# 18

# CONCRETE SHORES

## Illusions and Desires of Total Control on the Littoral Edge of Egypt

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In 1955, the Egyptian General Administration for Youth Welfare published a manual to describe the implementation of a government plan that encouraged camping, particularly along the coastal regions of Egypt. As described by the manual, managing free time was understood as a matter of national responsibility, and leisure spaces were the sites for shaping a new socialist and post-independence Egyptian subject: "Modern social education points towards maximizing leisure time, driven by a desire to guide citizens towards a sound social direction and to prime them for the betterment of themselves, their families and the nation."[1]

In this context, I introduce the beach as a media—both in the sense of media as a mediating, in-between condition and in the popular understanding of media as a space for broadcasting and determining a set of social practices. I present the beach as a constellation of spatial elements appropriated by the State to gain control over its subjects through what I interpret as an ideological practice of social engineering. Going to the beach, or *tasyeef*, i.e. summering, was, and remains, a rare opportunity for youth to mix, away from restrictive social norms, which dictate that they live with their parents until marriage-age. The mid-century Egyptian modern State capitalized on the possibility of romance and courtship in this unconstrained setting despite the enduring social stigmas around the "liberalization" of sexual relations. In this essay, I will show that the infrastructural production of the beach as the site for leisure and romance aimed ultimately at reorganizing domesticity and governing desire and sexuality. It also masked the militarization of Egypt's desert and the repression of its Bedouin communities. This process intensified with Nasser in a moment where nationalism for a newly formed postcolonial republic trumped tribal affiliation.[2]

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## Engineering a Transformation of the Littoral Edge

Before becoming the site for leisure and romance, the sea in Egypt was the space for maritime trade. After the Suez Canal construction in 1859, port cities became canal cities with a colonial-expat community connected to the canal's administration (Figure 18.1).[3] For this colonial-expat community, the seaside was not just a space to be managed by controlling the flow of materials that came through it. Instead, as evident in postcards from the period, it was also a space for leisure. Temporary wooden and reed changing cabins were set up, recalling the cabins and bathing boxes of 19th-century Europe, which themselves were inspired by Tiki huts and Bedouin tents.[4] In Egypt, in response to a vernacular vocabulary of fishing huts and other temporary Bedouin structures and watersheds that were already by the seaside, the Tiki-Bedouin hut was reformulated (Figure 18.2). At this moment, breakwaters and dams had not yet been built, so building with temporary and cheap materials, such as straw reed, was practical for annual renewal and reconstruction.[5] Though non-permanent, the presence of these structures on the beach was enough to signal a visual order that connoted the privilege of having leisure time and signified the sharing of the same tastes and symbolic practices by this elite class.[6] In parallel to constructing cabanas that enacted a fantasy of vernacular and indigenous forms and materials, the same colonial elite was also interested in utilizing modern materials, including reinforced concrete, to project an image of power and faith in the possibilities of


**FIGURE 18.1** A postcard showing the city of Port Said, a port town that became a canal city after the construction of the Suez Canal in 1859. Image courtesy of the author.

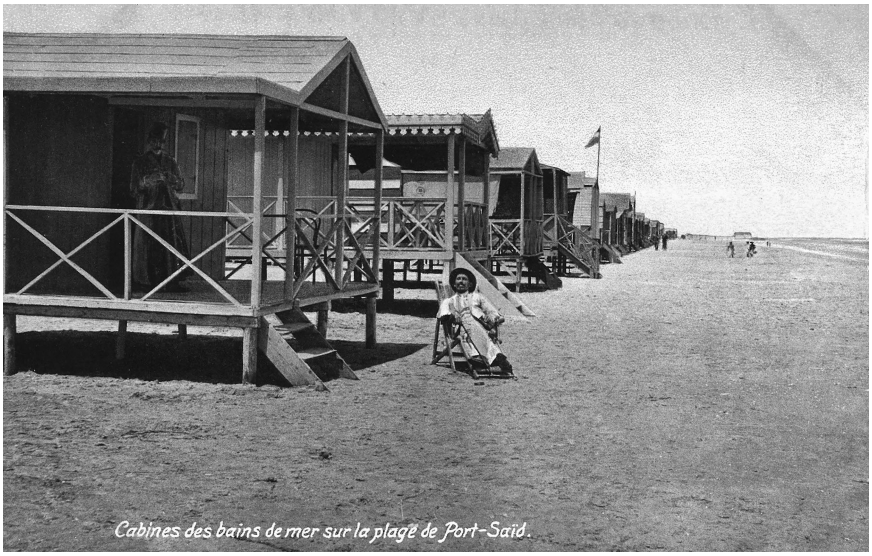


**FIGURE 18.2** An example of beach cabins in Port Said as depicted in a postcard from the 1910 to the 1920s. Image courtesy of the author.

science and progress for the "mastery of nature (including human nature)."[7] The first use of concrete in the Middle East was in the coastal town of Port Said to erect a lighthouse (1869–1870) designed by French architect Francois Coignet. Infrastructure projects such as the Suez Canal were also using concrete.

Before the erection of cabana structures for colonial officers to enjoy the coast, Muhammad Ali, the Albanian-Ottoman governor of Egypt, had erected a palace in Ras El-Tin at the easternmost edge of Alexandria mid-19th century, which served as a summer recluse.[8] Following Muhammad Ali, between 1863 and 1879, the Khedive Ismail took an interest in developing Alexandria, establishing El Raml district and erecting a palace there, and connecting it east through a new trolley system that took passengers to Abu Kir.[9] The second phase of extending the Alexandrian coast east for the purpose of *summering* came with the Khedive Abass Helmi II from 1892 to 1914, who erected the Al-Montazah palace for himself in large gardens on reclaimed agricultural plots in 1892.[10] This last development paved the way for other court members to catch the trend and build their own summer retreats on surrounding agrarian parcels.

In an effort to reverse the elitist distinction associated with Al-Montazah and the colonial camping sites, one of Nasser's first moves after seizing power in 1952 was to convert the palace gardens of Al-Montazah to public parks, a nod to his socialist agenda. He also developed the Palestine Hotel on the site, a nod to his Pan-Arab ambitions. This hotel was inaugurated in 1964 and hosted two Arab summits that same year. Nasser also initiated the construction of cooperative beach towns sanctioned by the State, among them, Al-Maamoura which lay directly adjacent to Al-Montazah and the towns of Ras El Bar and Gamasa further

East. Newly expropriated agricultural land seized from landowners post-revolution provided the land for developing these towns (Figure 18.3). Conceived as "tourist villages" rather than "hotel" typologies, the towns connected visually and in scale to a rural organization. They offered a chance to test models and arrangements intended to modernize rural villages.

The tourist villages employed a modernist vocabulary in their architecture, which became the brand associated with his regime. Nasser's ambition to employ modernist materials such as concrete, on the one hand, mimicked the language of colonial powers, communicating that "…only those who have…scientific knowledge to discern and create [a] superior social order are fit to rule in the new age."[11] But on the other hand, Nasser's use of modernist forms communicated a contrary desire to distance himself from colonial aesthetics rather than mimic them and usher instead, a new era of progress signaled by buildings dressed in concrete, with brise-soleil screens, patios, and sharp angular forms. A generation of modern architects in Egypt, perhaps the most prolific of which was Sayed Karim, had already argued for this espousal of modernism as an agent for the nation's progress as far back as the 1930s. In *Al-Emara* magazine, the first Arabic language architectural journal, Karim explained his vision of architecture and its relation to a secular modernist perspective of Egyptian identity, a vision that Nasser later followed:

> Architecture has begun to be liberated from the past and is headed towards science and innovation, supported by research, industrial production, and intellectual effort…Our role as architects is to move towards this modern future built on science. We need to join the world stage in developing and applying research adapted to our climate and social conditions. The concept of holding on to old traditions is wrong, and so is advocating for the maintenance of old styles because they are part of our national identity […] Maintaining tradition is regressive[…].[12]

The cooperative modernist beach townhomes were to be inhabited over the entirety of the summer season rather than as serving as day-use structures. Middle- and upper-middle-class families were the target consumers for these developments. Though the intention was to make them affordable, in the end, they served a new elite class associated with the regime. However, the Egyptian State was still interested in making the beach accessible to a broader segment of the population and promoting beach-going as a national right gained after the revolution. New post-revolution labor laws formalized annual holidays, echoing Soviet socialist ambitions to create productive labor and productive rest conditions.[13]

Camping along the coast was the solution for inexpensive and purposeful vacations for all social classes. Along the Mediterranean coast, particularly in Alexandria, a network of campsites for unionized farmers, students, and factory workers was set up in response to this need. In a supplement to the July 1964 issue of the State's *Al Musawir* magazine, titled *The Summer*, the back pages outline


**FIGURE 18.3** An advertisement from state-owned *Al Musawir* magazine promoting the new cooperative beach town of Al-Ma'amoura developed by the Egyptian Authority for Construction and Tourist Development. Image courtesy of the author.

how farmers, workers, and students can access these affordable summer camping vacations subsidized by the government through their unions (Figure 18.4).[14] The accessibility and openness of the beach campsite to all segments meant that the government could have a broader reach to communicate its messages through the beach as a media.


**FIGURE 18.4** Images depicting camping at the beach published in *Al Musawir* magazine, Special Issue: Summer, 1964. The title reads "A Summer Beach Vacation for Pennies!" Image courtesy of the author.

Though alleged to be an open and utopic space of accessibility, the beach masked the militarization of Bedouin land, where eventually much of the development of the coast west of Alexandria took place post-Nasser. The construction of these tourist villages on desert land originally belonging to Bedouin communities was facilitated by laws put in place during Nasser's regime, for example: "Law 124, the Desert Law enacted in 1958, and further modified in 1964 stipulated that tribal possession of land was no longer recognized and instead, that desert lands were considered state property."[15] [16] If a Bedouin chose to settle, they could be approved for a land title from the government. However, this process was not guaranteed because it required sedentarization, atypical for these communities, and even then, did not necessarily grant them proof of ownership. The government confiscated their lands and developed them for leisure purposes. Later in the 1980s and 1990s, private real estate developers built more tourist villages on land purchased from the government. Yet, all these efforts did not allow the State to fulfill its control ambitions and its desires to repress its Bedouin population. Some Bedouin populations were instead empowered in a trickle-down effect of wealth and power when private developers struck informal deals to negotiate building on their lands—an undesirable after-effect of developing the coast. The beach, therefore, became a site for repression and concealment under a sand and sea rug of utopian leisure, fulfillment, and escapism. And yet it remains an elusive space, with a complexity that is neither linear nor deterministic.

Molding the coast for leisure was a complex endeavor that involved the coordination of multiple physical engineering and infrastructural gestures such as breakwaters and seawalls and a network of roads and water pipes.[17] The government commissioned Edoardo Almagi, an Italian engineer and contractor, to work on a breakwater for the Western Port in Alexandria from 1906 to 1908 and constructed another breakwater made of artificial boulders toward the sea in the eastern port of Silsilah from 1929 to 1934.[18, 19] Dentamaro & Cartareggia, another Italian contractor, developed a waterfront promenade between Chatby and Camp Cesar in the 1920s and extended this promenade between Stanley Bay and Montazah in the 1930s. They were also involved in developing a cabin arena that functioned as a terraced concrete seawall at Stanley beach that same year.[20] These seawalls facilitated the installment of the coastal road that ran east to west of Alexandria, parallel to the sea (Figure 18.5). Dentamaro & Cartareggia also added a series of docks and marinas to retain shifting sands and reduce the impact of waves eroding at the coastal edge. Interlocking concrete tetrapods added in the late 1960s continued these efforts to absorb and dissipate the energy of the waves.

Access to the Mediterranean beach towns was by train from Cairo but was also made possible through the completion of the Cairo-Alexandria road, initiated by the Anglo-Dutch petroleum company Shell in the 1930s but completed in 1959 by the new regime and touted as their accomplishment.[21] The viability of developing the beach west toward Libya was limited due to distance from Cairo and difficulty of transportation, and a lack of services such as access to potable water, which impeded the further development of Matruh, a tourist destination.[22] Developing westward to occupy all of Egypt's Mediterranean coastal


**FIGURE 18.5** A postcard from 1942 of the Stanley Bay beach cabins built by Italian contractors Dentamaro & Cartareggia. Photo courtesy of Tom Beazley and Jeff Crisdale. It was originally posted to Flickr by aussiejeff at https://www.flickr.com/photos/88572252@N06/8088532710.

front was a challenge that only a state with technical capability could accomplish. The development of this northwestern stretch did not materialize until the 1980s, with the exceptions of sporadic constructions in the late 1960s and 1970s in the towns of Marsa Matruh and King Mariout, often pioneered by the Alexandrian-Greek community.[23]

## The Beach as a Site for Social Engineering

A modern state capable of sculpting and engineering its coastal edge also desired to sculpt its subjects through determining choices related to their bodies and exterior forms of expression. The beach became the space for promoting a particular image of the ideal modern citizen. For women, this meant the removal of the veil. Bodies that did not fit the glamorous image of Westernized modernity that new beach developments aspired toward were excluded—bodies that wore the *galabiya*, bodies of *fellahin* and Bedouin populations.[24]

The beach was the ideal tabula rasa for testing new social relations by encouraging romantic unions and mixing genders along its shores. The encouragement of marriage based on conjugal love was increasingly the agenda of mid-century Egypt.[25] Historian Lisa Pollard notes the obsession with state-sponsored literature and privately funded press from the 1870s onward with what it means to be Egyptian, focusing on marital and domestic habits.[26] In one article, a writer argued that "the biggest problem affecting domestic life was the marital practices

of a new generation of Egyptian men, who were refusing to marry women who were not well educated."[27] If matching in a good marriage was no longer guaranteed through kinship ties and arranged marriage, encouraging romantic compatibility put pressure on women to reform themselves to satisfy male interest and serve as good mothers. Further, encouraging romantically companionate unions was also a way to tame other unruly forms of male sexuality favoring the normative monogamous heterosexual couple.[28]

Qasim Amin, "the father of modern Egyptian feminism," also advocated for love marriages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For Amin, love marriage was the space where spouses were not held together through domination but in respectful companionship. Amin argued that only with the reform of the familial body would the Egyptian State achieve a progressive political body.[29] Amin's ideas have been critiqued as not necessarily feminist nor necessarily against the patriarchy. Political theorist Timothy Mitchell argues that Amin's ideas "eroded the custom of forming joint households."[30] Anthropologist Lila Abu Lughod contends that the modern family "divided women from one another, gave them new tasks, placed them under the control of husbands, and opened up the family to sexual exploitation, state control and new forms of discipline."[31] It decentralized power from large family clans that lived together, breaking them into smaller, more legible, and manageable units. However, these criticisms are contemporary; at the time, Amin's ideas gained valence with feminists and with the modern State, which promoted conjugal love and monogamous marriage. The beach became the site to inspire the blossoming of these types of marriages.

## The Beach Film: A Manual for Expected Social Roles

Seeing the opportunity to promote a conjugal love agenda, Nasser sponsored a series of summer camp beach films as a way to do so. These films included titles such as *The Summer Vacation* (1966), *Beach Fun* (1967), *The Women's Camp* (1967), *Marriage in the Modern Way* (1968), and *My Father Atop a Tree* (1969). The beach film was often a musical with fantastic colors, where bodies were exposed and sexualized, where everything was excessive and dreamy, and couples fell in love in two minutes, and love is often portrayed with sensual kissing (Figure 18.6). *My Father Atop a Tree,* for example, lured filmgoers by noting on its posters the number of kisses the film contained. Beach films emphasized happy endings for the couples they depicted. The camping trip signaled a magical turning point in their lives for the protagonists. In these films, patriarchal authority is not challenged per se but reimagined, allowing the introduction and discussion of ideas about women entering the workforce and empowering them to choose a marriage spouse—but still within bounds of patriarchal approval.

Emblematic of the beach film genre is the 1967 film *The Women's Camp,* directed by Khalil Shawqi, which, to the sound of lapping waves, foregrounds efforts to modernize the nation through updating women and the institution of marriage. In the film, camping on the beach is depicted as a utopic setting for


**FIGURE 18.6** Poster promoting the 1960 film *The Girls and the Summer.* Image courtesy of the author.

mixing classes and genders. In the opening sequence, we see a group of men preparing a meal and performing other chores that would have been otherwise assigned to women. The camera shifts from the men's coastal campground, with its white tents in an austere setting, to the women's camp, with its tents enlivened by 1960s geometric and floral patterns in sync with a manicured, designed, and domesticated landscape. Enter a prim and proper Ms. Nadya, the stern director of the women's camp. The director of the men's camp, Mr. Hasan, approaches Ms. Nadya to suggest an introductory social event. She refuses, claiming that the two genders should not mix. She says this as the camera pans to the white picket fence that encircles the women's campground. The white grids and lines established by the fence overlaid on the natural setting of the beach evoke her repressive and circumscribed attitude.

In the next scene, the young men strategize meeting the women, all of whom are gymnasts. When one of the men suggests a sports competition as a fun way to meet, the other men confess that they fear that the women would outpace them. As with the opening scene, the director establishes the allure of modern society with his portrait of inverted and unexpected gender roles. At the same time, he affirms the supremacy of men in his depiction of Mr. Hasan. The latter

is depicted as a man in control, while Ms. Nadya and the other women characters range from prudish, erratic, and emotional, to sexually immature and borderline licentious.

As Ms. Nadya and Mr. Hasan warm up to each other, she tells him that should any man be interested in her, he would have to seek her family's approval first, formalizing the relationship. Ms. Nadya is depicted as conservative in that sense. However, she is also depicted as embracing feminist ideas of women working outside the home. The film's message is that, while women should be open to choosing their partner through dating, they should still honor the importance of family approval. Additionally, Mr. Hasan says he feels that, although women can pursue a career, their "main job in life" is being a wife and a good mother. His ideas intersect with those of the State that careers and education make women better company as wives and better mothers for future generations. Entering the workforce provides the household with extra income; it serves the family's interest only, but pursuit of a woman's complete financial independence is not a goal into and unto itself. In this way, the film reinforces a nationalist agenda rather than a genuinely feminist one.

In another scene, the film promotes nationalist agendas, this time emphasizing a plan of collective responsibility and freedom within bounds. When two men from the men's camp sneak a recording device into a women's tent to eavesdrop, Mr. Hasan seizes the tape and plays it for all students to hear. It reveals that the students have been continually breaking the rules such as camp curfews and when and how the men and women can mix. As a result, Mr. Hasan and Ms. Nadya decide that no one in the camp will engage in collective activities. The students misinterpret this punishment to mean that they will be more in control of their time individually. One of them proclaims excitedly, "long live democracy." Mr. Hasan retorts, "No. This is not democracy. This is chaos, and chaos, in my opinion, is maximal punishment for those who do not know how to live in freedom. Organized freedom." One of the students objects, saying, "But Mr. Hasan, if two of us misbehaved, does it mean that we should all be punished?" Mr. Hasan responds, "Sometimes the collective is accountable for the action of individuals within it." The dialogue thereby becomes a manual for expected social roles of model citizens toward the modern nation. In this way, the film alters the perception that the beach is a playground with unlimited freedom and instead marks the extent of this freedom.

In the final scenes of *The Women's Camp*, the female campers are invited to the party of a wealthy hotel owner, Esawy Beh. The scene depicts a group of women dancing with abandon within a structure that resembles a white metal cage, where they seem captive to their wild desires. Also present are characters considered deviants by the State: a flamboyantly gay character and a mother discovered to be a pimp. We understand that Esawy Beh's beach crowd, away from the social vigilance of the city, have entered into a web of open relationships outside of expected norms and definitely in counterpoint to the State's plans for using the beach.

In a scene the morning after the party, Esawy Beh invites Ms. Nadya and the students to spend the day at his hotel. Esawy Beh takes Ms. Nadya to his room, locks the door, and aggressively attempts to make a sexual advance on her. The scene cuts to Mr. Hasan searching for her with one of the students. They find her submerging her attacker's head in a bathtub full of water. Ms. Nadya is not passive or powerless. She has managed to handle the situation herself. Mr. Hasan and Ms. Nadya are reunited and almost kiss—a happy ending. In this way, the film intentionally elides the truth around rape, claiming instead that dating is not dangerous because women can navigate sexual violence independently. This misrepresentation reinforces the film's main message that dating and gender mixing can be safe, and dating can be worth it because you can end up with a compatible partner like Mr. Hasan.

Mr. Hasan and Ms. Nadya leave the room and enter the hotel lobby, where students are fighting in a scene of chaos. In the background, we see a water fountain, an artificial water body, suggesting that the hotel's artificial and constructed space, divorced from the possibility of feedback and connection to and from nature, will only yield disorder. This is contrary to the campsite, where subjects are still connected to nature and therefore have happier endings. The opposition between the two settings we are shown in the film, the hotel and the campsite, and their distance and closeness from a natural environment may be analogous to another dichotomy the film sets up between modernity and tradition. In this second dichotomy, extreme modernization depicted as an "out-of-control" sexual liberation is set contra to a more controlled and "gradual blending" of modernity with tradition in a model where conjugal love and dating are still rooted within the traditional and "natural" patriarchal order of marriage.

## Conclusion

Post-Nasser, as Egypt's economy liberalized, the development on Egypt's desert coastline continues to extend west and now covers 490 km with high-density summer resort compounds as an uninterrupted wall.[32] The more recent and most extensive compounds are military complexes and towers—a display of military power. Though reminiscent of Nasser's in demonstrating authoritarian state control, current development trends are distinct in that authoritarianism is mixed with an explicit neoliberal agenda. Beach properties are often intended for speculation and sold to investors locally and from the Gulf (Figure 18.7).

Beach films continue to discuss marriage and sexual tensions, as the beach continues its role as a space of freedom and possibility for those still living with their parents. However, as the cinema industry has changed and diversified in its production avenues, so too have the political messages of the new beach films. In the 2019 independent short film *The Trap* by director Nada Riyadh, an unmarried couple travels to a run-down beach house for the weekend. The woman, Aya, attempts to break up with her boyfriend Islam and is met with violence and resistance as he threatens to scandalize her with her family for having pre-marital

**FIGURE 18.7** Photo from the northwestern coastal development of *Telal*. Image courtesy of the author.

sex with him, a practice that is still frowned upon. In the following scene, he seems to yield to her request for the breakup. As they are heading out, he changes his mind and rapes her to the backdrop sound of the waves. The camera zooms out from the rape scene, tracks out to the patio, and leaves the viewer looking out to the sea as the film closes. The seaside that had promised so much for engineering a "modern" and progressive Egyptian woman is now, instead, the backdrop to a trapped and powerless subject.[33]

## Notes

1 Ministry of Social Affairs, *Leisure Manual: Campsites* (Cairo: Ministry Press, 1955), 2.

2 The sedentarization process of Bedouin communities in Egypt started as far back as Muhamad Ali's reign; however, it intensified with Nasser and post-Nasser for two reasons: as James Scott explains in *Seeing Like the State* that "…nomads and pastoralists (such as Berbers and Bedouins)…have always been a thorn in the side of states" (1998, 2). In the Egyptian case post-independence, this has to do with messy political allegiance which transcends borders posing a threat to conceptions of a homogenous Egyptian State. For example, in the coastal regions I study in this paper, "The Awlad 'Ali tribe…former sheepherders, settled along the coast from the west of Alexandria to the Libyan border …describe themselves as Arabs and claim an affiliation with the Bedouin tribes of eastern Libya…" From: Lila Abu Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (1990): 42–43. For more on the history of sedentarization of Bedouins in Egypt, see Gabriel Baer, "Some Aspects of Bedouin Sedentarization in 19th Century Egypt," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 5, no. 1/2 (1957), 84–98.

3 Ola Seif, "Egyptian Beaches: The Canal Trio," *Ahram English Online* (August 4, 2015), available at https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/32/0/136958/Folk/0/Egyptian-beaches-The-Canal-trio-.aspx.
4 See for example: Diane Kane, "San Diego TIKI: Creating a Post-War Tropical Paradise." Conference Paper presented as part of the *Coastal Landscapes and Politics of Leisure in the Global Sunbelt* session chaired by Sibel Bozdogan and Panayiota Pyla at the 2021 Society of Architectural Historians; "History of Beach Huts," available at https://www.beachhuts.com/history-of-beach-huts; "Brighton Bathing Box History – Pre and Post European Settlement to 1930," Brighton Bathing Box Association Inc., 2008: http://www.brightonbathingbox.org.au/History.html. Retrieved 1st of March 2021.
5 Moro Baruk, "Ras El Bar: My Vacation's Paradise," *Historical Society of Jews from Egypt Online* (July 10, 2016), available at https://www.hsje.org/mystory/moro_baruk/ras_el_bar_my_vacations_paradise.html
6 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* Translation by Routledge Kegan & Paul, (Oxford: Routledge Classics, 1984), 28, 33.
7 James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.
8 Ola Seif, "Alexandria: Coast of Passion," *Ahram English Online* (August 11, 2014), available at https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/32/0/108206/Folk/0/Alexandria-Coast-of-passion.aspx.
9 "Al Maamoura the First Touristic Village in Egypt," *El Fajr Online* (October 19, 2017), available at https://www.elfagronline.com/2798379
10 Seif, "Alexandria: Coast of Passion,"; "The History of Alexandrian Beaches: From Private Bathing Sites for Foreigners and Pashas to 50 Beaches for Rent," *El Yowm El Sabe'a Online* (May 8, 2018), available at https://www.youm7.com/story/2018/5/8/50/3782798-ل-تاوشبلاو-بناجالل-ةصاخ-تامامح-نم-ةيردنكسإلا-ئطاوش-خيرات-روص
11 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 94.
12 Sayed Karim, "What Is Architecture?" Majallat al-Imarah 1, No. 1 (1939): Cairo. [also titled Emara, Alemara],11–10.
13 After the nationalization of the Suez Canal, Nasser looked East to the Soviet Union for new allies therefore inspiring his Soviet-like policies, including those relating to labor and leisure. For more on socialist vacations, see Diane P. Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 12.
14 "The Summer Supplement," *Al Musawir Magazine* (July, 1964): 20.
15 A. R. George, "Processes of Sedentarization of Nomads in Egypt, Israel and Syria: A Comparison." *Geography* 58, no. 2 (1973): 168.
16 For more on this, see Noor Naga's "Arabs on the Beach in Alexandria," *The Common,* April 30, 2018, available at https://www.thecommononline.org/arabs-on-the-beach-in-alexandria/
17 "The End of Summer Camps on Matruh's Beaches," *Al Musawir Magazine*, September 1963, 24. "The Opening of the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road," November 23, 2014. YouTube video, 01:17, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFeBKbsu3-0
18 Milva Giacomelli, "Italian Construction Companies in Egypt," in *Building Beyond the Mediterranean, Studying The Archives of European Business (1860–1970)*, ed. Claudine Piaton, Ezio Godoli and David Peyceré, trans. Maryse Bideault, Giada Chanaz Saint Amour, Anita Conrade, Francesca Giovannini and Jane MacAvock, Publications de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Honoré Clair, InVisu (CNRS-INHA, Arles, 2012), 50.
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20 Giacomelli, "Italian Construction Companies in Egypt," 52.
21 The only documentation I have found so far on this engineering history is this video of the opening events of the road as captured in this video, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFeBKbsu3-0
22 Matruh, a mostly Bedouin beach-side town on the northwestern edge of the country near the border with Libya and 200 kms west of where the World War II battle of El-Alamein was fought, suffered from this water problem until the late 1960s. A 1963 article in *Al Musawir* magazine titled "The End of Summer Camps on Matruh's Beaches" indicated that historically, in the early 20th century, Matruh received its fresh water supply from ships that came to its shores with water supplies. See "The End of Summer Camps on Matruh's Beaches," *Al Musawir* (September 1963): 24.
23 This community was later marginalized in a context of Arab nationalist sentiments sparked by Nasser and their marginalization continued on in Sadat times but through an Islamic rather than Arab nationalist exclusion.
24 Today, this masking includes repression of veiled women from entry into certain beaches in the North Coast because of their "plebian" image. For more on this, see Hend El-Behary, "Stories of Veiled Women Banned from Entering Resorts and Restaurants," *Egypt Independent* (July 29, 2015), available at https://egyptindependent.com/stories-veiled-women-banned-entering-resorts-and-restaurants/
25 Kenneth M. Cuno, *Modernizing Marriage: Family, Ideology, and Law in Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 77.
26 Ibid., 132.
27 *Al-Manar Journal*, Issue 6, 1901, 339.
28 Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 281.
29 Qtd. in Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805–1923* (London: University of California Press, 2015),157.
30 Qtd. in Lila Abu Lughod, "The Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt: Selective Repudiation as a Dynamic of Postcolonial Cultural Politics," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 256.
31 Ibid., 256.
32 David Sims, *Egypt's Desert Dreams: Development or Disaster?* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 190 and 194.
33 I would like to thank the editors of this volume for their thoughts as I crafted this paper. I would also like to thank Marilyn Levine for her guidance and invaluable editorial feedback.