Understanding the Transformation of Marketplaces with Respect to Local Culture and the Built Environment in 21st Century Cairo

Sameh El-Feki, Hala Higazi

Abstract— In recent years, Egypt has witnessed a wave of events affecting the country's economic state. With the devaluation of the Egyptian pound in late 2016, however, it is still noticeable that the retail market is efficiently thriving with shoppers and investors. This research aims to explore this phenomenon from a strategic level focusing on Cairo's built environment and local culture after the year 2000, highlighting the transformation of current marketplaces with respect to those parameters (local culture & and built environment) laying a foundation for further research to anticipate their future tranformations. A qualitative approach was adopted based on themed questions drawn from the literature review and the researchers' observations. The interview questions broadly covered six main themes; "Globalization, Consumer Culture and Society Dynamics", "Consumerism and the Built Environment", "Marketplace Transformation and Shopping Preferences", "The Cairene Shopping Experience", followed by an opinionated section about the "Future Views of the Cairene Shopping Experience", and finally "Challenges Facing the Shopping Experience". The interviewee selection was based on the "purposive sampling technique", dividing them into sets based mainly on professional backgrounds (marketing expert, architect and urbanist professionals, and general consumers), and consisted of a mix of age groups and genders. Finally, a set of conclusive remarks were laid out discussing issues raised in interviews with regard to literature in terms of; sustaining shopping venues as we know them, questioning how much the architectural discourse has changed and needs to adapt, and what further research is needed to better understand the situation.

Index Terms— Cairene Shopping Experience, Consumer Culture, Consumer Culture Theory, Globalization, Marketplaces, Modern Cairo, Local Culture and Acculturation, Shopping Malls.

1 Introduction / Cairo as a Consumerist City

Despite the economic crisis Egypt is suffering from, especially after the devaluation of the Egyptian Pound (late 2016), it is still noticeable that the retail market is thriving, people are shopping, and investments in marketplaces are growing. In her book "The Changing Consumer Culture of Modern Egypt" Mona Abaza highlights three paradoxical phenomena that shape the consumer culture in Egypt. First, the relationship between religion and market where Abaza suggests that due to massive migration to oil producing countries, Egyptian society detoured the process of "Americanization" to "Saudi Arabization" resulting in a lifestyle of spending leisure time at malls. This experience was mainly based on the clothing industry and food chains, which shaped the lifeworlds of the Islamised middle-class in the 90's. Second, Abaza points out to the boom in shopping mall construction claiming that flourishing companies like "Orascom" will continue to expand regardless of the fact that shopping malls may become obsolete. The final paradox is the survival of malls due to their appropriation of the popular class (who might not spend much). This means providing free spaces for window shopping, hang outs and cheap food, despite the managerial concerns with cleanliness and attracting those who are more likely to spend [1].

On another note, the Merriam-Webster's defines "Consumerism" as "The theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable" [2, URL]. However, this definition neglects many phenomena that occur in the process between consumers and producers; in addition to the influences of various social, political and economic shifts on local and global levels. Indeed, it is difficult to fully understand and theorize Consumerism even though it is more vital in the 21st century's society.

Therefore, it is important to comprehend how marketplaces have evolved in Cairo since the last decade of the 20th century and stepping on the 21st century, and understand if this was a response to the existing consumer culture or an attempt to nurture a much bigger one.

1.1 Research Framework

Thus, the main purpose of the research is to explore into the transformation of the cause and effect relationship of marketplaces, the local culture and the built environment in 21st century Cairo. To do so, one needs to understand the socio-economic factors accompanied the transformation of marketplaces that were responsible for producing such endeavors and how they evolved. Hence, a set of objectives have been defined; first, knowing that globalization, has facilitated the transfer of ideologies, cultural forms, technologies and building materials around the world, it becomes inevitable to gain an overview of the impact of globalization on the consumer and local culture and how that is reflected in the built environment. Second, is to study how and why marketplaces have evolved. Third, is to understand how different Cairene users' perceive this and how do they project this to the future.

Towards achieving this aim, the study embraces a methodology grounded on two phases. First, being developed from the literature. Whereas the second comprises the empirical

- *Sameh El-Feki, Assistant professor at the department of architecture in October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA University), Cairo, Egypt. E-mail: samehelfeki@yahoo.co.uk*
- *Hala Higazi, LA at the department of architecture in October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA University), Cairo, Egypt. E-mail: hhigazi@msa.eun.eg*

work. The research begins by discussing thoughts and views of theorists regarding the consumer culture, globalization and the built environment. It introduces the "Consumer Culture Theory", which gives a thorough understanding of the complex nature of the dynamic relationships between the marketplace, cultural meaning and consumer actions [3]. Next, the study sheds light on globalization and its impact on the built environment in general and marketplaces in particular. Then, it gives a historical brief about the transformation of market places. The literature review part ends with a discussion about Egypt's economic status and its effect on the Cairene marketplaces.

Then, comes the field work, comprising one to one interviews built upon open-ended questions that were distilled from the literature and the researchers' observations. Interviewees were selected by a diversity of professions, genders and age groups. This is to gain a variety of insights that confirm or deny the outcomes from the literature. Based on analysis and discussion of findings, the research highlights present issues regarding the transformation of marketplaces with respect to the local culture and the built environment, attempting to interoperate its future in Cairo. These include, globalization, consumerism, the built environment, the shopping experience and challenges facing it.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Culture Theory

In a comprehensive 20 years research on the matter, Arnould and Thompson introduced the "Consumer Culture Theory" (CCT). Nevertheless, the CCT is not a unified grand theory in itself. Rather, it refers to a set of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meaning [3]. Moreover, it attempts to create a distinctive body of theoretical knowledge about consumption and marketplace behaviours. This is done through systematically linking individual level meanings to different levels of cultural processes and structures. Then, situating these relationships within historical and marketplace contexts. While consumer research is sometimes critiqued for being impractical form of theorizing [4], the benefit of the CCT approach lays on the emphases on the fact that consumption is a mode of sociocultural practice, historically shaped, and emerges within the structures and ideological imperatives of dynamic marketplaces [3]. Yet, it lacks a holistic framework for assessing different parameters and understanding the influence of cultural convergence due to globalization. Though, one may question if this is feasible, however, it is important to, at least, understand in return how and why consumption; the changing consumer culture and identities shape and reshape marketplaces. Marketplaces have existed since the 17th century before the consumerism ideology. But the face of marketplaces of 21st century has certainly changed, where the tangible physical space dedicated for commerce becomes a space serving an intangible experience. This is achieved by elaborating on how the definition and function of a marketplace is historically shaped by structures and ideologies. Also showing how new architectural prototypes are born to aid the development of societies and cultures.

2.2 Globalization and the Cultural Impact on the Marketplace

With no boundaries to investments, it is apparent that a particular project prototype born to fit the needs of a particular society maybe replicated elsewhere in the world. However, one may wonder if this new prototype is implanted to transform the society, or if it is re-shaped by the context it is in? What is the extent of simultaneous influence, if there is any?

In this regard, Cleaveland and Laroche, believe that national cultures and economies boundaries are dissolving due to interactions of powerful sources like: capitalism, global transportation, communications, marketing and advertising as well as transitional cosmopolitanism resulting in the accelerated emergence of a homogeneous global consumer culture [5].

In addition, Cleveland and Laroch, clarify that satisfying consumer needs depends on their attitudes, behaviours, and lifestyles, all of which are primarily determined by culture which can be learned, shared, and transmitted. It is also argued that an individual at any given place and time can acquire culture which is referred to as "Acculturation". Though it would seem obvious why marketers cluster countries into international segments based on similarities, yet acculturation due to globalization should not be neglected. Cleveland and Laroch explain that the reasons in differences of cultures within and across countries are due to: 1) Immigration reducing cultural homogeneity within countries; 2) the varying extent to which an individual relates with or adheres to cultural norms in a country; and 3) rapid globalization increases communalities between consumers across countries while diminishes the individuality of consumer behaviours within a country [5].

For example, in a report published by L.E.K. Consulting, Jonathan Simmons and John Weber discuss the impact of the cultural complexity of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on the retail sector. Generally, the retail landscape consists mostly of shopping malls which provide an enclosed, air-conditioned and entertaining environment, ideal for the climatic conditions of the region. However, what is culturally acceptable in one part of the region may not be in another. Therefore, due to political, regulatory and cultural constraints, international suppliers and brands sell franchising rights through local agents who understand the scene better even if it means that they give a considerably high stake of the business [6]. Thus, there are three points to be derived from this: 1) the significant impact of culture on retail in-terms of market and design; 2) the potential impact of new cultures on the existing culture; and 3) the compromise that results in a new culture and guaranteed profitability.

If consumerism has come to be a global culture of its own, then referring back to the term "acculturation" it should be natural for the global consumer culture to transform a person's behaviour towards acquiring material goods. As was evident in observing the GCC region example, Cleveland and Laroch show this from other perspectives such as including; 1) the direct adoption of either foreign or global behaviour referring to global teens and elite consumers in Third-World countries, 2) the combination of local elements with alternative behaviour 3) the hyper-identification with culture of origin, e.g. greater quantities of foodstuffs associated with Mexico is consumed by Mexican immigrants in the U.S. as opposed to those in their home countries, 4) or finally, as in North Korea, consumption behaviour is rejected by all means. Therefore, the idea of acculturation of the global consumer culture may be described best as a loose garment; where in consumer culture, ethnicity can be sold, bought, and worn [5].

To conclude, there are many dimensions to understand the current shopping scene in Cairo. While acknowledging the various dimensions attached to a "Consumer Culture" including sociocultural processes, consumer identity and marketplace cultures, sociohistorical patterning and consumers' interpretive strategies as mentioned by Arnould and Thompson, there is an added degree of complexity when attempting to understand the impact of globalization on each of these parameters [3].

2.3 Globalization and the Built Environment

To discuss the status of the built environment, one must begin by distinguishing between the roles of individual actors, organizations, and the larger structures in which they operate. According to King, accelerated globalization process and its undeniable relation to economy is attributed to three major players in internationalization: banks, global corporations and the state, bringing to the "deterritorialization" of cultures. To add, not only has globalization affected the architecture discourse as a discipline, but it has hugely influenced the built environment. For example, King discusses how the Australian urban and building development was hugely affected by the internationalization of "Kumagi Gumi", a Japanese construction firm which between 1981 and 1988, moved from being a small-scale contractor ranking 135th to 6th in the world's top international construction contracts. With internationalization of services, finding suitable sites for investments was no longer limited to Japan. As a result of this phenomenon, "Kumagi Gumi" constructed various projects around Australia including luxury hotels, tourist resorts, condominiums, etc. This example sheds light on two important dimensions of internationalization with regard to the built environment. First, the 1980s witnessed a type development, where profitable sites for investments had become internationalized. Second, many world cities had become recipients of foreign capital investment, in that decade, 70% of Los Angeles's downtown had become foreign owned. Moreover, this introduced new building typologies of massive scales universally known as "Megaprojects" involving certain scale of shopping malls [7].

2.4 The Birth and Transformation of Marketplaces

According to Abaza, quoting Meaghan Morris, "It is the change in the city, the managing itself of change and the changing role of shopping centres which is worth the attention" [8, p.101]. Indeed, the transformation of the historical marketplace into more modern adaptations reflects the dynamic transformation of societies, technologies and economical ideologies, making it possible to trace and understand transformations within the built environment. Depending on their location, marketplaces play a fundamental role in the city's dynamics and even if they transform landscapes, it is impossible to treat them as stand-alone entities regardless of their initial intent.

In an article by the Spanish office Ecosistema Urbano, it is highlighted that contemporary urban centres developed with the appearance of the bourgeoisie and the current consumer society at the time. The birth of this consumer society dates back to the post industrial revolution period, with the concept of a "street space", protected from weather, with trades on both sides allowing customers to choose where to shop [9]. According to Glancey, "Harding, Howel & Co" a Georgian shop opened in London in 1796, was known to be the world's first department store divided into four departments; focusing on middle-class women's needs, providing a space for them to browse and shop away from home and men's company, freely and safely [10].

Then, over the time, towards the end of the 19th century, the department store has transformed into large multi-storey retail establishments selling a wide variety of products, along with providing services and restaurants. However, Ecosistema Urbano elaborates how Paris galleries and luxurious shopping streets of the 19th century depict the merge between social life and commerce like those of new urban spaces today [9].

On the other side of the ocean, Victor Gruen (an Austrian born architect who was acknowledged for pioneering the theory of the shopping mall in North America), attempted to bring his Vienna-like tastes in urbanism to the rapidly suburbanizing America, "Victor Gruen Associates" was founded, quickly becoming among the nation's busiest firms, providing master plans and shopping centres for municipalities around the country in 1951 [11]. It is noteworthy to highlight that after the Second World War boom, suburbs were becoming rapidly populated as movements began to shift in retailing to shape the outer metropolitan region around retailing centres rather than passively following population dispersion [12], this was also encouraged by the widespread use of automobile [13]. Though, some department stores were branching out to provide goods and services, Gruen invention of the suburban shopping mall lured people, even if they couldn't afford to shop. Understanding what has become known as the "Gruen Effect" could be approached from different perspectives. First, Gruen argued that good design was equal to good profit. Second, with appealing window displays and beautiful surroundings, the longer consumers would stay in a shop, hence the more likely they would spend [14].

Thus, shopping centres were becoming what Ray Oldenberg defines as "Third Places", with the first and second places being home and work. Third places are "public places on neutral ground where people can gather and interact becoming the heart of a community's social vitality" [15, URL]. Indeed, Guren envision these structures as "Architectural Panacea" remedying all society's problems from environmental and commercial to sociological in a single building.

It is noteworthy to state that the idea of the marketplace as a focal point for public life which propagated in the 50s in North America was never lost. Refering to Wilbur Kowinski, Lowe states that malls have become a way of life, transforming the concept of –one-stop shopping into virtual one-stop culture, making their significance more than just financial. It is true that malls gave birth to cultivated new activities such as window-shopping and promenading [13]. This can be observed in analysing later James Rouse's strategy to transition suburban malls to urban malls, confirming and extending on Gruen's work, that retailers must link merchandising to recreational activity for the project to be successful [12].

In more recent development in upscale areas, shopping centres have become attached to mixed-use/ commercial functions along with leisure amenities and have become widely known as "Lifestyle Centres" according to the International Council of Shopping centres (ICSC) [16]. According to Martin and Turley, modern shoppers are looking for more entertainment-oriented centres and places that blend and reflect with their own community, which is an evident theme common in contemporary prototypes and was made possible by the advancement in technologies, materials, and what seems like an abundance of capital [17].

In design, malls were simple box-shaped structures with hardly any windows. Storefronts were inverted inwards intentionally; facades were left blank without any signage to create a sense of fantasy for users as they entered giving a "Disneyesque" sense.

Nowadays mall structures and layouts differ from what was traditionally known as the "anchor-store" based shopping malls. In newer versions, designs include "Outlet Malls" and "Hybrid Malls" consisting of both open-air and enclosed store shopping while "Main Street Malls" are specifically designed for urban shopping and consuming [17].

2.5 Economic Status in Egypt and Its Impact on the Development of the Cairene Marketplaces

It is important to shed light on the economic status in Egypt during the last couple of decades, as it has a direct impact on both the expansion in the construction of marketplaces and the affordability of Egyptians to spend.

According to the "Economy Watch", economic reforms introduced in 2005 allowed the economy to open up to "Foreign Direct Investments" (FDI), which until 2003 Egypt's economic structure was hostile towards [18]. However, political uncertainty since 2011 has restricted economic growth, dollar shortages persistence and waning aid of Gulf allies made Cairo turn to the "International Monetary Fund" (IMF) for a 3-year, $12 billion loan program in late 2016. Moreover, Cairo currency was floated to secure the deal, introducing new taxes and cutting energy subsidies which for most of 2017 drove the inflation rate above 30%, which is the highest rate witnessed in a generation according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). However, it is believed that the dollar availability and the Central Bank reserves have boosted, justified by the exponential increase in the foreign investment in Egypt's high interest Treasury bill showing the necessity to sustain efforts to implement a range of business reforms [19]. Therefore, it is apparent that the consequences of the inflation are contradicting when analysed by different ends. This also clarifies Mona Abaza's paradoxical phenomenon regarding wealthy companies and begins to show how the interference of other foreign companies with new visions contributes to this phenomenon, and bring about new phenomenon in the Egyptian society and built environment [1].

On another note, and referring to an article published by "Forbes Middle East" as reported by Sophia, Alain Bejjani, CEO of Majid Al-Futtaim discusses the expansion spree in Egypt believing that the high population growth and its strong consumer demand make the Egyptian market highly attractive for investment. Moreover, he claims that one of the pillars of investening in Egypt is that the majority of this large population is below 25 years of age, which is maybe the most insightful affirmation concerning Egypt explicitly. Furthermore, he argues that the devaluation of 2016 was well appreciated and rafts of reforms introduced by the government to enhance foreign reserves brought back many investors to take advantage of Egypt's large economic potential, noting that retailers must be committed for the long term and willing to localize their businesses [20]. However, Bejjani states that there will be challenges and this is confirmed by a staff report published in the "Gulf News" earlier in 2018 which discussed that despite the group's revenue was increased in 2017, the shopping mall business profits have slipped, highlighting the group's slow growth after the EGP devaluation. Therefore, the impact of the devaluation could be seen as positive and negative, however, it is important to note that slowing and halting completely are very different and with Bejjani's predictions regarding Egypt's economic status the situation is temporary. Moreover, it is noted in the "Gulf News" report (2018) that mall customers increased by 6% in 2017, and while this is a positive note for "Majid AL-Futtaim" group [21], there comes a question of how is this possible given the fact that the majority of the population continues to struggle after the 2016 devaluation.

Building upon the previous analysis and tracing the impact of such economic status on the marketplaces in Egypt, it is impossible not to notice the sizable differences of marketplaces in Cairo established by the end of the 80's and throughout the 90's till today. As stated by Abaza, the merge of foreign capital, expertise and Egyptian capitalists is growing and represented in marketplaces. For example, the first mall constructed in Egypt in late 1970's known as "Al-Yamamah" centre in Zamalik was funded by Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia. While later most malls in the 90's were erected in Nasr City by local capitalists targeting middle-class residents migrating back from the Gulf. However, "Citystars" (erected in 2006 - the first of its scale) was developed by "Citystars Properties" group, a joint venture of foreign and local shareholders [1]. In comparison to "Citystars" it is important to mention "Maadi Grand Mall" (MGM), which was erected in 1994 and was also the first of its scale at the time and was inspired by shopping centres in the Far East [22]. Years later in 2002, "City Centre Maadi" was founded by Majid Al-Futtaim which until today proved to be very popular in Cairo [23]. While "City Centre Maadi" covers over 28,543 m² - significantly larger than MGM which covers 5,400 m² [22] [23]. It is noteworthy to point out the different components each venue compromises. MGM provides retail, yet it lacks dominant big stores and brands [22], while "City Centre Maadi" is popular for the "Carrefour" hypermarket, local and international brands, "Magic Planet", 8 food court outlets and 2 separate restaurants [23]. Though, many malls in the past attempted to incorporate the idea of leisure and retail, the success of this is firstly visible in "City Centre Maadi" [23], while later this scenario is also visible in "Citystars" and all major marketplaces built afterwards.

To continue, both marketplaces have different investors with different visons where "Citystars Properties" targets Egypt [24] while "Magid Al-Futtaim" targets the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region [23]. It is evident that both thrive through the idea of incorporating a particular experience by introducing specific components in their ventures. According to “Citystars Properties”, the Egyptian market’s unique position allows creation, management, and maintenance of living landmarks with cosmopolitan experiences. Moreover, based on the success of “Citystars” mall, the firm intends to reshape how the world views real estate in Egypt by committing to the execution of large scale, innovative and visionary designs [24]. However, “Majid Al-Futtaim” embarks on revolutionizing the retail experience through an entrepreneurial culture of integrated retail model, representing “Carrefour” hypermarket, the world’s second largest hypermarket, a trusted partner for international fashion brands and convenience stores across the region, and other leisure ventures. Indeed, the introduction of “Carrefour” chains by “Majid Al-Futtaim” in 12 countries with a license to operate in 38 markets exclusive has provided a range of products like never before at affordable prices, transforming completely household shopping in communities [23]. While “Citystars Properties” hasn’t developed other retail complexes, “Majid Al-Futtaim” has been investing in most of the major megamalls erected around Egypt for the past 15 years, with “Mall of Egypt” which opened its doors to visitors in 2017 [23]. Here one may wonder, in a time of economic instability, why are investments towards retail projects in particular becoming bigger and more frequent?

Interestingly, Abaza’s argues that “Carrefour” had produced a group of “Simulating Shoppers” who do not purchase anything but find joy in the experience of filling their trolley and leaving it by the cashier claiming that this act has replaced “Window Shopping” [1]. Yet, based on observation nowadays, shopping in “Carrefour” is no longer associated with upper class shoppers and it is noticeable that all mega marketplaces starting with “Citystars” in 2006 and up to the recent “Mall of Egypt” in 2017 incorporate large hypermarkets within along with top-notch entertainment components. While this shows contradiction, it raises the question of whether marketplaces are no longer designed for the wealthy, and consumption has become better rooted and accessible to all social classes.

Capping this discussion, Flyvbjerg explains that megaprojects proved to be remarkably “recession proof”, and that megaprojects business grows further by the help of the downturn from 2008, showing simultaneous spending on many types of projects [25]. Moreover, Orueta and Fainstein state that nations with either a history of controversial development programs or the more prosperous ones, even with economic decline, and population loss, megaprojects are used as a means for their governing bodies to confront the threat of global competition. Indeed, affecting all aspect of our lives from commuting, surfing the internet and shopping, megaprojects have transformed from being reserved for rich developed nations as fringe activities, to global multi-million-dollar businesses, an integral part of city skylines [26].

3 From Perceptions to Fieldwork

Having, in the previous section, addressed the theories and paradigms of consumer culture, globalization and their impact on marketplaces, this section attempts to stitch together and understand the “Causes and Effects” of the different parameters affecting the Cairene Consumer Culture. Hence, a qualitative approach was adopted and a set of face-to-face, guided and open-ended interviews were carried out. By setting questions designed in themes for investigation, interviewees were given space to for detailed discussions when needed and allowed the interviewer to use cues of prompts when necessary. Moreover, this also enabled the respondents to follow a line of inquiry which might have been introduced by them from initial responses which is ideal for an exploratory research such as this.

The interview questions broadly covered six main themes; “Globalization, Consumer Culture and Society Dynamics”, “Consumerism and the Built Environment”, “Marketplace Transformation and Shopping Preferences”, “The Cairene Shopping Experience”, followed by an opinionated section about the “Future Views of the Cairene Shopping Experience”, and finally “Challenges Facing the Shopping Experience”.

This research employed the ‘purposive sampling’ technique. The sample was intentionally selected because they are believed to have valuable information and critical views, due to their involvement in the research’s field. Hence, the sample selection was divided into sets; a marketing expert from “Majid Al-Futtaim”, architects and urbanist professionals (1 female designer working at “Dar Al-Handsa Shahir and Partners, 1 male BIM architect working at Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC), and 1 male architect, founder of an architectural firm in Cairo), and general consumers (1 mother in early 40’s, 1 mother in early 30’s, 1 male and 1 female graduates in their mid-20’s, 20 year old undergraduates). The participants ages covered the range from 19–50 years of age consisted of 5 males and 4 females.

The interview session begins with a brief introduction of the research explaining the purpose of the interview, the interview sequence, exchange of interviewee and interviewer backgrounds and confidentiality agreement. All interviews are recorded by interviewer and notes are taken during the session too. After all questions are covered, entrants were given a chance to ask any questions or give any comments.

3.1 Discussion and Analysis

3.1.1 Globalization, Consumer Culture and Society Dynamics

Interviewees acknowledged the impact of internationalization on Egyptians, and some mentioned how the internet and facilitated means of transport have eased the transformation in culture where the more the global exposure, the less remains of old traditions. It is important to note that this inversely proportional relationship is applicable in any place, but how easy and fast it is for a society to change is subjective. As for Egypt with its layers of history, it comes as no surprise that there is a hybrid of different cultures within the society. In other words, these technologies allowed for the birth and thriving of the consumer culture which has been planted in the new generation regardless of the country's economic status.

One claimant believed that the Egyptian market has been influenced by globalization, elaborating how brands that are available globally would generally sell the same products, but some specifics would differ according to the country's culture which ranges from garments to meals. With regard to this, the marketing expert stated that ideas are transferred globally through models and where they may have become obsolete in some regions; they may begin to thrive elsewhere if implemented correctly. He explained that with internationalization and the birth of the consumer culture, the Egyptian culture has become global. He considers that there are touches that remain, referring to how the bakery in "Carrefour" in Egypt provides "Baladi" bread, while it remains within the umbrella of the modern global hypermarket. He continued, advocating that some investors have touched on the consumer desires of new generations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq which have very distinctive cultures with traditional activities. The thing that was confirmed by the whole sample believing that this culture is available globally; some highlighted how this differs in Egypt. One suggested that cultural differences within society forces a difference in this culture and even influences what products are sold.

On the other hand, another participant argued that Egyptians have been influenced by the fascination of the "Khawaga" (Foreigner), an idea that makes people want to live, act, and appear as such. Yet, the cultural constrains hold many back. While this may be true to some, it is difficult to generalize such claims due to the complexity of the society structure in Cairo.

But why are such consumerist's desires increasing in the region? Drawing from the previous affirmation, all respondents were aware of the existence of such a culture and their definitions to it were generally under the same umbrella - defining consumer culture as how the society behaves towards buying. Definitions included; "A culture that consumes and doesn't produce", and "A culture where products are presented in different ways to provoke people's interest to purchase, thinking they need it when they don't". While the marketing expert suggests that the "Consumer Culture" is the shopping habits with other constituents that accompany the day or activity. By other constituents, he clarified that this global culture has impacted family lifestyles whether through exposure

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RELEVANT EXPERINCE

Classification	Number	Percentage
Marketing Expert	1	11.11 %
Architects and Urbanists	4	44.44 %
General Consumers	4	44.44 %
Total	9	100%

The above table shows the number of respondents related to the subjects' classification, to show the size of each category involved in the interviews. Larger numbers of architects and urbanist professionals were included due to their wider experiences. Yet, it was intended to involve more of the marketing experts, but it did not succeed due to the difficulty of reaching them.

to new merchandise or new family activities such as spending a day at the mall rather than a social club, unlike what used to happen in the past where the housewife or the husband would go to a small store with a list and buy their weekly needs.

Adding to this, one respondent noted that consumer culture is not exclusive to one segment and there are many outlet alternatives to attract different segments of the society and this is the same worldwide where different markets attract different groups. At this point it is important to highlight that the following broad grouping will be used for purpose of this discussion as; upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, and lower class.

This thought was perceived differently by another entrant who proposed that if we split them into a group of upper class and a group of lower class, the former is to show wealth, power, and social status in community, while the latter is to flatter and not be embarrassed within their community. Therefore, while members of both segments might do this for show, the decision to acquire particular things and how to acquire them varies depending on income, context, needs and mind-set.

The marketing specialist then concludes, with no production but a lot of consumption, the consumer culture allows for mega-projects such as malls to succeed in the region, and for this culture to grow and become a norm.

3.1.2 Consumerism and the Built Environment

Replying to the questions of how can a family spend a whole day in a mall? What are the impacts of this on the built environment? The marketing expert mentioned that most contemporary malls have on top of the hypermarket, cafes, cinemas, shops, food court, restaurants and other services. This diversity of services allow for the engagement of the whole family, where each member finds something that suits him/her most (shopping, strolling, getting use of the foodcourt and other services, etc.). Other respondents said that this idea of a complete mall didn't exist in the region and it introduces a new culture.

ISSN 2229-5518

Fig. 1. The exterior of “Mall of Egypt” in 6th of October City. Top: Large LED screen covers one edge of the mall showing advertisments of activities within the mall. Bottom: A large signage post showing different shopping brands. This is not available in malls before 2003 (Source: Authors).

Furthermore, it was argued that being a global culture, the model of the “Mega-Mall” is similar everywhere, it is designed so that the hypermarket’s entrances and exits are separated in different ends and are embedded within the mall so people have to pass by most of the shops. An entrant points out that even in 2 floor malls, walking the distance to reach the escalator allows users to pass by many shops and get acquainted to the products, creating attraction luring people to buy more. Seeming that constituents are predefined by the investor advocating that this is similar worldwide, then what are the roles of planners, architects, and designers in the process?

Thus, an architect emphasized the significance of the architect’s role, clarifying that even projects of similar programs would not necessarily produce the same model. He also added that for retail projects it is important to understand the shop groupings according to users then the division of the project into “anchor”, “small”, “medium”, and “large”, this breed of project depends very much on creating an experience that attracts users forcing them to explore the whole venue without distraction to insure they buy.

Likewise, it was particularly highlighted by some of the sample that geographic location and environment strongly affect the design, stating that the weather would automatically determine the inclusion or exclusion of outdoor spaces which alters the experience dramatically. Hence, when asked about the role of architects in the process, respondents referred again to the scale, geographic location and client. It was also stated by another architect that it is the architect’s role to advise the client about the users’ needs and provide suitable options while the final decision is up to the client. As well, one architect advocated that a mega-project is more likely to have its own, influential identity and may become a landmark.

It is noteworthy to state that architects agreed that location, transportation, parking, as well as the lack of understanding the local community needs and incorporating them in design can mean that some projects are designed to fail. It was also mentioned that existing spatial comfort issues as well as corridor and space proportions, make marketplaces too mechanical. That is why, the design should be dealt with carefully to create an interesting experience.

However, interviewees clarified that owners’ agendas greatly affect these types of projects. In fact, owners / investors have a huge role in the process in-terms of vision and budget, which maybe irrelevant to culture. Moreover, the marketing expert referred to social class segmentation and how it influences marketplaces models. He first elaborated that there will always be a mix of all segments within the mall but with variable percentages which vary according to location. Referring to “Maadi City Centre” as a (middle/lower) venue, he stated that users come for “Carrefour” and its special offers. While in the case of “Mall of Egypt” which was classed as (upper/middle), “Carrefour” is only part of a bigger experience and is secondary while the bigger attractions are “Cinemas” and “Ski”. He explained that the catchment area for the Maadi venue is the “Autostrad”, “Masaken Al-Zelzal”, and “Al-Kattamia”, while “Mall of Egypt” is in the catchment area of “Al-Sheikh Zayed” and “6th of October City”. He elaborated that the product display in “high-end” areas would be customized to be more appealing and would have a bigger selection of products (even imported items) than that in areas classified as lower social class. Therefore, it is clear that the geographic location plays a bigger role than determining the availability of an outdoor experience. The marketing expert concluded that the model, catchment area and location impose the guidelines which controls design decisions.

3.1.3 Marketplace Transformation and Shopping Preferences

Having discussed the perception of the marketing professional and architects towards marketplaces and the built environment, consumers’ sample were asked to elaborate how they decide to go shopping in-order to see if their decisions match the previously mentioned considerations. It was interesting that some of the sample mentioned that they go to malls to buy what they need directly and not as a form of leisure activity. Others said that the shopping experience has forced itself on a much bigger scale and has become fancier and even with the inflation they observed that venues haven’t changed physically and people are adapting instead.

Fig. 2. Top: The interior space of "Mall of Arabia" where the 2 floors are aligned. Bottom: The interior of "Mall of Egypt" where the 2 floors are not (Source: Authors).

Participants living in satellite cities advocated that these cities introduced the car culture due to poor proximity of services, where even buying groceries requires visiting a mall. Even with the existence of small supermarkets in some areas, a couple of others commented on safety and security of walking in these new cities. Where in the past they would travel to Downtown for more options, now the malls do this in a confined, closer space. Additionally, an architect expressed that shopping venues can no longer be considered as remote as they combine many components such as offices, amenities, hotel, and even residential elements, meaning that they transform the urban plots an participate in creating new communities.

When it came to what interviewees found as important shopping experiences, examples given included Ikea, the Book Fair, and new malls in general. One claimant discussed that what shapes an exciting experience is related to what they are going to buy and for what reasons (i.e. preparing for a trip or buying a gift for someone). However, an architect affirmed (as the consumers did) that the decision to where to go shopping depends mostly on what is needed. It was also mentioned that malls wouldn't be their first choice to go out with friends unless it is to do with something as specific as going to the cinema and have several options at the food court later. It was clarified that success of an investment in retail projects relies on the large population numbers and their willingness to buy.

Similarly, the majority of the sample revealed that they use shopping venues to run errands rather than for leisure, they were asked to state the venues they liked and disliked and to mention the reasons why for such preferences. The most favoured venue was "Mall of Arabia" in "Al-Sheikh Zayed", which was chosen by 8. It was described as comfortable and convenient in size. Entrants elaborated that it has a good variety of shops, and having a clear design makes its wayfinding easy. Three respondents explained that it is close to where they lived and would visit it once or twice a week to get things like groceries too, and a couple enjoyed the availability of an open space. Another favoured venue was "The Mall of Egypt" in "6th of October City" which is bigger in scale and according to a few participants is very legible and better maintained than others. However, it is important to note that this venue's soft opening was towards the end of 2017, making it the newest venue in the Greater Cairo Region. While one participant pointed out that it can't be judged since it is not fully operating yet, another said that since not all stores are open it is not crowded and shops tend to have nice stock as opposed to "Mall of Arabia" which can get very crowded and gets out of stock rapidly. Smaller venues were also mentioned such as "Dandy Mall" in "6th of October City" which was described as small in scale making it easy to read and navigate, and is less crowded than other venues. In addition, "Carrefour City Centre" in "Maadi" has also appeared in the list and was described as an intimate and familiar place. Four claimants selected "Cairo Festival City" as a preference due to its dynamic design in outdoor spaces, which makes it comfortable even if it were multi-floored and huge in scale.

It was also mentioned by several others that they sometimes preferred small shops that they were familiar with, to get specific items. One respondent said that with price increases she doesn't shop from malls anymore and would travel to farther standalone shops to shop for clothes for her child. The thing that was confirmed by two female interviewees who mentioned "Geziert Al-Arab" in "Mohandeseen", who explained that it combines a cluster shops in ground floors of buildings giving a feeling of a zone and is pedestrian friendly, not to mention that everything is in a walkable distance. However, a couple of other claimants opposed to this idea of a "High Street", arguing that these shops require huge walking distances and lack variety in shops. Another, desired venue was "Arkan" in "6th of October City", which is a space between two office blocks combining several cafes and small shops, similar to the "Gezirt Al-Arab" enclosure. The respondent described that it has a European spirit which brings back good memories to her.

ISSN 2229-5518

Fig. 3. A panoramic shot showing the “Gezirt Al-Arab” enclosure in Mohadeseen (Source: Authors).

Another interesting preference mentioned by one, was the markets and bazars held in outdoor places like “Arkan”, “Westown Hub” “Fish Garden” in Zamalik, “Downtown Mall” in New Cairo and many others which have become more popular in recent years. The participant elaborated that they may have limited items but they are different and enjoyable to look at, a lot of local products are displayed and some food, making the experience unique.

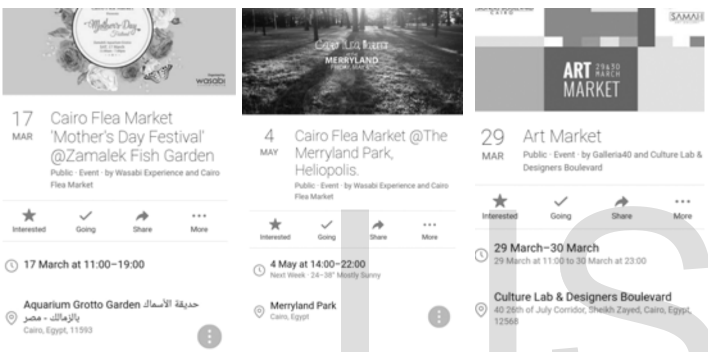

Fig. 4. Screenshots of several events on Facebook.com of various markets held in different public spaces around Cairo (Source: Gathered by the authors).

Interestingly, one of the entrants acknowledged the “Outlet Mall of Dubai” as an important shopping experience pointing out that it combines top brands and outlets under one roof at much discounted prices. Furthermore, younger participants discussed that although venues try to embrace globalization and how the country has changed over time, but compared to the world the shopping experience here looks similar but it is still relatively smaller in scale. While some depend on family and friends to get products from abroad, others expressed the luxury of shopping online and delivery to their door steps. However, there is still a sense of distrust for online shopping, therefore respondents elaborated that as the consumer mindsets change, entrepreneurs have to catch on to insure their profitability. This transformation in behaviour seems inevitable; with technological advancement and the pound depreciation people are becoming more intelligent in their shopping to find the best deals and go to buy directly regardless of where the shop is located. It is worthy to note that this issue will be further discussed later in this research under the title “Challenges Facing the Shopping Experience”.

On the other hand, a couple of interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with places like “Khan El-Khalili”, which may be seen as a good experience stating that they sell at over inflated prices, have a culture of “Haggling” since there are no fixed prices, and find difficulty in parking.

As for the unpopular venues, “Hyperone” in “Al-Sheikh Zayed” was agreed upon by 3 respondents who described it as very crowded, and that people treat each other aggressively and poorly. It was pointed out that people still go there to buy on a bargain. One contributor stated that to visit this venue, it is preferable to go very early before anyone arrives to be able to shop. It was mentioned that “Hyperone” is considered a transportation node in the area and connects people from the greater Cairo region as well as other Governorates, where its needs are appropriate for the visiting segments rather than that within its catchment area.

Another unpopular venue mentioned by a respondent was “Carrefour Madnet Al-Obour”, which is a big branch operating optimally in the summer and barely in winter mostly by Arab visitors to buy their basic needs.

Other less popular venues included; “Cityscape Mall” in “6th of October City”, which the sample said that there is not much to be done or bought, and that the ice-skating rink does not have real ice which takes away from the experience. It was interesting that “Talaat Harb Mall” in downtown Cairo and “Serag Mall” in Nasr City (dating back to the 90’s) were mentioned as well as “Diamond Mall” in 6th of October City (a more recent venue) and where all described as depressing and tight with low ceilings and narrow corridors and have very dense shops distribution making the experience uncomfortable, noisy and quickly overcrowded. Interviewees also pointed out that it is hard to find your way directly to a particular shop in these venues. “Serag Mall” was specifically mentioned for not being convenient at all, having one of the respondents saying “In ‘Serag Mall’ the only active feature are the cafes at the storefront”. Other respondents acknowledged the old malls, but mentioned that they were not very inviting and were mostly used as outing for cinemas or skating, as well as specialized malls for particular products like electronics, computers, furniture etc.

It is noteworthy here that “Citystars Mall” was one of the controversial venues, those who were not satisfied highlighted that it is too big and very confusing with many levels and extensions, on top of the inconvenient location. In contrast, those who liked it implied that it still has more variety than elsewhere making it very convenient for shopping. However, it is important to note that this is still a popular venue which attracts many people through its cinemas and huge food court. It also draws many people to it particularly because it’s an urban location.

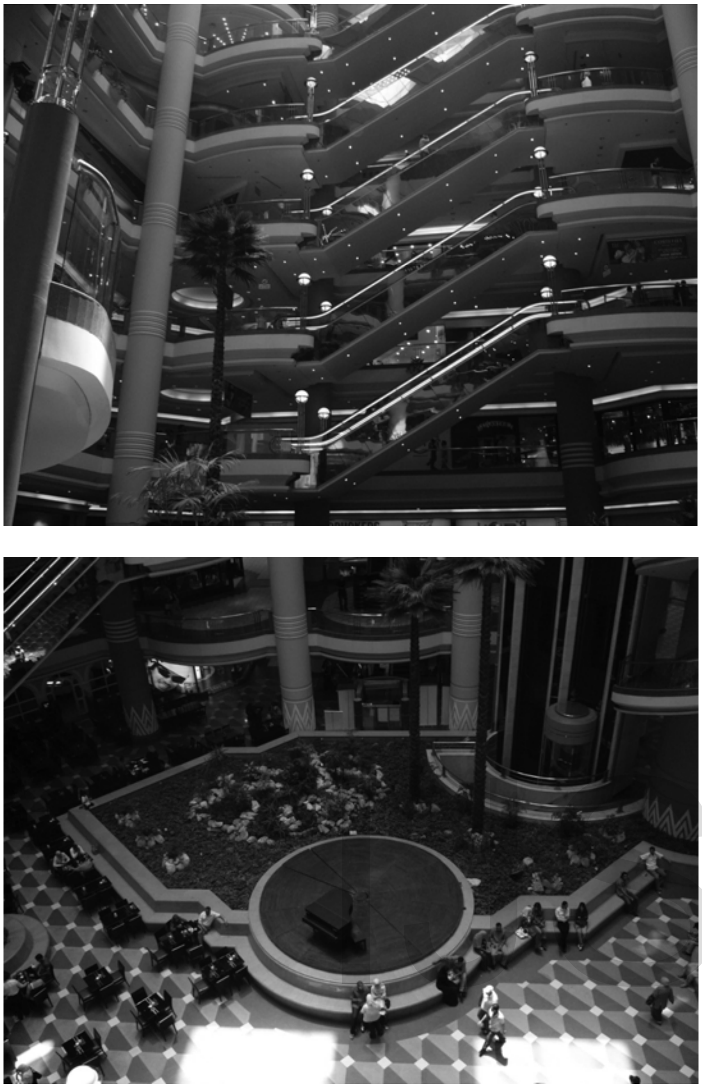

Fig. 5. The interior of "Citystars Mall" showing the central court with escalators leading to the food court and the cinema on the upper floors (Source: Authors).

3.1.4 The Cairene Shopping Experience

While interviewees' responses showed contradictions, it is possible to predict the reason behind their perceptions based on the previous discussions. One partaker believes that there is no particular "Cairene" experience, debating that as marketplaces evolve, it is harder to trace a unique identity since retail consultants design malls prioritizing particular standards. Though, this has been discussed previously when discussing the role of architects in marketplace design nowadays. Another pointed out that Egypt's weather helps create a different experience than elsewhere due to the mix of indoor and outdoor spaces. Moreover, it was elaborated by others that since malls exist everywhere, the types of products sold here related to local culture is what makes it "Cairene". Some had negative feeling where one described the experience as "aggressive" and "Haggling bringing up the "Hyperone" experience again. However, it was interesting that the whole sample mentioned "promotions" acknowledging seasons where shopping peaks. Others confirmed this view, characterizing the experience based on the availability of offers stating that if people are told there's a deal they will buy even if there wasn't a real bargain, which shows that Cairenes as consumers might go shopping according to need as mentioned previously but their buying habits are not limited to that, in conclusion the word "Promo" does magic to the Egyptian shoppers. Thus, the perception of these offers vary according to users, where users in lower segments would travel to venues for offers while users in higher segments would visit venues for particular elite items, and users from a middle segment may use the venue as an outing destination. Therefore, during promo periods, a certain segment may not be available at the venue which is an intended sacrifice. There are different kinds of promos BC (upper middle and lower middle classes), CD (lower middle and lower class), and AB (Upper and upper middle classes) all at different times in different branches, which may have an impact on the venue design.

Hence, the marketing specialist argues that venues are designed for the biggest segment that will buy targeting the upper middle classes of society while providing a selection of shops for the elite and making room for window shopping for others. Other participants advocated that malls are perceived differently by different members of the society and are designed for a particular demographic status as follows: First, the venue would be a place for shopping and hanging out for middle class groups. Second, there are a few selective shops in one zone designated for the upper class group; eventhough members of this group are not likely to frequent visit these venues. Third, for the other part of society, malls maybe a place providing overpriced items and used mostly for going out, window shopping and spending time at the food court.

Another respondent spoke about "Galleria 40" in "6th of October City", a venue accessible by everyone but since it is packed with very high-end brands and cuisine, it comes off as a very selective place which only very selective people would go to.

Moreover, entrants concluded that different members of society perceive places differently because they have different needs, stating that this differs from project to project not just by social class but by various grouping.

On another note, and regarding age groups, an architect gave example of this by comparing between "Arkan" and "Americana Plaza" in 6th of October city. Though, "Americana Plaza" is designed for younger age group, "Arkan" is creating a new extension that would accommodate this younger age group too. Therefore, it could be said that the spatial dimension of these venues is influenced by the types of users. Additionally, a claimant implied that users initially influenced malls to be as they are, and entrepreneurs caught on how to make this a convenient shopping experience for as many people as possible, leaving any cultural norms out of the equation. While this is true, it is important to observe, how with time, places are continuing to adapt and become adapted to the changing society, in order to maximize their profitability.

ISSN 2229-5518

3.1.5 Future Views of the Cairine Shopping Experience

The sample was asked first if they wanted to see changes in shopping venues and interestingly regardless of age, profession, background, and gender, they were all in agreement supporting the idea of grouping similar shops together to facilitate the process of comparison and reduce time. While there are malls that exist as such, claimants explained that outlets available are low-end and obsolete. The sample also highlighted the need for straightforward circulation routes rather than travelling around unnecessary paths. Conversely, this controverts the conventional techniques of attraction that implies such intentional forced circulation loops.

On another note, one of the interviewees believed that Egyptians prefer spaces of 2 to 3 floors elaborating that venues of more stories from the 80's eventually became derelict because of this. However, he gave example of "Citystars" where the compact site forced the design to be vertical and compacted, yet the creation of visual points on escalators and panoramic elevators revolving around the central atrium make users keen on going up. This is combined with the food court area and cinemas placed on the upper floors.

As for circulation, one entrant pointed out the issue of legibility and wayfinding in the space claiming that this has been acknowledged in "Mall of Egypt", where the ceiling and flooring vary in different parts of the mall but don't fulfil their purpose optimally. Additionally, an architect said that the main circulation should incorporate event nodes to add interest and break the long paths. Also, a considerable number of the sample emphasized the necessity of better integration between indoor and outdoor spaces, making venues less mechanical which they predict will lose its appeal over time. As well, several respondents suggested that there should be rests at short intervals for the elderly and better facilities for handicaps and child care.

Fig. 6. Images showing how ceiling design differes within different zones in "Mall of Egypt" (Source: Authors).

Furthermore, when asked about how they imagine venues in the future, interviewees speculated that malls would be more or less the same but at bigger scales more similar to malls abroad with more features. As stated by the marketing specialist, Egypt has still not reached its full maturity of retail it has a huge potential for investment in the Delta and Upper Egypt. The specialist speculates that there would be more penetration of projects to reach more people, and while this has been happening since 2003, he claims that this has been inefficiently exploited due to the city's infrastructure and conditions.

3.1.6 Challenges Facing the Shopping Experience

When asked about the challenges facing the shopping experience two major factors were mentioned. These are the current economic situation and what is so called the virtual shopping, also known as online shopping. While the former is local, the latter is an international threat. On top of that one secondary factor was mentioned. This factor is regarding malls in particular, being challenged by other types of buildings.

Discussing the current economic status, the marketing expert mentioned that over time there were changes in consumers' patterns and how they think, it was identified that there was a time when people shopped on a daily basis which, however, by the end of the 90's beginning of the 2000's this changed to a weekly/monthly basis. However, after the devaluation in November 2016, patterns shifted again to people going back to supermarkets rather than hypermarkets and to list shopping rather than intuitive shopping. He continues, clarifying his own experience stating that around 6 years ago, he preferred to go shopping in the mall so the kids would play, the wife would shop while he spent time at a café. This family day activity used to consume 6 to 7 hours at the mall has changed nowadays where he would rather make a list of what the household needs, or ask generally and go to the supermarket or a specific shop every 2 to 3 days not even on a weekly basis. Confirmed by this study and consumers' interviews, it is expected that people will adapt in-order to continue buying whether online, from abroad, or from the physical venue. However, several questions remain; to what extent can people adapt and withstand the impact of the economic status to fulfil their consumerist needs, and if this behaviour changes, how companies adapt in return and how would this influence shopping venue models.

As for the second factor, respondents highlighted the ease of online shopping which will be more challenging to force people to go to shops advocating that this may be overcame by providing better offers at the physical store. Otherwise, physical shops will have to adjust for the unprivileged sector that doesn't have access to internet cards. As for the younger interviewees, they assume that online shopping culture will grow, especially that it is not only used for purchasing merchandise but also for comparison and tracking offers. Moreover, they believe that sustaining malls will depend on things that people can't get online (e.g. tailored suits).

However, other participants argued that while online shopping is trending, there is no evidence that the "Brick and Mortar" shopping experience will come to an end anytime soon. According to the architecture professionals, malls today are much bigger in scale and will continue to grow. As well, they are designed to be fancier, more adaptable and offering more international brands. It is noted that nowadays projects are based on more intensive studies especially around retail patterns, creating a particular experience with high amusement factor.

Still, an architect implied that even though investments are going towards "Mega Mall", there is a new rising direction towards mixed-use projects combining retail and offices or residential units. He believed that this aspect will totally affect the shopping experience.

4 Conclusive Remarks

Shopping malls have long been embedded in everyone's minds when picturing Cairo's landscape. From the 20th century's narrow-corridor, derelict constructions to today's more spacious, multimillion-dollar investments or what some may call "experiences", it is impossible to deny their influence within the built environment and in return on the society's lifestyle. In addition, as it might be apparent that the venues are designed appropriate to the social structure of the area, it is important to consider how their implementations transform these areas later.

This study was carried out initially to invistigate into the transformation of the cause and effect association of marketplaces, the local culture and the built environment in Cairo since the year 2000. With the aid of an intensive literature review, one to one interviews were conducted with a diversity of backgrounds and age groups. Towards achieving this a set of questions were raised creating 6 main themes for discussion.

Under the first theme "Globalization, Consumer Culture and Society Dynamics", it's established that culture maybe renewed and transferred by interaction through internationally adopted models. Layers of historic events have forced a hybrid of cultures within Egypt. In addition, exposure of new generations to internet, media, and the ease of travel has bought about a globalized culture of consumers. This culture is not limited to a particular social segment, there is a market attracting various groups, the decision to purchase certain things and how to purchase them varies depending on income, context, needs and mind-set. Hence, it is possible to confirm from discussions that malls have transformed lifestyles of many.

However, in the section titled "Consumerism and the Built Environment", it is clarified that the mall as a model is similar globally where there are particular constituents such as hypermarket, cafes, cinemas, shops, food court, restaurants and other services targeting a wider scope of the society. It appears that the idea of a hypermarket worked to profit from all society segments. While, from an entertainment perspective, many people would settle for a stroll in the mall, visit the food court or get use of the other available services.

It is also important to highlight that the interviewed architects explained that the project's scale, geographic location, environment, as well as locals' habits and needs impact their design decisions, they all affirmed that the owner's (being the investor) approval is essential. Yet, it is noteworthy to mention that in the discussion, it was emphasised that their target in design is to create a particular experience. However, the notion of segmentation considerations was brought up by the marketing expert. Therefore, the influence of the geographic location from both perspectives differs, where to designers it affects accessibility or appearance (amongst others), while form a marketing perspective its influences the types of shops, how products are displayed and types of ventures where venues in lower class areas might not even have entertainment ventures at all and investors might resort to using smaller formats. Hence, it was concluded that the main design guidelines include the model, catchment area and location.

In the section titled "Marketplace Transformation and Shopping Preferences", it was clarified that these venues are an asset particularly to those residing in satellite areas with poor proximity to services. It is evident that new malls gave an impression of providing more options and of better quality products, which old malls fall short on, along with other issues such as design, spaciousness, location and lack of services. While closeness of malls to people living in remote areas is ideal many would go the distance to purchase something for various reasons. Therefore, the decision to go shopping depends mostly on what is needed, best offers, and location of venues where, for instance, some people have made their way back to Downtown shopping for more convenient prices while others resort to online shopping or friends and family living abroad to get what they need. Moreover, it was established that people go to malls which are easy to navigate, comfortable, provide open spaces, and are not overwhelming in scale.

The section titled "The Cairene Shopping Experience" discussed how investors adapt to cultural trends and social structures. While a huge emphasis was put on how well promotions work in Cairo, intensifying them through having promotions targeting each segment at one point insures that the mall is always operating.

The section titled "Future Views of the Cairene Shopping Experience" showed clearly that consumers had more or less similar ideas. These include issues like circulation and wayfinding, stating that good attention should be paid for such issues, in addition to incorporating event nodes to enhance the experience and avoid the boredom of the long paths. The integration between indoor and outdoor spaces was an important consideration for the interviewees. It was also recognized that malls lacked a diverse range of facilities and services for different age groups. However, suggestions such as dedicate specialized zones for different needs to shorten visits show contradiction to the intentional forced circulation loops and conventional methods of attraction which are the basis of mall design.

Finally, the section "Challenges Facing the Shopping Experience" debated two main points. More importantly, it's clear that consumers, although struggling to cope with the economic situation, but generally are adapting to it in many ways. On another note, and from a marketing perspective, it is declared that understanding the millennials today is essential to develop projects of tomorrow as this will be the main population. Hence, online shopping culture has become popular and not just for younger generations and is used as a means of product comparison and tracking of offers not just purchasing. Yet, it is suggested that malls will become bigger and fancier inevitably and others declare that the future will witness more mixed-use buildings.

In conclusion it is true that perhaps sustaining malls may become limited to things that can't be purchased online, yet it is evident that advancement in modern management is essential both online and in the brick and mortar market. It is always a wonder if the idea came first or the architecture, but based on the findings of this research, dealing with projects as physical spaces that provide a particular service or experience is not enough nowadays. While investors are embracing new technologies for their gain, the fate of the physical built environment is unclear. It is obvious that people of all age groups, professions, and genders are continuously striving for a faster life pace, and big investors are forced to respond to this. From this research it is impossible to deny the impact of globalization on both the society and the built environment. While we are to witness more changes, it must be noted that the change in legislation in 2003 brought about a wave of project models that have altered the built environment while this was not its initial intent. However, one can only imagine how much a medium such as the internet used by many globally and uncontrollably will dictate our lives and cities in the future. Knowing this, and by understanding marketing and investor intentions, one may wonder how the architecture and urbanism discourses will be involved in the decision making process, or in theorising like Victor Guren and many others once did, particularly amidst this rapid globalization and technological advancements. So, to better understand the situation, further research is strongly recommended involving more econmists, specialized architects and marketing experts an obstacle that this research faced.

REFERENCES

[1] M. Abaza, *Changing Consumer Cultures of Modern Egypt, Cairo's Urban Reshaping*. Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden: The Netherlands, pp. 1-292, 2006.

[2] "Consumer Culture," *Merriam-Webster.com,* https://www.merriam-webster.com/2017.

[3] E.J. Arnould and C.J. Thompson, "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research,* vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 868-882, Mar. 2005.

[4] W.D. Wells, "Discovery-oriented Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 489–504, Mar. 1993.

[5] M. Cleveland and M. Laroche, "Acculturation to the global consumer culture: Scale development and research paradigm," *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 60, pp. 249–259, 2007.

[6] J. Simmons and J. Weber, "Spotlight on the Gulf Cooperation Council: Understanding the Gulf Consumer," L.E.K. Consulting, https://www.lek.com/insights/spotlight-gulf-cooperation-council-understanding-gulf-consumer. 2014.

[7] A. King "Architecture, Capital and the Globalization of Culture," *Theory, Culture and Society, SAGE Journals*, vol. 7, pp. 397–411, 1990.

[8] M. Abaza, "Shopping Malls, Consumer Culture, and Reshaping the Public Space in Egypt," *Theory, Culture and Society, SAGE Journals,* vol. 18, no. 5, pp. 18-97, Oct. 2001.

[9] Ecosistema Urbano, "Reinvent or Die: The Transformation of Malls under the New Economic/Urban Paradigm," ArchDaily, https://www.archdaily.com/882288/reinvent-or-die-the-transformation-of-malls-under-the-new-economic-urban-paradigm. 2017.

[10] J. Glancey, "A History of the Department Store," BBC Culture, http://www.bbc.com/culture/bespoke/story/20150326-a-history-of-the-department-store/index.html. 2015.

[11] M. Byrnes, "Victor Gruen Wanted to Make Our Suburbs More Urban. Instead, He Invented the Mall," CityLab, https://www.citylab.com/design/2013/07/victor-gruen-wanted-make-our-suburbs-better-instead-he-invented-mall/6249/. 2013.

[12] H. Gillette Jr., "The Evolution of the Planned Shopping Center in Suburb and City," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 449-460, 1985.

[13] M.S. Lowe, "Britain's Regional Shopping Centres: New Urban Forms?" *Urban Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 261- 274, 2000.

[14] A. Trufelman, "The Gruen Effect," 99percentinvisible, https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-gruen-effect/. 2015.

[15] R. Oldnburg, "Project for Public Spaces," PPS, https://www.pps.org/article/roldenburg. 2008.

[16] International Council of Shopping Centres, "ICSC Master Narrative & Supporting Points," International Council of Shopping Centres, https://www.icsc.org/who-we-are/our-mission/icsc-master-narrative-supporting-points. 2018.

[17] C.A. Martin and L.W. Turley, "Malls and consumption motivation: an exploratory examination of older Generation Y consumers," *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, vol. 32, no. 10, pp. 464-475, 2004.

[18] Economy Watch, "Egypt Economic Structure," Economy Watch, http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/egypt/structure-of-economy.html. 2010.

[19] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook,"Central Intelligence Agency, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html. 2018.

[20] M. Sophia, "Majid Al Futtaim is on an Expansion Spree in Egypt and Here's Why,"Forbes Middle East, https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/en/majid-al-futtaim-is-on-an-expansion-spree-in-egypt-and-heres-why/. 2018.

[21] Gulf News, "Majid Al Futtaim Growth Sluggish as Egypt Devaluation Hits Hard,"Gulf News, https://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/retail/majid-al-futtaim-growth-sluggish-as-egypt-devaluation-hits-hard-1.2166179/. 2018.

[22] S. Rafaat, "Maadi Grand Mall,"Egy.com, http://www.egy.com/maadi/98-02-19.php/1998.

[23] M. Al Futtaim, "City Centre Maadi,"Majid Al Futtaim, http://www.majidalfuttaim.com/our-businesses/properties/shopping-malls/city-centre/city-centre-maadi/2018.

[24] Citystars Properties, "Overview,"Citystars Properties, http://citystars.com.eg/about_us.php?active=page_overview/2018.

[25] B. Flyvbjerg, "What You Should Know About Megaprojects and Why: An Overview," *Project Management Journal,* vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 6-19, 2014.

[26] F.D. Orueta and S.S. Fainstein, "The New Mega-Projects: Genesis and Impacts," Proc. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research Symp. Proc. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, pp. 760-67, 2009, DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00829.x.