

Cultural Globalization and Changes in the Urban Form of Metropolis Cities, (The Case of Cairo)

1. INTRODUCTION

Fundamental changes in various aspects of the world have been noticed in the last two decades, where technology and the use of Information and communication technology (ICTs) play an important role in the appearance of such changes. The new communication system and the use of (ICTs) have increased the capacity of the present to absorb all kinds of cultural, social and political articulation, in a digital globe that is electronically communicated and managed. They are modifying all aspects of the life of cities, political, economic and cultural. Globalization which resulted from the use of ICTs affected the cities of the world, it has sharpened the basic conflict between the old and the new, secularism and religion, strong and weak, the West and the East and ones who can afford and who can not. In the globalization age everything is connected or wired through the trans-national traffic of awkward images and identities.

The research is to tackle the effect of globalization on cities first in terms of culture, then its effect on the urban form through the following:

2. GLOBALIZATION'S EFFECT ON THE SYMBOLIC SPHERE

Globalization has affected people's relation through the "way" they communicate in between in addition to their linkage to places. As a result of the industrial revolution the meaning of time has changed, space and distance have been reduced, physical boundaries demolished, and the speed and type of movement is different. Furthermore, such meaning was more catalyzed by the digital revolution; globalization and telematics have defused place, distance and time making the latter unreal in a way. It is what Castells (2002) calls the timeless time. The shrinkage of distances and the speed of movement that characterize the current period find one of its most extreme forms in electronically based communities of individuals or organizations throughout the whole world.

3. CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION AND PEOPLE'S LIFE-STYLE

Cultural globalization forms the two sides of a coin. Through the exposure to others, and due to the changes in space, distance and time, communication between inhabitants of the globe will be easier thus a comprehensible relation will appear which will help to create a more peaceful world. Thus a global civil society is expected to exist. The opposite side of the coin is different, rich diversity of human civilizations through their exposure to other culture might get confused and their values, norms and beliefs altered. So culture will be either homogenized or vulgarized.

Homogenization of culture points to the formation of a global consumer culture in the era of late capitalism, Appadurai (1996). The Americanization of the world reflects such homogenization. It is what Barber (1995) refers to as the Mc world or Mcdonaldization. The homogenization of culture is proceeding strongly through various aspects of life as fashion, language, music, media, and film industries and slightly through commercial products as fast food and restaurant, e.g. Mc Donald, Coca-Cola, etc. which are universally used. The global reach of American culture products offers huge and complex collection of images, and values to inhabitants around the world. Such homogenization could create a uniform world culture beside the loss and demolishing of an important cultural feature which is cultural diversity. The term cultural diversity reflects the uniqueness and distinctiveness of local identity of societies.

On the other hand, heterogenization refers to variation and diversity of cultures. One way of reducing the disadvantages of the Americanization of culture could be through the modification, adaptation and incorporation, then presenting the culture in a way which goes-

on with its uniqueness. Societies might borrow and adapt cultural elements into their system without demolishing their own. According to Appadurai (1996), the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization is the most controversial issue in the interpretation on increasing interactions across the globe. Moreover he addresses two different terms which are more related to the connection between place, culture, location and identity; territorialization and deterritorialization. The former embraces a series of processes ranging from diffusion from their origin across borders to establish in a new place and form, while the latter takes roots in places away from their traditional locations and origin.

As a result to the process of homogenization of culture, the life style of people is diffused. People, especially who belong to traditional cultures, are torn between the culture they are newly exposed to and their own. Traditional societies are struggling to grasp to their inheriting in the face of the new tides while at the same time taking benefits of the new technology to solve their problems, which is not an easy task. They have to adjust themselves in order to survive in the new circumstances.

Accordingly, and due to the exceeding changes and improvements in technology, a gap has been produced between traditional (who have not or have weak access) and network societies (who own the technology). Castells (2002) defines both traditional and network societies. According to him the former represents developing countries in which the prevalence of the logic of the spaces of places over the spaces of flows, while the latter symbolizes developed ones, where the prevalence of the logic spaces of flows over the spaces of places. By its name, the network society is a society that depends on and structured in its dominant functions and processes around network. It is not a production of information technology, rather without the information technology revolution it could not be such a broad, determined social form, able to connect the whole kingdom of human activities.

As a result of the digital revolution, a digital divide took place indicating a gap between ICT have and have not, in terms of access and affordability, resulting what is identified as social polarization, which needs more controlled empirical investigation (Abu-Lughod (1995)). Culture identity is now being replaced, to a certain extent, by global identity. Global identities are shaped by globalization through sharing broader terms among people through the exceeding use of ICTs. The internet represents a multiplying source of information though it is preserved to small global elite, who represent about 2% to 5% of the global population (Castells (2002) and Graham (2000)). An evident example of global identity exists between the business elite; a common identity is noticed around the world; their traveling between countries, accommodation of same hotels, life style and needs, etc. Although they may differ in terms of nationality but they share same interests and life style.

4. INTERLOCKING CHANGES IN THE URBAN FORM

The urban form of cities has witnessed a large shift as a result of the industrial revolution. This was evident in its physical appearance through what El-Shakhs and Shoshkes call standardization of urban systems, as the width of roads, heights of buildings, zoning and segregation of use...etc. Furthermore, the digital revolution has affected the urban form differently.

The world is not becoming identical and same rather it is in certain parts becoming alike. Postmodern buildings, ethnic streets, amusement parks, and cultural centers have become the most important visual images of many cities. The spreading of similar planning concepts and architecture work in various cities started by the modern movement and the spread of utopian's ideas as the ideas of Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and others. Furthermore, the digital revolution largely helped in the wide spreading of such ideas throughout the universe. In the field of Architecture the existence of the work of well known architects such as Frank Gehry, James Sterling and Richard Rogers in standing metropolitan sites, have made cities around the world look similar. Frank Lloyd Wright imposed the idea

of decentralisation through his broad-acre city, but the use of advanced technology made such idea easy to take place. The appearance of satellite cities on city edges, districts depending on (ICT) and the born of cyberspace as a new phenomenon, is another form of the impact of globalization on the urban form of cities. The fabric of many cities, specially developed ones, is now becoming familiarly mediated with technological systems, while developing countries are still trying to catch up.

5. THE CASE STUDY OF CAIRO:

Cairo, as a traditional society, is exposed to the global communication system thus undergoing a cultural diffusion resulted from the forces of both an outer cultural exposure and its inherited culture. The case study of Cairo will be investigated through describing the effect of globalization on the life-style of Cairenes, describing the resulted changes on the urban form and finally identifying the major problems facing Cairo as a metropolitan city exposed to accelerating technological changes and tackled solutions.

5.1 CAIRO'S CULTURAL CHANGES AND THE URBAN FORM:

To understand the changes that took place in Cairo, first a portrait will be drawn of the original culture and urban form of the traditional city of Cairo followed by its steps towards globalization.

5.1.1. The Pre-Industrial City of Cairo (Basic principles of Islam on the urban form):

At that era the urban form of the city was a reflection of the inhabitant's beliefs. Cairo, as most Islamic cities, was characterised by its homogeneous form. The street pattern was a manifestation of three main elements, climate, social structure and political organisation. Although some elites' residences were located around lakes e.g. Birkat Al Fil or on the borders of the Birkat Azbakyia, Cairo was mainly characterised by its intermixture where the poor and the rich inhabit the same alley (*hara*).

As a historic Arab Muslim City, mixed land use was evident, where the main land use pattern of Cairo was focused on a multifunctional core structure enveloping, at least partially surrounding the central mosque by different layers of interconnected markets (*suqs*). The unique symbiosis between religion, education, social and commercial functions is expressed in the volumetric assimilation of the mosque building into this complex central compound. The Friday mosque, in addition of being the place of prayer, its courtyard serves as the primary public open space of the city. As a result of such homogeneity, the urban form of old Cairo gives a feeling of spatial continuity, where a vernacular pattern, based on the common appropriation and transformation of public space by the various social groups existed, (Bianca (2000)), figure (1).



Figure (1), the boundaries of the former Fatimid city (Bianca (2000))

5.1.2 The Westernization of Cairo (the origin of socio-cultural and urban changes):

At that time, "... the past became a matter of history, science, curiosity or romantic nostalgia, but was considered a defunct state of being. The future became the target of new hopes and projections, with utopian ideas of progress succeeding each other but never reaching elusive goal" (Bianca, (2000)). The process of Cairo's westernization, and not modernisation¹, took place through various phases as follows:

5.1.2.1 The French expedition (1798- 1801):

Although the French expedition occupied Cairo for a relatively short period of 3 years, its effect on the city and more on Cairenes life style cannot be denied. French as a language was prominent on newsstands, shop names and in advertisement. The urban form of the city changed for purely military reasons. Some streets, especially important communicating ones, were straightened, for ease of commandant all internal fortifications and gates were removed and parts of the city, as the *Husayniyah* suburb, were destroyed.

5.1.2.2 Muhammad Ali and his successors (1801-1882):

The westernization of Cairo was not truly under way until the reigns of Muhammad Ali's successors during the second half of the century, (Abu Lughod, (1971) and Bianca, (2000)). Muhammad Ali started what was known as "the modernization of Egypt", thus affecting the urban form of Cairo and its inhabitant's life style. Foreign teachers and advisors were imported for European-Modeled schools and technicians for the factories, in addition to sending education missions to France. Moreover, a new urban form was constructed, while the old town was excluded from the plan of modernizing Cairo. By locating new factories near Cairo, the city expansion took place. Wide Westernization steps took place through, the construction of European-style palaces, in addition to changes in the facades of buildings through the prohibition of the *mashrabiya* and replacing it by bare rectangular European windows.

The westernization of Cairo was catalyzed in Khedive Isma'il reign. A proliferation of non-governmental private foreign missionary and community schools opened in Cairo. In his scheme to beautify Cairo, Khedive Isma'il was affected by Haussmann's new scheme when visiting Paris (1867) and sent for the chief landscape architecture of Paris to help in the redesign of the city of Cairo. He laid the origin of the European part of Cairo southwest of the Fatimid and Mamluk city away from the existing city, thus applying a pattern that has been created during the early decades of the 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, Cairo was divided to two distinct communities; the old by the east and the modern by the west figure (2). A social gap took place between a new local bourgeoisie and alienated elites choosing to live in a Westernized urban form and the population mounting up in the old city, which was suddenly disgraced with backwardness.



Figure (2), planned new urban development in Cairo, Khedive Isma'il era (Abu-Lughod (1971))

5.1.2.3 The British Colonialism (1882-1956):

The year 1882 marks the beginning of the Colonial Cairo, through the British occupation, where a large number of Europeans took the modern community as their residence. Many spoke English beside French and patterned their ways of life and values on their vague image of a stylish West. Foreign films were showed in movie houses. Foreigners and upper-class Egyptian share the same life style. Much of modern Cairo was built according to European plans, e.g. Garden City and Zamalek, figure (3). The applied European style in the urban form and buildings of the new part of Cairo was more encouraged and intensified by the technological changes that took place at the beginning of the 20th century addressed through the invention of the automobile and industrial revolution.

The introduction of the car in 1903 in Cairo widened the gap between the old and the new community. The old streets were not suitable for cars whether in terms of width, pattern or condition. As a result, the old part depended on foot or donkey while the new depended on new technology for transportation. On the other hand the growth and extension of Cairo and decentralization was more encouraged after the use of cars and tramways where the latter opened vast peripheral areas to urban settlement, e.g. the satellite city of Heliopolis. In sum, the colonialism introduced an alien cultural system and did not favor a smooth integration.



5.1.2.4 Revolution and Republic (1952):

Through revolutionary action, Egypt managed to establish its independence. Despite the fact that this period had witnessed an accelerating move towards Egyptianization in various aspects, this however did not succeed to bring cultural independence because of the strong effect left behind by the colonial period. **Figure (3), the western layout of Garden City**

Egypt had to continue its pre-established economic patterns, which had become dependent on international trade structures and was adjusted to the application of Western technology. It was hard to escape the pressure of the rapid industrialisation in the Western world. The European fashion and lifestyle remained dominant. Although education policy became strictly a concern of the Egyptian government, again Western education became an important qualification of success and prestige especially for the new local elites. In dealing with a number of demographic problems due to the rising population and the migration of residents of the canal cities, residential high rise buildings were constructed (as in Nasr City) and were still characterized by the Western-style.

5.1.2.5 The adoption of the open door policy (1971):

The first legislative step towards the open door policy appeared with the Law 65 of foreign investment, which paved the way for a vast market for investment and commercial banking, (Yousry, Abu-Zekry and Yousry, (1998)). Its chief purpose was to attract Arab and foreign investment capital under highly favorable conditions. The socio-economic gap has widened between the fixed-income earners and a new capitalist class who gained from the new economic dependency by linking their interests to the West. Large personal investments took place to serve the upper and high-middle class of Cairenes through the establishment of non-governmental private schools and hospitals. On the other hand, the government was more directed to solve the pressing problem of the boost and concentration of population through the creation of new urban centres with new economic activities and better facilities in an attempt to attract people to a better life.

In some, the above period ended by a raise in social problems and an environment characterized by Western style architecture and planning rules.

5.1.3 The Globalization of Cairo and the Resulted Conflict:

Cairo plays a major role in both the Arab and Muslim worlds. It is the seat of the Arab Nation (the Arab league headquarters in Cairo), the Islamic world's bridge to Africa, it houses Al Azhar University which offers a wide range of prominent certificates and degrees in many fields, Islamic and scientific, to vast number of Egyptian and foreign students. Egypt is going under tremendous conflict, where a growing sense of retaining the traditions is rising, at the same time, globalization forces and information technology lead to the reshaping and homogenization of Egypt's culture. The formation of globalize culture, according to

Appadurai (1996), is a result of five dimensions of global cultural flows, named: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, finascaples, and idioscaples. In applying Appadurai's five dimensions of global cultural flows on Cairo's society the following could be revealed:

Ethnoscaples: (the movement of tourists, immigrants, refugees and guest workers) Tourism has played a great role in globalising Cairo and has clearly helped to generate a certain level of openness to other cultures. Tourists seem to increase recently after some years of recession. In the year 2000 about 5506 thousand tourists visited Egypt compared to 3133 thousand in the year 1995 (CAPMAS (2002)). Moreover, the open-door policy encouraged other cultures to integrate with Cairenes. Foreigner guest workers whether from the West or from Africa, in addition to migrants from the local and rural parts of Egypt have lead to the interpretation of populations and the existence of dissimilar ways of life within Cairo's sphere. In addition, many professionals have been educated abroad, e.g. European countries and by the USA. Furthermore, the presence of the American University in Cairo and the increasing number of students' enrolments represent a strong influence on the Americanization of Cairenes' life-style. Many multinational firms and producer services companies operating in Cairo prefer professionals with American educational background, especially who have an international sense, offering larger salaries in comparison to their opponents with local education which worsened the situation and have played a significant role in the promotion of an American Lifestyle in Cairo.

Mediascaples: (the worldwide distribution of information through newspapers, magazines, TV programs and films) The TV represents the first device which introduced the global culture at home. Many American TV shows, such as Dallas, the Bold and Beautiful, Friends and others have been shown through local TV channels which influenced Egyptians' culture, bearing in mind that in the year 2000 95.95% of the households in Cairo own a TV, (EHDR, (2003)). Besides, some local radio and TV Programmes are broadcasted in English. However, the globalization of Cairo is not a recent phenomenon; it started last century when Hollywood films have been dominant in the global cinema market. In addition, local and imported English newspapers and magazines can be easily found out at news stands in any corner.

Technoscaples: (the distribution of technologies) Mobile phones, as advanced technological devices, do not represent a strong indicator of using global instruments in a country as Egypt, as it could be used due to difficulty of obtaining ordinary phone lines, although the increase in ownership of the mobile phones is more than phone lines if compared with the space of time of existence in Egypt, as the former helped in the demolish of space, distance and time. If the fact that the number of phone lines exceeds mobile phones is taken as an indicator of old vs. new, that would be misleading, since the time frames are different, i.e. the 35.7% represented by mobiles was achieved in only 7 years, while it took 85 years for phone lines to achieve its current status, (table (1)). Moreover, in terms of the number of university enrolment and graduates from faculties of Technology has witnessed a rise. The number of graduates in the year 1995/96 was 189 students, which increased in the years 1999/2000 to 1041 students, excluding technological branches in Faculty of Engineering (Ministry of Higher Education in CAPMAS (2002)). Furthermore, the number of Internet users in Egypt has increased by 78.9% within the last year, (MICT, in The National Plan for Communication and Information Technology, August (2003))

Source of Service	Number of telephone in thousands	The percentage
Public sector Egyptian company for communications	7250	64.3
Private sector (mobile phones)	4020	35.7
The Total	11270	100

Table (1), statistics concerning the number of telephones service in Egypt (July 2002), (Egypt Human Development Report 2003)

Finascaples: (global capital flows) Cairo turned out to be home to; one of the largest AID missions, a number of branches of US multinational corporations as GM and IBM, a number

of American fast food chains as KFC (36 branch), Pizza Hut (22 branch), and McDonald (26 branch), in addition to American outfits series as Nike, Timberland and others. Moreover Cairo is also home of several Western educational institutions as the AUC and GUC. Western Certificates as the American diploma, IGCSE, and the German certificate, witnessed an increasing percentage of enrollments in the last few years.

Idioscapes: (the distribution of political ideas and values) Starting from El-Sadat presidency, Egypt has been oriented to the USA in particular for aid in resolving its economic and technological development. On the other hand, with the beginning of the Intifada many Cairenes developed strong anti-American feeling which was translated into a movement for boycotting all American products due to the perceived American biasness regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However the paradox was by boycotting American chains like McDonalds were putting the Egyptians who work there out of work. The counter-argument for it was that these Egyptians would work in Egyptian chains. This affected the economy in various ways that no one had expected and its outcome is largely debatable. However it demonstrates how political ideas and how people on the street perceive them can affect any society from top to bottom influencing everyone, the worker at the counter, his family, the businessman, whether who owns the American company or Egyptian counterpart and their supplier, etc....

As a result of the exposure to the above cultural flows, and as a traditional country, Egypt and especially Cairo turned out to be a country with a lot of controversies.

5.2 CAIRO AS A MEGA CITY: PROBLEMS in METROPOLITAN CAIRO

Metropolitan cities, especially in developing countries, face various problems as a result of economic recession, unemployment and rise in population which lead to deficient housing, insufficient infrastructure, transportation congestion and environmental tribulations. The above problems, beside the raised conflict resulted from the homogenization of culture, widened the gap that metropolitan cities in traditional societies are trying to fill. Mega cities are defined as those with populations exceeding 8 million, following the United Nations definition. As Cairo lies in the category of mega cities in developing countries it faces a number of problems that bear heavily on its future, some of which will be cited below:

5.2.1 Demographic Growth:

The demographic growth together with the pressing social problems makes urban metropolises a state-wide issue. Cairo's population categorizes it as the largest metropolitan area in the Arab world, Africa, the Middle East and the Islamic world, (table (2)). Although the rate of population growth of Cairo has declined considerably since 1975, still population is one of the major problems that face Cairo (United Nations Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision).

Country	Estimated Population 1995 (million)	Percentage Muslim	Large Cities (+million)	City's Population	
				1955	2000
Europe: Turkey	62.0	98.0	Istanbul	7.8	9.3
Africa : Egypt	58.5	94.0	Cairo	9.7	10.8
Asia: Bangladesh	128.3	83.0	Dhaka	8.8	11.5

Table, (2), Total population of Cairo compared to the largest metropolitan areas in Arab World, Africa and the Islamic World, (El-Shakhs and Shoshkes).

5.2.2 Public Utilities:

By the end of last century, the rapid growth of population and the sharp increase in density in some inner and intermediate districts in Cairo represented huge pressure on the existing public utilities and networks in these districts. Moreover, a great number of inhabitants (2098469 people) live in 78 slum areas, and occupying an area of 23.104 km² which lacks public utilities, thus adding more strain on the government to improve their situation, (CAPMAS (2002)).

5.2.3 Transportation and communication:

Cairo's inefficient and overcrowded public transportation system forced the residents, who can afford, to resort and depend upon private transportation, i.e. private cars. In the last few years, Cairo witnessed a dramatic increase in vehicles, where the total number of cars has increased by 2.6% in a year from 2001-2002, thus causing huge traffic congestion. Moreover, in term of communication the number of telephones in Cairo has increased by 4.9% from 2001-2002, (table (3)) thus facilitating the use of Internet. Although it is widely expected that physical transportation will be replaced by transportation via the Internet, as a result of the use of advanced technology, still Cairenes who are on-line need to move physically.

Transportation and communication in Cairo	Year 2001	Year 2002
Number of cars	986229	1011540
Telephone lines in thousands	1824	1913

Table (3), transportation and communication in Cairo, (General Department of traffic and MCIT, Egypt Telecom)

5.2.4 Environmental Problems:

Being Egypt's primary industrial centre in addition to the increasing number of private vehicle and uncontrolled fumes from public transportation make Cairo one of the most polluted mega-cities in the world. In the past, there was no governing body that was responsible for monitoring and preserving Cairo's environment. This was translated into the sprouting of several factories and workshops near, if not within, Cairo's residential and commercial areas. This and the boost in both, public transportation and private vehicle decreased air quality and increased both acoustic pollution and traffic congestion and so, suffering of Cairo's environment turning it into unprecedented levels deterioration. Moreover, the overcrowding in the existing areas represented an unbearable load on the services and facilities.

As a result of the above problems in a world characterised by globalization, an evident social polarisation in Cairo's society took place, thus producing a divergent situation in the urban form.

5.3 THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIO-CULTURAL POLLARISATION:

To overcome the above problems, the Egyptian government took vital steps in improving its infrastructure; telecommunications, power, sewage-drainage, water and urban transport. Heavy investments were devoted to roadways and bridges' infrastructure, in addition to the construction of the subway system. Despite the above governmental attempts, still the number of private vehicles has been rising thus resulting in major traffic congestion. Moreover, and to help in reducing the pressure on the existed utilities and services in GCR, major projects were attained through; the reconstruction of the deteriorating parts (the displacement of residents of Bulaq), the construction of independent new towns and cities (the construction of, 10th of Ramadan, El Obour and New Cairo City) and the encouragement of migration away from the over crowded areas (the relocation of Vodafone to the 6th of October instead of community of Maadi).

The construction of new cities, presented itself as the perfect solution for problems facing metropolitan Cairo. A number of governmental housing projects took place in these cities to absorb the new generation of the lower-middle class, figure (4). On the other hand, private investments within these cities also took place through the construction of gated settlements, which characterizes the global era and has proved to be a very profitable business in Cairo attracting large numbers of Egyptian business men and construction companies to both construct these compounds and occupy them.



Figure (4), governmental youth housing projects.

New Cairo symbolizes a new city, which fulfills a great role of the government's plan of improving Cairo, figure (5). The New Cairo City (NCC) is about 45000 acre and represents an Eastern extension of the capital, located east of the ring road. It consists of a number of districts and embodies several colleges as Mobarak Police Academy and the new campus of the AUC. It is not the research intention to dip deeply in the new communities' phenomenon; rather an observation and an interview will take place to have a general understanding of three examples of gated settlements in New Cairo City to show to what extent this global phenomenon has managed to polarize different social sects .



Figure (5), Central Layout of New Cairo

The three gated settlements are; El Rehab which is an independent gated community, Quatameya Heights which is part of a whole community and Mirage City which represents a discrete settlement directly located by the ring road, and are all non-governmental investments about 10-15 minutes drive from both Heliopolis and Nasr City, table (4).

Settlement	Mirage City	Quatameya Heights	El Rehab
Comparison			
Location	A settlement by the ring road and Cairo-Suez road	Part of the 5 th district ¹ of NCC	The North East of NCC
Land-use	Residential ²	Residential ³	Mixed use
Social class of residents	Upper	Upper	Middle, middle upper and upper
Façade	Western modeled prototype facades	Western varies between buildings	Western prototype depending on grouping of buildings
Privacy	Partially fulfilled	No privacy	Mostly unfulfilled
Territoriality	Physically attained	Physically attained	Physically attained
Transportation	Private vehicles	Private vehicles	Free bus route serves the community and a bus service is connected to a subway station in Cairo.
Type of residential buildings	Detached two storey villas	Detached two storey villas	A variety of house blocks 4 - 6 storeys in addition to detached and attached villas.
Technical privileges	None	Access to the Internet via ADSL is being considered	None
Figures within settlements	Villas by Mirage City 	The golf course in Quatameya Heights 	House Blocks in El Rehab 

Table (4), the gated settlements in New Cairo City

¹ the district embodies religious, educational and residential buildings (a sufficient number of governmental projects of public housing for low-income and youth are part of this district).

² commercial needs are unavailable except for a nearby supermarket "on the run", which is part of a gas station. Recreation facilities are available through private membership of presented facilities in the nearby JW Marriott Hotel as the golf course and swimming pool.

³ commercial needs are partially fulfilled from a small market, while the recreational needs are available through a membership of the club house which includes the golf course and swimming pool. It symbolizes a luxurious life-style which serves only the people who can afford such luxury, overlooked by residents in residential blocks who could be squeezed and condensed in a limited area.

Most residents of the above settlements chose such sites for the sake of privacy, to live in a spacious residential area overlooking a desirable, natural view, and to escape the overcrowd, sound and air pollution of the City of Cairo. It was observed that although these communities are gated and secured by guards still windows are guarded by fixed iron-grids, which shows that the gates are not for amenity purpose as much as for identity and belongingness to a certain group. El Rehab is relatively different from the other two settlements as it reflects an independent community through mixed social classes and land use.

6. CONCLUSION:

It seems that Cairo is taking wide steps towards its westernization, where its culture is being homogenized through the cultural flows. While the steps of modernization, using the advanced technology to improve its situation, is still slow and more devoted to serve the upper-class who face less problems in comparison to their opponents. All social classes within the community of Cairo are affected where the gap is wide and getting wider between the higher and the lower classes in Cairo's society especially after the construction of these gated settlements. The poor live in very densely packed areas where pollution is high or take up living in cemeteries and informal areas that lack the vital facilities such as sewage systems, phone lines, electricity etc.. The lower-medium are pressurized in middle sized area where limited facilities are available. While the squeezed middle class lives in medium sized apartment blocks with a certain amount of greenery and tolerable levels of pollution and have access to all vital facilities. At the same time they are all witnessing the upper class, as neighbors or through global media, enjoying a universal luxurious life-style shared with their world-like mates. They are getting more isolated with their life-style, practicing Western activities as playing golf which is a relatively new game introduced in an inappropriate environment (the desert) thus asking for more pressure on the utilities to keep it in its perfect form

Accordingly, more attention should take place to encourage the collaboration between the private and the governmental section to improve and narrow the gap developed from the social polarisation. Major steps should be given to the smashed up classes who are most affected by the harsh consequences of cultural globalization, as well as the middle and low income group who need vital assistant to meet their crucial needs. Although the government is paying attention to these groups through the increase of phones and Internet lines, the project of a computer for each student, and implementing English as a second language in the early stages of education, still they need more crucial attention, as equipping teachers to be capable of teaching the advanced technology, stressing on the ministry of education and ministry media's role to focus on the inherited values against the foreign cultural flow to avoid and slow down the process of homogenization/ standardization/ Americanization of its culture and putting the advanced technology within the reach of both who can and who cannot afford.

Still more questioned are raised as; how to use technology wherever available to solve the various problems in a world which is characterized by polarization (bearing in mind the limited finance of these societies), how could a traditional metropolitan city as Cairo take advantages of globalization processes and avoid losing grounds towards its cultural heritage and to what extent is the process of cultural homogenization will still exist.

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End Notes:

¹ The term westernization of Cairo is used instead of the modernization of Cairo in the research according to Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*. He argues that Cairo has moved towards westernization without technical modernization as a response to the impact of the West.