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**BUILDING INNOVATIVELY
INTERACTIVE CITIES
HORIZONS AND PROSPECTS**

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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

BUILDING INNOVATIVELY INTERACTIVE CITIES HORIZONS AND PROSPECTS

Under the Auspices of
HE-Dr. Mostafa Madbouly
Minister of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities in Egypt

Conference Topics:

- 1- ANTICIPATE: CITIES AT A TIME OF RISK**
- 2- REACT: RESOURCE EFFICIENT CITIES**
- 3- INTEGRATE: BUILDING CITIES FOR ALL**
- 4- PROMOTE: BRANDING NEW CITIES**
- 5- INNOVATE: REAL ESTATE AS A TOOL**

PREFACE

URBAN INNOVATION occurs at the controversial interface between the multifaceted approaches, led by governmental entities; stakeholders' development strategies, and community interest groups. At the time of transformation, people continue to influence their habitat and beyond. While facing the compelling challenges of the present, innovative development poses itself as an inevitable response to future demands. In socio-economic disparities and environmental crises, innovation necessitates a mode of action to act responsibly in addressing issues in unconventional manners. The production of space becomes a responsibility towards the development of human resources, promoting their needs, capacities, and advancing a decent quality of life.

This conference addresses a key manifestation of “responsible innovation” in the human activity of “*dwelling*” and “*urbanization*”; in light of the scarcity of resources and rising demands, the conference invites academics, experts, practitioners, and policy-makers for a critical debate. The aim is to develop a two-fold approach; one fold reads into the future by daring to imagine a different *form of life* that pushes the boundaries of responsibility and creativity in the pursuit of a *vision for new-innovative cities*, that integrate productivity, effectiveness, and attractiveness. The other fold claims an ability to anticipate and pre-empt the various risks and uncertainties of such development and expansions.

The conference seeks to push forward the boundaries of current practices and knowledge to embrace innovative solutions, novel approaches, and grounded technologies within realistic comprehension of economic risks and environmental implications. It investigates different scales and situations, various urban forms and morphology, and various localities and totalities. It provides a platform for academics to present recent research, findings, and answers to pressing issues of building new cities and expanding existing ones worldwide within their ecological limits, formulating images, architecture, public spaces to create liveable, working, and productive cities. Furthermore, experts and researchers will be invited in roundtable discussions and workshops to develop ideas for new “innovative-responsible” cities. The conference welcomes contributions from diverse practices that support a quest for better living conditions to all urban dwellers while withholding their aspirations within a transforming world.

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BRANDING THE CITY? QUESTIONING MEGA MALLS AS NEW MAGNETS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC VITALITY IN NEW CITIES AROUND CAIRO

Elhusseiny, Mennat-Allah¹, Kesseiba, Karim².

Abstract

In accordance with the urban development and expansions taking place around Greater Cairo since Sadaat's open economy policies, questions have been raised and researched related to the sustainability whether economic, social or environmental of the new expansions. Ranging from New Cairo to the East and 6th of October to the West of Greater Cairo, more or less the same urban design strategies of low density and horizontal expansions have been applied with hopes to thus provide more open space and greener neighborhoods. However, the applied urban design strategies did not fulfill the need for more inclusive communities, and the vast open spaces are either privatized by real estate companies, mega malls with investments from the Arab Gulf or left vacant. This is due to the decreased density of neighborhoods in addition to the increased dependency on vehicle use as a result of the long travel distances between services and residence. In reaction to those observations, mega malls played the role of the public space in several cases to be investigated in this paper. From one point of view, the mega mall provides all services whether social or economic to all users who can manage to enter its gates. However, this leads to a great dilemma of privatization, branding and consumption of public space in new cities. This is the main debate this paper aims to question, using case studies from the two far ends of the expanding Greater Cairo, connected by the ring road. The paper questions the validity of branding new cities via mega shopping malls, which aim to provide spaces of consumption along with controlled environments and activities. This debate thus re-questions Jane Jacobs theories regarding the death and life of cities, however applied on the Cairene case. In order to achieve this, the paper will adopt a methodology based first on qualitative analysis of the two selected case studies, the first is Cairo Festival City located in New Cairo, and the second is Mall of Arabia located in 6th of October city. The analysis will focus on twofold aspects, first the urban setting of the mega malls within the new expansion; the second is the architectural character depending primarily upon branding and advertisement of products. Following that, Jane Jacobs theories will be briefly re-read according to the urban setting surrounding the mega malls in addition to contemporary theories of social resilience. The analysis will thus focus on the duality between the possibilities of creating vital streets Vs the branding of the city via mega malls. Finally the paper will conclude by a series of recommendations to enhance the social vitality of new cities.

Keywords

Branding of Cities, Mega Malls, Social Resilience, Controlled Environments, New Developments around Cairo.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses mainly on the role mega malls play in the new urban expansions around Cairo to the East and West. The paper aims to examine the duality of the roles of

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mega malls, being from one point of view, the services providers to the new expansions whether social or economic, while from another point of view they create a dilemma of privatization, branding and consumption of public space in new cities, resembling the fantasies of the Dubai architectural extravaganza. This is the main debate this paper aims to question, using case studies from the two far ends of the expanding Greater Cairo, connected by the ring road.

The paper questions the validity of branding new cities via mega shopping malls, which aim to provide spaces of consumption along with controlled environments and activities. This debate thus re-questions Jane Jacobs theories regarding the death and life of cities, however applied on the Cairene case. In order to achieve this, the paper will adopt a methodology based first on the literature review of the Life and Death of Cities in relation to Cairo's urban expansions, followed by a qualitative analysis of the two selected case studies, the first is Cairo Festival City located in New Cairo, and the second is Mall of Arabia located in 6th of October city taking into account in the analysis the dominant urban features and architectural qualities. The qualitative analysis will focus on twofold aspects, first the urban setting of the mega malls within the new expansion; the second is the architectural character depending primarily upon branding and advertisement of products. Following that, Jane Jacobs theories will be briefly re-read according to the urban setting surrounding the mega malls in addition to contemporary theories of social resilience. The analysis will thus focus on the duality between the possibilities of creating vital streets Vs the branding of the city via mega malls. Finally the paper will conclude by a series of recommendations to enhance the social vitality of new cities.

2. Literature Review: Re-visiting the Life and Death of New Cities in Accordance with New Urban Expansions Policies in Cairo

The new expansions around Cairo have to be regarded in the shadows of several theories due to their vitality in creating a better built environment. According to Nassar (2013), the absence of sustainable principles in the urban expansions for instance "Green Urbanism", have affected the livability of the expansions, public space and the Sustainable Modle of the city of Cairo. Nassar (2013) also advocates the importance of paying attention to principles of Green Urbanism especially in cities as important and as expanding as Cairo. Stemming from that, the definition of the term "Green Urbanism" has to be explored. According to Beatley (2000), green urbanism is the term that captures both urban and environmental sustainability. Lehmann (2010) added to that a proactive vision of what might be

"our zero-carbon, fossil fuel free future: overlapping mixed-use activities, living and working building typologies explored on the urban scale, infrastructures systems for renewable energies, public transport and individual energy-efficient building designs".

This adds an important dimension related to social integration and the value of paying attention to emerging theories in the 1960s, in which notably Jane Jacobs (1960), called for the “Livability” in cities in accordance with specific urban design attributes, most importantly the significance of the sidewalk, the role of parks, the identification of the city neighborhood, the balance between the formal and informal. Based on the previous debate, the following table summarizes the main aspects to balance social sustainability in the new developments which represent the focus of the paper, (Table 1).

Table 13: Key aspects for Enhancing Livability in New Expansion

Respecting Human Behavior in											
Mixture of Building	Informal Meetings	Street Life	Market Square	Street Vendor	Shop	Frontage	Sidewalk	Café	Identity	Narrow Streets	De-commoditiz

Source: Authors, 2016.

In relation to the low livability of the new expansions, Fahmi (2013) explains that the new expansions have failed to attract the planned middle income and low income classes resulting in cities which apparently seem empty. From another side, he argues that since 2000 New Cairo City was established as a result of merging Greater Cairo Master Plan's eastern new settlements, creating a large suburban community. Initially the area was inhabited by 1992 Cairo's earthquake victims officially relocated to public housing units in settlement which were later regarded incompatible with the development of gated communities, (fig. 1). However, this resulted that the New Cairo City encapsulates most of the features and problems of Greater Cairo’s urban situation, in terms of a hybrid mixture of decayed public resettlement housing for the poor and up-market private gated resort communities for wealthy expatriate groups, Fahmi (2013).

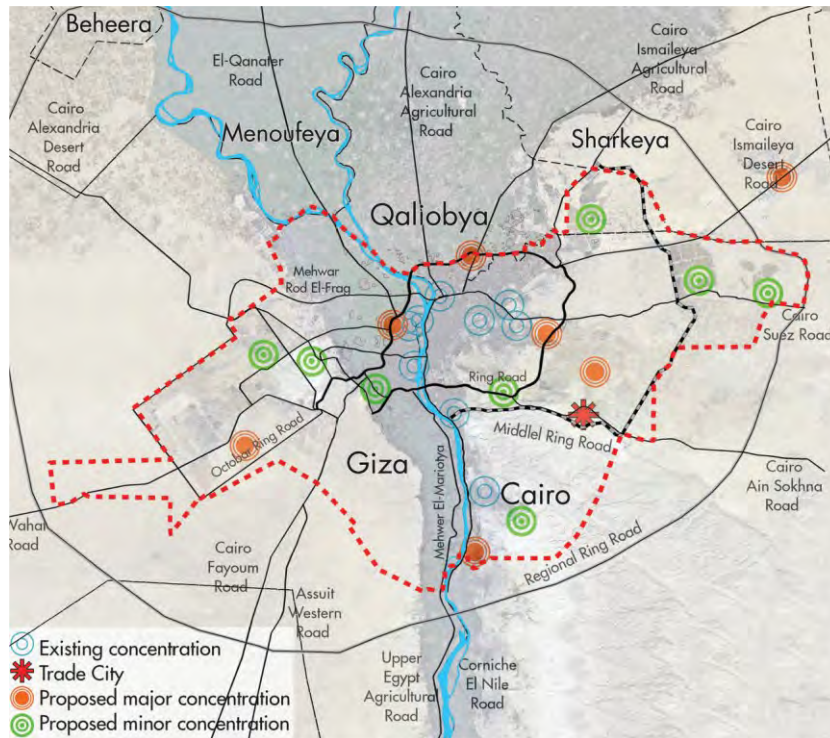


Fig. 1: Map of Greater Cairo Expansions showing expected vision for decentralizing Greater Cairo

Source: Database of the GC Geographic Information Systems – GOPP, 2012.

The role of transportation was crucial in bonding the two far ends together as well as with central Cairo. The ring road contributed to transportation communication which connected New Cairo to downtown, the 26th July road axis, introduced on Giza's western outer fringes, has encouraged linkage within 6th October New City including Sheikh Zayed. Whilst the state was forced to re-house thousands of victims of the 1992 Earthquake within Eastern New Cairo City (Sutton & Fahmi 2001) and within Badr New Town (El-Noshokaty 2002), the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC) has recently handed over the management of some of these new towns to private promoters and speculators who constructed villa complexes, enclosed elite compounds, and gulf funded mega malls, (Denis 1997).

In addition to the previous and tackling the issues of livability and vitality of new expansions, Stewart (1996) argues that poor basic services and lack of social and educational infrastructure have also discouraged families from settling in new towns. Families preferred to remain in familiar even if crowded environments in Greater Cairo rather than relocate to remote desert cities with unattractive monotonous architecture. As new town housing proved to be too expensive for workers, it eventually attracted higher income classes and investors rather than residents, as in New Cairo City, (Fahmi 2008).

Those debates ranging from Jacob to other scholars who debate the livability, social sustenance and resilience of new expansions recall Foucault's (1997) concern with the power of space in terms of how a place is open or closed to public entrance, how it maintains boundaries, barriers, gateways and disallows thoroughfare, loitering or

anonymous entrance. Stemming from that, the next part will analyze the two selected cases on the East and West of Greater Cairo.

3. Mall of Arabia Vs Cairo Festival City: Architectural and Urban Similarities of Mega Malls Branding in Egypt:

As El-Sheshtawy (2009) emphasized, traditionally; Cairo had a strong cultural, social, and architectural influence on the Arab world. However, currently this influence is weakened and even inverted. To justify this, one has to regard the series of projects which emerged in Cairo, that respond to Dubai's new urban fantasies. Among which as El-Sheshtawy (2009) explains the Smart Village Project on Cairo-Alexandria road, initially planned to be occupied by the major ministries of the state, which is a replica of Dubai Internet City; Ma'adi City Center which is a replica of Dubai City Center, a retail chain; and the various gated communities emerging in New Cairo, which are an echo of similar ventures in Dubai. These parallels do exist and in many instances references are made directly to Dubai, (fig. 2, fig. 3).



Fig. 2: Dubai Festival City Map.

Source: <http://www.dubaifestivalcity.com/cntn.aspx?id=70>



Fig. 3: Cairo Festival City Map.

Source: <http://wikimapia.org/20467668/Cairo-Festival-City>.

El-Sheshtawy (2009) further implies that examining these projects would throw some light on changing notions of Egyptian architectural language and identity in which its own heritage whether its Muslim and pharaonic incarnations as well as those of others, like Dubai's architectural language are repetitively used as 'branding' devices to attract multinationals and in turn "globalize". This will be studied in more details below, to examine the architectural qualities of branding mega malls, (fig. 4a, b). As a matter of fact, the scale of those projects could be considered as urban projects, due to the horizontality and multi-functional use of the projects. Nevertheless, architecture in many instances is used to create eye-catching impressions, aiming to achieve the aura of the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao. Such projects are the means to revitalize an otherwise stagnant city-a process sometimes called "the Bilbao effect", (El-Sheshtawy, 2009).



Fig. 4a, b: CFCM and Mall of Arabia as branding tool in Cairo's new suburbs.



Source: cairo360.com

3.1. Analysis of the Urban Features in Cairo Festival City Mall/ Mall of Arabia:

The following part represents the core analysis of the paper according to two-fold aspects. The first explained in (table 2) is the main similarities as to urban setting of the

two selected case studies, while the second explained in (table 3) are the architectural features dominant in both cases. The analysis here will pinpoint the surrounding of each mega mall, the main roads leading to both, the mass-plan of each mega mall and finally the heights.

Table 2: Urban Features Analysis of the Mega Malls

<p>Surrounding</p>	<p>CFCM: Cairo Festival City Mall is surrounded by notably the Polic Academy to the North, which marks an important security landmark in New Cairo. From the East, South and West CFCM is surrounded by hosing settelemnts for higher middle income class of the 1st settelement in New Cairo. Adjacent to the Mega-mall lies an underconstruction gated housing compound also developed by the Futtiam which marekts the villas and appartments based on the luxurious life style expected by being adjacent to the mega-mall.</p>
	 <p>Mall of Arabia: Mall of Arabia is located in a strategic plot which marks the major traffic node in 6th of October city, which is El-Obour square. This node is considered the entrance gateway to the new expansion, upon which lies one of the major universities, The Nile Univertsity, still under construction and well as gated housing compounds marking the south corners of the urban node. This location provides the mall with easier accessibility via public transportation, which adds an important layer to the functionality of the mega mall.</p> 
<p>Roads</p>	<p>CFCM: The main access to CFCM is from an exit on the Ring-road linking New Cairo to downtown. This marks a heavy traffic road, especially during rush hours, where schools and universities students and residents move towards to back to their destinations. Dependency is thus majorly on private cars, although minibuses also play a crucial role in transportation especially for workers and employees of the mega mall who reside in considerably far places form the</p>

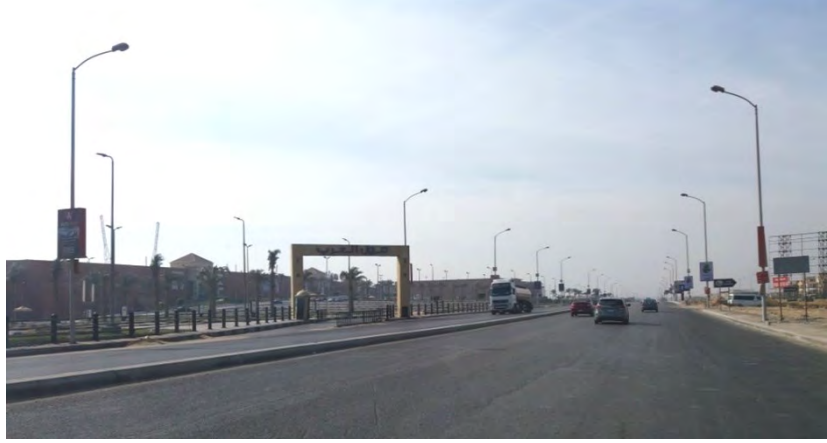

mega mall. Access can be also achieved from the adjacent streets of the first settlement.






Mall of Arabia:

Access to mall of arabia is from the main 26th of July axis which link 6th of October city to downtown. The other entrances are located on the parallel axis of Gamal Abdel-Nasser road. Both roads again mark high traffic roads, and dependency is mainly on private cars or minibuses. Pedestrian access is not possible due to the urban features of the roads, even from nearby gated communities.



	
<p>Mass plan</p>	<p>CFCM: The mass plan of CFCM is extending horizontally with a low density built up area, consuming the horizontal expansion to provide vast parking spaces and featuring landscape. This marks the long travel distances between the shops, department stores and parking zones. Thus, experiencing the whole mega mall in one visit is considered impossible in the shadows of consumers dealing with the project as a separate city with different attractions to target in each visit. Stemming from that, mobile apps started targeting this horizontal expansions to provide way finding techniques within the same project.</p> 
	<p>Mall of Arabia: The same strategy of horizontal expansion applies to Mall of Arabia, which also marks a large scale experience for users from the different gates to one another or to parking spaces. This horizontal expansion resulted in patterns of use where internal valet services are provided for users who aim to facilitate their trip.</p>



	
<p>Heights</p>	<p>CFCM: The heights in this case extend up to 4 stories in most of the complex. This provides enclosure within the central spaces, and enabled the presence of more dominant branding techniques on the elevations.</p> 
	<p>Mall of Arabia: Heights are limited to a single storey in this case, except for the furniture complex which marks a landmark by extending for 4 levels with a cylindrical form. Thus, from the vistas of the axes around, the mega mall doesn't provide a strong visual image.</p> 



Source: Authors, 2016.

3.2. Analysis of the Architectural Features in Cairo Festival City Mall/ Mall of Arabia:

In the next part, (table 3), the qualitative analysis will focus mainly on the architectural features of both mega malls. The aim is to aid in the conclusion to figure out the points of similarities and differences in the emerging trend of mega-malls. The analysis will cover the features of central space, architectural language and circulation.

Table 3: Architectural Features Analysis of the Mega Malls

<p>Central Space</p>	<p>CFCM: The central space represents the core gathering and social interaction ground in the mega –mall. Although there is no clear impact of the central space upon the external image of the mega mall, yet, the inner elevations, setting, landscape and activities make it the real heart of the project. The water feature plays an important role in creating a favorable view for the tens of restaurants and cafes. However, access is not limited only to the users of the cafes, but extend to all users of different socio-economic levels.</p>
	
	
	<p>Mall of Arabia: The central space in this case also embodies the heart of the project, where again a dominant water feature has been added to provide attraction in the vast space.</p>

	<p>However, the main difference here is that the access to the water feature has been limited to the dwellers of the restaurants and cafes, after being open to the public. The next two images refer to the alterations before and after the access to the central water feature has been limited. Certainly the main goal here was to maximize the economical profit, however, disregarding the possibility of creating a new typology of urban forums. The branding and consumption values have been maximized in this case.</p> 
	
<p>Architectural Language</p>	<p>CFCM: The architectural language in this case provides a minimalistic tribute to patterns and materials. The main player in the mega mall was to provide a background for the elevations of the commercials and branding features. The selection of colors is also based on the suitable choice for each department store. This provides a new sort of International Style, where the branding of the elevations are the new trend, regardless of the physical context of the city.</p>



Mall of Arabia:

The same strategy is applied on the elevations of Mall of Arabia. The entrances are the only highlighted design features through mass and materials, however, the remaining of the elevation is another background for branding. Notably to mention here, that the same architectural language has been borrowed from the Mall of Arabia in Jeddah, by the same holding company, which re-emphasize the emergence of a new trend of International Style based on branding and consumption aspects.



Circulation

CFCM:

The circulation elements in this case is mainly linear, however, sub-divided by several nodes and atriums which provide vertical connectivity of the different levels. The inner nodes are again used to provide entertaining features for the users and act as magnets to attract users from one node to the other through the different settings and displays.





Mall of Arabia:

In the case of Mall of Arabis, the circulation is mostly linear to the horizontality and loop shaped circulation. However, the main player here was to provide a vast circulation space amid the two rows of the shops to enable the circulation elements to contain commercial and social activities as well.

Source: Authors, 2016.

4. Cross-Analysis of the Role of Mega Malls in Creating Liveability in Cairo’s new Districts

After the previous analysis of the mega malls as islands of consumption and branding in the new extensions around Cairo, it is important to re-read the mega malls in their outer context, in relation to the nearby residential neighbourhoods and traffic arteries. In this section, the cross analysis will be conducted on the effect of the mega malls on the liveability of the peripheral streets nearby.

As to Momtaz and El-Semary (2015), definitions of liveability include an array of different issues that are underpinned by a common set of guiding principles. Those include accessibility, equity, and participation that give substance to the concepts of liveability. The quality of life experienced by citizens living in a city is tied to their ability to access infrastructure (transportation, communication, water, and sanitation); food; clean air; affordable housing; meaningful employment; and green space and parks. The

differential access of people within a city to the infrastructure and amenities highlights questions of equity. The liveability of a city can be also determined by the access that its residents have to participate in decision-making to meet their needs. Thus, the liveability indicators used in this paper will be combined with reference to the previous literature review as, access to suitable transportation, the right to public space, local products in public space and the balance between the formal and informal activities.

In addition to this, Momtaz and El-Semary (2015) add on that a liveable city is a city where common spaces are the centres of social life and the foci of the entire community. A liveable city must be built up, or restored, as a continuous network; from the central areas to the more distant settlements, where pedestrian paths and bicycle-paths don't bind together, each has its own path in all the sites of social quality and of the community life. Those indicators will be examined in the direct context of the two mega malls selected for the study in the coming figures (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). It has to be noted that the images below were taken in the same duration as the images used in the previous analysis. This gives a strong indication that the liveability has been mainly directed to the mega malls, while being de-saturated from the surrounding neighbourhoods.





Figures (5,6,7): First Settlement Neighborhoods adjacent to Cairo Festival City Mall.

Source: Authors, 2016

As apparent in the figures above, the planned open space in the neighbourhood is left vacant due to its nature of no man's land. Only private entrances of the houses are maintained, however, none of the indicators of liveability studied above are present.





Figures (8,9,10): 6th of October Neighborhoods adjacent to Mall of Arabia.

Source: Authors, 2016

The same problem of the lack of liveability is indicated in the above figures adjacent to Mall of Arabia. Open public space is left unmaintained, no possibilities for walk ability or the presence of social interaction in the streets. Adding to that the new fly-over under-construction in El-Obour street adds even more to the lack of social vitality in the neighbourhoods. In addition to that, the left over undersigned space started to re-adapt informal activities and dwellings by the porters of the adjacent houses.

5. Discussion

The paper tackled the emergence of the new trend of mega malls in the new urban extensions around Cairo. The main aim is to study the current state of the mega malls as islands of branding and consumption, and the cross-effect this has on the liveability of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The study resulted in the assurance that the new trend of mega malls is certainly changing the social spaces of socio-economic vitality into consumption and branding tools. The strong presence architecturally and on the urban scale of the branding tools de-saturated the new expansions from opportunities of creating spaces of social and economic vitality elsewhere. The mega malls have been acting as magnets to attract the users to the central space.

In a parallel note, the architectural significance of the mega malls in Egypt are nothing but replicas of the featuring mega malls in Duabi and the gulf area. This in addition to demolishing the layers of identity and architectural primacy of Egypt emphasizes more and more the global architectural transitions to branding and consumption. The brand is thus emerging via mega malls to become the new International Architectural Language.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the paper examined the relevant literature related to the life and death of cities as applied on the cases of new expansions around greater Cairo. After that, qualitative analysis has been implemented on two selected case studies of mega-malls, Cairo Festival City Mall and Mall of Arabia.

The main outcomes of the study can be summarized as a group of recommendations listed below,

1. It is crucially important to pay attention to the decaying and unmaintained public space in the new extensions and to provide opportunities of economic and social vitality to avoid the presence of unsafe spaces in new developments, or leave the space for further informalities. This is also important for the social sustainability of the new developments around Cairo.
2. It is important to re-insert a local character or a sort of appropriated architectural language to emphasize the locality of the spaces. Thus, this will add a distinction to the place instead of being merely replicas of similar mega malls in the region.
3. Public transportation should play a better role in the new expansions to link the districts together, without excessive dependency on private transportation.

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