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AN ANALYSIS OF A MIDDLE EASTERN ENCLAVE:
LITTLE EGYPT

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Architecture
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ABSTRACT

This study explores a Middle Eastern enclave of New York City, known as Little Egypt. It examines the ethnic characteristics and social behaviors found within this Arab enclave. Components of the research include physical characteristics of the place, such as Arabic signage, hookah displays found in storefronts, and culturally inspired street events. Additionally, the study explores the implications and use of culture to define an enclave. I examined cultural events that are either politically, socially, or religiously relevant as ways in which the member of the enclave used them to create a territory of their own. I also assessed aspects through theories developed by urban theorists and economists, such as Jane Jacobs’s concept of the effectiveness of small fragmented businesses, Michael Porter’s definition of clusters and Alejandro Portes’s enclave economic theory. These theoretical models are the backdrop of the study and are tested in Little Egypt as a way to analyze the vitality of the enclave.
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Growing up in a non-native country as a child was initially a struggle. Barriers such as language and difference of culture delayed my engagement with American society. Fortunately, through the dominant Egyptian presence in New York City, my family was able to find an existing network and migrate to the specific location of Astoria, Queens. Living in a neighborhood with

Figure 1: Little Egypt. Source: Author
immigrants from a similar background eased the transition from Egypt to the United States. As more Middle Eastern groups moved into our community, grocery stores and restaurants that served the locals emerged. Over the years, as we continued to live in Astoria, I was able to personally witness the area’s transformation. This is especially true of a portion of Steinway Street (between 28th Avenue and Astoria Boulevard) in Astoria, which sprouted into its own identity and gradually became an enclave. This small region came to be known as Little Egypt, which is somewhat misleading, as it represents several Middle Eastern countries and not exclusively Egypt. It also became a place that I eventually called home.

New York City is made up of five boroughs; Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Largest of the five is Queens, it is a diverse borough that encompasses immigrants from many different nations (as seen in figure 2). The Dutch and English were the first settlers in 1635 in Maspeth and Flushing in the 1640s (Roleke, 2012). Subsequently, Newton (1642), Far Rockaway (1644), Flushing (1645) and Jamaica (1656) were formed as later establishments (Chauhan et al., 2013). In 1683, Queens County became one of twelve counties of the providence of New York under the English rule (Chauhan et al., 2013 & Roleke, 2012). It wasn’t until 1898 that Queens became a borough of New York City (Roleke, 2012). It was in the 1800s that the borough attracted German settlers when it became more commercial oriented (Bortot, 2010). After the Germans, Irish and Italian, the Arab immigrants started populating the borough.
Immigrants have created ethnic clusters\(^1\) throughout the outer borough of Queens. From the Southeast Asians in Jackson Heights, to the Chinese in Flushing, to the Arabs and Greeks in Astoria, these ethnic clusters are representative of the multicultural aspect of Queens. The neighborhood of Astoria is a microcosm of several cultural inheritances. Earlier populations of Italian and Greek immigrants have shifted over the past few decades to include a wave of Brazilians, Bangladeshis, Eastern Europeans, Colombians, and Egyptians (Anonymous, 2013). Walking through Steinway Street and 30\(^{th}\) Avenue, which intersect, it is as if one is walking through the streets of Greece or Egypt. The languages heard and interactions seen on the sidewalk are reminiscent of sights in foreign countries.

\(^1\) “.... a special relationship between a distinctive group of people and a particular place. Thus an enclave has some characteristics of a subculture, in which a group of people share common traditions and values that are ordinarily maintained by a high rate of interaction within the group” (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 3).
Through my personal experience, I became interested in the phenomenon of enclave forming, and I looked to further this curiosity by focusing this research paper on Little Egypt. This paper is an analysis of the Middle Eastern enclave and has two focused purposes. The first purpose is the primary focus of this study. It is to indicate traces of identity in an ethnic enclave.
Specifically, the intent is to identify the visible cultural traits pertaining to a Middle Eastern ethnicity that form an enclave. The second purpose of this study is and underlying examination of how theories developed by Micheal Porter, Jane Jacobs, and Alejandro Portes can add to our understanding of elements that add to the success of neighborhoods. It is important to note that this study does not look at typical immigrant issues, yet offers a nuanced perspective of such topics.

My research paper is set out to explore the following claim: ethnic groups use culture to create a personalized environment. It aspires to address the following question: How does the ethnic group use culture through physical elements and social events to create an enclave?

Understanding the importance of ethnic enclaves and their cultural effects is essential to any city. The existence of cultural pockets throughout the city can ultimately have an impact on the city’s urban fabric. Additionally, types of ethnic neighborhoods, which are typical of New York City, and how they generate profit has tremendous benefits. The success of small-scale neighborhoods can lead to urban and regional development on a larger scale. The success of neighborhoods is seen in both spatial and economic features found in ethnic enclaves. Furthermore, the concentration of people and small businesses provides endless opportunities for individuals and start-up businesses because they have an existing pool of potential consumers and opportunities for partnership.

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2 “The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group” - (dictionary.com)
3 Social occurrences are defined as the activities that take place within the ethnic group. These occurrences are spontaneous and planned meetings that fall into religious, political, and leisure categories.
4 A personalized space that the ethnic group has embedded with physical traits.
In this thesis, I explore Jane Jacobs’s urban theories as they pertain to commercial economies, specifically small economies as are relevant to ethnic enclaves. Jacobs (1969) believed that cities grow gradually through little, fragmented, and diversified economies. I also examine an idea established by Michel Porter (1998) in support of ethnic enclaves, which states that clusters have a competitive yet successful nature.

A case study by James Goodno (2005) on an ethnic Latin community addresses the potential of urban planners and architects to learn from the “creative reuse” of the group (p. 1). The study hints at the informal impact of the physical setting that the immigrants have retrofitted. It additionally gives examples of cases in which entrepreneurs and investors have consciously developed ethnically oriented commercial centers. Therefore, there is a potential for specialists from the fields of architecture, urban planning, economics, and geography to adapt schemes that will help urban vitality. However, this study specifically calls onto city planners to address possible areas of development within ethnic enclaves.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories and prominent figures in the disciplines of community planning, urban planning, sociology, economics, and geography have dealt with the context of ethnic communities and will form the supporting structure of the study. Ethnic communities can be understood through three theoretical categories: urban economics, clusters and agglomeration, and the enclave economic theory. These categories were grouped based on the analysis of theories presented by interdisciplinary ideas that provide anchorage for the existence of successful ethnic communities.
Urban Economics

[Defining Urban Economics]

Urban economics “emphasizes the spatial dimensions of urban activity” (Hirsch, 1973, p. 5). It highlights the existing spatial characteristics that allow urban activity to occur. Moreover, the framework of spatial economics can be associated with “the allocation of resources over space and the location of economic activity” (Duranton, 2008, p. 1). McCann (2001) points to the critical decision of the location of a firm and the affect this has on its economic performance. He evaluates a firm’s placement in an isolated region compared to placement in a concentrated region and concludes that firms in each location perform differently. This factor results in cities of different sizes and economic structures. In reference to ethnic communities, we can see their case existing in a concentrated region. This, according to urban economists, provides distinct and dominant economies.

Jane Jacobs’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, in which Jacobs speaks of what makes a neighborhood vital, is a leading reference on urban issues. Weicher (1973) points out that “Jacobs describes her theory of successful neighborhoods as an economic theory….the factors which she identifies as generating success are both spatial and economic” (p. 29). Jacobs (1961) measures success in diversity, writing, “Big cities are natural generators of diversity…big cities are the natural economic homes of immense numbers and ranges of small enterprises” (p. 145). We can consider this an economic theory suited to ethnic enclaves, specifically those existing in large metropolitan cities. Small businesses thrive in large areas because of the support of the diverse population present. Further pointed out by Jacobs (1961), “Cities…are the natural homes of supermarkets and standard movie houses plus delicatessens, Viennese bakeries, foreign
groceries, art movies…the standard with the strange, the large with the small” (p. 147). This idea supports the importance of small businesses that are often found within ethnic enclaves. Such businesses not only aid their community but give back to the overall vitality of the city.

Hirsch (1973) writes, “Concentration of people and economic activities, a characteristic of cities, is the direct result of the advantages of close contact-often referred to as ‘economies of agglomeration’” (p. 3). In this way of thinking, there is an emphasis on proximity and the economic actors that take part in a confined location. If we were to look at this concept more closely, we would see it also existing on a finer scale. Ethnic communities are generally small-scaled, tight-knit communities, in which there is a concentration of locals who work to promote a vigorous economy. In urban economics, such a concentration is more focused on the condensed spatial aspects that form an economy. Ultimately, this study hopes to identify the extent to which the spatial dimensions and scale of the clustering of ethnic commercial spaces play a role in the overall prospect of the enclave. The physical structure of the ethnic neighborhood is explored to define the economic actions that occur as a result of the spatial makeup.

[Jacobs on Urban Economics]

In Jacobs's *The Economy of Cities* (1969), an emphasis is placed on the importance of cities as growth engines. In this book, she argues that goods and innovations are generated in cities due to the large population of diverse people. Furthermore, she describes this phenomenon in the process of diversified economic organizations, which leads to “economically creative breakaway” as a factor of economic growth (p. 67). Jacobs supports the idea of “fragmented and inefficient little industries,” where she refers to small businesses building off of other businesses
(p. 85-87). She believed that small, inefficient businesses were capable of yielding more jobs in comparison to the domination of one industry. In the context of clustering, Jacobs also argued that agglomeration of firms in different industries in a city or region was the main aspect encouraging the development of cities (p. 87-89). She felt the strength in settlements, primarily because they relied on their own local economies, which were consistent and added to the greater economy. We see a pattern in Jacobs’s thinking on the importance of the small within the large, as discussed earlier in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Clusters and Agglomerations

[Defining Clusters]

The contemporary use of the word “cluster” was popularized by Michael Porter, a leading authority on business clusters (Porter, 1990). Clusters are, “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions in particular fields that compete but also cooperate,” (Porter, 1998, p. 197). In specific reference to ethnic enclaves and in a more recent source, Porter (2008) further defines a cluster as, “a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities” (p. 215). The linkage of “commonalities and complementarities” can be the common culture that ties an ethnic enclave together. This refined definition by Porter was strictly responding to his observations towards ethnic communities.

Scholars such as Roelandt and den Hertog define clusters in a similar manner as Porter by emphasizing the idea of networking. They characterize clusters as “networks of production of
strongly interdependent firms…linked to each other in a value-adding production chain”
(Roelandt and den Hertog, 1999, p. 9). Porter, Roelandt, and Den Hertog agree upon the
dependence of companies on one another. We see scholars such as Swann and Rosenfeld address
the concept of proximity. Without close contact, the firms are less likely to be working within an
interconnected network. In Swann’s (1998) analysis of dynamic industrial clusters, he defines
clusters as, “a large group of firms in related industries at a particular location,” (p. 1). Rosenfeld
(1997, p. 3) interprets clusters as related businesses that are geographically bound and become
increasingly interdependent.

Dependence and closeness are evident in clusters as described above. However, what makes an
ethnic community an ethnic cluster is its social interactions and relations. Feser (1998, p. 10)
states that, “economic clusters are not just related and supporting industries, but rather related
and supporting institutions that are more competitive by virtue of their relationships.” A similar
and current definition raises the point of clusters extending beyond merely geographical
proximities and highlights the, “relationships, personal interactions, frequent communication,
and a sense of a common identity that can arise out of a cluster’s divers network,” which are all
key elements that foster the cluster dynamic (Danish Shipowner’s Association, 2010, p. 9).

Kuah (2002) has organized and analyzed the countless explanations and theories encompassing
clusters into two main categories: common groups and geographical proximity. The first are the
groups associated with businesses through their commonalities in ethnic background, products,
services, and inputs-outputs activities. Secondly, clusters are groups linked through businesses
that are physically immediate. These groups are able to promote the value of products and
benefits through their interaction. Thus, Kuah justified the significance of clusters in their geographical agglomeration of competing similar industries and the presence of improved performance. In other words, there is a great value in the coexistence of groups with both a linkage and physical proximity in prospering clusters.

[Advantage of Clustering]

The notion of clustering has its benefits. According to Rosenfeld (1997, p. 3), “firms find it advantageous to be close to their suppliers, customers, services and competitors.” Rosenfeld (1997, p. 3) further expanded on the efficiency of close proximity in being able to inexpensively manage and handle business-related issues locally. The business owners are able to adapt and learn new innovative practices from one another. Burt (1987, p. 1288) offered a theory on social contagion, in which “contact, communication, and competition” enhanced the contagious behavior of competitors. In this theory, financial incentives are offered through the act of spatial gathering. As noted by the economist Alfred Marshal (1920), the major benefit of the concentration of agglomerations is that of productive efficiencies. More notably, companies see the advantage of drawing in crowds, which power economic growth (Florida, 2003, p. 5). One can compare this occurrence to ethnic neighborhoods, as they contain similar cases of concentrations. Clustering is seen not only in their concentration of businesses but also in the concentration of people from similar backgrounds.
I will briefly address the counterargument of isolation (placing a business remotely and away from similar business opponents), which Kuah (2002, pp. 207-208) argues has an upper hand compared to clustering. With the advent of technology and the surge of global multinational companies, the irrelevance of space and placement is promoted as an idea (Kuah, 2002, p. 207). However, Porter expanded on this notion of space and placement by presenting the idea of competitive advantage: He states that the, “… role of locations has been long overlooked, despite striking evidence that innovation and competitive success in so many fields are geographically concentrated,” (Porter 1998, P. 78). Porter has observed that the strongest competitive advantages are likely to emerge from clusters that are geographically localized. From this viewpoint, one can conclude that firms outside of the clusters (known as remotes) do not have the means of accessing the common cluster knowledge nor the ability to directly observe their rivals (Porter, 1998, p.78).

[Models of Clusters]
Models and concentrations of similar firms that bond together in a specific place are seen in many instances and are not necessarily confined to ethnic neighborhoods. Florida (2003, p. 4) notes, “An increasingly influential view suggests that place remains important as a locus of economic activity because of the tendency of corporations to assemble together.” As observed by Swann (1998, p. 1), “clusters are found in a wide variety of traditional industries.” Agglomerations of this sort can be seen in the following examples, ranging from regional to urban scales.

- California Wine—California
- Silicon Valley—California
• Garment District—New York, NY

(Anonymous, “Examples of Business Clusters and Technology Centers July 5, 2012”)
Figure 3:  
Image Source:  
“Map of Silicon Valley”: http://www.hot-map.com/silicon-valley  
As seen in Figure 3, the three clusters convey three different scales. California wine expands over several counties throughout the state, covering over 700 square miles (MacNeil, 2001); Silicon Valley, the technology-oriented cluster, expands over a smaller area within California; the Garment District in New York represents a more confined coverage, roughly from 5th Avenue to 9th Avenue and from 34th Street to 42nd Street. The clusters are similar in their linkage of common business fields, yet they are different in terms of actual size. Putting the definition of clusters into perspective, it is apparent from these models that geographically proximate networks are essential to a cluster. As recognized in the examples, such a network can occur at multiple scales.

According to MacNeil (2001, p. 623), “The United States is one of the most dynamic wine producing countr[ies]”, and the California Wine cluster is the leader in this production. From 1965 to 1995, the number of wineries in California quadrupled (MacNeil, 2001, p. 623). The continuously growing wine regions of California include: Napa Valley, Sonoma Valley, Marin County, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo / Paso Robles Santa Barbara, Mendocino, Sierra Foothills, Solano County, Central, Lodi, and Woodbridge (California…, n.d.). It is estimated that “more than 90 percent of all the wine produced in the United States is from California,” (MacNeil, 2001, p. 629). California Wine depicts a regional scaled cluster, as the vineyards extend over hundreds of acres throughout California (Figure 4).
A popular example often examined while discussing cluster theory is Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is located in Northern California and represents the concept of clustering on a smaller regional scale than California Wine. Silicon Valley provides an alternative view of an enclave. Although its boundaries are not clearly defined, the region contains many cities and colleges. The cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, Stanford, Los Altos, and Sunnyvale (San Jose California – Silicon Valley, 2013) are all contained within its borders. Colleges and universities within the borders include California State University, the University of California, San Jose University, San Diego State University, and San Francisco State University. The region also encompasses an extensive number of international technology corporations. Companies such as

Figure 4: Where the Vineyard Are – Image
Source: (MacNeil, The Wine Bible, 2001, p. 628)
Facebook, Adobe Systems, Google, Logitech, Yahoo, Intel, EBay, YouTube, and many more have located their main headquarters within this technology-driven area. Interestingly, many startup companies also locate their offices in Silicon Valley. This high-tech center provides many opportunities for employment and is seen as a strong economic sector, not only in California, but in all of the United States. According to the American Electronics Association, Silicon Valley has the highest average high-tech salary and the greatest density of high-tech workers.
Figure 5: Map of Silicon Valley
Source: http://www.hot-map.com/silicon-valley
Silicon Valley's clustering of computer-related companies into one region creates a form of agglomeration economies. The successful nature of several companies that emerged in Silicon Valley has led startup companies to locate within the proximity in an effort to gain available opportunities. For these startups, having immediate contact with companies of a similar nature is beneficial. This goes back to the concept of competitive advantage: startups in close proximity to successful companies are able to mimic what other companies are doing well. In Saxeian's study of Silicon Valley, she has argued that this system has done well due to, “regional agglomerations where repeated interactions builds shared identities and mutual trust while at the same time intensifying competitive rivalries,” (Saxenian, 1996, p. 4). Through their informal communication, companies are able to collaborate and learn from one another, which is made possible by their co-location, while simultaneously still being competitive with each other. Additionally, specialists in search for jobs are attracted to the cluster, as they are able to job-hop and share resources across many companies rather than just one firm (Saxenian, 1996). Concurrently, the existence of two universities on the West Coast (University of California Berkeley and Stanford) provides the educational background and expertise of engineers needed for the companies.

Silicon Valley's example substantiates the two main elements of a cluster: place and a common ground that binds a group. In Silicon Valley, we also witness the presence of Porter's competitive advantage concept. The companies are geographically clusters, although in a broader scale; however, the firms are also closely linked via their technology aspect. The adjacency creates convenience in observing their competitors and allows them to stay up to par.
The third and smallest example of scales of cluster is the Garment district. It is a cluster that contains fashion-related retail stores over an area of less than one square mile. The New York City Department of City Planning passed a zoning law in 1978 that protected the leases for the tenants that ran the businesses (Our Story, 2013). It is striking to see, to this day, the presence of the numerous fabric stores, wholesale evening-wear stores, stores solely for ties, and stores strictly for threads. Although the district is being threatened and has declined over the years due to outsourcing, it still accounts for 1.1 million square feet of manufacturing space today (Our Story, 2013). Additionally, the district still holds a symbolic importance for New York as the “capital of the fashion world”.

Figure 6: Garment District
Source: http://www.citi-habitats.com/nyc-guides/garment-district.html
Ethnic Enclaves and the Enclave Economic Theory

[Enclave Economic Theory Defined]

The discussion of ethnic enterprise has been examined by Alejandro Portes, in which he establishes ethnic enterprise as an ethnic economy that provides economic advantages to its members. Ethnic economy is elaborated in a study as, “distinctive constellations of business ownership and/or employment of group members in certain economic sections,” (Logan, Alba, & McNulty, 1994, p. 691). The researchers furthered this perception, “as any situation where common ethnicity provides an economic advantage: in relations among owners in the same or complementary business sections, between owners and workers,” (Logan, Alba, & McNulty, 1994, p. 693). As a sociologist, Portes and his colleagues have developed theories that speak to the notion of financial success that transpires within an enclosed neighborhood. One such theory shaped is the Enclave Economic Theory, which claims:

“…the spatial concentration of an ethnic group permits it to create its own business enterprises, thus speeding the economic progress of the group. It stresses that ethnic and racial minorities can make more rapid initial economic progress when they create an enclave economy,” (Ethnic Enclave, n.d.).

This theory relates back to Silicon Valley’s example in that cluster’s ability to constantly progress in ideas and economic development through the physical proximity of the companies. This economic progression is seen in ethnic and non-ethnic enclaves. In regards to ethnic
communities, the clustering of a group with similar backgrounds creates demand for special products and services otherwise not found in the local country. The presence of commercial spaces that tailor to the needs of the locals promotes gains within the area. These small enterprises not only help the neighborhood thrive, they also offer employment opportunities for newcomers.

[Models of Ethnic Economy]

Several studies have found that ethnic solidarity plays a major role in ethnic enclaves. For example, the study, “Ethnic Enclaves and the Economic Success of Immigrants,” which addresses Eastern European, African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and South American immigrants in Sweden, finds that, “the enclave represents a network that increases opportunities for general trade in labor markets, e.g. by disseminating information on job opportunities,” (Edin, Fredriksson, and Aslund, 2003, p. 330). Similarly, Logan, Alba, and McNulty (1994, p. 693) discovered in their research that Cuban entrepreneurs in Miami provide jobs for co-ethnic members that require less command of the English language and, hence, the workers are protected from discrimination based on their ethnicity. In another example, a study on “Little Thailand of Hong Kong” states that the networks created allowed for marketing information to be accessed in regards to employment recruitment (Chan & Chan, 2011, p 12.4).

The importance of spatial concentration is another key component of an ethnic economy found within the studies. A study on “Ethnic Economies in Metropolitan Regions and Ethnic Enclave of Thai Restaurants” equally recognizes the importance of ethnic clustering, noting that, “emphasis on concentration in a single metropolitan area acknowledges the advantages of spatial
agglomerations effects” (Logan, Alba, and McNulty, 1994, p. 694). Additionally, Chan & Chan (2011, pl. 12.2) state that “enclave economy benefited from co-ethnic clustering in a location.” An additional finding of the studies is the immigrants’ tendencies to work in fields in which they excel; honing unique niches allows them to be competitive. Logan, Alba, and McNulty (1994, p. 694) demonstrate the idea of “sectoral specialization,” which “provides competitive advantage to enclave firms.” Cuban residents of Miami have found their niche in specific manufacturing sectors, such as furniture, as well as construction, supermarkets, and law firms (Logan, Alba, and McNulty, 1994, p. 694). In a narrower specialty, Thai immigrants in Hong Kong have found their specialty in the restaurant business (Chan & Chan, 2011, 12.2).
3. CASE STUDY INTRODUCTION

According to the Census Bureau’s 2010 Census, there are an estimated 1.9 million Arab Americans. The Arab American Institute Foundation estimates an adjusted population total of about 3.7 million and notes that the “undercount is due to the placement of and limit of the ancestry question,” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 & Arab American Institute Foundation, 2012). Roughly speaking, of the millions of Arabs present today, 37% are of Lebanese and Syrian roots (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 & AAI, 2012). Since 1990, a considerable amount of Arab immigrants came from Iraq, Egypt, and Somalia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 & AAI, 2012). Moreover, 94% of Arabs reside in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Detroit, New York, Chicago, and Washington D.C.
Residential Settlement of Persons Born in Arab Countries by Neighborhood
New York City, 2007–2011

Persons Born in an Arab Country = 47,375

- 2,500 or more (2 neighborhoods)
- 1,000 to 2,499 (4)
- Under 1,000 (170)

Figure 7: Residential Settlement of Persons Born in Arab Countries by Neighborhood.
Source 2: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey-Summary File
Population Division- New York City Department of City Planning
In the 1960s, under Gamal Abdel Nasser’s rule, Egyptians began moving to Queens (Dyer, 2011). The Egyptian population living in New York formed an enclave, located in Astoria, Queens, an area about fifteen minutes by subway from Manhattan. It is a diverse neighborhood with a diverse ethnic makeup of Italian, Greek, Spanish, Albanian, Asian, and Arab immigrants. The neighborhood of Little Egypt is an enclave that represents a diverse Middle Eastern population. It exemplifies the idea of immigrant clusters, which are formed through a common ground.

![Figure 8: Persons Born in Arab Countries by Borough](image)

Source 1: The Newest New Yorkers, 2013 edition, Chapter 3, p.91
Source 2: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census-5-Percent PUMS; 2011 American Community Survey-PUMS Population Division- New York City Department of City Planning
In the 1960s, under Gamal Abdel Nasser’s rule, Egyptians began moving to Queens (Dyer, 2011). The Egyptian population living in New York formed an enclave, Little Egypt, located in

According to the 2000 Census and 2011 American Community Survey-PUMS Population Division, there were an estimated 58,018 persons born in Arab countries throughout New York City (Newest New Yorkers, Chapter 3, p.91). Queens alone had the second highest with 13,456 persons in 2011 (figure 8). Specifically, the neighborhood of Steinway accounted for 1,799 persons and the neighborhood of Astoria for 1,638 persons (figure 9). The study states that, “about one-third of New York’s Arab immigrants were born in Egypt,” which is roughly the
largest Arab group (p.91). The second largest group in NYC are the Yemenis; with Moroccans, Lebanese and Syrians making up much of the rest.

The movement of Arabs into the area began to give the neighborhood its own identity. Starting in 1987, the enclave formed its first restaurant, the now famous Kabab Café, which is known to be the first Egyptian restaurant in the area. The area continued to develop independently, with commercial spaces such as restaurants, ethnic grocery stores, sweet shops, and hookah bars, and became a major commercial strip in Queens. This residential and commercial area has also acquired services catering to the Arab community, such as the offices of Arabic-speaking physicians and lawyers (Dyer, 2011). Furthermore, other services such as immigrant-advocacy groups and travel agencies cater to Middle Eastern immigrants. Home to numerous Middle Eastern restaurants, the neighborhood is not solely Egyptian, but also encompasses Moroccan, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Algerian people. According to Dyer (2011), “although there is a sizable Egyptian population in this neighborhood, the nickname is really a misnomer because immigrants from many other Middle Easter countries call area home”.

![Figure 10: Use of Sidewalk in Little Egypt -Source: Author](image-url)
Street events in Little Egypt usually occur unofficially. With the street acting as a public forum, current events that reflect back to the home country, such as soccer matches or political events, dictate the presence of street gatherings in Little Egypt. The street thus offers a means of joining in, as a study on enclaves showed that, “friendly, closely knit communities developed in immigrant neighborhoods, partly because communal life mostly took place on the street” (Erdentug and Colombijn, 2002, p. 1). As seen in the photograph taken during Ramadan of 2013 (Figure 10), the sidewalk is used for social interactions, and is displayed with traditional elements found on streets of Egypt. In this case a food cart, placed for decorative purposes, is reminiscent of mobile Egyptian street food.
Figure 11: Astoria Rezoning. Source: NYC Department of City Planning, 2010
According to an Astoria zoning study by the NYC Department of City Planning (2010, p.15), recommendations have been made to, “update commercial overlays to reinforce existing patterns of commercial uses and create new businesses location opportunities.” The rezoning proposal in figure 11, which was later approved on May 25, 2010, included Little Egypt’s sector of Steinway Street specifically to be rezoned into a C4-2A district. Initially an R5 district, the C4-2A is characterized by, “mixed-use development including local and regional retail, office uses, and residential uses,” (NYC Department of City Planning, 2010). With an FAR of 3.0 and a maximum height of 70’, the spaces may contain, “up to 2 floors of commercial uses with residential above,” (NYC Department of City Planning, 2010). As seen in the figure, Little Egypt’s portion of the neighborhood was changed to a C4-2A to continue the major corridor that already exists adjacent to the site. This change expands and opens up new possible business locations on the second floor of buildings, rather than just on the ground level. The rezoning was considered necessary because the area was continuously developing its commercial spaces, making the zoning outdated.
Steinway Street, which Little Egypt is situated on, is one component of several vibrant commercial strips in Astoria, Queens. 31st Street, Ditmars, Astoria Boulevard, 30th Avenue, and Broadway are all essential commercial strips in Astoria (NYC Department of City Planning, 2010). Because these strips often intersect, they work in an interconnected network. The continued success of these areas propelled commercial areas and called for an updated zoning scheme. As seen in Figure 12, Little Egypt is located within an already existing commercial district. The new zoning regulation was extended to accommodate Little Egypt’s growing business sector.
4. METHODOLOGY

Four methods have been used to address the question of how an ethnic group can use culture through physical elements and social events to form an enclave. Data was collected through a visual and spatial survey, activity diagrams, observations, and semi-structured interviews.
1. Neighborhood Survey

I started the data collection methods with a visual and spatial survey of the neighborhood. This included mapping the following:

- The national background of the business owners. The categories are non-Arab establishments, and Arab establishments of Egyptian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Palestinian owners.
- Establishment types. The categories are restaurants/cafes/pastries, delicatessens and groceries, other retail, and services (law offices, medical offices, immigration offices, travel agencies, barber shops) as well as religious institutions.
- Types of customers served in the Arab establishment. The categories are Arab, non-Arab, and both. This diagram excludes the non-Arab establishment.
- Group type served. This category is a subset of the previous. The categories are men, family, women, and youth.
- Signage language used. The categories are English only, and both Arabic and English.

This survey shows the existing conditions of the neighborhood. By having these separate categories diagramed, I am able to analyze how they have each played a role in shaping the enclave. It is easy to identify, for example, if Lebanese businesses cluster together. We can also see where the Arab businesses sprawl into neighboring areas, thus showing the physical boundaries of the enclave. Other categories, such as establishment types, represent the businesses that the group relies on and point out their placement within the neighborhood.
2. Activity Diagrams

This second method measured the ethnic group’s activities and events that occur on the street and sidewalk of the neighborhood. There are three main categories that were studied: political events, leisurely events, and religious events. The political event studied was that of the Egyptian uprising during 2011. The leisurely event diagrammed in this study is that of the FIFA world cup qualifications in 2008. Lastly, the religious event analyzed was of the weekly Friday prayer in front of the neighborhood’s local mosque. These specific events were chosen based on the impact that they had on the area. They drew attention not only from the locals but also media outlets.

I obtained recordings of the events through external sources, such as recordings done by observers or via online articles. This is mainly due to the timing of some the events, which took place prior to the start of my study. After the images of the events were gathered, I located the exact position of the events on the site plans produced in the previous step. Based on the areas of congregation, I highlighted the density of people in places they tend to occupy during the events.

This method was most useful in determining types of social occurrences that are unique to the Middle Eastern culture. For example, social events, such as spectators watching sports and religious practices, are an evident part of the traditions found in their home country and add to the formation of Little Egypt as an enclave. These observations lead to a better understanding of what forces direct people into the neighborhood. In addition, political assemblies where
participants congregate on sidewalks with use of native drums and music were noted. It allows us to see how the enclave functions in a manner that is specific to the user groups.

3. Observations

The purpose of this part of the research is to identify the physical elements and social relationships that form ethnic characteristics of the neighborhood. According to a study on immigrant enclaves in New York and Los Angeles, an ethnic character, “may be visible through observation of people in public places, the names of shops or the languages found on signs or spoken by clerks or patron, or by community institutions such as churches, social clubs, and associations,” (Logan, Alba and Zhang, 2002, p. 304). Using this definition, the observations sought out in this research looked for the particular items stated. A second point of interest in this method is the appeal stores or institutions may have to residents of the neighborhood, based on the characteristics mentioned above. I have taken photographs to record the fixed physical characteristics of the existing street.

More detailed physical features noted are signs describing a store’s products and ethnicity. By this, I am referring to the existing restaurant and cafe fronts, signage, decorative items, and any cultural feature that would not be seen on a non-Arab block. For instance, calligraphic, religious, and detail items such as Hookah displays were noted. Additionally, as I documented the visual aspects of the enclave and listened for auditory cues that are relevant to the study, for example, the different Arabic dialects within the area. Some spoken Arabic can easily identify a person from a specific country.
4. Semi-Structured Interviews

Finally, the last method used was conducting semi-structured interviews with business owners. 12 owners of grocery stores, cafes, and restaurants participated. This was an effort to gain insight into the locals, since the business owners have a unique perspective of the area; it is a viewpoint from within the enclave. The owners pointed out factors that affect their business and add to the increase or decrease of sales. These factors included religious holidays and major social events. The stores tended to display decorative items during religious holidays or advertise the viewing of a special event. Furthermore, the owners have observed changes of the neighborhood over the years. The interviews gave an insider’s look into the enclave.
5. DATA AND ANALYSIS

1. Neighborhood Survey

Figure 13: National Background. Source: Author
National Background

There were roughly 100 buildings surveyed along Steinway St. that extended beyond 28th Avenue and Astoria Boulevard. As illustrated in figure 13, the layers represent the different nationalities present in Little Egypt. The national background of the owners was used to diagram the countries that are found within the enclave. The following countries were found: Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Algeria. Additionally, there are non-Arab establishments along the street.

The diversity within the cluster itself presents an interesting aspect of Little Egypt that is unique to this neighborhood. What makes this enclave different from other enclaves is the number of different countries that are present within, which is seven as seen in the National Background diagram. Although the immigrant group is unified as a whole within the enclave, there are subsets within the cluster. The Egyptian population in Little Egypt is the most prominent with about 28 commercial spaces. The Lebanese population is the second largest group that marks its presence with an estimated 11 establishments, followed by the Moroccan businesses with 10, Algerian 4, Palestinian 4, and Tunisian 1. Along Steinway Street, between 28th Avenue and Astoria Boulevard there are about 35 non-Arab establishments. As seen in figure 13, the commercial spaces beyond 28th Ave and Astoria Boulevard gradually change to mainly non-Arab with some Middle-Eastern businesses. The enclave doesn’t abruptly end, but continues over to the adjacent blocks.

The non-Arab businesses found within the enclave provide important services to the locals. The businesses noted were: Citibank, Chase Bank, Dunkin’ Donuts, Western Union office, Domino’s
Pizza, a medical clinic, a laundromat, a dental office, a State Farm Insurance office, a dry cleaners and an immigration service office. These business are an integral part of this enclave; making it a neighborhood with a more complete range of services. Residents of Little Egypt have their ethnic restaurants, cafes and delis yet still need these vital commercial spaces. More importantly, the non-Arab establishments provide employment to the residents of the enclave. For example, the Chase bank manager is Middle Eastern. A number of the personal bankers and tellers at this local Chase are also Middle Eastern. The medical clinic has at least one worker of Arab decent. Additionally, the Western Union store has an Arabic clerk. The other non-Arab establishments such as the dry cleaners and the laundromat do not have employees of a Middle Eastern background. However, these places of business have found their way into the enclave because there is a necessity for them.
Establishment Types

Figure 14: Establishment Types. Source: Author
The survey of the types of establishments found that there are an estimated 42 restaurants and cafes, out of 63 businesses. The results of the remaining spaces are 11 delicatessen / convenience stores, 4 legal services offices (typically immigration lawyers), 2 retail stores, 2 traveling agencies, and 1 mosque. With the majority of establishments offering food and hookah (water pipes), it’s clear that most businesses rely on the Middle Eastern cuisine to attract customers. Consumers who seek an authentic Middle Eastern experience come to Little Egypt. Establishments of this type attract both locals an people from outside the enclave. The remaining establishment types are tailored for the locals, and are places that residents of the neighborhood predominantly use. Delis, law offices, retail stores and travel agencies are services that rely on business from the locals. On the other hand, these places are necessities that the local Arab consumer needs. There is a dichotomy that exists in this observation between the consumers and producers, yet they are dependent on each other, although the producers rely on not only the locals, but on visitors to maintain a stable income.
Types of Customers

Figure 15: Types of Customers. Source: Author
Analysis of the types of customers served is divided into 3 categories; non-Arab, Arab, and both. This analysis took into consideration only the Arab establishments. The non-Arab establishments, marked in grey in figure 15, are excluded in this examination. It is important to determine the types of people the enclave serves because it allows us to see who the businesses rely on, and vice versa. Of the 63 establishments found along the street, 12 exclusively cater to non-Arabs, 25 serve the Arab population and 26 serve both. This exploration was based on observations made on the demographics that occupy certain places. For example, there are certain delis that only Arabs frequent. The Nile Deli has merchandize that is imported from Egypt, and therefore Non-Arabs rarely enter this store. Across the street, the Bidaouj Butcher Shop offers ‘fresh halal meat’, which generally attracts Muslims (in this case Arab or non-Arab Muslims) seeking a specific kind of meat. There are 4 cafes: Sultana Café, Melody, Jour Et Nuit and Fayrooz that attract non-Arabs because of the atmosphere they generate. They promote a club like environment and the latter two advertise alcohol on their storefronts. The remaining 26 places attract different groups, thus serve both categories. These places are predominantly restaurants that offer authentic Middle Eastern food, which draws in both Arabs and non-Arabs.
Group Types Served

Figure 16: Group Type Served. Source: Author
The breakdown of the group types served is a subset of the breakdown of customer type. This aspect is important because we are able to understand how much influence the Middle Eastern culture has in an American setting (taking into consideration the 63 Arab establishments). The study has counted men, family, women and youth. In the Middle East there are establishments that exclusively cater to men, such as coffee shops, but most places cater to families. The men have 2 cafés in Little Egypt that resemble the known coffee houses back home; Egyptian Coffee Shop and El Khayam Cafe. In addition, cafés that are popular with the youth of Arab descent have become popular. Four businesses in the enclave fall into this category: which are Jour Et Nuit, Sultana, Fayrooz and Melody Café. As for the families, 56 businesses have a setting that allows for their presence. The women in this case do not have a specific place of congregation as the men do; they utilize the Mosque’s allocated space for women not only to pray, but also to socialize with one another. In certain parts of the Middle East women cannot socialize in public. They often meet in the privacy of their own homes. It’s evident that certain traditions from the Middle East have found their way to Little Egypt.
2. Activity Diagrams

The neighborhood survey maps were used to bring to consideration both the physical location and social characteristics of the enclave. The location of certain social events relative to local businesses is important. According to my observation data, there are specific and popular areas of gathering. During a major sport or political event, a crowd tends to form outside of the El Khayam Café, which professes to be an *Arab Community Center*, dominated by Egyptians. Although its small interior space does not allow for a community atmosphere as it’s mainly occupied by men smoking hookah, its outside space makes up for what it lacks indoors. Its immediate exterior space is a common site for political group meetings. On some occasions, the sidewalk is not large enough for the number of participants. Thus, the street inadvertently becomes part of the event.

During the 2011 Egyptian revolution, the sidewalk and street became a public square. The Egyptian crowds grew as they celebrated. As a result, traffic congestion ensued as the enclave became inaccessible. Given the diversity of nationalities found along the enclave and the different types of events that take place, the uses of the public space of Little Egypt changes. The heated soccer rivalry between Egypt and Algeria has led to a clear division. The street drew a separating line between the fans. The separation was due to the placement of the popular Egyptian-owned El Khayam Café, which draws in the crowds within its proximity. Across from this café was an Algerian-owned restaurant that drew its own crowd. Therefore, the two groups were divided by the street. The immigrant groups adapted the existing physical conditions to accommodate their events. They have gained the ability to adapt the street to a new purpose.
Figure 17: Political Assembly. Image Source: “Egyptian Solidarity Protest Steinway St Queens NY January 28th 2011”. By Peter Brauer

Diagram Source: Author.
Data on activities that speak to the ethnic background of the neighborhood was collected based on the criteria that activities were group activities that took place in public space. An example of these activities can be seen in figure 17. The political gatherings that take place typically reflect current events in the home country. Street demonstrations occurred along Steinway Street of Little Egypt during the Egyptian political uprising in 2011. According to a *New York Times* article discussing people gathered in front of the Al-Imam Mosque (Figure 18): “As tens of thousands of Egyptians took to the streets of Cairo on Sunday for the sixth day of open revolt, here in Astoria, the heart of New York City’s Egyptian community, people reacted with hope...” (Bilefsky, 2011). The author went on to describe the state of the neighborhood during the Egyptian revolution as, “a frenetic neighborhood that would not look out of place in Cairo.”

Current events, specifically the political unrest in Egypt, have spurred many strong reactions from local Egyptians. Their political gatherings promoted a physical presence of local citizens and use of public space in the neighborhood. The streets of Little Egypt performed as a public square in place of Tahrir Square. The public street in the enclave acts as the main congregation space; it is where people immediately head after a break of major news, and it is where they are able to freely express their political views collectively. With this occurrence comes a flow of
partakers occupying the commercial spaces found along the street. As Bilefsky (2011) noted, “In nearly every cafe, Middle Eastern restaurant and grocery store in Little Egypt….onlookers were glued to Al Jazeera over the weekend.” Figure 17 shows the diagramming of the political assembly that occurred on January 28, 2011, the crowd gathered mainly in front of the Al-Iman Mosque. This presents another function of the mosque that is besides a religious one. The members used the grounds of the mosque as a meeting point.

Figure 19 represents another political assembly that displays the celebration of Egyptian-Americans on February 11, 2011 at 8pm. This day marks the stepping down of the Egyptian government of the time, which was a major historical event in the eyes of Egyptians worldwide. The local Egyptians of Little Egypt occupied the sidewalks of Steinway Street in front of Jerusalem Nights Café, now Star Hookah, which is a popular hookah café. It is interesting to note the different locations of both political gatherings in this study. The gathering in front of the mosque was made up of the elderly, while the gathering by Jerusalem Nights Café was made up of a much younger crowd that chanted to drums. The two locations represent different types of activities that can occur near their perimeter.
Figure 19: Political Assembly. Image Source: “Little Egypt on Feb. 11, 2011, post-Mubarak” and “Reporting Live from Little Egypt”  
By Dan Nguyen  
Diagram Source: Author.
Figure 20: Religious Assembly. Image Source: Author
Diagram Source: Author.

**KEY**

- 1 PERSON
- AREA OF STUDY
- MOSQUE

*September 26, 2014*
Although major events take place on an occasional basis, there are recurring occasions that also call for an outpouring of people. One such event is the weekly Friday prayer at the mosque. Under Islamic law, the men are required to attend the prayer every Friday. The local Al Iman Mosque of the neighborhood is generally full of practicing Muslims every Friday at noon. After the prayer, the men tend to engage in conversation in front of the Mosque (Figure 20). One important observation is the use of rugs on the sidewalk during the Friday prayer. The Mosque’s interior space is not large enough to accommodate the growing Muslim community, which forces the use of the exterior perimeter for prayer. This is one main reason the Mosque is expanding – as seen in the figure, the adjacent site to the right has been demolished to begin construction of the new extension. According to Al-Iman Center’s website, the adjacent lot has 3,900 square feet. The lot was purchased in 2011 for $1.5 million, $900,000 of which was paid from donations and loans. Additionally, according to the report, the remaining balance must be paid within 5 years of the purchase date. The cost of the project, which is to include an Islamic School, is estimated to be $5 million. As I have witnessed from within the Mosque, they are constantly collecting donations for this effort. The Al-Iman organization’s ability to collect this amount of money is an outstanding achievement. This speaks to the community’s ability to collectively aid in the developing an important component of their neighborhood. They see this expansion an important undertaking by the community as a whole and graciously give donations.
Leisure

Figure 21: Leisurely Assembly.
Image Source: “Steinway on Fire” By Algerican1
Diagram Source: Author.
By socializing in the cafes, which may involve playing a game of chess or partaking in political conversations, the locals are forming a bond. They are part of a network that is able to come together under various circumstances. The Arab community is capable of conjoining not only for serious matters but also for leisure affairs. Accounts of disorder took place during a heated soccer match for the FIFA World Cup qualifications of 2009. A minor conflict between the participating Egyptians and Algerians broke out. This division is seen in figure 21. Although there were positive celebrations, with chants and drums on each side, they also hurled insults. The excitement turned into chaos when the block was divided into two, with the street as the separator. On one sidewalk the Egyptians were chanting, “Masr, Masr, Masr” (which translates into “Egypt, Egypt, Egypt”). While the Algerians across the street shouted, “1 2 3 viva l'Algerie.” The clash began when the Egyptian end countered the Algerians by shouting “1 2 3, bye bye Algerie.” The issue escalated to the point where the New York Police Department had to seize control of the situation. This type of occurrence portrays the underlying issues prevalent between the two groups within the larger community. At the same time, the event drew in a large number of participants who do not come to the area on a daily basis, and who flooded the cafes and restaurants that were broadcasting the match. In some cases, the disturbances caused negative outcomes. For instance, the presence of people on the road halted vehicular traffic. Additionally, confusion arose among those who were not part of the event. From my observations, some visitors were intrigued by the celebrations, especially when there was music involved. When the crowds grew and caused distractions, such as blockage of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, however, the visitors were not as pleased.
3. Observations

After the businesses were identified, different categories are used to systematize the distinctive attributes of each business. The established categories are:

- Target group (referring to the types of customers the place of business is targeting)
  - Local Tourists
  - Middle Eastern Men
  - Middle Eastern Women
  - Middle Eastern Families
- Outdoor seating
- Signage
- Menus (whether they are in Arabic or English)
- Hookah

The groups listed were picked to determine the reasoning behind the placement of specific physical items. For instance, the target group is important in determining how the owners strive to appeal to a specific group. The language of the signage and menus are cues that demonstrate the type of people sought after. Language also shows the extent to which the owners are tailoring the appearance of their storefronts to attract a specific type of customer. The main groups associated will be identified as Middle Eastern, non-Middle Eastern, men, women, and families.
Signage and Design Details

Figure 22: Signage Language. Source: Author
The use of language in the enclave is mainly evident in the signage found along Steinway Street. Of the 63 Arab establishments, 40 have English signage and 23 use both English and Arabic signage. Little Egypt's physical characteristics are evident primarily in the signage and through decorative items such as ornate symbols, and types of products (hookah and Middle-Eastern food offered). The signage that has Arabic writing contains mostly informative text. Establishments that do not have signs with Arabic text have English signage that generally has a connection to the nationality of the owners or customers associated. For example, the restaurant named Aldar does not incorporate any use of the Arabic scrip on the exterior; however, Aldar is an Arabic word that is interpreted as home. Similarly, the Layali Beirut restaurant also does not integrate Arabic text. The word Layali, means nights and Beirut refers to the capital of Lebanon, which also happens to be the home country of the owner. Cairo Steakhouse (note: this establishment was present in earlier phases of the research and has now closed), Nile Deli and El Karnak Luxor all fall under the same category. All three restaurants have signs with only English text, yet still have an association with their home country, Egypt. Cairo Steakhouse represents an Egyptian-American blend. Steak is generally not part of the Egyptian cuisine, yet the restaurant offers a juxtaposition of two cultures by having its meat certified Halal. This combination naturally invites Middle Easterners and non-Middle Easterners alike. Out of all the restaurants and cafes, Cairo Steakhouse stood for upscale dinning and was one of the most expensive places to eat on the street. The Nile Deli (figure 23) offers products predominantly imported from Middle Eastern countries that are solely intended for ethnic groups in the community. El Karnak Luxor, which has recently closed (figure 23), is a restaurant that attempted to appeal to both Arab and non Arab groups. Its menu was only in Arabic, which made most non-Arab customers unable to read it (yelp.com).
Another illustration of this trend is Little Morocco, that displays the word “Halal” on its facade. According to the Halal Research Center, “halal” is defined as food that is permissible or lawful under Islamic law. By displaying this important aspect of a religious belief, the owner potentially gains Muslim customers.

The exterior design of the restaurant Mombar (Figure 24) contains a different approach. It is the most decorative storefront along the block and stands out amongst its competition. According to New York Magazine, the owner of Mombar “single-handedly designed and built the restaurant” (Patronite & Raisfeld, n.d.). The façade is embedded with several Egyptian symbols, such as the eye of Horus, and displays many forms of color and texture. The decoration of the interior of the restaurant is as extensive as the exterior. The creative design and mosaic tiles carry the theme of
the establishment from the outside in. The owner chose specific symbols that speak to his Egyptian heritage. I believe this was done to promote his interest to potential customers.

![Image of Mombar](image)

**Figure 24:** Mombar. Source: Author

The mosque of the enclave, Al-Iman, which translates into *The Faith* in Arabic, is one of the biggest mosques in the area. The mosque’s façade incorporates elements of Islamic architecture. The ornate double-arched doors are decorated with geometric patterns. Due to the large numbers of worshippers, the mosque is expanding as it takes over the lot next door. It is seen as a major point of activity for the Arab locals. In reference to the Friday prayers, which are a requirement for Muslim men, “several hundred men from North Africa and Middle-Eastern countries leave their work and make way to the jammed mosque to pray” (Al-Iman Masjid – Faiths and Freedom, 2013).

It is evident from the examples of the restaurants and cafes that traces of identity are found on façades in one way or another. The owners are not dismissing a connection to their ethnic...
identity by downplaying it in their façade displays. They have found different methods to appeal to local ethnic groups while simultaneously appealing to English speakers.

**Hookah**

![Figure 25: Arab Community Center. Source: Author](image)

Other than the signage of the cafes and restaurants as an immediate signal, I have also discovered an alternative attractive agent, hookah, which seems to be a common commodity in the neighborhood. In many of the establishments, a hookah appears at least once in one form or another. Be it in the shape of a graphic representation or in a form of writing, hookah is an inherent component of the shop’s identity and one that is easily pronounced. The El Khayam Cafe, which according to its signage is the “Arab Community Center,” displays a sign that states “El Khayam Godfather of Hookah Lounges,” which reads larger than any text on the awning (Figure 25). The Nile Deli grocery showcases a window display packed with hookahs for sale (Figure 23). The Hookah, also known as Shisha, is an aspect that is part of the traditions and cultures of many Middle Eastern countries (Razpush, 2002). Most cafes in the Middle East offer the enjoyment of hookah, and Little Egypt has adapted this trend (Christensen, 2011). In Egypt, there are popular coffee shops known as Ahwas, and Hoffman (2011) notes that “the shops are an Egyptian institution…mostly you’ll find only men in them”. The shops are described as “open
to the street,” with men playing table games, smoking hookah, and drinking tea (Hoffman, 2011). This is somewhat similar to the coffee shops in Little Egypt. There are, however, very few, places that have predominantly male customers. The rest are tailored to a family atmosphere.

By simply strolling through the street of the enclave, one immediately smells the aroma of the hookah. This aroma offers a third dimension that isn’t a physical or audible feature of the culture and acts as an exotic appeal to the general public: the non-Arab crowds in the form of neighborhood tourists. Some of the cafes along the neighborhood primarily target a younger customer base. The Jour Et Nuit hookah bar is one of the few along Steinway street that offers both alcoholic beverages and hookah. Through visual observations, I have noticed that it often

Figure 26: Hookah/Alcoholic beverage. Source: Author
has a group of youth waiting outside its doors. The loud music and club type atmosphere, along with the hookah and beer, lure a crowd that includes non-Arab customers.
Semi-structured Interviews

The open-ended questions were conducted for different business types. I have summarized and grouped the data into three different charts. The first includes results from restaurant and café owners, the second from offices and the third from delis and grocery stores. Basic findings of the interviews are as follows:

**Location**

Almost all of the interviewees were conscious about locating their businesses specifically on this street. They were aware of the present competition. Many had expressed the desire to locate in an Arab community that is within a safe neighborhood. The negative drawback to a desirable neighborhood, as stated by the owners, is the high rent that some have to pay. Additionally, some owners felt that there was a “conscious competitive nature” between members of the group. Many restaurants, for example, offer the same type of food to the same customers and naturally have to take measures to stay ahead of their business competitors. The pool of Middle Eastern customers was recognized as a determining factor of locating businesses within Little Egypt, especially for the offices. The immigration office, travel agency, and Arabic-speaking lawyers were in agreement on the benefit of having local ethnic customers. Most could not imagine locating elsewhere.

**Social Networks**

Although most owners are aware of their business competition, I found it surprising that they collaborate locally. One restaurant owner made it a point to buy his beverages and bread from
local delis and bakeries. He stated, “If you are good locally, you become popular.” It is evident that creating a collaborative network creates a credible partnership. More so, it builds trust between the owners, which then generates a reputation for the businesses as a whole. Further support of a social network is implemented when opening up a new establishment. As one of the interviewees admitted, “having connections and knowing the building landlord is important.”

**Cultural Advantages**

A consensus was reached among the owners regarding the advantages that come from locating a restaurant or deli within the enclave—specifically, the holidays and major events that frequently take place. As one owner recognized the increase in revenue during the Egyptian political turmoil, “the Egyptian revolution was good for business; they like to drink Moroccan mint tea while discussing politics.” Additionally, another owner noted specific seasonal timings that increased their revenue. Ramadan, which is a religious holiday where Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, is always a busy month in Little Egypt. Most restaurants offer an open buffet at sunset for Muslims to break their fast. The African Cup of Nations and the FIFA World Cup are two sporting events that attract spectators in many of the cafes. Middle Easterners are very passionate about soccer. It is one of the few sports that many countries from the Middle East participate in on a national scale. Soccer is often played by young males on the streets of Egypt and other Arabic countries. However, this leisure activity is a double edged sword. It is a unifying factor, yet at the same time it causes animosity between competing countries. The current political situation in the Middle East also invites people to watch Arabic news channels such as Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. The men often enjoy going to the coffee shops and engaging in political discussions as they smoke a hookah, while the women tend to socialize in the mosque.
6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Little Egypt has presented a scenario in which an ethnic group has used specific cultural traits to create a home away from home. We have seen that physical elements, such as ornate decorations on a mosque’s exterior and ancient Egyptian symbols displayed on a storefront, as examples of using ethnic characters to create a personalized enclave. Furthermore, the ethnic group conducted social events that could have not happened elsewhere, but were possible because of the marked territory of the enclave. We saw this with their celebrations on the sidewalks for sport events and through political rallies held locally in the enclave. What makes it an enclave is the liberty the members of the enclave have within the neighborhood to carry out such events. The clusters and existence of many businesses along a tight perimeter permits the residents to freely express their views because they are within a confined network that indirectly supports each other.
Little Egypt’s enclave, as seen in the neighborhood survey, is relatively small expanding the length of about two blocks. The proximity of the businesses in this instance is an important component in the urban economics theory as discussed in the theoretical-framework chapter. The clusters of small businesses allow the members to unite easily for their known events. Isolated commercial spaces are not capable of supporting such events. Another advantage of close contact is Jane Jacob’s concept of fragmented small businesses. Little Egypt has a small network of independently run establishments that exist within a larger structure. Jacobs felt that small enterprises build off of each other and rely on their own network economy. This can be a case argued in Little Egypt. In one example, a shop owner had stated that he buys his bread from the local bakery. This relates back to Michael Porter’s definition of clusters, in which he characterized them as places that “compete but also cooperate”, we see this as a relevant concept in Little Egypt (Porter, 1998, p.197). The business owners naturally compete with one another, however, they cooperate by buying merchandise from each other. This idea of competition is also evident in their social activities. The soccer matches caused a different type of competition between the different groups found within the enclave. The Egyptians and Algerians were on opposite ends for a few days until the excitement of the soccer match was over. On the other hand, the concept of cooperation between the different groups found within is observed by the ability of the members to collectively donate a large sum of money for the mosque’s expansion. There is a constant shift between Porter’s idea of competition and cooperation. Furthering this idea is Porter’s view on the linkage of clusters due to their “commonalities and complementarities” (Porter, 2008, p.215). Little Egypt represents about 7 different countries that share a common language and, in some cases, religion. The ethnic group is tied by their ethnicity despite the tensions that occasionally arise as we have witnessed. What’s striking about their
bond is that their home countries might have conflicts with one another, yet here in Queens they are dependent on each other.

This dependence relates back to Portes’ ethnic enclave economic theory in which the enclave has its own enterprise. The Arab establishments employ mostly Arabs, and the non-Arab establishments, like Chase Bank, have a significant number of Arab employees. Economic theory indicates that members of the enclave can easily advance through their enclave’s economy. They are able to access the resources within the neighborhood without having to venture elsewhere. I think this translates to Little Egypt’s ability in relying on its own businesses. It is easier for the members to find jobs within the enclave, and eventually venture out to other parts of the city.

Neighborhoods of this type are important objects of study for city planners. Little Egypt’s growth has been noticed by the New York City department of city planning as seen in the rezoning effort of 2010. By examining trends in the neighborhood, the planning department was able to allow for Steinway Street’s commercial growth. Ethnic enclaves, like Little Egypt, need to be encouraged because they introduce small pockets of vigorous activity that benefit the overall growth of the city. I believe that, given its relative size, the city needs to allow for further expansion of Little Egypt. Additionally, further study and research by city planners need to be conducted on the enclave. The zoning study that included Little Egypt’s sector was part of a large neighborhood overview, which did not focus solely on Little Egypt. There may be more buildings that can allow for additional commercial spaces on the second floor, as the rezoning effort had allocated. However, the enclave’s need for growth goes beyond more commercial spaces. Its mosque’s extension hints at the popularity and common use of other services found
within the neighborhood. The current number of members that belong to this enclave has grown beyond the space provided. We have seen this issue with the limited interior space of the mosque and with their spontaneous street events. The events that took place on the sidewalks of the enclave were overcrowded and at times unsafe. Moreover, the sporadic activities did not last because there were no proper spatial arrangements made for them. I believe that in the case of the unprompted and creative cultural aspect of such activities, a supportive environment is called for. It may be that this Arab community is in need of an official allocated space, such as a community center. I think that this can organize community meetings and help in addressing issues more effectively. It seems that the mosque’s extension is headed towards this idea, of a shared common space that extends beyond prayer halls. The downside of this is that it is not a secular space and eliminates presence of non-Muslims that belong to the same enclave.

This thesis set out to identify the extent to which a group of immigrants can use their known traditions to accommodate their stay in a new country. I have found that people with similar backgrounds can unite to build a small neighborhood despite their difference. They share a common goal, which is to be able to eventually integrate their lives in American society. Once can conclude that neighborhoods of this type act as a threshold between foreign and domestic cultures. We have seen Little Egypt as an example that still has much room for growth. With enough support, this enclave can flourish and provide more opportunities for its members.
## Table 1
### Interview Topics and Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-location</strong></td>
<td>Why did you locate your business here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any positives or negative for doing so?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you imagine location else where?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Do you collaborate locally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you collaborate in a broader sense?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start-up Businesses</strong></td>
<td>How do local businesses start up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typologies</strong></td>
<td>What type of customers do you generally service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of the local culture or outside of the culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Success:</strong></td>
<td>How has business picked up since you opened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What factors might make business more successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial (physical)</strong></td>
<td>Why do you have seats outside?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why is your signage in Arabic/English?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 2
Survey of Businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Outdoor Seating</th>
<th>Signage</th>
<th>Menu</th>
<th>Hookah Appeal</th>
<th>Detail Items</th>
<th>Misc. Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melody Café Inc.</td>
<td>Cafe/Club</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Hookah / Full Bar</td>
<td>Alcohol/Dance Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo Steakhouse</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldar</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asteria Family Pharmacy</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Palestinian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mango’s NY</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing leaner permit questions in Arabic only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Yorker Driving School &amp; Limo</td>
<td>Driving School/Insurance</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English/Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Provides leaner permit questions in Arabic only</td>
<td>Backyard is open for Hookah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Sea Restaurant</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Algerian</td>
<td>Algerian</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazza New York Pasteries</td>
<td>Pastry Shop</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Mostly Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinway Pharmacy</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English/Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td>“Godfather of Hookah Lounges” Arabic Community Center. Popular place for watching football matches and for engaging in conversation on political issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Khayam Café</td>
<td>Café/Hookah Lounge</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Offices of Rifat A. Harb</td>
<td>Law Office</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English/Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naseem Inc.</td>
<td>Meat Market &amp; Grocery</td>
<td>Algerian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Hookah / Full Bar</td>
<td>Alcohol/Dance Floor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halal Sandwich Shop</td>
<td>Café</td>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>Algerian/Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English/Arabic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shams El Assiel</td>
<td>Café/Hookah Lounge</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayali Beirut</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El-Rewsheh</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>Arabic/Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Nights</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jumbiya</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
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<td>English/Arabic</td>
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<td>Alfrha</td>
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<td>Arabic/Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
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<td>Hookah / Full Bar</td>
<td>Alcohol/Dance Floor</td>
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<td>Islam Fashion</td>
<td>Retail</td>
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<td>Arab</td>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zohny Tours</td>
<td>Travel Agency</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Princes</td>
<td>Grocery/Deli</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
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<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mombar</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
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<td>Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nile Deli</td>
<td>Grocery/Deli</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>English/Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Deli</td>
<td>Grocery/Deli</td>
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<td>Non-Arab</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sultan Café</td>
<td>Lounge/Club</td>
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<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>English</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Morocco</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabab Café</td>
<td>Café/Restaurant</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>First Middle Eastern café in Little Egypt. Owner self proclaimed “mayor of little Egypt”</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosque</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arab/Non-Arab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Backyard open for Hookah</td>
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<td>Answers</td>
<td>Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did you locate your business here?</td>
<td>“Location, location, location!” (L) Located near an Arabic community (Com). Serve Arabic food (F) for Arabic community (Loc-Cus). Great area, safe neighborhood (Char).</td>
<td>(L) Location Specific (F) Ethnic Food (Com) Community (Char) Neighborhood Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any positives or negative for doing so?</td>
<td>Rent ($) high because of neighborhood, conscious competition (Comp). Same restaurants serve same food (F).</td>
<td>($) Expenses due to location (Support) (Comp) Competition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you image location else where?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you collaborate locally?</td>
<td>Yes, small businesses, beverage distribution, Bakeries- same ethnicity (Support). If you’re good locally, become very popular (Rep)</td>
<td>(Support) (Rep) Reputation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you collaborate in a broader sense?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do local businesses start up?</td>
<td>“Money, money, capital”($) Connections, need to know business owners and building owners (Support)</td>
<td>($) Expenses due to location (Support)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of customers do you generally service?</td>
<td>Arabs, SO/50 Americans Lots of Egyptians (Cus-Type)</td>
<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type</td>
<td></td>
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<td>What type of customers do you generally service?</td>
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<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>How has business picked up since you opened?</td>
<td>Started slow after a couple of years went up. “Hanging on” during economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What factors might make business more successful?</td>
<td>Seasonal, weather/season/Ramadan-very busy. Muslim Eid (Seasonal) Egyptian Revolution good for business (E). Like to drink Moroccan mint tea (F).</td>
<td>(E) Events (Seasonal) Business based on seasons</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you have seats outside?</td>
<td>Not enough room outside (Space). Special permit.</td>
<td>(Space)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is your signage in Arabic/English?</td>
<td>English only, Little Morocco can’t translate in Arabic (Adv)(Cul)</td>
<td>(Adv)(Cul) Advertisement (Cul) Cultural Aspect</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did you locate your business here?</td>
<td>As traveling agency that is for Middle Eastern countries, we wanted to gain customers going to those areas (Loc-Cus)[L]. Immigration office- lots of people here are dealing with paper work related to immigration (Loc-Cus).</td>
<td>(Loc-Cus) Local Customer (L) Location Specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any positives or negative for doing so?</td>
<td>I think its mostly positives, get to help out people with immigration issues (Cus-Type)(Support).</td>
<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type (Support)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you imagine location else where?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you collaborate locally?</td>
<td>We sometimes place flyers of our office in restaurants on the street (Adv).</td>
<td>(Adv) Advertisement</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you collaborate in a broader sense?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do local businesses start up?</td>
<td>Need to find good location, that makes sense. Need to invest.</td>
<td>(S) Expenses due to location (L) Location Specific</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of customers do you generally service?</td>
<td>Mostly Arabic and Muslims, for the pilgrimage to Mecca. Or those who want to go visit family back home. (Cus-Typ)</td>
<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of the local culture or outside of culture?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has business picked up since you opened?</td>
<td>It has picked up, but sometimes there is a drop.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors might make business more successful?</td>
<td>Depending on the season. Summer is very busy. Also during holidays people want to go home/vacation. (Seasonal)</td>
<td>(Seasonal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you have seats outside?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is your signage in Arabic/English?</td>
<td>Both, for Arabs to understand. We are in English speaking country.</td>
<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>Categories</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you locate your business here?</td>
<td>Heard about similar businesses here and I live nearby (L).</td>
<td>(L) Location Specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Any positives or negative for doing so?</td>
<td>Yes, many choices for the customers to select from (Comp). Hope that they choose your store (Cus).</td>
<td>(Comp) Competition (Cus) Customers</td>
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<td>Can you imagine location else where?</td>
<td>Sometimes, when its not busy. “But I really think its a great neighborhood”. (L).</td>
<td>(L) Location Specific</td>
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<td>Do you collaborate locally?</td>
<td>Yes, when I need to get something last minute especially (Conv). There are a lot of stores nearby I can get my supplies from.</td>
<td>(Conv) Convenience</td>
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<td>Do you collaborate in a broader sense?</td>
<td>Yes, import products from abroad.</td>
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<td>How do local businesses start up?</td>
<td>You have to ask around (Net). Also, lots of permits and licenses.</td>
<td>(Net) Network</td>
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<td>What type of customers do you generally service?</td>
<td>Both Arabic and non Arabic (Cus-Type)</td>
<td>(Cus-Type) Customer Type</td>
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<td>Of the local culture or outside of culture?</td>
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<td>How has business picked up since you opened?</td>
<td>More recognized now than before.</td>
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<td>What factors might make business more successful?</td>
<td>Time of day after work people sometimes come. Weekends. Muslim holidays are very busy here. (Seasonal)</td>
<td>(Seasonal)</td>
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<td>Why do you have seats outside?</td>
<td>Few, not for customers. Owners sit outside. (Space)</td>
<td>(Space)</td>
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<td>Why is your signage in Arabic/English?</td>
<td>For everyone to understand it (Adv)</td>
<td>(Adv) Advertisement</td>
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