



# Metabolism as a strategy for policy makers? The marginalization of the red brick in Khartoum (Sudan) and Cairo (Egypt)

Corten Pérez-Houis

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# **METABOLISM AS A STRATEGY FOR POLICY MAKERS ?**

## **The marginalization of the red brick in Khartoum (Sudan) and Cairo (Egypt)**

**METABOLISM STUDIES: MATERIALITY AND  
RELATIONALITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE**

Scientific research symposium – June 28 to 30, 2022 – Lyon

Studio Métabolisme of the Lyon Urban School

Corten Pérez-Houis – Doctorant

Université Paris I / UMR 8504 Géographie Cités





# Al-Sisi instructs painting all red brick buildings with unified colours

Prime Minister ordered governors to begin implementation of decision over several phases

Daily News Egypt, 21/01/2019

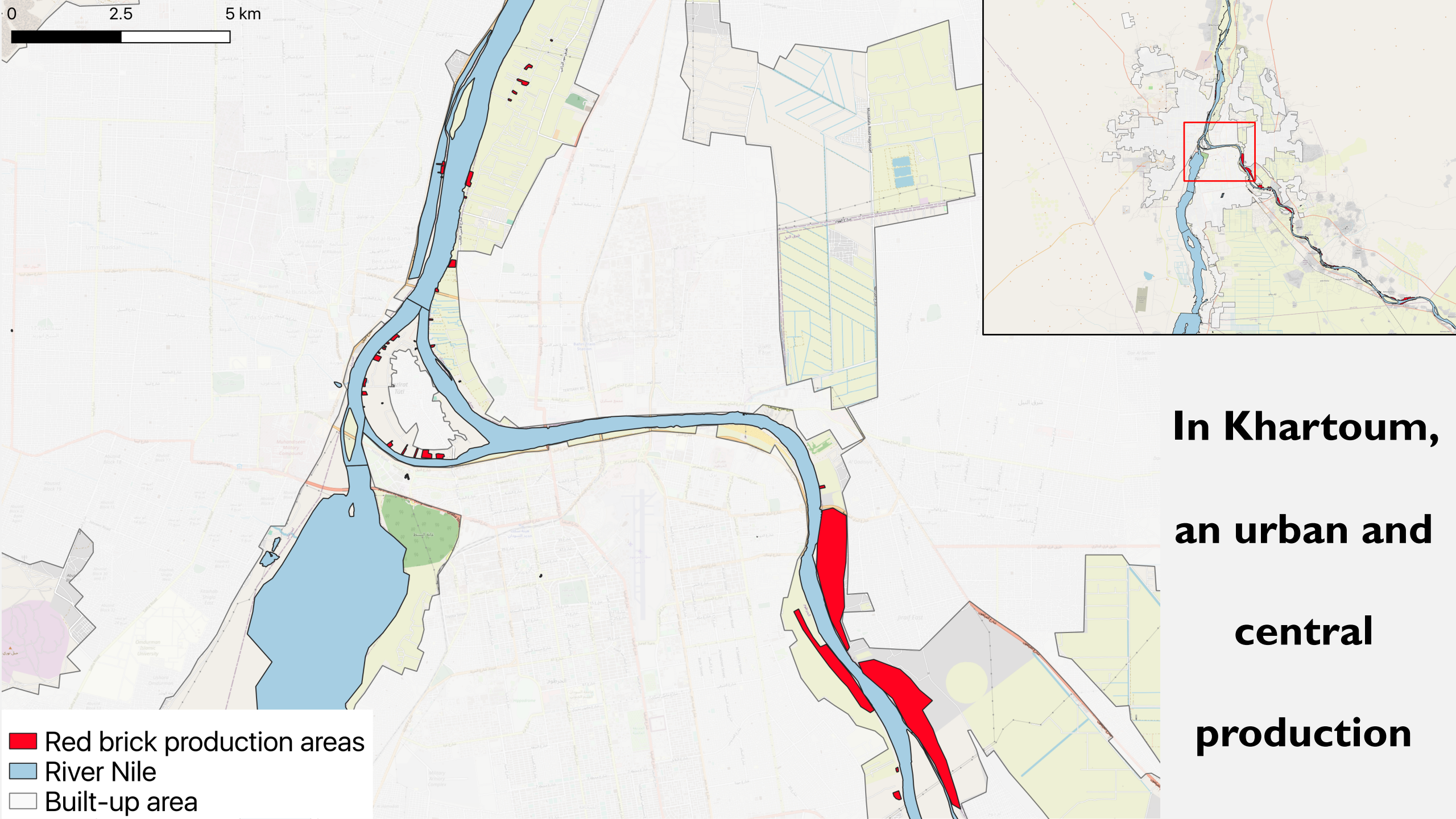
« Madbouly described the red brick facades spread across the country as “uncivilised.” »











**In Khartoum,  
an urban and  
central  
production**



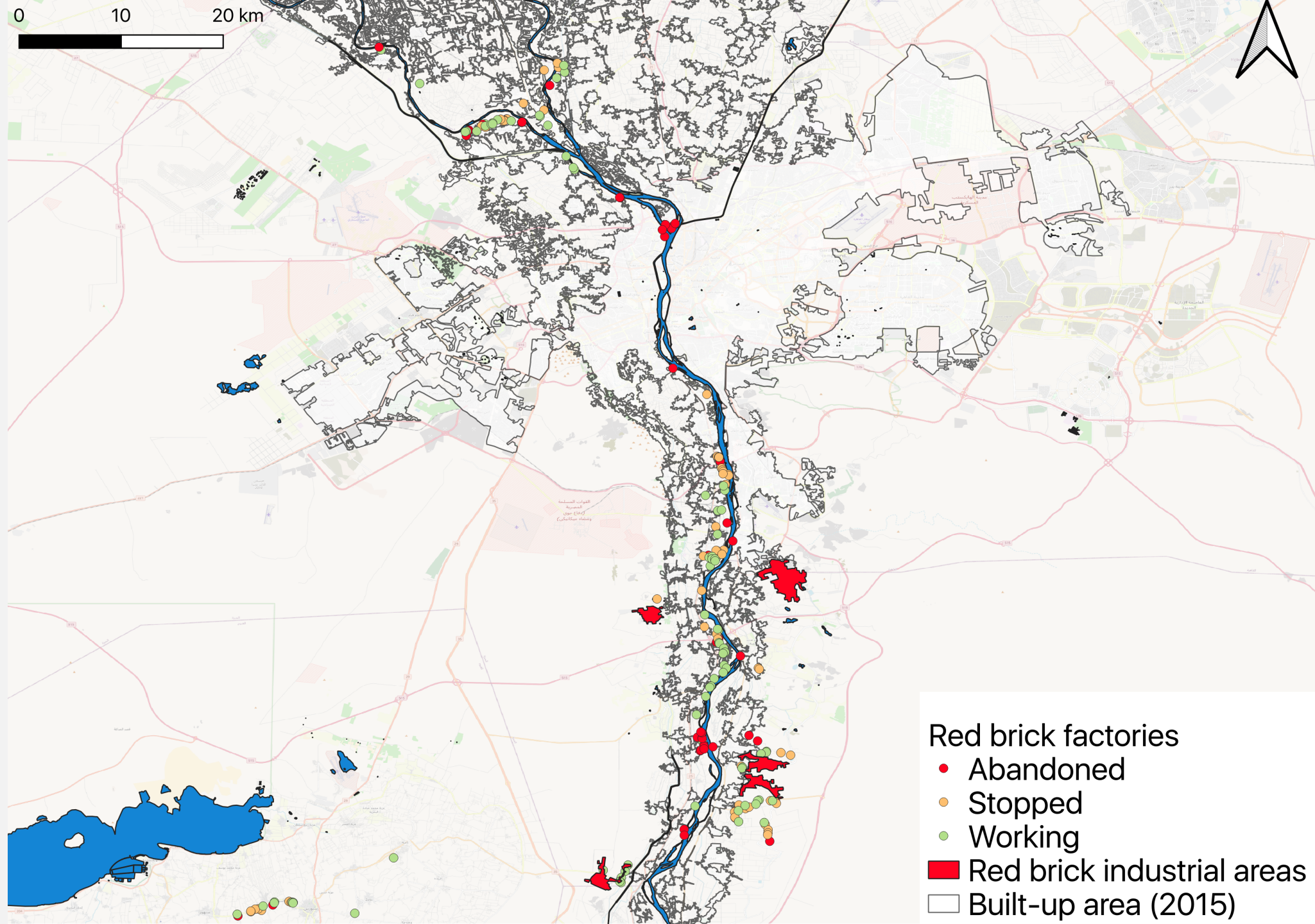








**In Cairo, a  
peripheral  
industrial  
activity**









How public actors  
are trying to  
control an entire  
supply chain by  
regulating the  
matter flows  
related to it ?

- 1. A consensual criticism of the red brick production : environment and energy consumption
- 2. The active promotion of alternative building materials
- 3. A political and economic regulation at every step



I. A CONSENSUAL  
CRITICISM OF THE RED  
BRICK PRODUCTION :  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
ENERGY CONSUMPTION



Red brick production criticized as a very polluting activity in both Khartoum (left) and Cairo (right)







For academic and public actors, the wood in Khartoum...

...and the mazout in Cairo have to be replaced by natural gas.





2. THE ACTIVE  
PROMOTION OF  
ALTERNATIVE BUILDING  
MATERIALS : TOWARDS  
THE CEMENT BLOCK



*« First, we used local materials like earth. Then, in 2004, we moved to red burnt bricks. And in 2007, we introduced the cement block in our housing projects. »*

(engineer at Housing Fund of Khartoum, April 2022)





*« In the New Administrative Capital, the government and the consultants are imposing 75% of cement blocks. »*

*(sales manager in a cement block factory, May 2022)*





### 3. A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REGULATION AT EVERY STEP

- Upstream, the access to natural resources
- Downstream, the interdiction of informal and individual construction



## REGULATE THE ACCESS TO NATURAL RESSOURCES

August 2019 : all the  
quarries of the country  
become under the  
control of the Armed  
Forces (taxes,  
mandatoriy exploitation  
license...)





## REGULATE THE INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCTION

January 2022 : « We said  
that for 10 years, the state  
is building and it won't  
allow any individual to build  
again, until we have  
disciplined mechanisms. »

Abdel Fatah Al Sissi,  
president of Egypt

"وقف البناء في مصر 10 سنوات باستثناءات يقررها السيسي  
ما نتائج هذا القرار؟"

À l'origine en arabe et traduit par Google

Arrêt de la construction en Égypte pendant 10 ans,  
avec des exceptions décidées par Sisi  
Quelles sont les conséquences de cette décision ?





## CONCLUSION

- From technical arguments about air pollution and environment to a political regulation of the circulation and production of building materials
- Both material (change of fuel, of localization...) and immaterial control (standardization, control of building permits...)
- Can we speak of « strategy » or of a « political intention » ?



**Thank you for  
your attention !**

