

# Global-Local Traces in Store Interior Design

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**Abstract** The aim of this study is to investigate the contributions of local cultures on chain retail stores' interior spaces, which are natural consequences of the globalization. The conceptual foundation of this work is based on sociological globalization theories. Following the explanation of two main theories that are defined as global and local spatial reflections of both theories are analyzed through retail store interior space examples chosen from diverse countries. In conclusion of this work, it has been ascertained that in western countries standard design understanding gained acceptance, where cultural diversities are relatively less palpable, however in cultures where traditional, religious and vital practices are differentiating, localities are merged into global design understandings and more the economical power raise, localities' effects on global is also raising accordingly.

**Keywords:** interior architecture, globalization, chain store

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## 1. Introduction

In today's world, our lives are interconnected through global nets in every discipline. The term globalization that have began to be popular after the late 80's have brought disintegrations at some periods and dedifferentiation in others for the cultures dwelling in the world while in some cases it also caused evolvments through interactions and followed by standardizations in daily life practices.

Through the expanding of standardized understanding of products and services that are natural causes of globalization, it can be observed that global brands are also expanding with their chain stores that offer monotypic spatial experience. On the other hand, besides these chain stores with standard interior concepts located in diverse geographies, it is possible from time to time to find retail examples that involve local geography's cultural traces in their interiors by conceding their monotypic interior concepts, breaking this monotony. It would be appropriate to evaluate these different spatial approaches through sociological globalization theories' enlightenment.

In this manner this paper is an endeavor to find an answer for how and with what purpose the local cultural traces are being merged into global retail chain stores' interior spatial concepts from the perspectives of main globalization theories.

## 2. Definition and Theories of Globalization

The increase of interconnection, shopping/exchange, people and product mobilization followed by rapid change and differentiation in the intellectual and cultural process ascertained globalization. In this view, the beginning of globalization which is highly related with the dawn of modernity can be dated as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century

([16]: 3). However, According to Tomlinson, although its roots hold on to the early periods of the modern era, the complex correlativity of globalization is a more vivid characteristic of recent history and is a phenomenon that has pulled attention to itself by force in the last twenty or thirty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (2004:67). Indeed, the definition has been drawn into our lives with the 80's and in the following decade has shown a dominant affect on the spread of consumption culture much as the sharing of knowledge.

When evaluated in its cultural dimensions, globalization is seen to emerge in two groups. In the first one, we are faced with the approach of Anthony Giddens that observes the phenomenon as a result of the propagation of western modernity. Giddens sees globalization as a result of modernity and interprets as a condensation of worldwide social relationships, where distant settlements are interrelated and local occurrences are formed by events miles away [14]. According to him, globalization is partially defined as westernization. While stating the effect of western countries on developing countries, he also points out that this process gets out of hands of certain countries and causes a centralization through the definition of 'global village'. By his definition of 'Reverse colonization', he explains the affect of non-western countries on the developments of the west and elaborates this theory with the example of a globally oriented high-tech sector in India being effective on the western countries ([13]: 27-28 ). In this sense, he concludes the theory in the form that non-western communities can organize global mechanisms with their institutions and be utilized by economic benefits of globalization, which can make possible to minimize its negative results.

Roland Robertson's theories are the first example to the approaches of the second axis. According to Robertson, globalization is a process that covers the encounters of differing lifestyles; not a result of modernity as a project founded on the west. He describes globalization as the

condensation of the world as a whole, and the resulting interconnection of localities. By refusing the perception that accepts the global as the dominant power, he defines globalization as a model of unity where the communal and cultural differences can be vividly emphasized. Briefly, he criticizes the argument of the locality is a subset of globalization. Hence he uses the term glocalization<sup>1</sup>, instead of the term globalization (1990).

According to John Tomlinson who develops a parallel point of view, globalization lies in the centre of modern culture and in the centre of globalization lies cultural practices. According to him, globalization brings the world into a state on a single place; whereas it is possible to grasp/understand communal-cultural processes and practices as relatively independent phenomena in the past ([1,2]: 23). Tomlinson states that this anonymous structure can also be taken as essentially a criticism of modernity and like Giddens, he signifies the success in spreading its institutional forms of the west has also led it to the loss of its once unique communal/cultural superiority. During this continuum, cultural dynamics through different geographies in the world are undergoing a change and the permanent effects of these changes on localized cultures are becoming a question of debate. Tomlinson approaches to the globalization as an empirical case of the modern world with the term that he named as 'complex connectivity'. He states that globalization generates rapidly developing and gradually intensifying mutual connections and dependency networks which are characterizing the modern life ([1,2]: 12). According to him, a world with complex connectivity (global market, international fashion norms, international division of labour, a shared ecosystem) connects millions of people's destiny with the others that dwell afar that they don't know personally and even with the planet's possible destiny with each other. At this point he dwells on the indispensability of the cultural while defining complex connectivity and states that:

*'All these individual acts are taking shape in the culturally meaningful context of these local and daily life realms in which dressing norms and fashion nuances are constituting the personal and cultural identities. The main reason of the importance of the culture for globalization is because the consequences of these cultural acts are global' ([1,2]:43).*

Given these theories, globosity can be summarized with the flowing effect directed from the powerful to the weak, from centre to the peripheral in the cultural and sociological terms. In this sense, the transforming effect of the west or the modernity on the localities is the reality that we live through consumption culture since the 90's. Today we spend a major part of our daily life with consuming the products of global brands in global spaces where these products are sold and we witness throughout the world that life proceeds in dominant global spaces instead of localities that its own geography brings.

Nevertheless, under the light of opposing perspectives and their criticisms, the mutual effects and inflows of the cultures are causing effects that shouldn't be overlooked.

Transformations as massive global brands using marketing techniques that are converging to localities reveals the traces that the local is effecting on the global in consumption culture while being restrained by it<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Globalization and Commercial Spaces: Stores

Commercial activities in global world have been effective on spreading the relations in consumption culture to wide geographies. In this sense commercial spaces and stores which are taken under discussion in this paper, are affected by the uniforming affect of globalization as being the concreting areas of global commercial operations. As Ünsal's statement, today's world is the media age where information and communication can be sold and exchanged [18]. Design has a crucial role on transferring corporate identity and brand personality to the receiver. The design process is to bring strategic and creative processes altogether in order to achieve the common objective [7]. In other words, it is extremely important to design the product, service and space as a piece of the whole in favor of a positive brand experience for the brand image.

The process that has began with the modernization created the global consumption society and the global brands that distinguish in diverse geographies commenced the standardization process in products, services and naturally in space with a formation of chain. In this process of the centre dominates the peripheral, the centre can be taken as the west -mainly USA- and the peripheral can be interpreted as developing countries within a sociological perspective. Also 90's is a period that global effects are getting intense and international brands reveal themselves with their spatial standards in Turkey. In this period, as a result of the international expansion of the economy, efficiency of the consumption culture and the effect of globalization on increasing physical mobility, foreign chain stores have began to be visible with their monotype store designs. Realization of the same spatial solutions irrelevant to the geography has been interpreted as leaving local perspective's place to the global point of view and the declaration of the dominant's cultural hegemony, which became widely influential in both our country and the world until today. While global retailing was creating a change in store interior design by practicing interior spatial characteristics of their own geography in different regions, it also caused a competitive environment for the local brands wherever it has been reached. During this period, the endeavour to imitate the global brands have been replaced with a search of a prototype and then continued with the seeking of regeneration for the local brands which were in between of being vanished or innovation. Eventually, the consumption culture that is nourished with globalization phenomenon have began to propagate to all commercial spaces with the standardization that has been seen as the equivalence of being new and modern. As Kozinetz mentions, the personal experience of every individual that

<sup>1</sup> The term 'glocalization' is derived from the word 'dockhaku' founded in Japanese, and it is pointed out that it means 'the adaptation of general agricultural activities to local conditions' ([5]: 203). The fact that the cultural roots of the concept is related with Japanese culture strengthens the argument of this study.

<sup>2</sup> Coca-Cola used the brand with its Turkish equivalent as Koka-Kola in a recent advertisement campaign for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their entrance in Turkish market (URL-1).

experience the store had reach a more important position than the ethnic, national, religious and political differences that are revealed in retail spaces during this period [12]. During this process which also covers today, the chain store interiors have shaped the store spaces through global effects that are relatively western/modern and independent from the local architecture and indicated a propagation.

As Ünsal mentions 'It have become a necessity to spread the identity that makes the store to gain its image to all areas from the product of the store to the standard service conception and typified spatial layout' [18]. The standardization in the store interiors of this period can be described as 'the transformation of the localities by west as the dominant power' testifying Giddens' theory which is explained above. Global standards of consumption culture and spaces have been transferred to the life and space in Turkey and similarly in many developing countries. At this point, modern commercial interior spaces that have been brought by hegemonic power had acceptance rapidly and served to consumption culture in societies that are familiar to western architectural implementations. Supporting this point of view, Tomlinson states that 'In a world where our ordinary 'local' experiences are being

motivated by distant operations and events increasingly, to perceive daily cultural practices as 'we do this as this way' -meaning to take these as practices that has idiosyncratic relations with our specific history and traditions- is problematic. In that case, today's modern westerns are experiencing the globalized culture as a self-assured 'centreless', 'placeless' modernity' (2004:133). Different stores of the French apparel brand Givenchy which are located in various countries can be convenient examples for the interior design installation that is independent to the located geography and its local cultural factors in global retailing. In these chain store agencies, the interior design has been set up with monotypic arrangement in order to project the corporate identity and do not reveal any spatial characteristics related with the geographical location. The brand's South Korea, Japan and USA stores are shown in Figure 1. Interior space is an example of a rational design understanding. A monotypic assembly from surface finishing materials to colour schemes can be seen. The large-scaled black display units that are used in every store of the brand are iconic armatures which are substantial for the corporate identity's recognisability.

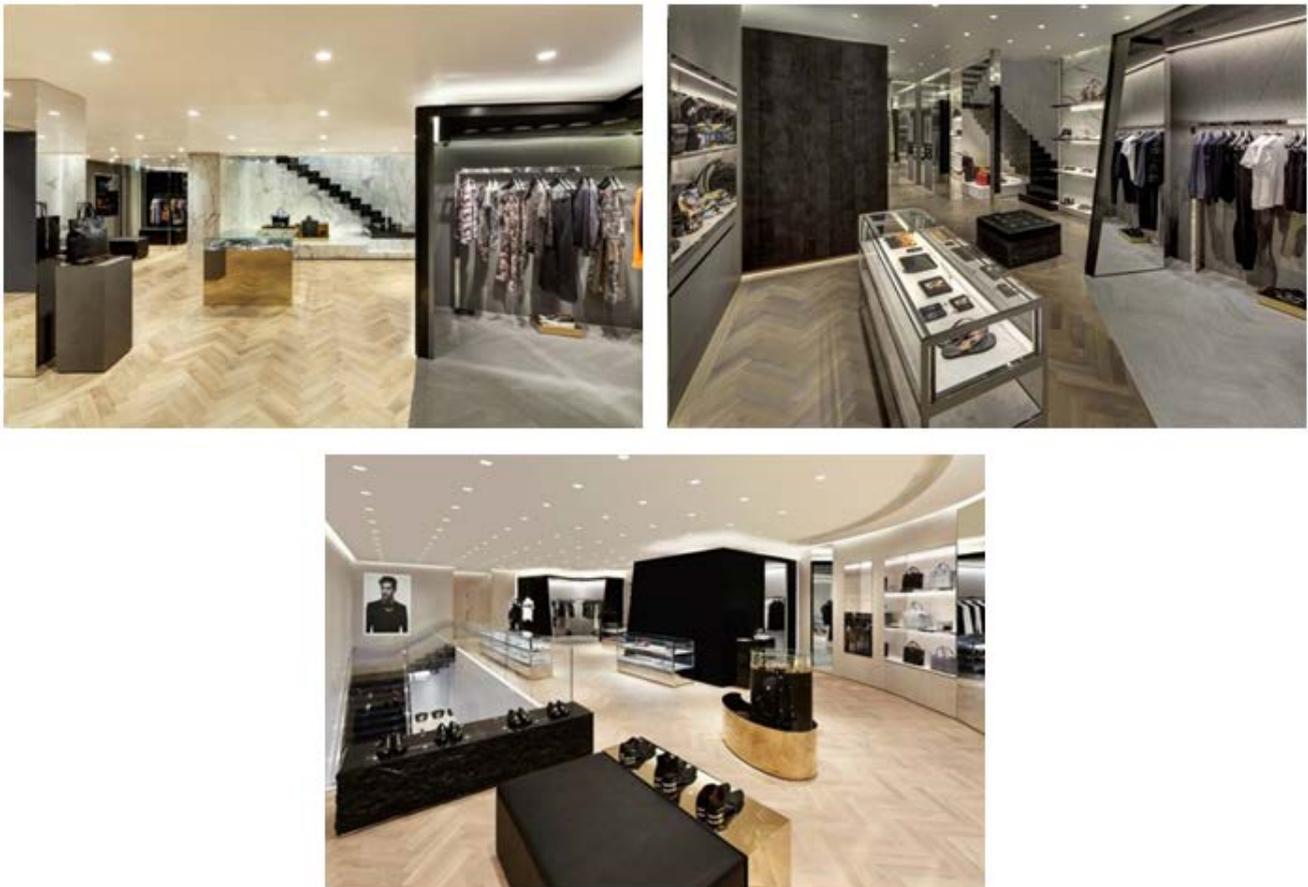


Figure 1. Givenchy stores in South Korea, Japan and USA respectively (URL-2)

Another chain store example that is designed to reflect the corporate identity into spatial configuration is shown in Figure 2. The images belong to an apparel brand's chain stores in four different countries. Store's interior design is formed with the fundamental idea of representing the corporate identity unrelated to the geographical location. All store agencies are dominated by the monotypic assembly with eclectic characteristics. It is salient in store images that sales, resting and display areas are designed as

nested in each other. Resting areas that support marketing reminds residential dwelling areas as a part of interior spatial concept. Hand-made carpets and eclectic furnishings are used and wall surfaces are covered with visual images in frames in the interior space; where a slice of domestic life is conceptualized. It is imaginable that the mannequins which are used to display products are the households. Pendant lighting fixtures which are an effective armature in every retail store are used here again

as parallel to residential spaces. The only differentiation about design criteria for store space assemblies can be seen in the colour choices for the surfaces; partly red, black and white colours are leaping out on surfaces of the walls and ceilings. The single limited variance design tool

is the colour in this manner. It was not stepped out of the colour frame which are specified as black, white and red and even it have become challenging to figure out that the images belong to four different stores located in various geographies.



**Figure 2.** American *John Varvatos* chain stores. Toronto, Bangkok, New York and London stores respectively (URL-3)

Two chain stores that are analyzed above are setting an example of the theory that global understanding is being effective independently from localities in interior spatial design. Many of the European and American global brands continued the monotypic store characteristic while spreading to their own continents. It is possible that these brands haven't met an obstacle about their monotypic store interiors' acceptance in countries that does not have major differences in terms of cultural and vital practices. On the other hand, in some chain stores that are located in asunder geographies with differentiating cultural and vital traditions, it is possible to observe that this effect has began to change, as these examples are giving rise to thought of local influences are situated in global design. At this point, nowadays, it can be observed that the balance of *glocal* influences are relatively different in the chain store interiors of the far East, which is a rising value with its economy and similarly in Arabian peninsula as an essential market with its economical resources. Some chain store brands franchised in these mentioned geographies have combined their corporate identities with local cultural factors by taking different interior design decisions. In this scope, it is possible to think that there are some traces of the monotony of today's global retailing has begin to be distorted by localization. This thought exemplifies the integration of global design understanding with local elements, which is an evidence for the *glocalization* theory of Roland Robertson as explained above. The usage of cultural elements in design of store

interiors may refer to the desire to find a piece of themselves which is mentioned in the statement of Barr: '*when people enter in a store, they observe their environment in the search of small details that will strengthen their inspirations and to see their own images*' (1990). It can be the reason of global brands' choice of a historical location for their *flagshi*<sup>3</sup> stores when they place themselves in a different geography in the recent period. These flagship stores placed in the buildings with historical values and a prestigious stories offer a familiar experience based on a deep-rooted past to the users and this way provide quality and prestige to the brand itself [9]. While store interior design is concerned with the brand, product and identity, it should also answer the basic criteria of increasing the shopping duration of the customer in the space while spending quality time [6]. In this manner, it becomes a great importance to create an attractive interior spatial concept that is inviting the customer inside while supporting their decision of purchase products. Using local geography's historical data in the design will cause the customer to have a familiar and/or interesting experience and motive his perception positively in this way.

<sup>3</sup> *Flagship Store*: The very first store of a global brand that is located in fashion capitals designed with the aim of promoting the brand or strengthen the perception of the brand [17]. Obviously in this typology of flagship stores in retailing sector require to present the corporate identity of the brand in the most clear way.

An example store interior for the usage of localities as an input that is influencing and diverging the global is given in Figure 3, which are a global apparel brand's flagship stores. When the same brand's stores located in different geographies are examined, it is observed that a common interior spatial concept with a rational design understanding is dominant. A monotypic product and material usage in almost all fittings from surface coverings to display units is remarkable. The contrast between dark brown and beige tones and the usage of bronze material in fittings can be seen. However, a distinctive fixture attracts

the attention in the last image of the store in Dubai. The morphological characteristics of the lighting fixture defines a quite majestic volume compared to other stores, even it doesn't stand contradictory to the rational spirit of the space (Figure 3). This differentiation which is provided by a dominant fixture in the entrance can be interpreted as the interaction of local factors with global dynamics. In this scope, the corporate identity does not rule out cultural symbols of the geography where it is located while it is permeating to the space.



Figure 3. Hugo Boss stores located in Manchester, UK; Toronto, Canada and Dubai, Saudi Arabia respectively (URL-4,5,6)

Similarly, another interior spatial conception can be given as an example for the coalescence of localities with global from a Spanish accessories brand's chain stores.

The Paris and Rome stores of the chain brand are placed in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Loewe stores from Paris, France and Rome, Italy respectively (URL-7,8)

Interior spatial characteristics, materials and choice of fixtures are implemented exactly the same to both stores. Colour scheme decisions are made as a monochromatic layout from brown to yellow. Display and purchasing units with metal shelves and niches on textile coverings of the walls are also common design decisions. However, it is observed that the interior spatial characteristics are completely different in the store of the same brand located

in Tokyo, Japan. In the images of [Figure 5](#), the design is completely out of the design decisions which are applied in stores located in Europe. Narrated from the designer, local materials are mainly chosen for surface coverings; marble and limestone coatings are used. Also, displays with cultural references made by Japanese designers for the fixtures take attention ([URL-9](#)).



**Figure 5.** *Loewe* flagship store in Tokyo/Japan ([URL-9](#))

Another example for store interior design that is shaped with the integrated influence of global and local components can be given from a global chain brand of a fashion designer that explicates his style as a synthesis of the luxury, simplicity and elegance. The key words of simplicity and elegance are responded with the choice of

travertine, wood and leather furniture in the stores of the brand located in New Mexico, USA; Geneva, Switzerland, and Hong Kong, China that can be seen in [Figure 6](#). Plain, rational forms afar from ornament are perceived in all scales from surface coverings to fixture decisions.



**Figure 6.** *Elie Saab* stores located in Geneva, Switzerland, New Mexico, USA and Hong Kong, China respectively ([URL-10,11](#))

However, the Dubai/Saudi Arabia store in [Figure 7](#) reveals differing specialties from the European and American stores in [Figure 6](#), beginning from its showcase design. Rational form of unpolished, thin-profiled metal display units leave their place into more bold profiles and brass-like shiny yellow metal in the store located in Dubai.



**Figure 7.** *Elie Saab* store in Dubai, Saudi Arabia (URL-12)

Consequently, alterations related to culture are observed in order to reflect the key words belonging the corporate identity or the message that is needed to be given to the customer through space in this chain store.

#### 4. Conclusion

Globalization keeps being a current issue as a phenomenon that defines the frame of our lives. The definition and domain of this influence that its propagating effect and power continues increasingly since its emergence period is studied and classified in two axis in a sociological perspective. While first group defines globalization as a connective interaction from centre to the peripheral combined with western modernity, the second group evaluates globalization as an intercultural process and through this perspective explains as a convergence and influence of localities with each other. Spreading with the globalization, consumption culture brings the transformations that are being felt in daily life of societies and individuals together itself. Lives that are being uniformed by global perspective are surrounded by standard products, services and spatial requirements. The reason that commerce as the catalyst hegemony throughout the world is being influential on social life also prepared the transformation of commercial spaces. Within this scope, commercial spaces and specifically chain stores can be thought as one of the typologies that this economy-based transformation is being perceived rapidly.

Global brands reunited their products with different consumer profiles through the stores they opened in various countries. When the interior spaces of these stores are observed, it is possible to encounter to spatial embodiments of both globalization theories. In the first periods that globalization entered our lives as a popular term, it is seen that the search of monotypic design came to the forefront in chain store interior designs. In this

Even though there is no alteration about rational form usage, the atmospheric definition have quite changed, a relatively warmer and sumptuous interior space have been created. The reason of this alteration can be explained as the luxury finds an expression through different displays in Arabic culture.

approach, a single interior design is being developed in order to apply to every retail of the chain store and local culture or geographical data are being ignored. Examples for this type of store interior design concepts are shown in [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#). As one can see, the monotypic store interior design is repeated in every store agencies despite the geography that they have been located. Corporate identity of the store has been taken as the primary design criteria and no interactions are made with consumer group's cultural acceptances or local parameters. This rigid perspective that is shown for spatial design understanding have not been bended according to the expectations of aimed customer group; vital practices or culture of the countries that stores are located have not been taken as parameters for design process. Within this scope, repeatability of these monotypic store interior designs in every location in the world may be seen as the practical field of the first category of globalization theories which is lead by Giddens. According to this theory, globalization is an upper dominance spreading from the centre to peripheral while being coalescence with western modernity understanding. One and the same to western chain stores applying their interior spatial concepts in Asia or Far East dominantly.

Nowadays on the other hand, dissimilar to this approach above, there are some examples that integrates the contribution of localities to the fundamental aim of reflecting corporate identity in space in store interior design. Examples for global chain stores enriched by containing local-cultural influences are shown in [Figure 3](#), [5](#) and [7](#). In these examples, while global chain stores' agencies in Europe and USA keep the same concept, they need differentiation in Far East and Arabian peninsula. Various cultural notions are being mingled to the design as a spatial parameter and thus, the emphasis in interior space is being changed. In this time, fundamental aim of reflecting corporate identity to interior space is being taken with various extents. While the chain store in [Figure 5](#)

preferred to integrate its Far East agency to local culture completely, the brand in Figure 3 and Figure 7 integrates local cultural elements to the concept limited with fixture designs. In this way, while the notions developed for corporate identity in store interior design remain the same, it is observed that a distinctive steering is given to the design by inserting equivalents of these notions in local culture. These examples can be thought as the reflections of the theory defined by Tomlinson as local influences on global or glocalities on spatial design. In other words, these chain stores that are being example for second group of globalization theories can be accepted as hybrid glocal formations occurred by convergence of localities, supporting Tomlinson's approach. The fact that glocal interior spatial design examples are generally seen from Far East and Arabic culture can be explained by cultural influences of globalization. As these Eastern societies are being partially adapted to western (European-American) life styles, nonetheless, they reveal a differentiating structure with cultural, vital traditions or practices of their own. Considering the fact that the key words or notions which used by brands in order to describe their corporate identities find different responses in cultures with different structures, store interiors are being compatible to these variations.

From a mercantile perspective, the need to approach to customer with local spatial influences in order to success in societies with differing cultural dynamics is a natural consequence. In this sense through the examples from interior design, societies that are dominantly influential with their economical or cultural powers are able to create examples that are localizing or transforming the global effects.

As a conclusion, it is possible to find examples from store interior designs that are equivalent to both global and glocal theories. Store interior design may come up with monotypic solutions in some cases or innovated details including local cultural traces in others throughout various corners of the globe in our time that globalization is dominating entire world. In this sense, it is possible to state that local cultural parameters being visible in global design understandings creates new cultural coalescences and consequently steer the design to relatively enriched spatial concepts.

## URL:

### Url-1

<<https://ekonomist.co/2014/04/20/50-yila-ozel-koka-kola-reklamı/>>

### Url-2

<<http://www.dezeen.com/2015/02/12/givenchy-store-seoul-piurarch-undulating-moulded-metal-facade>>

### Url-3

<<https://www.johnvarvatos.com/storedetails?StoreID=3013>>

### Url-4

<<http://www.manchesterfashion.com/c/19/508/hugo-boss-opens-uks-largest-store-in-manchester>>

### Url-5

<<http://dtah.com/project/hugo-boss/>>

### Url-6

<<http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/shop/FashionGenera/1/hugo-boss.aspx>>

### Url-7

<<http://www.cpp-luxury.com/loewe-unveils-redesigned-paris-flagship-store/>>

### Url-8

<<http://www.cpp-luxury.com/loewe-opens-in-rome-first-flagship-store-in-italy/>>

### Url-9

<<http://www.alumind.com/article/casa-loewe-opens-tokyo/>>

### Url-10

<[red-luxury.com/brands-retail/lie-saab-to-set-up-shops-in-hk-beijing-shanghai](http://red-luxury.com/brands-retail/lie-saab-to-set-up-shops-in-hk-beijing-shanghai)>

### Url-11

<<http://www.globalblue.com/destinations/switzerland/geneva/lie-saab-geneva/#slide-2>>

### Url 12

<<http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/shop/fashionwomen/lie-saab.aspx>>

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