

Group Two Commentary

Please access the **transcripts** of your Guttman group and your Egyptian counterparts through these links.

[Guttman Interviews/Photos/Transcripts and Consent Forms](#)

[American University of Cairo Transcripts](#)

By Sunday 10/24 reflect on the transcripts in your Groups Google Doc. On your own, under your name in this shared google doc you must...

1. Write one paragraph about the similar, and/or different, challenges small businesses in each city faced.
2. Under at least two of your classmates' or Egyptian counterparts responses, in a sentence or two reflect on what they said. Make sure to end your comments with your name to get credit for your work.

Authentic Food -- AUC 2

1. Jana Ahmed Nasr
2. Nadin Fouda
3. Nadin Khalil
4. Rowan Ali

Guttman Group Three -- Thomas: My Place Family Pizza, 240 E 198th Street, Bronx, New York, 10458

5. Josery Compres
6. Dahian Abreu
7. Sitora Hodieva
8. Sydney Polanco
9. Cielo Perez
10. Isaacs Perfecto
11. Bashir Juwara
12. Montgomery Martinez
13. Kadijatu Kamara

Bassrou (Bashir) Juwara

After watching and reading the interview transcripts of Cairo and New York City, I saw many similarities and differences. Some of the similarities: most of the businesses are family owned, located in the cities and businesses have been around for a very long time. The biggest challenge most of the businesses have in common is lack of financial support from the

government during the pandemic. Additionally, Covid19 pandemic has and continues to affect business owners in both cities. Most of the interviewees mentioned how customers are afraid of going back to in-person shopping because they are afraid of crowds in these areas. They also described the impact of online shopping during the pandemic which gave options and flexibility to customers to avoid going to the restaurants and bodegas. Although there are many similarities between business in Cairo and in New York City, there are also differences that are noticeable. For example, in Cairo, businesses are not open for everyone. One interviewee stated, “Not everyone is welcome because the atmosphere is not to everyone's liking” another interviewee stated, “full of people who do not belong and take away from the standards of downtown Cairo.” This indicates that businesses in New York City are more welcoming than businesses in Cairo.

Dahian Abreu Sanchez reflection on Bashir thoughts: I really agree and understand what you said Bashir. Businesses in general had financial support from the government during the pandemic and what you said about people being scared to interact and the online shopping shows how seriously this impacts businesses not only around these two places but the whole country. It was also visible that Cairo compared to NYC had different welcoming policies and aspects which I also spoke about in my paragraph.

Kadijatu Kamara response to Bashir's paragraph: I agree with Bashir since, in general, businesses have struggled to stay viable owing to a lack of government financial support.

Montgomery Martinez response to Bashir's paragraph:

I also feel that the businesses are continuing to be hurt by the COVID pandemic. But it is not the COVID virus that is doing the damage, it is the lack of respect some customers have by not following the safety guidelines, such as wearing a mask and social distancing. This lack of respect causes the other customers to be afraid and prevents them from going back into these businesses again.

Dahian Abreu Sanchez

After watching and reading the transcript of Cairon in NYC I was able to find similarities mostly and very little difference. Most of the businesses were family owned and family connected and had been like that for a very long time. One of the biggest challenges that business had in common was lacking financial support from the government when the pandemic occurred and Covid 19 made the country go into a lock down. People were worried about the contact after the lock down and crowded areas. The main source and most safe way to shop during this pandemic was to buy things online because it didn't require physical contact and it was super flexible. Cairo's businesses did not open the doors to simply anyone during this time. If a business was open during this time and you didn't have a mask and practiced social distance then you weren't accepted in the environment. It was like that everywhere until the vaccination was introduced and people started to get vaccinated. But besides that it was possible that businesses in NYC compared to Cairo were different in the welcoming aspect.

Nadin Khalil response to Dahian Abreu Sanchez

During Covid it was very difficult for many shops to adapt and turn online. Although most of the shops got themselves registered on delivering apps, old historical cafes in Cairo stuck to their old traditions and refused to go online which made them stay shut down during this period.

Bassrou (Bashir) Juwara's comment on Dahian's reflection: I agree with your comparison between Cairo and New York City. We both mentioned how the pandemic really affected local business owners and benefited online retailers.

Kadijatu Kamara response to Dahians paragraph: I agree with Your analogy of Cairo with New York City is accurate. I like how you highlighted how the epidemic had a significant impact on local businesses while also benefiting internet shops.

Montgomery Martinez response to Dahian's paragraph:

It is awful to know that these businesses remained open in order to provide services and products to people during this critical historic time. Those businesses that faced the risks by remaining open should be granted some form of help from our governments.

Sitora Hodieva's response on Dahian's paragraph:

I agree with your similarities because this business did not receive any support from the government during this crisis. It is important to realize that these stores could have been closed due to a number of reasons during Covid, but they continued to offer good service to their customers.

Montgomery Martinez

Even though the two businesses have remained in the same locations for a long period of time their experiences with the customers are different. In the Bronx, the restaurant is located in a residential neighborhood and the frequency of new people is much less compared to the business in Cairo, which is located in a high-volume tourist area. Whether the customers are regulars or new their behavior is just as varied as their cultures. Both businesses experience customers who are grabbing something to eat on their way to and from work, friends hanging out and families spending time together eating dinner. With both businesses treat their customers equally and with respect regardless of race, gender, or culture. All while both businesses face the same challenge of competing against other restaurants in their area for customer business.

Bashir response to Montgomery's Reflection: It is unique and interesting that some businesses will serve some customers and never see them again because those customers are tourists. Tourism plays a huge role in the success of some of these businesses because tourists are more likely to spend more money on food. Pandemic shot down the whole universe which means no tourism.

Dahian response to Montgomery's Reflection: Treating everyone with respect no matter who they are is the key action that businesses follow and it's interesting how you mentioned it and made it feel like a safe area where people go and can have a pleasant time. Also how you mentioned tourists which is also interesting because they get to experience the welcoming aspects and other things.

Sitora response to Montgomery's Reflection:

As I read through the transcript in Cairo, I also realized that restaurant was located in a "high-volume tourist area" because it was located near the hotels and travel agencies. However,

during pandemics, it has been very difficult because the employer stated that “foreigners were a bid deal”

Cielo’s response to Montgomerys’s Reflection:

I loved your reflection and I completely agree. Keeping our community safe is a long term goal that we need to ensure that business would be running from here on out, but treating everyone with respect is a key and very important.

Sitora Hodieva

As I reviewed authentic food restaurant in Cairo and “My Place Family Pizza” in New York, I discovered that there were significant differences and similarities. According to both of the restaurants, they stated that safety in their communities was one of their top priorities. In order to make their neighborhood a more welcoming environment, both mentioned community efforts to be present, such as cleaning up garbage and taking care of each other. The different challenges each city faces is during a pandemic. “My Place Family Pizza” is trying to disinfect the store constantly as customers come and go. Thomas has also mentioned that dealing with customers has been more challenging than before because their stores require customers to show their vaccination cards and some customers refuse and complain. Based in Cairo, they have experienced fewer customers since the pandemic began because their customers were mostly foreigners who came from different countries, and since there is less traveling, there have been fewer customers.

Nadin Fouda response to Sitora Reflection:

Safety is one the key for a successful place because if the customer feels unsafe in the community of shops they would not like to visit that place. Including the surrounding

environment too also matters because if there is garbage everywhere and it's not clean no one would come.

Kadijatu Kamara

Many small businesses have suffered huge losses as a result of the government's imposed lockdown in the country. There is no one to buy products, so they do not get income and no money to pay salary to the employees, so they are forced to fire the employees. This is not only for people, but also for a large industry. In Cairo, Egypt they faced major issues. Foreigners were a huge issue for the restaurant, but due to COVID, they stopped visiting, making it difficult to keep up financially. Even Egyptian clientele stopped coming because of the curfew. The COVID-19 outbreak serves as a stark reminder that pandemics, like other sporadic disasters, have occurred in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Even if we can't stop deadly diseases from spreading, we should be prepared to mitigate their societal impacts. The present pandemic is wreaking havoc on economies all around the world, and it does not appear that any country will be spared. This has ramifications not only for the economy, but for the entire society. This has resulted in significant changes in how firms and consumers conduct themselves. This special issue is part of a global effort to address some of society's pandemic-related challenges.

Nadin Khalil response to Kadijatu Kamara Reflection:

True, lack of foreigners due to COVID greatly affected the income of some restaurants as many of them were mainly based on tourism.

Cielo's response to Kadijatu Kamara Reflection:

It is honestly so sad what the pandemic has done and how far back we have gotten over time. Life is completely different and it is crazy to believe that this pandemic businesses have been losing money but not only that people have been losing their lives.

Nadin Fouda response to Kadijatu Kamara Reflection:

I agree with the fact that the pandemic did affect the stores, especially food places because people felt unsafe to go out. Also about whether that place will take the right precautions for covid 19 or not. The curfew also played a major role in that too, even some store completely closed like cafe riche because they saw no benefit of opening only 25 percent of the space in the shop and the curfew was too early too. Especially downtown Cairo because foreigners stopped coming and it is one of the crowded places in Egypt so even locals didn't go so all of that affected their economy.

Nadin Fouda

There are many differences and similarities between the businesses after doing interviews with our shops in downtown Cairo and reading/listening to the interviews conducted in New York. To begin with, when the pandemic began, all four stores experienced a decrease in revenue. COVID-19 lowered the percentage of people who feel safe in public settings, causing business to decrease, according to all interviews; the government did not intervene in either country. Another similarity is that most of the restaurants are family-owned, and they have been in operation for a long time. According to both shops in Cairo and New York, one of their major concerns is ensuring the safety of their communities. Both emphasised community efforts to be present, such

as cleaning up trash and taking care of one another, in order to make their area a more welcoming atmosphere. The difference between the shops in Cairo is that they are located in a very crowded high density area so finding parking or a pathway for people to walk is very difficult.

Nadin Khalil

The pandemic was definitely one of the common reasons in both Cairo and New York to lower the income of these shops. Also, the fact that some shops needed a chance to prove themselves worthy was found in both New York and Cairo. However, the culture of shops in Cairo was a bit different than New York. The idea of quickly grabbing a bite to run off somewhere and go about the day was not based on Cairo. Most of the customers in Downtown Cairo visit there specifically to capture the lively vibe of the place and enjoy a lovely sitting. No matter how small or old the place was in Cairo, the antique feeling that it had invited foreigners from all over the world to visit and nowadays tourism is starting to get back step by step after vaccinations.

Cielo Perez

The pandemic really took a huge toll in both NYC and Cairo. There are both similarities and differences, but one of the similarities in both restaurants are the safety they keep to ensure everyone is comfortable and safe within the community, by taking care of each other they make

that happen. One of the differences in both restaurants would be the experience they gain with the customers. Some people are mean and loud while others are kind and well behaved.