Abstract

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Social Cohesion in Cairo and the Nature of Boundary Areas between Socio-culturally Distinct Districts: The Case of El-Maadi – Dar El-Salam Boundary

Abstract—Like most large cities around the world, society in Cairo is composed of very diverse cultural, social, and economic groups. The aim of the study presented in this article is to investigate if boundary areas between socio-culturally distinct districts in the city are areas of contact and interaction between these groups and can thus promote social cohesion between them. The case-study focuses on the boundary area between very different adjoining districts, El-Maadi and Dar El-Salam. It relies on in-depth interviews with residents of both districts as well as filed documentation of the study area and observation of activity patterns within it. Findings indicate that, primarily because of perceived wide social differences, the boundary area is not an area of contact and interaction between residents of the two districts. While there is an appropriation of the area by residents of Dar El-Salam, there is at the same time, a withdrawal from and an avoidance of the area by residents of El-Maadi. In its conclusion the article discusses implications for urban design, policy making, and future research. Index Terms—Social cohesion, Boundary areas, Socio-cultural diversity, Cairo-Egypt.