This encouraged people to settle in the major cities—already over-populated—and leave the new communities abandoned. Also, the services and facilities in the new communities were deteriorating, if not absent, including New Borg Al-Arab City. This situation did not attract people to move to such communities.

There is also the problem of connecting the city with other areas, especially with Alexandria and Behaira, through a good network of transportation. Most of the transportation facilities are provided through the private sector and NGOs.

The city was inaugurated in 1988. Back then, there were only 78 factories, and the services were in poor conditions, many services were lacking and more

infrastructure was needed. For instance, until very recently—2004—there was no potable water supply in the city, and even now, there are still many areas that suffer from this problem.

Also, due to the under-population and the powerless population in the city, there was no improvement in the services; it became a vicious circle. This situation continued for years; since its establishment in 1978 until around the year 2000. After that, through the efforts of active individuals, the services improved significantly, whether be it provided by the local authorities or through local NGOs.

Mr. Gamal, who was one of the government officials, and one of the policy-makers, argues that there should be laws to prevent the urban sprawl in existing cities, and encourage the migration to new communities.

Mr. Samir also mentioned some urban problems that faced the city:

In the very beginning, after its establishment, the city was suffering from the lack of population. The reasons that discouraged the people to migrate to New Borg Al-Arab City were due to the high rates of rent and the high price of residential units, as well as the lack of basic facilities and services. In this regard, the government should attract people to migrate to the city by facilitating their ownership to their own residences and provide some bonus and incentives to the first migrants. Furthermore, people should be attracted by the level of services and amenities in the new city, which, unfortunately, was not the case in New Borg Al-Arab City.

Social problems

The fact that the city was not connected to other urban centers forced the people to abandon the new city, hence, poor services and amenities were provided. The governmental authorities started to attract people to move to the new city by giving them privileges and facilitating their move. That was in the beginning only, which attracted, as mentioned before, the unskilled labor and the very poor, since there were no criteria for choice. This, undoubtedly, caused social problems.

When talking with Mr. Gamal about the city, its history and its problems, he told me the following (I preferred to use his own words):

Every one is trying to have a role in this empty theatre, hence, social problems arose. Instead of exerting collective efforts to improve the living conditions in the city, old residents were looking for power, arguing that they are the right persons to have the upper hand in decision-making in the city. Each was looking for a role to play, especially, that the city began to flourish and the services improved. The old residents were reluctant to any new blood, a new vision, especially, that those new residents are of better social status, and better educational level. There were always disputes for the managerial positions, like the management of the youth center. The old residents see that they have the sole right to chair the center, while authorities see that the new residents are more qualified and are best entitled for such position. A lot of efforts have been exerted to achieve some sort of balance between purposes and aspirations of the old and new residents, especially, that the old residents began to recognize that the new residents have no individual aspirations. Now there is some balance despite the fact of the decrease in population in the last years. This decrease in population was due to the selling of the cement factory that was employing hundreds of workers and employees whom were, also, provided residences. After it has been sold, those people lost both their jobs and their residences, the matter that caused most of them to leave the city and return back to their original areas, hence a decrease in population. All those newcomers as well as the old residents found that for the welfare for everyone it is better to socialize and form social networks within the city. In this regard, the Youth Center played a pivotal role in forming such social networks, not only amongst the youth, but also amongst senior residents of the city.

Then, came the role of the investors, who formed an association to solve these social problems and to assist the new investors and encourage newcomers.

There also emerged some social problems from these investment activities in the city. Unlike the old investors who used to provide residence for their employees and workers, the new investors provided only transportation for their employees and workers from and to their original residence, which leave the residential units empty and cause traffic crowdedness, usually, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. This situation, also affects the formation of social networks since those commuters do not permanently reside in the city, so their networks are limited to coworkers and do not exceed the work, or factory boundaries. This besides the problems caused by *Al-Ghoraba*, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The Bedouins also cause some social imbalances since they have different living conditions; they usually live in big houses with a large number of household members—extended families, since they are dependent to a great extent on family ties and kinship relations. Moreover, a great number who work or own

private business in the city live in Old Borg Al-Arab city, which is not far from new Borg Al-Arab, but has also different living conditions and different housing and urban planning; it is something between rural and urban community.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE CITY

The Youth Center

The Youth Center is the main social center in the city. It provides sports facilities as well as social events. It covers a plot of land about 20 acres. It has a swimming pool where championships take place, and football, basketball and volleyball courts, where also, tournaments are held, in addition to many other activities and facilities, like restaurants, a clubhouse, etc... The Center has caused a breakthrough in the social life of the city, especially, among the youth.

Mr. Gamal told me that before the establishment of the Youth Center and the Cultural Center there was almost no social life in the city. Nor were there any social networks, except those very few that were formed amongst neighbors. Social life, then, was closed with women mostly at home, children at school and men at work during the day, and in the teahouses and coffee shops in the evenings. Only, three years ago, the Youth Center started its activity and is run by a number of active people, some of whom are old residents. The Center started to organize a series of social activities and events, and encouraging people to participate in those activities and events, hence people got to know each other and started to form social networks.

Now the Center has the recognition of all the residents, whether they are members, participants in events or just visitors or attendants of events. It has become the place for all social occasions, festivals, and ceremonies, like wedding parties, graduation parties, etc... Also, it became a place for reconciliation or solving of disputes or problems that might emerge between the residents in the city.

The Center also organizes many sports tournaments mostly in the summer, and some in the month of Ramadan. I was there in Ramadan, and there was a tournament for football, which I attended. However, I observed that only male youth attended, with some male organizers; the women were completely absent from that event.

The people of rural origin whom I interviewed are not members in the Youth Center, yet they do go to events that are held there. However, most of their networks and ties are with people from their home village.

The most significant social networks formed through the Youth Center are those amongst the youth, since there are many activities in which they are engaged.

The Cultural Center

Also, there is the Cultural Center, where classes and cultural events are held, like computer and language courses. There are some festivals held during the year, and especially in summer time, and some, also, in Ramadan, like live shows, acting, and folkloric dance, for example. I have also attended one of the acting shows in Ramadan. It was a play written, produced and played by the youth, who were, also, almost male; only one actress was participating in the play.

Like the Youth Center, most of the visitors of the Cultural Center are from the youth.

The local market

The local market, Wednesday Market, or *Suq El-Arba'*, is one of the major gathering spots in New Borg Al-Arab City, which in turn plays a significant role in forming social ties/networks in the city.

When I asked my informants: "where are the people? Why are the streets almost always empty? From where do you buy your stuff?" I was told from almost

all of my informants that most residents buy their goods at *Suq El-Arba'*. Some advised me to go there. One housewife told me "it would help you in your research to go to the *suq*, you will see a part of Borg Al-Arab's real life".

In the beginning, I went with my car, holding my digital camera with me, but I realized at once that this would never work. So I started to practice participant observation. I parked my car on a side road, put my camera in my handbag, and started to tour the *suq*.

As a participant observer, I started to buy some goods, asking and bargaining about prices. Then, I started to talk to some of the vendors, and told them about my research; they were happy to help me, and to take photos with me (some are included at the end of this chapter). I started to build rapport with the vendors, who, in return, began to tell me about their lives and families, and most importantly, about the *suq* and the life in the *suq*. Almost all vendors are from outside New Borg Al-Arab. They told me that only those who own shops in the city are residents of New Borg Al-Arab; as for them, they are from Old Borg Al-Arab, *Sokkar Al-Bangar*, and some from *El-Amereya*.

At the *Suq*, I observed many communications and relations, whether amongst the vendors themselves, amongst the residents, or amongst the residents and the vendors. There, I found crowds, unlike, the empty streets of the city. I soon, realized that there is social life in the city.

Life at the suq

The *suq* starts on Tuesday at around 10:00 a.m., and ends at Wednesday night after the night prayer. You can find almost everything in the *suq*. However, Tuesday is mainly for foodstuffs, whereas, Wednesday for other goods, like clothes, footwear, and all other household items, in addition to foodstuffs.

There are some built shops on one side of the road, built by the *Gehaz El-Madina*, and are mainly for grocery, butchery, and poultry. These are permanent shops. Other vendors erect tents. These temporary shops usually sell foodstuffs,

clothes, footwear, children toys, and other household stuffs. There are also vendors who sell milk products, egg, vegetables and fruits. Those vendors are mostly using umbrellas, or nothing at all.

The crowds start after middle afternoon (el 'asr) prayer on Tuesday. A large number of vendors have kinship relations and ties that are based on origin, such as people of the same village, Al-'Amerya for example. Others establish relationships through the *suq*.

The residents of New Borg Al-Arab City as well as residents of nearby communities buy their foodstuffs and other goods from this *suq*. You rarely find a lonely one going along the *suq*. People, especially, women go to the *suq* in groups, or at least two. Most of the shoppers are women, who go after finishing cooking, and after their children return home from school. However, some, especially, those who have younger children, prefer to go to the *suq* as early as possible to be back home before their children are back from school. Others get their children from school on their way to the *suq*. Men usually shop after the prayer.

At the *suq*, you hear very loud voices; vendors calling for their products, shoppers bargaining about the prices, children playing, and vendors talking to each others and calling upon others (usually among friends) to show some commodity, and so on.

Life in the *suq* shows the other side of the city. Unlike the sedentary tempo of life in the city streets, especially, during the weekdays, life in the *suq* has a different tempo. Moreover, the *suq* gives you a better opportunity to get the best at the lowest price.

NGOs

There are a number of NGOs, mostly concerned with charity and women's affairs, that plays a significant role in the formation of social networks in the city. Through their provision of assistance to the youth, for example employment and

training sessions; to poor families, especially female-headed households, such as payments of educational expenses, clothing and so on; to women in general, for instance providing educational and training courses, like sewing, language courses and so on, they help in creating social life amongst this group, hence lead to the formation of social networks.

There are about seven NGOs, some of them are headed by women. One of the most significant of which is '*Elsa7wa*' Association, which is managed by Karima, who also has her private business, from which she covers some of the charity expenses. Through '*Elsa7wa*' Association, Karima managed to put people together in charity work, whether providing or getting the services. Also through their work or their affiliation to the association, or even through getting the services, individuals are recruited in some types of social networks.

Community Development Association (CDA)

In order to help in solving some of the problems of the city, and to help maintain a better social life, Mr. Samir promoted the idea of development agencies in the city to assist the newcomers, and improve the services and facilities to attract more people to move to the city. He is a very active engineer, and he has his own workshop in the city. He is originally from Alexandria and migrated to the city 15 years ago. He has two daughters, who completed their basic and secondary education in New Borg Al-Arab City, but, since there are no universities in the city, they completed their education in Alexandria. He established the CDA. The CDA established seven kindergartens, distributed throughout the city, with affordable fees. Through these kindergartens, the parents, especially, the mothers of the youngsters got to know each other, thus creating another form of social networks amongst the parents. The CDA, then, expanded its scope of services to improve the environment, the services and infrastructure in the city. Furthermore, Mr. Samir established the Association for the Protection of the Environment, with its main objective to improve and protect the

environment, like the provision of pure potable water, and the preservation of the green areas. Also through the engagement of some individuals in the work of this association, they are recruited in more social networks.

Investors' Association

Because the city was originally an industrial center, investors were encouraged to have new businesses there. Mr. Samir was of the pioneers who established his own business in the city. He has a carpentry workshop, and some other small businesses. He has many acquaintances, and, consequently, a wide social network. He is very loyal to the city, and he exerted a lot of efforts to improve the services in the city and to solve some of the problems and obstacles that face the new investors. He is also one of the powerful members of the Investors Association.

The Investors' Association's main objective is to provide assistance to investors and solve their problems. He enacted a plan to attract new investors to invest in the city by facilitating their ownership of plots of lands of a minimum area of 300 square meters, with as little as 50 pounds per meter. The Investors' Association also constructs small factories and hands them over to the young investors against only 35,000 pounds on a turn-key basis (completely finished), to encourage them to start their business promptly. The members of this association are all factory owners. All of the members of board of directors are from Alexandria except two. Also, since most of the investors are from Alexandria, they do not live in the city. Some of them own flats or nice villas in the city, but do not reside there. They prefer to come and go on daily basis, also because they have their offices in Alexandria. However, through the Investors' Association they maintain some type of social networks. The Association has an effective role in the city development, and it has a positive social impact in the city as well. It provides assistance to schools in the form of donations, like desks, equipment, lab facilities, and other educational aids. The association is also active

in participating in national and international fairs.

The Banking Complex

One of the very eye-catching spots in the city is the banking complex. I met with one of the general managers of one of the banks in the complex, who is not residing in the city, and one of the employees, who resides in the city.

All the managers and employees in the banks are originally from Alexandria and they come and go on daily basis. The banks usually provide transportation facilities for the employees.

Almost all of the employees are not connected to the city in any way whatsoever, except for a few number, mostly the security personnel. Hence, the employees do not have any social ties in the city.

There is only one employee in the CIB who moved to an area called 'Bahig' near the city, but he is originally from Alexandria also. He chose to move to 'Bahig' since land is less expensive than in Alexandria, and he built a big house there for his immediate family and his extended family, i.e. his parents (his mother now dead), his sister, who is living with his father since she is divorced, and his brother with his family. Most of their errands and services are done in Alexandria. However, they have some social connections in the New Borg Al-Arab City, since they are members of the Youth Center and have some connections with some NGOs in the city. He sees that the services in the city are not good, especially health services, and thus, he prefers to get his medical services from Alexandria. However, he perceives the educational services as being quite good, and he has his children enrolled in schools in the city.

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE CITY

When I asked Karima about how social networks are formed in the new city, and what the types of social ties there are, she said that there are networks

that are formed through charity, others through social work, third through cultural activities, and some through participation in sports activities or even through attending sports activities, and some amongst neighbors, although Karima herself does not have social ties with her neighbors. She owns her flat and she, like many others, especially, those who are of urban background, do not prefer to be engaged in close relations with their neighbors, because, as she mentioned, this causes a lot of problems, like envy and curiosity. She also included that, unlike other Egyptian cities, in new Borg Al-Arab city, neighborhood ties are the weakest of the social ties.

According to Mr. Samir, the city since its inauguration until 1996 was almost empty of population, because, he argues, the Egyptians are family-oriented and are tied to their original families. Therefore, they find some difficulty in leaving their original families behind to move elsewhere. Then, when the very few old comers decided to have their permanent residence in the city, attracted by the better living conditions, they encouraged their relatives and kin-members to move to the city, which was his own case. He believes that in many cases, especially in the case of individuals of rural background, the formation of social networks is based on family ties and kinship relationships. Therefore, he sees that the most significant social networks in the city are family and kinship networks. He also argues that the social networks based on neighborhood ties are not strong enough. Moreover, he believes that the Cultural Center and the Youth Center, both, play a role in forming social networks in the city. Furthermore, he added that there is another factor that helps in creating social ties among people in the city, especially the youth, that is the transportation facilities university students use from the city to their universities, mostly in Alexandria, and back to the city. He believes that these daily journeys enhance the students' relationships and help in forming new types of social networks.

Furthermore, he added that there is another factor that negatively influences the social networks in the city, which is the social mobility and false

social status. People, since they are from different origins and all are new to the area, tend to lie about their social status, pretending that they belong to a higher social status than that of their real status. Therefore, they prefer not to form any close social ties, so not to reveal their real social status.

Marriage

I was curious to know how people in these new communities get to know each other and chose their mates. I have been informed that it is mostly arranged through families. A young couple may know each other through school or any other event, like sport and social events that are arranged in the Cultural Center or the Youth Center, or they may know each other through the neighborhood. And there are also the marriages arranged through family members, for example fathers who know each other from work, or through religious practices, or mothers who are friends through the neighborhood. Also, the Youth Center played a significant role in marriage arrangements in many cases. However, in all cases, the role of the family is very important and decisive.

Gender

Karima is a very active woman who presents a successful example of women in the city. She is a member of the Board of Trustees, representing women, in addition to other seven NGOs. She is originally from Alexandria, and she has been living in the city for about eleven years. I was surprised by the way she talks about the city; she is very loyal to the city, and is defending the city continuously; she rejected any of my comments that might point to any lack of services in the city; and she, also, rejected my observation regarding women being out of the scene.

I got the impression that women do not work there, so I asked one of my informants who works in the Administrative Body of the city about that. He said that, on the contrary, there are many women in the workforce; they work as

teachers, in the factories, in private businesses, and in governmental offices.

In general, women are not absent from the scene, or at least that is what I have been told. However, on the contrary, I can say that they are absent from the social life of the city; their role is limited to employment, mostly in public and governmental offices, or as workers in the factories; and to charity work. Some, especially those who are the heads of their families may work on private basis, like selling fruits and vegetables, with a very small portion that run some private businesses, like bakery shops, and clothes stores, and small shops. Usually, the streets are empty of women after the evening, with only men who socialize in the coffee shops, or teahouses.

Age also plays a role in the formation of social networks amongst women. Younger women are more likely to form, or to be recruited in social networks than older women do. However, for men, age is not of significant in the formation of social network.

Fields for the Formation of Social Networks

Youth Center: Samir believes that the social life in the city is vivid through some of the main spots, the most significant of which is the Youth Center. It plays an effective role in creating and improving the social life in the city, and helps in forming new social networks, whether amongst the youth or the elderly.

Cultural Center: The Cultural Center, also, has a very positive impact on the social life in the city and the social networks among the people.

Wednesday Market: One of the major facilities that creates social ties amongst the community of New Borg Al-Arab City is the weekly market. *Suq el-Arbaa'* (Wednesday Market) is very significant in New Borg Al-Arab, where most of the residents and outsiders meet and buy all of their needs from one place where they can bargain and get the best prices. The market activates commercial and social activities in the city, hence the formation of social networks.

Public Parks: the public parks and green areas are all over the city, where people, particularly, neighbors socialize, especially, in the summer time. All these facilities help in strengthening the social ties amongst people and the formation of social networks within the community, which may also create new familial networks that would be based on new marriage relations.

Workplace and Schools: Moreover, there are some social networks that are formed through friendship relations through schools and those amongst coworkers.

The Mosque: Also, through religious practices, like prayers in mosques and religious festivals some kind of social networks are formed. For example, during Friday Prayers, and also during Ramadan, through the Prayers '*taraweeh*' at night people spend a lot of time in the mosque, and because it is regular, social ties are cemented there.

Coffee Shops and Teahouses: most of the coffee shops, teahouses and restaurants are along the main hub of the city, on one side of the street, while on the other side are a number of various shops, like bookshops, pharmacies, etc. The coffee shops are run by men, and, though different than those typical coffee shops '*Kahwa*' in Cairo, their guests are mostly men, of all ages. However, young men form the majority of the customers, especially, in summer and during the month of Ramadan. The coffee shop plays a significant role in the formation of new social networks, mostly among men.

In conclusion, people in New Borg Al-Arab City are of different backgrounds, i.e. urban/rural backgrounds, which consequently has its impact on the formation of social networks as well as the types of social ties that are formed amongst the different categories of the population.

The sample of population I included for my research represents, to a great extent, the different categories of the population, e.g. different age group, gender, urban and rural background, employees/workers, businessmen/shop owners, private/public employees. In fact, this diversified population has shaped

the social life in the city, which I found different than other urban cities, like Cairo and Alexandria, and new settlements in Cairo. Since the majority of population is of rural backgrounds, whereas, the planning of the city is an urban planning, so this resulted in a special character for the city. For example, unlike other areas, like *Sha'bi* areas in Cairo, where most of the residents are of rural background, people in New Borg Al-Arab are not dependant on neighbors, hence the social networks based on neighborly relationships are limited. Also, the streets of the city do not show any type of social life, like other areas in Cairo and other major cities. Moreover, the social networks within the community are not limited to kinship or family members, as the case in rural areas. People in Borg Al-Arab have formed wider social networks than they used to do in their original places, since the urban setting imposed special types of social ties.



Private Transportation Facilities & Vegetable/Fruit Street Vendors



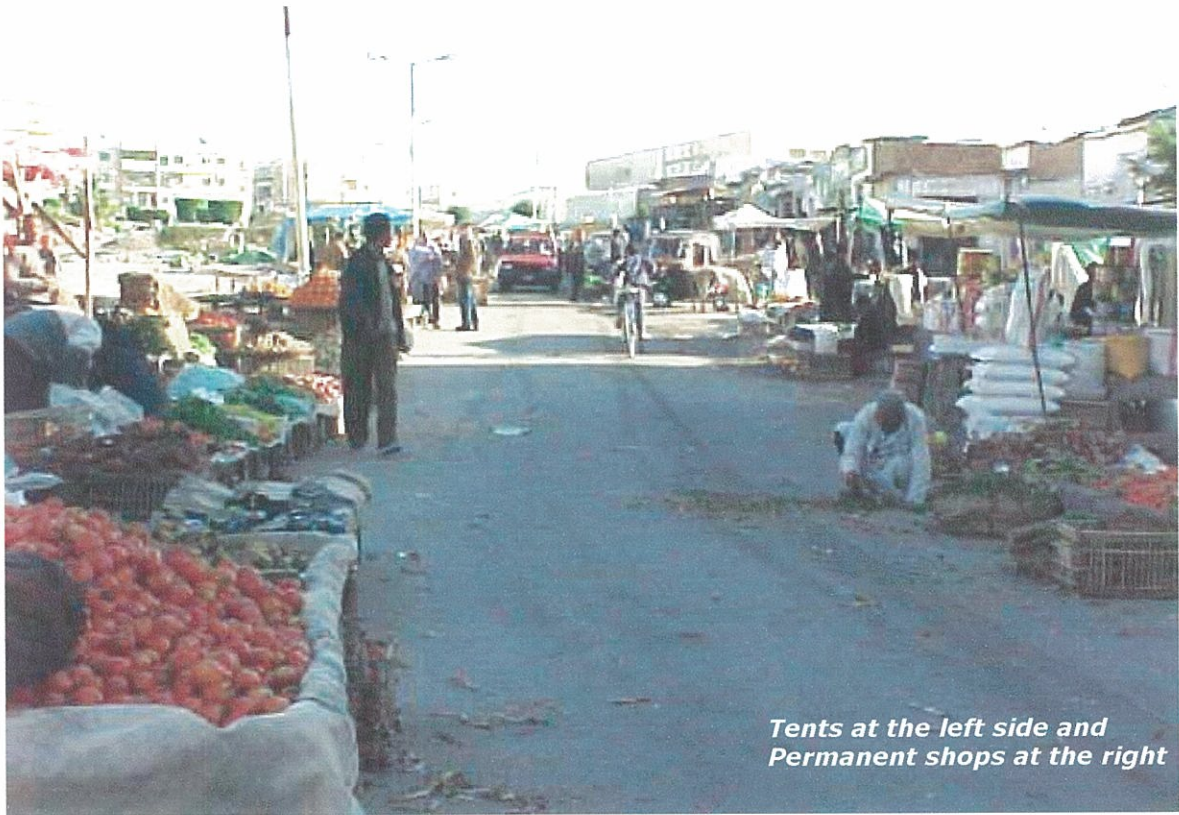
The Transportation Center at the Rush Hour



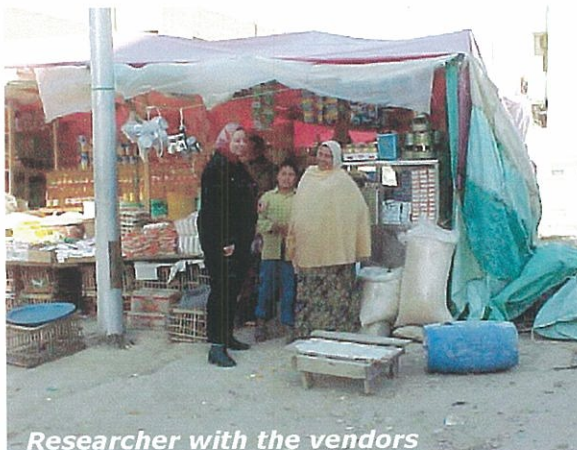
Activities in the Youth Center



Children Playgroup



Tents at the left side and Permanent shops at the right



Researcher with the vendors



Life at the Wednesday Market

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is twofold: First to examine what types of social ties and relationships that emerge in new communities and how social networks are formed within such communities, and second to bring attention to urban life styles as an influence in the emergence of new types of social networks, and how could urban planning affect the process of forming social networks within an urban society.

Repeatedly, well-being is shown to be positively influenced by the number and quality of personal relationships, or in other words the size and the type of a person's network.

It is, also, plausible that the number of personal relationships also has a direct effect on well-being, independent of the support they provide. Having close relationships with family, neighbors, and friends will make people feel part of and integrated into a larger community. It gives them the feeling that they have someone to rely on, someone that will help them in times of need. This can be beneficial for well-being without actual helpful functions being performed.

Since not all personal relationships provide the same kind and same amount of support, it is useful to make some distinctions. The criterion most commonly employed to distinguish between personal relationships is the role relationship. The role relationship categories most frequently used and considered most important are family, neighbors, and friends. Other role relationships which can be taken into account are colleagues, acquaintances and fellow members of organizations.

In modern society a wide variety of specialized support is needed. The family, neighborhood and friendship groups serve these complementary functions.

The most important quality of neighborhood relations in modern society, with mobility making community membership transient, is the geographical proximity and reachability. Therefore, neighbors are the main source of help with minor, short-term tasks, and in case of emergencies. In contrast with family and neighbors, friends can be chosen voluntarily. Friendship relations thus have a more 'achieved' status, where family and neighbor relations are more of an 'ascribed' nature. Because of this freedom of choice, friends are usually bound together by mutual interests and a mutual feeling of affection.

People turn to neighbors when they need short-term practical support such as borrowing things like a cup of sugar or a piece of equipment, looking after the house, or looking after the kids. Friends, on the other hand, are sought after for furnishing emotional support. They are also the main source of social companionship. Relatives, especially close kin, supply very different kinds of support, including the ones that require long-term involvement.

Theorists in the area of urbanization believe that the urban way of life changes individual attitudes, behavior and culture (Smith 1980), which in turn affects the social network and, accordingly, new types of social relationships emerge. Moreover, urban life and facilities that exist within urban settlements encourage special types of social networks, like friendship ties, networks through sports club, cultural centers, NGOs and membership in political parties.

In urban communities, social interaction takes place within the family, the neighborhood networks, friendship, kinship, schools, workplace, and informal social gathering places (Smith 1980).

The major objective that helps in the success of new urban community is through the building of successful social life within the community.

I focused my study on New Borg Al-Arab City as a new urban community, focusing on the population, their social life and social activities in the new setting, how they formed social networks among themselves, and the types of social relationships that emerged there.

There are some major principles in urban planning that aim at creating social life amongst the inhabitants. Green areas, parks or open courts in the midst of apartment blocks, or neighborhoods play a significant role in the socialization process amongst the residents. Furthermore, the planning of the neighborhood park should consider all age groups, should provide spaces for toddlers, mothers with strollers, youth, and the elderly (Allam 1991).

Also, while planning an urban area, special playing areas for the children should be provided considering the safety of the children, i.e. instead of their playing in the street (Allam 1991).

In fact, the physical planning of New Borg Al-Arab City is done by the book; there are a sufficient number of internal green areas, separated from traffic, safe for children to play.

Moreover, public parks-- for holidays and weekends, sports facilities, and other leisure outlets are important urban planning features. In New Borg Al-Arab City, the Youth Center plays the role of the public park, sports facilities, and one of the major leisure outlets of the city.

The public library, also, is of great significance in the urban setting, since it provides cultural facilities for the residents, which in turn plays a great role in forming social ties within the community. I believe that the Cultural Center in New Borg Al-Arab City plays such a role, and it creates good opportunities for social relations and the formation of social networks, especially, amongst the youth.

The city of New Borg Al-Arab was founded in 1979, and officially inaugurated in 1988. It is one among many other cities that constitute a wide national plan for the construction of new settlements, in order to reduce the demographic pressure on major cities like Cairo and Alexandria. Borg Al-Arab was built as basically an industrial zone that would attract capital, both local and foreign, as well as create job opportunities for the Egyptians.

The physical planning of the city considers the social life of the residents in many aspects. For example, the main hub of the city, where major commercial

activities exist is located at the center of the residential areas for easy access to all residents. Moreover, there is a road network connecting all residential districts to the main hub. Also, there are a number of coffee shops and restaurants along the hub to satisfy the recreational needs of the residents.

The administrative bodies and office facilities are at the back of residential areas, yet serve the whole city, and are accessible through the main hub, while the factories and industrial zones are at the boundaries of the city with a green belt separates these zones from the rest of the city, to provide a healthy and safe environment within the city.

The Youth Center and the Cultural Center are the most significant places in the city that play a social role and help in the formation of social networks amongst the residents as well as the commuters to the city whether on daily bases or occasionally, for example during the sports or cultural activities.

Furthermore, the weekly market provides an opportunity for social life. It is considered one of the significant social places in the city.

Moreover, the planning of the city does not ignore the greenery and open spaces within the residential areas, where a number of green areas exist in the middle of residential blocks to provide a clean and healthy environment throughout the residential districts in the city, and to serve as neighborhood parks, which create social networks amongst the residents of each residential district, especially, amongst children, since it provide a safe place for play-groups.

The street is an important physical element that distinguishes urban areas than rural ones. It is a significant social urban element, where various social interactions usually take place.

The city of New Borg Al-Arab has almost all the basic urban elements that encourage specific types of social networks. However, unlike other urban areas, in New Borg Al-Arab there are some elements that do not influence the formation of social networks, like streets, for instance.

The streets in New Borg Al-Arab City do not play a significant social role

like in other areas, like *sha'bi* districts in Cairo, where the street is the main social element; or in cities, where the street corner, for instance, is considered a social point that help in creating social ties. In Borg Al-Arab, on the contrary, you rarely find street corners. Also, there is no social life in the small streets since there are no shops or any other services, where people can meet. As for the main hub, although there are a lot of commercial facilities, there is no social life there, since most of the residents prefer to buy all their stuff at the weekly market— the Wednesday market.

Furthermore, unlike other areas, where neighborly ties are strong and important, in New Borg Al-Arab City neighborly ties are weak and neglected.

Moreover, two of my informants reported that the formation of social ties/networks depends to a great extent on, or is influenced by social class. For instance, low class people intend to create social ties with neighbors more than middle class residents.

Most importantly, there is a very high sense of loyalty for the city, which surprised me. Even those who are relatively newcomers, for example only two years in the city, are very loyal to the city. Furthermore, people who are assigned for a time-limited job, generally two years, mostly by the government, intend to ask for extension when their assignment ends, or they will search for another job, to stay in the city.

The major problem in urban planning for new communities is that it does not consider the social aspects. The planning for new urban communities is based on providing residence, infrastructure and basic services, without knowing who will be the residents, what their style of living is, what their requirements are in this new community, and what would attract them to move to these new communities.

What happened in New Borg Al-Arab City was nice physical planning with wide streets, green areas, and the very basic services, which were less than the minimum requirement for any society. There was no sufficient infrastructure, and

no social services, especially, in the beginning, since its early establishment until 1996. Therefore, those who moved in were those who could not afford living in their original residence, like newly married poor people and the unemployed. This shows clearly, how physical planning could shape the social structure of the community, which was the case in New Borg Al-Arab City.

In the year 2000, the government renewed its attention to the new communities; this was also a result of the over-population of the old urban centers, and the inefficiency of the services and infrastructure. Therefore, the government exerted much effort to attract the people to move to these new communities. New Borg Al-Arab City was given more attention since it was planned to be an industrial and residential center. The services were improved to a great extent, especially social services, like the Youth Center and the Cultural Center.

There are some differences in the social patterns and the use of urban space between the different types of urban settlements in Cairo. However, there are similarities in each type regardless of location, or historical background. For example, new urbanized low-income areas have similar patterns of social life with similar gender distinctions as old low-class urban areas. In low-class urban areas, the streets and alleyways are almost women's domain, while the teahouses are the men's domain.

In new Borg Al-Arab City, the Youth Center acts as a sports club in big cities, and the Cultural Center are mainly where most social ties are formed, especially, amongst the youth. Then comes the role of NGOs.

From the studies conducted by different sociologists on the Egyptian society in different areas, I can conclude that social networks are based, to a great extent, on the division of labor and social roles.

Women, almost in all types of urban settlement have their own associations, and have power within their neighborhoods, whereas men are almost absent during day hours, and sometimes until late in the evenings.

Moreover, women seem to be the social active actors in almost all urban settlements in Cairo.

What confused me while interviewing different categories of people is the different answers, sometimes, concerning one service. For instance, some, like the CIB employee reports that the health services in the city are not efficient, whereas, Mr. Samir, chairman of CDA and a member of the Investors' Association, assured me that the health services in the city are of outstanding quality, and that there is a specialized hospital with up-to-date technology, in addition to some small medical centers and some private clinics.

In general people are happy with the city and are loyal to it, because it provides them with better living conditions. However, they are reluctant to an extent and suspicious to make close relationships with others, especially, neighbors.

I would attribute these differences of views of the individuals to two main reasons. First, it could be due to the different background people have, like urban/rural backgrounds. In this case, people of rural background find that the services provided in the city are sufficient compared to those provided, or in most cases, lacking, in their original places (mostly poor rural areas). The second reason could be attributed to the high expectations people have of any new community. In many cases, people have higher expectations than the reality and, in most cases, they are disappointed.

Moreover, I believe that the Wednesday market is different from markets from markets found in other new areas in Cairo, since in the case of New Borg Al-Arab people used to get all their goods from the market including food stuff and daily household goods, whereas, in other areas, such weekly markets are mainly for specific items, like clothes, cars, meat, etc., and they are visited by specific strata of the community, like the poor and the lower class. However, in Borg Al-Arab all strata of the community visit the *suq* regularly to get their goods and foodstuff. Therefore in Borg Al-Arab the *suq* plays a significant role in the

formation of social networks amongst all segments of the society. Moreover, it is the only free open space that gathers all people of different categories and classes on regular basis.

Finally, I believe that the case of Borg Al-Arab is unique, since it is a rural community, to a great extent, in an urban setting, the matter that affects the formation of social networks that, to some extent, differ than many other new communities, especially in Egypt. The community is new even in its composition and in its social characteristics, a rural society in an urban setting, which resulted in a totally new social fabric. It is different from other new communities in Cairo in its formation of social networks as they are not based on neighborhood relationships, nor are there any social life in the streets as is the case in other urban communities, like Al-Zawiya Al-Hamra in Cairo. This community does not follow theoretical expectations of geographic boundaries, since it is expected that individuals within the same geographic proximity form some sort of social networks as is the case in all neighborhoods in old and new areas in major cities, like Cairo, Alexandria, etc.

This new community is basically a rural community in an urbanized space. However, many of the social networks are based in urban, "modern", formations, such as the Youth Center, the Cultural Center and NGOs, and not in the traditional areas of streets and neighborhoods. This is because those urban elements as well as urban life impose the formation of social networks as such through encouraging the individuals to take part in urban life by participating in social and cultural activities that are held in those places. This participation is also encouraged through active individuals in the community, like Mr Kamal, Karima, and Mr Samir. However, and despite all their efforts, there are still different networks formed by rural migrants such as people from same village used to live in the same neighborhood, keeping up traditional ties that are based on family and kinship ties.

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