

# Vacant areas Management and Its Role in the Development of Egyptian Cities (A case study of the city of Qoutour)

Prof. Tariq Abdel Latif Abu Al-Atta <sup>1</sup>, Mohamed Aly Ahmed Elgabar <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Architecture and Regional Planning, Department of Architecture,  
Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Egypt

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D. student, Department of Architecture, Cairo University, Egypt.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Lecturer at the Higher Institute of Engineering and Technology,  
Kafr El-Sheikh – Egypt;

## Abstract

Many residents prefer to live in Egyptian cities, as they are considered a vital place to live, study, work, recreation, health care. As a result, they are increasing urban growth, and here arises a real problem in providing land for various activities necessary to provide the required services. The sustainable development strategy for Egypt 2030 has adopted stopping the encroachment on agricultural lands, and because many Egyptian cities do not have a desert expanse that can be extended, it requires redrawing the policies related to vacant areas as the main resource for providing activities and services currently and in the future according to their sizes, ownership, and characteristics. The percentage of vacant area is 17% of the percentage of land uses in Egyptian cities, according to city databases conducted by the researcher on (20) cities, which indicates the existence of great opportunities to enable development. The research aims to study the possibility of managing Vacant areas efficiently, by analyzing the challenges facing vacant areas, to exploit it as one of the most important resources to confront unplanned growth and urbanism, by identifying the scientific theories, and international experiences in light of the challenges and reform system. In addition, the research discusses the dimensions of the land management systems in Egypt, by evaluating the strategic plan of Qotour city (2011) through the proposed projects on the vacant areas both the implemented and unimplemented projects in 2021. Finally, the research ends with a set of recommendations that would activate integrated strategies for the management of vacant areas, which include: Solving the problem of multiple authorities which have the discretion of the Vacant areas (institutional framework). As well as selecting the necessary laws to raise its efficiency (legislative framework). In addition, benefiting from the technological systems in registering and updating its data (technological framework).

**Keywords:** Essentials of Vacant areas Management- legislation of Vacant areas - Registration systems of Vacant areas - Performance of Strategic plans.

## INTRODUCTION:

Land is one of the most important non-renewable natural resources, which if managed well, will help to reach sustainable development, economic growth and protect the natural environment. The problem of providing the necessary vacant lots for public services and utilities and the settlement of various activities is one of the urgent issues facing decision-makers in Egypt. The management of the vacant areas system is related to the state's role and responsibilities towards providing the basic needs of citizens in terms of services, public utilities, and housing projects.

The research paper begins by defining the different dimensions of the concept of managing the vacant areas, followed by analyzing its problems in the world countries and analyzing the current situation in Egypt which leads us at the end of the research paper to extract recommendations for the management of the vacant lands to enable development in Egyptian cities.

## 1- The main factors for reforming the Vacant areas management system:

### 1.1 The concept of vacant areas:

**Urban:** These are the lands that are included in a specific area plan where significant changes are expected and are usually within the framework of strategic plans<sup>1</sup>.

**Economically:** it is a proposed urban specific area for the development of projects on it, and the size of development may range from a small group of plots of land to an entire urban community<sup>2</sup>.

**Legal:** Separate urban maps showing how individual plots are used also include the identification of both the legal rights of landowners, which the state may also be in addition to a particular condition relating to the use and development of land.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Human Settlements Report 2009, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Khaled Allam, Mahmoud Mohamed Ghaith: Planning the Residential Neighborhood, Cairo, 1995, p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Human Settlements Report 2009, p. 7.

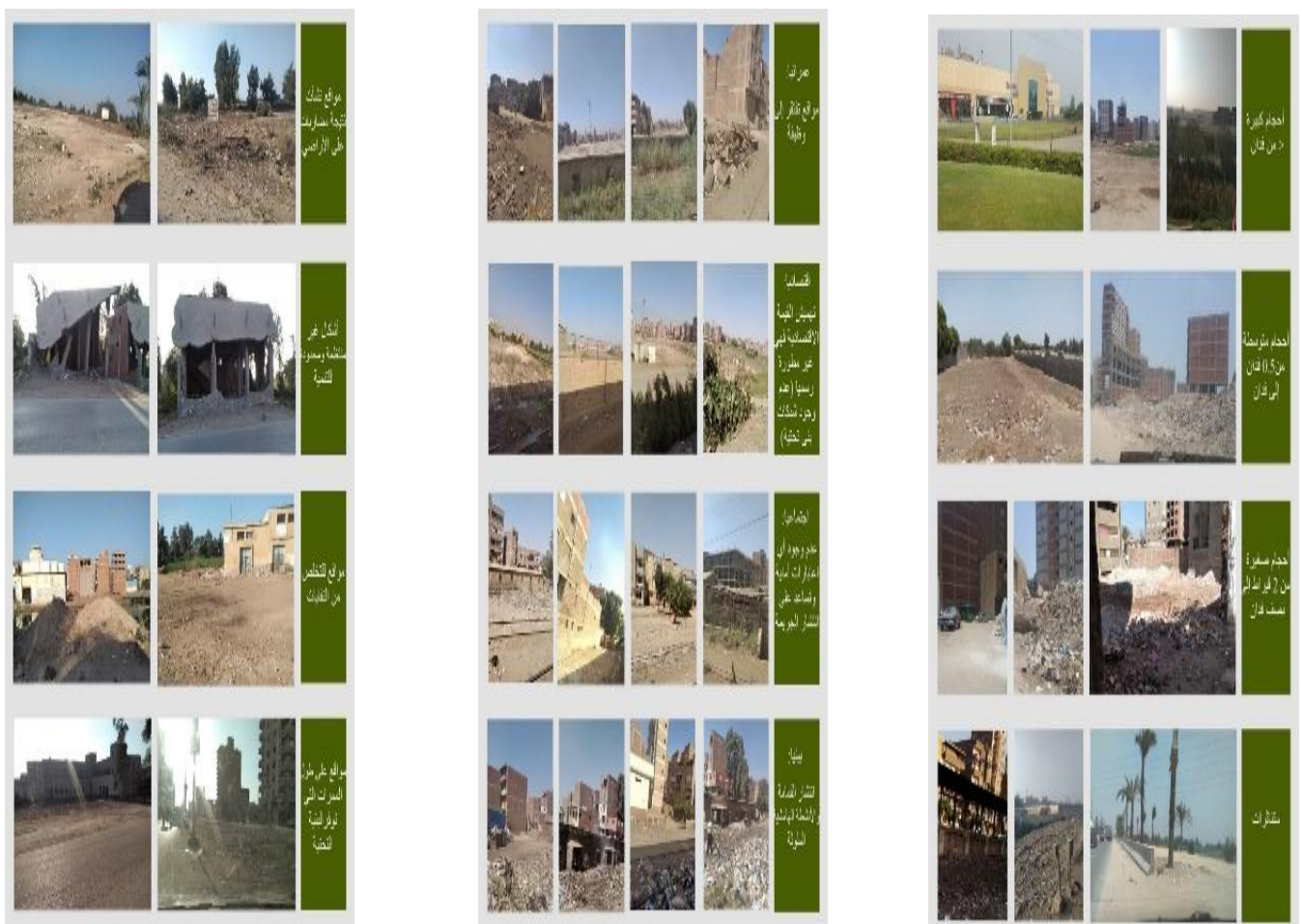
**1.2 Classifications of Vacant areas inside cities:**

Cities across Egypt contain different types of Vacant areas and can serve as integrated urban infrastructure systems in short- and long-term city plans.

Through field studies of 20 Egyptian cities and aerial image analysis, to identify and classify vacant plots, according to the size, property, and shape, as in the table 1 and figure 1.

**Table 1.** Classification of vacant lands within cities according to size, ownership, and properties.

Classification	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
Size	Large Lots	Medium sizes	Small sizes	Scattered
property	Public	Private	Endowments	infringement
Properties	urban	economic	social	environmental



According to characteristics Sidi Salem      According to property in Tanta City      According to size in Shebin El-Koum City

**Figure 1:** Classifications of Vacant areas in Egyptian cities according to size, ownership, and Properties

**2- The Status quo of Vacant areas in Egyptian cities:**

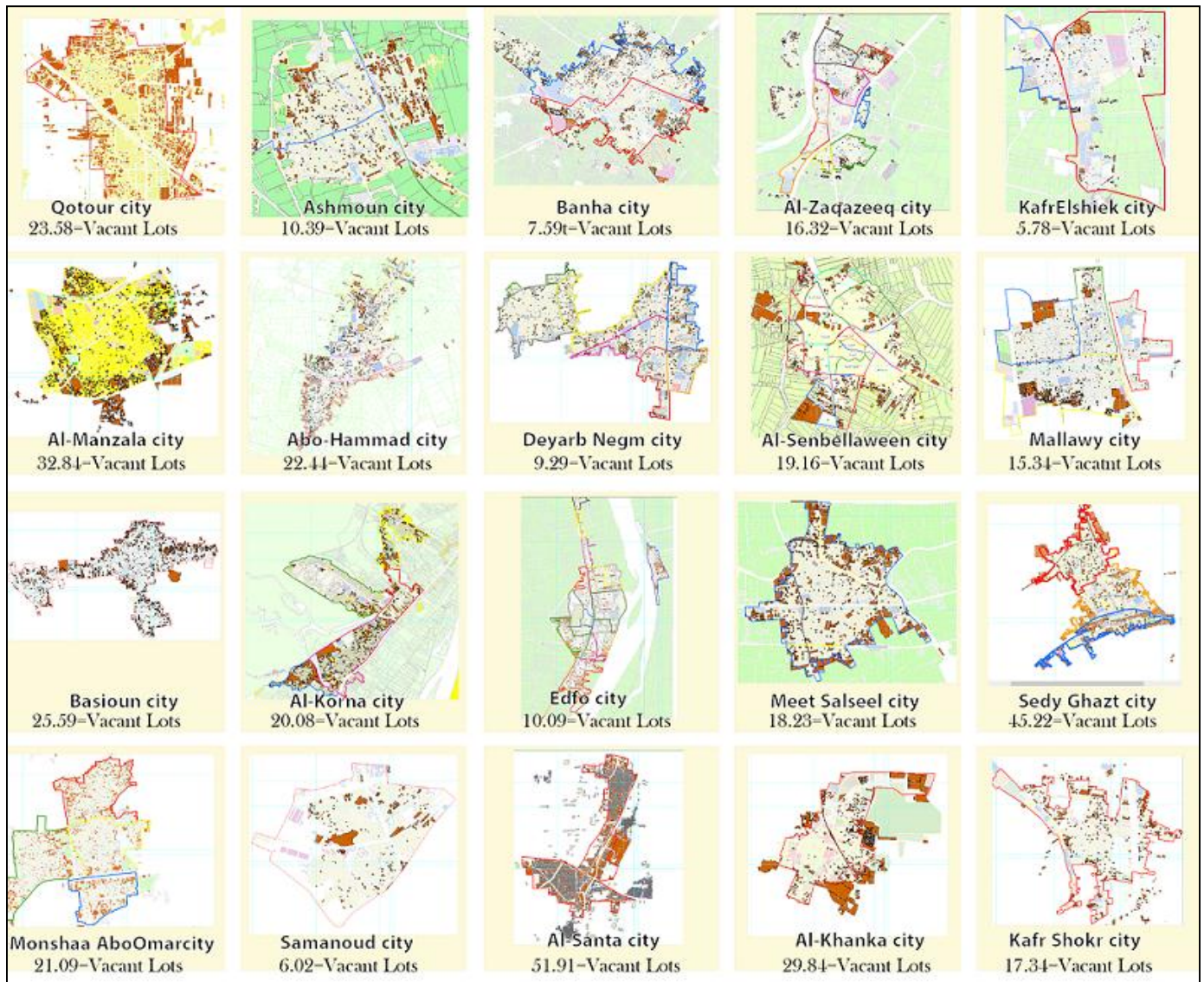
The optimal use of resources such as urban vacant areas plays an important role in enabling urban development in Egyptian cities, According to an analysis conducted by the researcher on the number of 20 Egyptian cities found that vacant areas

represent 17% of the total uses, table 1 shows the area of vacant areas and the number of lots in the selected cities conducted by the researcher based on the strategic plans prepared for those cities, as shown in figure 1 vacant areas distribution and proportions in selected cities.

**Table 1:** The area of the vacant areas and the number of plots in the selected cities and their proportions

City name	District No.	Total area for other uses	Total plots of land for various uses	Total Vacant areas area	Number of vacant plots	Vacant areas ratios in selected cities
Kafr Al-Sheikh	2	1308.44	16793	75.64	273	5.78
Zagazig	2	2496.58	7267	407.55	2025	16.32
Banha	10	1721.32	8562	130.59	785	7.59
Ashmon	3	578.066	10870	60.06	621	10.39
Qotour	1	495.54	3661	152.82	1793	23.58
Mallawy	4	623.513	15005	95.64	684	15.34
Singlawin	14	970.357	3560	185.89	477	19.16
Derb Najm	9	454.597	11310	42.23	628	9.29
Abu Hammad	5	208.724	5101	46.83	620	22.44
Al-MAnzala	1	463.761	9789	152.31	1028	32.84
Sidi Ghazi	3	151.956	3343	106.64	471	45.22
Meet Salsil	1	408.229	7613	74.40	703	18.23
Edfo	16	869.38	12892	87.73	734	10.09
Al Qurna	5	697.082	6905	139.95	1012	20.08
Basion	1	488.112	15282	124.89	1647	25.59
Kafr Shukr	1	204.617	3527	35.48	437	17.34
Al-Khanka	1	569.634	1090	169.96	653	29.84
Al-Santa	1	270.363	6004	140.35	1456	51.91
Samnod	1	395.616	12392	23.83	172	6.02
Monshaat Abo-Omar	4	555.633	12123	117.18	1256	21.09
<b>Average Vacant areas area</b>		<b>13931.5</b>	<b>173089</b>	<b>2369.98</b>	<b>17475</b>	<b>17.01</b>





**Figure 2:** The area of the vacant areas and the number of plots in the selected cities and their proportions

The vacant area is a rare resource and one of the most important tools for urban development as to provide cities with its needs, and the state during the years (2015-2018) has allowed citizens to return the vacant lots attacked in Egyptian cities by the decision of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt No. (7) 5) 2016, the formation of an official committee to recover the land of the state has received a total of 170,000 applications for legalization, and 30,000 legalization applications submitted as of August 2021 in all governorates of Egypt, which contributed to the presence of Large areas are estimated at thousands of acres that will contribute to the development of Egyptian cities if they can be exploited optimally.

On the other hand, there are many drawbacks to not exploiting Vacant areas as follows:

**On the economic side:** vacant lots reduce the value of neighboring properties due to lack of services, and in Egypt, there is no law imposing tax revenues on landlords not to

exploit those lands, which constitutes the absence of any pressure on landlords to think about development and limit the monopoly of land for periods to increase its prices.



**Figure 3:** Empty land in Shubra El-Kheima neighborhood monopolized for long periods to increase its prices

**On the social side:** Vacant lots are targets of sabotage, criminal activities, and environmental damage.



**Figure 4:** Vacant plots next to the agricultural lands in Al-Mahalla city, a target for sabotage and criminal activities