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The Emergence of Nation Sub-Branding: A Case Study on the Discourses of 'The National Developer of Egypt'

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the emerging strategy of nation *sub-branding* and critically argues for the domestic implications it has on national identities and the falsely promoted tradition of social justice. The study situates itself within the critical cultural stream of nation branding research, rejecting, however, prior scholarly presumption that a segmented nation brand could mean less marginalization. Embracing Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse and their conception of hegemony over identity, this qualitative study looks into a sector-driven case study from Egypt: City Edge Developments (CED), a state-owned real estate brand that caters to the high-end market while promoting itself as 'The National Developer of Egypt'. This (sub-)brand had its début in 2018 with focus on the new urban development projects, including the New Administrative Capital and New Alamein City. Two research questions directed the design of the study: First, observing the meanings CED has fixated through its discursive articulations of the new urban projects by way of scrutinizing selected marketing materials. Second, nine interviews were conducted with Egyptian youths to understand how CED's articulations of the new national urban projects influence their perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand. Concerned with the discourses of the brand and those of the participants, the findings of the study point out to strong notions of antagonism amid the brand's construction of an imagined society that is seen as alienating and that only privileges the elite while serving economic and political agendas. The results unfold into the conclusion that hegemony intervenes even in the non-monolithic structure of nation branding, thus asserting that the emerging sub-branding strategy within the practice is as problematic to the domestic consumption of the nation brand.

Keywords: Nation branding, sub-branding, social justice, hegemony, Laclau and Mouffe's Theory of Discourse

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1. Introduction

In the beginning of 2015 Egypt announced the launch of a *New Administrative Capital*, proposed as a relief for highly congested Cairo while being envisioned as the future "*center of the Middle East*" (Abu Zaid, 2020). The launch was in fact the start of a new wave of national urban development projects: *New Mansoura City*, *New Alamein City*, among many others, followed in construction across the country year after another. One cannot simply overlook the labeling of 'new' in every instance. It seems to suggest that Egypt is going through some investment-attractive changes—arguably, an attempt at nation branding toward a competitive identity. The label 'new' in marketing terms, is believed to offer an opportunity for a leap in competition, whether it is a new brand or a relaunch (Wheelwright & Sasser, 1989). While it is not within the scope of this study to entertain marketing and corporate logic, this is rather a prelude to the conception of nation branding as a corporate-inspired practice of commodification (Kaneva, 2011b). In a PowerPoint presentation subtitled "*Investment Opportunities*" by the Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities (MHUC) for an annual regional conference in Egypt, the new capital's mission is expressed to provide "*a respectable life, social justice and sustainable development*" (2019, p. 9). This, as an example, reiterates nation branding's capital drive.

Nations are increasingly becoming regarded and managed as brands, developed with certain target audiences in mind for commercial gains; e.g., foreign investment, tourism, trade, etc. Taking its inspiration from the monolithic structure of corporate branding, nation branding proposes that it is within its capacity to create a holistically coordinated picture of a given nation. In this sense, nation branding tends to come off as a tradition for social justice (Jansen, 2008; Browning, 2014). On the contrary, a growing critical stream of scholars argue that nation branding—as a neoliberal expression of a supposedly *one-brand* nation—fuels marginalization of national identities that are of less marketing value (Jansen, 2008; Kaneva, 2011b; Valaskivi, 2013; Browning, 2015). Among some of the concerned researchers, it was

suggested to shift away from the monolithic brand architecture in order to evade the trap of representations (Kaneva, 2011b; Kulcsár & Yum, 2011). Recently, however, one can observe that the emergence of sub-branding strategies in certain developing countries is resulting in even more explicit injustice, where catering to the niche segment of a nation conveys unattainable national identities for the masses. That said, and in the sense that the long standing tradition for equality may be at stake, the aim of this thesis is to examine the emerging model of nation sub-branding, the meanings it generates and their implications on national identity and the sense of social justice. The study uses City Edge Developments (hereafter CED), branded '*The National Developer of Egypt*', as the empirical case for investigation.

1.1 Contextual Background

Demographics and the Land Bank under Neoliberal Governance

According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the Egyptian population hit 100 million in 2020 with a growth rate of around 2% that continues to represent a central challenge for the government (Egyptian Streets, 2020). One significant dimension of the challenge can be seen in the density of the population: Only 6.8% of Egypt's total land area is inhabited, with the Greater Cairo Region (GCR) being the most populated with around 20 million residents (CAPMAS, 2018). The GCR had long reached a state of chaos: pollution, congestion, to mention a few, besides the troubling issue of informal settlements which was left unaddressed by former governors and the private sector (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998). With a non-slowing population growth rate, developing new settlements was always a primary strategy to addressing the issue in hand without so much success as anticipated (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2016). While intended to cater to the middle class and below, the phenomenon of gated communities arose accommodating the upper classes instead amid neoliberal governance (Metwally & Abdalla, 2013). A 'Population Situation Analysis' study in 2016 showed that below-line-of-poverty percentage doubled between the periods 1999/2000 and 2012/2013, reaching 27.8% in 2015 which was estimated at ±23 million (Ragab et al., 2016). About 50% of the overall poverty rate is present in Egypt's metropolitan area (World Bank, 2019).

The gated-communities phenomenon kicked off first at Egypt's Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts in the late 70s with private high-end vacation villages, then gradually became adopted in the capital toward the second half of the 90s (Metwally & Abdalla, 2013). The private sector having dominance over the real estate market (AmCham Egypt, 2016) quickly grasped the opportunities behind Egypt's vast land bank and the GCR's urban dilemma. Affordable housing for the lower segments is regarded to be in conflict with the developers' interest in high profits (Hendawy & Stollmann, 2020). Accordingly, the private sector has been competing over a small segment of the society; roughly speaking, 15% of the population (AmCham Egypt, 2016). With a commercial promise for a superlative life, today there are a number of self-sufficient communities projects: e.g. green parks, international schools, hospitals, universities, shopping malls, social clubs, etc., all amenities within private borders.

The real estate industry over the past decade developed its own branding and communication strategies in a constant attempt to frame the uniqueness of their communities, deliberately positioned to be unlike the 'rest'. Arabic, for example, the official language of the country, is remarkably disappearing in the industry's communication. As noted by Hendawy, most real estate outdoor advertisements in Egypt are in English (press-b as cited in Hendawy & Stollmann, 2020). Aboulwafa (2019) pointed out that the English language has gained higher integration in the Egyptian society. With that said, one can note that there is an increasing tendency to unconsciously generalize the life of merely 15% of the nation. Not only an issue of language choice, real estate brands are also projecting an image of life and lifestyles as a utopian, picture-perfect reality (see Abotera & Ashoub, 2017). Outdoor advertising across the country's most inhabited cities has majorly altered the cities' landscape spreading both vertically (e.g. double-decker billboards) as well as horizontally (mega outdoor installations). Urban issues aside, however, the exposure to such real estate communications is not limited to their intended target audience, the whole nation comes across them on daily basis (Hendawy & Stollmann, 2020), aside from other traditional mass media. While this phenomenon was initiated by the private sector, in a way reflecting on the lives, the

lifestyles, and the interests of the businessmen involved, the problem becomes more questionable with the début of City Edge Developments (CED), '*The National Developer of Egypt*', targeting the high-end market.

"The [High-End] National Developer of Egypt"

In a joint partnership between *New Urban Communities Authority* (NUCA) and *Housing and Development Bank* (HDBEG)—an Egyptian stock company established in 1979, CED penetrated the real estate market in January 2018 with two projects worth EGP 5.5bn (roughly US\$350 million) of investments ("NUCA, HDBEG join forces", 2018). Empirically observing CED's brand identity within the portfolio of the governmental brands (e.g. NUCA, see Appendix A), one would not fail to recognize the visual differences. In other words, CED's brand logo and brand look and feel seem to have wanted to uplift the image of the public sector. *Amr El Kady, back then CEO of the company, was quoted in Daily News Egypt, "we believe in building a product that has a significant and redeeming impact on our lives, behaviors, and future decisions,"* ("NUCA, HDBEG join forces," 2018). The use of first-person plural pronoun (i.e., our) in El Kady's statement could be another manifestation of a taken-for-granted generalization in the society and specifically within the developers sphere. CED did not reinvent the wheel for the category's communication strategies, they followed the trend and the footsteps of the private sector market players, namely, English communication and aspirational visuals.

The company's English-only website (<https://cityedgedevelopments.com/>) showcases the different projects they are developing using a virtual tour experience (see Appendix B). Among these projects, New Alamein City; "[a] *new coastal city based on integrated development [that] provides a diversified economic base...*" ([MHUC], 2019, p. 66). Labeled as the "*diamond of investment*," New Alamein City is envisioned in an all-year round Mediterranean destination with capacity to accommodate over 3 million by 2030 (Kamaly, 2020). The mega project includes *The Gate Towers* (two 44-floor serviced residential towers), *North Edge* (four self-sufficient residential towers), *Downtown* (mixed-use and commercial), and *Mazarine* (mix of villas and chalets), coming hand-in-hand with the country's ambition for "[positioning] *Egypt as a foremost regional destination for investment, tourism and*

businesses” (Kamaly, 2020). The Gate's launch campaign in mid 2019 with the message "*Rise Luxuriously*" (see Appendix C) was spread all over the capital's outdoor network with a strategic purpose to raise awareness and, ultimately, generate domestic sales lead. The primary social issue in question becomes elevated as '*The National Developer of Egypt*' brand (or rather say, an emerging sub-brand) projects meanings of an imagined reality that is far from what the average citizen of the nation can withstand— arguably, a feature of hegemony.

1.2 Research Problem

Critical scholars in nation branding research have mostly been concerned with the foreign influence throughout the branding process, the selective representation of national identities, and the branding claims that were not up to the capacity of some nations (i.e., overpromising). The body of scholarly work within the cultural stream has captured many angles (e.g., Kaneva, 2011b; Aronczyk, 2013; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2016), including the perspective of the agents involved in the development process, the domestic perspective of certain nation branding campaigns, as well as some campaign analysis, and the role of the media. Valaskivi (2013) noted that while the literature shows to some extent different practices in different countries, the common logic of nation branding remains the same. Thus far, in almost every instance, the central problem seemed to stem from the approaches where the nation was presented as a *totality*—i.e. the monolithic structure. The emergence of nation sub-brands might not be novel, although almost absent in empirical studies. It is, arguably, due to the prevailing tendency to only spot nation branding practices when the nation is put into an explicit context of a brand (e.g., *Cool Japan*, *Colombia is Passion*, *Kosovo...The Young Europeans*, etc.). In this sense, there is a gap in knowledge with regard to the non-monolithic nation branding strategies, the meanings they intend to project, on one side, and their implications on national identity and social justice, on the other side.

1.3 Study Aim and Research Questions

In principle falling under the field of strategic communication, which "is [about] *the purposeful use of communication by an organization or other entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals*" (Zerfass et al., 2018, p. 493), the thesis follows a critical stance against the ethical negligence and social abuse of strategic conversations by nations that, motivated by economic returns, choose to act as marketable brands. More specifically, the study aims to contribute with new knowledge to the critical cultural stream of nation branding research, in particular, providing an empirical view on the emerging segmented nation brand architecture; e.g., sector driven, and its consequences on national identity and the domestic perception of social justice thereof. Nation branding, being in itself a practice of soft power in a sociopolitical context, suggests that there is an ongoing construction of meanings to reach a certain imagined reality. That said, with a poststructuralist philosophy, discourse theory would serve as a theoretical framework to explore the organization of meanings conveyed by such an example of a nation sub-brand, deconstruct their articulations so as to trace the possible hegemonic features, and consequently understand their implications on the *imagined* nation among the youth generation. To this end, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1. What meanings has CED fixated throughout its discursive articulation of the new national urban development projects?

In this instance, the aim is to examine some of CED's communications through deconstructing the strategic signs and discursive articulations that emerge from within the brand's selective marketing materials.

RQ2. How do CED's articulations of the new national urban projects influence Egyptian youths' perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand?

The second research question here investigates the empirical phenomenon from the individual viewpoint of Egyptian youths who collectively represent a strategic significance for the nation's future. By situating their views against the backdrop of the *imagined* society, answering this research question becomes possible with different angles covered.

1.4 Research Scope and Delimitations

The current critical studies concerned with the domestic audience and the construction and representation of national identities, as mentioned earlier, utilized empirical cases that were connected to campaigns where nations were explicitly presented in terms of logos, slogans, and other communication branding material (Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2015). In contrast, the scope of this study, and its use of CED as an empirical case, is not in any way concerned with this common monolithic branding approach; i.e., the nation as a totality. CED, *The National Developer of Egypt*, is herein regarded as a sector-driven nation sub-brand. Accordingly, the research solely focuses on CED's brand communication campaigns that launched via mass media, including project-led communications for the *New Administrative Capital* and *New Alamein City*. The deliberate selection of these two mega projects is based on their parallel positioning for foreign investment and future tourism schemes, according to MHUC's presentation (2019), and as central to nation branding ambitions. That said, any other nation branding activities that might have taken place beyond this specific urban development sector and brand (i.e., CED) are excluded from the study.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter the literature review is presented in key themes with relevance to the study in question. First, it gives a brief overview of the emergence of nation branding, its practical premise, and the rise of a scholarly critique following a decade of predominance by proponents of nation branding. Second, it zooms into the critical perspective on nation branding from within the called-upon cultural approach, which is broadly concerned with the Western influence, the brand experience among the domestic audience as primary consumers of the nation brand, and its implications on national identities and individual sense of belonging. This critical theme also tackles notions of power and touches upon the role of media in projecting selective identities and the imagined monolithic nation brand. From this point onward, the literature comes into explicit connection with the empirical case drawing on the route of the study while reiterating its aim for knowledge contribution.

2.1 Nation Branding: Practice and Critique

Nation branding emerged in the second half of the 90s with the term claimed to be coined by British branding consultant, Simon Anholt (Kaneva, 2011a). In spite of different interpretations and applications over the first decade since its emergence (Fan, 2010), the field surfaced as an extension or mere adaptation of corporate branding strategies that enable nations to compete over a unique positioning in the global marketplace (Anholt, 2002; Mihailovich, 2006; Dinnie, 2016). It is widely argued that establishing nation branding as a necessity was backed by globalization and neoliberal governance (Mihailovich, 2006; Aronczyk, 2013; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2016) with commercial returns being central to the field's motives (Jansen, 2008).

Nadia Kaneva (2011a), at the heart of a critical movement in nation branding research, classified the existing body of literature into three streams. The first two, and the most predominant, being the *technical-economic* stream (e.g., Anholt,

2005; Olins, 2002; Fan, 2008) and the *political* stream (e.g., van Ham, 2008; Szondi, 2010), which have in common the reasoning of nation branding as an instrument to enhance and boost the competitive position of a nation (Kaneva, 2011a). In the third stream, referred to as the *cultural* approach (e.g., Kaneva, 2007; Jansen, 2008), lies the critical perspective toward the implications of nation branding on national identities and other sociopolitical aspects (Kaneva, 2011a). Kaneva's seminal work within the cultural stream (2011b) witnessed a notable follow-up among scholars on the critical scope of nation branding research (e.g., Aronczyk, 2013; Browning, 2015; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2016; Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018). In her latest broad assessment of the critical research, specifically within the former Eastern Bloc, Kaneva (2021) suggested that the field after its second decade has remained divided, reiterating that many wider implications tend to be overshadowed by nation branding's economic motives. Moreover, she proposed two loose categories under which the cultural studies fall: (1) *identity-oriented*, and (2) *practice-oriented*; the former being concerned with social and cultural notions of nationalism (e.g., *discourse*) and, the latter, with the political economy and the institutionalization of nation branding (2021). Plainly, this study being critical toward nation branding situates itself within the cultural stream of research and more inclined toward the *identity-oriented* category. Without dismissing possible patterns of power, the study attempts to specifically investigate the plausibility of nation branding non-monolithic structure.

2.2 The Critical Cultural Perspective on Nation Branding

In principle concerned about the top-down approach, critical researchers over the past ten years aimed to shed the light on the conflicting 'marketable' nation brand images, the process of their construction, the agents involved, and the media's role in their mediations (Kaneva, 2011b; Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2015; Sanín, 2016). A point of departure here is that, despite nation branding's ultimate interest in attracting foreign investment, tourism, trade, etc. (i.e. international audiences) (Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2018), the domestic audience has been argued to have a significant weight along the process, especially that it deals with the construction and representation of national identities (Valaskivi, 2013; Browning, 2015), which is

covered later in this chapter. Amid the controversial thought that an enhanced global image of a nation with economic outcomes would resonate across the domestic audiences; i.e., citizens, (Aronczyk, 2013), the symbolic aspect of nation branding (e.g. logo, slogan, etc.) was long paving the way to what Jansen described as an "*illusion of participation in exclusive communities, lifestyles, and experiences*" (2008, p. 126). Aronczyk (2013) touched upon the espousing of globalized modern media and the semiotic nature of nation branding, although it was contended that in later nation branding strategies, logos and slogans were reconsidered in the process so as not to play a primary role (Valaskivi, 2013). Having said that, and beyond the internal and external effects of such graphic representations of nations, a common question triggering many of the critical views was: who strategizes, envisions, and decides for the intended image of the nation brand?

Cases from post-communist Central and Eastern European countries gained notable attention in the most cited literature, where nation branding was sought as a technical solution for placing the referenced countries on the world map with differentiating identities (Kaneva, 2011b). In many cases it was noted that there were foreign branders in the process, which national governments depended on for strategic consultation and creative execution (Kaneva, 2011b; Jordan, 2014; Browning & Ferraz de Oliveira, 2017; Kaneva, 2018). This pattern was also consistent in the case of '*Colombia is Passion*'¹ where the deliberate reliance on a foreign consultant by the government was justified in terms of international targets, though ironically enough the campaign had strategically kickstarted at the domestic level before leaving the Colombian borders (Sanín, 2016). Consequently, it can be understood that the West, as source of capital, is not only a point of reference, but also a matter of aspirations and preference—aspirations in this context being foremost economic and image-oriented. In this sense, nations being motivated by the commercial idea of a competing brand, are more likely to be driven by the foreign audiences (Watson, 2012 as cited in Browning, 2015). As a matter of fact, objectives toward the international target audience could be mirroring and

¹ Colombia's nation branding campaign slogan (*Colombia es Pasión*, as translated by the referenced author)

benefiting local goals of the public and private sectors, which happen to override the interests of the domestic consumer (Sanín, 2016). Often discussed in the literature when looking at citizens as domestic consumers of the nation brand is the *nation building* process.

The Nation Brand Experience through 'Building' and 'Living'

Nation building holds in its meaning a notion of symbolic uprise, and thus points out to a change from a prior less-appealing state. Eastern European cases studied within the theoretical domain of nation branding showed that national governments were keen to build their nations' image under a new vision (e.g., governance, identities, culture, etc.), away from the haunting Soviet connotations (Kaneva & Popescu, 2011; Kaneva, 2011b; Jordan, 2014). It is likely in many instances not to distinguish between the idea of nation branding and the equally politicized concept of nation building, as they could be two sides of the same coin. Bolin and Miazhevich (2018), seeing no overlap between them, provided four clear-cut distinction points: These are, (a) the actors engaged in *building* versus *branding* a nation, (b) the target audience addressed in each of the two concepts, (c) the reliance on historical versus future contexts, and (d) the mediums used to project the intended constructed image. They argued that nation building is more about the cultural aspects that bank on historical resources and talented individuals, including political actors, to collectively construct a shared perception of a nation among its citizens, which could take place through pop culture, for example (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018). Simply put, the idea proposed is that nation building is concerned with the internal audience and that nation branding is, on the contrary, external. This study is in alignment with Bolin and Miazhevich's explanation of nation building and the idea that the domestic image of a nation "[is] *constructed via very different thought processes and experiences, with considerable emphasis on core cultural values and collective consciousness*" (Kulcsár & Yum, 2011, p. 205). However, it rejects the presupposition that nation branding solely addresses external audiences.

It is more comprehensive to talk about how nation branding seeks to onboard the domestic audience in the crafted experience of the nation brand (Volcic

& Andrejevic, 2016). That is to say, national governments and the citizens of their respective nation-states need to be aligned on what the brand should stand for, and thus collectively enact or live the branded vision. The bottom-up approach, albeit less common in practice, where the brand together with its identity and values is negotiated and accepted by all involved actors, is argued to result in higher chances for organically *living the nation brand* (Dinnie, 2016). Dinnie noted, however, that “[t]he word ‘brand’ in particular alienates many people” (2016, p. 70). Kulcsár and Yum (2011) elaborated that while nation branding had come across as a promising solution to Eastern Europe's deconstructed national identities amid inequalities and economic challenges post communism, the politicized attempts behind marketing hand-picked Hungarian identities were more problematic. They emphasized that nation branding should not be concerned solely with establishing a national image to the Western audiences, it equally requires the management of the perceived domestic image (Kulcsár & Yum, 2011). When it comes to the internal national image, however, it is not always about exclusion, albeit a primary issue in the critical literature. Nation branding and its quasi-domestic strategies do not always surface with their political agendas, subliminal factors can be imposed even when there is a national call for living the brand.

Taking into account the ethnic diversity of some nations, Sanín (2016) discussed how the branding campaign for Colombia achieved an internal success in creating a constructed national belief of what unified the country; *passion*, despite its regional differences, showing how public participation was orchestrated by a sense of patriotism. Critically speaking, the morale of the campaign with its exemplar and imaginary representation of the 'good' Colombian citizen—who did everything with passion for the benefit of their nation (e.g., favoring products that were tagged with 'Colombia is Passion')—only served political and economic agendas, even though it meant no tangible gains to the participants themselves (Sanín, 2016). Volcic and Andrejevic (2011, as cited in Sanín, 2016) criticized such political tactics for being abusive as they call upon citizens and instruct them to participate in the brand experience as a national duty. While this view might be somewhat far-fetched, given that public participation is after all voluntary, nation branding could be seen as manipulative (this paper's choice of term) from a

nationalistic perspective where there is a driving force for narratives that aim to create and sustain positive recognition of the nation inside out (Browning, 2015). Embracing the idea of promotional narratives, Mihailovich (2006) noted that “a *transparent, open and honest government will be an essential ingredient*” (p. 245). In many instances, narratives like making believe that 'Estonia is positively transforming' (Jordan, 2014), 'Ukraine is moving in the fast lane' (Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2015), and 'Kosovo is young' (Kaneva, 2018), are not always consumed among the domestic audiences as intended.

National Identity, Nationalism and Mass Media

When talking about *nation* and *national identity* it is necessary to establish a quick worldview of what these terms entail. That is to say, what level of objective reality nations and their respective identities present. In alignment with Kaneva (2011b), Aronczyk (2013) and arguably many other scholars within this cultural stream of nation branding research, nations are regarded as an outcome of a socially imaginative process that is being constantly produced. From this perspective, Taylor (2002 as cited in Bolin & Ståhlberg, 2020) explained that for a nation to exist it needs to occupy a cognitive space prior to entering our collectively imagined social world. In this regard, when nation-states engage in nation branding they seek to penetrate the cognitive spaces and inhabit the social worlds of the domestic population. As Jansen (2008) had previously pointed out, “[b]randing not only explains nations to the world but also reinterprets national identity in market terms and provides new narratives for domestic consumption” (p. 122). To put this into context, nation-states are led to believe that with an enhanced image—i.e. the sum of a selection of identities and values—targeted at advancing their global position, the domestic consumption of that image would also translate into a stronger feeling of affiliation (Aronczyk, 2013; Fernández, 2021). From a sociological standpoint, Ernest Gellner (1983 as cited in Bolin & Miazhovich, 2018) explained nation as a sense of affiliation to a cultural body. Thus, national identities within this imagined cultural body are subject to political and economic framing. In other words, and in brief, this worldview of nations and national identities can suggest that they are the (by)product of soft power triggered by notions of nationalism.

Nation branding is in itself a form of political soft power, since it aims to materialize its domestic objectives through the art of subtle persuasion: It "*make[s] people want to pay attention to their particular nation state, their achievements, and belie[ve] in their qualities*" (Jordan, 2014, p. 284). Kaneva (2011b) equated the power of nation branding with that of a modern state, reflecting on Boudieu's conceptualization of "field of power" (p. 100). In other words, it is a matter of molding domestic attitudes through administering and enforcing the desired narratives so that the result would be a shared imagination of the social world (Nye, 2008 as cited in Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018). Nationalism is another dimension related to how people of a given nation are instructed to embrace national identities and establish, accordingly, a strong affiliation with it (Sanín, 2016). The subject is often met with conflicts, since it could have both positive and negative implications depending on the lens one would choose to look through. For example, Kaneva (2011a) had expressed provocation toward van Ham's statement that nationalism in its modern format was more threatening than nation branding narratives with their intention to collectively reconstruct national identities. Reflecting on the individual's psychological state of self-assurance in a changing nation-state, Browning banked on Kinnvall's idea that "*[n]ationalism can provide people with a sense of continuity, stability, and safety even when other aspects of their personal life may be fragmenting*" (Kinnvall, 2004 as cited in Browning, 2015, p. 198). Conflicts of nationalism aside, this might assert that the domestic audiences are, to a great extent, vulnerable to narratives of national identities.

Central to the same thread of discussion, with regard to nation branding as a tool of soft power, is the role of mass media in projecting those branding narratives to the domestic publics. Sanín (2016) suggested that amid the "*introduction [of] commercial technologies and promotional materials,*" nationalism shifted from its traditional representation of national symbols (e.g., flags, textbooks, etc.) and political engagement to a participatory approach of media content consumption (p. 52). So, while a nation brand is constantly interpreted by analogy with a branded product (Jordan, 2014), both being promoted via mass media, it is interesting to critically ask who can afford it? In other words, as Valaskivi (2013) put it "*[a] product for consumption is advertised for those who are able to consume and who are*

interested in things that are [branded within a certain imaginative space]" (p. 500). When covering the branding of Bulgaria, Kaneva (2011) was critical about the nation being reimagined "as a total brand, rather than focusing on a separate industry or aspect of economic or cultural activity" (p. 104). Kulcsár and Yum (2011) also voiced the same line of thought saying that "[nation branding] should move from what it is today, a unified brand attempting to represent diverse societies and complex identities, to a more inclusive conceptual process built up from various pieces" (p. 209). It is rather argued in this paper that a segmented 'brand' of a nation, where there is a strategic focus on a specific aspect, could mean more alienation than integration. Therefore, the core premise of nation branding would still remain questionable.

2.3 Conclusion and Reiteration for the Need of the Study

To sum up, nation branding practices presume that nations are as manageable as corporate brands, whether externally or internally. While it is understandable that a corporate brand is plausible for commercial gains, a nation cannot be simply left to undemocratic marketing strategies that calculate what sells and what not and, accordingly, decides who is in and who is not. Nation branding has, in almost all practices all over the world, taken a monolithic brand structure where the nation is projected as one brand that supposes to cater to everyone. Some critical researchers have suggested that a different brand architecture away from the monolithic approach; e.g., segmented by sector, would serve as a solution for the repeated pattern of domestic marginalization.

In line with the aim of this thesis, the domestic image of a nation is not just constructed via attaching a marketable adjective to the nation's name (e.g. Cool Japan), or by showing passion to the nation and the world (e.g., Colombia is Passion). Nation branding is taking other indirect forms where the monolithic nation brand is not in the foreground but intends to benefit from a sub-branding spillover strategy. While it might be possible within the capacity of a corporate brand to create segmented sub-brands, acquire or lose audience in a competitive marketplace—to use marketing terms, this logic is much more complex when

applied to nation branding. This being an approach in the empirical case used in the study (City Edge Developments, '*The National Developer of Egypt*'), the question becomes what will the nation sub-brand, as it caters to domestic elites while producing narratives of luxury via mass media, contribute to the nation image in the eyes of the youth segment of the general domestic population.

3. Theoretical framework

This third chapter presents the theoretical framework that is used as an analytical lens for the study. Concerned with social organization of meanings and the fixation of a politically engaged construction of the nation brand image, Laclau and Mouffe's Theory of Discourse² can provide a path for exploring the social phenomenon in question. The chapter starts with a general perspective on discourse theories, establishing some foundational understanding of its philosophical premise as well as its conceptualization of *meanings* and *meaning-construction*. Then, it is followed by an outline for the existing generations of discourse theories, where Laclau and Mouffe become specifically situated with their poststructuralist departure. From this point onward, the focus is put on elaborating the primary constituents of ToD with its view of *discourse* as an incoherent character, inclusive of both linguistic and behavioral dimensions with no distinction, and its vulnerability to the exterior. As final pillars to the theoretical discussion, the chapter unfolds Laclau and Mouffe's conception of hegemony through the *subject*, its changing positions, and the arising notions of antagonism. These specific dimensions of the theory are beneficial for the study as it shall help deconstruct taken-for-granted traits of dominance in the construction of the domestic identity.

3.1 An Introduction to Discourse Theories

It is not possible to start talking about *discourse* without establishing some basic understanding of its conceptual origination. Discourse theory took its foundational character from linguistic and hermeneutic disciplines specifically within the overlapping fields of social science and politics (Torfing, 2005). This would require us to take a quick journey backward to Ferdinand de Saussure, the Swiss linguist and philosopher who had since the beginning of the twentieth century transformed the way social scientists would view *language* against the social world (Rasiński, 2017). With his focus on language as a system of signs from which

² abbreviated hereafter as ToD as opposed to 'discourse theory/theories' as a general scope.

meanings emerge, Saussure's key concept was that a sign comprises two dimensions: content (signifié or signified) and expression (signifiant or signifier) whose relationship is arbitrary (Rasiński, 2017). In this sense, meanings are assigned to words through social conventions and, consequently, reality becomes constructed with dependence on language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Saussure's structuralist view of language tended to theorize that there are fixed relationships between signs, suggesting that a meaning can be fixed alike (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Discourse theory, rather poststructuralist, emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as a critical stance to the aforementioned structuralist views of language, culture and society, offering a novel perspective for analysis (Torfing, 2005). It has ever since opened up new aspects for traditional theorists to question the worldview of knowledge, construction of identity, and the role of discourse in constructing collective principles, norms, and symbolic representations (Torfing, 2005). From a poststructuralist lens, this can help us understand that meanings, in their constantly subjective production and reproduction process, give us a sense of orientation upon which we adjust ourselves and act in political and social events (Torfing, 2005). Torfing explicates that it is through language and innovative rhetorics that politics could advance its strategies (2005). Right from this point, where meanings are constantly changing with such advancements targeting to settle in the shared imagination of the social world, discourse theory comes into play (Torfing, 2005).

Torfing (2005) classifies discourse theories into three generations: The first being skewed to the discursive analysis of language and its semantic features (e.g., William Downes), the second, widening the borders of the linguistic scope to encompass semiotic aspects of discourse, and the third generation, rather going borderless as it accepts everything that is regarded as social. Since the scope of this thesis is beyond linguistics, the last two generations are generally of a higher relevance. To start in a chronological order, Michel Foucault, among the prominent names in the second generation—besides Jürgen Habermas and Norman Fairclough—has three key ideas of discourse: (1) *discursive formation*, (2) *archive*,

and (3) *discursive practice* (Rasiński, 2017). In a rather simplified explanation, by discursive formation Foucault refers to a point of regularity in dispersion (e.g., different views toward the same goal), where archive is a historical determinant of what is actually uttered and what is excluded, and discursive practice being the unspecified directive framework (i.e. rules) for enunciation (Rasiński, 2017). In this sense, Foucault does not ultimately seek the truth or meanings behind actual discursive practices as much as understanding their state of possibility (Torfing, 2005). In other words, Foucault looks into the systems and the guidelines of discursive formation that control all levels of discourse (Torfing, 2005).

The third generation of discourse theories, right where Torfing situate Jacques Derrida, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe—among a number of other overlapping philosophers, is characterized by its encompassment of all social phenomena (2005). Leaving behind Marxist and structuralist logic, this generation insists that construction of social identities is an infinite process and to which there are no prior determinants (Torfing, 2005). Laclau and Mouffe's conceptualization of their theory is rather a constructive and critical engagement with the thoughts of other renowned theorists and scholars. On the basis of defining their agreements and disagreements with earlier conceptions, their theory becomes crystalized, as the following sections of this chapter shall demonstrate. In essence, Laclau and Mouffe's ToD, the primary guiding lens for this study, departs from the principle idea that the relationship between signs are mutable and, accordingly, meanings are not eternally fixed (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

3.2 Constituents of Laclau and Mouffe's Theory of Discourse

As we have briefly seen, discourse has its roots in a number of intersecting disciplines and philosophical standpoints. With specific interest in Laclau and Mouffe's conceptualization of discourse, we can proceed with defining some of its key components from the founding theorists' very perspective. While *discourse* is looked at as an ensemble brought about by the articulatory practice, *articulation* is about the relational specificity across elements whose identities become altered in the course of the practice (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, p.272). This is in essence in line

with the semiotic grasp of *signs* for not being inherently expressive of any predefined meaning and that they only acquire their meanings in relation to other signs (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Torfing, 2005). On the basis that any articulation necessarily comprises a structure of differential positions— i.e. what they are *not*— *elements* are defined as such differences that are not articulated in a discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). On the contrary, when they are articulated, Laclau and Mouffe refer to them as *moments* (2014). The primary concept of discourse is manifested in the transformation of elements into moments (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014), which is particularly equivalent to partially matching and fixating a meaning to the sign in relation to other signs (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Just like the same foundational idea that meanings arise from the subtraction of all other signs, Jørgensen and Phillips reiterate that discourse is about minimizing possibilities (2002).

Laclau and Mouffe (2014) provide three key specifications that elaborate on their distinctions within the aforementioned constituents of discourse: (1) *the incoherent nature of discursive formation*, (2) *the wider scope of discourse*, and (3) *the absent sense of completeness within the discursive formation*. With regard to the first specification, Laclau and Mouffe reiterate that meanings are crystalized against their opposing meanings, which could be contingent or external, and thus reject the idea of a coherent and fixed relation between elements (2014). As for the scope of discourse, contrary to Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe choose to eliminate the prior contrast drawn between practices that are discursive and non-discursive (2014). They argue that objects are in principal defined by discourse per se; not emerging externally, and that the former conception of linguistic versus behavioral conditions are the result of predefined systematic relations that are socially produced and presented as a totality (2014). In brief, Laclau and Mouffe assert that the differential positions in discursive formation encompass a variety of organizations, rituals and practices, all of which are beyond a pure linguistic phenomenon (2014). The third specification with regard to the complete formation of discourse, Laclau and Mouffe suggest that the total transformation of elements into moments is never really accomplished (2014). It is emphasized within this logic that social identities are deemed as vulnerable to external discourse, and thus

incomplete, which altogether paves the way to their rejection of 'society' as an innate and fixed whole (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Having reached this point of poststructuralist understanding of discourse, a social dimension to the discussion can further sharpen the premise, as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe. In accordance with the absent sense of closure in discourse, it is argued that any social practice needs a surplus of elements—i.e. differentiators—that control the identity of the object in question and the endless possibilities of the same discursive character (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). This surplus of elements or meanings, which are technically speaking reduced in the process of discourse, is referred to as *field of discursivity* (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Laclau and Mouffe point out that discourse, from this perspective, can be understood as an attempt to manage and control the field of discursivity so as to establish a temporary central focus (2014). These discursive focal points are what Laclau and Mouffe termed *nodal points* (2014). Nodal points create stability and identity by 'suppressing' the dynamics of discourse. However, identities are never stable because discourses from a poststructuralist perspective consist of signs whose signifiers refer to other signifiers (and not signified, i.e., they are empty signifiers). So any identity suffers from the lack of proper content and is thus unstable and open to disturbances from new discourses. Laclau and Mouffe specifically state that “[s]ociety never manages to be identical to itself, as every nodal point is constituted within an intertextuality that overflows it” (2014, p. 293). In this sense, they argue that societies are not constituted by notions of production and reproduction (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). On the basis that society is a discursive outcome (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Torfing, 2005), it is specifically through the constant construction of novel features of articulation that society is constantly shaped (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

3.3 The Unfolding of *Hegemony*

In principle Laclau and Mouffe's theory being engaged with politics, they attempt to reach a redefined conception of hegemony through deconstructing a number of interrelated dimensions—namely, the *subject* and its position in discourse, and the experience of *antagonism*—differences—against objectivity. This

section touches upon these aspects from Laclau and Mouffe's viewpoint to ensue the same logic in the unfolding of what broadly constitutes hegemonic practices.

3.3.1 The Subject and Its Multitude of Positions

Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of *the subjects* lies in the positions they occupy within a discursive practice (2014). They stress that social relations are not in anyway the determinant of the subject, but, in contrast, subject positions are adaptable to every discourse without any absolute or fixed closure (2014). In this sense, as Laclau and Mouffe illustrate, while 'feminism' as a social subject is symbolically dependent on the conditions inherited within the society (e.g., gender oppression), rejecting such one-way system of thought can result in a myriad of angles for feminist politics (2014). This approach is one of the key modifications and emancipation from the Marxist viewpoint. In Marxism, the subject is ultimately determined by social classes (in this context, working class), regulating the subject position against a specific group of interests (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). Accordingly, articulating such homogeneity of group interests becomes envisaged as liberating (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). In Laclau and Mouffe's words, “[w]hat the discourse of ‘historical interests’ does is to hegemonize certain demands” (2014, p. 310). In other words, the identity of the subject, in the eyes of Laclau and Mouffe, is constituted by the exercise of hegemony over meaning construction (Rasiński, 2017). This, in brief, explains that discourse strategically intends to plot the subject in a specific position (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). That said, Laclau and Mouffe reemphasize that political and economic identities are not in themselves contrasting moments of a discourse and that the subject position cannot be absolutely determined in a closed system (2014).

3.3.2 Antagonistic Limits to an Objective Reality of a Society

Laclau and Mouffe broadly refer to antagonism as a disruptive event that shows the limits of objectivity (2014). Such events collide from *outside*, representing the limits to what constitutes the objectified society (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). By this definition, Laclau and Mouffe specifically aim to elevate the historical and

sociological explanation of antagonistic conditions—namely, opposition and contradiction, which leaves antagonism misplaced in discourse (2014). They add to the discussion that the experience of antagonism is a confrontation with a situation of a different character where one cannot be themselves in the presence of the 'Other' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, p. 321). In this sense, antagonism can become silenced by discursive interventions of hegemony whereby new meanings are temporarily fixated in a way that overshadows prior antagonistic or differential conditions (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Nevertheless, insofar as negations can take different forms and emerge from different points, antagonism can occur in many possibilities (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). Along this line of thought, societies being faced with such antagonistic limits will never reach a state of an objective reality (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). Laclau and Mouffe conclude that antagonism becomes prolific in societies where social relations are faced with instability amid a weak system of differences (2014). In brief, the primary takeaway of Laclau and Mouffe's conception of antagonism lies in the centrality of external struggle in the open-ended construction of identities, which leads us in the discussion to the oppositional role of *hegemony*.

3.3.3 The State of Hegemony

The starting point for a theoretical understanding of hegemony is that *elements* in an articulatory practice have not become definite *moments* (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). On this basis, Laclau and Mouffe restate that hegemony cannot possibly exist in a complete and closed character of the *social*— i.e. relations of representation (2014). On the contrary, hegemony in the form of a subject of an articulatory practice needs to be to a certain extent outside what is being articulated, and thus having an open character (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). Laclau and Mouffe elaborate that this exteriority is not to be confused or lost within the field of discursivity, it specifically refers to the level of external ambiguity present between the subject positions and the elements (2014). Moreover, when speaking of hegemony one cannot just regard the articulatory *moment*, but also inspect the occurrence of articulation against antagonism in articulatory practices (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Laclau and Mouffe's theorization of hegemony banks on and attempts to radicalize Antonio Gramsci's analysis of the subject matter. That said, it is appropriate to give a rather quick overview of Gramsci's viewpoint and the line of disagreements that Laclau and Mouffe draw against his thoughts. Attempting to go beyond the Marxist dependence on economic factors to understand social behavior, while seeing a need for a political element, Gramsci's term of hegemony reflect on the position of power that was inexplicable via economic terms alone (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The basic idea of hegemony is presented as a mix of power and consensus—acceptance of what is presented as objective, where power would not be seen as the driver of consensus but the other way round (McNally, 2018). Thus, the practice of modern politics, in Gramsci's view, seeks to establish its leadership by entering into this notion of struggle for hegemony (Torfing, 2005). Gramsci believed that "[h]egemony [...] is a process of creating a new collective identity" (Rasiński, 2017, p. 42). The apex of this endeavor "is when the hegemonic force [i.e. fundamental class] becomes a state" (Torfing, 2005, p. 11). Two key Gramscian thoughts turned down by Laclau and Mouffe are: (1) his assertion that classes determine the hegemonic subjects, and (2) the presence of a sole hegemonic center on which social formation is structured (2014). Laclau and Mouffe (2014) justify their rejection of these thoughts by reiterating that hegemony is a form of a political relation, not skewed to a certain social arrangement, where there can possibly be multiple privileged discursive points (i.e., nodal points).

To conclude, from the perspective of Laclau and Mouffe's ToD, discourse is regarded as a form of hegemony in its purpose and capacity to fixate moments, normalizing and giving a natural logic to a specific articulation (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Rasiński, 2017). With this in mind, the purpose of discourse analysis is to deconstruct what tends to be taken for granted in a social context, shaped by the discouragement of antagonistic conditions, so as to demonstrate how the imagined myth; i.e. the *social*, is organized by means of political processes. That said, this chosen theoretical lens would help understand the organization of meanings around the new national urban development projects, specifically through the discourses of City Edge Developments and the domestic youths' perspective thereof.

4. Methodology

This chapter serves as a descriptive manual for the research strategy applied. It starts with a broad discussion on the poststructuralist tradition the study follows in line with Laclau and Mouffe's ToD. Then it outlines and presents in detail the research design in terms of method, sample selection, data collection as well as the analytical approach carried out in the study. It is important to note in advance that the conduction of the study is two-fold, based on the two research questions proposed. One, it analyzes communication materials of CED—*The National Developer of Egypt* (the nation sub-brand in question) and, two, it explores the mediating effects of such articulations on the domestic image of the nation brand among Egyptian youths. This two-fold structure remains consistent throughout the sections of this chapter. In addition to the procedures and techniques elaborated herein, the chapter concludes with reflection on the analysis and the trustworthiness criteria taken into account.

4.1 Poststructuralist Epistemology

With focus on the mechanics of language in the establishment of institutional and power relations, poststructuralism is specifically distinct from other traditions (Prasad, 2017). In principle, poststructuralist knowledge is not concerned with any predefined structures or limitations to what constitutes a given phenomenon (Williams, 2005). In other words, it denies the acknowledgement of structures and limits, yet remains vigilant in tracking down the effects resulting from within (Williams, 2005). Williams elaborate that poststructuralism is powerful in withstanding the truths that are taken for granted (2005). In this sense, we find poststructuralist theorists and philosophers (e.g., Derrida) engaged with *deconstruction*; i.e., critical textual analyses, to spot new forms of language, thought levels, power, knowledge, etc. (Prasad, 2017). This broadly defines the epistemological foundation of this thesis, especially being guided by Laclau and Mouffe's theory which is conceived on a poststructuralist premise (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse with its ontological view of reality as socially constructed, does not seek to unearth the truth of a society. On the contrary, it provides an exploratory approach to understand how truth is structured and normalized through the use of discourse in all its social forms (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, discourse produces meaning through articulations that shape how we think and behave. In a political context, for example, according to Jørgensen and Phillips' explanation, it is not limited to politics in its governance form, but is rather concerned with discourse that is sought for the creation of the society (2002). In this sense, objectivity is understood as “*the historical outcome of political processes and struggle*” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 36), and specifically one that is never complete. This is where the idea of power comes into practice, not as a possession, but as a producer of what constitutes the social. Accordingly, power gives us our identity and establishes our relationship with one another. Societies are constantly produced and we tend to behave within their frame of existence, albeit '*imagined*'—a myth that illustrates our common grounds of understanding or imagination of reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). A central logic in ToD is that social events are contingent; meaning that nothing in the social context is necessary, but possible (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

4.2 Research Design

In line with the study's attempt to explore constructed meanings by the nation sub-brand and their implications on the domestically *imagined* nation among youths, a qualitative research method has been employed. Creswell (2013) highlighted that while there could be a number of reasons for why to engage in a qualitative approach, in essence, it needs to fit for the issue in question. Moreover, as noted by Prasad, qualitative research "*is far from being a uniform set of techniques or procedures for collecting and analyzing data*" (2017, p. 1). The strategy for conducting the study was carried out in two primary routes, each accommodating a different qualitative method. On the one hand, and specifically for answering the first research question with regard to the articulations within CED's communication, discourse analysis was conducted on selected material (as

elaborated in section 4.2.1.). On the other hand, the second route of the study relied on in-depth interviews with Egyptian youths to understand through their articulations the implications of CED's communication on their thoughts, feelings and attitudes toward the nation brand.

By tackling these two routes, or namely the two research questions in this design, the study aims to put forward new knowledge of nation branding specifically in its non-monolithic structure. In this sense, CED—The National Developer of Egypt, is used as a qualitative case study for nation branding. This approach to inquiry, in Creswell's point of view, is purposeful when a case "*has unusual interest in and of itself and needs to be described and detailed*" (2013, p. 98). In order to reach a level of in-depth description of meanings in case studies multiple data sources are deemed necessary; e.g., interviews, documents, multimedia materials, etc. (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the research design is in accordance with this data-collection requirement.

4.2.1 Selection of Materials

As previously mentioned in the introduction chapter, City Edge Developments (CED) launched in 2018 with a limited number (7) of new projects across the country. Thus, tracking their communication campaigns to date was manageable with reliance on available sources. However, certain selection criteria were necessary to control the scope of the study. The first criterion for material selection is based on communication campaigns that made use of mass media—namely, TV and out-of-home (OOH) advertising. This criterion manifests that exposure to such communications by CED were not limited to a certain target group, but rather open for wider consumption. That said, all digital and below-the-line communications (e.g., brochures) were excluded from the study. The second criterion entails mega projects within the borders of the new urban cities; e.g., New Administrative Capital and New Alamein City, which have parallel ambitions for international nation branding targets (MHUC, 2019). Accordingly, the GCR project named Etapa and Zahya project in New Mansoura are deliberately kept out of the data. The selected materials will allow the study to follow the brand's narrative, the identities that are

being fixated through its holistic discourses whether through brand campaigns or project-driven communications. The below table outlines in chronological order the campaigns covered in the analysis:

Date	Campaign title/ message	Language	Type	Medium
2018, Q2	"Shaping cities of the future"	English	Brand campaign	OOH
2018, Q2	North Edge: "The first and only towers in New Alamein"	English	Project	OOH
2019, Q1	Al Maqsad: "The first destination ready for you at the new capital"	English	Project	OOH
2019, Q2	"The National Developer of Egypt"	English	Brand campaign	OOH
2019, Q2	"Developments that make history"	Egyptian Arabic	Brand campaign	TV
2019, Q3	The Gate: "Rise luxuriously"	English	Project	OOH
2019, Q3	Mazarine: "The first villas in New Alamein"	English	Project	OOH
2020, Q3	New Alamein: "An all year-round coastal home. No picture can describe the beauty, come see it yourself"	English	Collective campaign	OOH
2020, Q4	Al Maqsad: "The first destination ready for you at the new capital"	Classical Arabic	Project	OOH

4.2.2 Population and Sample

The second research question of this study specifically seeks to understand perceptions and attitudes of Egyptian youths—defined and narrowed herein as public universities students—toward the articulations of the nation sub-brand. According to CAPMAS, 8.3 million Egyptian youths are between the ages of 20-24, most of whom reside in Cairo and Giza, with males slightly exceeding half of this number (2018). The deliberate focus on this segment of the population is motivated by the strategic importance these youths present for the social and economic development of the country (State Information Service, n.d.). It is important to note

that international and private universities³ students were excluded from the study, given the low percentage they represent of total higher education students (Shaheen, 2019). A non-probability purposive sampling technique was, accordingly, fitting for recruitment for the in-depth interviews. This sampling strategy has the advantage of adding trustworthiness to the sample especially in cases where the pool of possibilities is large in size (Creswell, 2013).

Public universities⁴ in the defined geographical region were the starting point for recruitment, although reliance on digital mediums was indispensable given the recent shift to distance learning following the local restrictions of COVID-19 pandemic. Banking on public universities' social media accounts as well as students-moderated pages, students were individually approached. The study had a total of nine participants whose average age was 21.5 years; the oldest being 23 and the youngest 20. Five out of the nine participants were males, which is roughly consistent with the ratio of the population within this age group. The participating students, of whom two were fresh graduates, were attending their bachelor's programs in five different public universities—in alphabetical order, *Ain Shams University*, *Al-Azhar University*, *Cairo University*, *Helwan University*, and *High Cinema Institute*, within six different majors. This ensured diversity of the sample, and thus enriched the logical assumption of population representation.

4.2.3 Interviews

The interviews followed a semi-structured approach with an interview guide that helped navigate loosely through three main areas of discussion covering level of awareness, perception and attitude toward (a) the new national urban development projects, (b) CED communications, and (c) the implications of such branded communications on the domestic perception of the nation and the individual attitude toward it. Six out of the nine interviews were conducted online via

³ Students attending international and private universities for the academic year 2018/2019 were at 6.3%. Annual tuition fees could range from a few thousand US dollars to over USD 15,000— in most cases exceeding the average annual household income in the country (El-Tohamy & Abd El-Galil, 2020)

⁴ Public/governmental universities in GCR include Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Helwan University, Al-Azhar University (non-profit), etc.

Zoom video communications program, which was the method of preference for those specific participants, including all four interviewed females. The fact that students over the past year have mostly relied on similar digital solutions for their academic activities aided the conduction of the interviews in a smooth manner, as opposed to earlier scholarly concerns on the requirement of technical skills (Creswell, 2013). Besides cost and time efficiency of qualitative data collection via the internet, online interviews also establish a comfortable environment for the participants to express their views without reservations (Nicholas et al., 2010 as cited in Creswell, 2013). As for the three physical interviews, those took place at outdoor venues suggested by the participants themselves, which also helped establish a casual experience for the discussions. The average time of all interviews was 68.8 minutes, ranging between 50 and 80 minutes each. The interviews were carried out over three consecutive calendar weeks, allowing for reflection and adjustments after every instance. All interviews were conducted in Egyptian Arabic dialect, the natively spoken language in the country.

4.2.4 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

In line with this study's theoretical framework and its purposeful focus on key concepts from Laclau and Mouffe's theory, discourse analysis is the main approach toward analyzing the data, be it for the marketing materials or the interviews. That said, on the one hand, it is through the discourses of *The National Developer of Egypt (CED)* that the study aims to grasp the meanings that are being fixated, the positioning of the subject, and the possibility of hegemonic features. On the other hand, bringing into focus the uttered perceptions and attitudes of Egyptian youths toward such articulations in order to explore possible antagonistic limits to the temporarily fixated reality of the society and its national identities.

Creswell (2013) proposed a spiral model for qualitative data analysis whereby the analytical steps are interconnected, evolving from visual and textual data to a comprehensive narrative. The study follows this spiral approach comprising four main stages: (1) data managing, (2) data sense-making, (3) data coding, and (4) data representation (Creswell, 2013). The first stage in the study involved organization of the collected data—audiovisual campaigns, interviews recording, and transcripts,

into digital files on the computer. Then, making sense of the data came as a second step where after having read and reviewed the data a broad picture became formed of the general takeaways. As for coding, which is "the heart of qualitative data analysis," in vivo strategy was used relying on verbatim wording by the participants in the interviews (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). Rubin and Rubin (2005) pointed out that extracting codes from interviews' transcripts is of higher importance than a deductive strategy relying solely on a priori codes. In essence, the reliance on in vivo coding strategy is in compliance with the study's interest in the actual language spoken by the participants to closely observe how they talk about the subjects of concern. Interpreting the data then completes the coding stage by forming themes out of the codes, which altogether bring about bigger concepts and, finally, representing the abstractions whereby narrative patterns become visible (Creswell, 2013)

In order to establish trustworthiness, this qualitative study follows Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four operational criteria: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. In terms of credibility, Lincoln and Guba suggested that the researcher needs to be fully acquainted with the culture whereby the scientific investigation is taking place, while providing detailed description of how the whole collection and analytical process was performed (1985). Moreover, in order to increase the credibility of the qualitative study, it is also suggested to apply different triangulation methods; for example, using multiple modes of data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Generalizing the investigation of the study is what Lincoln and Guba termed *transferability*, proposing for the researcher to employ purposive sampling, which could be one way to providing "*thick description*" for other researchers to validate the possibility that the conclusion can be reached by such transfer (1985, p. 314). *Dependability* entails the extent to which readers of the study can follow the process and thus deem it as dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As for the fourth criterion; *confirmability*, using a well-proven methodology means that other researchers can conduct the same type of analysis and corroborate the results. Accordingly, it establishes a reasoning for how the interpretations and the results of the study are strictly obtained from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

5. Analysis

The empirical analysis is presented in this chapter with the purpose of answering the two research questions proposed for the study. The analysis examines the discourses of *The National Developer of Egypt*; the meanings it organizes, and its domestic implications on the young Egyptian generation. In essence, the study is concerned with two streams of discourses; on the one hand, discourses of the brand in question and, on the other hand, the articulations of the sample representative of the target population. This distinction is further elaborated in the analysis of the second research question where intersections occur. Accordingly, the chapter addresses each research question at a time allowing explicit answers that contribute to a meaningful understanding of the problem of the study.

5.1 RQ1: City Edge Developments' Discourses

What meanings has CED fixated throughout its discursive articulation of the new national urban development projects?

The analysis of CED's selected marketing materials is presented herein by type while loosely following the overall discourses of the brand from a chronological perspective. With this in mind, this section starts with presenting the various out-of-home (OOH) campaigns as previously listed in the methodology chapter, exploring the patterns of articulations around the brand, its projects and the meanings organized beyond the explicit. Then, the brand TV commercial is followed in the analysis, scrutinizing its audiovisual elements through the same theoretical lens of discourse theory. It should be pointed out that CED's 2019 TV commercial was used during the interviews besides a few other materials. This order of material presentation is to create a smooth transition from the answer to the first research question to the analysis presented afterward of the interviewees' articulations, for the second research question. This section, however, is focused on the collective discursive patterns identified from CED's OOH communication campaigns.

5.1.1 CED's Out-of-Home Campaigns

The various campaigns CED released since the launch of the brand in 2018 to date collectively represent a holistic discourse with some remarkable patterns. This is the point of departure for examining the articulations that were presented across the brand's OOH media network, specifically looking into nodal points that bring forward certain meanings around the brand and its activities. Starting with the broad English message "*Shaping cities of the future*"— in bold and all caps style in an abstract galaxy-like faded artwork (see Figure 1), we find CED's first *articulation* in the labeling of the new urban projects as cities of a '*futuristic*' nature. This brings relational specificity to the generic identity of what could constitute the conception of a city, tying it to *signs* of urban advancement whereby the brand plays the role of the '*shaper*'. Such functional description in terms of discourses could mean that the brand is being identified overtly as the source of identity creation. This being the opening discourse of CED, we find it backed up on quarterly basis with projects-driven communications that strive to transform the differential *elements* into *moments* with the purpose of fixating meanings for how the new future cities are like from the brand's perspective, as elaborated in the following paragraphs.



Figure 1: CED's launch campaign

One of the evident nodal points we find in CED's discursive practices within the selected OOH marketing materials is the reliance on notions of leadership through the repetitive use of the word '*first*'. While relying on its positioning of *high-end*, CED presented North Edge Towers as "*The first and only towers in New Alamein*" (Q2 2018), Al Maqsad⁵—launching in Q1 2019, as "*The first destination*

⁵ Al Maqsad is a residential project in a prominent district in the New Administrative Capital.

ready for you at the new capital", then Mazarine followed a couple of quarters later as *"The first villas in New Alamein"*, etc. This discursive pattern continued over time with Al Maqsad's second wave campaign in Q4 2020 toward project completion, promoted as *"The first to light the New Capital"*. Since Laclau and Mouffe reject the complete closure of discourse, it can be argued in this context that CED's strategy in presenting its discourses with consistency pushes for establishing meanings of leadership for the brand. In this case, we find the brand projecting itself as a pioneer across its discursive practices; i.e., being the first to introduce almost everything in the new cities.

While CED has dominant use of the English language across its OOH discourses, it is important to note that Al Maqsad's communication shifted from English since its launch to classical Arabic in its second wave. This could initially point out to a change in management strategy, albeit beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the exceptional use of classical Arabic in this case; being distinct from the natively spoken Egyptian Arabic dialect, adds sophistication to the positioning of the project whose name origin is also a reflection of the same formal language meaning '*the destination*'. Sophistication in this sense is, arguably, one of a refined, high culture taste. Since it is through discourses that social identity is shaped, whether through CED's English or classical Arabic communication—although the former might be more problematic, it could be looked at as the manifestation of battling over new identities that are presented as more compatible with the new future-oriented generation of cities.

In addition to the notion of leadership in CED's OOH campaigns, one can also spot another vivid pattern in their communications: the type of residential units that are incorporated across their messages. It is a foundational aspect of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse not to limit discourses to words, but rather opening up to non-linguistic features as well that in essence represent the signified and the signifier. Whether towers or villas, we find notions of 'luxury' articulated in focal themes throughout CED's discourses. In some instances the message is presented both through the visual and the copy, as in the case of *"Rise Luxuriously"* for The Gate project in New Alamein City (see Figure 2). The imperative exhortation

in the verb 'rise' holds meanings of empowerment and upgrade, but restrictively ties it to extravagance, limiting the message to the segment that can adopt this lifestyle. In this example, from a theoretical perspective, one can identify a surplus of *elements* that control the identity of the brand.



Figure 2: The Gate Towers in New Alamein City

While articulations of luxury is consistent with CED's market positioning, yet it becomes more socially conflicting when flexing their nation-state affiliation as "*The National Developer of Egypt*" with subtle visual resemblance of a pyramid as seen in one of their brand campaigns (see Figure 3). The argument here is that the discourse of the brand could be arousing conflict of identities as its caters to a selective segment while evoking claims of nationalism and subtle connotation of historic interests that are certainly not exclusive to any given social group. Such conflicting representation of a brand that takes pride in its national positioning against the backdrop of its segmenting sales and marketing goals could be subject to antagonistic struggles over signification and identification.

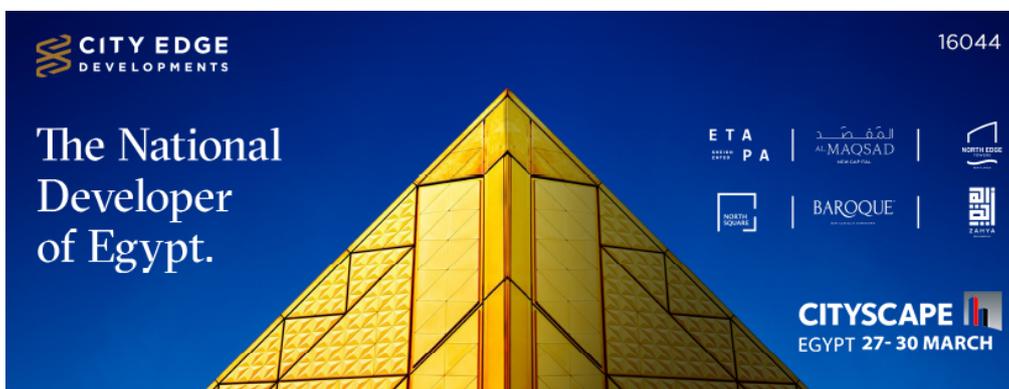


Figure 3: The National Developer of Egypt brand campaign

So, in brief one can draw a conclusion from these articulations found across the various OOH campaigns that the national brand for urban development constructs an image of a pioneer that advances the living standard for privileged Egyptian individuals. It may be argued that this image is even extended to accommodate wider feelings of national pride regardless of whom it would benefit, as captured further in the brand's TV commercial analysis.

5.1.2 CED TV Commercial: "Developments that Make History"

City Edge Developments' commercial⁶ premiered on Egyptian satellite TV channels during the fasting lunar month of Ramadan of the year 2019. According to a study commissioned by Netflix, TV viewership during Ramadan witnesses an increase of 3 additional hours per day across the Middle East dedicated to entertainment content (Arab News, 2018). That said, the brand's first appearance on this medium suggests strategic planning in terms of timing to ensure audience reach. Before stepping into the second research question concerned with Egyptian youths' perceptions and attitudes, the brand TV commercial is presented and analyzed separately in the following paragraphs while connecting it to CED's holistic discourse and the identities it strives to fix through its articulations.

In a second person narrative voice CED TV commercial opens with a thoughtful question; *"If you would write a book about your life, what title would you give it?"*, as we see a smartly dressed young man walk toward a panoramic window with an elevated view of the city. Instantly, one can identify an emotional approach with a subliminal message of empowerment and recognition, capturing a gaze of determination through the eyes of the portrayed individuals (see Figure 4) amid grand scenes of modern skyscrapers. Taking the social context into account, the conflict over identity giving is mostly seen through the visual signs of the opening shot, consistently projecting that same notion of luxury and privilege present in other articulatory practices by the brand. *"How would you go about writing it?"* continues the narrative with some construction shots round the clock. Then, it poses a couple of follow-up questions: *"Along the way, one step at a time? Or*

⁶ CED 2019 brand TV commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQDGuE2N1yQ>

would you wait for a remarkable achievement?", showing quick consecutive victory shots; including a young gymnastics champion performing in a tournament arena, and a young man scoring a field goal in a friendly basketball match. At first glance one might think that being exposed to such discourse would be motivating to any viewer with its resemblance of success for both the brand and the individual. On the contrary, the nodal points traced from the beginning of the commercial through the narrative's linguistic direction, the featured models, the fancy locations, etc., create certain dynamics for the discourse pushing for specific identities that could be deliberately alienating more than motivating.



Figure 4: A smartly dressed young man gazes with determination

The commercial is heavily stuffed with symbolic *moments* articulated via audiovisual signs, which altogether contribute to the construction of meanings throughout this piece of communication. With background music adding a mysterious rhythm to the overall mood, the advertisement cuts to a young woman in a pale purple satin dress looking straight into the camera from a low angle with a horse paddock in the background (see Figure 5), followed by more abstract shots including a rural train in motion and a long shot of a woman wandering in the desert. The voice-over at that instant complements the visuals with another question: "*Would you need to set a destination first? Or would you fear not arriving?*", presenting a subtle play on words where 'destination' draws an analogy between CED's featured projects and the life goals toward which the brand pushes the individual to accomplish. The question of doubt raised in the narrative with the use of the word 'fear' is quickly refuted with exclamation, "*But why wouldn't you*

arrive!", as we see a young father converse with his little daughter in a modern spacious living room with panoramic view of skyscrapers in the background (see Figure 6). Then it follows with more shots of real construction (see Figure 7) where we see progress of towers, villas, cranes and construction workers collaborating with one another in an attempt to materialize those promoted destinations. From such articulatory objects within the commercial, one can grasp a message of affirmation that dreams are actually being realized in a seemingly tangible form. Critically speaking, however, it remains an open-ended question with regard to whose dreams in the Egyptian society these discourses represent.



Figure 5: An elegantly dressed young woman looking straight into the camera with a paddock in the background



Figure 6: Father and daughter conversing in a living room setup with panoramic view



Figure 7: Construction workers collaborating in a construction site by night

In the second half of the commercial the camera takes us to an aerial shot of the Great Pyramids of Giza (see Figure 8) where the voice-over continues with its mysterious narration, "*Would you choose to have people tell your story?*". The narration pauses for a few seconds as we see many cutting shots including a closeup on a father holding a baby and wide shot of a little boy dressing himself in a house corridor, then it goes on, "*Or would you share it yourself?*". While the featured historical monuments do not represent any direct reason-to-believe for the brand's projects, which are geographically distant in terms of location, one cannot disregard the national pride-laden symbolism in these footage. A sense of pride that only CED as The National Developer of Egypt is entitled to project and extend to its intended audiences. The discourse here banks on another analogy of a historical character that plots the subject in a very specific position attempting to bridge the brand with meanings of patriotism and grandiosity that boost the imagination of a certain reality directed by the brand. "*That's your own story, your own history... and history is either told or made... you choose!*" wraps up the commercial with final aspirations where one would need to be critical again concerning how the discourse subliminally grants ownership of a nation-wide shared ancient history to a specific target group (see Figure 9). The nationalistic theme within CED's commercial as it signs off with "*Developments that make history,*" could suggest that the brand vision is turning a blind eye to the majority of the population whose identity, from a theoretical perspective, is vulnerable to such discourses.



Figure 8: Aerial shot of the Great Pyramids of Giza



Figure 9: A young woman looking straight into the camera from a low angle in a seemingly historical location.

When looking at the commercial from a visual (signs) perspective we find a number of intertwined aspects that complement the discourse. Such aspects are beyond direct linguistic phenomena, including *the featured models, the choice of wardrobe, the art direction, the camera angles, and the locations*. In essence, these aspects can be regarded as magnified representations of signs and identities that the brand is bringing forward in the form of nodal points throughout its discourse. With regard to the featured models, it is noticeable how there is a deliberate focus on young individuals whose sharp looks seem consistent with the narrative's

confident tone of voice aided by closeups and direct eye contacts with the camera. The featured models with the fine selection of elegant wardrobe and the ultra-modern art direction matched with computer-generated imagery (CGI) (see Figure 10) are arguably central to reflecting on the brand's primary target group. One cannot miss that five out the seven featured female models are dressed up in gala-like fashion; formal dresses and jewelry. In several instances we find the models captured from low angles, which portray the subject in a powerful position. That said, the notions of empowerment in CED's discourse are present in a wide array of articulated *elements*, albeit skewed toward individuals of certain characteristics that are specifically not generalizable to the Egyptian population.



Figure 10: A young woman in a black dress walking toward the CGI panoramic view of skyscrapers

In a few words, the brand copy projects life as promised in their various projects, attempting to mirror individual self-actualization in an analogy to the brand's own mission. On the basis that subject positions are versatile, according to Laclau and Mouffe's ToD, one can argue that the commercial as a discursive practice imposes a certain identity that hegemonizes the urban lifestyle of affluent Egyptians, as seen in the aforementioned exemplification of several *signs* whose meanings have been assigned through a process of subtraction. Such an objectified image of an arguably 'parallel' society, which is of a different character for the majority of Egyptians, could mean putting down oneself in the presence of others—a feature of antagonism silenced by hegemonic intervention.

5.1.3 Conclusive findings for RQ1

Thus far, and in conclusion, three themes can be recognized from CED's holistic discursive practices, which provide an answer to this study's first research question: (1) *individual advancement and empowerment*, (2) *luxury and leadership*, and (3) *nationalism and national pride*. These themes have evolved across the brand's articulations through different modes of discourse with the purpose of magnifying the ongoing urban development changes in the eyes of the citizens as part of a national agenda—namely, nation branding. In other words, the brand in its role and position as the national developer demonstrates a new modern image of the country, ultimately, catering to the niche segment of the society. So, while City Edge Developments has a strategic focus on high-end real estate projects from marketing and sales perspective, the second research question addressed in the following section allows us to explore these findings against the perceptions and attitudes of Egyptian youths—the future of the country.

5.2 RQ2: The Domestic Perspective of Egyptian Youths

How do CED's articulations of the new national urban projects influence Egyptian youths' perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand?

Illustrating an answer to the second research question requires breaking it down into three subjects of discussion: *the new national urban projects*, *City Edge Developments*, and *the nation brand*. All three subjects are presented from the perspective of Egyptian youths as the primary target of the study. In this attempt we are regarding discourses of the participants about discourses of the brand and the new cities. Based on the data collected from all nine interviews, five themes emerged: (1) *economic value*, (2) *social segregation*, (3) *political prioritization*, (4) *national identity*, and (5) *nationalism*, which are loosely interconnected throughout the discussions in the following paragraphs.

5.2.1 The New National Urban Projects

Whether residents of Cairo or Giza, one can immediately notice a love-hate relationship among almost all participants toward their city. On the one hand, they express a lot of concerns with regard to their day-to-day living experience being consumed with wasted hours in public transportation, surrounded by concrete blocks of what some describe as *urban catastrophe*, and environmental noise, besides a number of other issues which the youths seem to have long gotten used to. On the other hand, however, nothing of these urban problems seem to come in the way of the emotional bond and connection the participants have with the current capital, referring to its vibes, culture, and *genuine people*. This vivid contradiction toward the current living condition of almost all interviewees makes a smooth entry point to understanding how the new urban development projects are looked at from a broad perspective by this sample of Egyptian youths. Beyond the scope of City Edge Developments, the new urban projects primarily deliver a political promise for a better living, a solution for soothing the urban stress at the current capital while making use of the vast land, according to the participants whose perception explicitly suggests a more problematic nature to what is being articulated with regard to these new projects. Even though it is widely acknowledged that there are some tangible changes in the urban development agenda including infrastructure upgrade, the youths of concern to this study mostly think of these projects as investments-led where businessmen, companies and the upper segment of the society are of a definite priority.

Given the ongoing communications on the media, awareness of the new national urban projects is mostly centered on the New Administrative Capital followed by New Alamein City, the latter only resonating as a name. In several instances throughout the interviews, the new urban projects are referred to as *compounds* (English verbatim, not translated) instead of cities, resembling the participants' subconscious of the social phenomenon of private gated communities. While evidently affected by the urban issues of the GCR, all participants seem to believe that the new capital is not for the general public to benefit from its vast amenities, large green spaces, and high standard living, as envisioned by some.

Although a desire to upgrade their living and lifestyle is a common state-of-mind, it is constantly asserted among the interviewed youths that the compound-like life of the new urban projects is not meant for them. With only one participant foreseeing a scenario whereby more social classes would be accommodated on the long run, the dominating perception still suggests otherwise.

P9: "I think things will get easier by time as soon as the new cities are connected with Cairo [in terms of infrastructure and transportation]... There might be some people who would think otherwise now, but later you'll find pulses of life there."

P2: "They say that by 2030 we're all gonna be there, which is really unrealistic. It is as if every citizen will be paid in [US] dollars...The ones who'll move there are not the Egyptians we know of; not the average Egyptian. It is a new vision for Egypt that is different from ours...It will benefit Egypt in terms of economy, tourism, and investment...They're building something that looks good, that is well administered with amenities and services of good quality, but not for Egyptians"

The projects have been described a number of times both literally and implicitly as *utopian* and image-driven to rather deliver a message of development and revival, which is believed to be somewhat real yet exaggerated. According to the conducted interviews, communications suggestive of social inclusion; that the new urban projects are for 'all' Egyptians, are perceived as commercial talk or, simply put, untrue and irrational. In such articulations by the young participants we find counter-discourses to the collective discourses about the new urban projects, expressed in critical concerns about a socially segregated *system* where they do not fit. That is to say, the New Administrative Capital is significantly seen as elitist by the interviewees where only those financially privileged are believed to benefit, which represents to them a clearly visible social irony given the ratio between the affluent and the rest. This is mainly due to the prevailing perception of high costs in terms of housing and living standard, making the projects in reality distant and irrelevant to the majority of the population. As one example, the new capital is imagined as a city with a future setting from a Western movie, suggesting that this mega national project is to a great extent alienating. When observing the discursive patterns arising from the participants' own articulations thus far, one can strongly

follow the conflict over identity and the inner rejection of the constructed meanings around those new urban projects.

P7: "It's not an issue of constructing new cities, but we don't want it to turn into us living in slums at the end...we'll be segmented into levels and I don't like that. It is understandable that any society is made up of levels, but we shouldn't be splitting it up that much... The rich people will move there and the rest will have no place but here."

P8: "Not anyone will enter such places! I'm not sure if the social class will matter to them but it probably will... Like they'd be asking '*why are you coming here?*' They surely have a different perspective, maybe one of security... The poor and the middle class, I think, would have the same impression that it's not for everyone and that the country's money is all being invested there, which justifies the attention they're given."

Amid this absent sense of relevance, in some cases the projects are critically seen by the participants as further advancement to a segment that is commonly thought of as already developed; one that had the privilege of private education, one that has Western ideologies and that dislikes mingling with other social segments. Rather seen as problem-free citizens; away from poverty, unaffected by inflation, and not concerned with social issues in the country, according to the interviewees who associate themselves with the middle class of the society, the upper segment is believed to have stronger positive views of these urban development projects. Among the arguments on this matter, it is perceived that the few privileged individuals in the country are taken by the physical aspect of development; a perspective they have from developed countries. Hence, according to the interviewees, with these new cities and their skyscrapers, Egypt would seem developed to the *crème-de-la-crème* of the society. The specific articulations from this sample of Egyptian youths are, in essence, a manifestation of more recharged notions of antagonism where there is a clear distinction between two colliding subjects; the 'others' being the ones having social advantage over the middle-class youths in this regard.

P7: "They're bringing together individuals of a certain social group who have similar lifestyles, interests and ideologies, putting them in a place that only suits their class!...Nowadays we hear a lot of *compounds*, which makes me wonder 'have people become rich?' Or 'are people pretending to be rich?'...Those who see these projects as 'attractive' are classist!"

P3: "I might live and die and not know anything about life there, just like many others who never knew what this is all about and never thought of even visiting similar places."

It is evident to a high degree that the perception of the new urban projects among Egyptian youths is positive when it comes to the economic returns to the state, including the opportunities they would open for youth labor market. Nevertheless, some believe that such opportunities are also subject to 'screening and filtering' to fit within the system. In this sense, most of the interviewed youths think of the new capital as a workplace as opposed to a new home that would welcome them and other social groups. It is repeatedly questioned who would be given green light to go there even if it were for just a visit, which one of the participants thinks hypothetically would require an interview. Among attitudes of indifference and provocation expressed through the discourses of the youths, one cannot turn an eye on the social pressure resulting from this perceived filtering system where one is expected to have improbable features to get admitted. Such views also resonate with expressions and feelings of demotivation; regardless of how much one would aspire for more, there are some perceived boundaries and social limits. The conclusion among the participants remains as is; the majority of the population would not benefit from these projects. It is noticeable in every instance of articulation by the interviewed sample how there is resistance to being positioned where the discourses about these projects aim to plot them, specifically behind the interests and demands of certain social and political agendas.

P3: "I won't be unfair, I believe that in terms of job opportunities, many would be availed and for everyone. Specifically, ample and well-paid opportunities for the youths."

P2: "You have no option but working your a** off to get somewhat closer, because wherever you are now that's gonna vanish. They're diluting this cluster of the Egyptian society."

P4: "[These projects] can make the average citizen feel demotivated that they wouldn't be able to get a home there. So, there needs to be something that caters to everyone's pocket."

Notions of nationalism arise in different communications, according to some of the participants, which seem to work out regardless of one's honest perception of the projects and the degree to which they would benefit from them. Such tone of nationalism might push participation as a national duty, because there is an inherited sense of belonging for the love of the country in spite of political reservations that some of the participants have expressed. A call for production and work is noted as one of the imperatives for these urban projects that come with institutional determination against all barriers (e.g., COVID implications). That said, the projects are set to happen against time and everyone is expected to follow without turning their back on the path, otherwise one would be labeled as unpatriotic. A direction that is also seen to a certain extent as glorification of the institution, projecting a branded discourse of accomplishments. In this sense, we find some of the study's participants implicitly opposing these meanings shaped by nationalistic discourses that favor certain groups of authority and financial privilege.

P6: "They have a mission and nothing would stop them anyway, be it corona or whatever. They'll just make it happen...If they want Europe's traffic in Heliopolis (neighborhood), DONE! As for other social matters, these are of no importance! I don't know how things work for whoever is taking these decisions, but I'm sure that they aren't easy either and they are not just random ones. It must be based on many things that are bigger than my own understanding. So, I leave to them the decision...they know better! As long as the system is going on; same problems, different times...just like from the times of my parents."

The above quote from P6, who reflects on the state's sense of determination for accomplishing the national urban agenda, points out to limits of *antagonism* where concerns of prioritization instantly fade into a mixed attitude of both recognition/justification (e.g., "*they know better*") and indifference (e.g., "*same*").

problems, different times"). According to Laclau and Mouffe, external contradictions coming into conflict with a given discourse represent restrictions to objectivity within societies that are faced with instability amid antagonistic limits.

P2: "The idea of forcing respect to the nation and the institutional projects is not right...Huge real estate ambitions while we have rural areas where only some 20 years ago people started getting basic utilities as water and electricity and some have not to date. I see this as a total disgrace!"

Some participants repeatedly questioned the political sense of prioritization when it comes to defining a meaningful approach toward developing the nation. In such instances, it is argued that much more important than physical developments developing people is essential for mentalities to be able to adapt to such uncommon living standard and living environment. Education resonates as one prominent example among the participants' critical views, reflecting on the majority of the population whose qualifications hinder the narrowing of social gaps, which is argued to be a political obligation in the first place. Moreover, the projects are not believed to address urban issues in a sustainable manner, arguing that problems of congestion are not solved by rescaling the roads. Thus, it is reiterated from different viewpoints that the new urban projects are more of a superficial image inspired by Western characteristics. The study being foremost concerned with discourses hereby traced *moments* of contradiction that are illustrated in the below quote:

P5: "In my own opinion, these projects are not worthy of the investments, we have so many other things that need more attention than just being concerned with concrete development. I don't want to talk politics, but I believe that we need to be concerned with human beings and not bricks, because it's human beings who make bricks. We have so many things that need to be fixed. So, instead of building roads and bridges, which are really working very well, I don't deny that, but we need to focus on education, health, and many other things... So, maybe we're doing the right thing, but not at the right time!"

It can be argued that second thoughts in such views are not necessarily out of an incomplete opinion, but the subconscious is rather adjusting the counter-discourse, even if momentarily, to the general discourse that is feeding into the

subject. In this instance, again, we find limits to antagonism despite the strong attempt in the P5's articulations.

P2: “The project isn’t really addressing any issue more than just being something ‘new’. It’s like when you have an old t-shirt and you decide to buy a new one and you decide to go for a much bigger size on the hope that you would work out and eventually beef up to fit in it, while in reality you have some medical conditions that require treatment before you can get on track. So, no, we are not qualified for this, we have no public understanding of societies with such [urban] aspects. First of all, you need to revive the citizen, and education is key!”

5.2.2 City Edge Developments: The Sub-Brand

In order to capture deep understanding of City Edge Developments from the viewpoint of Egyptian youths, a number of static visuals along with the brand's 2019 TV commercial were presented separately to the participants. With regard to the static visuals, three were displayed: a) the official Arabic claim of '*The National Developer of Egypt*', b) CED logo, and c) the lockup of the logo with the Arabic claim, respectively in this order (see Figure 11). Visual (C) is an actual image from one of CED's social media⁷ pages. This image was then slightly altered twice to present the claim and the logo separately, as shown in visuals (A) and (B). By doing so, it was possible to explore levels of awareness, perceptions and attitudes across all elements.



Figure 11: Three static visuals presenting CED and its claim.

⁷ CED's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/cityedgedevelopments>

To start with the claim, it is important to note that the official Arabic version⁸ of *'The National Developer of Egypt'* omits the word 'Egypt' and banks solely on the word 'national' instead, which creates ambiguity with regard to the nation it refers to. This point aside for now, the claim has shown low awareness among the study's participants who mostly see it as a governmental statement with slight uncertainty. On the one hand, some have perceived the word 'national' as a meaningless institutional term that mostly points out to Egyptian state-ownership while promoting nationalism/patriotism. On the other hand, to some other participants the claim seems to resemble the Arabian Gulf (e.g., United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, etc.), referring to regional real estate investments, as P3 asserts, "*It's either from Dubai or Dubai!*". Participants with this view argue that the Arabic term used for 'national' is more common among companies from within the Gulf region while mentioning other synonyms that they think are more relevant to Egypt. With all views in mind, the claim on its own seems to indicate for the sample that it is a state-owned developer that is mostly perceived to be associated with Egypt followed by the Gulf region, depending on where one would come across it.

P5: "[This claim] must represent a project for Egyptian real estate development. If I saw it in Egypt, I would then say it's Egyptian. But, if I saw it online for example, it could then be referring to any other Arab nation...But, most probably, it's owned by Egypt... the name resonates with those typical national projects. National [in this context] means Egyptian; that it's state-owned."

P7: "I think I have come across it before! It sounds like a newspaper headline, which no one reads but the older generations who are delusional, who have faulty understanding of the reality of the society...The claim is likely to come from one of those big governmental institutions, which we don't know what they do in the country!"

Moving onto CED, the brand is mostly recognized by its logo, although awareness is generally low among the participants. With uncertainty concerning its origin, perception of it being a private company prevailed while also giving an impression of private *compounds*. A few of the participants who see it unlikely for the brand to be Egyptian, strongly believe that its identity is more of an international

⁸CED's literal Arabic claim: "*The National Real Estate Developer*"

one. Nevertheless, when the logo is presented with the company's national claim puzzling thoughts arise, in some cases received with laughter, mostly seeing it as a collaboration between a private entity, whether Egyptian or foreign, and the state. Some participants link the private ownership to rich businessmen with goodwill who want to do good for the country, among which a Forbes-listed Egyptian billionaire business family was mentioned. The hesitation concerning the identity of the company with the national claim reflects a perceptual denial among the participating youths to grasp that City Edge Developments is in reality a state-owned brand. From a theoretical perspective, one can identify the struggle of fixing a new identity orchestrated by this *national*-claimed brand, which is perceptively divergent from prior national discourses according to the articulations of some participants, as illustrated in the following quote:

P5: "The logo gives an impression of a private company, it looks neat and it's not usually the case for governmental companies...Governmental projects would have a touch of nationalism with words like '*Egypt, nation, people, president*'. So, it will always have a word that points out to national loyalty." Then continues with laughter following the display of the logo with the claim, "now everything I just said is no longer valid, [with this claim] it is either governmental or a private company with the government's involvement in a way or another."

Upon revealing the actual identity of City Edge Developments, being Egypt's national real estate developer, a few participants had spontaneous surprising reactions: P3 comments, "*Oh my God! I actually feel happy now despite all what I previously said*", and P7 praises the visual look of the brand, "*Bravo! I've never seen governmental work with such quality*". The change in such thoughts seemed momentarily taken by the image of the brand identity, although it was followed by more critical views ensuing the preview of CED's 2019 TV commercial, which are presented shortly. Conflicting views as such in the open-ended construction of identities remain apparent in the articulations of the participating youths. Arguably, this is due to a diversity of dislocated *elements* present across discourses about the urban projects and, more specifically, through The National Developer of Egypt. That is to say, in some instances we find critical concerns arise and in other instances we find notions of inspiration and pride even if not entirely closed.

Most of the interviewed youths did not recall CED TV commercial, noting that the majority of the sample say that they do not watch TV and that social media is their primary media consumption. Watching the commercial a couple of times during the interview, the participants mostly regard it as communication for investment. However, instant reactions of provocation arise toward its content and its projection of people and life that are far from familiar: "*This is not how an Egyptian would look like in our streets,*" comments P8. Another participant pauses the video on the opening shot featuring a male model with a panoramic view of skyscrapers and asks with irony, "*What kind of education did that person get? Did he go to a public school?*". In these articulations we find conflict of identity representation between the participants and the featured cast in the commercial; in discourse theoretical terms, the '*Other*'. This conflict seems consistent in different interpretations by the participants, as it is repeatedly questioned if there is any awareness of the Egyptian streets and the '*real*' people, most of whom are believed not to have any imagination of life in such promoted places.

P1: "The ad gives an impression that the country has good stuff and good investors who make use of the land to build nice places... it is like tourism campaigns."

P3: "Just a typical cliché real estate commercial trying to tell you that the place has all the details of our lives, which we'll share together, and I don't know what...This person jogging, this one by the pool, that one working out at the gym, and, I don't know, this person going to what resort...In reality I'm only going to spend some time there and that's it, not a complete life!"

P8: "I feel that such commercials deliberately show people and sceneries so that you'd be certain that you won't live there...I just think that these are very expensive stuff that we shouldn't be concerned with."

Among the few positive views of the commercial, the message is in alignment with their perception of the changes in the country, reiterating that it is a meaningful message regardless of who can afford it. Moreover, one of the participants thinks that the commercial is successful in maintaining and reinforcing the Egyptian identity with the use of iconic Egyptian landmarks (e.g., Giza Pyramids) alongside the future vision of these projects in the new urban cities. On the downside,

however, those shots of historical monuments were remarkably regarded as visual messages of marketed nationalism. In this sense, the commercial is trying to deliver a message that banks on historical notions of civilization coupled with futuristic developments on the basis that people would get the best of both worlds, which most participants do not believe it to be a truthful message. From another critical perspective, reflecting on CED's national affiliation against its alienating discourse, P7 comments "*one would question the government's intention in favoring one segment over the other*".

P9: "The commercial has a good message, one that shows that we're developing with diligence and at the same time staying truthful to our Egyptian identity. However, I would say again that not everyone would be able to buy there. So, you [as a brand] are aware that not all segments will reach you, even though you still want to mark your presence."

P5: "It delivers a message that kind of bridges the past with the future, showing you how we were once great people with the greatest engineered construction in Egypt and probably in the world [the Pyramids] to revive the perception toward how the nation is being developed."

P2: "There is one thing that grabbed my attention [in this commercial]... While those who will benefit from these projects are presented by one or a maximum of two individuals [cast] in each scene, on the contrary, we find the construction workers in larger numbers per frame. Those workers are in fact the majority of the people...and unfortunately, this is how it's like!"

Repeatedly, we find across the discourses of the participants articulations of a reality that is in opposition to the reality presented through the discourse of the brand. P2's above quote, "*unfortunately, this is how it's like*" uncovers subliminal meanings of injustice, referring to a social imbalance whereby the majority are perceived to be serving the demands of smaller groups. This points out to a condition of hegemony where the subject is occurring outside what is being explicitly articulated.

5.2.3 The Effects on the Nation Brand and National Identities

It is commonly thought among the interviewed youths that effects of such communications would vary according to each segment of the society. To start with the middle class, with which the participants associate themselves, a mix of positivity, indifference, and appreciation in spite of these projects being socially and financially unreachable, whereas for the upper segment it could mean pride. On the extreme spectrum, among the vulnerable groups, Egyptian youths expect feelings of injustice, sarcasm, and hate to prevail. The general takeaway is that it is likely that there will be acknowledgment of some national efforts among some groups despite the sense of irrelevance it might resemble to the majority of the population. It is noticed how articulations of the study's participants in several instances are contradictory, confronted by a nation image that is relatively positive yet problematic from a social perspective, as illustrated in the following quotes:

P1: "There are people who get affected by these commercials, they'd be like 'these people [the ones in charge] are really doing a great job with these nice projects'... As for me, I like it; they're investing in the country, but I would go back to my initial point that many people won't be able to go there."

P3: "I have zero feelings toward this commercial, if it shows up in a commercial break on TV, I would put it on mute or get up and do anything else...I don't care, I know that this standard of compounds or living is an expensive one that is not for us, as a middle-class segment. So, I wouldn't care, and I'm talking reality of an average Egyptian home!...The commercial gives me an impression of diligence, that they want to deliver a good image of Egypt. So, it's a good thing, but not for Egyptians. We know how Egypt is like!"

In the above example, we find P3 only seeing the branded discourse as one that has no signification to them; being distant from a *real* experience that they can live in the country. The unauthentic experience is noted to be diverted away from the reality of the society, as further captured in the following quote from P6:

P6: "That's Egypt you see through the media lens, one that is changing, that has shifted the focus away from squatter settlements... and recently, they're talking about fancy companies and fancy people; a European perspective!"

The social gaps in the society are remarkably visible for almost all participants where struggles arise in the attempt to keep up with the social image. Such struggle is touched upon in the use of English communication to appeal to a certain segment for marketing purposes, as in the case with most of CED's communications. A phenomenon that might have not yet reached the Egyptian streets per se, but that is noticeably spreading in different everyday-life context (e.g., restaurant menus, hotlines, Franco Arabic texting, etc.) and that is stimulating provocation to a number of participants. Alerting to some of the youths who themselves utter English words from time to time throughout the interviews, they express concerns regarding the lack of preservation of the local language, as one dimension of the Egyptian national identity. P3 comments, "*I do not get why speaking straight in our mother tongue could be seen as socially degrading!*", not denying the importance of the language for work opportunities, but critically thinking how the use of the language has become misused to suggest impressions of sophistication and class. P5 argues, "*Let us agree that if I use some English words as we speak, people would have a different impression on me,*" referring to a certain segment of the society. "*Why so? We are all Egyptians!*" exclaims P1 whose question remains open-ended not only for the day-to-day incorporation of the language, but even more critical toward national brands as the case with CED.

5.2.4 Conclusive findings for RQ2

From the above analysis a definite answer can be given to the second research question concerning the effects CED's articulations of the new national urban projects have on Egyptian youths in terms of perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand. It has been noted through the articulations of the participating youths that the discourses around the new cities result in mixed feelings. On the one hand, they seem to marginalize the majority of the citizens as they cater to certain economic and political agendas. While, on the other hand, stimulating some general positivity toward the accomplishments of the state (mostly of a physical character), some other aspects of nation development are believed not to be given as much attention—*education* being a prominent example. Driven by the external image of the country, that is influenced by Western traits, it is mostly

regarded as problematic to national identities and the sense of social justice. Ultimately one can trace rejections through counter-discourses against the reality constructed by the brand in its attempt to project the nation in a certain identity with regard to its urban development scheme. That said, from Laclau and Mouffe's conception of hegemony, it is noticeable how many antagonistic conditions arise within the articulations of the interviewed youths, which are interrupted by second thoughts favoring or justifying the meanings evoked by this branded nation-building discourse.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Having reached this final chapter of the thesis means that some final discussions and conclusions can be drawn out of the findings. It starts by discussing the various pieces of the study; from the research problem and aim to the knowledge it brings forward to prior scholarly findings within the cultural stream of nation branding research, under the umbrella of strategic communication. Then the chapter concludes with explicit answers to the research questions proposed, followed by some thoughts and suggestions for future research with the aim of redirecting the focus on to the emerging tactics of nation sub-branding from within the critical domestic lens.

6.1 Comprehensive Discussion and Knowledge Contribution

It has been argued since the starting point of this thesis that nation branding, more than just being regarded as a corporate-inspired practice, has critical implications on nations whereby the premise/tradition of social justice is overtly at stake. While promising investments and a positive identity for the nation, the practice tends, on the contrary, to turn a blind eye to the consequences it has on the domestic consumers of the brand, following the thoughts of many critical scholars over the past couple of decades (Kaneva, 2011b; Aronczyk, 2013; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2016). The domain's focus on the monolithic structure of nation branding in most cited researches enabled this study to identify a gap. That is, looking closer into practices that shift away from the explicit context of the monolithic structure of a one-nation brand; examples like, Cool Japan, Colombia is Passion, etc. Leading critical scholars; e.g., Kaneva (2011), Kucsár & Yum (2011), had suggested a more fragmented approach as a solution to addressing concerns of marginalization in the prior attempts of presenting nations under a '*total*' brand. This study, however, problematized this conception and aimed to investigate an empirical case of an industry-driven *sub*-brand; City Edge Developments, a high-end real estate developer branded as '*The National Developer of Egypt*' with

projects across the various new generation of cities that are under construction, including the New Administrative Capital and New Alamein City.

Aiming to explore the implications of such an emerging sub-branding strategy, this qualitative study proposed two research questions while banking on the poststructuralist perspective of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse to analyze different types of data. On the one hand, examining the construction of meanings and identities through the discourses of the brand in question. This was conducted through analyzing selected marketing materials of City Edge Developments. On the other hand, nine interviews were conducted with Egyptian youths who associate themselves with the middle-class of the society, bringing in individual articulations that helped understand the effects of the aforementioned communications on their perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand.

The findings of the study reveal that this non-monolithic, sector-drive brand while catering to the needs of the high-end segment, creates wider social problems in terms of its connection to the young generation of middle-class Egyptians. That is to say, when the brand is looked at domestically from the perspective of the youths, we find it enforcing feelings of social injustice and a sense of splits in the population. This is evident in how the empirical analysis points out to the discourse of the brand being elitist and, although received with admiration in some instances, it remains to be seen as alienating while strengthening the divides between the people in the country. It might not surprising to find nations engaging with different strategies of nation branding depending on whom they address, this study confirms though that nothing appears to be the best choice for the domestic audiences who should not be left to marketing segmentation strategies or marginalized in other attempts. Accordingly, the findings confirm the initial assumptions underlying this exploratory study with regard to nation sub-branding strategy. That is to say, nation branding is as problematic in its non-monolithic structure; i.e., "*built up from various pieces*" to reuse Kulcsár and Yum's own words (2011, p. 209), as in its traditional monolithic format. This is a fundamental contribution of the study to the cultural body of nation branding research, which was initially led by Kaneva (2011).

In addition to its main contribution, the findings of the study also confirm what previous case studies of nation branding, although in its monolithic structure, concluded. Among some of these overlapping findings, the top-down construction of national identities, which Jansen (2011) described as a myth for citizens to participate in a social community experience of exclusive nature. Notions of patriotism and nationalism were also present in the study through partially influential attempts to manage the perceived image of the nation on the domestic level. That is to say, discourses from the interviewed young sample of the study showed contradictory attitudes toward the discourses of the brand; in many instances received with provocation, but also with recognition and pride even though there is a shared conviction that they are not the ones to benefit from these projects. Thus, capturing through the theoretical lens of the study antagonistic conditions that unfold into hegemonic interventions where dominance of certain identities are produced and projected via mass media despite certainty among the participants that these are not consumable for everyone.

It is thanks to the research questions of this thesis that a wider finding also surfaced along the process. While focusing on City Edge Developments in its strategic positioning as the national developer of the country, it was initially assumed that the aforementioned critical concerns were only attached to this 'high-end' brand. However, the study discovered through the interviews that the critical perspective might have not been different per se but bigger in scope; extended to the new national urban projects as a whole beyond CED's portfolio of projects. That is to say, apart from CED's articulations, according to the views of the participants, the New Administrative Capital as one example with highest awareness is regarded as a city designed to serve political and economic agendas. Thus, the dominant perception is that the new cities are not to accommodate anyone but the affluent and business sectors while projecting an advanced image of the country. Arguably, such finding is an indication that the collected data for this qualitative research could give a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the problem.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to investigate an empirical case of nation sub-branding, which was operationalized into two research questions. The first being; *'what meanings has City Edge Developments fixated throughout its discursive articulation of the new national urban development projects?'*, to which the answer was identified out of three themes in the brand's various discourses: (1) *individual advancement and empowerment*, (2) *luxury and leadership*, and (3) *nationalism and national pride*. The understanding reached out of these themes is that the holistic discourse of the brand attempts to establish new identities that seem only compatible with individuals of a certain social and economic profile who are presented as the likely citizens of the new *'cities of the future'*. In many articulations we find the brand empowering this privileged group of the society, based on its strategic positioning of *high-end* development. Through nodal points of luxury and leadership, CED's discourses present a surplus of *elements*; i.e., differences that are subtracted from the articulations, which control the identity of the subject. Not just a matter of promoting a particular meaning to the intended audiences, the brand's reliance on discourses of nationalism with articulated signs of a nation-wide shared history (e.g., Great Pyramids of Giza) points out to a wider strategy of signification and identity management. It has been argued that such representation establishes more complexity to the discursive position of the subject, since ultimately the history is shared among all Egyptians with no reservations, but the brand on the contrary is just not, as supported by the analysis of the second research question.

The second research question of the study aimed to investigate *'how City Edge Developments' articulations of the new national urban projects influence Egyptian youths' perceptions and attitudes toward the nation brand?'*. In this instance the study was concerned with the discourses of the sample of Egyptian youths about discourses of the brand with regard to the new cities. The answer to this question was concluded in five themes: (1) *economic value*, (2) *social segregation*, (3) *political prioritization*, (4) *national identity*, and (5) *nationalism*. The takeaway from these themes is that Egyptian youths perceive the new national

projects as capital driven with a social system where average citizens are not taken into consideration and thus suggestive of a social divide. In the youths' own views, the new cities were seen as utopian with 'provocative' identities that were novel and unfamiliar to the majority of the population. In that respect, the upper segment of the society were being further advanced by such projects, specifically favored through the articulations of The National Developer of Egypt. Nevertheless, although critically argued to be irrelevant and presenting an imbalance of political prioritization, notions of nationalism in some cases were received with positivity and pride. Consistently, the answer to the second research question demonstrated that hegemony is central to the role of nation branding.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis, associating itself with the cultural stream of nation branding critical research, has opened up a new angle for investigation; the sub-branding strategy emerging in some recent cases. That said, it is suggested that more empirical case studies away from the monolithic structure can continue to unveil new learnings on the implications of such practice on national identities and the premise of social justice. It means that researchers concerned with this domain will need to look beyond the surface of what is being presented in the form of logos, slogans or TV commercials for promoting a nation as a *total* brand. That said, and in brief, future research needs to explore more cases of sector-driven branding activities from around the world that are indirectly tied to the construction of nation image and national identities.

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Appendices

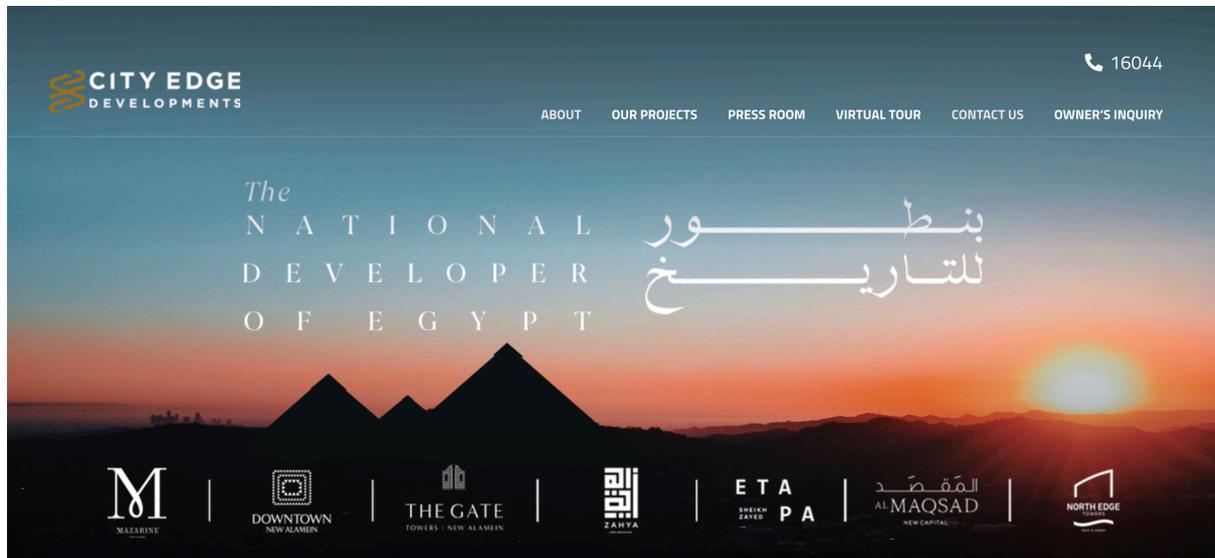
Appendix A



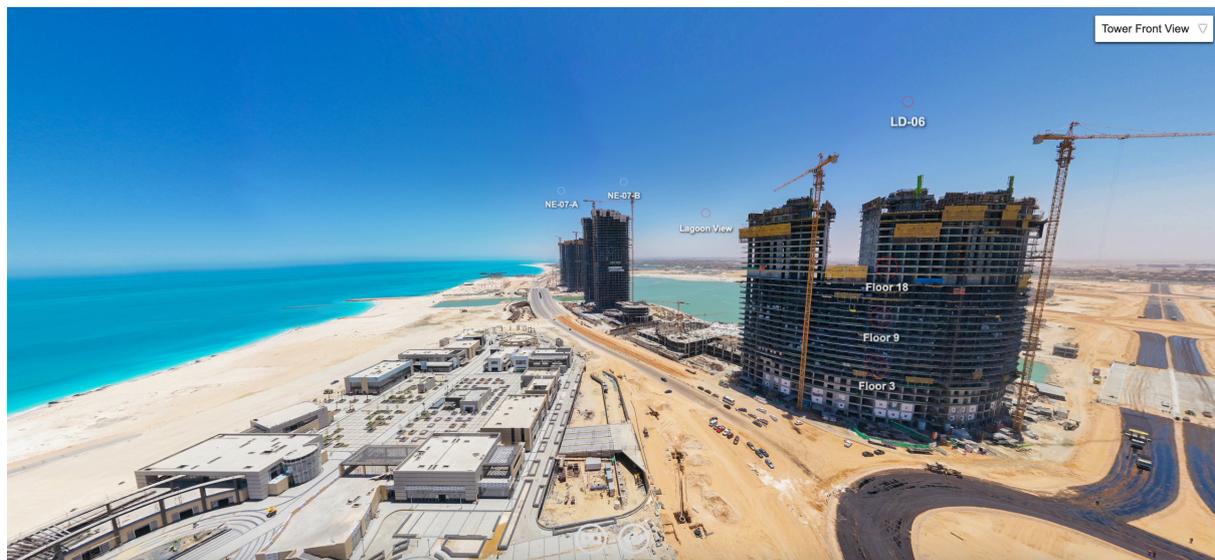
هيئة المجتمعات العمرانية الجديدة
New Urban Communities Authority



Appendix B

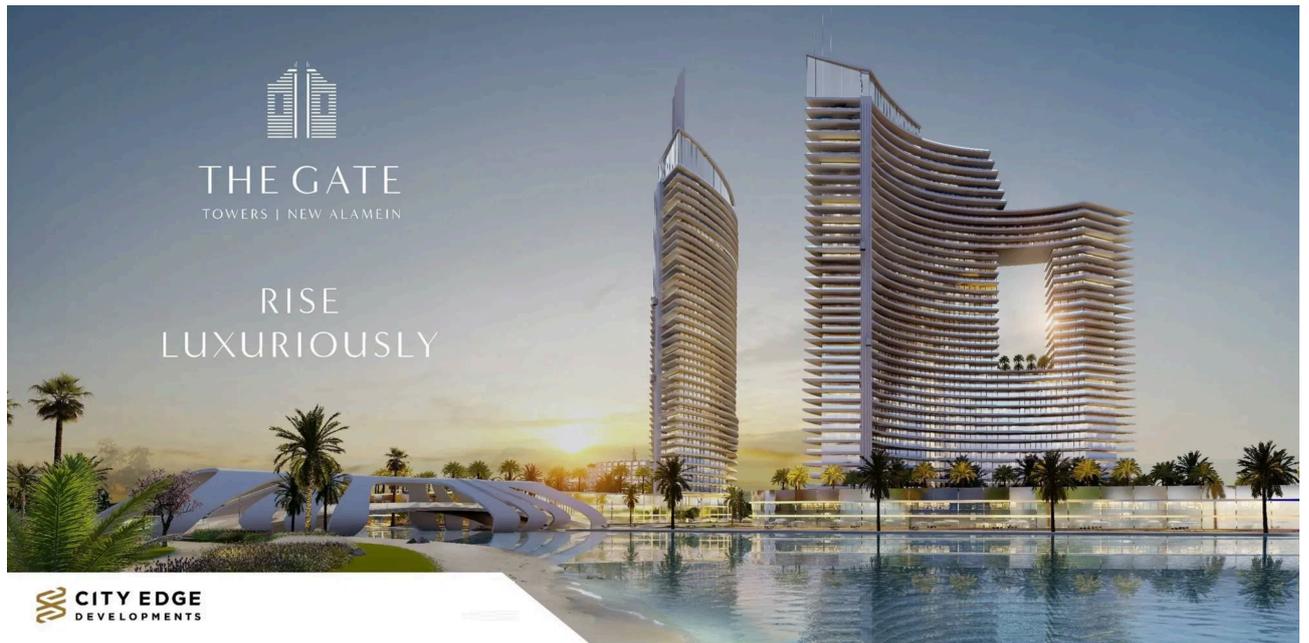


City Edge Developments homepage: <https://cityedgedevelopments.com/>



CED website: virtual tour available on <https://cityedgedevelopments.com/new-alamein-ld06/>

Appendix C



<https://insiteooh.com/article/2342-city-edge-will-make-you-rise-luxuriously-with-the-gate>