

Re-Presenting the Egyptian Informal Urbanism in Films between 1994 and 2014

R. Mofeed, N. Elgendy

I. THE PHENOMENON

Abstract—Cinema constructs mind-spaces that reflect inherent human thoughts and emotions. As a representational art, Cinema would introduce comprehensive images of life phenomena in different ways. The term “represent” suggests verity of meanings; bring into presence, replace or typify. In that sense, Cinema may present a phenomenon through direct embodiment, or introduce a substitute image that replaces the original phenomena, or typify it by relating the produced image to a more general category through a process of abstraction. This research is interested in questioning the type of images that Egyptian Cinema introduces to informal urbanism and how these images were conditioned and reshaped in the last twenty years. The informalities/slums phenomenon first appeared in Egypt and, particularly, Cairo in the early sixties, however, this phenomenon was completely ignored by the state and society until the eighties, and furthermore, its evident representation in Cinema was by the mid-nineties. The Informal City represents the illegal housing developments, and it is a fast growing form of urbanization in Cairo. Yet, this expanding phenomenon is still depicted as the minority, exceptional and marginal through the Cinematic lenses. This paper aims at tracing the forms of representations of the urban informalities in the Egyptian Cinema between 1994 and 2014, and how did that affect the popular mind and its perception of these areas. The paper runs two main lines of inquiry; the first traces the phenomena through a chronological and geographical mapping of the informal urbanism has been portrayed in films. This analysis is based on an academic research work at Cairo University in Fall 2014. The visual tracing through maps and timelines allowed a reading of the phases of ignorance, presence, typifying and repetition in the representation of this huge sector of the city through more than 50 films that has been investigated. The analysis clearly revealed the “portrayed image” of informality by the Cinema through the examined period. However, the second part of the paper explores the “perceived image”. A designed questionnaire is applied to highlight the main features of that image that is perceived by both inhabitants of informalities and other Cairenes based on watching selected films. The questionnaire covers the different images of informalities proposed in the Cinema whether in a comic or a melodramatic background and highlight the descriptive terms used, to see which of them resonate with the mass perceptions and affected their mental images. The two images; “portrayed” and “perceived” are then to be encountered to reflect on issues of repetitions, stereotyping and reality. The formulated stereotype of informal urbanism is finally outlined and justified in relation to both production consumption mechanisms of films and the State official vision of informalities.

Keywords—Cairo, cinema, informal urbanism, representation, stereotype.

R. Mofeed is Professor of Architecture and Criticism in the Architecture Department, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt (phone: +20 (100) 600 5320; e-mail: rmofeed@gmail.com).

N. Elgendy is Assistant Professor in Architecture and Urban Design, in the Architecture Department, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt (phone: +1 (647) 546 1982; e-mail: noheir@gmail.com).

THE Egyptian term for informalities is *Ashwa'iat* [1] meaning random and chaotic, and represents basically the settlements on the city periphery, which began their incipient growth in the early 1960s. It appears that there was no official resistance to such phenomenon, even though these early informal subdivisions clearly contravened the subdivision laws and building codes and have grown consuming the city's most precious and scarce resource of fertile agricultural land. However, this phenomenon can be associated with the 1952 revolution, and its calls for modernization and following the notions of the industrial revolution. Nasser law for “Free Education” and encouragement of the deprived to get educated and modernized, leaving their agricultural lands behind, was the major cause for the immigration from the countryside to the city [2]. Cairo, being the capital, was the hub for the major services and job opportunities and thus attracted huge numbers of those immigrants. The urban aggregates sprawled along the formal city periphery, to contain the housing needs of the poor and the immigrants from the countryside, who could not afford an alternative place, constituting a very structured entity, yet illegally built on agricultural and state-owned lands [3]. Perhaps what facilitated this process was the fact that at that time government was increasingly preoccupied with creating new socialist zones and prestige heavy industry, and it could afford to ignore a few marginal, unregulated developments on the periphery [4].

The informal sector of Cairo, nowadays, houses more than 11 million inhabitants that present two thirds of the population of the city and more than a third of its footprint [5]. Contrary to common perceptions, there are practically no parts of the informal city in Cairo that exhibit the characteristics of the stereotypical ‘Third World slum’- hutments or shantytowns. Only in small pockets, usually on public rights of way or in desert areas, does one find the type of precarious construction that evokes the images of slums that are standard in many parts of the developing world [6]. The informal settlements are very structured entities with a clear strategic way of building and community-developed codes. The residents of informalities forming the majority of the capital population are the mainstream, including different educational backgrounds and professional profiles and cannot be considered an exception. However, this part of the city is still in the minds of most comfortably established Egyptians remains a remote and marginal part of the metropolis. This huge sector of the city was not clearly represented in films before 1980s, yet, its roots can be found at the early beginnings of the cinema through representing another urban form that is called *Hara* or Alley.

The *Hara* was the preferred setting for writers and directors to depict the struggle of ordinary people in the city that has went through different phases. El-Telmesany [7] clarifies that early representations of the *Hara* between 1939 and 1953 were romantic, idealistic and almost imaginary where the indigenous Egyptian character was found in *Hara* in contrast to the corrupted rich ruling class inhabiting palaces and European style villas and neighborhoods. By 1952 revolution, the idealistic wave continued but with flavor of power, patriotism and struggle for social upgrade. It was not before 1980 that this idealistic mode changed to a more realistic one. The rise of the Egyptian New Rationalism trend following the Italian one, created new films that are produced in real sites and between/ about the marginalized people showing their pains and misery, for example “hanger” film in 1986 by Aly Badr Khan and “Bitter Day.. Sweet Day” film in 1988 by Khyree Beshara [7]. Following to this rationalism, a more commercial films’ wave prevailed by the 1990s that invested in the stereotype of evil and deviated figures. From then, the *Hara* continued to show up as part of the wider urban fabric of informalities or *Ashwa’iat*.

II. REPRESENTING THE PHENOMENON

The act of representation suggests a wide range of meanings and connotations. To represent is to ‘make present’ or to bring into presence in the physical sense as well as to the mind [8]. This meaning suggests “the revealing of some quality or value that although always in front of us has remained obscured until this point” [9]. Yet, the more common definition of representation is a ‘replacement or substitute’ [8]. Substitution suggests some sort of absence, of the original object, that is partially filled by a replacement. This type of representation assumes characteristics or qualities that are not necessarily intrinsic to the original (absent) object [9]. The third meaning of representation refers to the ‘typical’ or to typify a class of objects or ideas which implies sharing a minimum of sameness between particular entities to be connected to a more general category [9]. Representation, then, suggests meanings of: reveling, substitution and typifying of the original qualities or realities it represents. Yet, what interests us in this research is how the term works in media, especially in cinema, and how it would shape people understanding of themselves and to others.

For Nicholas [10], Cinema “gives sense of what we wish, or fear, reality itself might be or become”. The problem with cinematic representation, as Safik asserts [11], is “its potentially naturalizing or ‘real-zation’ effect, which helps viewers to mistake cinematic discourses on reality for real-life itself, and that works even better in the absence of alternative representations and balanced information. In this respect stereotypes may play an important role in shaping or confirming certain perceptions.” [11].

In Egypt, it is the case of absence of alternative representations and balanced information that Shafik pointed out which makes films one of the effective mediums that shape people understanding of real-life. Yet, reality here is not meant to be a documentation of real life or a secondary mode

of being. It is rather an understanding of films as “part of the reality we typically inhabit, or the world we live in” [12]. Actually, this is the critical role films play through representations of people, places, and subjects. As representations influence “how others see members of a group and their place and rights, others who have the power to affect that place and those rights. How we are seen determines in part how we are treated; how we treat others is based on how we see them; such seeing comes from representation” [13].

The researchers opted to explore the representation of Cairo informal urbanism or *Ashwa’iat* through the cinematic medium. This experiment was part of an architectural criticism graduate course at Cairo University in fall 2014. The interest was to explore the represented image of informal urbanism in Egyptian movies as part of an extensive project to explore the whole city. Fifty Egyptian feature films between 1994 and 2014 were selected in different levels of depth. While some films introduced informalities in its background showing glimpses of people’s poor life, others went deeply into tackling issues of gender, class, poverty, crime and power. The research raised number of questions regarding the image of informalities in films and how this image would differ than the image we, as architects and planner, already know. And how the represented image may shape people’s perception of urban life, social differences and concepts of power. The following investigations were conducted to approach the raised questions and to outline the portrayed image: films’ chronological scanning, films’ geographic analysis or mapping in addition to outlining the portrayed characters.

A. Films’ Chronological Scanning

All selected films were represented on a time line and analyzed through multiple layers of cinematic and architectural readings as in Fig 1. The cinematic reading focused on identifying films’ genre, narrative, embedded values, symbols and the overall represented image of informalities. However, the architectural reading was oriented to exploring the various portrayed spaces; the house, the workspace, the marketplace in addition to identifying films’ locations to be mapped later on.

The chronological analysis revealed that the phenomena of informalities was almost neglected in the 1990s except for the introduction of film “Al-Kit Kat” that has the name of an informal neighborhood in Cairo. The protagonist, in this film, was a reckless blind old man who sells his house for drugs supply and let his only son down, the house was considered a symbol of Egypt that was suffering from the economic policies of “open doors” by Sadat during 1980s and 1990s and its implications on poor people [14]. The neglecting of informalities in cinema at that time may be attributed to the overall reduction in films production especially in mid 1990s as a result of the privatization of the cinematic sector. It, also, can be attributed to the prevailing of what is called the clean genre of films that not only avoided the hot romantic films but also the controversial sociopolitical issues [7].

Back to the films’ timeline, it was observed that the gradual increase in addressing informalities in the cinema started from

2000, where three consecutive, yet interlaced, modes or genres can be noticed; the comedy, the tragic and the political. The comedy mode was observed between 2000 and 2007, where series of films by renowned comedians such as “Al-limby”, “Elly Baly Balak”, “Okal”, etc. were introduced. Informalities, here, were represented as places for kind, naive, incompetent, and ignorant people that you may laugh on their attitude or way of speaking [15].

By 2007 a tragic mode was first introduced by the shocking film “Heen Maysara” that represented informalities as places of all sins and ugliness; where harassment, prostitution, drugs, crimes, arms trade, families’ disintegration and street children etc. all are genuine characteristics of these areas that only criminals, dealers and degenerated people inhabit. The film also stressed on the unhuman spaces these people inhabit, sharing the same house with three or five other families without any sense of privacy or security. In addition, the suspicious relation between gangsters of these areas and the police was also emphasized. Khaled Youssef, the film director, declared that the governing regime supports such gangsters to create chaos and absence of law, which in turn bolsters the repressive policy of the regime [15]. Such films

continued to show up following the generated stereotype of informalities as places of poverty, violence and ugliness.

The January revolution at 2011, as part of Arab Spring Revolutions, evoked another mode with political flavor. Informalities were portrayed in films “Sarkhet Namla”, “Farsh wa Ghata” and “Baad Al-Mawkeaa” as places of independent authority out of the state power, they were also, fuel of the revolution, places for possible terrorism, fundamentalism and violence [16]. The tension between the inhabitants of informalities and the political power, in these films, fluctuated between surrender and resistance, yet seemed, in either case, to threaten the stability of the governing regime. A direct relation between the deteriorated situation of informalities and the revolution was outlined in many films; in addition, its inhabitants were introduced as active players in the revolution either by inhibiting or upholding.

It is worth mentioning that the three genres of comedy, tragic and political were always there throughout the investigated period, yet, it has been noticed that certain genres prevailed in certain moments and that might be related to particular political events.

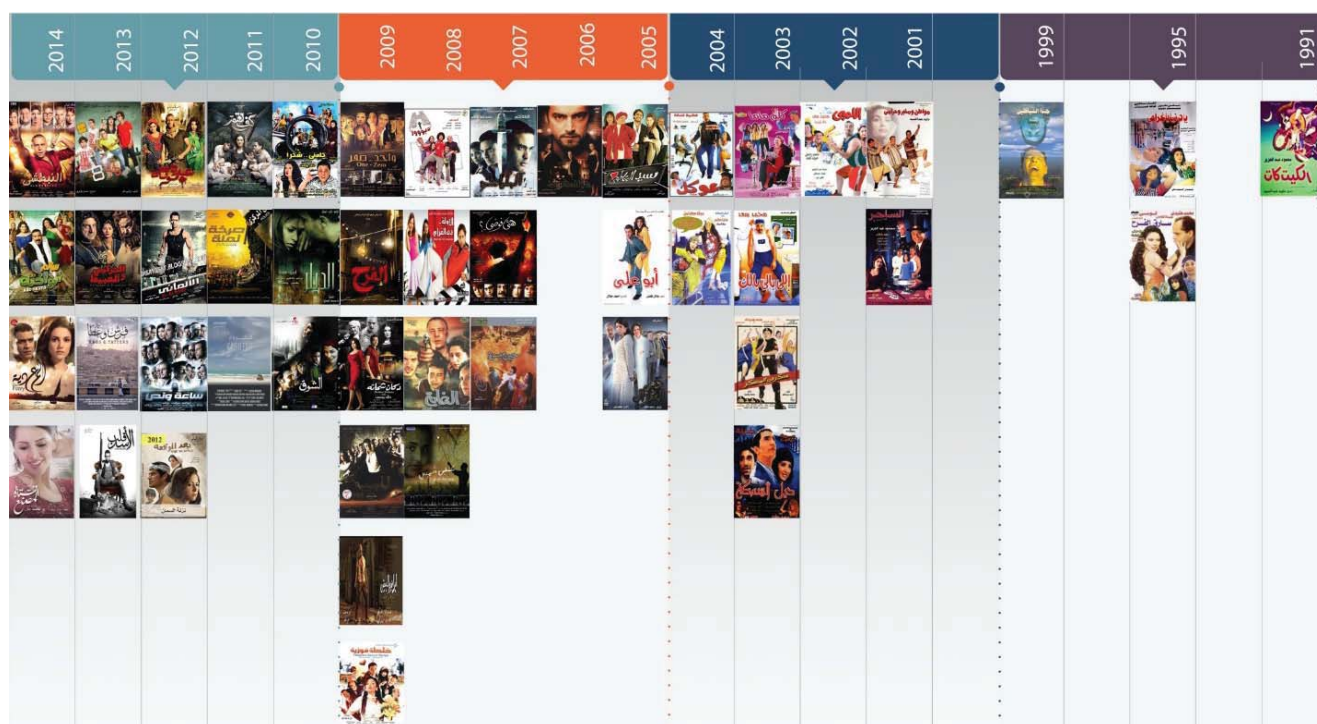


Fig. 1 Time line of films related to informal urbanism in Cairo 1991-2014

B. Films' Geographical Scanning

Through the identification of the presented places and neighborhoods in the reviewed films, a filmic map was outlined by placing each film's Affich in its place on Cairo map, Fig. 2 (a). Some films were placed in more than one site on the map, yet others were not mapped at all due to the lack of information about the shown places. It is interesting to

outline the cinematic geography of informalities through the map as:

- The cinematic locations of informalities were mainly centered in the heart of Cairo, while the actual informal urbanism is more spread in the outer skirt of the city, Fig. 2 (b).
- Urban informalities were more cinematically represented than rural informalities.

- Certain neighborhoods were intensively represented in films as informalities such as Al-Ebageiah, Manshiat Naser, Fustat, Embaba, Sayeda Zaynab, El- Kalaa, etc. yet, some of these neighborhoods are not classified as informal, instead they are considered deteriorated traditional areas or just poor areas. It seems that there is a kind of cinematic confusion between what is traditional and what is informal.
- Sometimes, as in “Heen Maysara” film, the place is undefined, as if it doesn’t matter or as if informal urbanism is everywhere. On the contrary, “Baad Almawkeaa” film stressed the place of Nazlet Alsemman and showed how this touristic based place forced its inhabitants to contribute to the counter revolution that is called ‘Camel Battle’.
- A cross section through the map, shows that cinematic representation of informalities clearly represents the varied nature of Cairo; the Mokatam Hill, the Nile River Vally, and the West Sahara, however the hill nature is more preferred cinematically as perfect places for crime, chase and hiding.
- The contiguity between formal and informal areas where cinematic representations usually stresses the edge between the two zones through aerial views or wide shots. In addition, the contiguity between informalities and city infrastructure: bridges, highways, high voltage electrical lines etc. were also outlined in the cinema.

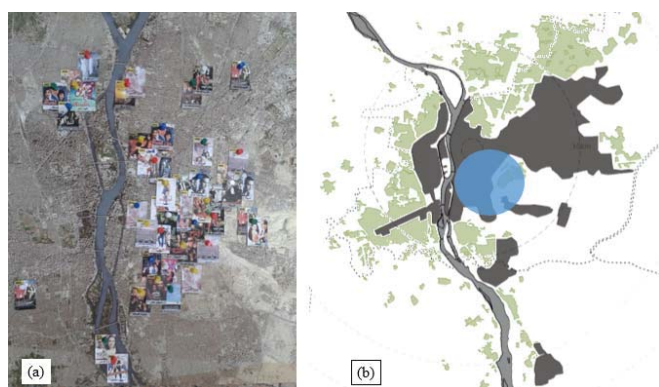


Fig. 2 (a) Films’ mapping (1994-2014) on Cairo’s google earth map. (b) represents the formal/ informal urbanisms of Cairo and the observed concentration of films locations, based on Cairo GIS map 2012

C. Portrayed Characters

Parallel to the processes of chronological and geographical scanning of the films, a scanning of the portrayed images of the residents of the informalities was essential for the understanding of the represented image. The scanning aimed at tracing the repeated characters in the films in a process of stereotyping the characteristics of the informalities residents in an abstract form. Through the 50 selected films, falling under the theme of informalities cinema and used in both the timeline and geographical scanning, a numerical presence was the main guide to identify the stereotypes. Although the film

genre whether comic, tragic or political affected the perspective through which these characters were framed, the attempt to include the ones obtaining the same features and characteristics throughout the different genres has been done, in terms of profession, character and actions. Nine repeated characters have been traced, Fig. 3, however the most prominent in terms of percentage, were the five characters of the young lady involved in adultery, the gangster, the corrupt policeman, the oppressed mother and the rich opportunist respectively [17]. Each character had a certain portrayed image that could be defined as follows:

The young lady involved in adultery or prostitution is the most prominent in the informalities movies appearing 50 times in 29 films out of the 50 selected movies. The portrayed image presents the girl as a vulnerable member of the society, with her body as her most important feature or asset. She is always seeking a stable life through marriage, in the deprived circumstances of poverty, to find her man and make her dream come true. Most of the movies present her falling into the path of adultery or prostitution, i.e. “disgrace and shame” due to societal oppression. The temptations presented are basically, her love with a shorthanded beloved, her acceptance to be a mistress for a rich guy, or working in prostitution to provide money for herself and her family. However, the outline of this character is living a double life, struggle and fear.

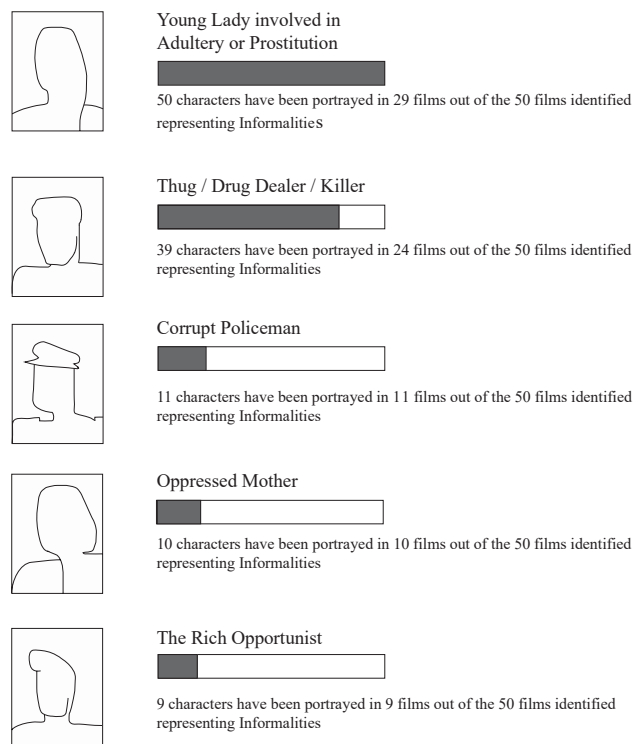


Fig. 3 Repeated characters through the examined films

The Gangster or the thug is the protagonist in almost half of the films presenting the informalities. He is usually involved in violent actions of killing, drug dealing, theft and adultery. Most of the movies try to give reasonable grounds or justifications for the amount of violence and blood involved in

a thug life. He is usually presented as a victim of the deprivation and social injustice, especially with reference to his oppressed childhood, and his extremely inappropriate, unethical or immoral actions is underlined with a layer of acceptance and understanding.

The Corrupt Policeman is usually portrayed with a negative perspective. He usually lacks integration, honor and is corrupt and unfair in forcing the law. The policeman sometimes represents the concept of unequalled authority and is a symbol of the state as a whole that undermines the poor and disregards their needs. He is a person who makes use of his authority and is usually a source of fear and terror rather than safety and respect for these vulnerable or illegal communities.

The Oppressed Mother usually, a single mother with a strong personality usually carries the burdens of the whole family. The mother is usually portrayed, as a selfless exhausted person striving to fulfill her family needs. She usually presents an ethical figure that tries to raise her children on manners and morals, within the sinful and dangerous

environment of the informalities presented. In a number of films, she is presented in conflict with her son or daughter that choose to fall in the routes of gangsters, crime or adultery. The mother figure is usually portrayed as an oppressed figure by the society and the state that does not support and deprive her from her basic rights.

The Opportunist Rich man/woman is usually presented in the informalities movies with a sense of exaggeration. He/she portrays the complete contrasting image of the informality resident, with supreme power and unlimited resources. The rich are mostly presented as a source of temptation to the shorthanded and good intentioned ordinary man/woman living in the informalities to follow the “wrong path”. The rich are also seen as the shadowed master makers of corruption in the society, managing the businesses of drug dealing, crime and adultery. They make use of the informalities residents to their interest and rarely presented as supporters of such deprived communities.

TABLE I
DETAILED ANSWERS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

		Perceived/ mental image	
		Inhabitants [Saft Al-laban]	Professionals [Architects & planner]
Overall mage in relation o films' genre	Comedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exaggerated Represent us as unwitnessed people. This draw a smile on our faces, yet makes people laugh on us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55% think slum films present a distorted and unrealistic image of people and places in informalities. 25% don't think so. 20% N/A
	Tragic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dirty, harlotry, violence, shit Unacceptable in our religion Kids imitate violence Exaggerated for commercial purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% think the presented image of informalities is a stereotype 20% don't think so. 10% N/A
	Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give true image of how government treat people Reveals corruption of police and other institutions 	
Detailed image	Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films shows only dirty places of informalities, yet many Cairenes areas, not only slums, look the same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal areas are parallel worlds to the formal structure of the city, while they are efficient and independent, films show only their ugly and scary face. Not all informal areas are deteriorated, yet most films focus on the dramatic image of unhuman spaces and miserable life. Films do not represent the varied nature of informal urbanism and create an abstracted bad image of these areas.
	People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films focus only on bad guys. In our area both good and bad people are there, yet bad ones are minority Women in films either maids or prostitutes. In our area they are normal, hardworking, good mothers. Very few of them are bad Films are grounded in reality but with a lot of exaggeration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhabitants of informalities are from the low and middle class, yet films show only the very low class and focus on the deviant characters of gangsters, dealers and prostitutes making them the protagonists of the film
	Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films present a true image; inhabitants have an independent authority by elder people or gangsters As in films, police always comes late or never comes. Usually, inhabitants have to pay for them to do their job. As in films, weak people are oppressed by powerful ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By definition, informal areas are places that are created out of the law, so parallel authority system is adopted that, in many cases, rely on old men, big families and powerful people. Films abstract this system through representing gangsters as the leading authority
Social Conflicts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films raises our aspirations towards rich people's life. Films causes us frustration as they emphasize the miserable image of our life Films create fears from our areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% think slum films deepen social gaps and create fear from lower classes. 10% don't think so.
	Political Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government encourages or at least accepts this genre to show that poor areas are a burden and they are the reason for its failure. They show poor areas as the land of terrorism and crime, so police violence against us is accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% think slum films serve the political agenda of the government. 25% don't think so. 25% N/A Films usually send a message that informality is a hopeless case

III. PERCEIVING THE PHENOMENON

Films not only portray physical images of the built environment but also, evokes mental images, emotions and reactions. In the act of experiencing art works, Pallasmaa asserts that “image shifts from the physical and material existence into a mental and imaginary reality”, he adds that the

two existences do not cancel out or exclude each other as they maintain a dynamic and dialectic relationship [18]. To understand this dialectic relation, the spectators' perceived image has been explored through a designed questionnaire that targeted both professionals and inhabitants of informalities. Professionals sample was fifty; they were architects and

researchers who worked on informal urbanism and aware of its physical and nonphysical qualities. The inhabitants sample was twenty and most of them were from Saft Al-laban neighborhood, near Cairo University Campus. It comprises an old area and a new one, yet the whole neighborhood is relatively in a good condition compared to other informal areas. These counted samples are the ones who have watched most of the selected films in our research.

The aim of the questionnaire is to understand how films would manipulate people's mental image of their built environment, and how this image would differ between the two-targeted groups. Through the questionnaire, four main types of images were examined that have been observed earlier; the overall image, the detailed image of places, people and power, the image of social conflicts and finally, the political image.

The detailed answers of the questionnaire are outlined in Table I, taking into account that professionals questionnaire was more statistical, while inhabitants one was more descriptive and was done through direct interviews, as most of samples were poorly educated. Following are the general results of the dual questionnaire:

- The perceived images of informalities by professionals and inhabitants were almost the same. While inhabitants were able to draw a more elaborate image that outlines some details and features, professionals were more able to justify the gap between the portrayed image and the real one.
- Both professionals and inhabitants considered the portrayed image of informalities as unreal, exaggerated and abstracted. Their mental image of informalities included a lot of positive aspects, yet, they admitted that films were grounded on reality and for dramatic purposes; films' directors usually focus more on deviated figures.
- Films' genre highly influenced the perceived image. Both comedy and political films were positively perceived, while tragic films of violence and prostitution images were not accepted at all.
- The portrayed images of places and people were considered prejudiced as they focused mainly on the bad side.
- The perceived image would promote social classes' conflicts as it creates aspirations towards social upgrade in addition to feelings of frustrations and fears.
- The perceived image of informalities as hopeless cases, burden on the state, and places for terrorism and political unrest which justifies police violence against its inhabitants.

IV. REFLECTIONS

The term representation, as reviewed earlier, suggests the revelation of an obscured object by different methods that varies from direct embodiment to abstraction and typifying. The examined representation type of informalities was considered an abstracted one that reduced the original qualities of informalities and divested it from its unique properties or qualities on the way to becoming a general statement of

typicality. This reduction into few essential, fixed in nature, simplified characteristics and repeated images created a stereotype of informalities as places of ugliness, crime and poverty, Fig. 4. Reflecting on that, two questions emerge; why these stereotypes were repeated and reproduced that way? And how they influenced the popular mind? Approaching these questions, the production consumption mechanisms of films in addition to the official vision of the State to informalities were considered influential factors. Concerning films production mechanisms, it has been noticed to follow certain repeated routines. Many work crew have been repeated, for example: Khaled Youssef, Dawood Abdel Sayed, and Wael Ehsan as directors, Belal Fadl, Naser Abdelrahman, and Ahmed Abd-Allah as writers, and Elsobki, Albatrous and Misr Company as producers. In addition, specific locations were preferred for filming, as al-Duweiqqa, al-Ebageiah, Mansheiat Naser, etc. These repeated production mechanisms by default maintained a level of similarity and repetition in the portrayed images, which in turn stressed the generated stereotype. On the other hand, the State official declarations regarding informalities stressed only its negative qualities, describing them as "back worded areas, places for poverty, misery and deprivation, incubations for all social ills, crimes, alienation and inadaptability." [19]. This negative image was disseminated through the media giving credibility to the filmic stereotype of informal areas.

It is worth mentioning that repeated schemata or stereotypes are not only based on the routine of cyclical production but also are repeated because they function so well. Schweinitz view point that "stereotypes are evidently (reciprocally) coordinated with the dispositions, expectations and desires of a wide audience" [20] is highly appreciated.

This seems with relevance to our case, as it has been noticed that most of the examined films hit the Box-Office and achieved high levels of watching during feasts season. As films entertainment became "manufactural goods", the high profits encourage producers for more production following the same recipe that repeat the same stereotype.

Being transported into an "era of repetition" [21], stereotypes drives its strength through repetitions as they simultaneously become cultural signs and ways of producing and exchanging meanings [22]. Stereotypes, as Schweinitz indicated, "are powerful because they are based on a well-functioning structures coordinated with recipient disposition, with previous experiences, wishes, and expectations, and these structures themselves have shaped viewer dispositions on a mass scale." [20]. In line with that, it has been noticed that people dispositions are somehow shaped by films, as a considerable sample of the questionnaire who has never visited informal areas, believed that the portrayed image of informalities is true and that these places are really dangerous. This confirms the power of image on popular minds that harmonize with Gustave Le Bon's view point that "Crowds being only capable of thinking in images are only to be impressed by images. It is only images that terrify or attract them and become motives of action" [23]. Facts and reality are not what influence the crowd, the image has an upper hand in

shaping dispositions and attitudes. But because one can see reality only through representation, it does not follow that one does not see reality at all. "Representation is in tension with the reality" [13].

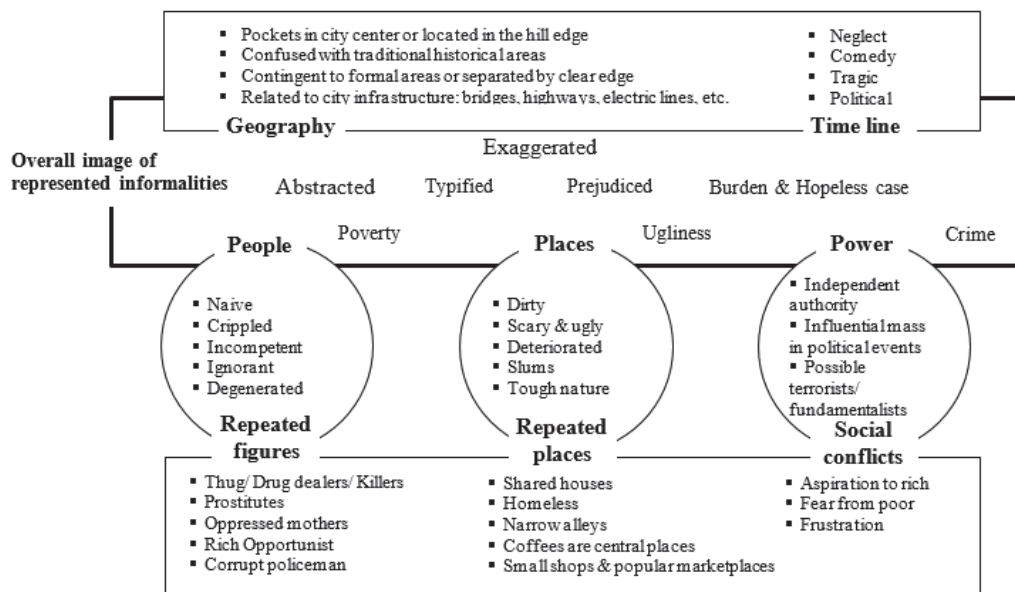


Fig. 4 The perceived/ mental image of informalities

Finally, whatever the represented image is, it is not directly reality as "behind every image revealed, there is another image more faithful to reality, and in back of that image there is another, and yet another behind the last one, and so on, up to the true image of the absolute mysterious reality that no-one will ever see."¹ [24].

REFERENCES:

- [1] ABT Associates Inc., Dames and Moore Inc., & General Organization for Housing, Building, and Planning Research, "Informal housing in Egypt", Report submitted to US Agency for International Development (US-AID), Cairo, 1982.
- [2] S. Cook, "The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square." Oxford University Press, 2011.
- [3] K. Ibrahim, "Post-Revolutionary Urban Egypt: A New Mode of Practice?" *Egypte: Monde Arabe*, 3 (11), 2014. Retrieved January 22, 2016, from <http://ema.revues.org/3330>
- [4] W. Judson Dorman, "The politics of neglect: The Egyptian State in Cairo, 1974-1998". Unpublished PhD thesis. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2007.
- [5] D. Sims, "Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City out of Control," Cairo: The American University Press, 2011.
- [6] UN-HABITAT, *The Challenge of Slums - Global Report on Human Settlements*, UN-Habitat, 2003
- [7] M. El-Telmesany, Translated by, R. Fathy, "The Alley in Egyptian Cinema 1939-2001," Cairo: The National Center for Translation, 2014.
- [8] R. Williams, "Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society," New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- [9] R. D. Dripps, "The First House: Myth, Paradigm, and the Task of Architecture," Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.
- [10] B. Nicholas, "Introduction to Documentary," Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- [11] V. Shafik, "Popular Egyptian Cinema; Gender, Class and Nation," Cairo: The American University Press, 2006.
- [12] R. Rushton, "The Reality of Film, Theories of Filmic Reality," Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011.
- [13] R. Dyer, "The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation," London: Routledge, 1993.
- [14] M. Kasem, "The Political Film in Egypt," Cairo: Egyptian General Book Authority, 2012.
- [15] F. Karawia, "Building Chaos: Slums' Cinema between Class Mind and System Mind," Cairo: Madbuli, 2011.
- [16] M. Abdel-Shakour, "Cinomania: The Passion of Films and Different Reading Vision," Cairo: Dar Alsrouk, 2016.
- [17] N. Ragheb, "Typical Elements in the Egyptian Cinema," Cairo: The National Center for Cinema, 2001.
- [18] J. Pallasmaa, "The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture," New Jersey: John Wiley & Son, 2011.
- [19] The National Council for Social Services and Development Report, 1997-1998, unpublished report.
- [20] J. Schweinitz, "Film and Stereotype: A Challenge for Cinema and Theory," (Film and Culture Series), New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- [21] U. Eco, "The Limits of Interpretation," Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- [22] S. Hall, "Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices," Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1997.
- [23] G. Le Bon, "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind," 15th ed. Chicago: T. Fisher Unwin, 1926.
- [24] J. Pallasmaa, "The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema," Helsinki: Rakennustieto, 2008.

¹ Michelangelo Antonioni, the architect of cinematic images, expresses the complexity and enigma of artistic imagery through the protagonist of his last film "Beyond the clouds" 1994. In Pallasmaa 2008 [24].