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Urban discontents between bargains and social justice : strategizing social mix in regeneration issues.

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<u>Abstract</u> :

Contention appears as a major feature of globalized and urban societies. Since a decade, it has taken new forms in most of European societies and strongly arisen also in non democratic societies. Our main hypothesis to be developed in this paper is the parallel between the competitive agenda of the world cities and the rise of a new moral grammar of contention among city-dwellers, both organized and not organized. This paper draws upon several field researches undertaken both in Paris urban renewal sites where social estates have become a main locus for change and social mix policies and in Cairo where risk management of informal areas are conceived as a new way for bringing new categories in desirable places. We shall examine how representations of social mix in the competitive cities agenda from political and technical decision-makers interfere with local and popular perceptions of gentrification strategies in new targeted areas that expand beyond the old fabrics and neighborhoods. Thus, we shall question the links between land conflicts and urban renewal tools, social mix and gentrification strategies of the new competitive turn and the new forms of debates and struggles for housing and human rights.

It is worth to mention both the circulation and global mobilization of concepts such as the right to information and the right of a fair compensation. Various new involvements appear in this deprived suburbs today targeted for regeneration : despite variations in political regimes and urban government, we will sustain the idea of a renewal of perceptions of justice and conflict management. Due to changes of local legitimacies with the disappearing of the former elites and patronages systems (be it a patron-client relation or a leardership by opposition parties), new social groupings will from now on in both countries take roots at various territorial and lexical scales. Thus, in coalitions and social movements recent expressions of fear and discontents make use of a language of respect for diversity and new interpretations of justice based on religious but also on political and social commitments.

Is there something in common between the National coordination against demolition of popular neighborhoods in the Paris region and several actions undertaken since the 90's by the Housing International Coalition branches, including the latest Egyptian Housing Center for Rights to Housing created early 2000 ?. Before drawing in detail each of these cases, we will first underline the main common features and dynamics in the metropolitan agendas and international actors involvement modes exemplified by these two metropolitan comparisons.

1. **Metropolitan challenges, positivist politics of mixity and land redevelopment in France**

In France a major turn in urban policies started in 2003 with the adoption of a national program for urban renewal (PNRU). It does address the situation of about 400 « Sensitive urban areas » (SUA) mainly composed of massive social housing estates and deteriorated co-ownership buildings, usually referred as the « Grands ensembles » erected during a decade (mid sixties to mid seventies) and that became the symbol of segregation, riots and impoverishment. A Huge 40 billion € investment has been poured into a complex mechanism of demolition targeted for 450 000 housing units.

The official objectives is bringing back social mix in impoverished areas which is often translated into « preventing the formation or consolidation of « ghettos », improving the quality of life for the residents. Thus has been planned a national grid of intervention aimed at bringing mixity through diversification of housing (C. Lelévrier, 2010). Underlying this call for mixity, demolition performs as a double signal in order to bring private or public investors to invest in these stigmatized neighborhoods.

- Decreasing the visible concentration of poor people as the only way to attract investors and new residents by proposing rehousing off-site to part of the dwellers

- Encouraging the « banalization » of these stigmatized areas by getting read of visible signs of the » grand ensemble », namely the « towers ».

Besides a very large rehabilitation policy that is also underway, demolition is directly connected to an major change of status : frozen during more than thirty years, land available within the Grands Ensembles is reincorporated by social housing companies and becomes constructible. A change of land ownerships with a progressive transfer from the municipalities to these companies also participate to reshape the urban fabric and to open the way for land opportunities. This is another aspect to be considered briefly : this whole transfer materializes as the idiom "residentialisation" that differentiate once open or vacant spaces.

Demolition, reconstruction, rehabilitation and residentialisation are often referred to as the "four pillars" of this huge machinery (Epstein, 2007). Their success and social acceptation were at the beginning supposed to be complete as renters or residents were depicted as vectors of social deterioration (and then targeted to leave, especially the "large families", understand mostly recent immigrants) or passive victims of this new sub-orders considered as endangering the republic. A more contrasted set of evaluation can be stated.

Easiness of the reconversion scheme
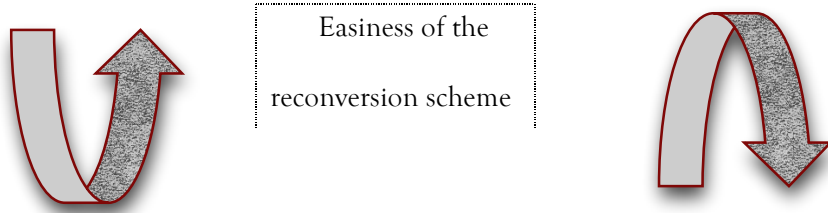
A/ Shrinking areas, high vacancy rate tensed land markets

B/ Dynamic metropolitan areas,

The first set of operations refered as A mostly takes place in small of middle-size cities located in desindustrialized regions. The vacancy stock being high and the locations remaining whatsoever unattractive, operations are mostly organized for the direct benefit of the residents, with very little success of the mixity credo. The story is quite different in major metropolitan areas and especially the most dynamics both in economic and demographic terms such as three regions -Ile de France ; Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Languedoc Roussillon. Cities within these three regions undergo a continuous high increase of land and housing markets prices linked in some ways to a continual metropolitan expansion of the speculative markets. This trend is very marked as the Grands Ensembles get caught into the metropolitan web and do not remain as isolated places.

Despite the unification of the financing and operating system of Anru and of the large attractivity of the Programmes de Rénovation Urbaine, local modes of action and intervention interfere a lot with the national grid to explain the degree of discontent within the residents, and even the modes of contention.

Social mix in these regeneration policies appears as the combination of variations between national and municipal consideration towards prevention of social concentration and forced desegregation. In other words, the degree of coercion to move to flats out of the neighbourhood is associated with local municipal narratives of social mix and the capacity to really create residential flux.

Municipal policies and social dedication
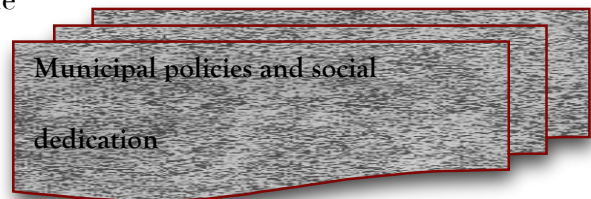
Thus it largely depends on tradition of social intervention and participation. Leaving strategic social choices to municipalities (left-right are one on this element but no clear correlation can be done), the Anru carries the risk to see some populations diversely affected depending on the context. Therefore, it largely relies on the "political" orientations (there is very contrasted willingness to maintain, slightly decrease or displace the popular classes and migrants population. This relies mostly on the political obedience of the mayors, on the percentage of social housing, on the degree of support within inter-municipal connections for mobility purposes.

Last, a rapid mapping of the open conflicts reveal their presence in the new hearts of the metropolitan systems, next to CBD (such as the Grands Ensembles of Nanterre and Gennevilliers, both communist municipalities located within or next to the La Défence

perimeter), along major redevelopment areas or encapsulated within wealthy environments (for exemple the Yvelynes department in the West of Paris).

2. Metropolitan challenges, land conquest and new pressures in Greater Cairo

Cairo was known till the end of the 90's to be a very fast growing city that did accommodate it's popular and informal neighborhoods with a relative acceptance. "Quiet encroachment" as stated by Asef Bayat (2009) was the rule for the majority and was rarely challenged except in squatters areas and other informal activities encroaching on public land and called as "social non movements". This economy of cohabitation between various social fabrics has changed since a decade. Boosted by a whole range of neo-liberal openings and favors to the private sector, huge land tracks were opened in the desert for the profit of a large range of private entrepreneurs, developers, private schools, leisure parks (L. Vignal, E. Denis, 2006) allowing the city to triple its size in less than 15 years. It is no doubt that this de-knitting of a very dense the urban fabric has influenced a growing consumer class, eager to find better locations for residence (away from incivil behaviours poverty, avoiding traffic jam and pollution) and for their children to get international education. What was left to the richest tends to become more and more concentrated in the new desert developments in "the new Cairo" or in one of in Uptown Cairo advertised as "up above it all".

In the last years a new trend for promoting Cairo image as a world city was developed by consultants hired by the ministry of Housing. Even if no new regulation ot master scheme was ever decided, P. A Barthel works (2010) helped us to understand how an hybrid nest of interest among high rank decisioners, professionals and developers shaped a new 3 D and power point concept called "Cairo 2050". In this vision, that has circulated a lot among various conferences and its always displayed in its updated version, different layers of the global city can be traced back. The over-congested city would like to become "green, sustainable and connected". One of the question raised by this simplistic scheme is "instead of what" ? In one of most densely populated capital-city of the world, with very little vacant spaces except in the desert fringes (and today fully developed), creating green space looks as starting to move away or thrive to displace some of the most permanent residential neighborhoods of the city, namely some of the inhabited cemeteries.

A conflicting representation of the global reshaping is carried out in the same vision (also see Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The "city victorious" is enhanced by a suggested lifting of its city center, with on one hand an experiment of rehabilitation scheme conducted by the private sector, after a permission given to an international (partly Emirati) company to buy 28 haussmanian type buildings and to renew it, without any measure for securing the rehousing process. But the most remarkable changes take place on the banks of the Nile. Neglected during almost a century, this location is supposed to regains its splendor by the erection of a multiplicity of towers and new high-end apartments blocks. When looking at the slide show, it is impossible to see the existence of huge and densely populated popular settlements that have faded away on this prospective vision.

In fact many popular neighborhoods surrounding or within the extended city center are concerned in various ways by this change of governmental attitude. This -unassumed- political vision, never openly debated in the public sphere challenges the usual attitude

towards popular and informal settlements characterized during decades by a mix of "disengagement, clientelism, and (...) the logic of "neglectful rule" (Dorman, 2009).

By looking at what has changed in this new representation of place, we assume that mixity has come to be a major avoidance, hence substituting a new vision of a segregated city to what was often seen as a very intertwined set of urban and social fabrics, with it's "beaux quartiers" often challenged by some pockets of deteriorated housing. My hypothesis is that many actors of the world system have suddenly realized the price of having to expand beyond the populated districts of central Cairo : in reality the best locations are already occupied by a majority of poor districts such as Bulaq and Maspero, just meters away from the Nile Hilton and Tahrir square ; by one of the most populous still considered as an informal settlement : Imbaba, with a population estimated to 900 or 950.000 dwellers. Other settlements are threatened by global visions and investors oriented image, search for land opportunities and avoidance of the poor. The most obviously threatened areas are located on the edge of the most touristic sites, in particular the pyramids, such as the consolidated squatter settlement of Nazlet al Saman with is considered to be partly dismantled for the sake of a new touristic village.

Even before Cairo 2050 on going process of reflection, various other attempts to gain land opportunities in protected areas had taken place since the beginning of the 2000, marking a clear convergence of views. Through this paper, one set of research questions planners and stakeholders definitions of new constructible zone in protected areas such as in the islands of Dahab and Waraq and at the same time argument with the public sphere to compete with existing dwellers in overpopulated areas. One of the best example is Embaba, one of the largest informal settlement where a number of roads enlargement is planned to open the way for urbanizing a vacant old airport, thus opening different breaches in the most negatively depicted informal settlement, with a long-lasting external representation of fundamentalism.

In a effort to map the areas of global competition, we assume that various other set of land conflicts have multiplied since a decade. Some are at the heart of the world city image and willingness to attract international investors or consolidate their business plans, other are rather located at the edge of the city. As land competition becomes each day stronger and opportunities to build within the first ring or nearest periphery of Cairo become scarce, various strategies have been stated. The first one is the "best practice" strategy of reconstruction and building a showcase. A very deteriorated are in Zeïnhom, a central district next to the citadel was demolished in 2007 after the area was declared unsafe and infamous following a fatal fire. Evictions without any notice of 1054 dwellings units and reconstructions were operated under the operation of the Suzanne Mubarak foundation[2]. The second one is considering the new attempts to regain ownership or control on state invaded land by various public authorities or their private partners. One major conflict arise in the district of 'Ain Shams, north-east of Cairo, in the neighborhood of Abu Regeila. This time, the army acted as an land actor, trying to get back its land and launching bulldozers without any public notice.

Then, environmental risk and fatal risk appears since 2008 as a major strategy to by-pass securization of former legalization policies. The land slide in Dweiqa, that causes 119

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[2] These 2 cases have been developed in interviews with Manal al-tibe, president of the ECHR, Egyptian Center for Housing Rights in December 2010. One in partly published in Mouvements, summer 2011.

deaths, has inspired the formation of a new agency dedicated to remove risk and insecurity from housing. The Informal Settlement Development Facility (Isdf) was founded as an emergency solution to risk, and performs from now on as an actor of urban regeneration. Within four categories of risk, the upper one incorporates 53 "unsafe" neighborhoods in the Cairo region that are supposed to be partly evacuated and households relocated in new settlements or new cities. This conveys words of caution, as the mapping of the risk areas draws some parallel to that of the most attractive areas : 'Izbat Khaîrallah huge squatter settlement trapped between a subway station and the ring road ; Boulaq, an old popular neighborhood downtown, etc.

Each of these efforts to redraw the residential cartography of Cairo has failed as a general strategy, except some very sudden evictions in squatter areas. Resistance among popular neighborhoods in France cannot be compared as most of the popular private-areas in the major metropolitan centers are now under heavy gentrification and most of the popular neighborhoods have been created and are still managed by the public sector and social housing authorities. Nevertheless, all observers can state the unexpected degree of resistance to demolition with relocation (in France) and to eviction with rehousing (in Egypt) in a post-industrial context where "avaibility in large resources in a favorable factor to participation" (Cefaï,

3. The right to housing

In the French suburbs challenged with the PRU programs, demolition is associated with the right to another similar social housing apartment. Each household has the right to be proposed up to three choices, and sometimes up depending on the good will of the organism and social workers in charge of the rehousing process. It does not mean that every household is rehoused. A minority is in trouble : the in-laws of present occupiers ; or sub-renters. Notwithstanding this rehousing guarantee, part of the renters are trapped into various fears that shares very similarities with the Egyptian case : fear of loosing social networks, anxiety of having new uncontrolled neighbours ; uncertainty on the final costs of the new flat

In Cairo, demolition is a much different story. The Esdf program has led for example to demolition within very short timespan : people has at most 2 weeks to get use to the clearance measures and to move into a unique rehousing scheme. A large part of people removed from 'Izabat Khaïrallah and Dweiqa, all zone "informal" and "at risk" were rehoused in Al-Ahram city, a 30 km distant satellite city. A very strong segregative zoning applies to rehousing with some thousand households from the "risk zones" parked in a single area.

The parallels between the situation are of three types : difference in the violence and intensity of the pressure to change ; difference in the choices and openings ; difference in the time and negotiation opportunities. This being said, what people resent explains of the whole process in part some converging patterns of actions.

We should not forget indeed that the most conflicting situations convey an expression of plural risk. Considering the uncertainty and difficulty of preserving work in the global city for popular classes, the fear of finding worse/more expensive housing/loosing their attachments is reinforced. This is also fueling a feeling of dispossession : of a trajectory without personal choices that is putting formal and democratic citizenship into doubt,

whereas in Egypt it does confirm the non-quality of citizenship of the large informal-dwellers category and in particular the squatters.

Uncertainty and discontent also finds their origin in the very general lack of participation and weakness of information. In the French case, participatory measures and local democracy are severely undermined in the PRU programs, that lie very far beyond any kind of recent policy enforcement in cities or rural areas despite discourses and measures supposed to launch participation with and during the programs. But as local institutions are generally unable to assume openly their wish to change population in the Grands Ensembles (mixity being not "more middle-class people" but "less low-income groups"), demolition as a central aspect of PRU is never debated. Therefore, participation is left to urban spaces planning (co-design of squares etc.)

The degree of discontent is heavily correlated with the capacity of influencing decision-making. This is why the government decision to launch demolition programs is often one of the most contested as demolition is rarely left to the residents choice…this is even more the case when demolition is included in a regeneration perspective with market surplus search, be it in Paris or in Cairo. In Paris social real estates as in Cairo squatter settlements, commodification of land has ended up, as in most global cities (see Istambul, C. Keyder, 2005) to accentuate land competition as "the geographical limits of the city grew, urban centrality is to be redefined (Ib., 2005, 126)". Without any doubt, this dimension is directly connected with the right to the city issue. If in the 70's major claims to remain in the city came from downtowns, this consciousness of the expansion of the capitalist redevelopment boundaries and rent search has moved. We can assume, considering our various field researches, that metropolitan incorporation of popular neighborhoods, of places once marginalized, has a tremendous impact on justifications used by authorities on one-side and counter-arguments from residents from the other.

And we have seen that new land and urban conflicts in international cities are centered around claims of justice rather than legal titles or legal rights. Our main hypotheses is that globalization and metropolization have merged to sharpen land challenges and competition (see Harvey, 2005). Since liberalization of land development has been opened up to local-global or simply foreign investors the mean arguments of crisis (deteriorated social environment and crime and social mix ; environmental pollution for informal settlements (Bell, 2009), beautification, to displace popular neighborhoods is not understood anymore nor accepted by local settlers. Even those that seem to adopt governments rhetoric end up in returning the argument. Oum Abir, a women relocated in al Ahram city explained the demolition by the wish of the state to *clean up the place from the 'ashwaiyat*", local term to depict random housing and it's occupants. She seems to agree with the persistent discourse on the uphazard layout and location of the invasion. Just after this, a former neighboor still residing in the district and waiting with fear for the demolition came to explain than Oum Abir was looking for a vacant place to lodge in 'Izbat Khaïrallah again with her family because, as usual, there was no way to earn their living in the distant satellite city.

But the general feeling among the squatters expecting the clearance and expecting any kind of (probable) alternate decision is that risk of collapse, as put forward by the topographs, is not convincing. Most probably, there might be "another project". If not, it would be impossible to understand that the "state" or the governorate is acting just for the sake of the residents as they are perfectly aware of their political insignificance. "Resilience

whether in the form of quiet encroachment of a more vocal social movement, such popular agency can be seen as exerting a kind of continuous bottom-up pressure on the Egyptian state" (Dorman, 2009).

This complete distrust is reinforced by internationalization and speculative schemes. In the Parisian case, the most conflicting cases of urban renewal in popular suburbs are also summarized by this sentence from a resident in Poissy, before a complete demolition program was counteracted by residents : "*the cake was very good but it was not for us*". This image is always downplayed by institutions : lower-income and the less desirable residents are well aware that their location is a premium and that some others will benefit of the housing program and social mix intentions (274).

This radical mistrust vis-à-vis the former Egyptian government or regeneration policies undertaken without acceptance of the dwellers merges with the promotion of new set of collective actions developed by a new range of activists in the field of housing rights.

4. Land use disputes, perception of social mix and feeling of injustice

Since the rapid transitions to land liberalization since mid 90's, a new set of economic and administrative actors have laid the foundations of a rising context of social and urban risk challenging the right to the city and right to housing. A close look at the metropolis sees the upheaval of contentious actors and vocabularies.

There is a clear convergence between globalization increasing pressures and changing modes of governance with a growing dismissal from governments and, till the arab spring, the paradox of an authoritarian turn which has revealed the reverse side of submission.

As a result of the policy changes towards privatization of the civil society demands, new local and national figures have arisen. There is no doubt that the growing NGO presence, especially in the south, and in some respects also a larger delegation to associations has been an element of de-politization and re-shaping of the political and conflicting scene. With the consolidation of very powerful coalitions of new actors, as shown by T. Kuyucu and O. Unsal (2010) including developers, real estate companies and credit institutions informal and popular second ring districts become much more attractive than in the past. These reborn of interest for land and regeneration issues has become quite visible and the shortcomings of eviction and relocation schemes readable even from the residents themselves. Considering the high pressure on areas, it is important to understand how to argument and resist within the global metropolis and opacity operating systems.

This discovery was at the start of a new form of contest, initiated by professionals and artists and human rights activists in Cairo when protected islands in Cairo, with a scarce but tight population was seized by expropriation decisions in the late 90's (GTZ[3], 2010). Mobilization is never as efficient as in these emblematic locations benefiting from socially and culturally mixed residents. In the case on informal settlements recent years have witnessed a parallel evolution. From one side a sharp rise in the number of threats or

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[3] See the article of Julia Gerlach on Qorsaya island

eviction schemes in once de facto secured neighborhoods. From the other side these new urban economy of risk has help to define new actors, both local and translocal. The same insecurity has arrived to the social housing estates in France, together with growing rumors of privatization.

In Paris since 2004 a coordination anti-demolition des quartiers populaires (coordination anti-removal of popular neighborhoods) has been taking the metropolitan relay of local battles. Till 2009 this coordination acted as a federal collective actor speaking out for the "quartiers". It did not comply with the ordinary vision of mobilizations. Founded by two local renters associations, this coordination is the result of crosscutting alliances among non hegemonic actors. Renters trade unions connected to the social Catholicism or communist traditions are equally part of the coalition with anti-globalization movements such as Attac ; sustained by the Droit au Logement (right to housing) human rights organizations ; organization of "post-colonial" sons of migrants

New grammar of contention is expressed mainly by the insurgent actors in the public sphere. Weak in number, activists at a local and metropolitan scale share a very important characteristic : they are both local residents as people living in neighbouring suburban surburban house and are for the first time performing in solidarity with residents of social housing. It is possible to consider demolition as a major event : it activates changes of representation among dwellers but also outsiders and acts as a major resentment and feeling of injustice

Parallel to environmental considerations since these buildings have been erected less than 40 years ago and assessment of the current deficit of social housing, contentious stances and attitudes consists in the expression of conflict within the official limited public sphere of participation but also outside. Besides to grievances exposed in the course of public meetings and debates organized by the managers of the PRU, contentious collective actions finds expression in the deliberative standpoint before any other kind of reason : it is precisely because decisions deeply affecting residents have not been discussed before hand that social protest emerge. Conscious of segregative processes and deprivation, residents do not want to be sacrificed once again- on modernity and social mix. Therefore in all the sites we have been studying, the mean idea of social and tenure mix was sometimes perceived as a strategy of the "others" to decide one again for the most segregated. Among the most educated or politicized, mixity is deconstructed as an anti-poor rhetoric and agency whereas the richest boroughs of the capital (often quoted as "le XVIth district") are never asked to welcome poor or middle-class dwellers. Nevertheless, if for the majority the ideology of social mix has been incorporated and accepted, it has not to be implemented first in a non consulted way and second to the detriment of inhabitants. After the lack of consideration embedded in the authoritarian decision of demolition, the second motive of contentious politics in the PRU programs is not, as some populist politicians would underline, the refuse to welcome the others caricature by the rise of the "communautarian and self-segregative attitudes of the banlieues" but rather "them, instead of us".

In Cairo, a progressive specialization of the Ngo sphere has grown parallel to the economic liberalization of the regime (Ben Nefissa, 2011) and the relation between corruption and repression (Farag, 2011). With a financing of international organization first, several human rights organizations have entered the contest and legal aid to

endangered residents. They sometimes substitute to absent local organization and civil sector and often come at the rescue of some existing new urban movements.

Among popular districts threatened by land expropriation (on the former agricultural and private land, this is the majority) and eviction (squatters areas mostly), we need to distinguish contrasted forms of mobilization. Among the sectors inhabited by a large working class, it is noticeable that the vocabulary of mobilization borrows to the trade unions references. In these districts, the "breaches" for urban re-conquest are taking the form of link roads, highways that can be identified as an attempt by state bodies to reaffirm their sovereignty as in the case of Beirut (Deboulet, Fawaz, 2010). In Boulaq al-Dakrur, a mobilization against a link road has given form to a popular committee for the defense of the people of Ard-al-Liwa' which protest ranges from media coverage, pamphlets, streets blocking (Dorman), along with an increase of these kind of cases of resistances. Consent to eviction and demolition is quite always the by-product of economic interest and rarely accepted by dwellers, and rather by absentee house owners.

More recently, the complex interplay between a popular committee has formed in Imbaba in reaction to quite similar reasons. As emphasized previously, small plot and flat owners on informal subdivisions are far less radical in their claims than squatters and they rather articulate demands for being part of the decision and subverting it rather than refusing. Informal houseowners, mostly educated men and notables react thus to a very ambitious urbanization project of an empty military airport. Along with this new project, Giza governorate has launched a plan for widening a number of roads (and calls for being part of Cairo 2050) that has never been released to thousands of affected households. If they rarely contest the dogma of a car-mobility, their position is to defy governments officials deny of the right to information and to fair compensations. These demands are incorporated within a larger frame of understanding : for them, there is no doubt that the government is planning the departure of number of residents to de-densify the area and making it more attractive for the new residents of the airport area. As for dwellers of the PRU districts in Paris region, social mix is perceived as a good thing but local residents have to be given the choice between staying or getting *fair* compensations. After compelling the authorities for bringing infrastructure, the most active residents get noticed of the price of becoming global that is often paid through major transport infrastructures (Dupont, 2010) as a main cause for eviction in global cities.

Existing evidence indicates that invasion or squatters areas in Cairo are more combative than clandestine subdivisions. The privation of land ownership has radicalized the dwellers : having nothing to loose except their homes, they petition in favor of a real politics anti-eviction and put forward a new right : the right to remain opposed to the trauma of eviction and/or demolition

5. "Remaining" : a new world argument against eviction and social mix rhetoric

"The plan is to clear Cairo from precarious housing, but there is another goal (than risk as advertised). You need to consider that Gamal Moubarak wants to transform Cairo in Dubaï. The idea is to compete with Dubaï in attracting investors in Cairo, becoming a central location" Manal al-Tibi (op. cit).

In former mobilizations in Europe, the "local" has always been at the forefront of urban struggles against urban renewals in city centers. Decision-makers express a surprise that marginalized peripheral neighborhoods without ownership (social housing from one side ; squatters subdivisions from the others) resist to eviction and rehousing. In this new contending politics, the "local" or "our place" becomes the "right to stay" and to gain recognition rights. At some point is it also about being "considered" as human beings and not commodified or taken as numbers or statistical categories (T. Vitale, 2008). The local becomes a major topic for mobilization and of silent opposition : "attachment" to social housing appears as a lesson learned from demolition policies even by urban practitioners. In Cairo, residential mobility is very weak for homeowners including informal areas and residents are often caught in very dense inter-generational residential networks that strengthen the willingness to be consolidated but not displaced.

Defiance and dread of state intervention are at the central in the new forms of involvement in the public sphere in these situations of urban renewal and restructuration. Fear and uncertainty do not always lead to public expression of discontent and refusal, as collective action needs some underlying parameters to take form. But global urban risk, now largely diffused to part of the middle class obliged to cope with the informal sector to survive (Bayat, 2010) in Egypt or the loss of social security long provided by industry and derived state institutions have brought together some unusual coalition of actors. Community based associations or religious-caritative or development NGO in Egypt are compelled to join with specialized human rights centers founded in the 90's to formalize a public claim. As in France, eviction dynamics have led new activists, local and non-local, to formulate equity-based arguments. These arguments help to deconstruct the biased nature of social mix discourse and modern standards of living as a way of producing more segregation and to produce alternate descriptions. In Embaba for instance, the popular committee supported by the Tagamu' party does undermine the importance of this classic support to sustain a very broad and open discourse of equity based on local ties.

With slightly different inflexions, both protagonists illustrate how political actors aware of citizenship deficiencies can articulate their demands as city-dwellers with the right to stay as a foundation discourse opposed to blind logics of displacements. They also multiply internal civic gestures of solidarity that reveals feelings of injustice (Gayet Viaud, 2011). A major difference lies in the use of legal cases : in Egypt eviction is subject to use a legal defense, at least till the Esdf foundation, on the ground of the right-to-housing as number of eviction cases in global cities (Cabannes and alii, 2010). Besides, confusion on land ownership adds to the possibility of asking lawyers help, whereas in France rehousing being provided and signs of public information displayed, legal argument are rarely searched in PRU programs.

Among others tools, Egyptian threatened neighborhoods have borrowed a language of respect for social diversity and new interpretations of justice based on religious but also on political and social commitments. Their expression of dissent make now use of banners "no to investors" is quite new (J. Bell, 2009) in the island of Dahab or "no to demolition" and or in-situ relocation in Parisian suburbs, defying the current discourses on popular political marginality of attitude of submission. Controversial evictions spurred by environmental or risk discourse also make use of the social medias (also see W. Fahmi, 2009), as invitations to join a day against-eviction posted on facebook by the Egyptian center for housing rights, which produced enlarged visibility and solidarity. To face international logics of eviction requires indeed the necessity to gain renewed supports : trade unions and political parties

will not succeed to gain an interest from the most combative medias. social urban movements are not registered to trade unions, whereas small dedicated and partly professional NGO's will, underlying the undergoing shift of capabilities. Besides the use of social medias, the de-monopolization of medias (Ben Nefissa, 2011) in Egypt and the strengthening of a number of internet-based very critical newspapers in France have also served the case of some emblematic suburbs as Poissy-la Coudraie. In all cases, repeated and focused contest have succeeded to block some demolition of eviction plans in some of the most media-covered cases, often used then as show cases.

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