



On Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 2:30pm at CEDEJ, **Omar Abolnaga** will present his research: "Cairo's Capital Cities".

Urban and history literature notes that there has been a tendency by Egypt's modern rulers to favour particular sections within Cairo, which receive a proportionate amount of capital and urban development. These sections, though mostly now integrated into Cairo, have been initially envisioned to be independent capital cities boasting concentrated wealth and power. This seminar presentation maps and explores the untold and often forgotten narratives of those cities, particularly the ones constructed in and around Cairo since the early 19th century, tracing the urban legacies of Egypt's modern rulers since Mehmed Ali. When pieced together, these cities reveal Cairo's formal landscape as an incomplete mosaic marked by literary and pedagogical gaps. Through the synthesis of archival records, maps, and urban literature, this presentation not only aims to unearth fragmented historical narratives surrounding Cairo's capital cities but also raises constructive questions about the ongoing project of the New Administrative Capital. This presentation is based on research done by Omar Abolnaga that will be published in the form of a book chapter in a forthcoming publication, which visualises the untold narrative of cities in the MENA region.

Omar Abolnaga is a PhD candidate at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. He holds a BArch and an MSc in Architectural History and Theory from the Department of Architecture at Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering. Omar began his academic career in 2018 as a full-time educator and researcher at Cairo University before moving to London to conduct his doctoral studies in Architectural and Urban History and Theory at UCL. Omar's PhD aims to construct a comprehensive history of the phenomenon of *ashwa'iyat* (commonly used to describe informal areas) through its perceived, conceived, and lived discourses. Omar's research interests span a wide range of topics, including informal urbanism, urban governance, traditional Islamic architecture, Cairo, and Arab film and pop culture.
