Urban Development in Cairo (1976-1993)
The Perils of ‘Everyday State Building’ in Egypt

World Bank Workshop
“Using History to Inform Development Policy: The Role of Archives”
(25-26 October 2012)
Introduction

- Interventions in Egypt
  - WB’s Urban I & II
  - Helwan Housing

- Largely unsuccessful

- Why study?
  - A distraction?
  - IFI critiques
  - Means of investigating Egypt (‘black box’)

- State neglect of Cairo

Informal Cairo in red
The Egyptian State & the Donors

• Political context
  – ‘Lame Leviathans’
  – ‘Gate-keeper’ state
• ‘Every-day state-building’
• Security context
  – Clear in the US case
  – Less so with respect to the Bank
• Donor strategy
  – Policy reforms
  – ‘Aided self help’
  – Demonstration projects
• Egyptian objections
  – Construction projects
  – Donor leverage
Projects

• Challenged authoritarian dispensation
• Urban I
  – Policy reform & resistance
  – Defense of the status quo
• Helwan
• Urban II
  – Transport sector
  – Low cost/low tech
  – Demands for a construction project
  – Parking garages & a bus depot
Using the Archives

- Minutiae, not the ‘big picture’
- Useful as part of a broader project
- Next stage research?
- Bank context for Egypt projects?
- Where are the ‘contentious’ documents?
- Future courses of action?