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# CAIRO IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CITIES FROM LOCAL INTO GLOBAL

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**ABSTRACT:** Nowadays, during this moment of global change, globalization becomes one of the most contested topics in the social sciences. Accompanying to globalization appears the term 'global city', which imparts an image of an urban place that is contemporary, international, multicultural, energetic, cosmopolitan, polarizing and having geographically unlimited power. The issue of global cities is timely of crucial importance in Egypt, as Cairo is now preparing for its new 2050 plan. The Greater Cairo Region (GCR) Strategic Urban Development Plan is currently in progress to define a vision, strategy and projects that capitalized on the region competitive assets and responds to its equity needs within a logical and spatial framework. One of the plan main goals is to increase Cairo competitive potentials to qualify as a global city. Therefore, this paper aims to identify the current position of Cairo on the continuum of global cities. Consequently, the paper investigates literature on how global cities have come into being, characteristics of a global city, criteria for ranking global cities and identifies significant factors that differentiate global city from other urban settings. We conclude that a deliberate planning is required to trigger the process of Cairo transformation to catch the train of global cities. Furthermore, an influential vision which aims at increasing the competitiveness of Cairo and a strategic urban plan for GCR is the first required step to qualify Cairo as a global city, which coincidentally contests with the national trend and the ambitious plan for Cairo 2050.

**Conference Topic:** 4- Cities, societies, communities and time

**Keywords:** Globalization; World/Global City; Cairo; Vision, Strategic Urban Development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Egyptians grow on a deep-rooted belief that Egypt is the mother of the world and Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is the centre of the Arab world. However, Cairo with its huge historical and cultural legacy, which was once a nexus for third world political and liberation movement, is currently facing an eclipse by other cities (Ex. Dubai) and its role in the Middle East and Africa is diminishing. Despite the numerous problems face Cairo and the continues pressure due to the population increase and the rural-

urban migration, with its sequence effects, Cairo experiences a strong awakening wind of fixation which can be seen in many fields. The dramatic changes of Cairo in the last few decades are well described by Khaled el-Khishin [1], as follows:

"With a multi-million dollar National Museum, a Stock Exchange Complex, a new French university, a smart/hi-tech research park and an ambitious gentrification scheme for the Islamic city in the pipeline, Cairo is not short on grand new schemes. Over the past decade, moreover, Cairo's transportation infrastructure was boosted by the inauguration of the second and third subway lines, and a ring road. Exclusive residential estates have sprung up around the city. Entertainment, leisure and international events have been served by the construction of an Opera House, a US\$200 million Media City, a "City Stars" shopping mall and residential complex, a "Dreamland" theme park, four world class golf courses, four new five-star hotels; Conrad, Four Seasons, Hilton, and Le Royal Meridien, plus an international convention centre."

Within the context of globalization, Cairo is trying hard to catch the train of global cities, but **does Cairo qualify to be a global city?**

Reviewing the literature on classifying large and significant cities and the terminology used to describe them indicates two main approaches [2]. The first approach classifies cities based on demographic basis which is largely interested in the sizes of cities, while the other one classifies cities according to its functional practice which treats cities as part of a larger system. The former studies human settlements in relation to existing and prospect population concentrations, while the latter focuses on world and global cities which are interpreted as integral to contemporary globalization processes. Within the classification of the first approach, Cairo undoubtedly fits as a "Megacity" and one of the largest urban agglomerations in the world, as shown in Figure (1). However, within the second approach the position of Cairo is blurred.



**Figure (1):** The largest agglomerations in the world

In fact, a mega city is not necessarily a global city, or being one, it could not be among the top ranking due to its standards of living, development, and infrastructures. For example, London is both mega city and global city, Singapore shows evidence as a global city but not a mega city and Cairo though it is an

important mega city due to its position in the Arab and African world, it is barely catch a very low rank in the global cities rosters.

This is the departure point of our paper; ***Why Cairo though its significant status and its considerable assets is still far away from the top list of global cities?***

In order to answer the above question we firstly review literature on the issue of globalization/global city history and evolution and investigate the different characteristics of a global city and the criteria used for ranking global cities in order to identify the position of Cairo on the continuum of global cities. Then, we explore the two paradigms demonstrating how global cities have come in to being; "deliberately planned" or "spontaneously evolved". Following this, we analyze the current status of Cairo against a set of factors, which drawn from the disparate perspectives defining the global city to highlight strength points that can trigger the development of Cairo to qualify as a global city as well as the weakness points that preclude this transformation.

## **2. CITIES WITHIN THE GLOBALIZATION / GLOBAL CITY CONTEXT**

Globalization is one of the most current charged issues, which is reflected in the dramatically increasing number of literature on globalization in the last fifty years [3]. Definitions of globalization are abundant. They differ according to the background of the scholars and theorists who define the term i.e. sociology, economy, politics, geography, etc. For example, sociologist Martin Albrow [4] defines globalization as the "diffusion of practices, values and technology that have an influence on people's lives worldwide.", while Political scientist Robert Gilpin [5] defines globalization as the "increasing interdependence of national economies in trade, finance, and macroeconomic policy". Mauro F. Guillén [6] has compiled a considerable number of definitions developed by (Guidry, Kennedy, and Zald [7]; Held et al. [8]; Robertson R. [9]), and he develops his own definition of globalization as "a process leading to greater interdependence and mutual awareness (reflexivity) among economic, political and social units in the world, and among actors in general". As it can be noticed, most of the definitions emphasize the combination of economic, technological, social and political forces and melting borders between the nations of the globe.

The start of globalization and when did it come into being is also a disputed issue [8]. One could argue that globalization was there since the dawn of history [10]. However, we can distinguish between two camps with regard to the start of globalization. One camp, particularly some economic historians, marks the days before World War I and the gold standard crisis as the zenith of international trade and investments i.e. era of globalization [11]. The other one tends to analysis globalization after the World War II and the start of nuclear age [5], [6], [7], and [12]. Accompanying to globalization appears the term "Global City", which was first introduced by Saskia Sassen in her book "The Global City" [13], in reference to London, New York, and Tokyo. Sassen described the city as one that tangibly influences global affairs in terms of politics, culture, and various socio-economic means [13], [14]. Relation between globalization and global cities are best described by Short and Kim [15], as follows:

"Globalization takes place in cities and cities embody and reflect globalization. Global processes lead to changes in the city and cities rework and situate globalization. Contemporary global dynamics are the spatial expression of globalization, while urban changes reshape and reform the processes of globalization."

Globalization brings opportunities as well as problems, both most clearly seen in cities. Also cities as they reflect the problems associated with globalization, they hold the potential for solving these problems. Their challenge is to function not only as engines of economic growth, but also as agents of social justice [3].

During the mid-nineties of the last century many commentators argued that cities would cease to exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as people could now participate in the world from any place of their choice. Proponents to this stance believe it was a big disappointment when cities remained in being, as advances in communication and transportation have meant that theoretically cities are no longer needed for the physical needs of production. However, opponents deem the crucial role that cities can play. Firstly, cities reflect the spatial dimension of globalization. Once the economic vision has been established, the land use and development strategy is expected to translate this into physical reality by creating the necessary sites and infrastructure. Secondly, cities provide essential amenities that allow people to enjoy a certain lifestyle. These include "hard" amenities such as hospitals, schools, universities, theatres, restaurants, museums and so on. Moreover, it also includes "soft" and intangible amenities such as friends, cosmopolitan atmosphere. Thirdly, cities are the places for creativity and interaction: despite the remarkable improvements in electronic communication, face to face interaction is still required, particularly for activities need exchanging ideas and information [16].

### **3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GLOBAL/WORLD CITIES**

A global city or world city is an important node point in the global network. The concept is based upon many backgrounds i.e. geography, urban studies and on the ideas that globalization had introduced into the global communities. The more linkages binding a city to the globe the more global is the city as it should have a direct and tangible effect on global affairs through socio-economic means in addition to culture and politics. Identifying the characteristics of the global city is one of challenged issues in recent literature, for more details refer to [17], [18]. General characteristics of global cities imply large populations, vast and advanced mass transportation systems, large international financial institutions and global headquarters, distinguished cultural and academic institutions that draw customers from around the globe, dynamic cultural scene with attractions including international film festivals, theatre, art galleries, and opera companies. Moreover, global cities could have media outlets that tend to reach the rest of the world, active participation in various forms of international affairs and can have several international cities within its urban boundaries. For example, many global cities in North America have, as "Chinatown" and "Little Italy" as autonomous districts within its urban context. Sanjeev Sanyal [19] attempted to build a paradigm for global city. He introduced some key threads that hold together the different factors of global cities in urban centres. They can be summarized as follows:

**Human Capital:** An innovative and creative society should require highly skilled people, where evidence clearly shows that skills/innovation drive urban growth. However, the quality of human capital in a city depends as much up on the quality of immigration as it does on the quality of locally available education [20].

**Hard Amenities:** A successful city needs the infrastructure required to support the lifestyle of its citizens. This includes the quality of civic infrastructure such as public transportation and real estate beside amenities such as medical care, education, entertainment, restaurants, parks and so on.

**Diversity and Cosmopolitan Attitude:** A city should have self consciously cosmopolitan and enjoy ethnic and cultural diversity. This should not be surprising since a global city needs the mixing of ideas, global linkages and cultural variety to sustain innovation. Thus, diversity of immigration must be considered as well in addition to the quality of immigration [21].

**Global Linkages:** The term "Global City" is derived from the linkages that city should make to be considered as a hub for the globalize world. There are many kinds of linkages that need to be considered: business, human, transportation, communications, cultural, etc.

**Hinterland Support:** All successful urban agglomerations need a hinterland that can feed the activities of the city by providing support functions such as golf courses, suburbs, holiday getaways, agricultural land and so on. In other words; hinterland is the area from which products are delivered to the global city for shipping to the globe.

**Urban Buzz:** Great cities are said to have a "buzz". This is of course a very difficult factor to define but it is probably a catch-all term for the variety and pace of activity that define successful cities, which might be similar to urban vibrant. However, there is another stance with regard to the issue of "buzz". Proponents think famous and successful cities are usually associated in people's minds with a single quality, promise, attribute or story. That simple brand narrative can have a major impact on people's decision to visit the city, to buy its products or services, to do business or relocate them. No human activity is exempt from this rule and the brand images of cities and countries underpin the emotional part of every decision, and also strongly affect the rational part. Paris is romance, Milan is style, New York is energy, Washington is power, Tokyo is modernity, Barcelona is culture, and Dubai is shopping [22].

In this paper we add another driver to the above six that we believe it is a key factor, which is the "quality of life".

**Quality of life:** It is the degree of well-being felt by an individual or group of people inside the city where they use to live. Unlike standard of living, it is an intangible concept; consequently it cannot be measured directly. It consists of two components: physical and psychological. The physical aspect includes such things as health, safety, and protection, while the psychological aspect includes stress, worry, pleasure and other positive or negative emotional states.

#### 4. TYPES OF GLOBAL CITIES

Types of global cities and the terminology describe these types differ according to scholars' perspectives and the method and criteria employed to classify them. For example Herman L. Boschken [18] classifies global cities into three clusters; global,

partially global and minimally global cities. Another attempt by J.V. Beaverstock, R.G. Smith and P.J. Taylor [2] results in categorizing global cities into three categories; Alpha world cities i.e. full service world cities, Beta world cities i.e. major world cities and Gamma world cities i.e. minor world cities. Generally, the classification always encompasses three categories, whatever the term used to describe them. In this paper, we focus on the types identified by Kris olds and Henry yeung [17] and attempt to identify Cairo case within their classification, as we think their classification is more holistic than the others.

1. Hyper global cities;
2. Emerging global cities
3. Global city-states.

#### 4.1 Hyper global cities

These global cities are comprehensively integrated via networks into a nested hierarchy of regional, national, and global economies. These cities have strong embedded relationships with their immediate hinterland, called 'global city-region'. Beside that, they are usually engaged in competitive relationships with other global city-regions in the same home country [23], [24].

#### 4.2 Emerging global cities

These emerging global cities are *striving to* become global cities. They would be classified as Beta and Gama world cities ,according to J.V. Beaverstock, R.G. Smith and P.J. Taylor classification [2], drawn in significant resources and inputs from their home countries, as well as from multilateral institutions (in the case of developing country cities). These cities have only limited relational linkages with the global economy (in a relative sense compared to hyper global cities). It is also much more dependent upon inward flows of development capital, people, goods and services and information from the global economy. Instead of acting as an interactive strategic node in the coordination, emerging global cities act as coordination/channeling centers responsible for receiving or channeling inward flows.

#### 4.3 Global city-states

To a large extent, city-states are unique historical and geographical realities because the state is contained within a fully urbanized and spatially constrained territorial unit. The most prominent of these global city-states – Singapore and Hong Kong (until 1997) – are the products of colonialism, and then postcolonial political dynamics. Colonial origins helped to shaped urban destinies that were (and still are) tightly intertwined with the evolving global economy [2].

## 5. HOW DOES A GLOBAL CITY COME IN TO BEING?

Though we have investigated the general characteristics and the different types of global cities, we could not conclude what can be the model of a global city, as there is no consensus on what could be a global city. The issue of how global cities have come in to being is another controversy issue i.e. are they "**deliberately planned**" or "**spontaneously evolved**" to be global cities.

Snjeev Sanyal [16] argued that all of today's global cities are largely the result of spontaneous evolution rather than deliberate planning. Global cities such as London,

Boston and New York have successfully transformed themselves from Industrial/transportation hubs into innovation/lifestyle hubs. These cities thrive because of their ability to support human capital accumulation, entrepreneurship, and innovation and provide cultural, social and consumer amenities. However, spontaneous evolution usually takes very long periods of time and cities can pass through prolonged periods of decline before achieving a tangible progress. For example, New York has gone through long periods of urban predicament in the seventies and the eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before it reaches to its current state on the top of global cities rosters. Moreover, many other cities could not even survive such obstacles and have failed such as Birmingham.

Snjeev explored in his article the possibility of the other alternative i.e. to create a vibrant urban model through deliberately guiding resources in a particular direction to mobilize urban change. His argument is that western global cities were not in need to use this strategy because they did not have a model that they could copy. However, for cities of developing countries such as Cairo and Singapore they could adopt "best practice" from existing successful cities, which is appropriate to their context, as there is no fundamental reason prevents such successful experience from replication. In his article he discussed the art of deliberately creating a global city for Asia in Singapore and argued that this process can be triggered and encouraged by "intelligent design". In fact we refer to his model as we consider Singapore a prime example of a city that has established itself as a key regional centre within the global economic circuit. We also think that Singapore model is one can be adopted as Singapore and Cairo have some similarities; both are cities of developing countries, were colonized by the British and attained their independent in the first half of the twentieth century. Cairo is the Arab World and Africa's most populous city and Singapore is the promising city-state into Asia's global city.

## **6. RANKING GLOBAL CITIES**

While there is a common consensus on which are the leading global cities, there is no agreed upon roster covering global cities below the highest level. A considerable number of attempts to rank global cities have been reviewed to investigate the rationale behind the different categorizations and ranks of global cities. Almost none of the reviewed rosters differ in considering London, New York, Tokyo on the top of the leading world/global cities list [13], [14], [15], [25]. For example, the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Group and Network has constructed an inventory of world cities based upon their level of advanced producer services. Using Saskia Sassen's [13] argument that it is advanced producer services which are the distinctive feature of contemporary world city formation, the authors focus on four key services: accounting, advertising, banking and law. Cities are evaluated as global service centres in each of these sectors and aggregation of these results provides a measure of a city's global capacity. 122 cities are considered in all. From these scores they defined 10 'Alpha' world cities, 10 'Beta' world cities and 35 'Gamma' world cities, and the remaining 68 cities are designated as having evidence of global city formation processes but the evidence is not strong enough to really call them global cities. The 68 cities are classified into 3 categories; relatively strong evidence, some evidence and Minimal evidence, where Cairo fits in the middle category 'some evidence' [2].

In 2004, the original roster by GaWC is revisited by P.J. Taylor and leading world cities are re-categorized [26]. In his paper he provides empirical evaluations of cities

within the world city network to find nodes that appear as notably important. The distinctiveness of this paper is that the evaluation extends beyond economic globalization to incorporate as well cultural, political and social globalization processes in order to define several networks of cities in globalization. Cairo appears in the list of Sites and situations of leading cities in political globalisations. The assessment includes three scales; UN agencies, National diplomatic missions and Local government global organization. At the global scale UN agencies bring in 'third world' cities for the first time, where Cairo gets rank 4. As it can be noticed, Cairo is not far from being a world/global city. It might have a lower rank, but at least it exists in the roster of leading world cities. The question here is why Cairo is at the bottom of the list while its assets, from our point of view, enable it to get advanced rank and precede other cities such as Dubai, which is at the moment at higher rank than Cairo. The following section is an attempt to answer this question.

## 7. WHERE IS CAIRO ON THE CONTINUUM OF GLOBAL CITIES?

In this section we firstly provide an overview about Cairo, and then analyze Cairo against the six key drivers characterizing the global cities that have previously identified by Sanjeev Sanyal [19], in addition to the seventh one added by us in order to highlight the strength points, which should be capitalized to trigger the transformation of Cairo into a global city.

### 7.1 Background of Cairo

Cairo city has a population of about 6.8 million people [27]. While Cairo's metropolitan area has a population of about 17.85 million people. Cairo is the most populous metropolitan area in Africa [28] and the sixteenth most populous metropolitan area in the world. Referring to Cairo often means Greater Cairo, which is composed of Cairo Governorate, part of Giza and Qaluobya Governorates. The evolution of GCR urban growth is indicated in Figure (2) and population growth in Table (1). Since May 2008 the administrative divisions of GCR has been changed to encompass 5 governorates: Cairo, Helwan, 6th of October and parts of Giza and Qaluobya. To date, there is no consensus on the actual boundary of GCR. Figure (3) indicates the current boundary of Cairo urban agglomeration.

**Table (1):** Urban & Population growth of Cairo  
1900 – 2000

Year	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population (millions)
1900	42	1.5
1950	120	5
2000	525	13.5



**Figure (2):** Urban growth of GCR in the period from 1900-2000. Source: [29]





International School in Cairo and International School of Choueifat. As for the higher education institutes, Cairo has a diverse categories of governmental and private institutions, which can be afforded by the different classes. Examples of governmental institutes include Ain Shams University, Cairo University and Al-Azhar University, which aims at the propagation of Islamic religion and culture and the Arabic language. As for private institutes, examples include the American University, British University, German University and the Canadian International College.

**Transport:** Cairo is the centre of almost the entire Egyptian transportation network. Transportation in Cairo comprises an extensive road network, rail system, subway system and maritime services. Although the road network represents nearly 25 per cent of the total GCR area, its practical capacity is inadequate owing to many problems. Lack of maintenance, poor driving habits, low vehicle occupancy, bottlenecks, and lack of parking lots and garages are among the major problems that decrease the efficiency of the network [30]. A new law for traffic is issued and implemented since the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, which aims at organizing and improving the traffic conditions in Egypt, and particularly the GCR.

- **Diversity & Cosmopolitan atmosphere**

Over the ages, and as far back as seven thousand years, Egypt stood as the land where civilizations have always met. It was the land for the Pharaohs, the Greeks, the Romans, the Coptic and the Muslims. The cultural diversity in Egypt is natural, given its heritage. Cairo is considered one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan areas in the Middle East and North Africa. This diversity can be seen in the variety of restaurants with different cuisines, luxury hotels, thematic museums, huge shopping malls, budding upscale gated communities, golf courses, festivals and so on. Furthermore, Cairo is gaining an increase in the attraction of major organizations and financial institutions to locate there. It includes representative offices of all the United Nations organizations/programmes, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Universal Postal Union. Other examples of international/regional political and corporate headquarters include the Arab League, the Council of Arab Economic Unity, the Centre for Environment and Development for Arab Region and Europe and the World Health Organization - Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean [1].

- **Global linkages**

A global city must have transportation\communication\business links with the rest of the world. With regard to transportation, Cairo International airport is known as the second busiest in Africa after Johannesburg International Airport in South Africa. The airport has two terminals and a third is under construction and due to be completed by October 2008. There are also four runways and a single cargo terminal. With the assimilation of Egypt Air into Star Alliance in July 2008 the airport has the potential to be a major hub with its positioning between Africa, the Middle East and Europe. In 2007, the airport served 12,577,524 passengers (+16.7% vs. 2006). As for communication links, Cairo is the Middle East's media production powerhouse, with its huge new 3.5 million square meters Media Production City (MPC). The 6th of October city-based MPC is the biggest ever built information and media complex, which, together with the Egyptian media satellites "Nilesat 101", "Nilesat 102", will allow Egypt to step into the new world of the 21st century. Thereby, Cairo will be well-qualified and well-equipped to maintain its pioneering role in the field of satellite television and to provide television and film production facilities that can support the information breakthrough. With respect to business links, the investment environment

in Egypt has changed dramatically to a more welcoming one with the appointment of the new pro- reform private-sector-oriented government in July 2004. A new Ministry of Investment was established, and its affiliate “The General Authority for Investment and Free Zones” was given a bigger role as Egypt’s investment promotion agency. This has led to significant streamlining of investment procedures. Different investment incentive packages are available now in Egypt’s free zones and the new Special Economic Zones systems. Additionally, there has been a 50% reduction of the corporate tax rate to 20%, and a restructuring of the customs system which has resulted in a reduction of the weighted average tariff rate from 14% to 9%, and a reduction of the number of tariff bands to 6. All this has promoted the growth of inward FDI to US\$ 4.4 billion in the first half of 2005/2006 from US\$ 1.8 billion in 2004/05 [30].

- **Links with hinterland**

The relation between Cairo and its hinterland is not symbiotic. Cairo exploits its hinterland on a staggered pace. GCR expanded in all the directions. Expansion in the desert direction is always favoured, however when the expansion takes place on the surrounded agricultural land it becomes a problem. Parts of the urban growth of GCR have taken place south along the Nile Valley and north in the Delta region, mostly on scarce agricultural land. The GCR alone has consumed increasing portions of the surrounding agricultural land (an average of 328 ha per annum between 1968 and 1977 and 593 ha per annum between 1977 and 1982). As a result, per capita food production has declined and food has had to be imported. In 1977, food represented 23 per cent of Egyptian imports and the proportion has grown since then.

- **Urban Buzz**

In addition to the good quality of hard amenities and cultural diversity, Cairo enjoys some sort of “urban buzz”. It offers a versatile and sophisticated environment great for a casual night out, gathering with friends, 24 hours opened restaurant and cafés, alive shopping malls and generous hospitality [31]. These features reflect the so called “urban vibrant”, which is considered a brand image for Cairo and it is very well known to its visitors. However, some argue that Cairo practices an annoying buzz, not this urban buzz of which one enjoys in such cities like London and New York. It is not a deliberate one but on the contrary it is a total mess.

- **Quality of life**

As we mentioned before, quality of life reflects the degree of well-being felt by an individual or group of people inside the city where they use to live. Given that it is an intangible concept, then measuring it is not easily. However, we refer to the quality of life index developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit [32]. The index is composed of nine determinants, which reflect factors of life satisfaction. The nine determinants are; material wellbeing, health, political stability and security, family life, community life, climate and geography, job security, political freedom and gender equality. Each factor is represented by an indicator to get a value. The index has been calculated for 111 countries for 2005. As it can be noticed, the study is on the country level not the city one. We assume implicitly that Cairo and Egypt are similarly. The index shows Egypt ranked 80<sup>th</sup>, with score 5.605 (Score on a scale from 1 to 10), where the first three are Ireland, Switzerland and Norway, with score 8.333, 8.068 and 8.051 respectively. As it can be recognized, Egypt has a low rank, which implies low quality of life to its resident. However, further study is required to identify whether Egypt

performs poorly in all of the above mentioned determinants or only few of them, which lead to these poor results.

## CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the position of Cairo on the continuum of global cities and highlights the conditions required to qualify Cairo as a global city. We investigate the position of Cairo in the different rosters identify leading world cities and unsurprisingly, we find it in the majority of them. However, Cairo is always far from the high positions within these lists. We, then explore the two paradigms demonstrating how global cities have come in to being; "deliberately planned" or "spontaneously evolved" and concludes that Cairo as well as other cities of developing countries needs a deliberate planning to trigger the process of its transformation to catch the train of global cities, otherwise if it is left to the spontaneous evolution, the risk of failing is considerably high. Then we analyze the current status of Cairo against a set of key drivers that together build a paradigm for the global city. The analysis indicates many positive aspects that can be capitalized to increase Cairo competitive potentials to qualify as a global city. In some aspects Cairo shows better performance than the others, for example hard amenities and global linkages indicate better performance for Cairo than links with hinterland and quality of life. Even within the single aspect the analysis indicates strength points as well as weakness ones. For example, the human capital accumulation indicates good performance in the education profile, while poor performance in the quality of immigration. The aim of this rapid analysis is not to find a magic solution that turn Cairo into a global city but rather to highlight strength points as well as weakness ones of Cairo to enable key persons in charge tailor these pits and pieces in the prospected development plan for Cairo 2050.

We conclude that the first step of the deliberate planning of Cairo is to elaborate an influential vision that capitalizes the positive assets of Cairo. Once the vision has been decided upon, it is vital that all the players involved in delivering that vision are able to work together to achieve that vision. Then, translating this vision in to a Strategic Urban Plan for GCR and a number of projects to increase the city competitiveness to qualify as a global city is crucial. Our conclusion is coincidentally contested with the national trend and the ambitious plan for Cairo 2050, which is currently in progress.

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