Domesticating Recolution: Cairene Collective Housing (1867-1960) & the Reconstruction of Visual Privacy

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DOMESTICATING RECOLUTION: CAIRENE COLLECTIVE HOUSING (1867-1960) & THE RECONSTRUCTION OF VISUAL PRIVACY

by

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A THESIS

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DOMESTICATING REVOLUTION: CAIRENE COLLECTIVE HOUSING (1867-1960) & THE RECONSTRUCTION OF VISUAL PRIVACY

KELSEA IZOR

ART HISTORY

ABSTRACT

Prior to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s experimentation with modern architecture in 1956, Cairo experimented with the collective housing unit between 1867 and 1955. Privacy, a central value in middle-class Cairene society, permeated the architectural construction of the collective housing unit, primarily adopting screened fenestration to ensure women’s privacy. In this thesis, I argue that in the collective mid twentieth-century housing units of Nasr City, a utopian style city planned by the Nasser administration, a visual shift in the façade suggests a social shift in the public visibility of Cairene women. Further, I argue that the collective housing units in Nasr City liberated middle-class Cairene women through architectural elements previously present in domestic spaces of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, while the living units of Nasr City break away from gendered conventions, state and commercial advertisements pushed in the press alongside women’s writings expose Nasser’s contradictory governance.

Keywords: Cairo; Nasser; Nasr City; International Style; gender; collective housing
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INTRODUCTION

President Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–1970) began his military career in the early 1940s with a nationalist vision to improve Egypt through socialist policies that centered on civil liberties and human welfare. By 1949, he had joined the Free Officers, a revolutionary political group, who seized control of the Egyptian government in the 1952 military coup d'etat, ending the monarchy and establishing Egypt as a Socialist Democracy. Egypt elected Nasser as their second president in 1956. During his presidency, Nasser began a short but fervent period of modern architectural experimentation that lasted until 1967 when Egypt lost the Six-Day War and was no longer financially able to pursue domestic housing projects.

Prior to Nasser’s experimentation with modern architecture in 1956, the collective housing unit existed in Cairo since at least the Mamluk Period (1250–1517). This thesis first looks at one nineteenth-century structure rooted in traditional Arab principles of design which reflected Islamic ideas of privacy and security in its construction. I then shift to the early twentieth century when Modernist structures in the Art Deco and International Style began to steadily appear throughout Cairo’s various districts which adopted Western architectural features just as Egypt achieved independence. I then focus on one housing model in Nasr City completed in the International Style that the Nasser administration conceived and constructed. Although the architecture of each period differed in its formal design, Egyptian and European architects continually designed the collective housing unit with visual privacy in mind.
Privacy, a central value in middle-class Cairene society, encompassed all residents of a household. However, women were the ones who predominantly occupied the home during the day and experienced greater constraints within the private sphere. Men, on the other hand, entered public space more freely and leisurely. Screened fenestration was one element of architectural design that ensured women’s privacy in the home during the day. Egyptian architect Sayed Karim (1911—2005), under the direction of Nasser, reworked screened fenestration in the collective housing units of Nasr City where windows and balconies heightened women’s public visibility alongside their participation in public life. This thesis investigates the development of middle-class collective housing units and how architecture is used to uphold notions of visual privacy as it pertains to women’s public visibility.

After the 1952 coup d'etat, Nasser began conceptualizing Nasr City, a modernist desert city that served as a bold statement for his administration and the ideology which it stood. By 1959, Nasser formally announced Nasr City as a state-funded project led by Egyptian modernist architect Sayed Karim. Nasr City would reflect the new revolutionary government, spatially adopting socialist design elements most prominently featured in post-colonial modernist projects such as Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia (1960) in Brazil and Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh (1958) in India. Nasr City, Brasilia, and Chandigarh utilized modernist design elements such as modular, rectilinear, and simple forms, clean lines, verticality, mass-produced and accessible materials, and an orthogonal plan epitomized by the International Style—a branch of Modern Architecture developed by Western architects in the early twentieth century.

The International Style of architecture emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as an architectural movement characterized by a minimalist aesthetic, the use of materials such
as glass, steel, and concrete, the rejection of ornamentation, and an emphasis on functionality and simplicity. The International Style was initially developed in Europe by architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe, but it soon spread globally where it signaled modernity and an industrialized nation at a time following the destabilization of governments after World War I and II.

Within Nasr City several mass housing units that, although configured for an Egyptian climate, adopted the International Style in their rectilinear and modular forms, lightweight mass-produced materials, use of *pilotis*, flat surfaces, and elimination of ornamentation. It is in the collective housing units of Nasr City that a visual shift in the façade suggests a shift in the public visibility of Cairene women.

In this thesis, I argue that the collective housing units in Nasr City liberated middle-class Cairene women through architectural elements previously present in domestic spaces of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Housing Model 22, a collective housing unit in Nasr City, both breaks free from gendered conventions and reinforces a new notion of modern womanhood tied to global ideas of twentieth-century modernity. Through this thesis, I problematize Nasser’s architecture and show that while the revolutionary leader supported female liberation, the new modern domestic space only enforced another version of control.¹

The Egyptian home was a complicated place for Nasser to focus his modernization efforts. In Egyptian middle and upper-class society, the home endured as the main space where social codes enforced conventional gender divisions during the nineteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, the Egyptian home continued as a

¹ My use of the word “modern” in the context of this thesis refers to the industrial developments, social practices, and architectural building practices taking place throughout the twentieth century.
private space governed by the Arab familial structure that maintained a male patriarch and encouraged women to remain away from public view.2 Women were secondary in this familial structure and encouraged to remain at home in a domestic role while their husbands worked. The lack of financial and public power the Arab familial model refused women led to upper-class women becoming prominent and respected writers for women’s journals and Egyptian trade publications where they relayed their dissatisfaction with women’s access to the public sphere.

During Nasser’s rule, Egyptian women are commonly understood to have come closer to social equality than any previous generation. Two major revolutions impacted women’s standing in twentieth-century Egypt: the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. During the 1919 Revolution, women marched in the streets alongside men for the first time to protest British rule. Women voiced their ideas to the public by writing editorials, disseminating their thoughts in the press through women’s magazines and weekly trade publications read widely by Egyptian men and women. At first, women writers focused on institutionalizing female education as a means to advance women’s place in Egyptian society. But by the 1952 Revolution, writers like Doria Shafik, Sa’id Na’matullah, and Amina Sa’id were regularly featured in national trade publications like Akhir Sa’a and Egypt’s first women’s magazine, Hawaa’, where they shifted focus and argued for women’s right to enter the public workforce. These conversations—led by women—were particularly important under a Pan-Arab government that adopted an agenda of female liberation.

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Nasser ruled under a vision of Pan-Arabism, or Arab Socialism as it is defined in the revised Egyptian Constitution of 1956, an ideology asserting that Arabs across the Middle East constitute a single nation.³ Rather than uniting only Egypt, Nasser’s goal was to unite the Arab region, which he believed would solidify the region as a powerful political force. Ultimately, Pan-Arab ideology sought to empower Arab states and reclaim a national identity not tied to previous British colonialism. Previous Arab leaders, such as the former ruler of Jordan, Abdullah I (1882–1951), adopted Pan-Arabism as an ideology, but Nasser was its most successful proponent and the first leader to make it a state policy reflected in the country’s constitution.

Pan-Arabism primarily adopted Marxist socialist principles that promoted human rights, the dissolution of social classes, equal distribution of wealth, and workplace regulation that valued the employee, but it differed from traditional Marxist Socialism in its promotion of Islam as “containing a progressive social message” that, as a religion, motivated societal change.⁴ Most prominently, Pan-Arabism believed that the Western world should not have any political power in the Middle East. Nasser saw Egypt as playing a central role in the future of Middle Eastern politics and situated himself as the leader. To fulfill such a role, he experimented with the modern architectural production of the state and mobilized women, a group he saw as politically underutilized, to support his rule.

Pan-Arabism adopted a view of women as equal to men and recognized their unequal standing in society. Freeing women—to a degree—from systematic inequality became a platform that Nasser adopted after the 1956 election when mobilizing women

became necessary to retain majority support. During his first year in office, Nasser revised the 1956 Egyptian Constitution, which granted women the right to work, vote, and hold public office for the first time in Egypt’s history—furthering a message that liberating women from societal inequality was important to him and his administration. As Laura Bier notes, Nasser’s administration “for the first time, recognized [women] as national subjects and citizens with an active and necessary role to play in national development.”

During the Nasser era when women’s rights expanded under a Pan-Arab government, advertisements were a crucial means of shaping the political and economic landscape of Egypt. As a tool of propaganda, advertisements promoted a vision of Egypt as a powerful and progressive nation determined to assert its independence on the global stage. Nasser’s status as a post-colonial leader meant he needed to position Egypt in line with other major global powers projecting an image of modernity. Hawaa’ and Akhir Sa’a published advertisements and magazine covers that adopted modernist imagery. Many images featured modernist architecture alongside women often in a domestic and maternal role. This imagery followed a global trend where magazines placed normative gender roles on men and women through imagery that aligned with modernity. When examined within the context of a Pan-Arab government during the initial years of Egyptian independence, these advertisements and the gender norms they propagated delineate from Nasser’s progressive advocation for women.

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On the surface, Nasser’s constitutional changes moved in a direction of freeing women from systematic structures that held them back from public life for centuries. Women writers penned editorials arguing for women’s integration into the public workforce at the same time the architecture of Nasr City employed windows and balconies that structurally heightened women’s public visibility more so than housing of previous decades allowed. However, government and commercially produced advertisements pushed in the press sent a different message that encouraged women residing in modernist housing to continue to stay away from public life. Together, the architecture and advertisements produced during Nasser’s presidency speaks to a contradiction in how his administration expected women to occupy modernist housing.

Review of Existing Literature

Early modern architectural historians Jürgen Joedicke, Siegfried Giedion, William Curtis, and Henry-Russell Hitchcock published on the history of Modern Architecture throughout the twentieth century, focusing on the origins, characteristics, and the field’s development. These writers argued that Modern Architecture responded to the changing societal and technological landscape. The International Style developed as a style of Modern Architecture, becoming a formal architectural style when architect Philip Johnson and Hitchcock first used the term in their 1932 architectural exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.  


Architects and critics characterized the International Style by its use of lightweight, mass-produced materials, modular forms, flat surfaces, and its rejection of ornamentation. It became the dominant architectural style across the world from the 1930s-1970s and represented societal, economic, and technological advancement.

Scholarship throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century referencing the International Style rarely mentioned Egypt, instead focusing on European and North American projects that authors found were emblematic of modernism’s best formal and philosophical aspects. This thesis considers Nasr City as a modernist project utilizing the International Style at a unique time of political and social change not seen in contemporaneous global modernist experimentations.

The assessment of Nasser era architecture has largely been restricted to a nationalistic framework interested in large-scale government and public projects like the Nile Hilton Hotel (1953-58), the Arab Socialist Union (1959, demolished), and the Cairo Tower (1956-61). Andre Raymond and Nezar AlSayyad examine the Arab Socialist Union and the Cairo Tower as key projects that symbolically represent political change, national identity, revolution, and Egyptian independence under Nasser. Yaseer Elsheshtawy further suggests that the Nile Hilton Hotel also serves as a visual embodiment of Nasserian modernity. Within this discourse, however, modern domestic space has rarely been considered as a symbol of nationalism or as representative of Nasser’s quest to modernize Egypt.

9 Curtis, Modern Architecture Since 1900, 257-274.
Instead, scholarship on modern domestic space centers on Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy’s 1945 New Gourna Project in Luxor, Egypt. The New Gourna project is a series of domestic buildings influenced by vernacular Islamic forms and housed a rural poor population. Fathy’s project is popular because of its revival of mud-brick and domed architecture which dramatically stood out against contemporaneous modernist housing utilizing reinforced concrete and rectilinear forms. Thus, modern urban middle-class domestic space serves as an unexplored area of study that will expand and complexify the understanding of Nasser era politics and modernization efforts. In an effort to center modern domestic space, I also engage with the theorist Michel de Certeau, who acknowledges that both the built environment and its inhabitants actively shape the culture around them.

Scholarship on gender relations of the Nasser era remains fixed on public architecture rather than domestic space. For instance, Annabel Wharton and Yaseer Elsheshtawy briefly examine how the Nile Hilton Hotel’s architecture responded to changing gender relations in 1950s Cairo. Wharton suggests that the removal of the mashrabiya, a wooden lattice-covered opening allowing female occupants to view the outside world without being seen, is an indication of changing societal values. Elsheshtawy echoes Wharton’s thoughts, discussing how the Nile Hilton Hotel is “compatible with modern social practices” of the 1960s where the hotel employed


women. By building on Wharton and Elsheshtawy’s scholarship, I both expand on the literature of gendered architecture in post-revolution Egypt and diverge from it by transitioning away from public to residential architecture.

Only recently has scholarship shifted to include housing typologies outside of government and palace architecture traditionally inhabited by the upper classes in the Arab region. In 2019, Kivanc Kilinc, Mohammad Gharipour, and Mohamed Elshahed constructed microhistories of modernist Arab social housing projects to individualize Middle Eastern countries’ approach to modern architecture. My research will follow Kilinc, Gharipour, and Elshahed’s lead in centering social housing as a vehicle for discussing societal transformation in lower socioeconomic populations. Moreover, I move away from early Orientalist narratives rooted in the Enlightenment and Romantic ideas that primarily valued the Pharaonic and Islamic elements of Egyptian architecture.

Asiya Chowdhury and Juan Eduardo Campo have written at length on how Edward William Lane’s An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (1836) and the French government-produced Description de l’Égypte (1809) became foundational texts for Western academics to assess Egyptian architecture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Chowdhury, both texts represented colonized peoples that “conformed to the colonial thesis of cultural difference between the East and Western Europe” and ultimately directed Western architectural scholarship

to perpetuate what Edward Said defined as Orientalism. This thesis challenges earlier Orientalist narratives by highlighting the modern architecture of Egypt rather than the Pharaonic and Islamic structures.

The primary aim of this thesis is to ground the production of Nasr City’s social housing within the gendered societal transformations taking place during Nasser’s presidency. In an attempt to centralize gender within Nasser’s rule, this thesis engages with the scholarship of such women as Alice Friedman, Hilde Heynen, Beatriz Colomina, Daphne Spain, Gülsüm Baydar, Dolores Hayden, and Gwendolyn Wright, all of whom have made great strides in defining how women occupy domestic space, exploring the underlying premises of domestic architecture, and demonstrating how women are assigned a particular social role through architecture. Nevertheless, the majority of existing research on gender, architecture, and domesticity emphasizes women’s role in a single-family house and is largely limited to North American and European architecture. Although such studies continue to be crucial in exposing what Baydar calls the “naturalized male dominance in spatial practices,” these scholars focus on North American and European architecture and the culture, economics, and social practices within their respective societies. Egypt remains distant from architectural discourse focused on understanding how women’s social role is shaped through the architecture of

the modern home. In her essay on women in contemporary architectural discourse, Baydar states that “much work remains to be done in broader historical and theoretical explorations of domesticity, especially in the processes of colonial encounters and decolonization.” This thesis expands the discourse around women and architecture to include much needed attention to Cairene women in colonial and post-colonial circumstances.

Margot Badran, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Leila Ahmed extensively studied post-1952 gender relations in Egypt and recognize the paradoxical nature of Nasser’s simultaneous expansion of women rights and silencing of female reformers and writers. Laura Bier’s 2011 book Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser’s Egypt remains the only monograph focused on the gender politics of Nasser’s rule. However, in this thesis, I diverge from these authors as they are more broadly focused on the relationship of women to the nation and never broach the subject of modern architecture as a tool of control.

Scholars have rarely considered Nasr City a worthwhile area of study. In her discussion of Nasr City’s architecture, Mona Abaza describes the modernist structures as “cement matchboxes” that “[look] like cheap Bauhaus buildings.” Further, Abaza remarks on the “boring grid architecture” of Nasr City that “remind[s] many of the constructions in Socialist countries.” Abaza’s primary focus is on Nasr City’s shopping

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21 Ibid., 42.
23 Bier, Revolutionary Womanhood.
25 Ibid., 264.
malls and their connection to middle-class, postwar consumer culture. Although Abaza treats Nasr City as an important site of Pan-Arab economics of the twentieth century, her architectural research is largely reliant on formal analysis and global economics. Elshahed suggests that the architectural modernism of Cairo is more than its formal elements because Egyptian modernism is tied to anticolonial national struggles affecting its production. Elshahed’s focus on colonial legacy is rooted in the postcolonial theory of Said, Robert Young, and Helen Tiffin, all of whom recognize the impact of colonialism upon a society’s cultural production.

Given its significance as a post-colonial utopian model city, it is surprising how understudied Nasr City has been. While Nasr City’s basic history and discussions concerning commercialism and nationalism are present, there have been no attempts to analyze the gendered relations in conjunction with its architecture. By recognizing how gender transformed within the nineteenth and twentieth-century home, I will move away from public architecture as the primary mode of exploring Nasser era relationships in accordance with Gülüm Baydar’s assertion that “the domestic sphere is arguably the most potent place to explore the spatiality of gendered power relations.”

Chapter Summaries

Chapter one describes the architectural elements that express gender divisions employed in the residential architecture of Cairo between 1867-1960. In Egyptian middle-class society in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the home endured as the main space where social codes enforced conventional gender divisions. Cairene residential architecture, which is local, individual, and distinct to the Arab region, is influenced by a range of social and political factors. This chapter investigates these factors and their impact on the various iterations of the collective housing unit pre-dating those in Nasr City. Architectural elements like fenestration and balconies suggest changing notions of how political regimes and architects negotiate visual privacy within the home. The collective housing units erected in Cairo prior to 1956 subtly heightened the public visibility of women, but the modern apartments in Nasr City—exemplified by one unit known as Housing Model 22—structurally dissolved gendered elements that inhibited women’s access to the public sphere. I argue that these structural changes in architecture aligned with the growing role of Egyptian women’s entrance into the public sphere.

Chapter two explores the Egyptian Press during the period 1956-1970, investigating the content of women’s writings and the advertisements and imagery of modernist architecture appearing alongside them during Nasser’s rule and censorship of the press. I first focus on women’s writings arguing for women’s entrance into the public workforce materializing in popular Egyptian publications to show how women fought for a public presence that afforded them financial and social power. I then shift to an analysis of advertisements and magazine covers appearing alongside such writings that depict the modern home in relation to women and women’s relationship to modernity. These advertisements served as a vehicle for the construction of gendered identities in the
period following Nasser’s 1956 entrance into office. By positioning women’s writings and advertisements together, an inconsistency emerges in Nasser’s reputedly progressive regime, whereby women remain in a domestic role in line with global ideas of modernity.

Methodology

In this thesis, I utilize architectural scholar and curator Mohamed Elshahed’s “Five Points to Decolonize Architecture” methodology presented in his 2021 Center for Architecture exhibition in New York City, “Cairo Modern,” to guide my writing and interpretation. Elshahed’s five points are a play on Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier’s “Five Points of Architecture” presented in 1926 as a set of design principles that prioritize the use of *pilotis*, a free open-floor plan, a free façade, horizontal windows, and a roof garden to create a functional and efficient building. Elshahed’s points challenge Le Corbusier’s points by aiming to foster a more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and contextually grounded approach to architecture. Elshahed’s “Five Points to Decolonize Architecture” include (1) centering local knowledge and voices, (2) addressing power dynamics, (3) reevaluating architectural education, (4) embracing hybridity and multiple identities, and (5) redefining success and sustainability. With these points in mind, I prioritize Arab scholarship, recognize the imbalanced power relationships inherent in architectural production, and acknowledge the multifaceted interplay of cultural influences in Cairene architecture. I have tried my best to construct a history of residential Cairene architecture that respects a newly emerging architectural history defined by a nuanced understanding of time, place, and history. In this way, I

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center Cairo as a unique place of architectural production that responds to its local and individualized socioeconomic qualities.

The choice of primary research materials for this project was partly necessitated by the limited accessibility of digital materials. I acquired digital advertisements and Nasr City plans from The American University in Cairo’s Rare Books and Special Collections Digital Library that has created and made available an important archive of digital materials pertaining to Egypt’s modern architectural heritage. This includes Sayed Karim’s personal archive which had been unexplored until recently.\(^{31}\)

Central to my thesis is the relationship between government produced advertisements and how women are presented in relation to the modern apartment. When analyzing these advertisements, I engage with scholarship that focuses on the mediation of architecture in the press which considers the built environment as a social, political, and cultural process.\(^{32}\)

A post-colonial and gendered approach alongside formal, literary, and media analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of how Nasr City’s housing both breaks free from former gendered conventions and reinforces a new notion of modern womanhood that is simultaneously liberating and controlling. Recently scholars Ayman Ahmed El-Desouky, Eid Mohmed, and Nathaniel Greenberg have stressed the importance of the press, advertising, and consumerism in fostering Egyptian nationalism during revolution.\(^{33}\) Elshahed and Elsheshtawy have also examined the iconography of


\(^{33}\) See Ayman Ahmed El-Desouky and Eid Mohmed, Cultural Production and Social Movements After the Arab Spring: Nationalism, Politics, and Transnational Identity (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021); and Nathaniel
the revolution in Nasser’s press advertisements. My focus, however, though related, differs from Elshahed and Elsheshtawy by taking a closer look into how advertisements present modern architecture in relation to women. In this way, press advertisements allow for an investigation into female identity, gendered behavior, and modernist housing.


34 Elshahed, “Revolutionary Modernism?,” 310-407; and Elsheshtawy, “City Interrupted,” 352-357.
Chapter one describes the architectural elements that express gender divisions employed in the residential architecture of Cairo between 1867-1960. In Egyptian middle-class society in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the home endured as the main space where social codes enforced conventional gender divisions. Cairene residential architecture, which is local, individual, and distinct to the Arab region, is influenced by a range of social and political factors. This chapter investigates these factors and their impact on the various iterations of the collective housing unit pre-dating those in Nasr City. Architectural elements like fenestration and balconies suggest changing notions of how political regimes and architects negotiate visual privacy within the home. The collective housing units erected in Cairo prior to 1956 subtly heightened the public visibility of women, but the modern apartments in Nasr City—exemplified by one unit known as Housing Model 22—structurally dissolved gendered elements that inhibited women’s access to the public sphere. I argue that these structural changes in architecture aligned with the growing role of Egyptian women’s entrance into the public sphere.
The principle of privacy is consistently presented throughout the scripture of the Qur'an. The Qur'an specifically relates privacy and the home together in the following verses:

“O ye who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until ye have asked permission and saluted those in them” (24:27)

“Do not enter any houses except your own homes unless you are sure of their occupants' consent” (24:27)

“And if you do not find anyone there, do not enter it until permission is given to you” (24:28)

These verses hold significant implications for domestic home life. The home is considered a sacred space in Arab culture and entering it without permission is seen as a violation of its sanctity. These versus also extend to security and class boundaries, but in the context of architecture, these verses dictate that privacy be prioritized and maintained in the home, which for centuries impacted the development of residential architecture in Cairo.

Two main forms of privacy impacted nineteenth century Cairene architectural spaces: social privacy and visual privacy. Men maintained “social privacy” by mediating who could and could not enter the home through assigned interior spaces such as a reception hall or receiving area enclosed by walls. Visual privacy, on the other, refers to

35 For these Quranic verses and their translations, see Hisham Mortada, *The Traditional Islamic Principles of the Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 2005), 50-52.
36 Like all societies, it is incorrect to attribute a particular religion to everyone within a region. However, Muslim identity during the entirety of the nineteenth century remained incredibly strong throughout the Arab region and influenced a consistent domestic architecture in Cairo rooted in the scripture of the Qur'an. Arab architecture varies widely depending on local traditions, heritage, and culture, resulting in architectural variations that reflect the cultural factors unique to each individual population. The rab’ is a uniquely Cairene piece of architecture reflective of Cairo’s socioeconomic history.
the idea that those within the Arab home should be shielded from the gaze of those outside their immediate family. In Cairo, late nineteenth-century domestic architecture reflects a deep-rooted investment in visual privacy, particularly its relationship to women within the home.

In Egyptian middle-class society in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the home endured as the main space where social codes enforced conventional gender divisions. The middle-class Arab familial model, a structure that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and extended, followed a strict system of societal standards. These standards dictated that women remain at home where domestic duties and childcare served as their main responsibilities. Family structure was thus organized around gender with women of the household considered secondary to their male counterparts.

While men maintained public and economic power through daily employment as merchants, shopkeepers, and craftsmen, women exercised almost complete power over the children and the home. In this way, women expressed their power privately and within the home rather than in the public sphere. The rab’, a popular collective housing unit inhabited by middle-class families, gives us insight into how fenestration and balconies expressed gender dynamics of late nineteenth-century Cairo.

The rab’ is an urban collective housing unit situated along the main streets of Cairo (c. 1867-1899; figure 1). The first floor accommodated commercial spaces, while the upper floors housed residential apartments, which occupants accessed through a

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38 The Qur'an never calls for a set of strictly enforced rules within the home and is better understood as a set of values historically reflected in the built environment. See Hisham Mortada, *The Traditional Islamic Principles of the Built Environment*, xix.
40 Ibid., 31.
central interior staircase. Although the number of apartments within the rab’ varied, the structure typically housed between one hundred and one hundred and fifty people.\(^{41}\)

The rab’ is important in the formation of collective housing in Cairo since it consistently appeared in Islamic Cairo (figure 2), the main residential quarter within the city, from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. It is unknown when the rab’ originated as an Arab form of housing, but in Cairo, scholars traced an early version to the late Mamluk Period (1250–1517). Laila ‘Ali Ibrahim’s research revealed that the Mamluk rab’ employed ground floor commercial spaces, upper floor residential spaces, and windows on the façade of first-floor residential space.\(^{42}\) Mona Zakariya’s research on an Ottoman Rab’ (1517–1798), located in Islamic Cairo, reveals ground floor commercial spaces, upper floor residential spaces, and windows on the facade of first-floor residential space.\(^{43}\) Mamluk and Ottoman riba’ both utilized walled-off space to divide rooms and as a measure to ensure women and men remained separated.\(^{44}\) In this way, riba’ suggest a consistent structure from the Mamluk to Ottoman Periods regardless of when constructed, rulers, or Cairo’s sociopolitical circumstances. Andre Raymond considers the rab’ a traditional piece of Cairene architecture precisely for this reason, its continuity from Mamluk to Ottoman times indicates a localized architecture specific to Cairo.\(^{45}\)

The rab’ is one of two housing typologies found in Islamic Cairo during the late nineteenth century that middle-class populations likely occupied. The courtyard home, a

\(^{44}\) Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 47-49; and Zakaria, “Le Rab’ de Tabbana,” 276-278.
\(^{45}\) Raymond, “The Rab’, 57.
traditional Arab home oriented around an open courtyard (14th-18th centuries; figure 3), began disappearing during the early nineteenth century in Cairo because of early modernization efforts pursued by Egyptian rulers Muhammad Ali (1805–1848) and Isma’il (1830-1895) who wanted to transition away from “traditional” Cairene architecture.46 However, courtyard homes remained in large quantities throughout Cairo during the nineteenth century—having existed since at least the fourteenth century—and attracted middle and upper-class residents, remaining a popular form of housing during the period.47 It is in the courtyard home where Arabic housing design perfected the spatialization of privacy in its interior organization.

In Egyptian society, the home is constructed to achieve privacy. Courtyard homes have consistently included a reception hall, a receiving area, a sitting room, and different spaces reserved for men and women.48 Inside the home, rooms gain a larger association with privacy the farther you move back into the home. This interior-focused organization is of prominent importance in Arabic society where families and individuals honor a unique relationship between the private and public spheres.

The private sphere encompasses intimate and personal aspects of life that are restricted to a smaller, more exclusive circle including the home, family, and close relationships. The public sphere, on the other hand, includes areas that are open and accessible to the larger community such as streets, markets, workplaces, educational institutions, and public gatherings. In the public sphere, individuals interact with a

48 Ibid.
broader range of people beyond their immediate family or close circle. In this way, Egyptian society—and Arabic society in general—followed an interior focused housing design that valued privacy and signaled the social status of its residents during the nineteenth century.

While the interior of the home prioritized privacy in its design, the façade further reflected the internal organization and secured another level of visual privacy. The façade plays a crucial role in ensuring privacy and security within the Cairene home. For instance, in many Cairene courtyard homes, the façade often presents a modest and closed appearance to the outside world, providing privacy and seclusion while still allowing sufficient airflow and light to enter the house. Elements like screened windows protect the interior spaces from prying eyes. Moreover, the facade acts as a transitional element between the public realm outside and the private realm within the home.

For instance, one Cairene courtyard home façade that remains greatly preserved and expertly documented is Gayer-Anderson House located in the Sayyida Zeinab neighborhood in Cairo (17th century; figure 4). As it stands now, Gayer-Anderson House is a combination of two courtyard homes joined by a third-story bridge in 1935. The home is now a museum operated by Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities office and structurally altered to accommodate visitors and vehicles, but the exterior façade remains in its original state and is representative of traditional Cairene courtyard home architecture.

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The public view of Gayer-Anderson House (17th century; figure 4) displays two *mashrabiya* located on the second floor above the entrance. A *mashrabiya* is a type of projecting window enclosed with carved wooden lattice work and located on the upper floors of Cairene residential housing.\(^{51}\) Above each *mashrabiya* is a single gated window. Although the photograph shows a ribbon of five wall niches present in the right corner, these project from the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, which is adjacent to Gayer-Anderson House and structurally supports the home through its outer wall (figure 4a). The placement of the *mashrabiya* and gated windows on the upper level ensures that those within the home can enjoy a public view without risking their privacy. Moreover, those passing by cannot see into the home. The *mashrabiya* and gated windows are the only fenestration present on the façade of the home; thus, they illustrate how the façade plays an important role in maintaining visual privacy in traditional Cairene courtyard home architecture.

The *rab’* was a much cheaper option for middle-families to occupy compared to courtyard homes. Rather than purchasing an individual courtyard home, families could rent units in the *rab’* at a lower rate.\(^{52}\) This allowed a middle-class artisan and merchant population to live and work in the same space.\(^{53}\) Additionally, the *rab’* is the most similar building, in terms of spatial organization and ability to provide high density housing, to the modern apartment unit that will appear in the mid-twentieth century under Nasser. Thus, the *rab’* provides a lens into understanding middle-class domestic spaces of the late nineteenth century with particular focus on how architectural elements that


\(^{52}\) Raymond, “The Rab’,” 57.

upheld privacy in the Cairene home both maintained and liberated women from
nineteenth-century notions of visual privacy.

In Boulaq, a western district within Islamic Cairo (figure 2), a rab’ located at Une
Rue à Boulaq demonstrates how architectural elements maintained women’s visual
privacy through fenestration and balconies.54 The photographic studio Maison Bonfils,
operated by French photographer Félix Bonfils (1831–1885), captured an image of a
Boulaq Rab’ in the late nineteenth century.55 In the sepia-toned image, the photographer
captures the façade (c. 1867-1899; figure 1) overlooking Boulaq street. Around fourteen
commercial spaces line the entirety of the ground floor while residential apartments make
up the upper levels. The number of residential apartments is unknown but Mamluk and
Ottoman riba’ place one residential unit for every commercial space.56 Therefore, it is
likely the structure contains around fourteen residential units spread over two levels to
form one unit accessible by an interior staircase. While only the façade is captured in this
image, the architectural elements featured along the upper-level residential units give us
clues as to how women occupied this space between 1867-1899 when social codes were
at their peak and dictated that women remain in the home and away from public view.

54 The rab’ located at Une Rue à Boulaq does not have a specified name. I will refer to it as the “Boulaq Rab’” moving forward. This follows the naming conventions of both Andre Raymond and Mona Zakaria who labeled riba’ in accordance with their district. See Raymond, “The Rab’,” 55-62; and Mona Zakaria, “Le Rab’ de Tabbana,” 275-298.

55 It should be noted that this image captured by Maison Bonfils works within the Orientalist narrative of the late nineteenth-century photographic trend that captured Cairo’s architecture only through the façade to highlight its “otherness.” Maison Bonfils produced this image for commercial use and appealed to a Western audience interested in exoticizing Egyptian architecture and culture. The Maison Bonfils image serves as the main point of evidence for this thesis largely because photographers rarely captured Cairene riba’, and this image currently remains one of the only known photographs of the Boulaq Rab’. See Caroline Williams, “Nineteenth-Century Images of Cairo: From Real to the Interpretive,” in Making Cairo Medieval, eds. Nezar AlSayyad, Irene A. Bierman, and Nasser O. Rabbat (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 112-117; and Zeynep Çelik, Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 172-175.

When relegated to the home, windows provided women in the Boulaq Rab’ different levels of access to the public sphere. The Boulaq Rab’ displays two variations: the mashrabiya and the double-hung window. As discussed, the mashrabiya is a type of projecting window enclosed with carved wooden lattice work and located on the upper floors of Cairene residential housing. A double-hung window is composed of two clear glass sliding panes that move both upwards and downwards.

Raymond and Ibrahim recognize that Cairene architecture often employs screened windows and balconies to facilitate ventilation and accommodates climatic conditions of Egypt. For instance, windows mitigate the effects of blowing sand and dust, which are common in arid regions like Cairo. Additionally, screened windows promote airflow, allowing fresh air to enter while maintaining a level of indoor comfort and cleanliness. However, I suggest while this is true, they also take on a sociopolitical meaning when understood in the changing relationship between women, the home, the nation, and privacy from 1867-1899.

The mashrabiyas on the facade of the Boulaq Rab’ (c. 1867-1899; figure 1a) restricts the public view of women within the household, which aligns with nineteenth-century notions of visual privacy. Because the threat of visual intrusion persisted as a central concern, the mashrabiya ensured the privacy of women in the home. They are much larger, more ornate, and distinctly Egyptian compared to the neighboring hung windows. In the Boulaq Rab’, mashrabiyas begin appearing on the first floor of

residential space centered between the alternating hung windows. Although the 
mashrabiya faces the main street, the public would not see into the home through its 
latticework. Additionally, the mashrabiya restricts the inner view of a home’s inhabitants.

The mashrabiyas fragment the view women have into the public from within the 
home, further aligning with nineteenth-century notions of visual privacy. The tightly 
carved latticework obstructs one’s view into the main street, only allowing women to see 
the public sphere in broken fragments. There is no flexibility in the mashrabiya form to 
allow for the women of the home to make themselves visible through the latticework. 
The projected wooden screens remain fixed and nonadjustable, making the mashrabiya a 
securely private way for women to view the public—albeit obstructed—without being seen.

However, the flexibility of the nearby double-hung windows suggests a subtle 
visibility of women in the Boulaq Rab’ that challenges visual privacy norms followed in 
the nineteenth century. The double-hung windows begin appearing on the first floor of 
residential space, enclosed by either wooden shutters or moveable blinds (c. 1867-1899; 
figure 1) and are oriented toward the main street. The flexibility of the double-hung 
windows allowed women to be subtly visible to a male-dominated public when 
occupying the home. Moreover, double-hung windows afforded women an unobstructed 
view into the public that is not seen in contemporaneous courtyard homes.

While neither interior photographs nor archival records currently exist of Une Rue 
à Boulac, Ibrahim and Zakari’s research on Mamluk and Ottoman riba’ show that the 
internal layout has maintained the same organization for centuries.60 If we are to follow 
the Ottoman and Mamluk layouts of the rab’, this places the kitchen of Une Rue à

60 Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 57; and Zakaria, “Le Rab’ de Tabbana,” 276-278.
Boulaq at the outer wall and as containing the hung-windows. The kitchen needs windows for ventilation and air circulation to maintain appropriate moisture levels and release unwanted odors, so its position here makes historical and functional sense. According to Hisham Mortada, “the most important spaces to protect from the sight of the guests’ area are the kitchen and living room. Females usually spend most of their time in these spaces.” Thus, it is possible that the hung-windows of the Boulaq Rab’ are located in the kitchen—the main domain of women—where the possibility of their visibility to the public is increased. Nevertheless, in the absence of additional evidence regarding the materials and construction techniques used in the Boulaq Rab’, it remains unclear from which room the double-hung window originates.

However, it is important to note that while the double-hung window afforded women greater visibility from within the home, women gained no economic or social power through its inclusion. Women’s visibility from within the home did not integrate them into society or change societal norms to encourage women to enter public life. Instead, the double-hung windows suggest that visual privacy relaxed to a small extent during the late nineteenth century in Cairo.

While the double-hung window promoted a greater visibility of women within the home, the rooftop balcony further maintains visual privacy in line with nineteenth-century social codes of privacy. Although it is unknown what type of balcony the Boulaq Rab’ displays, it is likely that the balcony is situated on the roof in accordance with contemporaneous multi-unit architecture that contain a roof-top balcony. A typical

61 Mortada, Traditional Islamic Principles of the Built Environment, 105.
rooftop balcony in Cairene multi-unit residential architecture is an elevated platform or platform-like structure that sits atop the building and is accessible by a door stemming from the interior. They can vary in size, shape, and design, but rooftop balconies are often enclosed by walls or decorative screens to ensure privacy. Further, the vertical height ensured privacy. Like fenestration, balconies link women from the private sphere to the public sphere. Socially, the balcony permitted women the ability to voyeuristically watch over a predominantly male public while at the same time on display and under the gaze of the same public.

The Boulaq Rab’ reveals how the home endured as the main space where social codes enforced conventional gender divisions during the late nineteenth century. Elements like fenestration and balconies show how architectural choices enforced social roles in the home. Women were publicly visible through the double-hung windows while at home during the day and performing domestic duties in the rab’. Yet they were also inhibited from public view through the mashrabiya and roof-top balconies. In the ensuing twentieth century, women’s public access will emerge as a dominant issue in the press. The following section will assess Cairene middle-class multi-unit residential architecture during the first half of the twentieth century, focusing on how architects reworked windows and balconies that align with women’s growing public visibility.

Collective Housing Units (1900-1955)

This section will first illustrate the relationship of women and the home through the fictionized novel Palace Walk (1956) by author Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006).

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64 Ibid.
Novels produced by Cairene writers provide one way to understand how women occupied domestic space and interacted with architectural elements in daily life. Because accounts of middle-class women are sparse, this novel is used because it centralizes how nineteenth-century social codes and fenestration impacted women and their access to the public sphere.

Although this thesis centers women’s writings in the second chapter, I use Mahfouz’s novel—a male voice—primarily because he grew up in Cairo where his family practiced nineteenth-century social customs that observed gender segregation and a patriarchal family structure. Born in 1911, to a merchant father, author Mahfouz lived through colonization as a young boy and published *Palace Walk* the year Nasser ascended office. This novel fictionalizes his experiences and, in Mahfouz’s words, “depicts the conflict between the old values and the new political and intellectual trends in modern Egypt...In this work, I portray the struggle between old and new and their identifications with new norms and modern society.”

*Palace Walk*, begins in 1917 pre-revolution Cairo when Egypt remained under British control, and women had not yet publicly participated in the 1919 political protests. The novel follows the middle-class Al-Jawad family who live in Islamic Cairo. The family is led by its patriarch, Al-Sayyid Ahman Abdul Gawwad al-Jawad, whose status as a storeowner dictates that the family must follow nineteenth-century social customs of gender segregation dictating that women remain in the home away from

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visible public view. In *Palace Walk*, we see how nineteenth-century notions of visual privacy are observed in one twentieth-century home.

To emphasize the strict social practices taking place in the Cairene middle-class home, Mahfouz contrasts the experiences of two generations of women and one man. First, sixteen-year old Aisha, the youngest daughter, uses windows to gain access to the public. Readers are first introduced to Aisha as she looks out a screened window and sees a young police officer. Realizing that her public view is impacted by the window’s screen, Aisha moves to a window that does not obstruct her view and “turn[s] the knob and open[s] the two panels a crack” before “she close[s] the window, fastening it nervously as though hiding evidence of a bloody crime.”

As a young woman, Aisha must remain away from public view while in the home. Her decision to partially open a window, as if to invite the male public to gaze upon her, breaks nineteenth-century social codes of visual privacy, which is why she equates the guilt she feels in opening the window to that “of a bloody crime.” In this instance, Aisha illustrates both how women used windows to gain access to the public and the weight that privacy still carried in the home during the early twentieth century.

Aisha continues to open windows throughout *Palace Walk* to gain access to the public sphere. Months later as she is dusting and shaking the curtains, Aisha “deliberately leave[s] the window halfway open so she could be seen” and eventually she fully “open[s] the two panels of the window and [stands] there.” Aisha’s persistent use of windows as a gateway to the public sphere highlights her longing for public access and

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 28-29.
shows that she is beginning to challenge a social code that keeps her in the home. Windows give her access to the public—a sphere she is denied access to under current social codes.

Aisha’s mother and the matriarch of the al-Jawad family, Amina, illustrates how an older generation of women utilized fenestration to gain public access, and the weight privacy carried in the twentieth-century home. Because of her strict adherence to nineteenth-century social codes, Amina never opens windows in the way Aisha does—she remains only gazing out of them throughout the novel. In one instance, Amina walks over to a screened balcony and “[stands] there, turning her face right and left while she [peeks] through the tiny, round openings of the latticework panels that [protect] her from being seen from the street.”\textsuperscript{70} Mahfouz emphasizes Amina’s restrictive gaze while looking out into the public from behind the screened balcony. Moreover, Mahfouz highlights the visual privacy the screens afford Amina, underscoring that the middle class maintained a strict adherence to social codes in the twentieth-century home.

Markedly different from Aisha’s and Amina’s use of windows is how her brother, Yasin, the oldest son of the al-Jawad family, uses windows to openly and sexually gaze upon women. In \textit{Palace Walk}, Yasin is introduced to readers as he aimlessly meanders around Cairo before settling in a local coffee shop opposite of a private home. From the start, Yasin is introduced occupying the public sphere rather than the domestic sphere. Social codes restrict Aisha and Amina from occupying the public, but Yasin has no such restrictions. At the coffee shop, Yasin directs his gaze upon a young female troupe dancer whom he expects to see by way of her window. As he sits there, he becomes lost in his

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 5.
thoughts and “dreams of naked women” before admitting that “such visions frequently played on the stage of his imagination when he was looking at a woman.” When compared to Aisha and Amina, Yasin carelessly occupies public space, using windows to exploit women through his wandering gaze. Yasin’s gaze is sexual, aggressive, and unrestricted. In this way, while unobstructed windows afford women more access to the public sphere, such visibility also puts them on display to a predominantly male public. Yasin’s experience further highlights how windows—while liberating in many ways—invite a male gaze.

Aisha, Amina, and Yasin give us insight into how middle-class men and women occupied both the home and public space during the early twentieth century in Cairo. Multi-unit residential architecture built from 1900-1955 employed a façade balcony and screened windows amid this social climate where women continued to remain at home where fenestration and balconies acted as one way to experience public life.

Modernist buildings built during the twentieth century signaled a break from traditional architectural forms and symbolized progress, technological advancement, and a forward-looking vision for Egypt's future. They further reflected the aspirations of a modern nation embracing contemporary ideals during a tumultuous period in Egyptian history when British troops maintained occupation in Egypt until the 1950s, despite Egypt achieving independence in 1922.

From 1900-1955, Cairene residential architecture began to regularly employ a façade balcony in line with European aesthetics. This period captures the transformations in architecture before Nasser takes office as president in 1956. The selection of buildings

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71 Ibid., 79.
included in the following discussion shows a consistent architectural pattern in multi-unit middle-class residential structures that adopt a façade balcony with accompanying screened windows. Façade balconies entered Egypt as a design element introduced by Western and colonial architecture. The façade balconies did not align with traditional Arab architecture that places balconies inward towards a courtyard or on the roof. In this way, the façade balconies facilitated women’s visibility. However, protecting the visual privacy of women in the home remained a central concern, and architecture safeguarded this by employing screened windows behind the balconies.

One early building employing a façade balcony with accompanying screened windows is a residential structure located in Heliopolis (figure 2), a suburb East of Cairo, only known as Residential Building #1 (1911; figure 5). It contains two floors of residential space with a spacious covered balcony on each floor. A single, large balcony is accessible from every room of the apartment and is oriented towards the main street. In this way, the balcony heightens women’s public visibility compared to the Boulaq Rab’ which employs a roof-top balcony. However, three wooden screened windows sit behind Residential Building’s balcony that block public view into the home, as well as one’s personal view from inside the home. This suggests that the spacious balcony is only employed if visual privacy is secured by screened windows. Through this construction, visual privacy remains an important social code of middle-class families–especially women–to honor in the early twentieth-century home; yet, the façade balcony indicates a more relaxed view of visual privacy.

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Residential housing in the following three decades will not diverge from the façade balcony and screened window combination until the housing in Nasr City shows a dramatic shift in its use of fenestration. After Egypt achieved independence in 1922, residential collective housing units continued to demonstrate a consistent architectural pattern that utilizes a façade balcony and screened windows although structures adopted different styles of the modernist aesthetic.

For example, the Shawarby (1925; figure 6) sits along a main street in downtown Cairo (figure 2). The Shawarby is done in an Art Deco and Beaux-Arts style, evident in its decorative details and appliques. The building allocated the first floor for office and commercial space, while the upper apartments were specifically designated for residential purposes. A close-up photograph of the exterior facade shows that a single, small balcony emerges from each residential unit (1925; figure 6a). Behind each balcony, a tall, screened window blocks the public’s view into the home. A second structure known as Residential Building #2 (1931; figure 7), employs several façade balconies that face the main street. Each apartment unit includes one spacious rectangular balcony and one small circular balcony. Regardless of the size, behind each balcony sits three wooden screen windows. Additionally, the Halim Dos Bey Building (1937; figure 8) includes one spacious rectangular balcony and one smaller circular balcony. A close-up photograph of the façade shows the large wooden screen windows consistently included behind each balcony space (1937; figure 8a). Lastly, the Fayza Hanem Owais Building (1949; figure 9), located in Heliopolis, alters the balcony in its construction, employing a circular balcony that wraps around the street-facing north and west walls. The balcony is spacious—around eight feet deep—and because of its circular nature, all units have access
to one encompassing balcony. However, the wooden screened window again appears behind the balcony.

Although few records of internal layouts and organizations exist of modernist structures built during the twentieth century, records of the Mahallawy Building’s (1949; figure 10) interior organization survive and show a transition in how local architects negotiated privacy within the home. In 1949, just before Egypt's declaration as a Socialist Democracy in 1952, Egyptian architect Tawfiq Abdel Gawad designed the Mahallawy Building, which featured an open-floor plan. Notably, residents had the freedom to decide the desired level of visual openness within the internal space. The architect included foldable partition walls in each unit, allowing occupants to separate the living and sitting rooms of the apartment or completely remove them to create a single open-floor space. Such a decision speaks to the ideas around visual privacy in the late 1940s, suggesting that internal space became less fixed when compared to the strict interior spatial segregation of the courtyard homes and *ribi’* of previous generations.

In all of the aforementioned modernist structures, visual privacy is secured by a screened window behind each façade balcony regardless of its size. Therefore, the façade balcony is only employed when privacy is safeguarded by the screened windows. This pattern of consistency suggests that under the sociopolitical climate of Cairo during the first half of the twentieth century, visual privacy remained enforced through screened windows, but the persistent use of façade balconies shows a shift in a relaxed view of visual privacy in middle-class residential architecture that aligns with women’s growing public role.

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It is in the architecture from the first half of the twentieth century we see how architect Sayed Karim’s choices for Nasr City’s Housing Model 22 may reflect a larger consideration of women’s growing public visibility. By 1952, the new socialist government erected over fifteen thousand public housing units. The following section will use one housing unit in Nasr City to investigate the structural changes employed in a new “revolutionary” city at a time of Egyptian political, social, and economic transition. It is in this space that we see a shift in how fenestration and balconies broke free from architecture of previous decades.

The Modern Apartment in Nasr City (1956-1960)

This section will attempt to capture the dynamism of modern domestic space under Nasser, pointing out its break from prior gendered nineteenth and twentieth-century architectural elements. I begin this study in 1956 when Nasser assumed the presidency and conclude it in 1960 when the construction of Nasr City’s collective housing units came to an end. Privacy remained a value to honor in the Cairene middle-class home during the 1950s, but because the International Style of Modern Architecture rejected traditional architectural elements like the mashrabiya and screened windows, privacy looked different in the modern apartment. I suggest that while Nasr City embraced the International Style which rejected ornamentation, Nasr City’s elimination of the screened window also reflects a regime that valued women’s public visibility. Egyptian architect Sayed Karim reworked the windows and balconies in the collective housing units of Nasr City where the architecture subtly heightened women’s access to the public sphere.

alongside her growing and unprecedented participation in public life. In the following section, I will assess Housing Model 22 against the collective housing units of previous centuries.

President Nasser conceived, designed, and developed Nasr City under a modernist vision that transmitted a revolutionary message in line with his socialist regime. Positioned east of the downtown Cairo and south of Heliopolis on military-owned land (figure 2), Nasser intended for the city to serve as the new capital of Egypt—although this never happened—and to symbolically represent a thriving postcolonial and industrialized nation that legitimized his regime. Politically, the project served as a nation-building tool, visible evidence of a legitimate regime, and to create loyalty between the regime and its citizens. Socially, the housing units reflected Nasser’s socialist philosophy and placed Egypt on the same playing field as other prosperous countries. Nasr City’s construction marks a shift in how architects and political regimes negotiated privacy in Cairene residential architecture.

The history of Nasr City’s design shows that Nasser intended for the city to follow socialist planning elements. Karim initially proposed residential plans for Nasr City that Nasser rejected as “conflicting with the ideals of Socialism” (1953; figure 11). At some point in 1956, an informal meeting between Karim and Vice President Anwar Sadat (1918–1981) occurred where Sadat suggested that Karim revise the design to better suit Nasser’s modern socialist vision. Karim adjusted the plans and when presented to Nasser, he enacted a presidential order for Nasr City’s construction. The new set of

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75 Mohamed Elshahed, “Revolutionary Modernism?,” 386-387.
76 Ibid., 387.
plans proposed by Karim (1950s; figure 12) fit more with Nasser’s socialist vision by incorporating government offices, a stadium, and a convention center rather than a singular residential expansion project originally proposed in Karim’s 1953 plans. These accommodations made domestic life more community centered and reflected socialist principles of human welfare and social justice.

Although the International Style originated most prominently in Europe and North America, Nasser did not find such origins problematic, despite his usual anti-Western rhetoric. Egypt was in a vulnerable position to regain a national identity after former colonization impacted how citizens saw themselves. Nasser was adamant on distancing Egypt from its colonial past to secure a stable national identity and Modern Architecture was the tool that could assist in this vision.

Nasser’s Socialist policies were part of a larger conversation across the world. At the end of World War II, governments prioritized social welfare in their national policies to alleviate social, financial, and global anxieties caused by the war. Architects all over the world saw a place for themselves in helping. Specifically, modern architects responded by creating experimental utopian housing models that took on a Socialist tone in their accommodations and design. Nasser conceived Nasr City under this architectural environment.

Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation in Marseilles, France (1952; figure 13) was one such utopian model that sought to provide in-house facilities like a nursery, health center, recreational space, and fitness center. Le Corbusier designed

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the city under a vision of urban renewal to uplift the community through housing. Unité d’Habitation (1952) employed his “Towers in the Park Model,” promoting high-rise housing complexes surrounded by green spaces, reducing vehicular and pedestrian congestion, and providing low-cost housing for the urban population.\textsuperscript{80} Karim based Nasr City’s design on the “Towers in the Park Model,” which aimed to utilize vertical space to accommodate Cairo’s growing population and address the challenges posed by erratic vehicular traffic.

In fact, Nasr City mirrored its design to one of Le Corbusier’s unrealized utopian design projects: Ville Radieuse (1924; figure 14). Similar to Unité d’Habitation (1952), Le Corbusier designed Ville Radieuse (1924) with accessible green space, lifestyle buildings, a grid pattern street system, and vertical collective housing units. Nasr City (1960; figure 15) adopts the Ville Radieuse (1924) plan closely in its verticality, building typologies, and symmetry. Overall, the Nasr City project took a European Modernist style popular throughout the world by the mid-twentieth century.

Modern architecture arose with the development of the architectural profession in Egypt during the twentieth century. Karim was among the first batch of Egyptian students to receive a European architectural education that he brought back to Egypt.\textsuperscript{81} Although not popular in the sense of his Western architect counterparts like Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius, Karim was known as an Egyptian Modernist to a small international audience alongside other Egyptian architects like Hassan Fathy (1900—1989) and Ramses Wissa Wassef (1911–1974). While Fathy and Wissa Wassef focused


\textsuperscript{81} Ahmad Hamid, \textit{Hassan Fathy and Continuity in Islamic Architecture: The Birth of a New Modern} (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 31.
on vernacular architecture and incorporating traditional Islamic elements into modernist structures, Karim stood in contrast as a modernist who embraced reinforced concrete, followed European design principles, and distanced himself from traditional Islamic ornamentation. In this way, Karim was in line with other Euro-American architects of his time but in contrast to local Egyptian architects. His tendency to adopt the Euro-American form of modernism was more in line with Nasser’s vision of modernity.

One housing model located in Nasr City, known as Housing Model 22 (1959; figure 16) serves as a vehicle to discuss Nasser, Egyptian Modernism, and evolving notions of female privacy within the modern apartment. Most prominently, the windows and balconies of Housing Model 22 are markedly different from residential architecture of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, suggesting a transition away from notions of privacy.

Housing Model 22 is representative of the style of collective housing Karim designed in Nasr City (figures 17 and 18). The structure contains six single-level apartments—two on each floor—with each unit consisting of two bedrooms, one sitting room, one living room, one dining room, one kitchen, and one bathroom. The ground floor is raised on *pilotis* with an entrance door that leads directly to the main staircase and “tight designed hallways” that allows access to the individual apartments. Because of the lifted ground floor, apartments begin on the second floor. Each apartment consists of two spacious rectangular balconies and a window in every room. The core of the building is made up of the bathroom and kitchen. Overall, Housing Model 22 embodies formal

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83 Elshahed, *Cairo Since 1900*, 239-258.
84 Ibid., 357.
elements of the International Style in its use of rectilinear forms, *pilotes*, open-floor plan, and overall lack of traditional references or ornamentation.

Housing Model 22’s windows position women as more visible to the public. Just as windows took on an important role in the public visibility of women during previous centuries, Housing Model 22 does the same by employing a window in every room. Previous models employed only a few windows, making a window in every room a major shift in women’s visual privacy. The typologies of the windows are unknown, but available images suggest a combination of single-hung, double-hung, and sliding windows in various sizes (1959; figure 16). The windows are without shutters and do not possess any elements that obstruct one’s view when looking out into the public from within the home. Additionally, their orientation faces towards the main street and front and back gardens. The frequency, size, and orientation of the windows allowed the public to see women more regularly and fully, and they permitted women unobstructed visual access into the public. By expanding women’s public visibility through multiple windows, the modern apartment relaxed strict codes of privacy that previous decades of middle-class housing employed.

The windows deployed in every room of Housing Model 22 also displays women to the public in a different manner from previous residential architecture. Because a window is employed in each room, women were visibly shown performing both domestic roles and leisurely activities from within the home. The Boulaq *Rab’* contained only one single-hung window, limiting the type of activity the public viewed women performing. The multiple hung windows in Housing Model 22 allowed for a higher chance of the public seeing women performing activities outside of domestic work. In this way, the
public gained a more nuanced understanding of women in the home that was not
restricted exclusively to housework and childcare.

Moreover, Housing Model 22 employs two street-facing balconies off the kitchen
and living room, disrupting previous notions of female privacy in the home (1959; figure
16). Each unit contains two spacious rectangular balconies which allowed the public to
continue seeing women partaking in work outside of their domestic and childcare
responsibilities such as hobbies, exercise, and general leisure. Previous Modernist
structures built during the 1900s-1950s employed screened windows behind balcony
space (figures 5, 6, and 7). No such windows existed in Housing Model 22 which
afforded women unrestricted public view while occupying balcony space. Thus, women’s
access to multiple outdoor balconies that are easily accessible from the home challenged
the former social codes that encouraged women to remain distant from the public while
within the home.

The dual façade balconies also allowed women to observe and participate in
political activities from afar. Nasr City, as a future capital, intended to serve as a major
center full of political activity. This meant that residents anticipated protests, public
speeches, and parades throughout the city. For example, to celebrate the construction of
Nasr City, a government parade took place in 1960 (figure 15). From their dual balconies,
women had the opportunity to distantly observe political life.

Thus in the changes that we see in the façade balconies and windows, Housing
Model 22 suggests modern space in Nasr City departed in how it understood female
privacy from late nineteenth and early twentieth-century middle-class collective housing
units. The Boulaq Rab’, the modernist structures from the 1900s-1950s, and Housing
Model 22 negotiate notions of privacy in different ways that reflect gendered
relationships of their respective time periods. Thus, architectural form takes on a sociopolitical meaning that aligns with the growing role of Egyptian women integrating into public space after the 1919 Revolution.
CHAPTER 2

NASSER’S CONTRADICTORY MODERNISM (1956-1970)

Chapter two explores the Egyptian Press during the period 1956-1970, investigating the content of women’s writings and the advertisements and imagery of modernist architecture appearing alongside them during Nasser’s rule and censorship of the press. I first focus on women’s writings arguing for women’s entrance into the public workforce materializing in popular Egyptian publications to show how women fought for a public presence that afforded them financial and social power. I then shift to an analysis of advertisements and magazine covers appearing alongside such writings that depict the modern home in relation to women and women’s relationship to modernity. These advertisements served as a vehicle for the construction of gendered identities in the period following Nasser’s 1956 entrance into office. By positioning women’s writings and advertisements together, an inconsistency emerges in Nasser’s reputedly progressive regime, whereby women remain in a domestic role in line with global ideas of modernity.
The Egyptian Press (1956-1970)

While Housing Model 22 suggested a heightened public visibility of women through fenestration and balconies and a new constitution in 1956 afforded women an opportunity to work publicly alongside men, a patriarchal familial structure that dictated women remain at home persisted under Nasser’s rule. Therefore, women continued to remain away from the public sphere and in the home resuming domestic and childcare responsibilities in Housing Model 22. While at home, educated and financially secure upper-class women engaged in feminist thought by reading and writing for Egyptian publications censored and controlled by Nasser’s government. This section will investigate the women’s writings appearing in Egyptian publications that spoke to women’s public labor and argued for women's integration into the public sphere. I argue that while Housing Model 22 rendered women more publicly visible through windows and balconies, Nasser was not overly invested in pursuing gender equality. Rather, he implemented these changes to boost Egypt’s new industrialized economy and align Egypt with a global idea of modernity.

Cairene women gradually entered the public as activists after the 1919 Revolution, but they voiced their political and social opinions in women’s journals and publications since 1892. In November 1892, the monthly women’s journal *al-Fatah*, or *The Young Woman*, appeared in Alexandria, Egypt, as the first Arab women’s periodical that became the impetus for the Egyptian women’s press that ensued in the upcoming decades.\(^8^5\) *Al-Fatah’s* readership mostly consisted of young upper-class Arab women

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\(^{85}\) Baron, *The Women’s Awakening in Egypt*, 14.
who were literate at a time when women’s literacy rates were extremely low.\textsuperscript{86} Hind Nawfal, a middle-class Lebanese Christian woman from Alexandria whose parents worked as newspaper writers, founded \textit{al-Fatah} in 1892 while British troops occupied Egypt. Inspired by international women’s journals that published literary, household, and political content for and by women, Nawful’s magazine followed suit by covering issues specific to Egyptian women such as marriage, divorce, veiling, seclusion, and public labor.\textsuperscript{87} The women’s journals and content appearing in Egyptian publications moving forward would continue to push for women to enter public life although it remained taboo for women to write for publications.

At a time before women entered the public as political activists, women risked their family name and honor when writing for both women’s publications and general magazines. Nawfal recognized that writing under current Arab social customs encouraged women not to pursue writing. To inspire women to contribute to publications, Nawfal reassured readers in an 1892 issue of \textit{al-Fatah} that women would not violate their modesty when writing for a women’s journal. Nawful writes, “do not imagine that a woman who writes in a journal is compromising her modesty or violating her purity and good behavior.”\textsuperscript{88} In this way, Nawful recognized the stringent social codes that women wrote under during the late eighteenth century and persisted into the twentieth century.

By 1919, thirty women’s journals appeared throughout Egypt with many based in Cairo.\textsuperscript{89} This aligns with the genre of women’s journals and magazines which globally


\textsuperscript{88} Hind Nawful, “\textit{Idah wa-Iltimas wa-Istismah},” \textit{al-Fatah} 1, no. 1 (1892): 3.

\textsuperscript{89} Baron, \textit{The Women’s Awakening in Egypt}, 1.
grew as a platform for women to discuss various issues during the twentieth century. The United States, France, South Africa, China, and India all had their respective women’s journals and publications that circulated among middle and upper-class women who were literate and gradually becoming college educated. Content varied depending on the country and their political, social, and economic circumstances, but these publications overwhelmingly provided a forum for women to voice their opinions on housekeeping, social changes, and political events. In Egypt, the press became particularly important in 1922 when it offered an important role in serving both women and a newly independent nation.

The Egyptian press grew after 1922 as journals and newspapers became a modern way to communicate with the masses. For women in particular, female literacy rates grew from schooling which increased female readership. Women also established formal women’s organizations throughout the 1920s-1940s, but the women’s journals are where women reached a wider audience of both men and women of the middle and upper classes. Under Nasser, editorials centered on the home and female public labor, discussing the barriers women faced when participating in the workforce.

The women’s writings appearing in the press during the Nasser years have not been adequately considered by scholars. Scholarship has largely focused on the development of the women’s press from 1890-1930, such as Margot Badran and Beth

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92 Baron, The Women’s Awakening in Egypt, 2.
93 Ibid.
Baron, who investigate the women’s press roots and its role in leading women to publicly protest in 1919. To this day, Laura Bier’s research remains one of the only focused studies investigating women’s writings during the Nasser years. In her study, Bier calls attention to the exclusion of women’s voices in Nasser era studies, suggesting that scholars avoid women’s writings of this period because they are censored and propagandistic. However, Nasser’s censorship of the press is precisely why we should investigate the editorials and advertisements appearing in it.

Women writers continued to engage in political and social discourse under Nasser’s government surveillance. It is true that their voice reflects a nationalistic tone in line with Nasserian ideology, but the ideas promoted are nonetheless important and a worthwhile area of study that speaks to women’s growing public visibility. While we must acknowledge the control Nasser held over the press and be careful how we read the nationalist content appearing in the media at this time, deeming women’s writings as only government propaganda devalues their worth and societal impact. Thus, Nasser’s censorship of women’s writings allows us to better understand how his government mediated gendered conversations to the Egyptian public and how their writings impacted the development of Housing Model 22. Further, Nasser’s tight control of the press gives the advertisements more weight as a vehicle for the construction of gendered behaviors in a modern home.

96 Bier, Revolutionary Womanhood, 19.
From the start of his presidency, Nasser practiced extreme censorship over the press. Shortly after he came to power in 1956, he abolished all independent political organizations and closed all media that sided with the opposition. By 1960, he nationalized the press, placing all content under government censorship and eliminating the private sector. Nasser placed Egypt’s five publication houses under the control of the National Union and the Arab Socialist Union, who he instructed to censor all cultural output in favor of his regime.97 Women’s journals, which existed in Egypt since 1890, fell under this control.98 Many ceased publication prior to Nasser’s presidency, but the threat of censorship further encouraged women’s publications to fold.99 By 1956, only two women’s journals remained active and by 1957, only one women’s journal existed.

The case of Doria Shafiq illustrates the extent of Nasser’s censorship practices and the threat women’s publications and their voices posed to his administration. Doria Shafiq (1908–1975) founded the Cairo-based and Arabic-language women’s journal *Bint al-Nil*, or *Daughter of the Nile*, in 1945. She was an upper-class, French-educated Egyptian woman who was heavily involved in the women’s liberation movement in Egypt throughout the 1940s. *Bint al-Nil’s* readers consisted of a new middle-class generation of young women less confined to nineteenth-century social customs and an older upper-class generation of French-educated women who connected with Shaqfiq’s background.100 *Bint al-Nil’s* early content from 1945-1948 focused on domesticity, fashion, and home management before shifting to issues of education reform and

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97 Ibid., 18.
eradicating illiteracy in 1949.\textsuperscript{101} Shafiq used the pages of \textit{Bint–al-Nil} to overtly criticize Nasser which would be the publication’s downfall.

Two years after Nasser entered office, Shafiq led a hunger strike in 1957 at the Indian Embassy where she publicly referred to Nasser as an authoritarian leader. A 1957 issue of \textit{Bint al-Nil} reprinted Shafiq’s “Hunger Strike Declaration” where she declared that “unto death [I] protest the two enemies of my freedom–Israel who is occupying Egyptian land; and the present authoritarian regime who is leading the country into bankruptcy and chaos.”\textsuperscript{102} Further condemning Nasser, Shafiq expressed that she participated in the strike because “as an Egyptian it is my duty to protest and to ask the ruler of Egypt where he is leading us. It is the moment. If we don’t do something now, we will never escape from under Nasser.”\textsuperscript{103} Shafiq’s overt criticism of Nasser led to him banishing \textit{Bint al-Nil} from future publication, placing Shafiq under house arrest, and prohibiting her name from appearing in the media.\textsuperscript{104} Her isolation in house arrest effectively ended her journalistic and activist career. By silencing Shafiq, one of the most visible and prominent women’s rights activists of the period, she served as an example of what would happen to women writers if they challenged Nasser’s government too publicly and overtly.

Moving forward, women evaded censorship by focusing on women’s right to enter the public workforce which aligned with both their cause and Nasser’s cause. For women writers, private domestic work afforded women no cultural or social power compared to public labor which was more advantageous in socially equalizing men and

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} As quoted in Nelson, \textit{Doria Shafik}, 275.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 138.
women. For Nasser, Egypt’s economy benefitted if women worked. Economic success reflected upon Nasser and cemented his role, both locally and internationally, as a successful leader.

To facilitate and mobilize women into the workforce, Nasser passed a series of labor laws between 1958-1959 that encouraged women’s employment. This legislation removed gender as a basis of discrimination for female wages and hiring.\textsuperscript{105} By 1958, women began entering the workforce as teachers, textile workers, and clerical workers in the public sector.\textsuperscript{106} By moving into a public workforce, public space rendered women more visible that we see reflected in the architecture of Housing Model 22.

Although women’s writings and Nasr City’s architecture promoted women’s public visibility, the Arab familial model remained one barrier to integrating women into the workforce because of its patriarchal structure. When discussing women’s public labor, both women and Nasser avoided directly criticizing the patriarchal familial model. Selma Botman and Mervat Hatem have both argued that while under Nasser the public sphere opened up in terms of employment, the state’s “refusal to alter patriarchal relations in the private realm of the family remained a barrier to women’s participation.”\textsuperscript{107} Women working outside of the home disrupted the patriarchal familial model which, for decades, served to keep men in financial power.\textsuperscript{108} Neither Nasser nor women writers could directly challenge the family model, because it risked alienating a

\textsuperscript{105} United Arab Republic, \textit{Al-Mar’a fi al-Jumhuriyya al-’Arabiyya al-Muttahida} (Cairo: State University Services, 1967), 35.
\textsuperscript{106} Bier, \textit{Revolutionary Womanhood}, 63-67.
\textsuperscript{108} Despite the government’s efforts to increase female employment, women’s participation in the workforce remained low during the 1960s. See Bier, \textit{Revolutionary Womanhood}, 61.
large portion of supporters. Thus, a large majority of women continued to remain at home during the day.

In the writings of Sa’id Na’matullah and Amina S’aid, we see how two women navigated avoiding the direct criticism of Nasser and the patriarchal family model by framing women’s public labor as advantageous to the nation and family. While their writing appeared across multiple publications, two popular Egyptian publications, Akhir Sa’a and Hawaa’, reached a large portion of a middle-class Cairene audience.

Akhir Sa’a (1924–present), or The Last Hour, is an Arabic-language weekly Cairene magazine founded by Egyptian political writer and journalist Mohamed El Tabii. Although not a women’s journal, Akhir Sa’a actively published women writers throughout Nasser’s presidency and became a forum to promote women’s issues, local, and international news. Akhir Sa’a directed their content to middle and upper-class men and women and primarily existed as a “photo magazine” similar to the United States publication Time (1923-present). As a long-standing publication, Akhir Sa’a had legitimacy and a consistent multi-generational readership. We see how Sa’id Na’matullah navigated discussing labor amid an authoritarian government and a culture that valued women in the home in one editorial example from Akhir Sa’a.

In a November 1963 issue of Akhir Sa’a, journalist Sa’id Na’matullah avoids directly calling attention to Nasser or the patriarchal familial model in an editorial on women’s public labor. Little is known about Na’matullah’s life, but her frequent contributions to Akhir Sa’a suggests she held a prominent social standing that allowed her to pursue writing without risking her social and familial reputation. Notably, the

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women writers of this period tended to come from upper-class backgrounds that consisted of a French education and a higher social status that gave them authority, credibility, and financial security that lower social classes could not match. Na’amatullah argues that Egyptian women are “imprisoned in the walls of her home and restricted from participating with man in his struggles and the building of his nation.” Na’amatullah associates the home with female restriction and women’s public labor with nation-building. Women are “imprisoned” in the home because of the family structure that dictates she be there—although Na’amatullah cannot say this. Instead, she emphasizes women’s seclusion as disadvantageous to the nation. Na’amatullah’s promotion of women’s public visibility is directly reflected in Housing Model 22.

Housing Model 22 dissolved the architectural barriers that kept women to the home. Yet, the public visibility women gained through Housing Model 22 did little to advance economic, political, or social power. Therefore, women writers continued to push for women to enter the public workforce although their public visibility increased in the domestic sphere. Amina Sa’id continued discourse on women’s public labor in the pages of Hawaa’.

Founded by journalist Amina Sa’id (1914–1995), Hawaa’ was the only operating women’s publication under the Nasser regime after Nasser banned Bint al-Nil. Born in Cairo, Sa’id joined the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1928—the first Egyptian feminist organization founded five years earlier—at the age of fourteen before attending Cairo University in 1931 where she obtained a degree in English Literature and joined several

110 Baron, The Women’s Awakening, 156.
magazines as a contributing editor thereafter. She served as the editor-in-chief of *Hawaa* which targeted women of all classes but largely found an audience in a new generation of university educated middle-class women and upper-class men. A 1980 survey done by the American University in Cairo found that around 40% of readers were men and the remaining 60% were women. During its inception, Sa’id stated that the content focused on women’s issues but wished to appeal to male readers who have traditionally been “very dominant and domineering.” To satisfy a male and female audience, both men and women wrote editorials. In *Hawaa*, Sa’id continued arguing for women’s public labor by avoiding criticizing Nasser and the patriarchal familial model.

In a March 1963 editorial, Sa’id declared women’s public labor as beneficial to both family and the nation. Sa’id writes:

> The most prominent difference between a strong and a weak country, an advanced country and a backward country, is the struggle of women in the public arena and her ability to share financially in her life and the life of those around her... We work for the sake of lessening the burdens on our husbands or our sons, we work to provide for the people closest to us... more food, cleaner clothes, a more beautiful house, a better education.

In her commentary, Sa’id frames women’s labor as enhancing a family’s home life, easing the financial pressure away from the husband, and contributing to the country’s modernization efforts. Sa’id criticizes women’s restricted access to the public sphere but in a way that evades both censorship and criticism of the family model. Some readers wrote in to voice their concern over Sa’id’s disregard of the established family model that would be disrupted by women publicly working.

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115 As quoted in Ibid.

In a 1966 issue, one reader criticized Sa’id’s support of women working. The unnamed reader wrote into Sa’id’s *Hawaa’* advice column saying that by encouraging women to find employment, Sa’id made the home and all it stood for at risk of collapse.\(^{117}\) Sa’id responded that she believed in a woman’s choice to publicly work.\(^{118}\) However, the reader calls attention to the disruption of home life Sa’id encouraged, one that would remove a woman from her home during the day. The reader voices concern over the dissolution of the familial model that, for decades, has kept men in financial power. The reader’s comments show how ingrained the patriarchal familial model was in Egyptian society and the fear that women’s public labor posed to it.

Women writers became active agents of political commentary and claimed a new social power in Nasser’s state. Although women wrote under government censorship and a culture that greatly valued women in the home and away from the public sphere, they relayed the value of women’s public work in the press without diminishing women’s private domestic labor.

Housing Model 22 was in direct conversation with these social developments. In this way, women’s writings arguing for women’s public presence aligned with how the International Style of architecture—as employed in Housing Model 22—negotiated privacy through windows and balconies. Whereas the *rab‘* maintained a traditional housing design that utilized *mashrabiya*s and a rooftop balcony and the Modernist buildings during the first half of the twentieth century incorporated a façade balcony and screened windows, Housing Model 22 marked a shift in how architects negotiated visual privacy through windows and balconies.

\(^{117}\) Amina Sa’id, “*La Tabaqiyya fî al-Mabadi’*,” *Hawaa’,* June 18, 1966, 16-17.

\(^{118}\) Ibid.
It is in the advertisement featured alongside Sa’id Na’matullah and Amina S’ai’d’s writings that we see a contradiction in gendered messaging occurring in the state and commercial advertisements. While the Nasser administration approved women’s writings arguing for public access through participating in the workforce, advertisements took a different direction and encouraged women to remain in the modern home—one that mirrored Housing Model 22. In the following section, I will examine the visual qualities, formal elements, and social connotations of several advertisements that appeared in Akhir Sa’a and investigate how these advertisements reconfigured what a woman’s role looked like in the modern era under Nasser. Further, I will compare these advertisements to global trends of modernity that feature women in a domestic role alongside modernist architecture appearing in both Western and Egyptian publications.

The Modern Home in the Press

If Housing Model 22 in Nasr City reflected a transition in architectural form that heightened the public visibility of women from late nineteenth and twentieth-century architecture, the modern homes in the same International Style featured in advertisements sent an opposing message. The advertisements were at odds with women writers’ demands and the government’s efforts to increase female public labor but in line with global trends of modernity that upheld conventional gender roles. While the modern home in Nasr City appeared as a more progressive space for women to occupy, advertisements mediated by Nasser’s government suggest that a family model centering men continued to be pushed and delineated from the public visibility advanced in Housing Model 22’s architecture. By exploring how these selected advertisements in a
widely read Egyptian weekly publication presented women in relation to modern spaces, this section exposes the contradictory nature of Nasser’s governance.

The censorship of the press included the mediation of advertisements appearing in publications. Similar threats of imprisonment persisted if a photographer, illustrator, or company challenged Nasser’s leadership. Therefore, the images that made it into the press speak to what Nasser understood as compatible with his administration’s goals. To highlight the powerful reach of these images during the production of Housing Model 22, I have chosen a selection of advertisements appearing in *Akhir Sa’a* from 1959-1960.

I primarily reference Egyptian advertisements featured only in *Akhir Sa’a* for three main reasons. First, my evidence was partly necessitated by the limited accessibility of digital materials and available translations. *Akhir Sa’a* is a well-documented magazine although English translations are sparse. Second, *Akhir Sa’a* as an internationally and locally circulating publication reached the broadest audience of middle-class men and women of multiple generations interested in political, social, and economic news. Last, *Akhir Sa’a*’s frequency as a weekly publication makes it a consistent forum in the lives of Cairene peoples. The last two points of evidence suggests that *Akhir Sa’a* is representative of the advertisements appearing to middle-class readers of the Egyptian press right as Nasr City’s Housing Model 22 came to fruition.

During a post-colonial period when Egypt sought to project modernity in various forms, advertisements emerged as a means of conveying messages of modernity to both local and international audiences. While architecture in the International Style embodied one aspect of this endeavor in the physical environment, advertisements served as another channel for transmitting such messages. Magazines worldwide adopted similar depictions and messages that showcased women in domestic, subservient, and maternal roles. These
depictions predominantly drew from modern Western iconography and were transposed onto social landscapes like Egypt. Consequently, the advertisements featured in this section align with this global trend, depicting Nasser as just one among many leaders embracing modernity to achieve political, economic, and social progress. Hence, the gender norms portrayed in these Egyptian advertisements exhibit Western influences in both style and behavior.

Appearing in an April 27, 1960 issue of *Akhir Sa’a*, an illustrated advertisement for IDEAL Company, a government-owned company producing modern appliances, uses Mid-Century Modernism to define a woman’s role as domestic and contained within the home. The image (1960; figure 19) is presented on a half-spread and stands out amongst the other black-and-white advertisements in the issue with its cobalt blue color overtaking most of the image. The air conditioner, the product advertised, is singled out among the domestic space as a white square hovers over the unit to visibly highlight it. A domestic scene is presented with two children—one girl and one boy—happily playing with a train set as they sit in front of their father who is reclining in a modern chair with a smile on his face as he reads a newspaper. The mother approaches the familial scene from behind, walking towards the family while holding a serving tray with beverages. Her full body is projected forward and covered by modern clothing as a smile lights up her face. This image places a woman as a domestic provider in the modern space and communicates the gendered behavior expected within the modern home.

In this image (1960; figure 19), modern space is represented through only a few objects distinctly associated with Mid-Century Modernism. First, the chair, a modified version of Eero Saarinen’s Womb Chair, is a distinctly modern chair that encourages its
sitter to relax with its curving orientation. Next, the floor lamp positioned beside the father is also emblematic of the modern period with its classic drum shape. Additionally, the curtains adorning the windows adopt a repetitive modular pattern popular for the modernist aesthetic. Last, the planter in the lower-left corner is angular and reflective of many of the mid-century modern planters popular at the time. These few objects define the space as modern, thus positioning the figures within it as modern. The single window is also modern in its use of plastic blinds and mirrors Housing Model 22’s windows.

Similar to Housing Model 22 in Nasr City, the IDEAL advertisement suggests a heightened visibility of women within the home through its use of flexible and uncovered windows. Because the air conditioning unit is highlighted in white against the blue background, a single window is visually emphasized by the patterned curtains that frame and accentuate the unit. The window is likely located in the living room since the family is gathered in an open space. While the flexibility of the blinds suggests a greater visibility of women within the home that defies nineteenth-century notions of visual privacy, the domestic scene maintains that the modern woman’s place continues to be at home. In this way, the architectural form suggests greater public visibility, but the domestic scene is not in line with government efforts to increase female public labor outside of the home. Further, the scene continues to promote a patriarchal familial model centering male power.

The IDEAL advertisement dictates gendered behaviors in line with the “nuclear family” model. The idealized “nuclear family” unit became popular all over the world after World War II. This family model consisted of a middle-class heterosexual couple in

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the role of husband and wife accompanied by two children. The nuclear family model framed the husband’s role as the dominant patriarch and although new as a familial structure, it maintained the patriarchal elements of Arab family life that centered men as financial leaders of the home. In the nuclear family model, the main difference from the Arab familial structure was the number of children it promoted. Two children was quite a small number compared to the Arab family model that supported upwards of five children in a family. By visually relaying the nuclear family model, this image suggests to women occupying a modern home that her role is one in the home and away from the public sphere. Images of the modern home became a way to shape middle-class female identity, primarily visualizing the woman’s domestic responsibilities.

For instance, the woman in the IDEAL advertisement communicates her domestic role through her familial servitude. She carries beverages to her family while the father and children take leisure in their respective activities. This is a scene of happiness brought about by female servitude. To maintain this vision of happiness, the image suggests female servitude, as performed by the wife, must be present. The husband’s role as the head-of-household is literally supported by modernism in the modern chair. The chair allows him to relax and recline, suggesting he should be served. Overall, the image suggests what behavior is expected to be performed between genders in a modern home. So while modern space offers greater visibility of women from within the home through windows, the overall scene maintains an image of female servitude with Mid-Century Modernism as its backdrop and echoes the Arab familial structure reframed in a modern light.

\[120 \text{Barakat, “The Arab Family and the Challenge of Social Transformation,”} 28.\]
The nuclear family was in line with already established notions of the Arab family structure but in opposition to the visibility promoted in Housing Model 22, legislation, socialist ideology, and women’s writings. In both the nuclear and Arab family model, women maintained their status in the home where economic power could not be attained. Thus, the nuclear family model continued to keep women away from the public sphere which delineated from the public visibility advanced in Housing Model 22’s architecture, legislation, socialist ideology, and women’s writings promoting women’s public labor.

The IDEAL advertisement serves as an example reminiscent of Western magazine covers found in monthly publications like the United State’s Better Homes and Gardens during the same period. Better Homes and Gardens attracted a readership primarily consisting of middle and upper-class women who sought inspiration in various aspects of home life, including design, cooking, gardening, crafts, healthy living, decorating, and entertaining. The publication heavily relied on modernist iconography in its imagery, which conveyed normative gender roles prevalent during that era. Notably, two magazine covers from Better Homes and Gardens echo the advertisements seen in Egypt during the Nasser years.

One instance, featured in a 1949 issue (1949; figure 20), portrays a young woman kneeling before a man comfortably seated in a modern-style chair with a Mid-Century Modern home serving as the backdrop. The woman wears a pleated dress and hairstyle characteristic of the 1940s, emphasizing her embodiment of modern womanhood. Although not necessarily in a subservient position, the imagery implies that modern women, embodying Western ideals of femininity, occupy modernist housing.

In another example in a 1955 issue of Better Homes and Gardens, an image of a nuclear family consisting of a man, woman, and one child occupy their modern home
The woman stands before the dining table, holding a stack of plates, presumably preparing to set the family table. Her gaze is directed towards the nearby child, while her husband tends to the grill in the background. This portrayal positions the woman in a subservient and maternal role within the modern household. Thus, in both *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine covers, women play a significant role in shaping modernity alongside Mid-Century Modern architecture. Similar themes of the nuclear family and modern architecture persists in one 1960 Nasr City advertisement.

In a 1960 state advertisement of Nasr City that appeared in *Akhir Sa’a* (1960; figure 22), the newly planned socialist city maintains an image of modernity tied to the nuclear family. This image is of particular importance because it directly advertises Nasr City’s modernist housing to the middle-class and is produced by Nasser’s government. The advertisement relies entirely on the promotion of happiness through a nuclear family to attract Nasr City residents. While the IDEAL advertisement uses Mid-Century Modernism as a stage to envision gendered roles, the Nasr City advertisement uses the International Style of Modernism to idealize the nuclear family as its preferred occupants.

In the half-spread black-and-white image (1960; figure 22), three variations of a modernist housing structure appear in the center. Modernism is transmitted through the architecture in the image. Their modernist angular properties are exaggerated as they converge inward and show use of clean lines, a weightless quality, and *pilotis* representative of the International Style. Looming over the building are the heads of a smiling couple, presumably the mother and father, as their two children play with unseen objects to the left of them. Text to the right of the familial scene reads that “real
happiness” can be found “for you and your family” when you “own a private residence in the second district of Nasr City.”

One assumption can be drawn from this image: the nuclear family is the ideal occupant of Nasr City’s housing. The nuclear family continues to be stressed in this advertisement that prescribed the male as the patriarch and the female in a domestic role. Female servitude is not directly on display here, but it is more subtle and relies on the viewer’s understanding of the male/female dynamic in a nuclear family. Again, the suggestion that a nuclear family should occupy Nasr City’s housing is at odds with the public visibility advanced in Housing Model 22’s architecture, legislation, socialist ideology, and women’s writings promoting women’s public labor.

In another example, a 1957 advertisement for the Egyptian Land Bank Bonds, an Egyptian Real Estate Bank providing mortgages, utilized similar imagery based in Western modernism (1957; figure 23). In the black-and white image, a family scene and modernist building are pictured together to sell the dream of middle-class housing. A father sits in a modern chair while his child sits on his lap. Th wife, pictured reclining just below them on the floor in modern dress, gazes up towards her husband and child smiling. Her body is in full view and to her left is a modernist building completed in the International Style. Thus, the image reflects the Nasr City advertisement in its idealization of the nuclear family as the preferred occupants of modernist housing. However, the nuclear family image was not always relied on to encourage women to remain at home and away from the public.

For example, in a 1960 issue of Akhir Sa’a, a Tide advertisement (1959; figure 24) directly positions a woman in her role as domestic servant against the modernist home without the presence of a nuclear family. In contrast to the former advertisements,
the Tide advertisement appears in color on a full-page spread. A woman in a short-sleeved yellow dress is hanging laundry on a laundry-line with both hands as her smiling face is turned toward the viewer. Positioned behind the laundry-line, one that is full of brightly colored clothes and linens, is a modern home. Its modernism is communicated through the building’s use of *pilotis*, its lack of ornamentation, set of ribbon windows, and its rectilinear forms dictated by the International Style. To the lower left of the woman’s body is a modernist set of International Style buildings resembling skyscrapers. Together, the skyscrapers form a nearby skyline of an urban environment and suggest she and her home are at a distance from the city. In the lower-right, a large Tide box is foregrounded as the text to the left reads that “Tide” gives “all members of the family” the “cleanest and whitest laundry.”

The Tide advertisement delineates from its contemporaneous advertisements that positions women strictly within the modern home. While we return to the portrayal of a woman assuming domestic responsibilities set against a modernist backdrop, the woman is pictured outside of the home rather than within it. She is on public display performing her role as domestic leader. Yet, the public she occupies is presumably her own lawn. While she is pictured occupying public space, the woman performs home labor rather than public labor. Therefore, her public visibility does little to advance her economic and social power.

The woman’s role as publicly visible domestic servant is further emphasized by the windows of the modernist house that stands behind her. Beginning on the third floor of the home, a vertical ribbon of glass windows stretches over most of the wall. To the left of the ribbon windows appears to be a double-hung window with brown blinds blocking its transparency. Next to it are another set of windows, possibly casement or
sliding windows. Moving to the second floor, the vertical ribbon of glass windows reappears in the same position as the third floor. Notions of visual privacy are explored within these variations of windows. All windows offer full transparency and flexibility in maintaining privacy except the window covered by brown blinds reminiscent of early twentieth-century housing. Much like Housing Model 22, the windows heighten a woman’s public visibility from within the household, but she can only occupy the public as a domestic servant.

While the woman performs domestic duties publicly amid modernist architecture, an earlier soap advertisement from 1952 shows a similar image, yet, places the woman within a Mid-Century Modern home. In the image (1952; figure 25), a woman stands in her kitchen as she is oriented frontally and smiles while cleaning a silver cooking pan. The kitchen behind her is decorated in the Mid-Century modern style with its many amenities, curved refrigerator, and modular canisters indicative of the period. Moreover, her collared dress and curled hair are modern in appearance as well. Just like the Tide advertisement, she is the sole occupant of the image and performing a domestic activity amid a slew of modernist iconography that positions her as integral to the new, modern identity the advertiser is pushing.

Prior to Nasser's banishment of *Bint al-Nil*, the advertisements within its pages followed the trend of featuring women alongside modernist architecture, aiming to influence how readers connected women to modernity. An example from 1945 (1945; figure 26) showcases a woman within a contemporary space, aligning with the global trends of modernity observed in Egypt and the United States. The image presents a woman wearing a red patterned dress, accompanied by black wrist-length gloves, a black hat, and black high-heels, positioned front and center. The backdrop showcases modernist
architecture framing her figure. Once again, we witness the portrayal of a woman as an essential component in shaping the discourse of modernity alongside architecture. The gendered transformations taking place in the West imposed themselves upon Egyptian advertisements, where modernity, the home, and modern architecture played a role in defining normative gender roles within a modern society.

Housing Model 22, as I argued in chapter one, reflected gendered relations taking place under Nasser. The women’s writings produced under a censored press further link Housing Model 22’s architecture to conversations on women’s public role in the workforce. Yet, the IDEAL, Egyptian Land Bank Bonds, Tide, and Nasr City advertisements, which were stringently mediated by Nasser’s government, diverge from the public visibility advanced in Housing Model 22’s architecture, new legislation, socialist ideology, and women’s writings promoting women’s public labor.

Such visual and written contradictions suggest that Nasser and his administration were not fully interested in pursuing equality among the sexes. Ideas of global modernity continued to place women in a domestic role that kept them at home during the day which did not differ from previous nineteenth and earlier twentieth-century standards. Instead, as Laura Bier has observed, in terms of gender, socialist governments that run on a platform of revolution simply re-package old gender ideology in a new way to suit their political agenda.¹²¹ We see this in advertisements picturing the nuclear family and women in conjunction with modernist architecture. Thus, the imagery maintained male economic power and placed normative gender roles on women at a time when their political and social power expanded under a post-colonial government. Under a socialist government,

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¹²¹ Bier, Revolutionary Womanhood, 57.
women were understood to have more social, economic, and cultural power; yet, Nasser detracted from women’s ability to attain this by his facilitation and dissemination of paradoxical messages of modernity.
CONCLUSION

From 1867-1955, middle-class collective housing units throughout Cairo show a consistent shift in how architects employed façade fenestration and balconies to maintain women’s visual privacy. While the rab’ employed a mashrabiya and a roof-top balcony at the end of the nineteenth century to prioritize visual privacy in the home, Cairo’s modernist buildings built during the first half of the twentieth century employed only wooden screened windows as a measure of privacy but integrated a façade balcony that suggests a heightened female visibility from within the home.

However, it is through Housing Model 22 in 1959 that a subtle shift occurs in the exterior fenestration reflecting a major change in how women occupy public space amid conversations of women’s public labor amid a new revolutionary government. Thus, Housing Model 22 heightened the public visibility of women through windows and balconies, which aligned with the growing role of Egyptian women’s writings encouraging women to question their place within the home. Karim’s decision—and Nasser’s approval—to challenge previous notions of visual privacy in early nineteenth and twentieth-century homes suggests the housing unit took on a sociopolitical message valuing women’s public visibility. Overall, the architectural changes taking place on the exterior façade reflect gendered relationships of their respective time periods.

Housing Model 22 legitimized women as visible in the public sphere on an architecture expected to rebuild and represent a new Egypt. Yet, a glaring contradiction appears in advertisements of the period which directly associate women, the modern
home, and domestic work as inextricably linked. The advertisements preserved a patriarchal familial structure that maintained prescribed gender roles and prevented Egypt from socially evolving to include women in their workforce.

While the symbolic weight of women in a domestic role pictured in advertisements did little to advance women into the public workforce, the legislation and housing changes were nonetheless important steps taken by Nasser to integrate women into the public. Previous rulers had not altered legislation in a major way that affected women. Such complicated contradictions suggest that while women achieved an unprecedented public visibility under Nasser, gendered conventions persisted that limited the choices they could make and the financial, social, and political power they could attain.

Nasser removed Karim from the Nasr City project after its first phase of construction in the early 1960s—just one year after builders completed the construction of Housing Model 22. By 1965, Nasser placed Karim under house arrest for an unknown reason which ended his architectural career. Nasser’s regime formally ended in 1970 when his Vice President, Anwar Sadat, succeeded him as president and began introducing economic liberal policies which diverged from the former anti-Western economic socialist policies set out by Nasser. Nasser believed that Nasr City had the capacity to evolve Egypt into a thriving post-colonial nation with a revolutionary government at its center, but utopian models like Nasr City were never prioritized by the state again.

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Examining the ways Cairene collective housing units spatialized gender through its façade allows for a more intricate understanding of the realities of middle-class twentieth-century women. This thesis not only investigates Nasr City as an important site of cultural power that shaped male/female dynamics, but it moves away from public architecture as the primary mode of exploring Nasser era relationships. While Nasr City’s basic history and discussions concerning commercialism and nationalism are present, scholars have not attempted to analyze the gendered relations in conjunction with its domestic architecture. Through this research, I have argued that although fenestration and balconies offer ventilation, they also take on a sociopolitical meaning when understood in the changing relationship between women, the home, and privacy. This thesis complexifies how the Nasser regime manipulated social, cultural, and political aspects of the built environment to assert his views on gendered relationships.

Further, this thesis contributes to reshaping an understanding of the International Style and Modernist architectural history. Although the International Style originated in the West, the collective housing units built throughout the twentieth century show how local and foreign architects outside of the West adapted the style to accommodate both an Egyptian climate and Arab social codes rooted in ideas of domestic visual privacy present in Egypt for centuries. By examining the gendered elements of the home and women’s depictions in advertisements, it is clear modernity, modern architecture, and the home were inextricably linked in defining a modern nation.

Although paradoxical to his Pan-Arab philosophy, Nasser’s adoption of the International Style was primarily political in nature. While he was committed to promoting Egyptian culture and values, he was also open to adopting the imagery and modernist iconography of Western culture that he felt would benefit Egypt’s political
standing. In this sense, his adoption of the International Style can be seen as a pragmatic
decision that was driven by a desire to promote economic growth and development,
rather than a wholesale embrace of Western culture. Instead, the International Style
symbolized his regime as modern, industrial, and economically successful.

As scholarship shifts to a global understanding of Modern Architecture, it is
important that Egypt be brought into academic discussions as an important site of
modernist experimentation that grapples with an individualized cultural and political
context not replicated elsewhere. The International Style persists as a global trend
throughout the twentieth century, yet Egypt remains distant from these conversations.
Nasr City stands out as a utopian project that architecturally negotiates visual privacy,
gendered relations, and socialist planning principles not seen in contemporaneous global
modernist experimentations. Thus, its integration into the architectural canon expands
discussions on how the built environment has the power to define social roles in a post-
colonial, socialist nation.


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Fig. 1 Maison Bonfils, Boulaq Rab’, Cairo (Boulaq), Egypt, c. 1867-1899. Courtesy of Library Of Congress.
Fig. 1a Maison Bonfils, detail of windows, Cairo (Boulaq), Egypt, c. 1867-1899. Courtesy of Library Of Congress.
Fig. 2 A map of Cairo’s districts.  
Courtesy of WikiCommons.
Fig. 4 Public street view of Gayer-Anderson House, Cairo (Sayyida Zeinab), Egypt, 17th Century. Courtesy of Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiques.

Fig. 4a A map showing Gayer-Anderson House’s location adjacent to the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, Cairo (Sayyida Zeinab), Egypt. Map created by the author.
Fig. 5 Camille Robida, Residential Building, Cairo (Heliopolis), Egypt, 1911. Courtesy of *Cairo Since 1900* by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 324.

Fig. 6 Habib Ayrou, Abdel Hamid Al Shawarby Pasha Building (Shawarby), Cairo, Egypt (Downtown Cairo), 1925. Courtesy of The Om El Donia Project.
Fig. 6a Habib Ayrou, Facade of the Abdel Hamid Al Shawarby Pasha Building (Shawarby), Cairo (Downtown Cairo), Egypt, 1925. Courtesy of The Om El Donia Project.
Fig. 7 Amin Abdel Qader, Residential Building, Cairo (Abbasiya), Egypt, 1931. Courtesy of *Cairo Since 1900* by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 298.
Fig. 8 Charles Ayrout, Halim Dos Bey Building, Cairo (Giza), Egypt, 1937. Courtesy of *Cairo Since 1900* by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 209.
Fig. 8a Charles Ayrout, Façade of Halim Dos Bey Building, Cairo (Giza), Egypt, 1937. Courtesy of Cairo Since 1900 by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 209.

Fig. 9 Muhammad Sherif Nouman, Fayza Hanem Owais Building, Cairo (Heliopolis), Egypt, 1949. Courtesy of Cairo Since 1900 by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 322.
Fig. 10 Tawfiq Abdel Gawad, Mahallawy Building, Cairo (Heliopolis), Egypt, 1949. Courtesy of *Cairo Since 1900* by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 323.
Fig. 11 Sayed Karim, Original plan for Nasr City, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1953. Courtesy of *Cairo Since 1900* by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 343.

Fig. 12 Sayed Karim, Revised plan for Nasr City showing residential blocks in the bottom right corner and Cairo Stadium in the top left corner, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1950s. Courtesy of “Revolutionary Modernism? Architecture and the Politics of Transition in Egypt 1936-1967” by Mohamed Elshahed (PhD diss., New York University, 2015), 385.
Fig. 13 Le Corbusier, Unité d’Habitation, Marseille, France, 1945. Courtesy of Foundation Le Corbusier.

Fig. 14 Le Corbusier, Villa Radieuse, 1924. Courtesy of Arch Daily.
Fig. 15 Military parade celebrating Nasr City, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1960. Courtesy of Cairo Observer.

Fig. 16 Sayed Karim, Housing Model 22, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1959. Courtesy of Cairo Since 1900 by Mohamed Elshahed (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2020), 351.
Fig. 17 Sayed Karim, Residential Building, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1960s. Courtesy of Cairo Observer.
Fig. 18 Sayed Karim, Advert for the new apartments in Nasr City, Cairo (Nasr City), Egypt, 1960s.

Courtesy of Cairo Observer.
Fig. 19 IDEAL Air Conditioning Advertisement, *Akhir Sa’a* no.1331, March 27, 1960. Image courtesy of The American University in Cairo Rare Books and Special Collections Digital Library.
Fig. 20 Cover, *Better Homes and Gardens*, 1949. Courtesy of *Midcentury Architecture*. 
Fig. 21 Cover, *Better Homes and Gardens*, August 1955. Courtesy of Flickr.
Fig. 22 Nasr City Advertisement, *Akhir Sa’a*, 1959. Image courtesy of [Cairo Observer](http://cairoobserver.com).
Fig. 23 Egyptian Land Bank Bonds advertisement, 1957.
Courtesy of Vintage Egypt.
Fig. 24 Tide Advertisement, *Akhir Sa’a*, 1960. Image courtesy of [Cairo Observer](http://cairoobserver.com).
Fig. 25 Soap advertisement, 1952.
Courtesy of Vintage Egypt.
Fig. 26 Cover, *Bint al-Nil*, 1953.

Courtesy of The American University in Cairo Rare Books and Special Collections Digital Library.