

# **Landscape Infrastructure and Liveable Communities: A Case Study of New-Cairo, Egypt 2011**

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## **Abstract**

To control urbanisation and to improve urban quality, Egypt has adopted the concept of master-planned estates (MPE's). This form of urbanisation is the latest manifestation of utopian place-making derived from the Garden City movement. With the emphasis on 'landscape' rather than 'architecture' and on building 'communities' rather than 'neighbourhoods', the development of these MPE's is underpinned by expectations that landscape characteristics have the potential to produce liveable communities. Located in the desert, the MPE's have often been criticised because of their weak connections with history, geography and culture.

This study challenges this criticism and argues that some of these landscape practices when analytically related to residential mobility and satisfaction, are crucial to the enhancement of liveability. However, these relationships need to be carefully examined and subsequently reconstructed in a holistic conception rooted in the challenging physical and cultural settings. To achieve this, the study draws on an extensive literature from several disciplines to develop a conceptual framework which provides a platform for meaningful analysis of practices, attitudes and aspirations.

Drawing on an empirical study of six MPE's in New-Cairo, the massive master planned extension to the east of Cairo, the research examines the strategies employed to attract residents and the factors required to satisfy residential needs. Using a variety of qualitative data collection techniques, the core of the analysis is centred on the fundamental role played by different stakeholders in making these MPE's into liveable places. These stakeholders include the officials involved in applying urban policy, the planners and developers who are the providers and the residents who live there.

The thesis offers a range of insights into what constitutes a liveable community and the contextual influences on landscape practices in MPE's. It also demonstrates that the consideration of MPE's with respect to liveability and infrastructures opens up innovative alternatives to understanding how these MPE's are shaped and function. The thesis concludes that landscape is an essential factor in enhancing liveability in the

desert MPE's. There is a potential therefore in pursuing the consideration of landscape as infrastructure, worthy of further investigation both in Egypt and elsewhere.