THE SEARCH FOR CITY

BETWEEN BEING AND SEEMING IN THE RAPID URBANISATION OF DOHA, QATAR

by

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ABSTRACT

Title:
The Search for City : Between Being and Seeming in the Rapid Urbanisation of Doha, Qatar

This dissertation's essential aim is to understand the collective nature of a rapidly evolving twenty-first-century city. Looking closely at Doha, Qatar – a city that can choose to be anything it desires – reveals a tension between the regime's aspirations and the expectations of its (mostly foreign) constituents. Doha's fundamental transformation from village to metropolis provides an interpretation of 'city' that discloses the possibilities and limitations of civic culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

This thesis' contribution to knowledge is four-fold: (1) to add generally to architectural and urban theory, and particularly to Arabian Gulf studies; (2) to develop an analytical framework based upon hermeneutic phenomenology that incorporates architecture into its structure of understanding; (3) to use this framework to illuminate the structure of Doha's urban culture during its most transformative period; (4) to publish previously unseen documents and gather original personal narratives related to the period of study.

This thesis takes as its central concern how the institutional order within Doha, Qatar, provides the ground for ethical and ontological orientation; how one specific urban society, Doha, Qatar, uses architecture and its representation in its search for an authentic orientation in history when caught between the pull of tradition and the push of modernity. This tension is expressed in the city's architecture and urban order as a mechanism to enable a shifting institutional order: new institutions arise within new forms, which in turn yield new architectural embodiments and new cultural articulations. This is Doha's search for city: the constant attempt to reconcile what the world seems to be with what it might be.

CONTENTS

Abstract *i*

Table of Contents *ii*

Acknowledgements *iii*

List of Figures *v*

Abbreviations *x*

PART I. INTRODUCTION AND INTERPRETIVE METHOD

Chapter 1. Introduction **1**

Chapter 2. Understanding the Urban Order: the Use and Method of Philosophical Hermeneutics **33**

PART II. THE ARCHITECTURAL, URBAN, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF QATAR

Chapter 3. Qatar's Political History **77**

Chapter 4. The Basis of Arabian Urbanism **100**

Chapter 5. The Development of Doha **115**

Chapter 6. Analysis of Doha's Master Plans: 1972–Present **151**

PART III. THE URBAN AND INSTITUTIONAL TOPOGRAPHY OF DOHA

Chapter 7. Islamic Urban Foundations and Traditions **177**

Chapter 8. Negotiating Cultural Differences: Between the Traditional and the Practical **255**

Chapter 9. The Practical City and the Modernist Image **296**

PART IV. CONCLUSION

Chapter 10. The Struggle for Synthesis **394**

Bibliography **423**

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LIST OF FIGURES

PART II

Chapter 3. Qatar's Political History
Figure 3.1. Photograph of the pearl sculpture on the Doha Corniche 78
Figure 3.2. Satellite image of Earth highlighting Qatar 79
Figure 3.3. Map of Persian Gulf pearl fishing grounds 81
Figure 3.4. 1935 oil concession map 86
Figure 3.5. Diagram of Al-Thani royal family tree 87
Figure 3.6. Photograph of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani 88
Figure 3.7. Photograph of Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al-Thani 88
Figure 3.8. Photograph of Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al-Than 89
Figure 3.9. Photograph of Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Abdullah Al-Thani 89
Figure 3.10. Photograph of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani 90
Figure 3.11. Photograph of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani 90
Figure 3.12. Photograph Sheikh Tamim during National Day 91
Figure 3.13. Chart illustrating foreign and national population of Qatar 1970–2015 93
Figure 3.14. Chart comparing oil prices and Qatar's GDP 1965–2015 94
Figure 3.15. Chart comparing LNG prices to Qatar's GDP 1985–2015 95
Figure 3.16. Chart comparing the growth of the national population of Qatari citizens and the rise of GDP 1965–2015 97

Chapter 4. The Basis of Arabian Urbanism
Figure 4.1. 1952 Hunting Aerial Survey of Doha 102
Figure 4.2. Detail of the 1952 Hunting Aerial Survey of Doha 103
Figure 4.3. Redrawn map from 1963 showing the urban fereej neighbourhoods 104
Figure 4.4. Aerial photograph of Doha in the late 1940s 109
Figure 4.5. Photograph of a Bedouin man drawing water from his local well 109
Figure 4.6. Rooftop view of a Doha neighbourhood in the 1970s. 110
Figure 4.7. Photograph of Qatari women near Souq Waqif 111
Figure 4.8. Photograph of daily life near Souq Waqif 112
Figure 4.9. Photograph of a Qatari woman walking in a Doha sikka (alleyway) 112
Figure 4.10. Photograph of men walking on a dirt lane in the years before tarmac 113

Chapter 5. The Development of Doha
Figure 5.1. 'Trigonometrical plan of the harbour of El Biddah on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. By Lieuts. J.M. Guy and G.B. Brucks, H.C. Marine. Drawn by Lieut. M. Houghton' 1862 117
Figure 5.2. Photograph of pearl divers 121
Figure 5.3. 1952 Kuwait City master plan by Minoprio and Spencely 126
Figure 5.4. 1952 detailed map of Doha highlighting the radial ring road system, by Hunting Aero Survey Ltd 126
Figure 5.5. 1971 Qatar National Budget summary 138
Figure 5.6. Photograph of Sheikh Ahmed in front of his Geneva, Switzerland home 140
Figure 5.7. Photograph of Sheikh Hamad and his second wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Misned, holding the trophy awarded by FIFA to host the World Cup in 2022. 146
Figure 5.8. Photograph of Sheikh Hamad appearing on US news programme 60 Minutes 147
Figure 5.9. Photograph of Qatar's Patriot missile launcher on parade 150

Chapter 6. Analysis of Doha's Master Plans: 1972-Present
Figure 6.1. 1972 Doha master plan by LWFB 154
Figure 6.2. 1975 Doha master plan by William L. Pereira 158
Figure 6.3. 1975 West Bay master plan by William L. Pereira 160
Figure 6.4. Chart of Doha population growth predictions 161
Figure 6.5. Chart of Doha population growth predictions 165

Figure 6.6. HOK PDP areas of major change within Doha 166
Figure 6.7. 2015 aerial image of Doha highlighting vacant land 167
Figure 6.8. 1996 HOK study of existing housing conditions 169
Figure 6.9. Chart of Qatar's defence spending 175

PART III

Figure III.1 Diagram of Part III analytical structure 178

Chapter 7. Islamic Urban Foundations and Traditions

Figure 7.1. 1956 aerial photograph of Doha 186
Figure 7.2. Photograph of Doha unpaved street 187
Figure 7.3. Photograph of the Al-Yousef mosque 188
Figure 7.4. Photograph of the interior of the Al-Yousef mosque 188
Figure 7.5 Photograph of the Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahahab Mosque 191
Figure 7.6. Map of central Doha locating key urban features 193
Figure 7.7. Photograph of the Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church 193
Figure 7.8. Photograph of the Anglican Centre Church 193
Figure 7.9. Photograph of the exterior of the Abdul Wahhab Mosque 194
Figure 7.10. Photograph of West Bay from the Abdul Wahhab Mosque entry 194
Figure 7.11. Photograph of Al-Qubib Mosque 196
Figure 7.12. Photograph of Al-Qubib Mosque 196
Figure 7.13. Photograph of Doha harbour in the 1950s 200
Figure 7.14. Photograph of Souq Waqif in the 1960s 201
Figure 7.15. Photograph of Souq Waqif in the 1970s 201
Figure 7.16. Photograph of the Darwish Travel Bureau 203
Figure 7.17. Aerial photograph of Doha harbour in the 1950s 205
Figure 7.18. Photograph of Souq Waqif while flooded 206
Figure 7.19. Photograph of Souq Waqif 208
Figure 7.20. Photograph of Souq Waqif 208
Figure 7.21. Photograph of Souq Waqif 209
Figure 7.22. Photograph of Souq Waqif 209
Figure 7.23. Photograph of Al-Hazm Mall 210
Figure 7.24. Photograph of Al-Hazm Mall 210
Figure 7.25. Photograph of inner Doha street market 211
Figure 7.26. Photograph of inner Doha alleyway 212
Figure 7.27. Photograph of Villagio Mall interior 213
Figure 7.28. Map of inner Doha 215
Figure 7.29. Aerial photograph of the Emiri Diwan 215
Figure 7.30. 1904 photograph of the Turkish Fort in Doha 216
Figure 7.31. Photograph of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim's palace 216
Figure 7.32. Photograph of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim's palace 217
Figure 7.33. Photograph of the Emiri Diwan complex in the 1960s 218
Figure 7.34. 1975 Ministries Competition entry by Kenzo Tange 219
Figure 7.35. Kenzo Tange's final scheme for the Ministries Competition 219
Figure 7.36. Architectural model of Kenzo Tange's Ministries Completion entry 219
Figure 7.37. Photograph of West Bay from the Emiri Diwan 221
Figure 7.38. Aerial image of Al-Wajbah Palace 222
Figure 7.39. Floor plans for government provided houses 224
Figure 7.40. Exterior rendering of a government provided house 225
Figure 7.41. Photograph of a typical government provided house 226
Figure 7.42. Photograph of the Emir's office 226
Figure 7.43. Photograph of Qatari majils 227
Figure 7.44. Photograph of Qatari house exterior 227
Figure 7.45. Photograph of a house under construction 228
Figure 7.46. Photograph of a large majlis fronting a highway 228
Figure 7.47. Photograph of traditional tent-like majlis 229
Figure 7.48. Photograph of traditional tent-like majlis 229
Figure 7.49. Night photograph of a majlis 230
Figure 7.50. Night photograph of a majlis 230
Figure 7.51. Map of Doha locating the Msheireb project 235
Figure 7.52. Detailed map of Doha locating the Msheireb project 236
Figure 7.53. 1980 street plan of Msheireb 236

Figure 7.54. Digital rendering of Msheireb site plan 236
Figure 7.55. Photograph of Msheireb 237
Figure 7.56. Digital rendering of Msheireb 237
Figure 7.57. Street view of Msheireb under construction 238
Figure 7.58. Panorama photograph of Msheireb under construction 238
Figure 7.59. Panorama photograph of the existing Msheireb neighbourhood 239
Figure 7.60. Map locating Barwa Commercial Avenue 243
Figure 7.61. Photograph of Barwa Village 245
Figure 7.62. Photograph of Barwa Village 246
Figure 7.63. Photograph of Barwa Commercial Avenue 246
Figure 7.64. Photograph of Barwa Commercial Avenue 247
Figure 7.65. Digital rendering of Msheireb redevelopment 250
Figure 7.66. Photography of Msheireb redevelopment under construction 250
Figure 7.67. Digital rendering of Msheireb redevelopment 251
Figure 7.68. Digital rendering of Msheireb redevelopment 252
Figure 7.69. Photograph of central Doha from Barwa Village 254

Chapter 8. Negotiating Cultural Differences: Between the Traditional and the Practical
Figure 8.1. Map of central Doha locating museums 256
Figure 8.2. Photograph of HE Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad Al-Thani 259
Figure 8.3. Photograph of the Ibn Tulun Mosque, Cairo, Egypt 259
Figure 8.4. Aerial photograph of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha 260
Figure 8.5. Photograph of West Bay seen from the MIA 261
Figure 8.6. Photograph of the MIA 262
Figure 8.7. Photograph of the Hajj Exhibition at the MIA 263
Figure 8.8. Photograph of Al-Riwaq gallery, Doha 264
Figure 8.9. Photograph of Damien Hirst exhibition at Al-Riwaq 264
Figure 8.10. Mural by Takashi Murakami 265
Figure 8.11. Photograph of Murakami and Al-Mayassa at Al-Riwaq 265
Figure 8.12. Murakami's *Hiropon* 265
Figure 8.13. Al-Riwaq exterior for the Murakami exhibition 266
Figure 8.14. Murakami's *My Lonesome Cowboy* 266
Figure 8.15. Abdessemed's *Chrysalide, ça tient à trois fils* 267
Figure 8.16. Abdessemed's *Décor* 267
Figure 8.17. Abdessemed's *Coup de Tête* 267
Figure 8.18. Abdessemed's *Printemps* 267
Figure 8.19. Twitter image 268
Figure 8.20. Twitter image 268
Figure 8.21. Photograph of Sidra Hospital with *The Miraculous Journey* 269
Figure 8.22. Photograph of Sidra Hospital with *The Miraculous Journey* 269
Figure 8.23. Photograph of Mataf 270
Figure 8.24. Photograph of Serra's '7' 271
Figure 8.25. Photograph of the MIA park 271
Figure 8.26. Map locating Education City and Qatar University 273
Figure 8.27. Photograph of Qatar University 274
Figure 8.28. Photograph of Doha wind tower 274
Figure 8.29. 1975 Qatar University master plan map 276
Figure 8.30. Aerial photograph of Qatar University 276
Figure 8.31. Photograph of Education City 278
Figure 8.32. Photograph of Qatar Foundation's new headquarters 278
Figure 8.33. Photograph of Qatar Foundation's old headquarters 279
Figure 8.34. Photograph of the Weill Cornell Medical School 280
Figure 8.35. Photograph of Texas A&M University in Qatar 280
Figure 8.36. Photograph of the Qatar National Library 280
Figure 8.37. Photograph of VCU-Qatar and QF's Liberal Arts Buildings 281
Figure 8.38. Panorama of Education City 282
Figure 8.39. Photograph from the new QF Headquarters 283
Figure 8.40. Photograph of Apple showroom, New York City 284
Figure 8.41. Photograph of the new QF Headquarters 284
Figure 8.42. Photograph of the Ka'ba, Mecca, Saudi Arabia 284
Figure 8.43. Map of Katara 285
Figure 8.44. Panorama photograph of West Bay from Katara 286
Figure 8.45. Photograph of Katara's dhow harbour 286

Figure 8.46. Map of Katara 287
Figure 8.47. Photograph of Katara's coloured-tile mosque and dovecote 287
Figure 8.48. Photograph of Katara's gold-tiled mosque 288
Figure 8.49. Photograph of Katara alleyway 288
Figure 8.50. Photograph of Katara sand dunes 289
Figure 8.51. Photograph of Katara's animal hospital 290
Figure 8.52. Photograph of Katara restaurant 291
Figure 8.53. Photograph of Katara Corniche 291
Figure 8.54. Photograph of Katara tile mosque 292
Figure 8.55. Photograph of Katara dovecote 293
Figure 8.56. Photograph of Katara parking lot 293
Figure 8.57. Photograph of Katara parking lot 294
Figure 8.58. Photograph of Katara parking lot 294
Figure 8.59. Photograph of Katara alleyway 295

Chapter 9. The Practical City and Modernist Image

Figure 9.1. Chart of transport-related injuries in Qatar 305
Figure 9.2. Photograph of a Doha truck convoy 308
Figure 9.3. Photograph of a Doha truck convoy 308
Figure 9.4. Photograph of truck carrying radioactive material 308
Figure 9.5. Photograph of custom painted lorry 310
Figure 9.6. Photograph of a Doha courtyard house 310
Figure 9.7. Photograph of a Doha courtyard house 310
Figure 9.8. Photograph of a Doha courtyard house 311
Figure 9.9. Photograph of cardboard home at Education City 311
Figure 9.10. Photograph of shanty dwelling 312
Figure 9.11. Photograph of migrant labour dormitory 312
Figure 9.12. Photograph of a migrant labour dormitory 312
Figure 9.13. Photograph of driver's dwelling 315
Figure 9.14. Photograph of a driver's dwelling 316
Figure 9.15. Photograph of Doha street with driver's dwellings numbered 317
Figure 9.16. Photograph of West Bay skyline 322
Figure 9.17. Photograph of Queen Elizabeth II in Dubai 324
Figure 9.18. Photograph of the Dubai World Trade Centre 324
Figure 9.19. Photograph of Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai 324
Figure 9.20. Photograph of Qatar General Petroleum Corp 325
Figure 9.21. Photograph of Qatar General Petroleum Corp 325
Figure 9.22. Photograph of the Doha Sheraton Hotel 326
Figure 9.23. Photograph of the Doha Sheraton Hotel 326
Figure 9.24. Photograph of Sheikh Zayed Road 327
Figure 9.25. Photograph of Conference Street, Doha 328
Figure 9.26. Photograph of QDP billboard 331
Figure 9.27. Photograph of QDP 331
Figure 9.28. Photograph of QDP and Msheireb billboard 332
Figure 9.29. Map of central Doha 333
Figure 9.30. Photograph of West Bay 334
Figure 9.31. Photograph of the Burj Qatar 337
Figure 9.32. Photograph of the Burj Qatar 337
Figure 9.33. Photograph of the Mezquita, Cordoba, Spain 338
Figure 9.34. Photograph of a Cairo Mashribiya 338
Figure 9.35. Photograph of the Burj Qatar 339
Figure 9.36. Floor plan of the Burj Qatar 339
Figure 9.37. Building section of the Burj Qatar 340
Figure 9.38. Photograph of the Burj Qatar 340
Figure 9.39. Photograph of the Burj Qatar 340
Figure 9.40. Photograph of Barzan Tower 341
Figure 9.41. Photograph of the Supreme Education Council 341
Figure 9.42. Photograph of Samriya Twin Towers 342
Figure 9.43. Photograph of Samriya Twin Towers 342
Figure 9.44. Photograph of the Msheireb neighbourhood 344
Figure 9.45. Digital rendering of the Msheireb redevelopment 344
Figure 9.46. Photograph of Sheikh Hamad 346
Figure 9.47. Photograph of National Day parade 347

Figure 9.48. Vodaphone advertisement 347
Figure 9.49. Drawing of Doha Tower, 1977 352
Figure 9.50. Site plan of Doha Tower, 1977 352
Figure 9.51. Photograph of West Bay 355
Figure 9.52. Photograph of the 2010 FIFA award presentation 358
Figure 9.53. Photograph of the hymenocallis flower 360
Figure 9.54. Photograph of the Burj Khalifa, Dubai 360
Figure 9.55. Digital rendering of Al-Wakrah Stadium 361
Figure 9.56. Digital rendering of Al-Bayt Stadium 362
Figure 9.57 Digital rendering of Qatar Foundation Stadium 363
Figure 9.58. Photograph of the QNCC 363
Figure 9.59. Photograph of a sidra tree 363
Figure 9.60. Rendering of Florence, Italy train station by Mutsuro Sasaki 364
Figure 9.61. Photograph of Sidra Hospital 364
Figure 9.62. Photograph of Damien Hirst sculpture, *The Miraculous Jo*urney 365
Figure 9.63. Photograph of the Burj Al-Arab, Dubai 365
Figure 9.64. Architectural rendering of the Qatar National Museum 366
Figure 9.65. Video image of a desert rose 367
Figure 9.66. Photograph of the Ministry of Interior Headquarters, 1977 370
Figure 9.67. Photograph of the new Ministry of Interior Headquarters 370
Figure 9.68. Photograph of the new Traffic Department Headquarters 370
Figure 9.69. Drawing 'Nimrud Restored' by A. H. Layard 371
Figure 9.70. Drawn reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate 371
Figure 9.71. Doha bus route map 373
Figure 9.72. Map of Qatar's long-distance rail network 374
Figure 9.73. Map of the Doha Metro Phase I 375
Figure 9.74. Map of the Doha Metro Phase II 376
Figure 9.75. RAF Doha air route 377
Figure 9.76. Doha airport 1960 378
Figure 9.77. Chart of GCC air passenger transit 379
Figure 9.78. Digital rendering for Airport City 381
Figure 9.79. Photograph of *Lamp Bear* 382
Figure 9.80. Photograph of the interior of HIA 383
Figure 9.81. Photograph of the interior of HIA 383
Figure 9.82. Photograph of the HIA departure gate 384
Figure 9.83. Photograph of the Emir's private air terminal 384
Figure 9.84. Map of the Sharq Crossing 385
Figure 9.85. Digital rendering of the Sharq Crossing 386
Figure 9.86. Digital rendering of the Sharq Crossing 386
Figure 9.87. Digital rendering of the Sharq Crossing 387
Figure 9.88. Digital rendering of Doha Park 388

PART IV

Chapter 10. The Struggle for Synthesis

Figure 10.1 Aerial photograph of Doha 397
Figure 10.2a. Aerial photograph of Doha 398
Figure 10.2b. Aerial photograph of Doha 398
Figure 10.3. Video image of Place Vendome 400
Figure 10.4. Video image of Place Vendome 400
Figure 10.5. Video image of Place Vendome 400
Figure 10.6. Video image of Place Vendome 400
Figure 10.7. Photograph of QF leadership 408
Figure 10.8 Photograph of Mecca 413

ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Central Municipal Council
EI	Encyclopaedia of Islam
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FO	Foreign Office
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the British Government
GCC	Gulf Cooperative Council
GSDP	General Secretariat for Development and Planning
GFA	Gross Floor Area
HBKU	Hamad bin Khalifa University
HH	Her Highness
HIA	Hamad International Airport
HOK	Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum
IOR	India Office Records
Lakh	A unit of the Indian numbering system equal to 100,000
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LWFB	Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor
MIA	The Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar
MMUP	Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PA	Political Agent
P&C	Private and Confidential: used by Eastern Bank managers
PDP	Physical Development Plan
PDQ	Petroleum Development Qatar
PEO	Private Engineer Office
QAR	Qatari Riyal (1 QAR = US $ 0.274, GBP £ 0.177)
QPD	Qatar Petroleum District
QF	Qatar Foundation
QGPC	Qatar General Petroleum Corporation
QMA	Qatar Museums Authority
QNCC	Qatar National Convention Centre
QRDP	Qatar Rail Development Program
QSTP	Qatar Science and Engineering Park
Rs.	Indian Rupee
RST	Rentier State Theory
SCDL	Supreme Council for Delivery and Legacy
SEC	Supreme Education Council

I have been a stranger in a strange land.

– Exodus 2:22

She looked over his shoulder
For vines and olive trees,
Marble well-governed cities
And ships upon untamed seas,
But there on the shining metal
His hands had put instead
An artificial wilderness
And a sky like lead.

– W.H. Auden, 'The Shield of Achilles'

"But all the same we must examine it more carefully. For it is no ordinary matter that we are discussing, but the right conduct of life." "Proceed with your inquiry," he said. "I proceed," said I.

– Plato, *The Republic*

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND INTERPRETIVE METHOD

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In 2010 the second wife of Qatar's Emir, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Misned (hereafter Sheikha Moza), broke ground on one of the world's largest, most ambitious urban redevelopment projects: 'The Heart of Doha'. When complete the new inner-city district will cover 31 hectares, and see over 100 new buildings totalling 760,000 square metres (gross floor area) at a

published cost of £3.6 billion.[1] To achieve this, almost every building on the site will be demolished and every one of the 50,000 long-time residents displaced. Conceptually, the project, and also Sheikha Moza's social and architectural vision, are summarized by the marketing slogan 'a meeting of cultures not a melting of them'.[2] Curiously, a few years later that strap line was dropped completely and the project rebranded as 'Msheireb Downtown Doha', Msheireb being the historic Arabic name for the site.

The details of this story are found in Part III; I introduce it here as a way to orient the central concerns, arguments, methods and conclusions of this thesis. While we do not know the actual reasons for changing Msheireb's marketing rhetoric, we can, more importantly, interpret the larger meanings behind the regime's desire to rebuild, rebrand and re-image Doha. The sentiment behind 'the meeting not melting of cultures' implies that as the city expands and migrants come *en masse* with their foreign ways, local Qataris and their ways will not be subsumed in the manner of 'melting pot' immigrant cities. Indeed, Doha has long avoided amalgamation, enjoying instead peaceful cultural diversity. But as the city continues its rapid expansion and transformation, pressure commensurably mounts on the local Qatari population to maintain an ancient institutional order within a modern, Western embodiment, surrounded constantly by foreign beliefs, religions and social practices. Though Qatar may welcome hordes of foreign labourers to help it modernize, it is most assuredly, and in spite of strap lines like Msheireb's, not democratic, a melting pot of foreign immigration, and its huddled masses do not enjoy all the freedoms of the UN Charter of Human Rights.

Msheireb Downtown Doha is just one of many projects by the real estate developer Msheireb Properties, a subsidiary of Qatar Foundation. Qatar Foundation was founded in 1995 by the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and his wife Sheikha Moza to provide Qatari citizens with

[1] People familiar with the project describe the total cost as at least 50 per cent higher.

[2] For a description of the project's planning principles written by its master planners see Law and Underwood (2012).

greater choices in education, health and social progress.[3] Because both Qatar Foundation and Msheireb Properties are chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza, with her children and close relatives, who also head many other government ministries on their boards of directors, I shall collectively refer to these corporate entities and the royal family, from which they often seem indistinguishable, simply as 'the regime'.

I interpret the dropping of the marketing line 'meeting not melting' to mean the regime has similarly dropped notions of cosmopolitanism in framing the conditions for 'community'. The re-centring is further reinforced by changing the project's name from the English 'Heart of Doha' (it never appeared in Arabic translation) to the traditional Arabic name for the site, 'Msheireb', a place to water animals. While these changes may seem subtle, when taken together the revised rhetoric unites architecture and politics to confer the meaning of the urban reclamation as being for Qataris, proud of their traditions, culture and religion, who for too long have neglected their urban roots as evidenced in how the city has become nearly devoid of any Arab presence. Put another way, Msheireb as an architectural fact is modern, designed by Western architects, it pays homage to Arab-Islamic motifs but it is most assuredly a gleaming box set among a sea of rapidly dilapidating architecture; as a symbol Msheireb represents Qatari pride. As a fact it is a reinvestment in urban society, a bulwark against decades of urban exodus to suburban sprawl by Qatari nationals; as a symbol it reclaims the city as Qatari, Arab, Islamic. As a fact Msheireb hopes Qatari families will move back to central Doha, enjoying luxury apartments, pedestrian streets and environmentally sustainable construction; as a symbol it is only for the very wealthy who hopefully will no longer have to 'meet' other cultures on non-Qatari terms. And finally, as a fact, Msheireb will connect the city's other major developments – museums, parks, souq, metro and Emir's administrative palace; as a symbol, taken together, this linkage portrays a modern, late-capitalist, well-functioning bureaucratic state warmly welcoming the world's tourists to its idyllic city.

[3] Source: http://www.qf.org.qa/about/about (accessed 29 May 2015).

I invoke the brief example of Msheireb to demonstrate the highly conflicted nature of re-imaging and refashioning a city. While we can forgive superficial inconsistencies, such as changing a marketing strategy, it is my contention, and what I shall argue throughout this thesis, that such dichotomies constitute a search to define the meaning of Qatar's capital city. The tension ranges in one dimension from the preservation of traditions to the embrace of modernity. And in another dimension the conflict is between a vertically oriented divine-cosmological ideal and a horizontally articulated human-centred world (grossly speaking, between theology embedded in local custom and the opportunities offered by global so-called neo-liberalism). These conflicts play out against the backdrop of a more fundamentalist interpretation of Islam than that which influenced the formation of earlier cosmopolitan Islamic cites, and against a contemporary orientation towards global capitalist icons of status, which are nominally less attached to religion or even to a nation or people than any previous understanding of 'cosmopolitanism' (Toulmin 1990). The ranges of these tensions arise from and give shape to the rapidly evolving city. That reciprocity is referred to throughout this thesis as the relationship between the urban and institutional order, suspending the city between what it factually is and symbolically seems, struggling all the while to synthesize the dichotomies in the search for a modern-Islamic city.

1.2 Objectives

Over and above the question of what is *a* purpose of Doha, we should ask what is *the* purpose of Doha or *any* city for that matter? Perhaps the earliest, most basic, answer comes from political philosophy's founder, Socrates, who asked 'how should we live?' (*Republic* 352D). Surely there is no more fundamental question one could ask of the purpose of a city than how we are to live, and I hasten to add the word *together*. Plato, in the subtitle to his *Republic*, provides an answer in the argument that the Republic is a search for justice, justice that harmonizes the individual to the world-soul. Plato's literary structure of dialog or dialectic mirrors what he believes makes harmony possible – symmetry between the city and the soul (Smith 2006). The analogy of city and soul was meant to posit a circular reasoning

between individuals shaping their societies, and their societies in turn shaping the individuals' characters.

Politically, every regime casts an ethos over its cities, producing particular kinds of individuals who in turn embody the regime's characteristics. The nature of this relationship underscores the contingency between the institutional order and the political order, which arises from and gives shape to the city.

Plato's student, Aristotle, pursues many of his teacher's themes but with far less derision towards individual liberty, or strident advocacy for a unity of public and private spheres. Also unlike Plato, Aristotle does not tell us exactly what kind of city (*polis*) or regime (*politea*) is best. What he does tell us is that the *polis* provides the conditions for the possibility of self-perfection, the mechanism to achieve our *telos*, our reason for being.[4] And only because humankind alone in the animal world possesses language and reason (*logos*) are we able to share in communal life, debating openly what makes a city just or unjust. For Aristotle the *polis* is, as Sophocles once remarked, 'the place of men's [all citizen's] free deeds and living worlds, which could endow life with splendour' (Sophocles 1962:255).

Crucially for our discussion, Aristotle's *polis* was not a universal state of any size, but rather a highly particular one, developed according to its own unique circumstances whose identity is always reflective of the regime. The *polis*, properly speaking, required trust, and common affection among its citizens, what Ibn Khaldun later called *'aṣabīya* (Ibn Khaldun 2005:123ff, 263ff) or group feeling, in order to grant a balance between individual liberty and communal responsibility, what Isaiah Berlin (1958) called negative and positive freedom. We will see both senses of this concept throughout this thesis as, the Islamic regime's guarantee of freedom from interference in submitting to God, the negative; and the positive as the freedom for something, and in our context the freedom for self-control over base desires. Negative freedom generally concerns the motivations of

[4] What Geertz (1973) says of Balinese ritual in 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' – that it represents the meaning of the collective order, or city – could be attributed to Aristotle's emphasis upon the *bios theoretikos*.

individual agents, while positive freedom describes how individuals relate to each other as members of particular collectives. Understanding how these definitions are linked to the regime, the city and its institutions is a central question in this thesis.

Some twenty-two centuries later political philosopher Hannah Arendt took the Aristotelian conjunction of political organization and urban form as a vital modern concern. I will discuss Arendt's contribution in Chapter 10, for the moment I shall only point out the enduring ontological and ethical orientation circumscribed by the relationship between politics and place as embodied in the *polis,* which always presents the problem voiced by Voegelin as 'order and history' – how can the exigencies of the latter (the particular) fulfil the former (the universal), usually understood as an ethical question?

One political category mentioned throughout this brief introduction requires some further discussion: the regime. As noted above, on one level 'regime' simply refers to Qatar's small group of business and political leaders, often both, clustered around the Emir that despite its image as a high-functioning Western-styled bureaucracy has monarchic status. On a deeper level regime forces us to question what is perhaps the oldest and most basic notion of political organization. The term 'regime' refers to Qatar's particular form of government in determining how people are ruled, and in turn what the people's rights and responsibilities to the regime and to each other are. Regime is also the formal institutions but also the culture's ethos, its way of life and its ethical, religious and legal practices. It is what the society values, and how it represents itself to itself and to others. Regime, therefore, comprises a spectrum of cultural articulations spanning the entire community, ranging on one end from definitive legal codes and the country's constitutional organization, to on the opposite pole the cultural customs of decorum and routine behaviours. This range of cultural articulations places claims upon every individual, affecting their positive and negative freedoms. Taken together I shall throughout this thesis refer collectively to these claims together with their architectural embodiments as the institutional order.

Inferred from the above discussion, and to quote the late US Senator Tip O'Neill 'all politics is local'. Common sense tells us everything, including – and perhaps especially – politics always occurs somewhere. We are always involved in a certain way of living, situated in a culture, experiencing the phenomena of that culture, in what Heidegger often calls the 'throwness' (*Geworfenheit*) of human existence in the world. And architecture better than any other cultural artefact provides a frame of reference that unites what I am broadly calling the institutional order with the facticity of everyday experience. We can, after Heidegger (1977), distinguish between architecture as an object, simply a constitutive member of the physical world; and also as a process related to context, situation and purpose. As such architecture allows us to enter the hermeneutic circle, understanding the relationship between parts and the whole (a topic discussed at length in Chapter 2), that is to say, the specific conditions that constitute the setting for the larger institutional order. As Dalibor Vesely (1988) reminds us 'in the end it is the situation that matters most of all. We dwell in situations … dwelling means being situated and having the ability and opportunity to come to a very rich context and live in it, inhabit it.' The term 'institutional order' emphasizes the fundamental status of the meaningful world of human activity, the relational whole of human existence that holds a structure of human possibilities.

The dialectic between architecture and politics is drawn from philosophical hermeneutics and the resulting interpretive paradigm found in social theory. The hermeneutic approach of Gadamer and Ricoeur stands in contrast to the positivist and, more obliquely, the post-structuralist approaches that dominate contemporary urban and architectural theory and analysis. Eschewing the positivist approach and the widely held explanatory theories of global commodity flows (Sassen) built upon neo-Marxist interpretations of social action, I shall instead draw upon the insights of phenomenologists and interpretive theorists. Resting upon the work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Taylor and Gadamer, among others, one of the virtues of phenomenological hermeneutics is that it enables one to identify the communication – or ruptures – between primordial experiences of

spatiality and more sophisticated or even abstract discourses emerging from philosophy or theology, the social sciences, the physical sciences, etc.

In large measure, this interpretive stance arose from Doha's ambiguities, strangely positioned between a modern business model and traditional Wahhabi fundamentalism, embodied in an architectural iconography that veers between pure form (or pure unadorned form) imported by high-modernist Western architects who draw upon vague notions of traditional (Orientalist) Islamism and analytical concepts such as 'space'.

The legibility of institutions in a traditional Islamic city is, in Doha, deeply compromised, even conflicted or confused. Against the usual Western disdain for Doha's architectural manners, however, I have adopted the hypothesis that they constitute a search for an 'Islamic city' appropriate for the new historical conditions, less a manifestation of global capitalism than a way to recover cultural pre-eminence in a milieu that conflicts with many Islamic beliefs. In its own way, and hidden from open debate by the manner of its achievement, Doha may be regarded as at the very early stages of a quest to preserve traditional hierarchies in a cultural context that eschews hierarchies (explicitly, at least) – that is, a way of finding orientation in history.

In sum, this thesis takes as its central concern how the institutional order within Doha, Qatar, provides the ground for ethical and ontological orientation.

By ethical I mean the ability to grant dignity and freedom (positive and negative) to its diverse peoples. Ground is understood in two, interrelated senses: as the actual places of meaningful social action; and also as a metaphor for the conditions that define Doha's particular interpretation of freedom (Carl 2012:67). By ontological I mean the study of what is. What is meaningful, the sources of meaning, and in virtue of what is anything understood as what it is. Having described what exists – that is, the general features of an urban society – I then seek to uncover the relations between these entities. In some instances this means describing the relationship

between universals and particulars (assuming, as I do, that both categories exist). In other cases it means comparing one situation to another. The ontological enquiry in this study therefore asks how beliefs held within several different social segments of Doha's urban society bring rational commitments to their understanding of the existence of certain entities, an understanding of the commitment to the existence of these entities (Hofweber 2014).

A triumph, or perhaps tragedy, of post-Cartesian philosophy is the divorce of ontological commitments from ethical ones. Seen against a pre-modern claim of the gods (a claim questioned at least as early as Xenophanes), today's ethical naturalist by contrast sees humans as part of a natural universe and their behaviours are explainable through paradigms derived from the sciences. As much as Doha takes advantage of, for example, modern medicine or engineering, it institutionally declares the measure of truth to be embodied in *sharīʿah* law with Allah simultaneously at the centre of the spiritual experience and at the head of the mundane earthly community. The political and theological unity places all of Qatari society, as well as the privacy of individual members, under the direct, legislative and supervisory power of Allah as understood through divine revelation. While this sounds very much like an ancient city, and institutionally in many respects it is, it is also thoroughly modern in appearance and impression. This fundamental tension gives rise to the essential question of this thesis: to establish how to understand the collective structure of Doha.

Within this overall objective there are several subordinate questions upon which the research rests: (1) to investigate the connections between different institutional registers that range from ancient to modern, from explicit to implicit; (2) to develop an interpretive model of the city's institutional structure based upon hermeneutic phenomenology that uses aspects of ethnographic anthropology to capture the personal reflections of a wide cross section of the city's inhabitants; (3) to develop an understanding of the difference and diversity within and between Muslim societies over time, and by doing so to counter the contemporary impulse among scholarly and non-scholarly authors that essentialize all of Islam. The thread of continuity

linking the above three objectives lies in the vital importance of particularity within situations.

It is hoped these interrelated research questions in turn yield answers as to how individuals and the larger collective society experience an orientation to the central concerns of the culture; in what ways parts of Doha are held in common either through agreement or conflict, a common ground of differences, that enable an ontological orientation; and, lastly, to address Socrates' question posed at this section's opening, 'how should we live?' A response to this question – coming, at least, from a PhD Dissertation text, as against, for example, from praxis in political life – would hopefully be a well-informed discussion of humankind's ethical obligations to each other living within a diverse community.

The research presented here explores the contours of urban life that characterize Doha from its first moment of oil extraction in 1950 to the present. The architectural, social and political development of this period illuminates an unprecedented rate of change in moving from village to metropolis, but more fundamentally sheds light on the diversity and difference within Islam, and more broadly the accommodation of diversity and difference with other cultures and religions. This, which took larger cities with more historic depth many centuries to experience, unfolds in Doha before our very eyes, and will hopefully yield important insights useful to other regions also undergoing rapid rates of urbanisation and cultural change.

Looking closely at Doha, Qatar – a city with almost limitless wealth and unchallenged monarchic control over the levers of power and which can choose to be anything it desires – reveals a tension between the aspirations of its planners and the expectations of its (mostly foreign) constituents. Doha's fundamental transformation from village to metropolis provides an interpretation of 'city' that discloses the possibilities and limitations of civic culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This thesis' contribution to knowledge is four-fold: (1) to add generally to architectural and urban theory, and particularly to Arabian Gulf studies; (2) to develop an

analytical framework based upon hermeneutic phenomenology that incorporates architecture into its structure of understanding; (3) to use this framework to illuminate the structure of Doha's urban culture during its most transformative period; (4) to publish previously unseen documents and gather original personal narratives related to the period of study. The theme of differences held in common by the institutional order allows a more fundamental enquiry into how a city functions as a collective structure than afforded by discipline-specific studies. As such, it is hoped, the proposed interpretive approach offers an olive branch towards those specialists, particularly in methodological positivism, in the belief that difference and diversity within unity – this thesis' key theme – would similarly serve us in the academy.

1.3 Literature Review

The 'being' of Doha's architectural landscape – the city's concrete, specific places of meaningful social action – as seen against its 'seeming' – the widely disparate subjectively experienced symbolization of that architecture – forms an essential problem in architectural-urban theory and Middle Eastern studies. Doha's urban order as expressed in the city's architecture and corresponding symbols of political participation are here inextricably related. On the one hand the importance of understanding 'city' through its architectural form and urban topography is so widely accepted that few scholars attempt to understand the meaningful lifeworld sedimented by architecture's concreteness except as generalized patterns of an abstracted whole often seen in architectural 'figure-ground' studies or the GIS visualisations of data flows. I do not wish to dismiss out of hand the important contributions by those working in quantitative time-series models, but I believe the interpretive model adopted here seeks a more fundamental, and thus universal, understanding of the ordering principles underlying any contemporary urban society regardless of location or scale. On the other hand, the often disciplinary nature of Middle Eastern scholarship typically does not anchor the institutional order to its embodied locus.

One such strand that has received much attention in recent years focuses on the unprecedented level of international labour migration. Most of the analyses point to 'globalisation' as the root cause of massive labour and financial 'flows'. The leading proponent, Saskia Sassen (1998, 1999, 2001, 2007), has concentrated for years on corporate financial centres and the resultant abuses of a networked economy. Harvey (1990, 2006) and Soja (1989, 2010) have laid out similar arguments, though theirs are largely based on Marxist interpretations of geography underlining arguments for spatial justice amid urban hierarchies. Much of this enquiry builds from Henri Lefebvre's (1991, 2008, 2009) notion of the production of space. In his 1974 book of the same name Lefebvre argues that 'space' is socially constructed and productively active through social action. Lefebvre's influence can be felt in works focusing on the 'place of the other' for lack of a better term, the experience and causation of urban centres dominated by low-paid, typically Asian workers in the boom economies of China and Arabia (Al Rasheed 2005; Appadurai 1996; Bollens 2012; Gardner 2010; Niezen 2004; Savage 2005; Smith, M.P. 2001; Tonkiss 2010; Wacquant 2008). The central limitation of these studies is that they fail to offer us what we need in order to understand the experience and meaning of urban life. Manifestations of 'space' as productive, consumptive, imaginative, gendered, Marxist, exclusionary or violent, to name the common themes expressed in the above list of authors, are generally more valuable for their case studies than their social theories, which often decant the messiness of life to statistical generalizations. Countering conceptual generalizations and spatial vagueness and resituating urban discourse within the lifeworld of individual experience is one of this thesis' main objectives. The approach seeks to be fair to the case, open to conflicts – and conflicts of interpretation – while also being honest to the position of the interpreter. Gadamer stresses above all the dialogical character of hermeneutics that the meaning happens in the encounter with the other.

Given the complexity of any city it is hardly surprising scholars adopt a particular lens to magnify their insights. Metaphors, tropes and figural language abound in describing the city, for example, as a work of art (Olsen 1988), as project (Aureli 2013), as corporation (Kanna 2011), as endless

(Burdett and Sudjic 2010), as post-colonial (Varma 2014), as text (Duncan 2005), all seeking to understand a particular view of urban 'space' in terms of larger global patterns and shifting spheres of influence. A trend in recent years (Hall 2012) seeks to connect unseen global forces such as currency or commodity flows with their expressions by everyday citizens upon their local 'streets', their publicly viewed manifestations.

The global-local (glocal) movement of urban analysis refreshingly anchors urban discourse in concrete situations. These studies begin to reclaim the notion long forgotten by social science that space is indeed spatial, and not another abstracted metaphor of vague human involvements. Many social scientists have split urban complexity into a series of discrete modalities – economic, geographic, gendered, sexual, social and cultural – and resist any attempt to integrate them into the actual places where human involvements occur: architecture. This has freed urban enquiry from vague generalizations but also from the thought that historically bound socio-architectural horizons are inherently complex and require a more holistic analysis in order to reveal the most basic institutional structures undergirding any urban society.

Over the last forty years research on the Arabian Gulf has pursued highly segregated paths. Beginning in the 1970s, the newly formed countries of the GCC (Gulf Cooperative Council) began to interest outside researchers but their highly exclusionary societies resulted in scant field research and a reliance on internationally available datasets. Two decades later, as Gulf economies exploded, new research focused on urban development and ethnic migration with greater attention paid to social and environmental transformations, particularly identity, human rights, industrialization and the legal and policy frameworks of guest workers. The current analysis of the region has once again broadened and now includes an investigation of the global networks of capital and labour flows that enable massive planning schemes.

A survey of the socio-economic scholarly research reveals several distinct strands of enquiry. The predominant corpus focuses on the geo-politics of

industrial development, petrochemical extraction and the resulting market dynamics. Because of the Gulf region's pace of rapid change, several excellent academic and non-governmental organizations both within the Gulf region and in North America and Europe regularly produce timely analyses and policy recommendations. The Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States based at the London School of Economics focuses on particular aspects of GCC economies – sovereign wealth funds (Gawdat 2011), capital and labour migration (Chalcraft 2010), down-stream petrochemical development and economic diversification (Hvidt 2013), regional politics (Barakat 2012) – as related to a shifting global economy. The Doha branch office of the Washington, DC based Brookings Institute explores Qatari (Al-Tamimi 2015; Gause 2013) and regional topics particularly the geo-politics of Iraq and Syria.[5]

Nearly as strong, the sociological and anthropological literature examining the phenomenon of rapid social change (Cooke 2014; Maisel and Shoup 2009) includes labour migration (Khalaf et al. 2015; Mahdavi 2011; Winckler 2002, 2009), challenges to Arab identity (Cooke and Lawrence 2005; Dresch and Piscatori 2005) and tribal transformation (Herb 1999). Gardner's (2010) analysis of migrant workers in Bahrain applies equally well to conditions in Qatar. And Fuccaro's (2005) study, also of Bahrain, uniquely combines urban morphology with the anthropology of the Gulf.

Political science and political economy enquiries have gathered momentum in the last decade with a precipitous rise since the so-called 'Arab Spring'. These views typically build upon rentier state theories from the 1980s (Beblawi and Luciani 1987) to explain the conjunction between economics, labour and regime legitimisation (Held and Ulrichsen 2011). Two recent volumes (Gengler 2015; Kropf and Ramady 2015) along with numerous

[5] The Brookings Doha office came under criticism for receiving $14.1 from the Qatari government by *The New York Times*, which alleged such donations have led to implicit agreements that the research and analysis will not negatively criticize Qatar's government or people. See 'Foreign Powers Buy Influence at Think Tank' by Eric Lipton, Brooke Williams and Nicholas Confessore, *The New York Times*, 6 September 2014. Scholars critical of Qatar Foundation's National Priorities Research Program, whose scholarly outcomes are rarely critical of government policy, have raised similar concerns.

policy studies from the last few years (Al-Kuwari 2013; El-Katiri et al. 2011; Gray 2011; Springborg 2013) suggest that the relatively small economies of the Gulf States are struggling to maintain their rentier policies in the face of declining oil and gas prices and reserves, increasing supply from new market entrants such as the United States through shale gas, and a desire to diversify their economies through the licensing of high technology innovation.

Finally, from the architectural and urban studies domain come architectural monographs examining the aesthetics and engineering of specific monumental projects, such as Dubai's many skyscrapers, particularly the Burj Khalifa, currently the world's tallest building, or its many artificial islands. Neighbouring Abu Dhabi also grabs scholarly and media attention for Saadiyat Island, a 27-square-kilometre mixed-use development and cultural centre on an artificial island whose collection of museum franchises are designed by world-renowned architects. Nearby Masdar City, 6 square kilometres and costing $20 billion designed by Norman Foster + Partners, is purportedly one of the world's most environmentally sustainable, energy efficient cities. In recent years scholars have sought to understand the environmental impact of such large projects and their connection to the global economy (Fraser and Golzari 2013).

Also from the United Arab Emirates come descriptions of 'boom cities'. Dubai, the largest and most rapidly transformed Gulf city, garners the most attention from architects, planners, sociologists and anthropologists who identify specific intersections between urban transformation and cultural identity. Architect Elsheshtawy (2011, 2013) and anthropologist Kanna (2011, 2013) both seek explanatory theories for why Dubai's ruling Emirs chose the development path they did, and how the city's rapid transformation is felt and understood by everyday citizens. Uniting social anthropology and architecture, collaborating authors Caton and Ardalan (2011) have completed their *Persian Gulf Sustainable Urbanism Research Project*, an encyclopaedia of the environmental impact and approaches to environmentally sustainable urbanism and architecture.

Rarely do these four strands – the economic, political, social and architectural – intertwine; and never do they intersect the religious-ontological underpinnings stretching from medieval Muslim scholars to contemporary interpreters.

With regard to Qatar and its capital city, Doha, a handful of excellent studies have appeared in the last few years, notably Kamrava's (2013) book on Qatar's international political agenda, and Gray's (2013) detailed account of the country's economic development. Since the early 1970s only a dozen or so PhD theses from UK universities have looked at Qatar's social, industrial and educational development. And only one recent book, by Salama and Weidmann (2013), purports, according to the title, to 'demystify' Doha's architectural and urban development. In reality, the study, an odd amalgam of Lefebvre's much celebrated spatial triumvirate (lived, perceived, conceived) is without Marxist, or any critical, theory and seeks simply to tell the reader what precincts of Doha are interesting to its visitors. The main thesis of Fromherz's 2012 survey of Qatar is summed up as 'the more things change the more they stay the same', an absurd argument he builds almost solely through internet research. So scant is the literature on Qatar that one of the most highly regarded and widely cited studies, by Jill Crystal, dates from 1995, and Sharon Nagy's unpublished PhD thesis from 1997. Therefore, this thesis fills a scholarly gap in providing genuine insight into Doha's particular architectural-political circumstances, while also adding an original contribution to Arabian Gulf studies and architectural theory through a novel combination of ethnographic field method and philosophical discourse.

This thesis addresses eleven particular situations within Doha, a city whose current size approximates the area of London inside the M25 ring road. This is not customary for PhD research, which is expected to isolate an important but limited problem. In fact, an earlier draft chapter – much reduced in the current text – explored in depth the skyscrapers of Doha's West Bay. While this was instructive, the primary insight was that the significant aspects derived less from their immediate qualities or their context, but rather from their role in the larger order. More to the point, the city is a creation almost

entirely by the Emir and the ruling Al-Thani family, and so might be expected to exhibit an overall purpose or intent. It is only a few decades old in its current incarnation, reinforcing expectations of coherence. It is a capital city, but shares little with, for example, Canberra, Chandigarh or Brasilia; nor is it a pastiche of earlier 'Islamic' cities. It is something much more strange, apparently both arrogant and uncertain of itself, in which familiar types – skyscrapers, shopping malls, even grand mosques – displace their expected meanings within the seeming paradox of an opulent Wahhabism. It became clear that the issue was how the city works as a collective structure. If a city provides the most articulate embodiment of the conditions for culture, the possibility presents itself that the culture itself is the true object of the Emir's efforts.

1.4 Method

My proposed research is, therefore, synthetic and seeks to operate across several scales. Ethnic migrations, spatial exclusions, ancient beliefs, rapid urbanisation, regime legitimisation and development economics affect the structure of almost any city, particularly those in the Arabian Gulf. To touch on them all requires a unique transdisciplinary understanding that, hopefully, also contributes to methodological approaches in urban studies research.

As a thesis that examines the architecture of Doha the most fundamental research decision was choosing which specific situations to examine. Because I am seeking to understand how individuals experience an orientation to the culture's central concerns and in what ways Doha provides the common ground of difference it was vital that I hear how individuals go about their daily lives, what places people find meaningful and why. Using participant and non-participant observation from a wide cross section of Doha's demographic strata was the key to understanding how the city functions as a collective order.

My desire to understand Doha stereoscopically, from one perspective as what is, and from another as what it seems, means observing the ways in

which its inhabitants 'see' and 'use' the city. By observing how the city functions as an image and an imaginary (Anderson 2006; Taylor 1989) reveals how people situate themselves in the meaningful world of social action, deriving an orientation toward sources of meaning. Methodologically, by closely observing everyday intersubjective interactions as grounded in some of the places people consider significant begins to surface the dynamic complexity increasingly present in an urbanising world caught between one's everyday life in particular, informal, and mundane situations, and late capitalism's totalising, homogenising, impulse.

1.4.1 Primary Data Sources

Data collection for this thesis comes from a variety of individual experiences, both domestic and foreign, the latter including personal, confidential and often 'secret' memos, briefings and diaries of British Foreign Service personnel and corporate officers stationed in Qatar, their documents having been released to the public either thirty or fifty years after their date of origin. These records, held in several British Archives and scholarly and private libraries throughout the United Kingdom, provide detailed accounts of Doha's political, economic, social and architectural development. In consulting the extensive record one develops an intimate sense of the characters involved, their idiosyncrasies and preferences.

The lived experience of Doha becomes known through these daily accounts, particularly during Doha's early transformation in the 1950s and 1960s. The value of the contribution to history that these documents make is equalled by the danger of relying on them too heavily, as, after all, they are only one side of the story, and a Western one at that. But with an almost total blackout of Arabic sources close to the Emir these are nearly all the researcher has to go on. The chart below summarizes the major primary source documents consulted and quoted throughout this thesis, the first group of entries on both lists were originally in Arabic:

Inside Qatar

Source	Type	Relevance
حكومة قطر	(Hakoomi) Online government website	Qatari laws, policies and data sources

ال جزيرة	(Al-Jazeera)Video	Contemporary scenes of Qatar and the GCC
ال راية	(Al-Reya) News	Qatar news
الشرق	(Al-Sharq) News	Regional news
ال وطن	(Al-Watun) News	Qatar news
الديوان الاميري	(Emiri Diwan)	Official site of the Emir of Qatar
وزارة العدل	(Ministry of Justice)	Official site of Qatar's Ministry of Justice
الهيزان	(Al-Meezan) Legal portal for the State of Qatar	Opinions, rulings Official Gazette
Al Rayyan TV	Video	Journalism on Doha topics
Arab Engineering Bureau	Drawings, photographs	Architectural projects in Doha from 1990s forward
Folkloric Heritage Center	Photographs, artefacts	Qatar history
Friends of the Environment	Photographs	Qatar history, landscapes
The Gulf Times Archives	Newspapers	Journalism on Doha topics
Hamad Hospital	Data, reports	Research on Doha public health
Hamad International Airport	Datasets	Flight volumes
Maersk Oil of Qatar	Data, photographs	Qatar history, oil exploration
Msheireb Properties	Data, photographs, drawings, oral histories	History of Doha and Msheireb neighbourhood
The Peninsula Archives	Newspapers	Journalism on Doha topics
Post Office Museum	Stamps, artefacts	Qatar history
Private libraries	Books, maps, drawings, photographs, oral histories	Topics related to the history and development Qatar
Qatar Foundation	Photographs	History of QF development
Qatar Ministry of Municipality of Urban Planning	GIS datasets, aerial and historic photographs	The architectural and urban development of Doha from 1937 to present
Qatar Museums	Artefacts, photographs, art works	Visual culture of Qatar, information on particular museum projects
Qatar National Library	Books, maps, photographs	Material on the history of Islam and Qatar
Qatar Photographic Society	Photographs	Qatar history
Qatar Radio &TV	Video	Journalism on Doha topics
Qatar Statistics Authority	Datasets	Time series data of Doha/Qatar demographics
Qatar Supreme Education Council	Datasets, reports	Qatar primary education indices
Qatar University SESRI	Datasets, analysis, reports	Original social science research on Qatar topics
Salam Studios	Photographs	Historic photos of Doha
Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Private Museum	Photographs, artefacts	Qatari, Arab history
Sheraton Hotels	Photographs	Historic photos of Doha

Outside Qatar

Source	**Type**	**Relevance**
Ibn Al-Athar	History	Medieval Arabic view of the Crusades
Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad	Hadith	Compilation of the sunnah and books of the Hadith
Ibn Khaldun	History	Islamic urban culture
Al-Matroudi	Fiqh	History of Ibn Taymiyyah
Ibn Taymiyyah	Fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence

Ibn Wahhab	Fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence
AECOM	Historical maps, drawings, photographs, contemporary master plans	History central Doha and the Msheireb district
Allies and Morrison Architects	Historical maps, drawings, photographs, contemporary architectural studies	History of central Doha and the Msheireb district
Bibliothèque nationale de France	Newspapers, photographs	History of Qatari–French relations
British Film Institute	Fiction and non-fiction films and videos	38 films related to Qatar's history from 1955, commercial/industrial, journalistic
British National Archives at Kew	British Foreign Office (FO) Records, memoranda, letters, briefings	History of UK-Qatari relations
British National Archives at Kew	British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Records, memoranda, letters, briefings	History of UK-Qatari relations
British National Archives at Kew	British Ministry of Defence (MOD) Records: maps	History of Qatar's military development, geographic reconnaissance
The British National Library	India Office Records	History of UK–Qatari relations 1700–1949
The British Royal Air force Archives	Maps, aerial photographs	History of Qatar's air transportation
The British Royal Museums at Greenwich	Drawings	82 rolled plans for the HH Sheikh of Qatar's yacht
Llewelyn-Davies Architects	Architectural drawings, reports	1972-5 master plan studies of Doha
London Metropolitan Archives	Corporate bank records for Doha branch offices	History of non-Qatari commercial development
Personal libraries of former Doha residents	Diaries, photographs, videos	From 1967 to the present chronicling changes in Doha and Qatar
SOAS University of London	Unpublished conference papers and proceedings	Analyses of Qatar political, industrial development
St Catherine's College, Oxford	The personal diary of Sir Rupert Hay	Descriptions of Qatar development during the early years of oil
St Catherine's College, Oxford	Photography collection	Aerial photographs of Doha 1960s–1970s
US National Archives	Photographs, maps, official correspondence	History of Qatari–US relations
The Telegraph Historical Archive, 1855–2000	Newspapers	Journalism of Qatar topics

As stated above, there are very few original source documents in Arabic that the researcher may consult in understanding Qatar's political or architectural history. It is widely known that the Emiri Diwan contains a vast archive of such material but any attempts to access them by this author, or those close to him, were met with refusals. In order to complement the copious Western sources detailed above, I was forced to rely on two exceedingly diverse bodies of knowledge: contemporary Arabic

newspapers, and medieval Islamic scholars. Because the regime tightly controls Qatar's media outlets there is little reporting on substantive events, except perhaps those of praise such as new building openings, highway expansions or diplomatic receptions. One need not live in Qatar for long to realize the massive media conglomerate Al-Jazeera rarely turns the cameras upon their homeland. The local newspapers and local TV broadcasts help sketch out general patterns of development, and alert the researcher to public events, but great caution should be exercised in interpreting either their stories or omissions. Participant D, a local newspaper reporter and long-time Qatar resident, shared that they have come to learn over the years what the Diwan will tolerate and simply self-censor stories to avoid problems.

The medieval sources, though centuries apart from the news channels, directly illuminate the nature of Qatar's interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. Since the late nineteenth century, Qatar's Emirs have fully embraced Wahhabism, a highly conservative eighteenth-century branch of the Hanbali *madhab*, itself the most orthodox of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Much of Ibn Wahhab's theology and teachings drew directly upon the thirteenth-century Damascene Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah. Both Taymiyyah and Wahhab give us the basis for understanding Qatar's *sharīʿah* legal system. This topic is taken up at length in Chapter 10.

As this study examines the experience of rapid urban change it was necessary to see how a wide diversity of Doha residents understand their city. Although a growing body of literature focuses on Arab identity in the face of radical cultural change and on the experiences of migrant labour in the Gulf, little is written on the range of perceptions of the local institutional order among Doha residents. To date, I have not found any study that specifically examines the varied experiences of the city's residents or the relationship of different social divisions to the urban order. My work helps fill this gap in the literature. I used participant and non-participant observation to obtain information about the perceptions and experiences of various resident populations. Although exceedingly time consuming, the methods yielded rich information as I established trust relationships over

many months and years, probing for details that structured survey research would not have uncovered.

1.4.2 Ethnographic Details

From May 2011 to June 2014, I conducted thirty one in-depth personal, semi-structured interviews in the US, UK, India and, predominately, in Qatar with a wide cross section of Doha's long-time residents. The individuals interviewed ranged in age from twenty-two to eighty-two years, with an average of forty-six years: 43 per cent female and 57 per cent male (though in some situations more than one person was present). Qatari nationals formed 33 per cent with the rest coming predominately from other Arab countries and the Indian subcontinent. Lengths of time in Doha ranged from two years to sixty-eight with an average of thirty-four years. Roughly 85 per cent were Muslim, 10 per cent Hindi and 5 per cent of no practising faith (see Appendix for details). Within the Muslim fraction nearly all were Sunni, though several came from the Shīʿah, Bahá'í and Alewite traditions.

Rates of marriage and family composition varied widely. Among Qatari men many lived with their wives (several having multiple wives), while just as many were unmarried and lived either with their parents or on their own. Unmarried Qatari women are legally prohibited to live on their own and just as many of my interviewees were divorced mothers who lived with one or both of their parents as the number of those married with children living with their husband. Lower-paid male service labourers are typically not allowed to bring their families to Doha and they lived with men of their own age, ethnicity and nationality, all often hailing from the same village in India or Pakistan. A small fraction of the interviewees were high-paid managers working in professional offices who came from North Atlantic countries and were in most cases accompanied by their families.

The interviewees ranged in social and economic status from members of the royal family to a household of Filipina maids who have 'absconded', to use the local parlance, from their *kafala* sponsors, and gone into hiding. Similarly, levels of education ranged from incomplete high school education to doctorates. Nearly all the interviews were conducted in English, with

some in Arabic, Farsi, Malayalam and Tagalog. In the case of the latter three languages English-speaking translators who were part of the interview process accompanied me. Levels of literacy, status and nationality indicated degrees of access to urban institutions. Gender seemed to be the first determinant of spatial or institutional access. Fewer distinctions were made on religious grounds as nearly all were Sunni Muslims, as are the majority of Qatari nationals.

1.4.3 The Interview Process

The interview process on average lasted sixty minutes, and each interview was digitally recorded except in several cases where the participant permitted only note-taking. Qatar's highly observant government apparatus caused all participants, without exception, to distrust the process. I assured them of complete anonymity in all aspects of my research and when cited here I have changed specific names of people, workplaces and organizations. In some instances I have combined statements of several participants in order to obscure identifying details. I have also removed grammatical idiosyncrasies of grammar or utterances from the quotations. Each interviewee was presented with a brief description of the aims and objectives of the research and how it was hoped their input would contribute specifically to the thesis and more generally to urban studies in the Arabian Gulf. In all instances consent forms were signed once I had explained the method of data protection, anonymity and that we can stop the interview process at any time for any reason.

Each interviewee was assigned an alphabetical letter that appeared on a demographic data collection sheet that also included age, occupation, contact details, level of education, and occupation. These forms were kept in a separate, locked file within my office. The recoded interviews and transcriptions were kept on a removable hard drive stored in a locked cabinet within my home. The protocols followed to protect the research subjects are both those set by London Metropolitan University (permission granted May 2011) and those set by the US Institutional Review Board requirements in the social and behavioural sciences. The reference style used

in this thesis follows the American Psychological Association Style Guide (APA Style 2010).

The interviews were usually conducted in each person's home, although twice I held them in my office for convenience, and three times in the participant's place of work. In one instance, I interviewed a man while he was driving, and in five others at neutral locations such as coffee shops or restaurants. Two interviews were conducted over the phone. I carried out follow-up interviews with four participants to clarify particular comments or pieces of information.

I entered this study not knowing exactly where the 'data' would lead me or what I might uncover. I maintained a consistent line of semi-structured questions related to the built environment. Each interview began with basic demographic facts, such as age, education, marital/family status, length of time in Qatar and circumstances of immigration. All the respondents shared a common experience of often changing homes, for example every few years. This thread allowed me to probe more deeply the circumstances of the move, and their perceptions and memories of home, neighbourhood and the intimate situations of daily life as they experienced them throughout their lives.

Because I was not seeking explanatory theories of causation it was not necessary to pay exacting attention to each utterance. However, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded at the sentence or paragraph level. This form of analysis allowed me to see patterns as the data were being collected, giving me increasing knowledge of what participants might or might not find meaningful in their lives.

Labelling topics and developing categories surfaced essential spatial and institutional paradigms that led directly to identifying the eleven situational studies that form Part III of this thesis. These range in depth of tradition and breadth of manifestation within their category and between categories. This matrix structures the entire thesis' enquiry into the nature of the urban order.

1.4.4 Identification of Situational Loci

We begin with the mosque as the most important – and thus deepest – institution of daily life in the antique and modern Gulf city. Nearly as deep are the souq, diwan, majlis and home. All five categories possess diverse architectural types within typical universal conditions (see Chapter 2 for greater detail on this distinction). For example, the decorum present in the country's grand Ibn Abdul Wahhab state mosque varies only by a matter of degree not kind when compared to the far more humble neighbourhood Portacabin mosque. These five types are examined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 looks at institutions that have a basis in Islamic and European history – the university, museum and arcade (or cultural village in our case). These three institutions are much grander in actual size but have less universal access and thus are not as widely shared or deeply orienting as those seen in Chapter 7.

The largest, and most modern, of the institutions examined in Chapter 9 might broadly be called 'infrastructure'. These are mechanisms that make the modern state of Qatar function. Massive buildings such as stadiums, airports, hospitals and convention centres are shared by different segments of the population in great numbers. Streets, roads and, incipiently, a metro unite the entire city creating quite literally the common ground – the only parts of Doha truly shared by all strata of society – which much of this thesis seeks to understand.

The three chapters of Part III begin with intimate, often ubiquitous (mosque, majlis, house) institutions of deep historical and ontological orientation. Within this category are included institutions that are not Islamic but which nonetheless act as a dialectical reference to understand the range of cultural articulations and their claims upon diverse populations – churches and shopping malls for example. The situations of Chapter 8 are not as ontologically significant as those of the previous chapter but have a broader inclusivity within their diversity. And finally Chapter 9 might be considered

the least ontologically meaningful but the most ontically present instantiation of a regime desirous of global recognition.

In sum, the movement from depth of topic as ontologically and ethically orienting (Chapter 7) towards breadth of embodiment as visually and physically enabling (Chapter 9) was given to me in the first instance as the concerns of my interview participants; secondarily these observations were confirmed by my field notebooks and thirdly by a combination of Western contemporary observers whose descriptions were compared with those of medieval Islamic scholars, for example Ibn Khaldun on Cairo.

1.4.5 Sampling Frame Selection

Researchers in the social sciences argue that qualitative work must begin 'where we are' (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Living continuously in Qatar alongside my participants, I was interested in how others experienced the breath-taking speed of urban and institutional transformation. My 'embeddedness' in the city, Arabic language ability, many years of living, travelling and working throughout the Middle East and employment with a leading Qatari organization gave me credibility and a high level of acceptance within various communities. With at least 30 per cent of Doha's population coming from the Indian state of Kerala I felt it important to access this population and began learning conversational Malayalam, which proved invaluable in granting an instant level of trust and access as, in their view, no one from the West they know of has ever taken the time to speak with them in their language and with good reason as Malayalam is not for the linguistically faint of heart. Rarely were my enquiries for an interview rejected by either gender, and only in a few circumstances did women request a male relative be present.

Having experienced the interview and the topics discussed, I asked at the end of each interview for names of friends or relatives who might also contribute to my research. In most cases my phone rang the next day with either a previous participant passing on names of people whom she contacted and who had agreed to meet with me, or by the referent herself.

Participants from high economic or social strata usually felt comfortable with any topic of conversation, often straying into deeply held memories and personal histories. As the saying goes, in ethnography 'you are the cheapest therapist in town'; and this certainly seemed the case as many expressed joy, often with tears, that someone cared to hear their stories. For those of lower social standing or who were clearly involved in illegal activity, such as working outside the terms of their immigration visa, or trafficking in narcotics, a much greater degree of trust was required. Through a network of personal relationships built over many years I was able to speak with what is perhaps Qatar's most vulnerable population.

While their insights were profound, if not heartbreaking, they often came with dangerous expectations. Being white, male, American and employed by a top government institution may have granted confidence but also a projection of power that I could solve their legal or financial problems. One must remain circumspect in these situations that what is revealed might be highly fictionalized to serve ulterior motives. Indeed, I overheard one such participant say 'he's *my* American, don't talk to him'. From this perspective my participants of all social strata may have felt I was giving them 'voice'; speaking for them in a hope I could either improve their particular situation or, more grandly, change the laws of Qatar. It was not my intention to give voice to the marginalized but I was nonetheless speaking for and about a very foreign culture.

1.4.6 Who Speaks for Whom?

Long before Edward Said penned *Orientalism* (1979), his hugely influential critique of Western views of the Middle East, scholars struggled with how to make sense of a vast geography stretching from West Africa to Indonesia. Calling such an enormous area one thing – Islamic, Arab, Middle Eastern – justifiably invites sharp criticism and accusations of bigotry and xenophobia. Said argues that Western thinkers can never escape the image of Arab culture as licentious, weak, effeminate, which was seared into cultural consciousness by writers and artists depicting the 'other' for over two centuries of colonial rule. Such a view, on Said's account, dooms forever any Western attempt to accurately understand a foreign culture. His ultimate

point is not Orientalism's truthfulness or mendacity but rather, as he says of his own belief, 'that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse' (Said 1979:23).

This position becomes clear during the debate that raged between Said, Lewis and Grabar in the pages of *The New York Times* (Grabar, Lewis, Said 1982) where the latter two scholars of the Middle East declare Said guilty of exactly his own critique: seeing all Western scholars as cut from the same cloth, guilty of hegemonic ambition in the attempt to continually subjugate the subaltern regardless of stated intention. In other words, if the West is guilty of essentializing the East, then it is acceptable for Western scholars to experience the same prejudice. Such a desire on Said's part, however, erases the difference between truth and value, leaving the researcher from one culture whose interest lies in another in an awkward position by devaluing the object of attention. Said admits that he does not have in mind one type of representational theory of how one might 'correctly' write about 'the other'; nor does he address the question of whether the biases of a foreign agent writing about my culture are better or worse than my own perceptions about myself or my culture.

Perhaps because Said was not a Middle East scholar he was unable to move beyond Saussure's binary structuralism in his own field of English literature and could only posit that understanding comes through identifying differences. This line of reasoning seems to find its origin in Hegel's master–slave dialectic in Chapter IV of *Phenomenology of Mind (*2003*)* where each party needs the other in a structure of mutuality. The master can only understand himself as free or superior by ruling over someone else; conversely the slave comes to understand the power he possesses by enabling his master's self-understanding as master. As a form of binarism the master–slave dialectic signifies (Saussure) in what ways the two need each other. There is nothing inherent in the physical properties of either person that makes them who they are, just as there is nothing inherent in the colour red that makes me stop when seeing a stop light: the meanings are

derived from the context of knowing ourselves only in so far as we are not the 'other'.

Bhabha (1985) criticizes this kind of binarism saying:

> It is this ambivalence that makes the boundaries of colonial 'positionality' – the division of self/other – and the question of colonial power the differentiation of colonizer/colonized – different from both the Hegelian master/slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of Otherness.
>
> (Bhabha 1985:150)

Ambivalence, or what Bhabha calls 'hybridity', describes the ability of both colonizer and colonized to possess more than one *Weltanschauung*. In eighteenth-century India, for instance, Warren Hastings, India's first governor (r. 1773–1785), advocated that members of the East India Company should deeply master the languages and customs of the people they ruled. British writer, and long-time resident of India, William Dalrymple has recently called this period a unique moment of mutual understanding which saw a great many interracial marriages seemingly based on deep love and respect for each other, as chronicled in his book *White Mughals* (2004).[6] For Bhabha British colonizers might possesses deep local knowledge out of respect or curiosity but also in a Foucauldian sense of acquiring knowledge for the sake of power to explicitly control India through laws, and implicitly through opinions that circulate freely within society constructing and reinforcing beliefs of truth that are in reality built upon biases (Fry 2012).

For the colonized, hybridity's double consciousness means living within a structure of authority that might hover between forced acquiescence and submission on one's own terms. A simple example of this in my own research is –because of my Arabic language skills – I am often referred to as *mesehe* (Christian). Now, this can mean a special status as a member of *'ahl al-kitāb* (people of the Scripture), a reference to Jews and Christians sharing in the same Abrahamic origins as Muslims as stated in the Qurʾān: 'And indeed, among the People of the Scripture (أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ) are those who believe

[6] According to Dalrymple that period was short-lived and came to an abrupt end under Queen Victoria's puritanical zeal.

in Allah and what was revealed to you and what was revealed to them, (being) humbly submissive to Allah. They do not exchange the verses of Allah for a small price' (3:199, Sahih International translation). Or alternatively, it can mean I posses a level of ignorance as described a few verses earlier: 'If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient' (3:110, Sahih International translation). The double hybridity on my part and for those around me means I may appear at times to have a privileged status (voluntarily submitting to the laws by which I am treated differently); or, at other times I might represent a corrupting impiety that must be brought under control (total acquiesce).

So either the Muslim in Doha can tolerate Christmas sales promotions in the local shopping malls, or a Qatari student at the American Jesuit University, Georgetown, can ignore the 15-m tall Christmas tree that adorns their lobby each December. Or, the hybridity can mean petitioning the authorities that such icons are forbidden (*harram*) and should be banned. The double hybridity clearly exists for both the researcher and the subject. There is never a point at which 'the other' no longer holds sway.

Trinh Minh-Ha (1991) cautions against viewing 'the other' as unique, especially when racial differences are present. For her, this is another form of essentialization that erodes identity rather than allowing differences to exist alongside identity. For me, this meant not seeing my participants as 'special' or in need of advocacy. I freely admit the challenge in resisting this impulse, as my participants and I lived parallel lives that often intersected throughout Doha. But the goal remained to capture each life story in such a way that I could see it within the particularities of their sedimented lifeworld, and not, as Said warns, simply from a position of comparative differences. But I owe a great debt to writers like Said and Bhabha, and particularly Gadamer, who challenge the researcher to question their own positions of power and knowledge, to remain aware of their horizons. Banerjee (1995) echoes this view in arguing writers from the developed world cannot adequately describe the reality of someone from the developing world. She advises that researcher and participants each speak

from their own positions: as opposed to an outside investigator viewing others as different, we might take difference as a starting point. This is precisely what Gadamer calls a 'fusion of horizons' and is one of the chief justifications for the hermeneutic approach used throughout this thesis. There is no Archimedean point of objectivity that erases the dialogue.

1.4.7 Non-participant Observation

Living continuously for six years in the site of my research meant every event, great or small, sacred or profane, contributed in some way to this thesis. Every cab ride, meeting, class taught, trip to the grocer was a chance to interact with 'the other'. Every traffic jam, *eid* holiday, Friday *khuṭbah* sermon, National Day celebration, wedding, hunting trip or just licking a stamp with the Emir's effigy was a moment of cultural articulation that placed claims upon me just as if they did for Doha's 2 million other residents. And like me, 90 per cent of those residents were not from Qatar, and very likely were experiencing new phenomena every day, if not every hour. I began capturing these moments in sketch books, and with digital cameras. I saw in the daily rhythms of my own life patterns worth documenting. I tasted the sweetness in a bowl of fresh camel's milk, felt the sting from a sandstorm's fury and every Friday morning I heard the call to prayer blanket the city. These descriptions read like an Orientalist's diary, and I suppose they are. But deeper than these 'desert' experiences I began understanding what it was to be a prisoner in a foreign land and at the mercy of someone else in the *kafala* labour system that ties residency status to employer. I saw a legal system's glaring racial injustices. And I began to see, perhaps for the first time in my life, that no matter how hard I might try to understand or sympathize with another person's plight I simply could never know the depths of their pain and suffering, but I could know it was there. And that was a start.

Perhaps just dropping into Doha from time to time would have made this project easier. It certainly would have made my analysis simpler. The field notebook served two very valuable functions, neither of which I foresaw at the start. The first was helping to ascertain a saturation point for the in-depth, semi-structured interviews. As I transcribed each interview I began to

hear echoes of events I had previously noted in the sketchbook. And conversely, my diary entries began to increasingly forecast what interviewees were telling me. Thus, in accordance with the Belmont Report's (1979) basic ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice, I felt by the thirty-first interview that the risks of harm to my participants were outweighing any new knowledge additional interviews might yield and I therefore ended this phase of the research. The second advantage of the notebook is mirrored in the commitment to live within my area of research, what I hope in this document is a narrative of the richness and depth of urban life in radical transformation.

But such an immersion, however poetic or nostalgic or life changing, has its dangers. First, it is tempting to feel one has disclosed the 'truthfulness' of the culture. This thesis is not about facts or truths but rather about understandings and interpretations. Second, the depth of my ethnographic method in Doha has provided valuable insights that could have only become known through years of building trust with my participants. Again, the danger in permanently living the same life as my research subjects inherently prejudices what they tell me. It has been a continuous struggle to bracket out my judgments and let the voices of the collaborators be heard in a manner consistent with their own beliefs. The prejudice of opinion on my part justifies one of the reasons why I have adopted an interpretive methodology, described in detail in the next chapter.

…to explain more is to understand better.

– Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*

How could human behavior be described? Surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what one man is doing now, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.

– Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*

Chapter 2. Understanding the Urban Order: the Use and Method of Philosophical Hermeneutics

2.1 Introduction

The dialectical tension I am emphasizing between being and seeming, between experience and expectation, rests broadly upon the philosophic traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology and the resulting interpretive theories of meaningful social action. The hermeneutic approach outlined in this chapter seeks to mediate the dialectical relationship between being and seeming, understanding and explanation, belonging and alienation, image and object, experience and expectation, which underlies interpretive stances in the social sciences, including architecture and urban theory.

From Max Weber (1978) on down it is clear the social sciences brightly illuminate the nature of institutional and urban order within historical horizons. It would seem natural that such enquiries contemplate architecture's unique role in structuring the urban lifeworld of human involvements, but they typically do not. It is hoped such a shortcoming is met through this thesis' methodology, which mediates between the concrete situatedness of individual human action and the larger cultural-institutional context. Because the institutional structure as an all-encompassing

background is largely hidden from us, like water to the fish, to borrow Sean Kelly's phrase,[1] it is difficult to disclose the stability of the intersubjective relational whole. This makes it possible, however, to interrogate the urban order through the culture's hidden background social practices.

The term 'urban order' emphasizes the fundamental status of the meaningful world (*Lebenswelt*) of human activity and is ontologically prior to objectified sense data. The urban order is the relational whole of human existence that holds a structure of human possibilities. In this thesis such a relational structure follows the Aristotelian interrogative – what is the essence of a *polis* – by answering similarly: the interrelationship between a city (its architecture), and the regime (its politics). Regime is viewed across two axes of the community: as the codified legal structures, duties, rights and responsibilities; and the less definitive manners, customs or beliefs, or what Heidegger might call the mood of a culture, its unseen, often unspoken or unnoticed background cultural practices – or what I shall refer to throughout this thesis as the 'institutional order'. These two broad definitions of regime, together with their corresponding architectural situations, it is hoped, shall reveal Doha's urban order.

2.2 Lived Experience and Understanding: Toward a General Hermeneutics

The issue of finding an appropriate method for the study of human lifeworlds has its most significant starting point with Schleiermacher (1959) in the early nineteenth century, who sought a more general 'art of understanding' that moved beyond specialized text interpretations in theology and law. Schleiermacher's central argument rests on the observation that dialogue comprises two distinct modes: one of speech construction and one of understanding what is spoken. With this premise hermeneutics moves from a specific act of clarifying to a general 'art of understanding'. Because of the inherent nature of dialogue's intersubjectivity, Schleiermacher believes text or speech permits entry into

[1] See Sean Kelly's lectures on later Heidegger on his website: http://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/people/sean-kelly, accessed February 2013

the original mental state of its author or orator. Schleiermacher's Romanticist model of interpretation invites several paradoxes that have come to be called the 'hermeneutical circle', a topic addressed by many of his philosophical successors.

If understanding occurs within what Heidegger (1985, 1988) would later call 'a totality of references', then we understand parts in relationship to the whole, and vice versa, for example in the way words take on meanings within a sentence, and the sentence is given direction by the words. Extending the grammatical metaphor to lifeworlds, concepts derive meanings from their situations and from the related details, objects or actions to which those situations refer. The hermeneutical circle's paradoxes are that we can only understand whole meanings from constituent parts and we can only understand the parts by understanding their whole totality; and the intelligibility of either the parts or wholes requires a fore-understanding, some prior knowledge of the topic that grounds understanding. But where does the understanding come from if not from the parts and wholes (Palmer 1969)?

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Wilhelm Dilthey reacted to the prevailing tendency to apply positivist methods of the natural sciences to the study of human achievements (Makkreel and Rodi 1996). In developing a theory of *Geisteswissenschaften* or 'human sciences', Dilthey asserted that the lived experience, in its concrete and historical situation, must fully bracket any enquiry. As Palmer notes, 'Life itself is that out of which we must develop our thinking and toward which we direct our questioning. We do not try to go behind it to a realm of ideas: "Behind life itself our thinking cannot go"' (Dilthey GS V, 5; VIII, 184, quoted in Palmer 1969:99).[2]

For Dilthey, natural science methods seek explanation (*Erklären*) through objectively verifiable data gathered by systematic procedures. The human sciences, by contrast, are characterized by 'lived experience' (*Erlebnis*), which is more than one's immediate, or intuitive, understanding, but rather is the unity of meaning drawn from one's involvement in the web of human

[2] Gadamer addresses Dilthey's 'entanglement in the aporias of historicism' in Part II (2006).

activity. And just as *Erlebnis* surpasses codified laws or theories, so too does understanding (*Verstehen*). Like the hermeneutic circle, individual lived experience is expressed in the institutional order, and only through attuning oneself to one's own socio-cultural horizon can one adopt a posture of interpretation. By centring interpretation upon the temporally and historically bound lived experience, Dilthey was able to move away from Schleiermacher's Romanticist psychology and instead offer a general hermeneutics underlying all human studies. However, Dilthey could not break completely free from the prevailing positivist quest for objectified truth, as he remained in pursuit of a human science that could claim an objectively valid interpretation of the object of study.

2.3 Setting in Life / the Lifeworld: Sitz im Leben / Lebenswelt

There can be little doubt that Martin Heidegger owes an enormous debt to Wilhelm Dilthey. Like Dilthey, Heidegger drew from hermeneutic theory in his attempt to find an historically oriented method underlying the *Geisteswissenschaften*, to 'understand "life" philosophically and to secure for this understanding a hermeneutical foundation in terms of "life itself"' (Heidegger 2008:450). With the publication of *Being and Time* (1927) Heidegger moved towards a more 'fundamental ontology', one that questions Western metaphysics from Plato forwards. In so doing Heidegger's hermeneutics moves beyond a human sciences methodology to become philosophically existential on the basis that interpretation is not just something human beings do: interpretation is something we are. Being human, for Heidegger, means understanding the 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*) of the experienced situation (*sitz im leben*) into which we are 'thrown'.

Being and Time argues that meaningful human activity, language and the artefacts of our world make sense only in terms of their concrete, social and cultural situations. Moreover, human activity and its residue only exist in terms of those contexts (Blattner 2006:5). The issue at stake is the question of whether objectivity in the natural sciences is altogether different from that in the human sciences. As Hubert Dreyfus notes,

> Heidegger would differ from Bourdieu,[3] however, in holding that Dasein's shared ways of behaving are not mere facts to be studied *objectively* by a 'scientific' discipline such as anthropology or sociology (although they are that too). Rather, because they contain an understanding of being they must be studied as an interpretation … Heidegger calls the shared agreement in our practices as to what entities can show up as a *preontological* or *pretheoretical* understanding of being.
>
> (1991:19; emphasis original)

By questioning an objectivist view of social reality that is ontologically prior to experience of the lifeworld, Heidegger, and to a lesser degree Dilthey, are, as Dreyfus (ibid.:14) puts it, 'reversing the Cartesian tradition by making the individual subject somehow dependent upon shared social practices'.

In pursuing his larger philosophical project to find a more 'fundamental ontology' Heidegger turned to the work of his mentor, Edmund Husserl, on phenomenology. Husserl's phenomenology, a turn 'to the things themselves' (Heidegger 2008:58), requires a 'bracketing' out of one's cultural biases in order to disclose the phenomenon as it actually appears, a view that brings out the functioning of human consciousness through its connection to phenomena. There is, therefore, a fundamental distinction to be drawn between fact and phenomenon. The first is achieved by the reductions derived from the application of the Cartesian method (Descartes 2003); the second assumes that the object of thought is in fact a topic, redolent of its contexts. Indeed, phenomenology asks only that one pay attention to these contexts.

In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger's phenomenology, on the other hand, is only descriptive and not explanatory, and investigates not transcendental subjectivity (consciousness) but what he calls *Dasein*, from the German for 'there-being', roughly meaning the human way of understanding. The important implication for this thesis' study of urban lifeworlds in particular and the human sciences in general is, as Dreyfus says:

> We can only come to understand what Husserl called the 'natural conception of the world,' the understanding of the

[3] Dreyfus is referring to Bourdieu's theory of Habitus, which is taken up further in this chapter.

> world that comes naturally to us, by looking at more and more aspects of our lives and trying to fit them into a more and more general and unified structure. Thus a phenomenology that wants to be what Husserl called 'self-responsible' must give up Husserl's goal, and the goal of philosophy since Plato, of working out a pre-suppositionless science. Phenomenology, when correctly understood, turns out to be hermeneutic, that is, interpretive. 'Our investigation itself will show that the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation'.
>
> (*Being and Time*, p.61, quoted in Dreyfus 1991:32)

Interpretation in Heidegger's view is disclosing the role that objects or people have within our lifeworld when encountered pre-theoretically. Or, as Heidegger says: 'Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us' (2008:191–192).

In reconceptualizing understanding as an event, Heidegger moves much beyond Dilthey's desire for a human sciences method rooted in either history or science. Despite the prevailing view, particularly in modern economics, that 'man' is a rational animal always acting to maximize his 'utility', we must concede that any society comprises individuals whose behaviour, as Weber says, is 'meaningfully oriented' because it always occurs intersubjectively and within a culturally specific institutional order. Clifford Geertz feels similarly, 'believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (1973:5). As I shall demonstrate throughout this thesis, the hermeneutical approach allows for objectivist claims so long as they occur within an interpretation of the contingently meaningful lifeworld of social action. Charles Taylor succinctly weaves together the themes discussed in this section thus far:

> The background understanding we share, interwoven with our practices and ways of relating, isn't necessarily something we partake in as individuals. That is, it can be part of the

> background understanding of a certain practice or meaning that it is not mine but ours; and it can indeed be 'ours' in a number of ways: as something intensely shared, which binds a community; or as something quite impersonal, where we act just as 'anyone' does. Bringing in the background allows us to articulate the ways in which our form of agency is nonmonological, in which the seat of certain practices and understandings is precisely not the individual but one of the common spaces between.
>
> (1995:77)

To accomplish an understanding of the urban order in this way means claiming the ontological foundation of embodied agency.

2.4 Agency: Engaged and Embodied

The concept of an interpreted *Lebenswelt* has important implications for this thesis and socio-historical analysis in general. At stake is the debate in social theory between a positivist scientifically objectified 'space' as standing over against an embodied agent acting within a specific 'place' of delimitating socially structured symbolic forms. The distinction between space and place begs the question of how meaningful symbols embodied in urban architecture subjectively structure social life: architecture's dual role of embodying meaningful symbols and making possible the place for the engaged agent. Such dualisms are typically studied through objective explanatory theories or hypotheses. The interpretive paradigm asserts that practical understanding cannot be reduced to a system of categories defined only in terms of their relations to each other (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979:3).

The positivistic view of urban theory as an externally observable pattern of architectural facts and symbols underlying social structures overlooks embedded agency; this leads to the belief that such abstract collections of external facts exist outside lived experience. The debate among urban theorists and social historians about choosing between methodological individualism or methodological holism finds its basis, respectively, in the philosophy of Husserl and Hegel, and is bequeathed respectively to Weber on the one hand and Marx and Durkheim on the other. Weber's interpretive

sociology refuses to apply scientific frameworks to individual social action within institutional horizons. As Paul Ricoeur notes,

> Weber denounces … the trap of organic metaphors; they have for him, at most a heuristic value. They allow us to identify and delimit the realities to be described; they trap us to take the description of an organic totality for an explanation capable of being substituted for interpretive understanding.
>
> (1991:242)

The organic metaphor of 'flows' championed by Sassen et al., for example, has nearly eclipsed a more fundamental understanding of engaged agency within the subjectively meaningful *Lebenswelt*.

Charles Taylor (1995) calls attention to the debt social science owes to Heidegger and Wittgenstein for helping to rescue us from 'modern rationalism' and for advancing the primacy of engaged agency:

> the dominant conception of the thinking agent that both Heidegger and Wittgenstein had to overcome was shaped by a kind of ontologizing of rational procedure … the result was a picture of the human thinking agent as disengaged, as occupying a sort of proto-variant of 'the view from nowhere,' to use Thomas Nagel's suggestive phrase.[4] Both Heidegger and Wittgenstein had to struggle to recover an understanding of the agent as engaged, as embedded in culture, a form of life, a 'world' of involvements, ultimately to understand the agent as embodied.
>
> (1995:61–62)

Taylor's political philosophy, like Bourdieu's sociology and Geertz's anthropology, owes at least an indirect debt to Merleau-Ponty's discussion of engaged agency. Merleau-Ponty claims that human thought and experience are grounded in concrete situations familiar to us and it is through the lived body that we access and create the world. Without a body there would be no world, because 'the [lived] body is our general medium for having a world' (Merleau-Ponty 2002:169). Indeed, it is the body's intentionality towards an object that lies at the heart of phenomenological philosophy. As the title of Merleau-Ponty's *magnum opus* implies,

[4] Taylor is referring to Nagel (1989).

Phenomenology of Perception is ultimately concerned with perception's ability – within an embodied agent – to disclose a world. A world of objects, to be sure, but also of environments and the situations in which we find ourselves that are the places and spaces where we experience life's struggle (Carman 2008:26).

For Taylor, engagement is the reciprocal relationship between embodiment and situation, where 'the world of the agent is shaped by one's form of life, or history, or bodily existence'. Thus, the

> 'world shaped' by embodiment in the sense that the way of experiencing or living the world is essentially that of an agent with this particular kind of body … To say that this world is essentially that of this agent is to say that the terms in which we describe this experience … make sense only against the background of this kind of embodiment … the background is what arises with engaged agency. It is the context of intelligibility of experience for this kind of agent. If a given kind of agency is engaged in this sense, then its experience is not intelligible outside this context.
>
> (C. Taylor 1995:62–69)

The debt Taylor owes to Merleau-Ponty is evident in the following quotation:

> But we have in fact learned to shed doubt upon objective thought, and have made contact, on the hither side of scientific representations of the world and the body, with an experience of the body and the world which these scientific approaches do not successfully embrace. My body and the world are no longer objects co-ordinated together by the kind of functional relationships that physics establishes. The system of experience in which they intercommunicate is not spread out before me and ranged over by a constituting consciousness. I have the world as an incomplete individual, through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world, and I have the positing of objects through that of my body, or conversely the positing of my body through that of objects, not in any kind of logical implication, as we determine an unknown size through its objective relations to given sizes, but in a real implication, and because my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body's point of support.

> The ideal of objective thought – the system of experience conceived as a cluster of physico-mathematical correlations – is grounded in my perception of the world as an individual concordant with itself, and when science tries to include my body among the relationships obtaining in the objective world, it is because it is trying, in its way, to translate the saturation of my phenomenal body on to the primordial world.
>
> (Merleau-Ponty 2002:408–409)

Here, we see Merleau-Ponty's view that the agent's understanding comes through being-in-the-world, acting within concrete situations, and correlatively having those situations acting upon us. Merleau-Ponty stands against the predominant view in much of the human sciences, of what Taylor calls 'monological consciousness' (acts of a single agent) (1990) handed down to us from Descartes' epistemological understanding of the human being as a subject of inner and outer representations. Merleau-Ponty's 'dialogical consciousness', that is, acts of multiple agents, re-establishes the body's interactions with others. This line of thinking throws open the door to ask under what conditions are dialogical agents interacting? What sorts of rules govern, direct or enable meaningful social action? I shall examine phenomenology's contribution to this debate in the following section.

2.5 Rules and the Institutional Order

The debate among social theorists as to the role of rules in determining social action essentially boils down to two positions: rules are either objectively descriptive, codified laws or legal systems for example; or internally subscribed ethical behaviours.[5] Empirically based social science has no trouble quantifying rule-breaking behaviour, and deducing behavioural patterns based on rational-choice theories. But such studies fail to address when rules are unintentionally followed either through social obligations or the ontological meanings they contain (Wrathall 2007).

[5] In political philosophy this concept is articulated most clearly by Isaiah Berlin in his essay 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in Isaiah Berlin (1958) *Four Essay on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Berlin distinguishes between two concepts of freedom: negative freedom is the freedom from interference (by the state); and positive freedom is the freedom for something, the freedom for self-control over base desires. Charles Taylor's critique of Berlin is worth noting in his essay 'What's Wrong with Negative Liberty' in Taylor (1990).

Phenomenology overcomes the debate by choosing neither position and offering instead a view that rules work as an integral aspect of the institutional order that guides our being-in-the-world.

One of Doha's most curious aspects is that its inhabitants have varying degrees of familiarity with the institutional and architectural order. With 90 per cent of Qatar's population comprising foreign labour, and Doha city's percentage quite likely even higher, how anyone understands rules explicitly or implicitly varies widely. Take driving for example. A conservative estimate counts at least 500,000 Indian and Pakistani nationals, a full quarter of the national population, living in the greater Doha area.[6] These individuals are accustomed to driving on the left in their home countries, but the rules in Doha dictate driving on the right. Similarly, most European drivers who are accustomed to driving on the right find the driving behaviours of fellow motorists completely foreign. In either case, foreign nationals become attuned to following rules explicitly, driving on the right, or implicitly, knowing which moment-to-moment driving behaviours are expected by those who have been there longer. In this simple example we see the contingent nature of internally and externally governed rule following.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu adopts the term 'habitus' to describe the ways in which individuals are governed by societal rules. Though Bourdieu varies his definition of habitus throughout his entire oeuvre, it can be described for our purposes as an internalized structure that determines how we act in the world, and how the world acts upon us. Habitus serves to 'generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by a "rule"' (Thompson 1991:12, quoted in Throop and Murphy 2002:186–187). Philosopher John Searle (1995) sees such acculturation and adaption as 'intentional', meaning that towards which our actions are directed even without us being aware; as Searle says 'particularly after I have become expert at an operation within the institution, I just know what to do. I know what the appropriate

[6] 'Population of Qatar by Nationality' by Jure Snoj, *BQ online*, 18 December 2013, http://www.bqdoha.com/2013/12/population-qatar (accessed 23 March 2015).

behaviour is, without reference to the rules' (ibid.:137). As a so-called 'background theorist', Searle recognizes our agency within cultural background practices, but does not accept that the practices determine the content; rather, the background is something mental triggering a neurophysiological response (Wrathall 2007).

On a superficial level of causation, Searle's intentionality thesis correctly describes Doha driving as the adjustment of behaviour without reference to rules. However, when I adjust my neurophysiological responses while driving alongside a white Toyota Landcruiser (most likely driven by a Qatari male), versus a black one (likely driven by a Pakistani house driver), these are not rules I no longer reference because I am familiar with them; rather they are meanings within the complex web of social action. As Merleau-Ponty says,

> one phenomenon releases another, not by means of some objective efficient cause, like those which link together natural events, but by the meaning which it holds out – there is a raison d'être for a thing which guides the flow of phenomena without being explicitly laid down in any one of them, a sort of operative reason.
>
> (Merleau-Ponty 2002:57, quoted in Wrathall 2007:82)

Taking embodied agency, social rules and background articulation together yields important methodological insights for the study of urban topography, particularly in disclosing the nature of Doha's rapid evolution. As Charles Taylor notes: 'the background is what arises with engaged agency. It is the context of intelligibility of experience for this kind of agent. If a given kind of agency is engaged in this sense, then its experience is not intelligible outside this context' (1995:69).

In Doha, for example, I have over the years come to ride in elevators in very different ways than I am accustomed to from having grown up in North America. While there are no explicit 'rules' or laws governing my behaviour in an elevator, I will, nonetheless, never ride in one with only women, particularly if they are wearing the *abaya* (black cloth covering worn by conservative Islamic women). The action has after six years of continuous

life in the Arabian Gulf faded as the focal object of awareness[7] – something I once paid close conscious attention to – to the background of my awareness; I do it without thinking explicitly about it, but outside of this context the experience loses its intelligibility. Taylor's definition of background is helpful here:

> the term 'background' … is that which I am not simply unaware [of], as I am unaware of what is not happening on the other side of the moon, because it makes intelligible what I am uncontestably aware of; at the same time, I am not explicitly or focally aware of it, because that status is already occupied by what it is making intelligible. Another way of stating the first condition, that I am not simply unaware of it, is to say that the background is what I am capable of articulating, that is, what I can bring out of the condition of implicit, unsaid contextual facilitator – what I can make articulate, in other words. In this activity of articulating, I trade on my familiarity with this background. What I bring out to articulacy is what I 'always know,' as we might say, or what I had a 'sense' of, even if I didn't 'know' it. We are at a loss exactly what to say here, where we are trying to do justice to our not having been simply unaware.
>
> (ibid.)

The elevator example attempts to illustrate the impoverished nature of the intellectualist's account of rules. The 'rule', if there is one, and I think there is, lies *only* in practice. Indeed the rule animates and gives form to the practice while determining how my body moves in a particular way, comporting myself towards the 'world', which also discloses the world of my possibilities (or limitations). As such, embodied understanding, within the institutional order, provides a generalized orientation for the culture – generalized in the sense that the institutional order provides a common ground where each agent continuously negotiates differences. Eric Voegelin's definition of institution helps us see this more clearly: 'Institutions are not objects with an essence about which a theory could be developed. The expression "institution" is a topical concept … [they are] complexes of relatively constant modes of conduct that are especially noticeable to us in society to appear to be especially important' (2000b:191).

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[7] I borrow this term from Taylor, who in turn borrows it from Michael Polyani, see *The Tacit Dimension* (2009) and *Personal Knowledge* (1974).

The word 'negotiation' purposefully elicits the dynamism of any urban order. People, institutions, roads and buildings are always in flux, particularly in Doha. Stability and order, or in Voegelin's parlance the 'constant modes of conduct', arise from dialogical negotiation, from the tension between self and other within a concrete horizon claimed by the institutional topic.

2.6 Gadamer's Belonging, Ricoeur's Distanciation

Heidegger's basic philosophical project was to do 'fundamental ontology', what he sometimes called the ontological difference, the difference between Being and beings (entities). As he says, 'the question which we are to work out, what is asked about is Being – that which determines beings as beings, that on the basis of which (*woraufhim*) Beings are already understood … the Being of beings "is" not itself a being' (2008:25–26). His answer to the question 'How is anything intelligible as anything?' is our concrete existence – the background understanding built into our culture. Understanding is not anything that we have as a proposition but something that organizes everything that we take as worth doing. Propositional statements or theoretical frameworks achieve meaning through an understanding of human life in all its concrete specificity and historical situatedness, which is the origin of theoretical truth (Polt 1999:17). By recentring hermeneutics within fundamental ontology Heidegger escaped interpretive epistemological frameworks built upon subject–object dualities. As Foucault (2010) reminds us, the problem with the social sciences is the subject – the scientist, for example – is also the object of the study, and the result is the interpreter can never achieve an objectified truth claim.

Heidegger's move away from epistemology leaves hermeneutics in danger of irrelevancy to the human sciences. It fell to Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer to reposition Heideggerian ontology within human science methodology. Gadamer's 1960 *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method*, is above all else his attempt at a universal hermeneutic of understanding. It has been said the title is misleading and would be better said as *Truth or Method*, for

Gadamer himself says in the second foreword that he 'did not intend to produce an art or technique of understanding … my real concern was and is philosophic: not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing' (Gadamer 2006:xxviii). Thus, a central theme in *Truth and Method* is that every act of understanding involves interpretation, and all interpretation involves application (Bernstein 1983:37).

Gadamer expands the notion of understanding through situatedness in his chapter on 'The Hermeneutic Problem of Application'. Citing hermeneutics' historical context of legal and theological textual interpretation, Gadamer asserts that the dependent relationship between understanding and application surfaces an essential tension 'between the fixed text – the law or the gospel', implying its historical boundness, on the one hand, and 'on the other, the sense arrived at by applying it at the concrete moment of interpretation, either in judgment [law] or in preaching [gospel]' (Gadamer 2006:307). The law or gospel (or any text or artefact)

> does not exist in order to be understood as a merely historical document, but to be taken in such a way that it exercises a saving effect. This implies that the text, whether law or gospel, if it is to be understood properly – i.e., according to the claim it makes – must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. Understanding here is always application.
>
> (ibid.:307–308)

And application is always particular, a hostage to circumstances, which interpretation seeks to reconcile with the more universal conditions.

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer describes the larger context of the confrontation of our historic tradition and 'how this process of challenge mediates the new and old and thus constitutes a communicative process built on the model of dialogue. From this I derive hermeneutics' claim to universality. It signifies nothing less than that language forms the base of everything constituting man and society' (Gadamer, quoted in Rabinow and Sullivan 1979:108). Smith (2001) clarifies Gadamer's use of *Gespräch*, or

conversation, by saying 'his focus is not the selves engaging in the conversation and their responsibility to each other, but on *dei Sache*, the subject matter about which they seek to get clear' (M.P. Smith in Mootz and Taylor 2011:34).

For the purposes of this thesis in particular, Gadamer's emphasis on location and its embodied subject matter, or what I shall call the 'topic',[8] is of primary importance. *Praxis* (often translated as practice) for Gadamer 'has to do with others and codetermines the communal concerns by its doing'. The emphasis on acting in normative ways consistent with and made intelligible by the culture's background social practices means

> Practice (praxis) … does not rely upon an abstract consciousness of norms. It is always concretely motivated already, prejudiced to be sure, but also challenged to a critique of prejudices. We are always dominated by conventions. In every culture a series of things is taken for granted and lies fully beyond the explicit consciousness of anyone, and even in the greatest dissolution of traditional forms, mores, and customs the degree to which things held in common still determine everyone is only more concealed.
>
> (Gadamer 1998:82)

Gadamer's concern for *praxis* and *phronesis*, or practical philosophy, in Aristotelian philosophy is important to the human sciences and the study of urban societies for several reasons. First, application requires hermeneutics; second, the connection between hermeneutics and Aristotelian practical philosophy underlies Gadamer's project of philosophical hermeneutics (Bernstein 1983). And third, it can emancipate us from the grip of modern science, what Weber called the 'iron cage':

> the problem of our society is that the longing of the citizenry for orientation and normative patterns invests the expert with an exaggerated authority. Modern society expects him to prove a substitute for past moral and political orientations. Consequently, the concept of '*praxis*' which was developed in the last two centuries is an awful deformation of what practice really is. In all the debates of the last century practice was understood as application of science to technical tasks. That is

[8] I derive this from the section 'The Hermeneutic Priority of the Question', in *Truth and Method* (2006).

> a very inadequate notion. It degrades practical reason to technical control. In fact, reason as guiding our practical behavior is much more than technical control. *Praxis* is not restricted to the special area of technical craftsmanship. It is a universal form of human life which embraces, yet goes beyond, the technical choice of the best means for a pre-given end.
>
> (Gadamer 1975:312)

Praxis on Gadamer's account offers the conditions for the possibility of authentic action within a culture's commonly held concerns. It connects the particular to the universal and bridges the individual to her lifeworld mediated by language. Interpretation is only possible by belonging to a particular historical tradition. From Heidegger human existence is both temporal and interpretive through the mode of being-in-the-world which is understanding. The original German construction of being-in-the-world, *Das in-der-Welt-sein*, places unique stress on the word 'in', better translated as 'involved', implying understanding is our primary mode of *involvement* with the concrete situations in which one actively participates. Heidegger briefly alludes to the spatiality of situation:

> In the term 'Situation' ('situation' – 'to be in a situation') there is an overtone of a signification that is spatial. We shall not try to eliminate this from the existential conception for such an overtone is also implied in the 'there' of Dasein. Being-in-the-world has a spatiality of its own, characterized by the phenomena of de-severance and directionality … spatiality of the kind which belongs to Dasein, and on the basis of which existence always determines its 'location', is grounded in the state of Being-in-the-world, for which disclosedness is primarily constitutive.
>
> (Heidegger 1962:346)

By contrast, in *Truth and Method* Gadamer expends considerable energy on the role of language in hermeneutics. As he says in the opening to section 5 (Gadamer 2006:385ff), 'the experience (*Erfahrung*) of meaning that takes place in understanding always includes application. Now we are to note *that this whole process is verbal*' (emphasis original). Language's intersubjective nature provides a common ground of shared understanding. Despite differences between socio-historic traditions, interpretation is possible in architectural, textual and cultural studies because when viewed broadly,

'Text' that are embodied conditions 'are "enduringly fixed expressions of life"' (Gadamer 2006:389 quoting Droysen 1937:63).

Gadamer calls the process of understanding a text, or another person, a 'fusion of horizons'. The interdependence of the meaningful lifeworld embodied in concrete situations and the concept of horizon reveals the nature of hermeneutic interpretation. For Gadamer, 'situation' is always specific, concrete and temporally and spatially bounded by its socio-historic horizon. The embodied conditions and architectural manifestations of situatedness hold the range of seen and unseen background practices as the institutional order within human lifeworlds. And it is the fusion of horizons that makes interpretation possible within the limitations of one's own prejudices:

> Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon.' Working out the hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition … the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. *Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*.
>
> (Gadamer 2006:301–305; emphasis original)

Conducting extensive ethnographic field work, such as I have done in developing the themes and analysis of this thesis, presents a significant challenge to the interpreter's prejudices in forming a 'correct' interpretation. Heidegger posed a similar question and provides a general answer:

> If the basic conditions which make interpretation possible are to be fulfilled, this must rather be done by not failing to recognize beforehand the essential conditions under which it can be performed. What is decisive is not to get out of the [hermeneutical] circle but to come into it in the right way.

(2008:195)

Gadamer believes 'we can formulate the fundamental epistemological question for a truly historical hermeneutics as follows: what is the ground of the legitimacy of prejudices? What distinguishes legitimate prejudices from the countless others which it is the undeniable task of critical reason to overcome?' (2006:278). In answering his own questions, Gadamer offers that,

> All correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought, and it must direct its gaze 'on the things themselves' … All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text. But this openness always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relations to it. (ibid.:260–271)

Jurgen Habermas vigorously challenged Gadamer on the universality of his hermeneutic project.[9] The core of the debate comes down to possessing either a hermeneutic or critical consciousness; a hermeneutics of tradition versus a critique of ideology. For Gadamer historical consciousness 'has the task of understanding all the witnesses of a past time out of the spirit of that time, of extricating them from the preoccupations of our own present life, and of knowing, without moral smugness, the past as a human phenomenon' (1976:5).

Working within the Frankfurt School's neo-Marxist tradition championed by Lukács, Horkheimer, Adorno et al., Habermas challenges Gadamer's acceptance of misunderstanding by positing his own theory of ideology 'construed as the systematic distortion of communication by the hidden exercise of force' (Ricoeur 1998:78).

Habermas rejects the notion that understanding comes through being-in-the-world on the grounds that it does not provide the distance necessary to critique language's potential distortions especially when used to legitimate structures of political power. Habermas says, 'Language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimate relations of organized

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[9] See Karl-Otto Apel, *Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik*, the *Gadamer–Habermas Debate*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971.

power. Insofar as the legitimations of power relations, whose institutionalization they make possible, are not articulated, insofar as these only express themselves in the legitimations, language is also ideological' (Habermas 1970:287, quoted in Thompson 1995:82).

For Gadamer language is what it means to have a world at all:

> [the] hermeneutic experience is verbal in nature … to have a world means to have an orientation (*Verhalten*) toward it. To have an orientation toward the world, however, means to keep oneself so free from what one encounters of the world that one can present it to oneself as it is. This capacity is at once to have a world and to have language.
> (2006:440–401)

For Gadamer critical theory's attempt to preserve a moment of critique limits it; it also reveals what lies within the method itself and eschews language's centrality in the 'world'. Gadamer's assertion that the ineluctable prejudice present in historical encounters arises from the fact that we are always already (to borrow a Heideggerian phrase) inhabiting a tradition. Habermas' counter-contention is that prejudice is overcome through self-reflection. Ricoeur understands the aim of Habermas' Marxism as expressed in *Knowledge and Human Interest* as the desire

> to retrace the continuous history of a single problematic, that of reflection, swamped by the rise of objectivism and positivism … [that] seeks to reconstruct the 'prehistory of modern positivism', and thereby the history of the dissolution of the critical function, with a goal that could be called apologetic: namely, 'to recover the forgotten experience of reflection'.
> (Ricoeur 1998:79, quoting Habermas 1987:9)

Such rehabilitation, Habermas hopes, restores in general the Enlightenment's belief in reason as the means to self-determination, and more narrowly the Kantian critique of prejudice, and grants to theory the means to conquer repressive traditions. Gadamer flips the argument around pointing out that the underlying message of *Truth and Method* is that Kant or Marx exist within an historically informed tradition and there is no Archimedean point from which one can objectively view a theory or

ideology. Thus, critical social theory fails to defend itself against Gadamer's belief that we simultaneously inhabit and reflect upon tradition.

However, the central thesis of *Truth and Method*, and the often voiced observation mentioned above that the book should have been titled *Truth or Method*, force a distinction between the 'truth' found in belonging over and against the distanciating alienation of method, a dichotomy Ricoeur finds problematic and 'the mainspring of Gadamer's work' (Ricoeur 1998:131). The opposition is, says Ricoeur,

> an antimony because it establishes an untenable alternative: on the one hand, alienating distanciation is the attitude that renders possible the objectification which reigns in the human sciences; but on the other hand, this distanciation, which is the condition of the scientific status of the sciences, is at the same time the fall that destroys the fundamental and primordial relation whereby we belong to and participate in the historical reality which we claim to construct as an object. Whence the alternative underlying the very title of Gadamer's work *Truth and Method*: either we adopt the methodological attitude and lose the ontological density of the reality we study, or we adopt the attitude of truth and must then renounce the objectivity of the sciences.
> (ibid.:131)

Ricoeur overcomes the polemical choice by casting the text in a 'positive' and 'productive' light of distanciation. More than mere intersubjective communication, text 'displays a fundamental characteristic of the very historicity of human experience, namely that it is communication in and through distance' (ibid.:131). Ricoeur develops his argument across five linked themes, of which we shall look at only one that sheds light directly upon the question of method asked in this thesis.[10] In the essay 'The World of the Text' Ricoeur resuscitates Heidegger's theory of understanding (*Verstehen*) as not 'tied to the understanding of others but becomes a structure of being-in-the-world … The moment of "understanding" corresponds dialectically to being in a situation: it is the projection of our

[10] The themes are '(1) the realization of language as discourse; (2) the realization of discourse as structured work; (3) the relation of speaking to writing in discourse and in the works of discourse; (4) the work of discourse as the projection of a world; (5) discourse and the work of discourse as the mediation of self-understanding. Taken together, these features constitute the criteria of textuality' (Ricoeur 1998:132).

ownmost possibilities at the very heart of the situations in which we find ourselves' (ibid:142). Thus the world of the text is the possible interpretation of a proposed world, inhabitable as one of many possibilities, a 'distanciation of the real from itself'. That is, a text's 'references', the projective possibilities of being-in-the-world, exist alongside the text's 'sense', its internal logic. Thus the communicative gap between sense and reference on the one hand allows a deeper objective 'sense' of the text, and on the other opens up the subjective world to which it refers. By entwining explanation and interpretation, Ricoeur's productive distanciation presents a novel development of Gadamer's fusion of horizons. Here, however, the fusion remains distanciated as the reader's situation is not so much fused with the author's as directed or 'referred' to possible ways of being-in-the-world. Literature, poetry and fables, says Ricoeur, are referent to but discontinuous with everyday language. Such narrative forms in particular hold out new possibilities of being-in-the-world within everyday reality. 'Everyday reality is thereby metamorphosed by what could be called the imaginative variations which literature carries out on the real' (ibid.:142). In the next section I shall examine briefly the architectural implications of Ricoeur's productive distanciation when we reconsider the definition of 'text'.

2.7 Meaningful Action as Text

Ricoeur's essay 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text' (1998) provides the basis to extend the traditional hermeneutics of textual interpretation as a paradigm for a more general interpretation for use throughout the human sciences. The key to understanding Ricoeur's paradigm of the text is his belief that language, either written or spoken, should more broadly be considered as discourse. Drawing from theories of speech and grammar, Ricoeur sketches out four 'traits' of the hermeneutics of action, in which discourse is: 1) temporally bound to the present; 2) self-referential in terms of the speaker; 3) always about something and refers to a world which it claims to describe; 4) communicative with another within its specific situation. In applying the criteria of text as discourse to the concept of meaningful social action, Ricoeur outlines a further four circumstances

typically encountered: the fixation of action; the autonomization of action; relevance and importance; and human action as an 'open work'. I shall look at two of these circumstances in a bit more detail as they pertain to hermeneutics' foundational claim upon the human sciences, and specifically in architecture's sense of textuality.

'The autonomization of action' concerns us because it describes the way in which action is ultimately detached from its agent, much in the way an author only 'speaks' to the reader through the text. On this account we may understand the depth of a city's architecture and institutional order as a history 'on which human action leaves a "trace", puts its mark'. The city's architecture is not explicitly and purposefully a written archive of the past, it is nonetheless a 'continuous process of "recording"' human action which is history itself and counts as the sum of "marks", the fact of which escapes the control of individual actors (Ricoeur 1998:207). Against the architectural backdrop of the city and through the 'sedimentation' of 'social time human deeds become "institutions", in the sense that their meaning no longer coincides with the logical intentions of the actors'. While the sedimentation creates the conditions for action, original action is implicated in such conditions. This view of architecture helps us recognize the need to understand that the 'marks' bequeathed to us through time may hold very different social practices than originally intended. Therefore 'meaning' is articulated from 'within these sedimented or instituted works' (ibid.).

Ricoeur's third criterion for a text, its 'relevance and importance', also concerns us because it contends how a meaningful action is an action whose importance goes beyond its initially situated relevance. This 'emancipation from the situational context' Ricoeur says, allows discourse to 'develop non-ostensive references which we called a "world" ... as an ontological dimension … An important action … develops meanings which can be actualized or fulfilled in situations other than the one in which the action occurred' (ibid.:207–208). Doha's unrelenting and all-consuming construction programme emancipates meaningful social action from its originating context allowing, if not forcing, its importance to resettle in the new environment, resulting in a sense of instability because social structures

are, as Ricoeur notes, 'also attempts to cope with existential perplexities, human predicaments and deep rooted conflicts' (ibid.:220). The constitutive function of the institutional order to manifest meaningful action within the urban order is in a city like Doha deeply conflicted. The non-ostensive reference of a text that Ricoeur notes (the 'display of a *Welt* which is no longer an *Umwelt*,' that is to say the 'projection of a world which is more than a situation' (ibid.)) in Doha's case implies an exaggerated distancing between what architectural situations seem and what they are.

The claim in 'The Model of the Text' that language symbolically mediates social action justifies its applicability across the social sciences. Once the human lifeworld is viewed linguistically, or once we view broadly architecture's similarity to textuality, we are confronted with the degree to which objectively verifiable explanation plays in the interpretive mode of understanding. For Ricoeur the tension is resolved in the 'paradigmatic character of textual interpretation' which proceeds from 'naïve' surface, first impressions, to depth interpretations through a formalized structure, but it is the 'depth of the interpretation which gives meaning to the whole process' (ibid.). The paradigm posits that understanding does not come from motivational theories or the identification of inner mental states, but is '*mediated* by the whole of explanatory procedures which precede it and accompany it' (ibid.; emphasis original).

Gadamer's hermeneutics, on the other hand, is less permissive of objectivist explanation than Ricoeur's, and is characterized by the interpreter's stance as both being-in-the-world of deep involvements and possessing a horizon of meaning that functions as the a priori condition of the possibility of interpretation through experience. As Westphal notes, 'That the interpreter belongs to history (traditions, horizons, life-worlds, language-games, cultural self-evidences, etc.) means that fully distanciated (objective, unsituated, presuppositionless, unprejudiced) interpretation is simply not possible' (2011:48–49). In addition to belonging to a concrete world, the interpreter also 'belongs to the text' (Gadamer 2006:335). The implication is that text has its own historicity existing within its concrete situation. Westphal notes that the text 'belongs not in museums or mausoleums but in

our churches (Bible), our schools (Shakespeare), our law courts (Constitution), and wherever people read … as we interpret, these texts address us and make truth claims on us' (2011: 49).

Westphal's examples of the relationship of text to architecture highlight a central concern for Gadamer, namely, intersubjectivity between persons is mediated across a communicative gap by a third participant found in the culture's products such as music, play or architecture. Individuals relate through playing the 'game' that requires conversation in order to participate. Thus Gadamer's notion of conversation (*Gespräch*) has less to do with those involved, the 'I' and 'thou' responsibility dialogue, than with the topic (*die Sache*) which they seek to better comprehend. Understanding centres primarily upon the topic, the subject matter, and less upon the understanding the participants have with each other (P.C. Smith 2011:34). As Gadamer says

> When we try to examine the hermeneutical phenomenon through the model of conversation between two persons, the chief thing that these apparently so different situations – understanding a text and reaching an understanding in a conversation – have in common is that both are concerned with a subject matter that is placed before them.
>
> (2006:370)

Gadamer's tripartite relationship between individuals and the topic stands in contrast to Ricoeur, who in *Oneself as Another* draws from Levinas and Taylor, to emphasize the direct relationship one has with another (Oneself as Another). From Levinas, Ricoeur asks, 'is it only in our own day that a thinker like Levinas dares to reverse the statement "no other-than-self without a self," substituting for it the inverse statement "no self without another who summons it to responsibility?"' Ricoeur, like Gadamer, seeks ultimately to situate the solitary self in relationship to others, and, again like Gadamer, he develops the notion of institution to do it. And both philosophers develop from 'the foundation', as Ricoeur says, 'of deontology in the desire to live well with and for others in just institutions' (Ricoeur 1990:239). In this sense Ricoeur's hermeneutic approximates Gadamer's in the development of 'institution' but differs in several important ways.

Clearly both thinkers are concerned with 'the good life with and for others' lived in 'just institutions' (P.C. Smith 2011:36).[11] For Gadamer, institutions provide the ground of self-evident understanding: 'history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live' (Gadamer 2006:278). Such pre-theoretical understanding derives from the dialectic between the individual and the larger institutional structures which makes truth claims upon us and orders our normative behaviour oriented towards a common order.

From Levinas primarily, Ricoeur develops an understanding of institution as mainly oriented towards an ethically bound community. The first part of the following quotation from Ricoeur mirrors Gadamer's above statement: 'By "institution", we are to understand here the structure of living together as this belongs to a historical community – people, nation, region … a structure irreducible to interpersonal relations and yet bound up with these in a remarkable sense' (Ricoeur 1990:194). So far so good, we belong to historically bound, concrete socio-cultural constructs. Ricoeur continues, 'what fundamentally characterizes the idea of institution is the bond of common mores and not that of constraining rules' (ibid). The main point of difference between the two accounts is that for Gadamer the setting, which provides the ground for historical traditions, allows the exchange between 'I' and 'thou'. For Ricoeur the concern of exchange is how one takes responsibility directly for another in face-to-face intersubjectivity. In contrast, P. Christopher Smith notes, Gadamer's '"I" becomes who "I" am precisely in participating with others in "our" customs and mores (*Sitten*) and in getting clear about them in "our" conversations' (Smith 2011:36).

2.8 The Architectural Situation

[11] See Gadamer's lengthy treatment in *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* (1986).

Although the philosophers studied in this section have much to say about the meaningful lifeworld of social action, and the ontological primacy of 'concrete situatedness' they have precious little to say about the exact nature of any situation. If we agree with Gadamer that *praxis* offers the conditions for the possibility of authentic action within a culture's commonly held concerns, and with the self-evident notion that all action occurs somewhere, then we should ultimately be concerned with where – specifically – action takes place. The preceding sections of this chapter have attempted to outline the general use and method of philosophical hermeneutics and the superiority of the interpretive method in understanding the institutional order. This subsection looks specifically at architecture as part of the structure and stratification of embodiments – the institutional order – and its convergence with the urban order as horizons for *praxis* (Carl 2015).

Recalling from Section 2.7 Gadamer's notion of conversation – the topic that seeks clarity – as mediated by material culture, I now extend to include involvement with architectural situations as providing the basis for intersubjective communication by transmitting what is expected of us in any situation, when we enter a house, café or cathedral, for example. As the locus of civic involvement, whose topic claims the participants, architecture mediates between the particular and the universal providing the conditions upon which we orient ourselves to the culture's commonly held concerns (Carl 2015:34).

Following Foucault, Cornel West voices his concern over a citizenry unaware of how architecture is produced by and gives shape to culture: 'Architecture is the embodiment, the concretization of the structures of freedom, domination, capitalism, democracy, and other institutions that have an effect on people. The less we consider architecture as an embodiment of these structures, the more these structures begin to control our discourse' (West 1994:85). Though less architecturally explicit, we infer from Arendt's (1998) belief that freedom rests upon our ability to negotiate difference in a commonly held public domain that requires specific spatial conditions. The political dimensions of institutional embodiment are taken up in more detail below, for the moment I wish to complement West's view

with a more expansive understanding of the range of embodiments in the city fabric.

The institutional life of the city ranges from explicit laws to implicit mores. Often the former have highly developed architectural 'types' to facilitate its bureaucratic function, law courts for example. Implicit structures, by comparison, develop from 'typicalities' of expected behaviour within particular situations. As Carl notes

> the stratification of kinds of involvement possesses a vertical structure, from the most primordial claim of the natural conditions to the most general (concepts) or most universal (symbols) levels of understanding. It is evident that the more articulate dimensions of involvement depend upon the more embodied dimensions. Also evident is the embeddedness of this structure in the institutional order, since all levels correspond to horizons/institutions of communication in a culture.
>
> (2015:35)

On this account we participate in the cultural order in various ways. Conceptual generalities expressed as types permit a mostly culturally neutral understanding. I say 'mostly' as even deeply bureaucratic institutions, a law court for example, embodied in a court house, derive from historically bound cultural interpretations, whose embodiment must always negotiate with the world around them. By contrast, the universally symbolic level of understanding is always culturally specific, mediating from foundational myth to contemporary custom and existing only within concrete situations (ibid.)

Dalibor Vesely understands architecture's symbolic role in the urban order in what he calls 'communicative space' (2004b:60). According to Vesely, cultures articulate meanings through hierarchical structures of embodiment ranging from linguistically explicit to the more purely symbolic. The continuity between articulation and embodiment provides the spectrum of the relationship between meaning and symbolic form. His example of the French Gothic Cathedral at Chartres illustrates the point. In Chartres the cathedral as communicative space is achieved through varying levels of

articulation and embodiment ranging from biblical text at the most articulate, down to sculpture, stained glass and the architecture itself. Describing the western façade of Chartres, Vesely says

> In the Chartres rose window, the story of the gospel is interpreted as an image embodied in the colored glass, which is in turn embodied in the shape of the window, in the composition of the wall, and finally in the structure of the church as a whole. These embodiments also represent a corresponding sequence of articulations. The body of the church articulates the global meaning of the façade through its topographical arrangement and the character of its space … The crucial observation at Chartres is how the body of the cathedral, itself abstract and silent, is capable of revealing and supporting a very subtle and highly articulated meaning of salvation – a meaning that can be brought down to earth tangibly and concretely.
>
> (ibid.:64–67)

We can make a similar observation pertinent to this thesis' inquiry into the nature of the Islamic city when looking at a mosque. For example the *mihrab*, a wall niche indicating the *qibla*, or direction to the *ka'ba* in Mecca, aligns the faithful in rows of communal prayer at prescribed times. The *mihrab* orients the entire structure, regardless of the surrounding urban topography, toward Mecca revealing the articulated meaning of Islam (submission) – a cosmic ideal meaningfully and concretely manifest on earth. These two examples, the Christian and the Islamic, illustrate the symbolic nature of communicative space. The symbolic expression of textual interpretation in Chartes demonstrates Gadamer's notion of the fusion of horizons that 'the problem of representation is a historic one' that should not be discussed in general terms (ibid.:86) but from within the horizon of the situation and the interpreter.

Clearly a medieval European cathedral provides enormous opportunity to probe the tremendous depth of a highly articulate institutional order. Can we say the same for modern cities or even ones rapidly transforming such as Doha? Vesely's next example of a French café leads me to conclude we can. The French café is hardly unique, not particularly symbolic, and certainly not textually articulated. Applying art historical techniques, as one might

with Chartes Cathedral, to understand the café's deeper cultural meaning will prove fruitless. Rather, says Vesely, 'its representational, ontological structure can be grasped' not through symbolic metaphors or striking visual representation, but in our 'preunderstanding' and 'familiarity' with the 'world to which it belongs … acquired through our involvement in the events of everyday life' (Vesely 2004:77). Reminiscent of Section 2.7, 'Meaningful Action as Text' above, Vesely compares a 'reading' of the café to a reading of a text:

> Its identity is formed in a long process during which the invisible aspects of culture and the way of life are embodied in the café's visible fabric, as if they were a language conveyed in written text. The visible 'text' of the café reveals certain common, deep characteristics, such as its location, its relation to the life of the street, its transparency of enclosure, a certain degree of theatricality (the need both to see the life of the outside world and to be seen in it, as if the café-goer were an actor), an ambiguity of inside and outside expressed not only in the transparency of enclosure but also in the café's typical furniture, and so on. These are only some of the characteristics that contribute to the identity and meaning of the French café as a culturally distinct typical situation.
>
> (Vesely 2004:78–79)

As a 'culturally distinct typical situation' it coheres to Carl's premise that such architectural situations possess universal 'typicalities' present only within concrete situations.

What makes cities unique, says Vesely, is 'their ability to support more articulated strata of culture, social, and political life … and the communicative nature of everyday life' (Vesely 2015:161). The relationship between ever-higher levels of articulated cultural stratigraphy, which always enjoy a specific situation, and the physical city, is the nexus that defines the nature of typical situations, where the urban fabric plays the role of final embodiment and primary reference that permits entry into the visible world of the city (ibid.:162). Therefore, it is possible to interrogate the complexity and depth of the urban lifeword by charting particular architectural situations that embody the institutional order.

This premise marks the fundamental departure from positivist enquiries into the nature of cities and the embrace of the interpretive paradigm. In common parlance to chart a topography means to represent two-dimensionally the three-dimensional surface contours of a landscape (or city-scape). This expression has become less of a metaphor for urban analysis than a literal analytical mode. Figure-ground plans, network diagrams, descriptions of flows (economic or social) give us exactly what the name topography implies – a two-dimensional reduction of the relatively stable urban configuration (streets, squares, parks, etc.). In so doing the positivist approach rightly claims to see the whole of the city, but never admits to its chief failure in understanding the relationship of the parts to that whole. As Vesely says, 'The horizon of a situation represents in a global sense the relation of parts and whole, the primary operational notion of modern hermeneutics in terms of understanding. This answers to a great extent our own question about the role of individual contributions to the life of the city' (2015:163).

I cite both the cathedral and café examples because they both illustrate the range of architectural situations that form the structure and stratification of embodiment from the highly symbolic and deeply historic to the simply manifest and commonly prosaic. This is precisely the range of articulations and embodiments covered in Part III of this thesis: from grand mosques, palaces and markets to schools, roads and cars, Part III seeks to use particular architectural situations that in my view represent 'the most complete way of understanding the condition of our experience of the surrounding world and the human qualities of the world' (ibid.:161).

In keeping with the main theme in this thesis to uncover the institutional order across two axes – the political and the architectural – I wish to briefly extend the architectural discussion of the symbolization of embodiments to also include political representation. Representation takes many symbolic forms, most notably throughout history that of a society's political order. Eric Voegelin gives us a unique understanding of political representation, that, when taken together with our discussion of the institutional order, provides a necessary element to our interpretive framework. Voegelin

moves beyond a study of standard 'representative institutions' and deeper 'into the nature of political representation as the form by which a political society gains existence for action in history' (Voegelin 1987:1). Using an Aristotelian process of 'examining symbols as they occur in reality' (ibid.:34), Voegelin sees the broad range of symbolic orders operating throughout history as that which have supplied human beings with existential articulations that ground us in an understanding of transcendence through an expression of symbolization in particular embodiments of that articulation (Beiner 2014:103). Or, as Voegelin says, the 'process in which human beings form themselves into society for action shall be called the articulation of society' (1987:37), where articulation provides the conditions for the possibility of representation reaching its limit when every member of society becomes politically articulate and the society becomes representative of itself (ibid.:40–41). Thus, for Voegelin, political order represents the meaning of a society's existence and gives political expression to the experience of cosmological reality. Every society must articulate an understanding of itself to itself and to the larger external world if it is to have any orientation in history. Again, as Beiner notes, 'this involves a notion of existential representation, embodied in a construction of political order that enacts symbolic projections of what the society stands for far deeper than what we associate with the representative institutions of a standard modern liberal democracy' (2014:100).

Both Voegelin and Vesely use nearly the same terms – symbol, representation, articulation and embodiment – and we must remain clear on their similarities and differences. The main point of continuity connecting the two philosophers lies in the first instance with Voegelin's characterization of a highly articulate political order, which represents existential notions of itself to itself and the outside world through symbolic embodiments. Vesely takes symbolic articulations as the means by which 'we are informed about the richness of events that take place in the depths of our human situation and experience' (2004b:63). Secondly, both the political and architectural embodiments of articulations provide the conditions for *praxis*. The conjunction of the political, architectural, urban and institutional orders underlies and justifies the use and method of the hermeneutical

approach argued for throughout this chapter. But moreover, the continuity between political agency and the ways in which architectural symbolization ground the human lifeworld of meaningful action ultimately provides the conditions for the possibility of freedom.

2.9 The Structure of Interpretation: Charting Doha's Urban Topography

If social action is symbolically mediated within concrete situations, then as the situations of human action and their historical sedimentations vary so too must the relationship between institutional claims and the apprehension of meaning. While we can generalize the nature of the urban order through particular reified cultural practices, to 'typify types', we must also guard against the distortive effects of architecture's political symbolism, both real and imaginary. The relationship between symbols either existing in Doha's history, or repurposed for political legitimacy, and symbols that cohere to the social order is central to our understanding of Doha's urban order.

The depth of meaning occurring through historic sedimentation locates each architectural artefact, either unique or typical, within a temporal locus ranging from stability to fluidity. Looking at 'typicalities of type' builds from an understanding of the particular towards an understanding of the universal. In so doing I am not seeking to develop explanatory theories through the use of objectified causal observation, or probe inner mental states, though motivations of individual actors and particularly those on the part of the ruling regime invariably come to light; rather, such motivations shall be seen as the consequence of external forces reflected in individual experience.

The trajectory of an individual life and the arc of a conglomeration of lives that form a city's fabric of meaningful action beg to be told as a story. The usefulness of the narrative device in explanation and understanding, says Ricoeur, stems from its ability to grasp together and integrate 'into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a

whole … [and] … whether it be a question of metaphor or of plot, to explain more is to understand better' (Ricoeur 1984:x). With this in mind I shall seek an understanding of Doha's urban order that 'is grasping the operation that unifies into one whole and complete action the miscellany constituted by the circumstances, ends and means, initiatives and interactions, the reversals of fortune, and the unintended consequences issuing from human action' (ibid.).

The use and method of philosophical hermeneutics to understand the depth and complexity of any urban order are perhaps best encapsulated by Wittgenstein's question 'How could human behaviour be described?' To which he answers

> surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what one man is doing now, an individual action, but 'the whole hurly-burly' of human actions, the background against which we see any action.
>
> (2007)

Understanding a city like Doha, I shall argue, first requires an interpretation of how human behaviour is caught in the tension between the city's seeming and being, between the experience and the expectation by everyday inhabitants. It is the story of that tension – the whole hurly-burly of human action – that reveals Doha's urban order in all its complexity.

The preceding conversation of hermeneutics in the human sciences is intended to structure this thesis' main argument. It highlights how the institutional order is claimed by its sedimented context. It also highlights the achievement of philosophical hermeneutics in rescuing us from the grip of scientific positivism or worse of applying natural science methods directly to the human sciences.

Understanding, as we have seen, is entwined with interpretation of individual lived experience. The general problem of understanding a city's depth, structure and complexity is addressed through an examination of

architecture's unique role in embodying institutions within the urban *Lebenswelt*.

The central argument in this thesis – that Doha's architectural manners seek an authentic historic orientation in the midst of a rapidly evolving social, cultural and physical landscape – requires that the cultural interpretation of Doha be anchored in the concrete manifestations of practical, everyday life, and its specific settings. Institutional interpretation, therefore, uses a set of institutional conditions, ranging from ancient and enduring to modern and transformative as the common ground of practical life. Linking the architectural order to the institutional order provides an analytical breadth and depth typically overlooked by either the social sciences or urban studies disciplines.

In looking ahead in this thesis to the application of the interpretive method it is necessary to first equip the reader with an understanding of Qatar's recent past. Part II: 'The Architectural, Urban and Political Development Qatar' describes how the political, social and economic histories of the last hundred years have shaped Doha's architectural and urban form. With the city's history firmly in place I am able in Part III: 'The Urban and Institutional Topography of Doha' to connect the use and method of philosophical hermeneutics with architecture's essential role in the urban *Lebenswelt* in the way in which it embodies the institutional order.

The concrete, architectural situations looked at in Part III are illuminated through historic and contemporary visual and textual records (Chapter 7: 'Islamic Urban Foundations and Traditions': mosque, souq, diwan, majlis, dwelling; Chapter 8: 'Negotiating Cultural Differences': museums, universities, cultural village; Chapter 9: .The Practical City': streets, skyscrapers, infrastructure). In most instances this is complemented by a wide variety of personal narratives drawn from across Doha's social spectrum. Predominately anthropological in character this analysis will describe the situated nature of a cultural interpretation. While the analyzed situations are spread across the city, and it is my hope to draw general conclusions about the current and future orientation of Doha, particularly as

envisioned by the regime, the chosen sites cannot speak for everyone nor embody everything in the same manner. Doha embodies in one sense a generalized orientation and coherent culture; however, in another sense the tensions, paradoxes and contradictions shall become equally evident. Awareness of the range of stabilities and uncertainties must be borne in mind simultaneously throughout Part III in particular and this thesis in general.

In all instances the description of the institutional order proceeds from its historical basis as a concrete situation of practical life. An eye is always kept on understanding how 'typical' universal conditions are the common ground holding commonly held concerns. By linking the articulated strata of involvement with their embodied architectural dimensions as an embedded structure of the institutional order it is hoped we shall more deeply comprehend, more viscerally experience, the urban order than is often the case in architectural, urban or social science studies alone.

The narrative nature of the analysis weaves between intimate and universal aspects of the institutional order depicting the ways in which Doha's various social, ethnic, religious and gendered (to name only a few) groups participate in typically human situations and in turn how the urban fabric is always an anticipation of the larger culture (Vesely 2015:161). For example, coffee in one's *majlis* is always poured by the host or his son, the *della* (coffee pot) held in the right hand, and beginning with guest of honour seated opposite the entry. The unwritten script is anchored spatially, temporally, historically among a multitude of 'equipmental' (Heidegger) references that form a 'world' all situated in the building, in a particular orientation to the street, neighbourhood and city.

Each strata of articulation invites interpretation to understand the relationship between embodying conditions, however minuscule, and the larger urban milieu, each adding to a deeper understanding of the connection between the social and material worlds. At times these structures proceed from intimate, ready-to-hand instruments, ranging from ancient (prayer beads) to modern (automobiles), leading us to understand rooms,

roads, bridges and infrastructure. At other times I begin with the concrete situation, a grand mosque or Emir's palace, and move deeper within, to the extent to which I am able or permitted as a foreigner, to reveal at one extreme basic human situatedness, and at the opposite pole the regime's larger cultural-urban objectives. In either case the eleven chosen situations are seen as structures of meaning, understood from the claims each makes upon its occupants, and conversely from the nature of participation in these situations.

Because cities are organized around the dialectic between deeply held – largely unseen – cultural background practices and the visually describable, symbolically representative architectural situation, we are able to characterize the strata of mediation between the particular and the universal: how the individual engages in the wider world of involvements, granting orientation to her and to the larger urban culture. The structures of mediation that provide the conditions for *praxis* are described as typicalities of architectural situations. Each is not necessarily a direct embodiment of the horizons of *praxis*, but rather the analysis surfaces meanings that come from their situational typicality. For example, the seat of honour in the *majlis* depends upon the arrangement of doors and walls, which in turn depends upon streets and neighbourhoods. As in this example the emphasis is placed upon how individuals are involved within concrete situations, within their worlds. In this analysis, world, from Heidegger, comprises three structural features: 1) equipment – the things people use skilfully that situate them; 2) goals – the actions worth pursuing in the world in which they are instituted; 3) roles – the self-interpretive stance individuals take upon themselves, the ultimate 'for-the-sake-of-which' ways individuals understand what it is to be them in that particular context. Though Doha often appears as a highly segregated landscape of differences, the location of typicalities illuminates how the differences are held in common in a referential and symbolic totality. This does not presuppose Doha has an underlying stability, coherence or orientation. Indeed, quite to the contrary, the analysis proposes to disclose the extent to which 'types' and 'typicalities' are instrumental in the search for historic orientation.

2.10 The Use of Western Hermeneutics in a Middle Eastern Context

The title of this chapter's last section picks up the topic of the researcher in a foreign culture first introduced in Section 1.4.6, 'Who Speaks for Whom', to now include *how* one speaks. First, the very notion of using hermeneutics in a Middle Eastern context, a branch of Continental Philosophy, underscores its Eurocentric origins and traditions forcing us to ask whether such interpretive models are appropriate in other cultures. Should research methods (and particularly the PhD), whose protocol derives from 'Western' practices regarding 'knowledge', only confine themselves to their originating contexts? Or, since one cannot escape one's cultural context, are there appropriately respectful forms of dialogue that are fruitful for generating legitimate insights?

However, before we can even begin this discussion we first encounter the problem of nomenclature. As the title of this section indicates, we are talking about a particular geographical region, 'The Middle East', which is itself a Western invention, coined by the European map makers and their colonial governments of the last few centuries. Terms such as 'Middle East' may expeditiously orient *any* reader to the topic of discussion, but Spivak (1984, 1995, 1996) might say the desire for clarity or transparency in one's writing is indicative of systems of repression, control and domination. This forces the researcher to ask himself if seeking clarity in one's writing reinforces systems of repression, either intentionally or subconsciously. Spivak's solution to how to give voice and political agency to the politically oppressed is the inverse: a use of language that strips away masks of inequality. Spivak takes inspiration From Derrida and Foucault, who see the language of power structures that must be challenged and 'deconstructed'. Her rhetorical devices challenge readers to question systemic conventions of representation and how to understand a culture through its artefacts in a post-colonial world. Interestingly, as with Said's use of Saussurean Semiotics, she, too, in employing deconstructionism, is using Western philosophy to undermine the West's own traditions. Similarly, Gadamer challenges how Derrida focuses on the sign rather than recognizing that it is

in the dialogue between writer and reader, or the written and the read, that the multiplicity of meanings are exposed (Gadamer 1989:114–125).

While I do not wish to claim that there is methodological validity in using Western forms of knowledge to undermine Western forms of knowledge, or to assert that such an approach automatically grants voice to the 'other', I do wish to point out that just because interpretive paradigms are of Western origin does not automatically discount their appropriateness, particularly when they are epistemically related to those of the culture under study.

The analysis of Doha in these pages is not about truths but rather it concerns interpretations. It views the actions of the regime from the point of view of different Doha residents who have experienced a radical urban transformation over the last half century. One of the threads woven throughout this thesis is the extent to which successive Emirs have fashioned Doha upon Western models. That the regime employs Western-trained designers who are interpreting 'Arab' or 'Islamic' culture at the behest of their benefactors, who invariably are also trained at universities in Europe and North America, leads one to believe the regime's interpretive paradigm is as much foreign as it is domestic. Indeed, one rarely finds a member of the Qatari elite educated at the country's only national institution, Qatar University. The one notable exception is Sheikha Moza, a 1986 Qatar University sociology graduate. But we must remember she is also the one who invited six US and two European universities to open branch campuses in Doha (see Chapter 8.2). More to the point, the nature of what is 'domestic' in Doha is precisely what appears to be in question for the regime; and this hinges upon the intended audience as much as any presumed control over meanings by the Emir.

On the other hand, Qatar in law and custom is Islamic and Arab as described in Article 1 of its modern constitution: 'Qatar is an independent sovereign Arab State. Its religion is Islam and Shari'a law shall be a main source of its legislation. Its political system is democratic. The Arabic Language shall be its official language. The people of Qatar are a part of the

Arab nation.'[12] Indeed, since the late nineteenth century the Qatari regime has aligned themselves with the highly conservative Wahhabi branch of the Hanbali *madhab*. While the vast field of Islamic jurisprudence is well beyond the limits of this thesis I have nonetheless found it important to touch upon the main sources that contribute to varying degrees to Qatar's legal system and social customs. These include: from the pre-modern period, Ibn Taymiyyah (1999), Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab (2010) and Ibn Khaldun (2005); and in the contemporary period, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan (1997, 2004, 2009, 2010) who are directly involved with Qatar's current royal family. In particular, Ramadan's concern for reform and renewal of Islam both within historically Muslim societies, such as Qatar, and for Muslim's living in the historically Christian countries of Europe, are also the central concerns of this thesis. Regardless of where Muslims find themselves, they are challenged, says Ramadan, by modernity and his project is to provide a set of analytical tools from within Islamic traditions and values for use by everyday Muslims. As such, Ramadan bases his Islamic hermeneutics on the premise that there is no fundamental incompatibility between Islamic values (what he calls Islamic ethics) and Western civilization.

Other contemporary scholars, though not based in the Gulf region, have also provided invaluable insights into the primary tension between tradition and modernity analysed throughout this thesis. In particular, Mohammed Arkoun's (2001) use of Western philosophical paradigms, such as semiotics and structuralism, to critique both Western and Islamic traditions, begins to surface a new legal and philosophical framework for understanding and practicing Islam. His analysis of Islam in the age of globalisation sheds new light on how individual existence within historical action constantly confronts the politics of religion adopting dogmatic ritualism while favouring the technological benefits thrust upon them.

One of Egypt's most recognized Muslim reformers, Nasr Abu Zayd (2004, 2006), uses 'humanistic hermeneutics' (2004) to construct a scientific

[12] Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, Part One: The State and the Basis of the Rule, Article 1. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, http://english.mofa.gov.qa/details.cfm?id=80 accessed March 2016.

understanding of the Qur'an and 'brush aside layers of ideological interpretations, in order to unearth the historical reality of the text' (quoted in Kermani 2004:175). By stressing the 'interpretational diversity' in Islamic traditions, Abu Zayd reinvigorates the notion of Islamic interpretation, or *ijtihad*, countering those who think the Qur'an is bindingly absolute and should be literally obeyed.

A prolific writer on topics ranging from hermeneutics to modernity, Hasan Hanafi's (1986) philosophical enquiry into the renewal of Islamic heritage within modernity, which probes 'the apparent duality between facts and values' (1986:161) in Islamic theology and Islamic culture align exceedingly well with the themes of this thesis.

From a Western perspective Daniel Martin Varisco's (2005) blistering critique of fellow Western anthropologists and sociologists, in particular Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner, upends their canonical status to provide a far more contemporary account of Islam's diversity and difference. Varisco reminds us that to 'observe Islam', which in real sense I am in this thesis, means two different things. On the one hand, one can observe Muslims involved in their particular lifeworlds: read and interpret their texts, inspect and examine their material culture. But on the other, to observe '"Islam" in the abstract sense of a religion or civilization' says Varisco can only be done though representations (2005:20). The danger persistently lurking among our anthropological heroes is they too often conflate belief with image in such a way that representations depict truths, which endure for far too long in the literature. Varisco profoundly influenced my own field work in the simple reminder that there is no such thing as a single 'Islam'. Understanding diversity and difference within unity meant rejecting essentialist depictions, and one should instead observe others as they actually live.

These sources, together with successive Emirs, continually engage in the practice of interpretation: deciding on what basis, and in what ways, one is to live in the modern world while still upholding Muslim piety. The chain of transmission, or *isnad*, from the Qurʾān and Hadith to the modern

constitution is an essential historical method within Islam characterized as hermeneutic.

This chapter's previous discussion of hermeneutics is meant as a framework that structures the main concerns and arguments found herein. More broadly, if we agree that one's research can engage material distant in time, place, culture and tradition, then the usage here of philosophical hermeneutics, whose subject area is not culturally specific, grants a more fundamental achievement of the dialectical relationship between being and seeming, explanation and understanding.

Many historians, philosophers, social scientists, philologists and linguists over the last four decades have regarded the study of the Middle East or Muslim societies by a Western agent as simply a disguise for the persistent power structure of domination and oppression. Others might take a more sympathetic view of the symbols studied in this thesis as a genuine attempt to grasp the degree to which contemporary civic culture understands how we are to live together. In either case a hermeneutics of symbols, as articulated in Doha, requires us to understand their distortions and ambiguities. It also necessitates our agreement that there is no Archimedean Point outside the symbolic tradition from which we might criticize symbols. Symbols must therefore first cohere and articulate the institutional order before they can distort it. This has four methodological implications.

The first is to recognize the interpretive tradition within Islam. The generally held belief among Muslims is that the Arabic text of the Qurʾān contains the exact words of revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad: timeless, perfect, unchanging. The second doctrinal source of Islam is the record of the Prophet's teachings, sayings and actions as compiled in the *sunnah* or 'custom'. For over fourteen centuries Muhammad's sayings and actions have been interpreted within each culture's temporal and spatial circumstances. Shortly after Muhammad's death social and political life moved in separate legal orbits: one in which laws were eternal and must be adhered to as a member of Islam, the community of Allah; and the other whose laws were mutable, revocable and subject to change as a mechanism

to cope with the complications of our sinful earthly existence. The compromise of inviting a human element into the concept of divine rulership over humankind and society meant, on the one hand, that Muslim law succeeded in preserving its Qurʾānic foundations and, on the other, in attuning its practices to the ever-changing needs of an enormously diverse people. And herein lies the key connection to the hermeneutical approach: Islamic law, *sharīʿah*, always attempts to bridge these conditions through interpretation and precedent, an examination of the basis for jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Understanding and explanation spring from the constant attempt at reconciliation between divine revelation and historical exigency. Further, it has been pointed out (Albright 1940; Becker 1924–1932) that Islamic civilization first in the Eastern Mediterranean and then elsewhere is essentially an outgrowth of Hellenism, just as Islam itself is an offshoot of Judaeo-Christian religion. One need only look to the Qurʾān's heavy adaptation of the biblical narrative for proof. As Albright (1940:284) points out, 'Not to recognize this fact and its implications is to misinterpret the course of history and to misunderstand Near-Eastern life and thought'.

The second implication arises from the manner in which one's unarticulated cultural background provides the structure and context for self-understanding. Norms, beliefs, meanings and purposes are always embedded in situations claimed by the context. By working with the results of agency – our evidence – we seek to expose the nature of the contexts on which the decisions depend, or that they at least imply.

Thirdly, as Gadamer emphasizes, understanding and meaning require a fusion of horizons, being open to the richness of the other's claim. When social theory describes social reality in terms of 'intentionality' (Searle 1995) and belonging to a sedimented existence towards which that intentionality is directed, it takes into account the beliefs and suppositions of those studied, however possibly misunderstood by the researcher's own fore-understandings. In any case, fundamental to any such enterprise is the recognition that it is the dialogue that creates the meanings: 'in a conversation, it is *something* [the topic, the question] that comes to language, not one or the other speaker' (Gadamer 1989:121; emphasis original).

And lastly, the attempt to mediate between social science and social reality allows us to understand how individual agency is practically embedded in social structures. If we genuinely attempt an understanding of the unarticulated, unthematized structures of social reality we reflexively uncover our own complicity in structures of knowledge and power (Kögler 2007:378–389).

In order to discover how Doha works as a collective structure – this thesis' central research question – the justification of Western hermeneutics is found in the way the above four premises are linked by a central Islamic idea, first articulated in the Greek philosophical context (and reprised by several thinkers in the Islamic tradition): how diversity and difference constitute unity (or continuity).

We are all from the Highest to the lowest slaves of one master, the pearl.

– Mohammed Al-Thani told to William Palgrave, *Personalized Journey*

PART II

THE ARCHITECTURAL, URBAN AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF QATAR

Chapter 3. Qatar's Political History

Resting between the Emiri Diwan, the ruler's administrative palace, and the Corniche, Doha's most public space, lies an enormous sculpture of an open oyster shell holding a polished pearl (Fig. 3.1). It is a clear statement of Qatar's origins, struggle for survival, dependence upon the sea and perceived heroic history. But its history, like those of most nations, is not so simple, nor so singularly symbolic. One might expect that a country that sixty years ago had neither roads, electricity nor concrete would have a complex history. Indeed, the pearl sculpture represents what most would like to believe of Qatar's past: a simple life of poverty and hard work smoothly transformed into a modern and prosperous nation-state with and through a strict adherence to Islam. In accordance with this view the layers of Qatar's past are not deposited in a deep and rich stratigraphy awaiting the archaeologist's shovel. Qatar's past is much nearer to us in time but, as we shall see, far less clear than other modern histories.

Qatar has had its share of momentous events and strong personalities; however, some are historically unfounded and persist as mythologized

history. The intensity of the climate and scarcity of resources have always reinforced a nomadic, unsettled existence, and this existence, more than anything, is what characterizes Qatar. From ancient accounts of war and trade to contemporary commentaries on commerce and politics, Qatar's



Fig. 3.1. *The pearl sculpture on the Doha Corniche with the West Bay skyscraper skyline in the background (photo by the author, 2015).*

people and leaders are revealed to be master negotiators. Gulf people have survived for thousands of years in one of the world's harshest environments through their ability to understand – and negotiate – the forces that shape their physical and social worlds. It is hoped that through an appreciation of Qatar's enduring pattern of constant negotiation between extremes and competing interests we will better understand the impulses of her key decision makers.

3.1 Ancient Origins

Archaeologists and historical geographers believe that during the last ice age, which ended approximately 10,000 years ago, the Arabian Gulf was little more than an inland lake just off the coast of present-day Iran. As the glaciers of Central Asia melted, the water flowed into the Tigris and Euphrates and towards the Persian coasts; the lake grew and eventually

overflowed its banks at the Straits of Hormuz thus connecting the Gulf to the Indian Ocean. Evidence suggests that ancient nomadic settlements litter the bottom of the sea. It must have been during these years that local inhabitants took to the sea.



Fig. 3.2. *Satellite image of Earth, Qatar highlighted in the red circle (source unknown).*

To be sure, the Arabian Gulf has always known navigation, either for trade or war. Both the sea and the formless desert expanses have for millennia connected Asia, Europe and Africa. The Uruk inscription from the reign of Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279 BCE) is one of the earliest historical references to what we call the Arabian Gulf (lower sea) and the Mediterranean Sea (upper sea). We understand from this brief inscription that all intervening lands were known navigable waters under Mesopotamian control.

In the 5th Century BCE, the Greek historian Herodotus describes the Euphrates emptying into the Erythaean Sea (modern Arabian Gulf) and believed the Phoenicians settled the Indian Ocean and Gulf coasts (Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1:180 in Cottrell 1980:xix,8). Two centuries later in his push to the Indus Valley, Alexander the Great dispatched his general, Nearchus, in 323 BCE to chart the Arabian Gulf and hinterland hoping to establish a regular trade route from the Indus to the Tigris, and ultimately to Egypt's Red Sea (ibid.:9).

It was Ptolemy in the second century CE who first named Qatar. His maps labeled the peninsula 'katara', a word of unknown origin. Linguistically, the

Arabic for Qatar (قطر) is the same trilateral form for 'dew', or 'water droplet'. In the winter and spring months Qatar often experiences heavy fog and indeed a blanket of morning dew is common.

Several centuries after Alexander the Sassanid Empire began to rise in 224 CE and continuing until 651 CE. Stretching from Anatolia to the Indus Valley and based near modern-day Baghdad, the Sassanids renewed Alexander's trade routes, which in turn promoted the emergence of coastal villages along both the eastern and western coasts of the Arabian Gulf devoted to shipbuilding, bolstering the well-established trade routes between Egypt and India. However, ground down by centuries of conflict with each other, and weary from internal dissent, both the Roman and Sassanid Empires were in decline. The time was now ripe for a new power to fill the void: Islam.

Just one year after the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE border clashes between his newly incorporated faithful and the Sassanids began. Ten years later, the Arabs, united in a new faith, conquered the entire Sassanid Empire. Within a mere 100 years of the Prophet's death Islam had nearly reached its geographical apogee, holding within its influence, or caliphate, all of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and reaching as far east as the Indus Valley. The Arabian Gulf was no longer a vital link in Euro-Asian trade but rather the western terminus for Indian Ocean commerce. Indeed, for the next thousand years trade with China was to constitute a major part of the Arabian Gulf economy (Cottrell 1980:12).

The Portuguese were the next major foreign power seeking its economic fortune in the Gulf. Led by Vasco de Gama in 1498, Portuguese navies progressively settled the Arabian shores first establishing its major stronghold in Muscat. From here, trade in spices and slaves flourished connecting Muscat with its other slave ports in Zanzibar, India and ultimately back to Europe. The conquest was relatively short-lived. Suffering defeat by the Turks in Jeddah in 1517 and barely holding the Straits of Hormuz, the Portuguese were easily dislodged opening the door for a new power from the East. In 1602 the Persian Ruler Shah Abbas I

(1571–1629) who took neighboring Bahrain, and, with the help of the English East Indian Company, sought to conquer all of the Gulf waters. However, the Dutch and French East Indian Companies checked this advance, sinking the entire region into conflict for much of the 17th century (Zahlan 1979:26-27).

By the middle of the 18th Century things became settled. Omani Arabs led by Ahmed bin Said Al-Buaidi (1710–1783) expelled the Persians from Muscat and secured the lucrative trade route with Zanzibar. Bahrain now belonged to the Persians, and the Utbi Arabs held Kuwait as they do today; Qatar, however, is barely mentioned. This changes around 1760 when the Kuwaiti Utub tribe migrated to Zubarah, Qatar's leading village at the north end of the peninsula, and within a short sail of Bahrain and in the middle of prime fishing and pearling grounds (Fig. 3.3). Skirmishes between Zubarah and Bahrain, being held variously by the Persians and several different Arab tribes, continue until British intervention.



Fig. 3.3. *'Chart showing pearl banks along Arabian Shore of the Persian Gulf between Ras Tanura and Dabai' c 1939. Pealing banks indicated by numbered small circles (source: IOR/R/15/1/616, f3).*

3.2 The British Empire

In an attempt to thwart plundering Arab pirates, the British imposed the 1820 General Treaty of Peace upon the local Sheikhs and what is now the UAE. The region's principal power now shifted to Bahrain, and, without much consideration, Qatar was de facto assumed to fall under this treaty.

By 1835 many of the local sheikhdoms had grown weary of maritime warfare and sought a broader truce beyond that of the 1820 General Treaty banning piracy. The resulting Pax Britannica obligated the local rulers to avoid all maritime hostilities and to seek redress and reparations through Britain's Resident Political Agent. The truce originally sought to protect the May to September pearling season, but was readily extended and became the 'Trucial system' that made Britain protector, mediator and guarantor of the local tribes. Its lasting success resulted in the Resident Political Agent inviting other sheikhdoms to join membership in what the British referred to as the 'Trucial States', their coastline being known as the 'Trucial Coast'. The truce welcomed Bahrain in 1861, Kuwait in 1899 and Qatar in 1916 (Ajjaj 1962; Onley 2009:9).

A combined naval attack on Doha in 1867 by Muhammad bin Khalifa of Bahrain and Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa of Abu Dhabi was in direct violation of the 1820 Treaty. Suspecting a challenge to its power over the Gulf, Britain sent Col. Lewis Pelly, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to restore order.[1] Pelly quickly removed Muhammad as leader of Bahrain and installed the latter's brother, Ali. Pelly then sailed to Al-Wakrah, a coastal village some 16 kilometres south of Doha, and met with the man who would become Qatar's founding personality, Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani. Mohammed agreed not to seek vengeance, nor align with other Trucial Coast sheikhdoms, and to reseat himself in Doha. A day after the treaty signing, Pelly sent the following note to the other tribal sheikhs:

> Be it known to all the Sheikhs and others on the Guttar [Qatar] Coast that Mahomed bin Sanee [Thani], of Guttar, is returning with his tribe to reside at his town of Dawha [Doha], and has

[1] Interestingly at just this moment the first sub-sea telegraph began operations connecting England with India. See Harris (1969:169–190).

> bound himself to live peaceably there and not to molest any of his neighboring tribes. It is therefore expected that all the Sheikhs and tribes of Guttar should not molest him or his tribesmen. If any one is found acting otherwise, or in any way breaking the peace at sea, he will be treated in the same manner as Sheikh Mahomed bin Khalifeh, of Bahrein, has been.
>
> (Pelly in Rahman 2005:78).

Thus, in this one, crucial moment, the newly signed treaty of 12 September 1868 established Qatar as a semi-autonomous political and geographic entity, with Doha as the principal seat of the emerging power, and began the regnal rule of the Al-Thani family.[2]

Qatar's semi-independence under British protection was not without challenge. Approaching old age, Mohammed ceded control to his son Jassim in 1876, and two years later upon Mohammed's death Jassim was officially in charge, and had inherited a revised political situation. With the Arabs of the central Arabian peninsula, what the British call Wahabbis in reference to their adherence the Sunni sect of puritanical Islam, in retreat, Jassim had little choice but to accept an Ottoman presence in Doha. Qatar, like much of the Arabian Gulf, would for the next forty years see a power struggle between the Ottomans and British, ending in 1913. In a move that prefigured those of many of his successors, Jassim understood Qatar's precarious situation and continually played the Ottomans against the British.

In 1913 the Ottomans agreed to withdrawal and the establishment of an autonomous Qatar that included a renunciation of any claims to suzerainty on the part of Turkey (Rahman 2005:211). However, with the British and Ottoman Empires at war less than a year later, a formal treaty would never see ratification.

The Treaty of 1916 stands as testimony to Qatar's negotiating ability with foreign powers. The treaty clearly brought Qatar into Britain's sphere of influence and protection, extending the revised Trucial States agreement of

[2] See Appendix for the full text.

1892. This time there was no tacit understanding of Britain's role in Qatar's internal politics and protection. Under the treaty, the ruler would not settle territorial disputes or enter into foreign relations without British consent. The official legal status of Qatar and the other Trucial States was that of 'British-protected states'. While the Emirs remained heads of their respective emirates, the British government of India placed them constitutionally within the British Indian Empire (1858–1947) and informally within the British Empire itself. British involvement had the added advantage of stabilizing internal politics by recognizing and legitimizing the rulers over their land and people. This secured the various family dynasties across the Trucial States, particularly the Al-Thani in Qatar and their consolidation of autocratic power, and it gradually dismantled the age-old pattern of protection from regional powers (Onley 2009:12). However, as we shall soon see, increased power and wealth brought increased scrutiny, thus also raising the prospect of a coup d'état from within the close Al-Thani family.

3.3 Economic Review

Before turning to the rapid rise of Qatar after 1950 it is important to note the economic conditions during the interwar period. Until the 1930s Qatar relied heavily upon the international pearl trade. On land, the principal towns of Doha and Al-Wakrah, which held the pearling fleets, would distribute a large portion of the pearling profits to Bedouin tribesmen to protect the towns while most of the men were at sea (Bowen 1950). This was a common practice throughout the Trucial Coast (Lorimer in Zahlan 1979:21 and note 6).[3]

In the early 1930s the Gulf pearling industry was dealt two lethal blows. The global depression beginning in 1929 severely truncated the demand for luxury goods. Simultaneously, Japan introduced the cultured pearl at a fraction of the price. Nearly overnight, the Arabian pearl trade collapsed and Qatar entered one of its darkest periods. The population of Doha and Qatar dropped precipitously as merchants moved elsewhere to survive.

[3] Without question, the founding myth of the essential and arduous nature of pearling is true. However, the hero of this story, the diver, is often unspecified and left to the imagination. Without a competing narrative, the crucial role of the slave is omitted.

Like his father, Jassim, before him, Abdullah, who had come to power in 1913, was a strong leader, shrewd in politics and successful in business. As we will see, with the 1935 oil agreement in place Abdullah had been little worried over any coup attempts, and as old age approached, he began in 1944 to gradually cede control to his second son, Hamad. However, with oil on the horizon and many Al-Thani families still reeling from the pearl trade collapse, strife among them began brewing. This added to the exodus, and many people became frustrated with living in poverty and began to resettle in Saudi Arabia.

If 1916 marks the moment of Qatar's political formation, 1935 defines its financial future. Beginning in the early 1920s the entire region was opening to oil exploration and extraction by foreign powers, with the Americans controlling much of Saudi Arabia, and Britain much of Mesopotamia. The eastern frontier of Arabia bordering Qatar had long been in dispute but none seemed inclined to settle the matter, simply because the thousands of square kilometres of endless sand, one of the most inhospitable places on earth, had little value. But with oil's discovery came ample motive for King Abdul Aziz (1902–1953) of Saudi Arabia to move against Qatar. Fearing this, Abdullah in 1935 once again extracted agreements from the British, this time exchanging a 75-year oil concession for protection. The newly established Petroleum Development Qatar (PDQ) slowly began exploration, showing favourable indications in 1940, but with Britain's entry into World War II PDQ suspended operations. It was not until the end of 1949 that Qatar would export its first drop of oil and forever change its history.

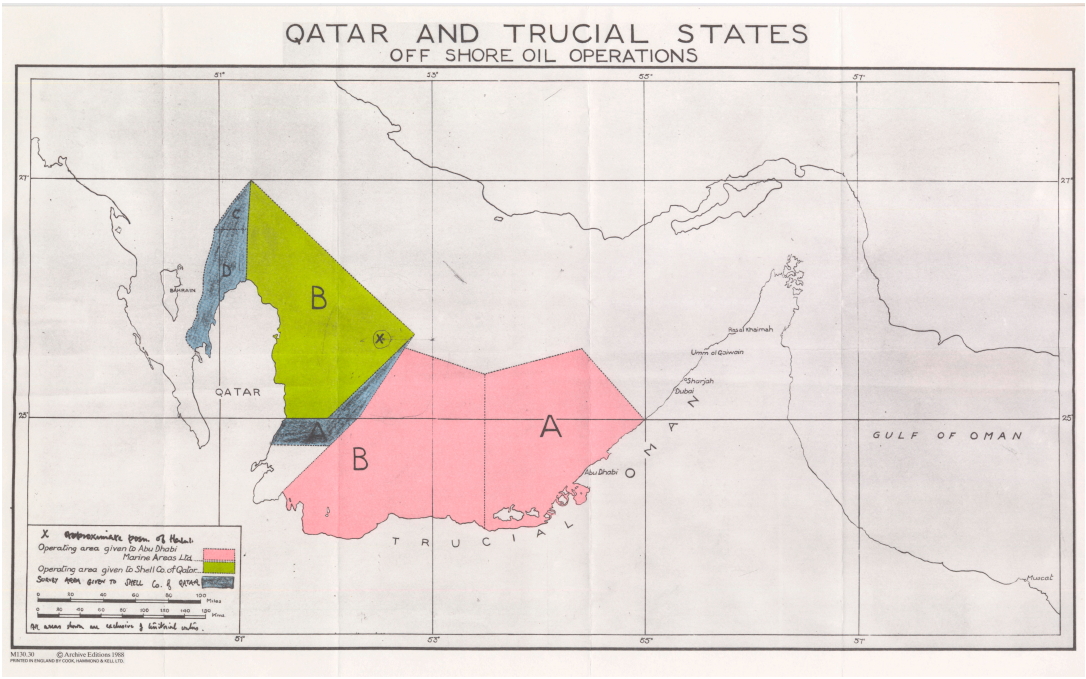


Fig. 3.4. *Map allocating oil concessions to Qatar and the UAE. Pink area given to Abu Dhabi illustrates why Dubai, without a concession, later relied on real estate for economic growth. The Green and Blue shaded areas belong to the Shell Co. of Qatar. 1935. (source: Tucson 1991:appendix).*

3.4 The Rise of the Modern State

Qatar's royal family tree, like those of most monarchies, has many branches, and is complicated by the high rate of first cousin marriage. A simplified diagram of the Al-Thani royal family tree highlights a particular kink in the inheritance of power (Fig. 3.5). The third Emir in the lineage, Abdullah bin Jassim (Fig. 3.6), had appointed his son Hamad (Fig. 3.7) as Heir Apparent in 1935.

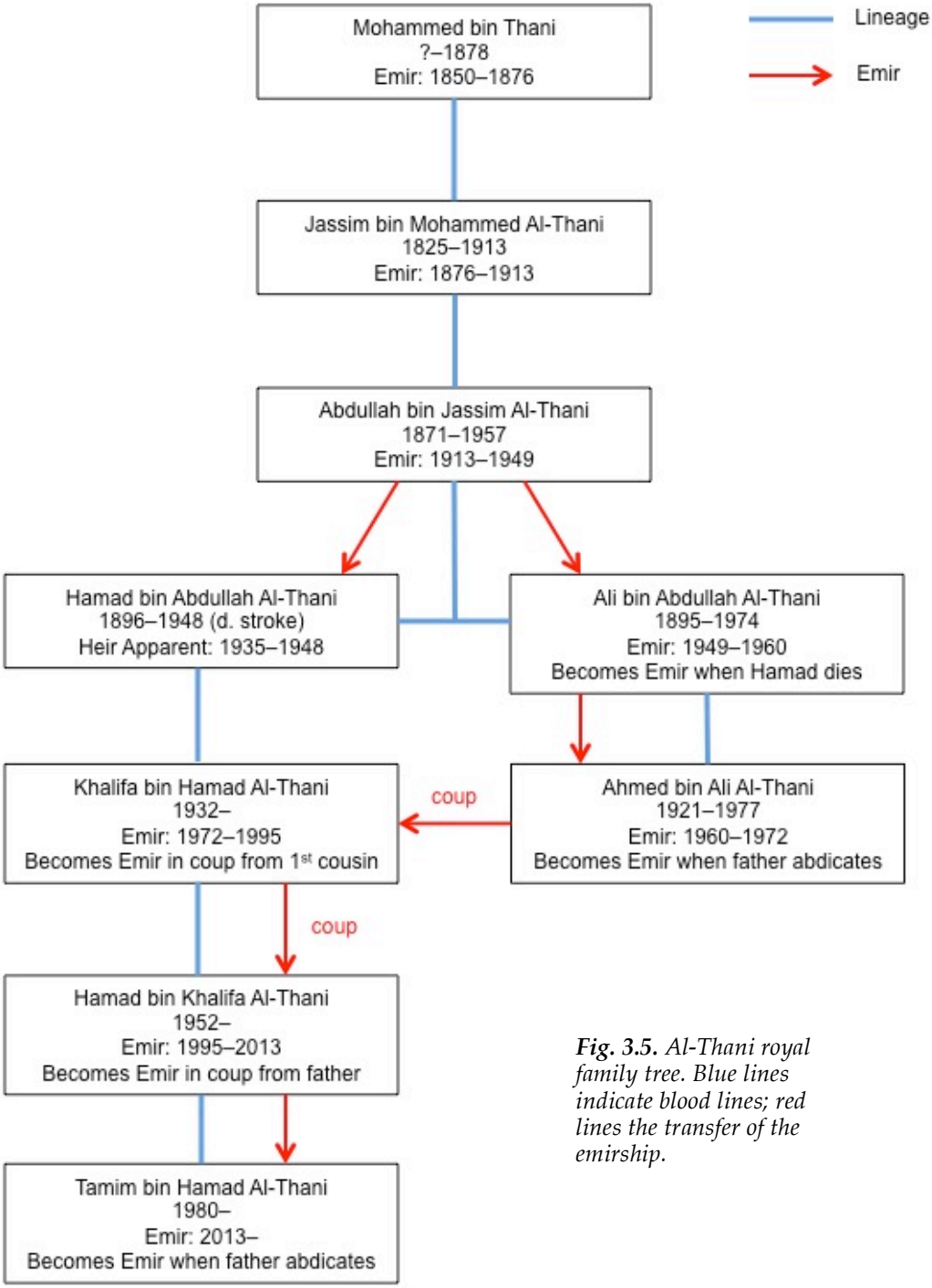


Fig. 3.5. *Al-Thani royal family tree. Blue lines indicate blood lines; red lines the transfer of the emirship.*

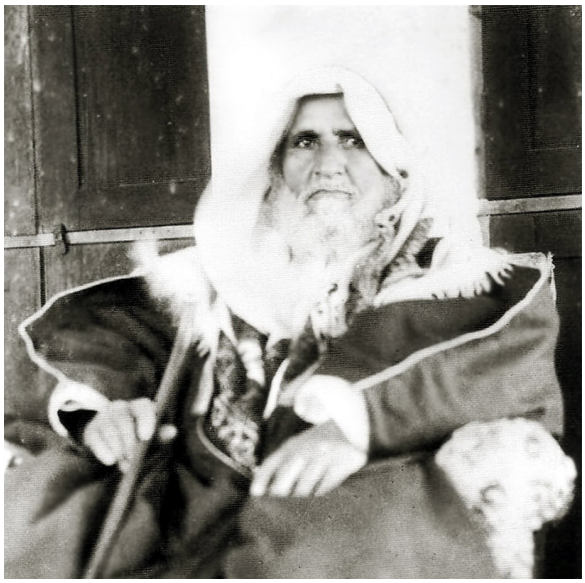


Fig. 3.6. *Left. Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani (source and date unknown).*



Fig. 3.7. *Right. Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al-Thani (source and date unknown).*

Upon Hamad's untimely death from a stroke in 1948, the aging Abdullah installed his first son, Ali (Fig. 3.8), as Emir in 1949. According to British Foreign Office records it is believed Sheikh Abdullah placed in writing instructions for the throne to revert to Hamad's son Khalifa at his coming of age. Sheikh Ali ignored his father's wishes and abdicated the throne to his son Ahmed (Fig. 3.9) in 1960, later forcing Khalifa to overthrow his first cousin in a palace coup in 1972 in order to return the emirship to the Hamad family branch. Clearly, Ali was not Abdullah's first choice: he lacked his ancestors' shrewd leadership qualities and this was only compounded by lavish spending brought on by new-found wealth. The British Political Agent and PDQ negotiated with the Diwan (the Emir's seat of government) to apportion oil revenues, with 25 per cent going directly to the Emir, 25 per cent to the Emir's family, staff and friends, 25 per cent to infrastructure projects and 25 per cent to long-term investment. While Ali did establish hospitals, schools, roads, electricity, a port and airport upgrades, he was a terrible spendthrift and was always indebted to the souq (local trading market).

New wealth generated by oil extraction continued to put pressure on the Diwan, as other branches of the Al-Thani family vied for power. Thus, Ali made what seems to have been a conscious decision to trade money for power. If the other throne contenders agreed to relinquish any claim to power then they would be handsomely rewarded. Through issuing building



Fig. 3.8. *Right. Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al-Thani (source and date unknown).*



Fig. 3.9. *Left. Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Abdullah Al-Thani (source and date unknown).*

contracts, purchasing land and encouraging the creation of businesses all among leading mercantile families, in the 1950s Ali set in motion the founding development of the modern nation-state and the formation of the urban and social structure of Doha. Ali abdicated in 1960 at the age of sixty-four and was succeeded by his son Ahmed.

Two unrelated events conspired in the creation of a fully independent Qatar. First, in January 1968, the British Labour government, led by Harold Wilson, announced it could not afford its defence contracts east of the Suez and would withdraw all its forces by the end of 1971. Unlike many former British colonies that fought bitter wars of independence in the 1950s and 1960s, autonomy was now thrust upon the Gulf sheikhdoms. In response

nine Gulf emirates seriously considered uniting in federation.[4] Old rivalries, and basic disagreements on the form and details of government, ultimately proved insurmountable. Despite Qatar's commitment to a Gulf federation, it withdrew from the process, drafting its own constitution in 1971.

The second event was the bloodless coup that deposed Sheikh Ahmed by his first cousin and Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Hamad, who is also the current Emir's grandfather.

Ahmed's uncontrolled spending, extravagant lifestyle and general disinterest in managing Qatar's rapidly evolving future gave Khalifa ample justification to move against him. A glaring example is Sheikh Ahmed's failure in 1971 to cut short his Swiss vacation and return to Qatar to sign the documents giving Qatar its long-awaited independence. For this he was publicly ridiculed (FCO 8/1892). So, on 22 February at 0730, while Sheikh Ahmed was on a hunting trip to Iran accompanied by 300 attendants, the Deputy Emir Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad (Fig. 3.10) informed a gathering of the Al-Thani at his morning administrative meeting (*majlis al shura*) that he had taken over the country (FCO 8/1892).



Fig. 3.10. *Right. Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani (source and date unknown).*



Fig. 3.11. *Left. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani (source: Getty Images, date unknown).*

[4] These included Qatar, Bahrain and the seven Emirates forming the current Unite Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm Al-Qaywayn, Ajman, Al-Fajayrah and Ras Al-Khaymah).



Fig. 3.12. *Qatari paratrooper displaying the image of Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani during National Day 2014 (source: Foreign Policy, accessed October 2015)*

Both events are curiously consistent with Qatar's past: threat and protection from within and without. Palace coups, border disputes, massive immigrant flows and diverse political alliances are as much a part of Qatar's present as its past.

3.5 Post-independence

Despite Ahmed's poor financial management, he was nonetheless adept at manoeuvring Qatar through its most spectacular transformation from poverty to prosperity. When the first drop of oil was shipped from the Dukhan field in late 1949, Doha was without roads, electricity, education or health care. The 'hunger years', as they are often called – the period following the pearling industry's complete collapse – formed the common experience of nearly all Qataris on the eve of oil. It is truly hard to imagine going from such primitive, subsistence conditions, to modern conveniences and infrastructure in under one decade.[5] Despite all of Ahmed's success and failure, his most enduring legacy is found in a single piece of legislation that would have the longest and most pronounced effect upon the spatial and

[5] There are relatively few in-depth reports or analyses of Qatar's industrial development. Those of note include: 'Qatar: Towards Industrial Diversification of an Oil-based Economy' by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (1988); 'The Spatial Impact of the Hydrocarbon Industry on Land and Sea Use in Qatar', PhD dissertation by Fahd Abdul Rhman Hamad Al-Thani (1992) provides a detailed description of Qatar's industrial modernization; 'Industrial Development in Qatar in a Changing World' (1994), PhD dissertation by Majid Abdulla M. Al-Malki; 'Urbanisation in Qatar: A Study of the Residential and Commercial Land Development in Doha City, 1970–1997' (1999), PhD dissertation by Fadl A.A. Al-Rashid Al-Buainain.

social development in Doha – a decision that his successor Sheikh Khalifa would fully embrace and take to a new height: the laws of citizenship. By 1972 the country had become a nation-state. Rivalries between local towns were now all but gone; hinterland villages and nomadic herding encampments were rapidly disappearing. A steady stream of urban migration had begun. All dimensions of Qatar and her people were now bound up in urban development.

3.6 Population and Wealth

Of all the facts and figures in Qatar's past and present by far the most elusive are those relating to population. As far back as 1957 the British Political Resident saw the need for a statistically sound census to better manage Doha's exploding growth. The following year a special report was compiled for the Foreign Office as to why a census would not take place:

> The Voice of the Arabs Broadcasting station (in Egypt) received from its correspondent in Doha a letter saying briefly that a census mission had been brought to the country by the imperialists in order to gather information which would enable the imperialists to grant the right of citizenship to the foreigners and make a general election from a new Municipal Council in which those foreigners would be represented. This had a tremendous effect on the indigenous population, an effect so great that the next day we met the head of a tribe who had come all the way from the desert to Doha to see what it was all about. He was very angry and was telling one of the Advisorate's employees that they had torn the Ruler's proclamation immediately after they had heard the terrible news.
>
> (FCO 132891 'Population Census of Qatar Final Report' by Sami Baaklini, 1958)

It would take another dozen years until Qatar saw its first, properly recorded census. Fig. 3.13, compiled from various data sources both within and outside Qatar, illustrates the heavy reliance on foreign labour over the

last half century with a precipitous rise in year 2000 only a few years after Sheikh Hamad took power.[6]

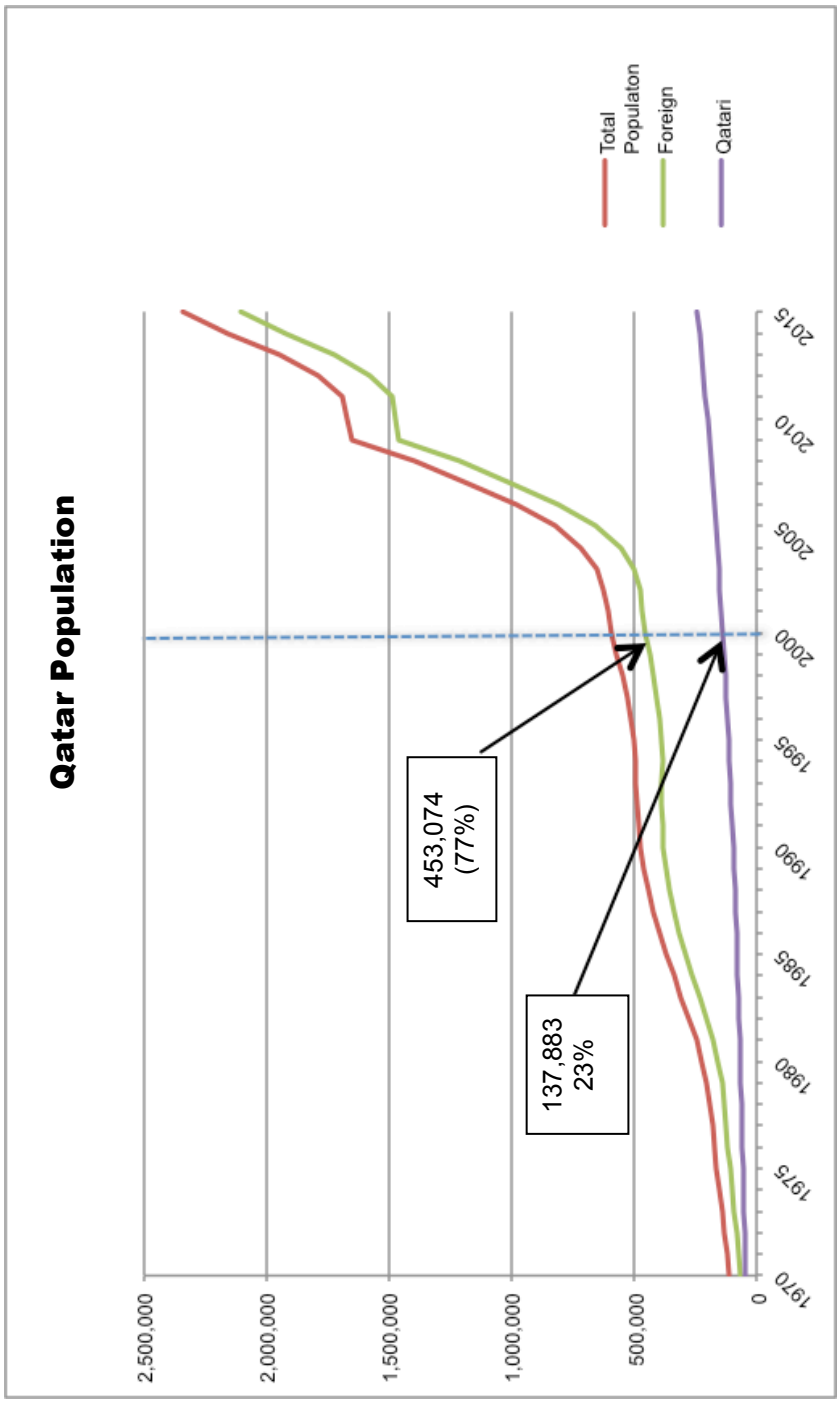


Fig. 3.13. *Foreign and national population of Qatar 1970–2015. In year 2000 23% (137,883) of the total country population were Qatari nationals (data sources compiled from: The World Bank metadata database; 'The First Population Census of Qatar April/May 1970', Ministry of Overseas Development, Middle East Development Division, British Embassy, Beirut Lebanon Foreign Office OD12/57; Qatar Statistics Authority).*

[6] For an in-depth analysis of Qatar's demographic trends through the 1990s see Onn Winckler (2002) who cites a World Bank projection that Qatar's foreign labour population will reach 693,000 by year 2010, Fig. 3.13 places foreign labour at over 1.5m. Winckler forecasts a growth in the Qatari population by using figures from other Gulf countries. The officially reported birth rate among Qatari females has nearly halved in the last twenty years, due in large measure to increased pressure for higher levels of education and increased participation in the labour market, which delays marriage. An older demographic study is found in the 1978 unpublished paper 'International Migration Project Country Case Study: The State of Qatar' by J.S. Birks and C.A. Sinclair. Though the paper woefully underestimates population projections, it does correctly imagine a large influx of Asian labourers in support of Qatar's industrial development projects.

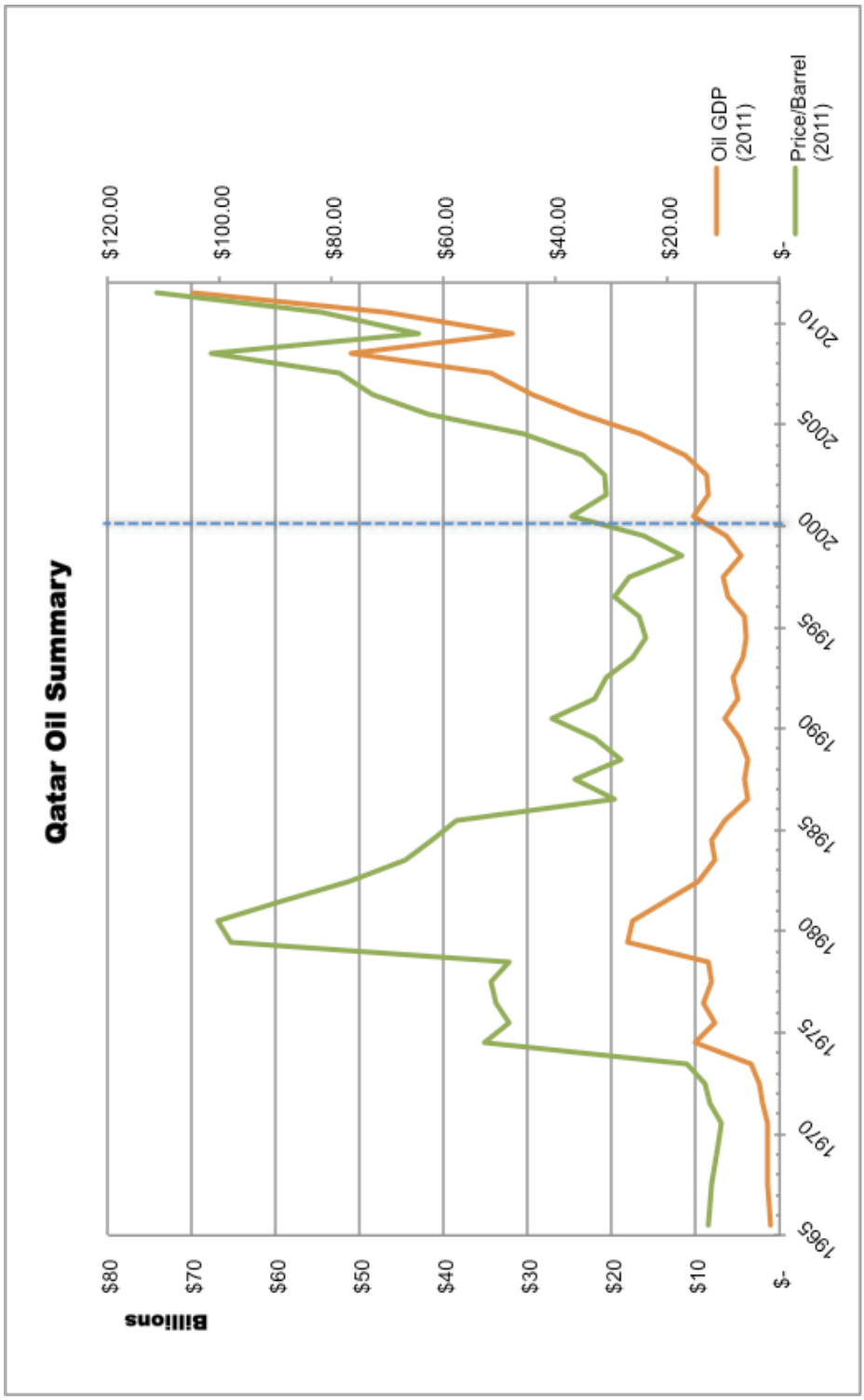


Fig. 3.14. *This chart, plotted in year 2011 US dollars, illustrates the correlative price of oil per barrel in Brent crude measured on the right-hand scale, and the amount of Qatar GDP from oil on the left-hand scale, e.g., Qatar GDP from oil rose from $10b in 2000 (58% of total GDP) to $70b in 2011 (41% of total GDP) (data source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2012, GDP figures from the World Bank)*

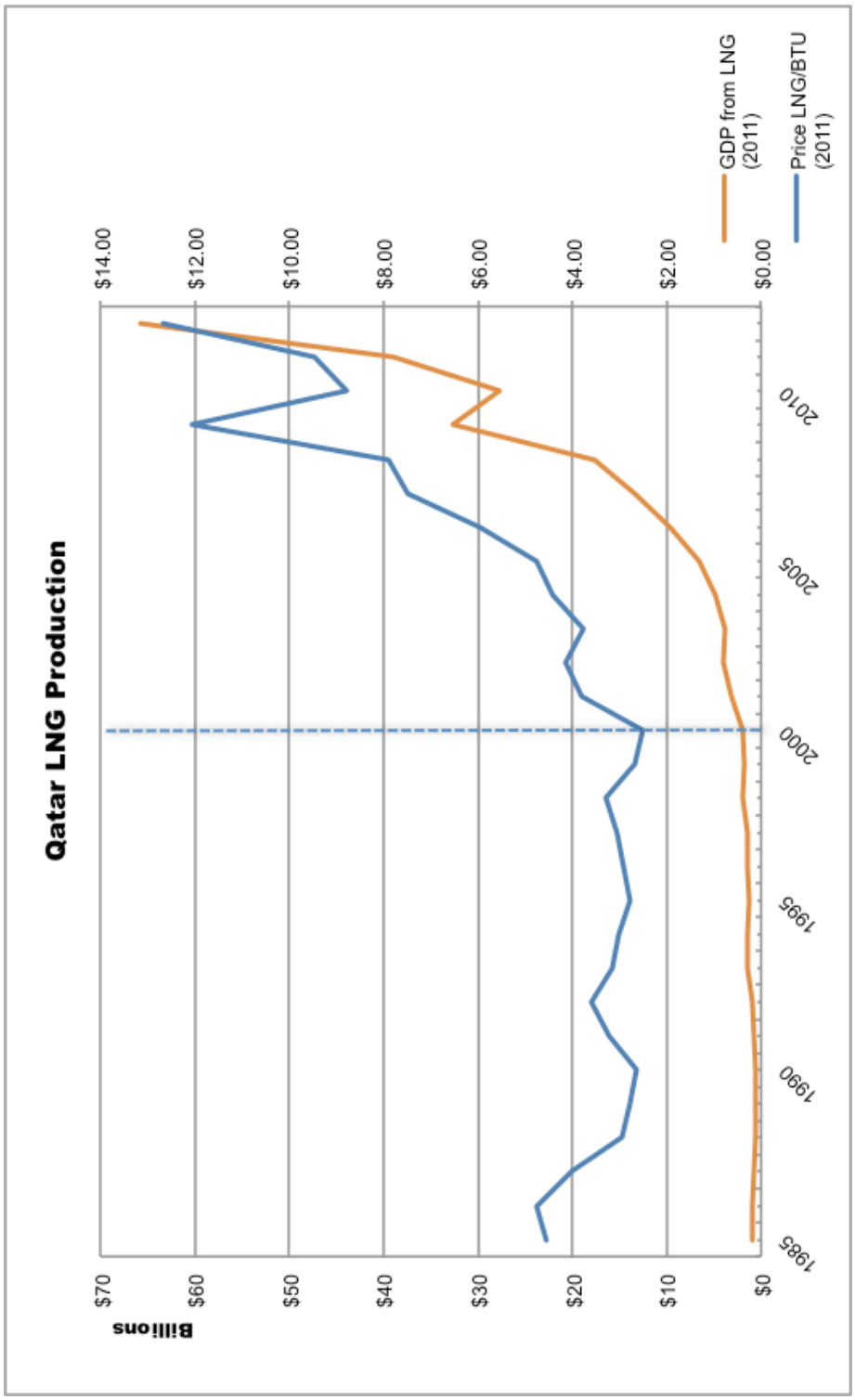


Fig. 3.15. *This chart compares the price of LNG using the average spot price of Japan and the European Union (two of Qatar's largest markets) on the right-hand scale, with the amount of Qatar GDP derived from LNG on the left-hand scale (data source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2012, GDP figures from the World Bank).*

When comparing Qatar's equally precipitous rise in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a result of rising prices for crude oil (Fig. 3.14) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) (Fig. 3.15) we quickly see the correlation between

unearned rents from natural resource extraction and importing foreign labour to build Doha.[7]

As of 2015 a safe estimate places the ratio of foreigners to nationals at 90 per cent: the highest ratio in the world according to the United Nations. However, several research participants (O, Y) within government ministries have indicated this number could be much higher as a full quarter of the Qatari national population, some 60,000 persons, live permanently outside Qatar, and the migrant labour number is likely under-reported by at least half a million.

Though the 1958 British Political Resident's view of the sensitivity of a national census due to foreigners voting in municipal council elections is no longer a concern, the disproportionate ratio of foreigners to nationals remains a highly sensitive issue.[8] The population imbalance implications shall be looked in Part III, but for the present it is worth bearing in mind the question of why the regime would invest so heavily in the creation of a modern city when so few nationals benefit and so many foreigners cannot participate.

Though Qatar is usually cited as having the world's third highest per capita Gross Domestic Product, beaten out by Luxembourg and Norway, the ranking is misleading because GDP per capita is calculated by dividing the nation's entire Gross Domestic Product by the country's total resident population, including immigrants and temporary residents, and not by its nationals. Figure 3.16 reveals how recently Qatar acquired this level of wealth and how this translates to GDP per national. Put this way, Qatari

[7] For an excellent analysis of the inverse relationship between oil wealth and democracy see, Ross (2013). For an economic perspective on how oil wealth crowds out private investment see Espinoza et al., (2013).

[8] For example the 1970 census is marked 'Secret' in the British Foreign Office report, and the 1993 unpublished PhD thesis by Hamed A. Aziz M. Hamed makes the following statement regarding his attempt to obtain official population statistics from the government: 'the President of the Central Statistics Organisation informed the researcher that he will not be able to provide this kind of information because it is a classified and confidential matter' (1993:48). My own attempts at receiving any data from the Qatari government were met with similar responses.

wealth per capita is actually six times higher than in Luxembourg, the world's top-ranked wealthy nation.[9]

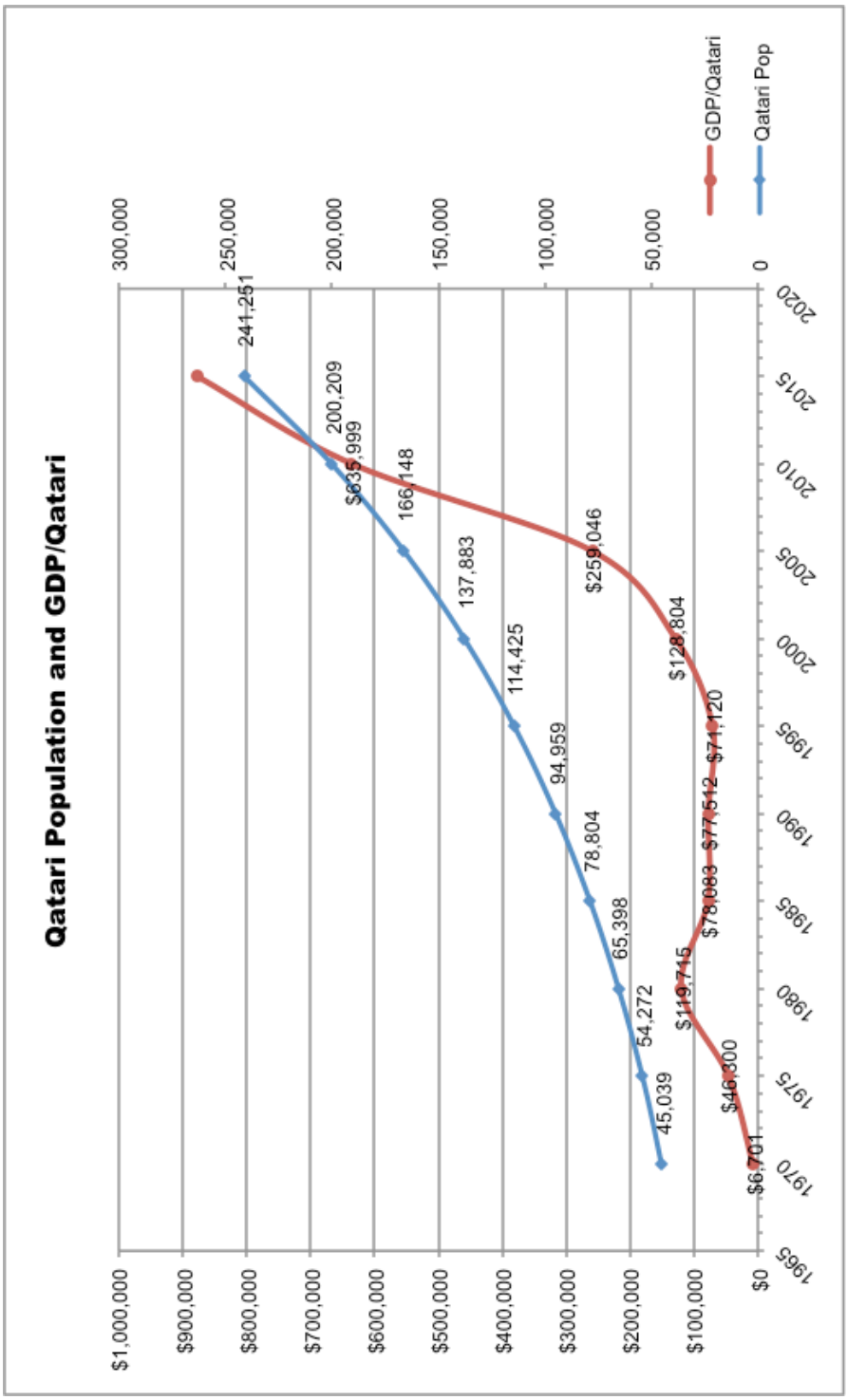


***Fig. 3.16**. Chart comparing the national population of Qatari citizens (those holding Qatari passports) on the right-hand scale, as plotted against the Gross Domestic Product distributed across this population evenly on the left-hand scale, i.e. in 2015 the GDP per capita is over $600,000 (data sources: The World Bank metadata database, 'The First Population Census of Qatar April/May 1970', Ministry of Overseas Development, Middle East Development Division, British Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon Foreign Office OD12/57, Qatar Statistics Authority. Year 2015 GDP estimate The Qatar Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS)).*

[9] As an aggregate figure, GDP per capita does not describe wealth distribution among the population.

To be sure, not all Qataris are equally wealthy. Like the ratio of nationals to foreigners, any data on income level, wealth, poverty or income distribution are highly confidential. However, local media and a few government publications point to a wide income gap.[10] A 2012 government publication describes the poverty level in Qatar, stating that some 9 per cent of all Qatari households are classified as being in relative income poverty (GDSP 2011:39).[11] The prevalence of low-income Qatari households increases to 14 per cent if government transfers do not supplement household incomes, which indicates the critical role played by government social policy.

3.7 Regional Politics

Qatar, like the other Gulf States, played a pivotal role in twentieth-century foreign policy. Before World War I, Gulf Coast diplomacy centred on securing the sea lanes to British India. During the interwar period Britain expanded its interests to include telegraphic lines, air fields, and oil. After World War II the Gulf States took on a broader, more globally strategic role both as the source for energy to fuel Europe's post-war reconstruction and American industrial expansion, and as a much needed ally after Britain's 1947 withdrawal from India and in the emerging Cold War battlefield. Arab Nationalism, the establishment of an internationally recognized Israel and America's muscular support of Iran's Shah Pahlavi brought the American military-industrial complex to the Gulf just as Britain's 200-year presence was drawing to a close.

Israel's 1948 independence found thousands of Palestinians resettling in the Gulf. In 1956 Britain's troop withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone prompted Egypt's elected president Gamal Abd Al-Nasir to nationalize the Suez Canal. Emboldened by his victory over colonialism, Al-Nasir became the undisputed leader of the Arab Nationalist cause, a position he used to export his ideology of Arab Socialism, revolution and republicanism (Onley

[10] For example, a local newspaper article on the food coupon scheme for Qatari families (*The Peninsula*, 25 January 2012).

[11] 'The relative poverty line income for Qatar was defined as half the median household equalized income … A household is said to be in relative income poverty if its income per equivalent adult falls below this line. In the 2006/2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey the threshold for annual equalized income (the relative poverty line income) was QR 64,286 ($17,647)'.

2009:16). Headquartered in Cairo, the Arab League sought pan-Arab unification and the end to Western, particularly British, imperialism.

The Gulf leaders once again found themselves walking a tenuous line. On one side they paid lip-service to Al-Nasir's movement, which was essential in maintaining support from their subjects. On the other, the Emirs needed continued British protection and development expertise. While the tension and pressure from Cairo steadily mounted, it seldom erupted. The 1967 war with Israel was a notable exception.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I strove to set Qatar's past into a broader political and geographical context and to dispute what many claim as Qatar's intense insularity. It has always been at the confluence of competing forces, negotiating between opposing interests, finding its footing on shifting sand and, as we have seen, shifting spheres of influence: interfamilial, internecine and international.

We shall next look briefly at the durable and ancient social-spatial pattern of Gulf urbanism before turning to an in-depth discussion of Doha's urban transformation beginning in the 1950s.

Muslims are partners in three things:
water, pasture and fire.

– Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah via
Ibn Abbas[1]

Chapter 4. The Basis of Arabian Urbanism

The great Arab cities of the past were the consequence of natural conditions: Tunis and Tangier – the bridge between Africa and Europe; Cairo, the nexus of three continents –Africa, Asia and Europe; Aleppo at the natural point of contact between caravan land traffic from the east and maritime trade to Europe in the west (Raymond 2008b: 735–736).

Unlike the great Arab cities of antiquity – Fez, Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo – Doha was only peripherally on maritime trade routes. It never developed a sedimented historic depth, and lacked the co-dependent relationship between villages and farms characteristic of ancient cities. On the west and north of Doha lay hard-packed, sun-baked scrubby earth with barely a blade of grass; to the south, the vast expanse of the Nejd Desert; to the east, the Arabian Sea. And it was here that Doha residents spent most their lives harvesting fish and pearls. Despite the harsh natural landscape, relative insularity and lack of historic depth, Doha nevertheless enjoys a culturally situated institutional order based upon durable traditions rooted in Islam and embodied in the city's architecture and topography. Some of the orders are in direct response to the natural conditions, others to cosmology. This brief chapter will look at general notions of the social order found throughout Muslim societies with an eye towards uncovering their manifestation in Doha's pre-oil era.

[1] Hadith Ref. 8 Vol. II, p. 311

4.1 The Fereej

The basic structure of most Islamic cities had the central business district (the *souq*) at the city's heart close to its great mosque and trading activities. The organs of power collocated into what Raymond terms the 'public zone' (2008b), surrounded more distantly by 'private' residential areas. In Doha this was by and large true for its early years as seen in the detailed 1952 drawing (Fig. 4.1 see also Appendix) that depicts the neighbourhood system known in local Gulf (Khaliji) Arabic as the *fereej* (فريج) (plural *ferjan* فرجان).[2] The *fereej* in Gulf usage refers to a specific urban neighbourhood, usually with the family or clan name appended – for example, *fereej Al-Jaidah*, named for the prominent Al-Jaidah mercantile family. Fig. 4.2 from 1963 shows how Doha was divided into different clan *ferjan*.

[2] The word *fereej* is corrupted Gulf Arabic dialect from the word *fereeq* (فريق), which means 'team'. However, in the study on the *fereej* system in Hofuf, Saudi Arabia, Al-Naim (2006) claims the word stems from *ferja* (فرجه) meaning a hole in the wall between two houses, connoting the social structure of women in private space.

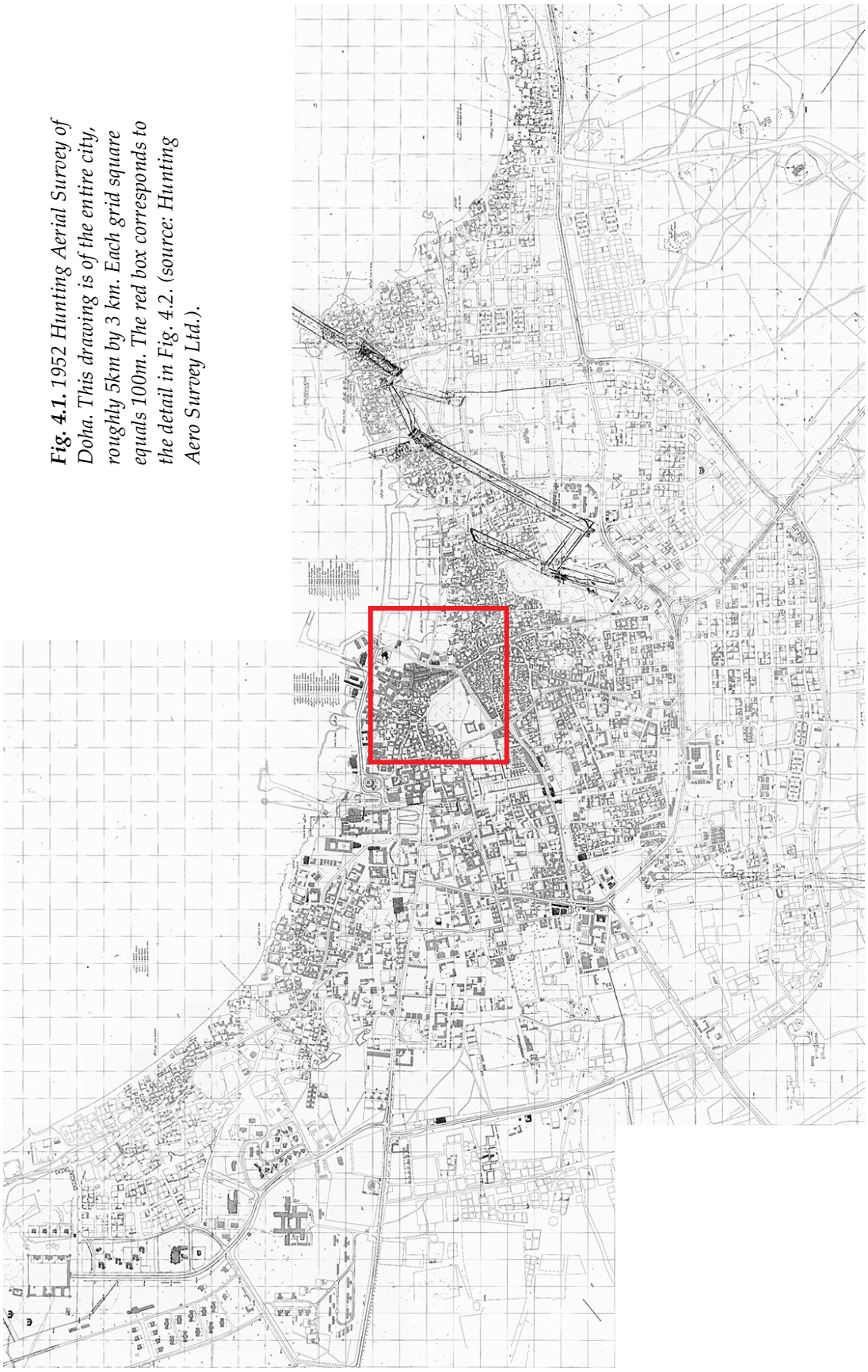


Fig. 4.1. *1952 Hunting Aerial Survey of Doha. This drawing is of the entire city, roughly 5km by 3 km. Each grid square equals 100m. The red box corresponds to the detail in Fig. 4.2. (source: Hunting Aero Survey Ltd.).*

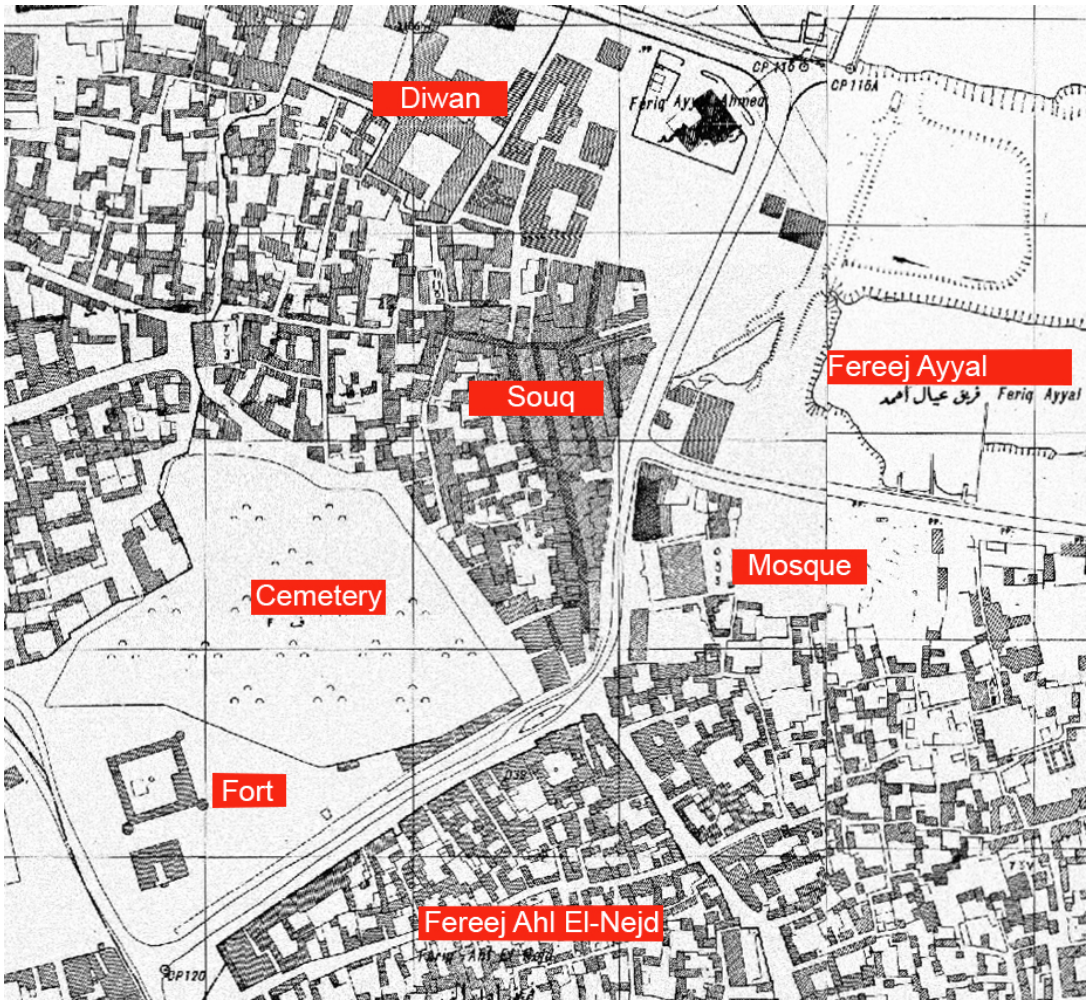
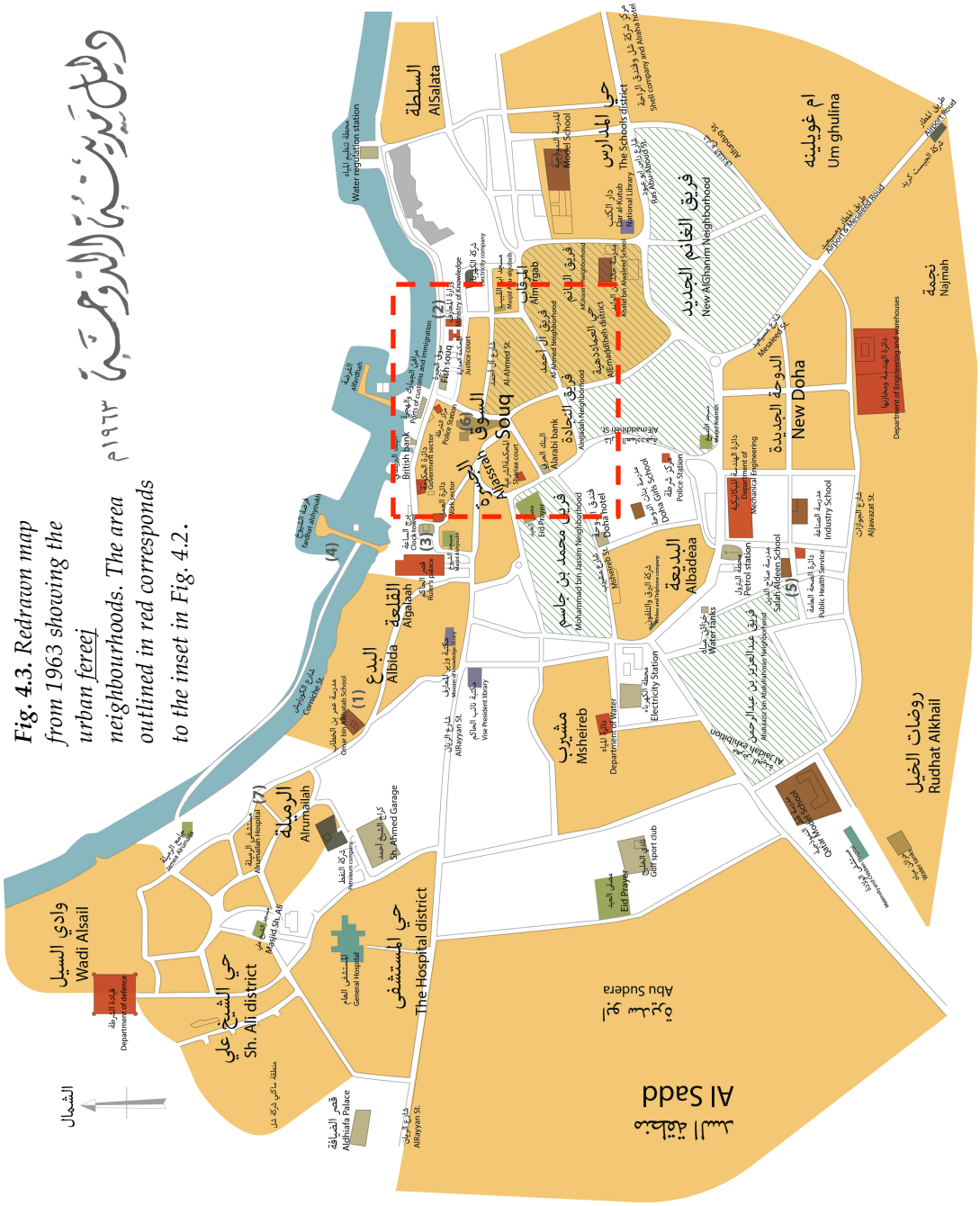


Fig. 4.2. *1952 Hunting Aerial Survey of Doha. Note the souq, fort and Diwan surrounded by the close-knit fereej neighbourhoods (source: Hunting Aero Survey Ltd.).*


Al Sadd
السد
Abu Sudera
أبو سدرة
Wadi Alsail
وادي السيل
Sh. Ali district
حي الشيخ علي
The Hospital district
حي المستشفى
Alrumailah
الرميلة
Albida
البدع
Algalaah
القلاعة
Msheireb
مشيرب
Albadeaa
البديعة
Rudhat Alkhail
روضات الخيل
New Doha
الدوحة الجديدة
New Alghanim Neighborhood
فريق الغانم الجديد
The Schools district
حي المدارس
Um ghulina
أم غويلينة
Najmah
نجمة
Alsalata
السلطة
Souq Alhasawiah
السوق الحسوية
Almirqab
المرقاب
Alsouq
السوق
Alshamal
الشمال
Water regestion station
British bank
Alrabi bank
Doha Hotel
Police Station
Petrol station
Electricity Station
Water tanks
Public Health Service
Industry School
Model School
Girls School
Eid Prayer
Gulf sport club
Qatar National Museum
Department of Engineering and Mechanical Engineering
Department of Defence
Department of Water
Sh. Ahmed Garage
Aldhiafa Palace
Alkhor Road
Airport Al Mesheref Road
Alsanaa St.
Alkhor Road
Alrayyan St.
Alwajbah St.
Alnasr St.
Alhamad St.
Alkhaleej St.
Alsanaa St.
Alwajbah St.
Alrayyan St.
Alkhor Road

protected rights and exemption from paying alms (*zakat*), but not enjoying full citizenship.

4.2 Wahhabism

While Muslims have a long history of living alongside non-Muslims and have developed traditions accordingly, the eighteenth-century emergence of Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative branch of Islam, significantly changed relationships with non-Muslims in the Gulf. Named for its founder, Muhammad 'Abd Al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Wahhabi doctrine emerged in the middle of the eighteenth century in an oasis settlement in the central Arabian Peninsula area of the Najd. Al-Wahhab's sparse, Bedouin desert life inspired his teachings and interpretation of central Islamic texts and traditions. At the core of the doctrine is a radical critique of his contemporaries' religious practices, particularly of those found in cities. He felt the whole Muslim world had misunderstood Islamic monotheism, or *tawhid*, the act of believing and affirming that God is one, unique and lord of the world. *Tawhid*'s centrality to Muslim belief is found in the first article of the Muslim profession of faith – the first pillar of Islam: 'there is no other god but God'. In the actions of his contemporaries, Al-Wahhab came to see a betrayal of *tawhid* through practices he considered *shirk*: the act of associating other deities with God, or polytheism. Among such deeds are any act of devotion that elevates or venerates persons and associated places such as tombs, mausoleums, pilgrimage caravansaries and domes erected at the birthplace of the Prophet.

Al-Wahhab's main points of corrective action, included: the abolition of taxes; destruction of all tobacco paraphernalia and prohibition of smoking; destruction of all places of immorality; destruction of all domes on graves and buildings used for the worship of others than Allah; and the prescription that all believers must perform each daily prayer (*salat*). Politically he argued that civil society needs no external, human-derived constitution. Nothing is needed beyond the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet (EI VII:39–47; Teitelbaum 1992).

The adoption by Qatar's second Emir, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed, of Wahhabism and the Hanbali *madhhab* (legal sect) as the state's official religious and legal interpretation had important implications for Qatar's late nineteenth-century foundation. Despite the constant presence of Ottoman and British Empire forces, Sheikh Jassim had to reconcile the saying attributed to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal on behalf of the Prophet Muhammad that stated 'No more than one religion is to exist in the Arabian Peninsula' (Hadith reference: Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad, Al-Musna, Vol. XI, Istanbul, n.d., p. 275 quoted in Hamed 1993:63). This is likely one of the reasons Jassim refused to honour his father's 1868 treaty with Britain, preferring instead to tolerate fellow Muslims of the Ottoman Empire over non-Muslim Europeans.

In the two centuries since Wahhabism swept across the Arabian Peninsula, many Gulf nations, with the notable exception of Saudi Arabia, have adopted a more relaxed interpretation of Al-Wahhab's teachings. Even before the age of oil Doha's need for labour outweighed the Emir's strict adherence to Hanbali jurisprudence[3] as described by geologist B.T. Cox of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company on a 1933 expedition to Qatar:

> The country is scarcely populated. The inhabitants are mostly Arabs. But this is not the case in Doha where Iranians are particularly in big numbers. People are not fanatics but conservatives. Their attitude towards foreigners is not very friendly … Qataris are conservative Muslims; they do not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes ... [the Emir] is very keen to keep the foreigners away, fearing that they will teach his people the drinking of alcohol … The only reason for him to allow I.P.O.C to drill oil was his bad need for resources.
>
> (Al-'Ahad Foundation, Qatar wa-tharwatuha al-naftiyya (Qatar and its Oil Wealth), pp. 101–102, quoted in Hamed 1993:90)

Despite the desire of successive Emirs to remain close to Wahhabi practices, movement towards national sovereignty, the need for more flexible,

[3] Orthodox Sunni jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is comprised of four schools (*madhab*): Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi'i. As the strictest and most traditional of the four *madhab*, and also the least populous, Hanbali legal interpretation relies almost entirely upon the Qur'an, Hadith and Sunna, eschewing contemporary community-bound opinion.

internationally recognized legal frameworks, and the constant influx of Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants from differing social and cultural backgrounds, including asylum seekers, and now, more commonly, students, have slowly eroded Wahhabi values. Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution that sent a shock wave of renewed religiosity across the Gulf, the region's attitudes have fluctuated between liberalism and conservatism with a generally accelerating trend towards an embrace of Western culture. Against this we find Gulf countries adopting differing political stances, for example, Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood, which neighbouring UAE and Saudi Arabia view as a neo-Wahhabi threat to monarchic rule (EI Index:500, 505).

4.3 The Fereej in Pre-Oil Doha

An interesting paradox surrounds Al-Wahhab's revelation. Ostensibly, one can easily see Wahhabism's connection to the desert. If the material world is essentially corrupt and architecture has the embodied potential to articulate polytheism, then an easy solution is not to build anything. To live in a desert tent, at the mercy of nature's wrath, is to submit body, mind and soul to *tawhid*, the only and unique God of all creation. Yet despite his desert origins and desire for ascetic purity Al-Wahhab recognized the potential for pre-Islamic cultic practices to continue among isolated tribes, and urged they resettle to towns and cities (Cummins 2006). In one sense nothing could challenge the Wahhabi world view more than the city: its embrace of diverse attitudes, collection of cultural practices, affordance of individuality, and use of a constructed environment – architecture – to enable polytheism and stand in hubris against nature. But remaining among pre-Islamic superstitions rooted in animism and Zoroastrianism was the very epitome of *shirk*. Whether city or desert Wahhabis desired a pure earthly world in full accord with *sharīʿah*, mirroring God's heavenly realm.

The paradox surfaces an essential question: can a pure city ever materialize? Put another way can the view of 'city' with its cosmopolitan rights, privileges and protections, come into alignment with Islam's central concept

of submission?[4] Doha seems to embody exactly this dilemma. To understand how the Wahhabi soul rests within a modernist body we first need to understand how Doha's pre-oil Wahhabi practices both generated and embodied urban form.

One way the city accommodates both strict Wahhabi uniformity and the social diversity of urban life is through the *fereej* system. Each *fereej* neighbourhood was highly homogeneous and autonomous, with each person quite literally a member of one, large, extended family. The more the *fereej* maintained its physical autonomy from the other *ferjan*, through walls and streets, the more clearly its monolithic identity was understood. And so long as each clan exhibited consistent normative behaviour, the more homogeneous the city. The result is analogous to the northern Italian city republics, also built around family clusters holding clearly defined differences in common.[5]

Because the Doha *fereej* system consists almost entirely of domestic dwellings, the house architecture and spatial configurations are indicative of the family structures found within a particular *fereej*. And it is the family structure and its household that are central to any understanding of the pre-oil Gulf city. The Doha courtyard house is an elegantly simple metaphor of the family structure. Typically a mud-brick wall encloses an area holding animals, livestock, a well – if so fortunate – and a small, one- or two-story mud-brick house (Figs. 4.4–4.6).

[4] For a detailed examination of the forms of submission in the traditional Arabian city related to *shari'ah* prescriptions for leases, pre-emption, inheritance, acquisitions, ownership and collection of state revenue see Akbar (1989).

[5] See Martines (1988).



Fig. 4.4. *Doha in the late 1940s: no paved roads, the entire 'city' characterized by the courtyard dwelling (source and date unknown, though likely British Royal Airforce).*



Fig. 4.5. *Below. Bedouin man drawing water from his local well, possibly within his courtyard (source and date unknown, likely the 1940s).*



Fig. 4.6. *Above. Doha in the 1970s, note the density of housing compared to the image in Fig. 4.4 thirty years earlier. The Arabic caption reads 'The Al-Jasra area'(source and date unknown).*

Over time as the family grew, additional structures were added within the courtyard. Eventually, adjacent plots were purchased or reclaimed through the Islamic provision of pre-emption (*shuf'a*): the right of a co-owner to buy out his partner's share in real property. If the adjacent land lay fallow (*mawat*, literally dead), the Hadith rewards its annexation and resuscitation (*'ihya*, life-giving): 'Malik related to me from Ibn Shihab from Salim ibn Abdullah from his father that Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "Whoever revives dead land, it belongs to him." Malik said, "That is what is done in our community"' (Maliks Muwatta. Book 36. Judgments. 036 : 027 : Section 496).[6]

Up through the 1980s the typical Doha family was exceedingly large. Qataris often married, then as now, polygamously with first cousins, which

[6] Source: www.hadithcollection.com (accessed 31 January 2013). What constitutes revivification is widely debated among the different legal schools. Some consider erecting boundary stones ample proof of the intention to improve the land and thus an ownership claim. Others rule that demarcated lands or allotments are not owned and so may not be sold unless they have been revived. See Akbar (1988). As noted elsewhere land grabbing through the erection of boundary markers was a common practice since 1950s.

densified the *fereej* and expanded its borders outward along the coastline. Within the *fereej* itself, cultural practices and the rhythms of daily life were guided by interfamily relationships. This understanding of shared responsibility of public spaces by the *fereej* is supported in Doha's history. Ultimately, however, there was no space in the *fereej* that was truly 'public'. Figs. 4.7–4.10 depict life on the 'public' streets in and between *ferjan*. As mentioned earlier, Islam and Wahhabism are the ultimate sources of Doha's institutional order before oil. However, medieval historian Ibn Khaldun offers a third dimension – the spirit of human kinship.



Fig. 4.7. *Qatari women near Souq Waqif probably in the 1950s(source MMUP, date unknown).*



Fig. 4.8. *An example of typical daily life near Souq Waqif. The souq's central location and proximity to the sea and fishing and pearling fleets gave it the ability to concentrate nearly all commercial and service activities providing the public a shared space of social interaction (source: MMUP, date unknown).*



Fig. 4.9. *A Qatari woman walking in a Doha sikka alongside the Abul Gibaib mosque demolished in 1969. Note the second-story tower on the right belonging to a prominent family. The parapet crenulations are found on nearly every new building in Doha, from modest homes to sprawling shopping malls. Image likely from the early 1950s (source MMUP, date unknown).*



Fig. 4.10. *Qatari men on a typical unpaved street in the 1940s (source MMUP, date unknown).*

4.4 'Asabiyya

'*Asabiyya*, the 'spirit of kinship', underlies the great medieval historian Ibn Khaldun's entire interpretation of history. For Ibn Khaldun, '*asabiyya* is the fundamental bond of human society and the basic force that propels history. Through '*asabiyya*, organized human groupings of kin and clan assert themselves, struggle for supremacy and establish dynasties and empires (EI I:681). As he says, 'royal authority and the foundation of dynasties are the goal of group feeling ('*asabiyya*), that sedentary culture is the goal of Bedouin life'. Ibn Khaldun offers a view to one of Doha's seeming contradictions: on the one hand urban life is the goal of civilization and the natural outcome of '*asabiyya*; yet, on the other hand, '*asabiyya* seeds its own destruction in fostering the radical individualism made possible by urban cosmopolitanism. Without such a unifying, rallying force as the 'group cohesion' found in Bedouin society, urban centres would never exist. But precisely because urbanity erodes '*asabiyya*'s binding force and thus one's intimate connection to a like-minded group, the city is inevitably doomed.

For this reason, says Ibn Khaldun, a dynasty rarely establishes itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups. The diverse opinions and

desires of these groups, each united by '*assabiyya*, make it impossible to build a polity. 'At any time, therefore, there is much opposition to a dynasty or rebellion against it even if a dynasty possesses group feeling because each group feeling under the control of the ruling dynasty thinks that it has in itself (enough) strength and power' (Ibn Khaldun 2005:232–233). Ultimately, '*asabiyya*'s social cohesion limits the state's ability to centralize power. It is for this exact reason that Qatar's rulers over the last half century have devised policies aimed at breaking up the *ferjan*'s clan networks and neighbourhoods, which historically have challenged the Emir's authority or limited his ability to make sweeping changes (this topic is covered in depth in chapters 5 and 6).

The above discussion has been an attempt to unite two essential strands of Doha's past: the particular practice of Wahhabi Islam, and an understanding of the social bond of '*asabiyya* as the ancient and enduring institutional order of Doha that undergirds the urban architectural order of the *ferjan*. In the sections to follow in Chapter 5, which look closely at Doha's urban order, it is vital to keep in mind the image circumscribed in the *ferjan* and how it becomes corrupted, displaced, erased or preserved.

It is the miserable capital of a miserable province. To have an idea of Katar, my readers must figure to themselves miles on miles of low barren hills, bleak and sun-scorched, with hardly a single tree to vary their dry monotonous outline: below these a muddy beach extends for a quarter of a mile seawards in slimy quicksands, bordered by a rim of sludge and seaweed. If we look landwards beyond the hills, we see what by extreme courtesy may be called pasture land, dreary downs with twenty pebbles for every blade of grass; and over this melancholy ground scene, but few and far between, little clusters of wretched, most wretched, earth cottages and palm-leaf huts, narrow, ugly, and low; these are the villages, or rather the 'towns' … of Katar.

– William Palgrave, *Personal Journey*

Chapter 5. The Development of Doha

There is a rumour floating around the city of Doha that the recently completed 31-story Hilton Hotel is leaning. This seems fantastically hard to believe: how could one of the world's largest hotel conglomerates build such a folly? By day the building appears finished, its polished aluminium and glass façade gleaming under the intense Middle Eastern sun along with nearly 100 other high-rises, none more than ten years old. But at night, amid its glowing neighbours, the Hilton stands dark. Not a single light to dispel the rumour of its unstable footing. Curiously, the same rumour circulated thirty years ago when its nearby competitor, the Sheraton Hotel, was thought unsafe and it, too, sat empty for several years, because the hotel was not only built on sand, but reclaimed, artificial, trucked-in, compacted sand. The locals wondered how a building of such size could possibly not sink?

And so, from then and for the next quarter century the Sheraton Hotel was the tallest building in Doha and one of only a handful of buildings on the

artificial peninsula known as West Bay. Both hotels, a few hundred metres from each other, stand as witnesses to and as representatives of Qatar's past, present and future, for the hotels and the rumours point to an underlying precariousness of existence that has been Qatar's one constant over its brief recorded history. The hotels, like almost all of Doha's architecture, illustrate how architecture, the urban landscape and their histories – real and fictitious – are the key mechanisms of state formation.

From the boom years after World War II onwards, Qatar's ruling family have found stability not only in negotiating between interests, but actually in creating the terms of the dialectic itself. Moving between – and creating – polar opposites has sculpted Doha's face and forged its character, prompting its unfettered and explosive growth. As we shall see in the sections that follow, within every generation and across every societal segment, Doha's residents are constantly attempting to decode the underlying reasons why anything in the city exists at all. Everyone appears to understand that nothing is what it seems: Hospitals are built to heal the sick, but the population increasingly suffers chronic diseases; an airport is built on the sea and a shipping port is dug from the desert; the more women achieve higher levels of education, the weaker the family structure. In the absence of an independent press or political transparency people will fill in the blanks for themselves. For its entire history, Qatar has managed to conceal much of its history. Many speculate this is an intentional strategy to preserve political legitimacy (Fromherz 2012). Lacking accurate facts and figures makes it difficult to write a history of Doha. Therefore, in keeping with this thesis' hermeneutic framework, I shall attempt to view Doha's history through first-hand, interpretive accounts. In seeking to uncover the experience of rapid urban change we must build our understanding on how others saw the events of their time.

5.1 Doha and Al-Bidda

If we were to tie Qatar's (officially) founding personality, Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani, to a place, it would not be Doha, but rather Al-Bidda (Fig. 5.1). Al-Bidda, a coastal neighbourhood well within the confines of

modern Doha, was in 1862 its commercial rival. The English explorer William Gifford Palgrave spent several weeks in Qatar's coastal cities, giving vivid descriptions of urban form and social construction. According to him it was the sea not the desert that oriented village life in Al-Bidda. As far as architecture was concerned 'little care is taken to ornament their land houses, the abodes of their wives and children at most, and the unsightly strong-boxes of their gathered treasures' (Palgrave 1877:230).



Figs. 5.1. *Extract from 'Trigonometrical plan of the harbour of El Biddah on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. By Lieuts. J.M. Guy and G.B. Brucks, H.C. Marine. Drawn by Lieut. M. Houghton'. IOR/X/3694 (source: http://www.qdl.qa/en/important-work-british-1820-survey-charted-gulf-first-time, accessed 4 April 2015).*

Qatar's historians often take sides in crafting the country's founding mythology. Rosemarie Zahlan's 1979 *The Creation of Qatar* is the earliest and perhaps most well-researched history of Qatar, relying nearly entirely on primary historic documents. In it she paints Mohammed Al-Thani as the

undisputed tribal leader of the peninsula. On the opposing side is Allen Fromherz's recent study that posits Mohammed Al-Thani's founding of Qatar as accidental and made possible only through British intervention (Fromherz 2012). In Palgrave's nineteenth-century view every village had its own 'collector-in-chief' who collected revenues and settled disputes. Uniting the three perspectives yields a view that the Al-Thani clan were powerful merchants, empowered to collect local taxes and provide security to fellow tribesmen, which made them an obvious, though perhaps not sole, choice for the British, who were looking for someone to endow with power to act on Britain's behalf.

As described in Chapter 3: Qatar's Political History, nineteenth century Qatar was a precarious place, constantly crossed by rival tribes, and manoeuvring empires. Again, Palgrave describes the form–function relationship between typical village and political instability:

> The villages of Katar are each and all carefully walled in, while the towns beyond are lined with towers, and here and there a castle 'huge and square' … these castles are in reality by no means superfluous, for Katar has wealth in plenty, and there are robbers against whom that wealth must be guarded. But if the people of Katar have peace within, they are exposed on the land side to continual marauding inroads from their Bedouin neighbours.
>
> (Palgrave 1877:231–234)

Of Mohammed Al-Thani's Al-Bidda, Palgrave again gives us a picture of nineteenth-century coastal life consisting of

> a long narrow and dirty market-place – a mass of little narrow dingy houses, separated by irregular lanes. The total amount of its inhabitants when on land, which is not often the case, reaches about six thousand ... Everywhere one meets fishermen's wives, and their brats … and ill-dressed men, too careworn to be sociable … Still the people are not by nature ungracious or inhospitable, but they are over-engrossed by their occupations.
>
> (ibid.:236–237)

Moving up the coast a few hundred metres, Palgrave describes the village of Doha:

> Dowhah, a village to the north of Bedaa'[1], and of about half its size … is situated … in a small deep bay, where the cliffs behind … give it a somewhat picturesque appearance. But the houses of Dowhah are even lower or meaner than at Bedaa', and the market-place is narrower and dirtier. Two castles overtop the place: one stands on the neighbouring cliff, the other within the town itself.
>
> (ibid.:237)

A decade later, French merchant seaman and consular agent, Hyacinthe Chapuy, paints a far more sanguine portrait of Doha's village life:

> The bank of the Gulf swarms with people. Fishermen unload their catches. It is truly beautiful … People bustle about … chat … squabble but laugh a lot ... I walk quickly through the side streets, I pass two partially covered markets … Veiled women slip away before my eyes; merely dark silhouettes … Some of them carry water drawn from the town's only water well on their head … People (men and children) smile and look at me without aggression. I feel very comfortable here. The townspeople are not rich but they seem happy.
>
> The city, hardly vast, is cut off from the outside world. Its population is estimated at approximately 10,000 inhabitants. Many negroes. Houses made of coral stone and brick adorned in moucharakieh [*mashrabiya*], but also modest houses made of dried mud and huts constructed from palm tree branches. These huts, that can have two levels, are very common. Several mosques: their tiny minarets have a simple construction, but elegance does not escape them. Very few trees. Massive dryness. It is the city of the famous Sheik of Katar, Sheik Yassim ben Mohammed be Thani [Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani], son of the late Sheik Mohammed ben Thani. My goal is to meet this prince who, it seems, has an excellent reputation.
>
> (quoted in Beguin-Billecocq 2003:98)

[1] For unknown reasons Palgrave confused the location of the two towns as Al-Bidda was most definitely north of Doha.

Chapuy is successful in meeting with Sheikh Jassim, where he is told of Doha's squeeze between the squabbling English and Ottoman Empires.[2]

Twenty years later, John Gordon Lorimer, an official of the Indian Civil Service, would describe Doha less colourfully, but with an eye towards understanding how it played seat to the political manoeuvrings of the British, Turks and Al-Thani. In addition to minute descriptions of the social and economic practices of the Arabian Gulf, Lorimer gives the first, albeit rough, accounting of population, tribal listing and slave trade. Many of the names mentioned by Lorimer were to play a leading role in shaping Doha's urban development as part of prominent family-run conglomerates. Indeed, many of this study's interviewees trace their ancestry directly to these founding tribes. In 1905 Lorimer conducts the first known census of Qatar with a total settled population of 25,865, of whom 15,350 live in Doha and the adjacent village of Al-Wakrah. Lorimer estimates the total population to include 6,000 slaves (Lorimer 1970:1530–1531).

At this same time, French natural science professor Charles Perez undertook an expedition to chart the Gulf's pearl banks. He had this to say about Doha:

> The divers in the same kind of slavery that they undoubtedly experienced back in the time of Alexander, as well as the trade in the various markets where the pearls are found, are part of an entire social system, which seems locked in place by Islam. Here and there it borrows one or another trait from modern civilization. From Europe it takes cottonware, modern arms, candles and quinine sulphate, and from Japan red phosphorus matches. However, these are simply surplus details that are out of place, like anachronisms, while the society remains fundamentally unchanging and practically impenetrable.
>
> (Quoted in Beguin-Billecocq 2003:141)

[2] From Chapuy's diary: 'Sheik Yassim is a fine diplomat and has more than one trick up his sleeve … In associating with the Turks, he avoids falling into the sprawling trap of the English. In order to assure his independence, he plays off of the devious rivalry between the English and the Ottomans. In a word, he hedges his bets! Excellent and wise politician.' (Beguin-Billecocq 2003:98)



Fig. 5.2. *Arabian Gulf Pearl Divers (source: Carter 2012, date unknown).*

In 1918, a French artist and naval officer added another colour to our portrait of Doha's humble origins:

> From the sea, Doha provides an amazing panorama of ochre-colored sculpture. A caramel-colored city with its houses cloaked in bronze sand, in tawny stone and in copper adobe. In the harbor, a patched-up sail whips against a heavily loaded Arab sailboat, or dhow: Men as black as ebony, in red loincloths, struggle to put the boat back on course …
>
> On land … I push my way through the labyrinth of this strange, chocolate-colored, austere city's tiny back streets. A marked simplicity adorns these houses resembling clothes trunks. They have only one level ... A few rare white houses, two stories high … belong to noted figures of the Moresque city ... The architecture is laced with latticework, arches and towers. They look like the grand homes of the Persian Gulf, generally. Several mosques aim their small minarets at the sky, displaying the marks of Islam: the crescent moon encircling a star. Here and there, a bunch of scraggly palm trees and spiny bushes with stunted little branches can be seen. Save these spots of enameled emerald, green is non-existent on this land. But in the sea it is everywhere … A lively, ephemeral green plays off the dark blue, magnificently orchestrated by the light of a beating sun.
>
> (Charles Fouquery in Beguin-Billecocq 2003:151–152)

I call attention to these detailed but distant accounts for two reasons. First, they give us first-hand, lived descriptions of Doha as it must have existed for hundreds of years. While the travel descriptions are several decades older than the photographs in Chapter 4 they match the images well and help complete the architectural, social, political and economic picture of an

enduring urban form very much at nature's mercy. This picture of Doha becomes far less romantic during the 1930s pearl trade collapse and the international depression, which meant Doha was meaner, harsher and less populated at mid century than at any point hitherto examined. Lorimer's 1905 estimate of 6,000 slaves, some 22 per cent of the entire population, occupies another crucial moment of change in Doha's mid century development. As late as January of 1951 the British Political Resident in Bahrain wrote regarding slave ownership:

> In the past the extreme poverty of the Shaikhly family of Qatar explained even if it is nothing to palliate, the part played by them in slave trading. In fact there were practically speaking only two industries in Qatar from which they could squeeze tribute or participate in profit, viz., pearling and slaving, the late sheikh Hamad [d. 1948] laid the foundation of his very considerable wealth from these sources.
>
> (EA 2181/3)

The second reason is to show the great part that pearling, slavery and Islam played in structuring Doha's enduring institutional and urban order. A structure that continues in partial compromise and in partial collapse as oil begins flowing. And it is to the oil years that we turn next.

5.2 Doha and the Age of Oil

My objective in this section is to reveal how architecture and urban form have been key elements in Doha's socio-political design from the eve of oil until today. By showing how the physically constructed environment was a tool – par excellence – for political legitimacy and state formation, I shall reveal a crucial element of Doha's topography, namely, the conditions and desire to create a city may have appeared to sidestep what the West considers civic discourse but were nonetheless a manifestation of the desire to give the city a common ground of historic orientation.

Since the mid 1980s Rentier State Theory (RST) has become the dominant means to understand state formation in societies that receive a large portion of their income from externally derived, unproductively earned payment, or

rents, which are typically royalties earned from oil or gas exports. Gray (2011) explains that RST's most basic assumption is that since the state receives an external income and distributes it to society, it is relieved of imposing taxation, which in turn means that it need not offer political or democratic participation.

In keeping with this theory Jill Crystal's ground-breaking analysis of Qatar is built on the premise that as oil began flowing in the early 1950s and continued generating exponential wealth concentrated in the hands of the Al-Thani, the Emir had to make a conscious decision to trade wealth for power (Crystal 1995). In the early 1950s Sheikh Ali bin Abdulla Al-Thani (b. c. 1895–1974) contended with two immediate threats to his throne: powerful merchant families, particularly the Al-Mana and the Darwish; and the voracious appetite for oil revenue constantly displayed by members of the Al-Thani family. Once these positions were resolved, the Emir began attracting popular support from lower levels of Qatari society. Economic diversification, urban expansion and state bureaucracy followed in lock-step, securing power for the Al-Thani line, enriching Qatari citizens and broadening the means to distribute oil revenue. There were several ways in which this was accomplished; we shall look next at those that contributed directly to the urban and architectural formation of Doha.

If the pearl trade collapse left one indelible impression upon both father and son, Sheikhs Ali and Ahmed, it is that political power requires an urban, settled population. Prior to oil Al-Thani wealth largely derived from participation in and taxation of the pearling and slave trades. In exchange, Doha residents received protection from piracy and nomadic invasion. When pearls lost their value the residents left en masse, with some estimates halving Doha's population. The domestic architecture depicts the anticipation of migration in the uncut roof timbers cantilevering from the walls: because wood was such a rare commodity, home dwellers wished them to be intact for the next move and reconstruction. In addition to the lesson that power rests with a settled population, father and son learned another valuable lesson: kinship claims to the throne can be challenged. Architecture was one solution to both.

Rupert Hay,[3] Qatar's Political Officer from Britain, wrote in his 1949 diary of an event of seeming insignificance: 'The first tanker arrived at Umm Sa'id on 29th December, and loading began the same day. It is hoped that it will be completed by midnight of the 30th' (FO 1016/145). Little did he know how that day would so starkly mark Qatar's transformation. On 22 February[4] the following year, Sheikh Ali was photographed opening the valve to 'officially' close the chapter of poverty and begin a new history of prosperity. Viewing Doha's development in the 1950s primarily through British Foreign Office correspondence and England's Eastern Bank (now Standard Chartered Bank) records, three themes emerge and dominate: labour disturbances, land disputes and allowance distribution. All were intertwined in the creation of modern Doha.

At first, oil revenue flowed only to the Al-Thani elite. In 1950, Sheikh Ali personally received 25 per cent of all oil revenue, his father, Sheikh Abdullah, a generous pension of Rs. five Lakhs[5] per year, even though he had emptied the Diwan of gold and furniture upon his abdication and retreated to his desert home in Al-Rayyan, some 8 kilometres to the west of Doha. Another sizeable portion went to members of the Al-Thani elite. Little social benefit was seen in these early years, Ali's first priority being his own wealth and the calming of constant complaints, and throne challenges, from various factions of his family. A prime example of one of the earliest 'public works' projects is the paved road between his father's desert palace and Doha. Projects of this type were controversial, as the Political Advisor writes,

> P.D.Q. Ltd (Petroleum Development Qatar) are now engaged in making an oiled road to Raiyan. They will continue at the same time to carry the road into the middle of Doha, but there

[3] Rupert Hay's lengthy Political Service career in the Persian Gulf and later in the London Foreign Office gives his voice and predictions particular weight. See, for example, Hay (1955); and his personal diary, now held at St. Catherine's College, Oxford, written while he was stationed in Bahrain in 1949, illuminates both the personal life of a British political officer and the great extent ancient Arabia was quickly fading with oil exploration.

[4] Doha's main north–south motorway has various names including 22 February Street.

[5] One Lakh equals 100,000 Gulf Rupees. Qatar and Dubai introduced a joint currency, the Riyal in 1966. Qatar established its own independent Riyal in 1973.

> has been some adverse comment in the town at the making of the Raiyan road, which is almost a private one for the use of the Ruler in visiting his father.
>
> (FO 1016/161)

From the historical record it is difficult to say if the Emir, the Political Agent (PA), PDQ or perhaps all three held the desire for development. In August of 1951 PDQ's General Manager came to see the PA and Emir to 'urge upon the Advisor the need for development measures which would show the people of Qatar some tangible benefits from oil revenue' (FO 1016/162).[6] Even the Americans were unimpressed by Qatar's slow pace of development. In October, M.R. Rutherford, American Consul based in Dhahran, reported on recent developments in Doha:

> The present situation in Doha is fascinating to behold; the scene is so limited and uncluttered, the characters so few and yet so well defined. There is no question in my mind but that the British Foreign Office has embarked upon a program of moulding Qatar into the pattern of Bahrein. They desire to keep the peninsula pretty much to themselves, to develop the resources profitably but with little or no investment of their own, to improve the lot of the native inhabitants in a commendable manner but at a leisurely pace.
>
> (Confidential US State Department Central Files)

It was clear to the British that large industrial projects lay ahead and proper urban planning was needed. In December of 1951 W.R. Hay, Bahrain's Political Agent, wrote to Minoprio and Spencely, the architects who had just

[6] Though to be fair Sheikh Ali did create Doha's first modern hospital and established a framework for primary education. The following is an amusing observation of how Ali presided over Qatar's economic transition: 'there are still many signs of the old order with here and there a most incongruous admixture of the new. The shiek, a pious member of the strict Wahabi sect, still seats himself every afternoon on the steps outside the white palace by the blue Gulf, where his two steam yachts lie at anchor, to distribute largess to the needy' (Huizinga 1956:19).

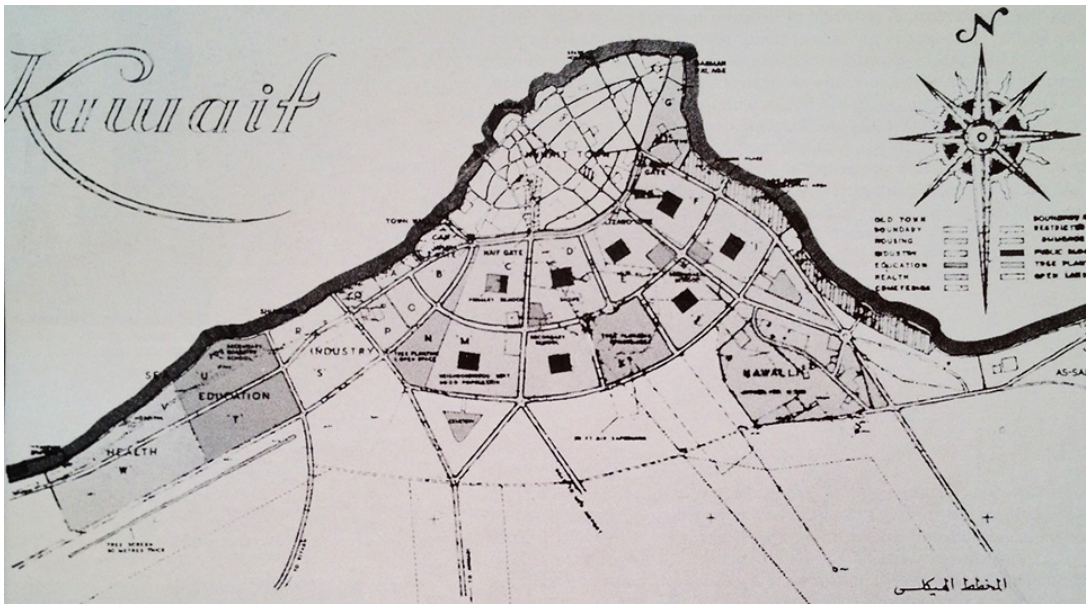


Fig. 5.3. *Minoprio and Spencely master plan for the Kuwait city (source: Harvard University, 1952).*

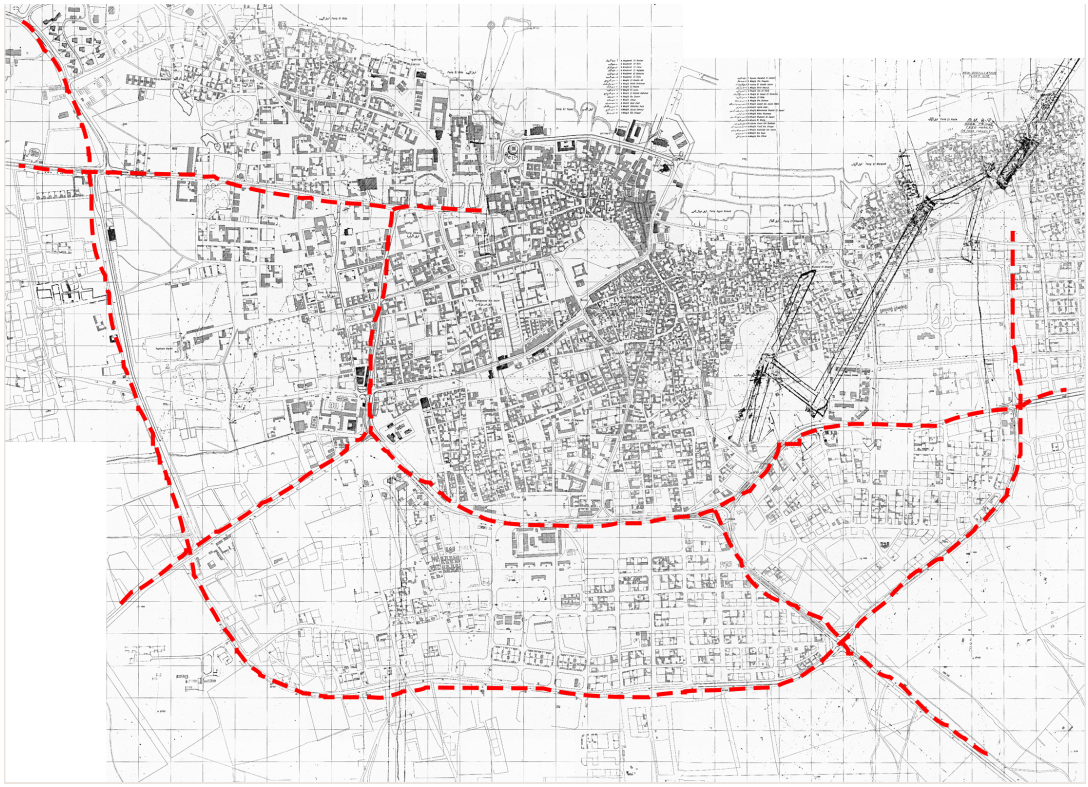


Fig. 5.4. *Hunting Aerosurvey of Doha, the nascent ring and radial roads highlighted in red (source: MMUP, 1952).*

completed master plans for Kuwait (Fig. 5.3) and Baghdad, to seek their assistance in Doha, and to the Hunting Aerosurvey Ltd. for a detailed city plan (Fig. 5.4) (FO 1016/164).[7]

A comparison between Minoprio's master plan for Kuwait (Fig. 5.3) and Doha's street plan (Fig. 5.4) both from 1952 make it entirely likely either Minoprio played a direct role in sketching out Doha's ring and radial network or their work in the region heavily influenced the Emir's planners. Regardless of the origin of Doha's street pattern, in just a few short months Doha would come a great distance towards providing basic infrastructure aimed largely at the poorer, non-elite class. It is interesting that during these early years of civic improvement the Emir must have enjoyed a great swelling of popular support. And it is precisely because of the public nature of the state's spending that the elite class would increasingly turn against the Emir. The Political Agent wrote:

> The Adviser then turned his attention to public works. The customs jetty was completed, houses for clerks were started, the beacon outside Doha was rebuilt, and a new road was made along the sea-front. During this time the family began again to agitate for increases in their allowances. The members of the beni Ahmed[8] who never accepted theirs began to pester.
>
> (FO 1016/162)

Indeed, the following year the Foreign Office wrote 'the Ruler is afraid of his family and will always, I suppose, yield if they make enough noise. The family say: "How can you spend money on roads and hospitals and such like nonsense when we haven't even got a decent Cadillac to ride in?"' (FO 1016/184).

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[7] Despite an exhaustive search I could find no information on the Minoprio plan. A personal conversation with the Spencely heirs revealed that nearly all of the firm's files were destroyed upon the firm's dissolution. Surviving, and in possession by the family is Hugh Spencely's personal travel diary that does not contain an entry for Doha. The earliest master plan I have found is the 1972 Doha plan by Llewelyn-Davies.

[8] The name 'beni Ahmed' refers to the sons of Hamad bin Abdullah whose premature death in 1948 sent the emirship to his brother Ali. The British Foreign Office reports from the 1950s frequently comment on the constant skirmishing, occasionally resulting in murder, between the sons of Hamad and the sons of Ali.

In these early years of oil revenue distribution there is both an expected and curious use of land and building. The Emir's immediate circle of family elites constantly chirping for an ever-larger allocation would begin building palaces outside the city. Even the Emir built an experimental farm outside Doha as a symbol of responsible investment in Qatar's future, which was then, as now, precariously dependent on imported food and water. Within the city new state-financed projects sparked land speculation with the wealthy merchant class holding much of the areas the government now needed for infrastructure improvements. Often boundary stones or rudimentary buildings were thrown up on vacant plots to claim ownership. In one particular case members of the Al-Thani sought not speculative arbitrage but rather perhaps a claim of political legitimacy through urban development. From the Political Resident in 1951:

> The Ruler was again worried, in the latter part of July, by the loud mouthed mendicancy of certain of his family, who continued to press their case for increased allowances more vigorously than politely … There were some rude threats, some shouting in the Palace and some rumours of plots in incubation … Since then there have been two minor manifestations of the tendency of these Al-Thani swashbucklers to play the 'overmighty subject'. Abdalla bin Thani touted the authority of the Municipality by starting to build a mosque blocking a public road without first seeking the requisite authority. The offending stones were removed just before the Police were due to intervene.
>
> (FO 1016/162)

It is important to remember that at this time Doha was structured around the *fereej*, a tight-knit neighbourhood of kin and tribe, looked at in detail in Chapter 4. Gaining control over these mean streets was necessary for urban growth and modernization but was not without difficulty. One incident sheds light on how challenging it was to make major urban progress one street, one building at a time:

> On 24th February the Qadi [Islamic judge within *Shari'ah* legal system] agreed to give up a corner of the Eid mosque [an open piece of ground surrounded by a wall used for public prayer during Ramadan] so that a road could be widened. This is a

> great example for others to follow when the Doha streets are opened up. It is also a remarkable sign of cooperation.
> (FO 1016/162)

By the end of the decade Doha had made tremendous progress. It now boasted city-wide electricity; an airport; the corniche road finally holding back the fêted harbour; a customs authority; emiri jetty; deep water jetty; vegetable, fish and meat markets; police headquarters; water system; hospital; and dozens of primary schools. But old habits persisted and Sheikh Ali, like his father before him, now faced a grave threat. In 1948, the aging Emir, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim, much preferred his second and favourite son, Hamad, to succeed him. Hamad was diabetic and died in 1948 before he could take the throne. This left Abdullah with two choices for his successor: his lacklustre first son, Ali, or the late Hamad's third son, the teenaged Khalifa. Abdullah compromised by choosing Ali, followed in turn by Khalifa, thus making both sides of the family moderately content but setting in motion a feud that would resurface for decades (FO 371/148915:10).

Such a moment came in 1960 when Sheikh Ali due to failing health needed to choose his successor. Instead of following his father's wishes by turning power over to his nephew Khalifa, Ali chose instead his own son Ahmed as successor. This countermanded his father's decision a decade earlier to name Khalifa as Ali's successor. To complicate matters it was rumoured that Abdullah had put in writing his wish for Khalifa to succeed Ali. But Ali had worked hard over the years to placate the families and build an alliance for Ahmed.

The British Political Resident's diary sheds light on how nearly every action in Doha's formative oil years was governed by a deeper, hidden objective. The British Police Chief's second in command, Mr Briggs, reports on what appear to be civic benefits in the form of health care but which were actually political payoffs:

> Shaikh Ali had been carefully preparing the ground in order to build up support for his own side over the last few years by

> judicious handouts in the forms of 'medical expenses' and trips to Geneva to members of his family. The result of all this was that the family had never stood so united behind him.
> (FO 371/148915:19)

We have seen in this section how the Emir used land and allowances against his family to constantly recalculate the wealth-for-power equation. In each instance the family members were bought off with land or cash in the form of monthly allowances or trips abroad. Even the abolition of slavery in 1952, which was seen by the British as a major moral victory, was used by the Emir to continue his policy of wealth distribution by compensating each slave-owning family for every manumissioned slave.

In the early 1950s it was obvious to all how quickly Doha would develop. Lacking a system of land registration, Sheikhs began piling marker stones on vast stretches of vacant land. In 1953 Sheikh Nasir Khalid, using his position in the newly formed municipality, doled out vacant land thus prompting a family crisis that led Sheikh Ali to turn the question of land distribution over to the British Political Advisor, who reported that 'all land questions, including registration and distribution, have been passed by the Ruler to the Advisor – a most unwelcome burden as no records exist and claim jumping is a universal recreation' (Crystal 1990:148). For the next few years land claims and state development would continue and Sheikh Ali, unable to reign in the speculation caused by his own development policies, would permit the practice of land grabbing. The following is an account from 1959:

> A few weeks ago a relatively unknown Qatari, but a man who is a staunch and vociferous follower of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad, was paid Rs.40,000 by the Government, on Sheikh Khalifa's order, for a plot of land required for an Education Department building extension. The plot was small and the price paid fantastic. Rs.5,000 would have been generous.
>
> In the past week there has been an astonishing epidemic of land grabbing all round Doha. The most remarkable instance being the cool seizure of a plot on the Raiyan road, belonging to Sheikh Ahmed, by Suheim, young brother of Sheikh Khalifa. He had stone boundary posts erected with 'Suheim' painted on with red paint (not without significance).

> It is typical of the weakness of the Ruler and Sheikh Ahmed that they protested to Sheikh Khalifa, got no help from him, and have dismissed the matter with a shrug as being of no importance.
>
> (FO 140220, 14 January 1959, J.S.R. Duncan)

In a confidential report from the Doha branch of Britain's Eastern Bank Ltd. to their London office, the bank manager, Mr Arton, outlined what was immediately needed to achieve some level of basic financial security: securing a loan from a non-Qatari source; the severe curtailing of payments to the 'civil list' of Al-Thani family members; a palace financial advisor; a civil law protecting the mercantile community from overdrafts; and the creation of a land registry (P&C No.51/88, Spl Rpt No.10, 25 May 1960, Arton to London).

Eastern Bank manager Arton clearly saw to the heart of the matter. As the state's coffers grew so too did the size and appetite of the leading families; and so too did the abuses by the Emir. The Emir could not continue entertaining the squawking of every hungry mouth, nor even his own mismanagement. Qatar was quickly outgrowing itself and the Emir needed a mechanism to dispel political claims, distribute allowances and grow the city. All three were accomplished through the creation of a state bureaucracy.

Britain's centuries of colonial rule gave the Political Agents and Foreign Office unparalleled expertise in state administration. For their part, Britain wanted a strategic foothold in the Gulf, access to oil, and lucrative engineering contracts for British firms. The Emir wanted wealth beyond measure and political security for himself and his Heir Apparent. And the Qataris by and large wanted a share in the oil revenues. Of course they wished for luxuries, many having experienced first hand the deprivations of the pre-oil pearling collapse. The common ground shared by these competing interests is, quite literally, 'the ground', and the architecture upon it. As we shall see in Section 5.3 the 1960s ushered in an era of

bureaucratic wealth distribution based upon the physical environment in general, and the domestic home in particular.

Much to Arton's delight, and to that of anyone else with commercial interests, Ahmed was making steady administrative progress. By the close of 1961 the Diwan decided on building a new airport, power station, comprehensive road redevelopment connecting Doha with smaller villages and, most shockingly, had formed a plan for a north–south road grid in Doha. I say 'shockingly' because fifty years and no fewer than six master plans later, Doha still operates today much as it did then.

Despite the advances in state administration and public works, other habits proved hard to change. The Emir spent heavily on a new palace and yacht believed to cost in excess of £350,000 (at that time). Family members must have seen these 'improvements' as outpacing their own lavishness and this caused considerable agitation by members of the ruling elite who now asked for a 25 per cent increase to their Civil List salaries. The Emir and his family spent without regard, both running up enormous debts to souq businesses. Ahmed's policy of giving state contracts to leading merchant families further worried his bankers with the Emir at one point owing £2,000,000 to the Darwish (P&C 52/208, Rpt 10, 26 November 1961, p.ii, Arton to London). Because oil revenue flowed steadily Ahmed had few options but to continually appease his family. In 1962 he approved the 25 per cent Civil List increase, which included all male infants receiving Rs.4,000 per month (previously the amount was Rs.2,000 per month). Ahmed's new country palace in the north of Qatar, complete with a farm, garden and yacht harbour, was well under way, all handled by the Darwish organization (P&C No.53/113, 21 June 1962, pp.i–ii, Arton to London).

Largely because of the state apparatus the 1960s enjoyed stunning progress. Ahmed was, for the moment, still in power, and trying hard to diversify the industrial economy. No one knew how long oil would hold out and it was impossible then to foresee that they were sitting upon the world's largest non-associated gas field (Oxford Business Group 2014:108). No official figures were ever published but the believed total state revenue in 1969

stood at £50 million of which £45 million was from oil revenue (Eastern Bank Letter No.60/2, 30 December 1969, Deasy to Winton). The government's net income for budgetary purposes (after payments to members of the ruling family) was estimated at half the total GDP between £25 and £30 million. In the opinion of the Eastern Bank:

> this income continues to be wisely spent in the development of the State and in improving the facilities available to the inhabitants. The most important projects which are at present being carried out by the Government are:
>
> (i) construction of a fertilizer plant
> (ii) extension to the main electricity generating station
> (iii) installation of a television station
> (iv) completion of the Doha sewage scheme
> (v) construction of highways and widening existing roads
> (vi) housing programme.
> (Letter No.60/2, 30 December 1969, Deasy to Winton)

The confidential records of the Eastern Bank provide a vital view into the state budgets, planning priorities, demands of the ruling family, indebtedness of the Emir to leading merchants, and civic construction progress. Throughout the reports several things are consistently clear. For one, the 1950s and 1960s were a time of constant monetary manoeuvring. Emirs Ali and Ahmed had only their wits to guide them through the country's most profound transformation. Both were reportedly illiterate, but nonetheless well schooled in the politics of popularity and court intrigue. For another, the oil revenues provided material luxuries unimaginable to those who remembered the water tanker that came to Doha every two weeks, the sweltering summers in mud-brick houses crammed with relatives in one or two tiny rooms, or the mud that invaded every inch of life during the rains. To bring a city from these humble origins to the very image of the polished pearl sculpture adorning the Corniche was a constant balancing act between the powers closest to the Emir. Unlike the founding years of the late nineteenth century that deftly pitted one empire against another, the first oil Emirs keenly perceived the internal dynamics that would either rip the country apart, or, if not unite the Al-Thani family

branches and leading merchant families, then at least bring them to agree to move in generally the same direction towards modernization.

5.3 Emiri Laws

Though still under the British Protectorate Treaty of 1916, Qatar began in the early 1960s to establish laws essential to its sovereignty and crucial to Doha's urban development. The first, and most basic, established who was a citizen. Law No.(1) of 1961 defined a Qatari as someone residing in Qatar before 1930.[9]

Having ended slavery – officially – only nine years prior, and given Qatar's long history of trans-Gulf migration from the east, nomadic herding from the west and the various trade routes both north and south, not to mention Bahrain's land claims on Qatar, this was surely a difficult law to enact much less adjudicate. But, as the window on citizenship closed with rising oil revenues, the state had to expand its bureaucratic and immigration abilities to limit who was in the country, for what purpose and for how long. This was the moment when civic discourse was pushed under. Passport-holding citizens were rewarded with new homes, government jobs and luxuries unimaginable only a few years prior. Conversely, the imported workers required to build the modern capital had no claim on anything except for the exchange of wages for labour. Currently, other forms of residence permit exist such as family permits for those born in Qatar and who are long-term residents, which are not employer dependent. For all other foreign nationals residence in Qatar is only possible through employer sponsorship, currently a highly contentious issue.[10] Given Qatar's long history of migration both by

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[9] Law No.(1) of 1961 on Qatari citizenship:
Qatari's are those:
1. Who were in Qatar before 1930 CE and have maintained their habitual residence in Qatar, and kept their Qatari nationality as of the date of the Law No.(22) of 1961
2. Who proved to be Qatari of origin, even when there were no conditions set forth in the preceding item, and issued an emiri decision to consider with regard to this
3. Who received Qatari citizenship in accordance with the provisions of law
4. Who were born in Qatar or abroad to a Qatari father.
Translation by Nadia Yousef Abu Dayeh.

[10] See Human Rights Watch special report on Qatar's labour practices and call for a boycott of the FIFA World Cup Games in 2022 if current laws are not changed to, among other things, permit 'guest workers' to change employer. http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/qatar, accessed May 2015.

neighbouring Arab tribes and later by Iranian, Indian and European migrants in the labour pool, the government further restricted its nationalism policies through Law No.(5) of 1963 that forbade foreigners from owning real property (immovable assets) or land.

Having restricted Qatari citizenship through Law No.(1) of 1961 – his first official act – and thus the number of people to share the wealth or challenge monarchic rule, Sheikh Ahmed turned his sights on other internal threats. The next step was to break up the *fereej*. As noted above, until oil extraction began in 1950 Doha's urban order was based upon the *fereej.* This archaic structure presented a direct obstacle to Sheikh Ahmed's political-urban calculus. The close-knit family structure often acted as a single voice of potential opposition; the architectural structure a blockade to any urban redevelopment plan. Removing the *fereej* as a fact and symbol would pave the way for political legitimization.

To gain control of the city Sheikh Ahmed began empowering the state's bureaucracy through Law No.(15) of 1963 establishing a municipality of Doha, that was tasked to manage the building process, gardens (public green space), public health (hospitals/clinics) and accounts (capital improvements).[11] Ostensibly this appeared to be a step towards democratization. Each citizen was in theory freed from the *fereej*'s tribal control and could instead petition a neutral administrative office. In reality, all decisions remained with the Emir, and the municipality simply acted as if it had the best interests of all in mind. A further complication is the use of the bureaucracy as an employer of nationals. Favouritism, nepotism and tribal conflict were no doubt rife in the early days of state administration. The growing state bureaucracy continued to weaken the *fereej*'s power by forcing individuals – not families – into state jobs in order to hold some degree of power over fellow citizens.

With the *fereej* now under government control, Ahmed needed a mechanism to both reclaim inner-city land and break up the power blocks held by the extended clan *fereej*. Offering the *fereej* large tracts of land for relocation

[11] Special thanks to Roudda F. Bahzad for legal research of Qatar's laws and regulations.

would not alone diminish the threats. He needed a way to dissolve the communicative ease and ideological unity made possible by the tight-knit *fereej* social-spatial structure. Law No.(1) of 1964, which established a public housing system, was the tool he needed.[12]

To be sure, the public housing laws from 1964 were ingeniously designed. Ostensibly, land and low-interest loans were given to low-income or elderly citizens (note the provisions for citizenship). This largesse on the Emir's part had a deeper, less obvious motivation, one that would forever change the very social-spatial fabric of Doha society. The land was typically outside of Doha and the free-standing houses, now called 'villas', were the spatial inversion of densely packed courtyard houses they left behind. As we shall see later on, the effect of this law has, more than any other policy, completely rewritten the social-spatial structure of Doha. For now, the law had several initial consequences.

First, immediate families could leave their rather humble mud-brick or concrete courtyard dwelling and relocate to large walled-in plots, with a free-standing villa. These families now had municipal utilities, central air-conditioning and car ports. Equally important, they also had a rental stream from the vacated courtyard house that was being let to Indian and Pakistani labourers.

Second, the Emir now had control over Doha's real estate and could begin building a city commensurate with his country's new-found wealth. Lastly, in support of Rentier State Theory, the Emir now also had a mechanism to selectively distribute wealth.

Ahmed's cousin and successor, Khalifa Al-Thani, further extended state control. As deputy minister in 1971, a year before he took power, Khalifa established a ministry structure termed the 'Ministry of Municipal Affairs' and was responsible for all municipalities in the peninsula. Then, as Emir, he formalized the process of eminent domain with Law No.(13) of 1988 – the

[12] See Appendix for the full English text.

expropriation of property for public benefit.[13] The law stipulates the creation of a property valuation board to fairly compensate landowners. But as a 2011 *Gulf Times* newspaper headline shows, 'Value of Realty Deals in Qatar Down 22% in 2nd Week of October', no such valuation process exists, either governmental or market-led.[14] Indeed, real estate values are known to fluctuate wildly with single monthly drops of 25 per cent not uncommon. Then, as now, property claimed through eminent domain was another mechanism to handsomely compensate urban, land-owning families. A common theme in my interviews has been how this law fuelled land speculation. If one had inside knowledge of a new road, or public building, for example, then one would buy the land only to have the Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning (MMUP) take it over for many times the purchase price only a few months later. Having insider information on urban development and the finances to buy the land were possible only for leading mercantile families. The eminent domain law in many ways simply extended the power for wealth proposition first seen in the 1950s.

It is important to note how such a law was practically administered. Qatar does not now, nor has it ever had, democratic impulses, except for its constitutional proclamation. Municipalities and supreme councils provide for the full function of the state. Each has its mandate, jurisdiction and set of governing laws. Each is ultimately responsible to the Emir. In the early days of oil it was common practice to petition the Emir directly. One might have a legal dispute, such as settling an inter-clan conflict, and in the case of public housing, one would ask the Emir directly for his dispensation. By keeping his hands on the levers of power, the Emir ensured his firm control over all matters public and private. And indeed, not all Qataris benefitted equally. For example, today, all males born to the Al-Thani tribe, which numbers upwards of 15,000 individuals, are reportedly given a monthly stipend of QAR 20,00 (approximately $5,500) until age eighteen.[15] From there, land, housing and a comfortable senior administrative job within a government

[13] See Appendix for the full English text.

[14] 'Value of reality deals in Qatar down 22% in 2nd week of October', *Gulf Times*, 23 October 2011.

[15] No formal document containing the policy or the exact amount of the 'social allowance', as it is called, could be found. However, many of my Qatari research participants corroborate this practice and the figures.

municipality or a leading 'Q company' such as Qatar Gas, is likely. To this day, Qatari citizens can meet with the Emir during his open office hours and seek redress for any claim.

5.4 The Next Coup

With power firmly consolidated, an enforceable legal framework, tight citizenship rules and wealth beyond measure it was time to plan for a modern city. Foreseeing the need for public support when he would forcibly take office, in 1971 Sheikh Khalifa, while still Deputy Ruler and Prime Minister, went on national radio and TV to publicly announce the state's budget. It was an historic first, to say the least, and demonstrated Khalifa's desire for popular support through political transparency. He did not mention the total national budget or the amounts to be spent on security or the armed forces – money used primarily for his own protection – but he did detail the capital budget to be spent on public works outlined in Fig. 5.5.

Budget	**QAR (millions)**
Compensation to landlords for lands acquired or to be acquired	30
Building new schools	5
Sending students abroad for further studies	4
New Doha Harbour (equipment)	4
New roads and improvements to existing ones	37
Extension to airport runway	10
Sewerage system – second stage	40
New power station	7
Two new distillation plants and development of water wells	2,3
Houses for labourers and people with limited income	12
Extension to TV station	4
Building new hospitals, central laboratory and quarantine, and improvements to existing hospitals	3
Umm Said Fertiliser project (of which QDR 17 million for new jetty)	52
Gas pipeline from Dukhan to Umm Said and Doha	26
TOTAL QAR	**236,3**

Fig. 5.5. *1971 Qatar National Budget (source: Eastern Bank P&C 62/60).*

Khalifa claimed the budget had three main aims: 1) increase the income of the individual Qatari; 2) improve both the quality and quantity of public services; and 3) encourage the industrial public sector, independent of oil.[16]

[16] For data on Qatar economic and industrial development in the 1970s and 1980s see El Mallakh (1979, 1985) and Nafi (1983).

When asked about the amount set aside for these priorities, Sheikh Khalifa answered QAR 220 million of which 30 million would be paid as compensation for landlords whose land had been or would be acquired by the government. He continued that the budget provided for new schools, enlarging existing schools, medical laboratories and a further QAR 4 million to send Qataris overseas for university education.[17] Additionally, it provided for an expanded road network, sewage treatment plant, electric grid, water piping and desalinization, public housing for those on low incomes, television and radio broadcasting, labour housing and oil pipeline enhancements. He concluded by expressing pleasure at the continual increase in the budget for the state's development projects, 'which shows that the State is exerting fruitful energy to supplement the elements of progress of Qatar and to raise the standard of living of its people in all walks of life' (P&C 62/60 pp.i–ii, 22 March 1971, D.B. McKay to London). By calling attention to specific public works, most notably housing and land compensation, Khalifa was laying the groundwork for his palace coup by appealing to public support largely through urban formation.

It is easy to think Khalifa's palace coup was just him nursing an old wound and claiming what he felt was rightly his. Ever since his grandfather, Sheikh Abdullah, put in writing some twenty-four years earlier his decree for Khalifa to follow Ahmed as Emir, Khalifa must have grown impatient. No doubt his impatience was brought to a new level when Abdullah's son reneged on his father's wishes and installed his own son as Emir. But greatly to his credit, it appears that Khalifa acted as much in the people's interests as his own.

Public discontentment with Ahmed had steadily grown over the years. It was widely known that the Chief Qadi had written an open letter addressed to Sheikh Ahmed accusing him of misspending public money, and of his inattention to public policy. Ahmed so much preferred his Geneva lakeside

[17] By contrast in 2014 Qatar Foundation paid 6 US universities over $400 million per year to educate roughly 1,000 Qatari citizens at its Education City campus in western Doha, see 'Doha's Education City by the numbers: Enrollment, diplomas, faculty, finances,' by Nick Anderson, *The Washington Post*, December 6, 2015.

villa (Fig. 5.6), or any place for that matter, to Qatar that he signed Qatar's independence documents in his Swiss home, for which he was openly mocked. In typical Gulf emiri fashion Ahmed returned to Qatar and deftly brought the family firmly behind him.



Fig. 5.6. *Sheikh Ahmed in front of his Geneva, Switzerland home known as Sans Souci. The caption reads: Sheikh's castle in Europe. It remains unclear why the villa name is also that for the Potsdam palace of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Sheikh Ahmed's eldest son, had been using his own position as Minister of Health to suborn the family to his allegiance by the simple method of bribes and gifts of free trips abroad, ostensibly on medical grounds, and by huge gifts of money spread out over a wide sector of the population; some of this money came from the government and some from his own and his father's pockets. Qatar's British Consul, Edward Henderson, summarizes the coup events to MP Sir Alec Douglas-Home, giving an appraisal of the situation and its likely significance. Says Henderson about Abdul Aziz's sociopathic tendencies:

> Notorious as a murderer of at least two men, famous for his instability and impetuosity, he nevertheless had bought some popularity. For a very short time perhaps he had bought a dangerously large amount. It afterwards transpired, not to anyone's surprise, that he had machine-guns by the thousand, bombs labelled with the numbers of people's houses, and a little red book with a list of names of the people he was going to kill … there is certainly enough evidence to show that the Minister of Health was about as well armed as was the government. Perhaps the main point that is not clear is what date he had in mind for his own coup: from the evidence now available it seems it was imminent: perhaps a matter of days.
>
> (FCO 8/192)

Clearly fearing Abdul Aziz's ability to thwart a coup attempt, Khalifa on 22 February 1972 at 0730 took control of the country while Sheikh Ahmed was on a hunting trip in Iran. He immediately granted a 20 per cent salary increase for the officers and men of the armed forces and government officials,[18] and forgiveness of governmental loans to Qataris for house purchases (FCO 8/1891).[19] In his first public address Khalifa recounted that since becoming Heir Apparent and Prime Minister he had 'tried in vain to dissuade by advice and counsel those irresponsible elements who had been indulging in profiteering and accumulation of fortune at the expense of the people'. He told the audience that all his previous efforts had 'been met with deaf ears by those elements' self-indulgence and disrespect for public interest' and the country had 'revolved in a vicious circle and our hopes and high aspirations for Qatar after independence withered away and were lost' (FCO 8/1891, letter from Frank O'Shanohun).

Khalifa was appealing to the people for broad support of his coup. In addition to the 20 per cent raise, Khalifa promised in his address the following year sweeping reform and massive urban change including: the establishment of municipal councils, Consumers' Cooperative Societies to help control inflation through price controls, a new state university and the 're-planning of Doha city' (FCO 8/1890). From here the Emir continues for several pages enumerating the number of new hospital beds, houses, schools, length of electrical cable laid, shortwave and broadcast capabilities, port and airport expansion, water and electric networks and new museums, etc.

Sheikh Khalifa's inaugural speech highlights several pivotal moments in Qatar's development. First, Qatar now had independence, unimaginable wealth and the desire to properly plan and administrate a fully autonomous state, with Doha as its capital. Second, we see Khalifa's plans were overwhelmingly based on the physical creation of things and places. He was

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[18] *Morning Star*, 23 February 1972.

[19] In the midst of the 2011 so-called 'Arab Spring', when Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were throwing off their dictatorial leadership, Sheikh Hamad, Khalifa's son, granted all government employees a 60 per cent immediate raise and members of the military 120 per cent.

giving Qataris money, jobs, houses, roads, universities and hospitals. What he was not giving them was freedom.

Within ten years of the first oil export Qatar had one of the world's highest GDPs per capita. In one of Khalifa's first public addresses he acknowledges the plague of idleness among young Qatari males: wealth had transformed the attitude towards work. Many families now considered work or employment beneath their social status. Qataris had the freedom to buy anything, but not to be anything. The *fereej* structure is exactly the shared involvement that most threatened the monarchy. A modern, Western-styled city is ironically diametrically opposed to the authentic freedom found in the *fereej*. Khalifa may have envisioned a city of hard-working, highly productive citizens. Political realities and several decades of undermining intrinsic vocational motivation produced instead a monarchic utopia of docile, idle subjects. It seems the current Emir's policies of male conscription, consolidation of all state budgets with the Ministry of Finance, and statements regarding the need for more Qataris in the workforce are his attempts to reconnect everyday Qataris with the future development of their nation.

The evidence suggests in order for Khalifa to deliver on his promise of a modern nation-state he would have to plough under everything in Qatar's past. There could be no room for antiquities, or mud-brick hovels in his utopian vision. Khalifa is creating a paradox whereby he must demonstrate his stewardship of oil revenue through public works. But to do so he must erase the places that hold memories. How will any future generation know how far the state has come without some reference to the impoverished past?

This creates a dialectic between presence and absence, a constant theme in all my interviews. The tension between memory and desire, past and future, has created a perpetual state of ambiguity for Doha. The *fereej* and its humble structures were authentically a self-imaged place and evocative of one's connection to the cosmic order and to natural conditions. The natural conditions that governed Doha's social and spatial order are hidden under a

dominating technology. The sheer rapidity of development will now cause the city's inhabitants to more often conjure a connection to disappeared places. Doha residents will more likely consciously relate to the absence of an object and not the object itself. In short, Ahmed got the people out of the city; Khalifa got rid of the city.

Lastly, Khalifa's speech promises a new life for the Qatari people built upon their complete dependence on the state. His 'family' is now all of Qatar. Government jobs, government building contracts, government education, housing: every situation puts Khalifa as the *paterfamilias* par excellence. A position his son, Hamad, the current Emir's father, would take to new heights.

By 1975 the strains of development were becoming clear. A small group expressed their anxiety over environmental pollution and social deprivation. An influx of expatriate labour sparked sharp inflation with particular upward pressure on housing rents. A build-up of traffic made it difficult to easily traverse the city in a matter of minutes as most were accustomed to doing. Port congestion created temporary shortages, and power cuts continued. Socially, the sense of security that characterized the slower-moving life of Doha seemed frayed with reports of upsets in the Police Force and incidents involving Europeans (FCO 8/2776, D.G. Crawford, 26 January 1976, 'Qatar: Annual Review for 1975').

To quote D.G. Crawford's 1976 report:

> While Qatar's small, unqualified and occasionally corrupt bureaucracy continued to follow its meeting, greeting, coffee drinking and jet traveling inclinations the demands made upon it by an increasingly complex modern society began rapidly to mount. There was no wide ranging development plan within the framework of which priorities could be allocated. In fact the work of Government was frequently interrupted by departmental squabbling and changes of mind at the highest level … projects to build a new airport, to extend the present port facilities and to increase hotel accommodation were deferred. On the other hand absolute priority in both labour and materials was given to the Sheikh Khalifah stadium project on which no expense is being spared

> to make it ready for the seventy nation Gulf soccer competition to be held in Doha this coming March … Nevertheless development decisions taken in earlier years proceeded on their course. New Government offices began to rise on Doha's cornice and they were the most noticeable of many other projects under way in the capital and the smaller towns. There were also encouraging signs in 1975 that the private sector was at last investing in Qatar rather than abroad and the Sheikhs did not as previously concentrate exclusively on land speculation. The growth in consumer demand, more private capital and a larger cash flow from Government to the merchants all contributed to a build in confidence.
>
> (FCO 8/2776, D.G. Crawford, 26 January 1976, 'Qatar: Annual Review for 1975')

Just six months later the very same D.G. Crawford would come to comprehend the deeper currents at work determining Doha's development. He now saw the intertwined strands of urban development and political legitimacy:

> Were it not for a familiar paradox I would be taking a more gloomy view of prospects for the Al Thani than I did a year ago. There are dissensions within the upper echelons of the ruling family and commercial rivalries threaten the coherent development of the country. Indeed both in government and in private business the Qataris seem to be becoming more greedy. These factors have played a large part in decisions taken this year by the Amir to delay, vary or even cancel major projects much to the frustration of the foreign firms involved in them. Thus Qatar has not developed as fast as expected and therein lies the paradox. For the more Qatar remains an individualistic Bedouin society and less like the modern industrial one, on which the Amir has set his heart, the longer will Al Thani rule remain unchallenged … The mounting pressures on the few at the top are much more worrying than the greed, the rivalries and the mind changing to which I have previously referred. Indeed, referring to the paradox, the more these conspire to slow progress the less is the strain on Qatar's extremely limited resources. They not only include home grown talent but also water, electricity and cement.
>
> (FCO 8/3676, D.G. Crawford, 10 July 1976, 'Qatar: Half Yearly Assessment')

In light of Crawford's comments it is not surprising that in 1995 Khalifa was deposed in a 'bloodless' coup by his son Hamad ostensibly on the grounds

of slow urban development. After all, Khalifa had in hand the first and only officially adopted master plan for Doha drawn up in 1972 by the British firm Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor. He had the 1975 Doha master plan commissioned by the American architect William Pereira; the Shankland Cox plan for West Bay; and the highly detailed redevelopment of Doha's city centre by the Lebanese firm Dar Al-Handasah. Khalifa also had in place the various ministries, municipalities and armies of foreign engineering and management professionals to enact the plans. But apart from the Llewelyn-Davies plan, none of the others would be formally adopted and all were only partially implemented.

5.5 The Latest Coup

In an eerily familiar pattern Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, second son of Sheikh Khalifa, took control while his father was out of the country.[20] And also like his father, one of Hamad's first acts was to proclaim the unmet potential of Qatar and commission one of the world's largest architecture and planning firms, Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK) to prepare a twenty-year master plan for the entire country, with particular focus on Doha. It seems politics and planning had once again surfaced in the changing fortunes of the country.

Hamad, and his second wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Misned (Fig. 5.7), would take Doha's development to an entirely different level. Officially, Hamad succeeded his father on 27 June 1995 in a 'handover of power'.

[20] In addition to the 1995 coup's coverage in the international press, a more comprehensive review is found in El-Katiri and Tatham (2009).



Fig. 5.7. *Sheikh Hamad and his second wife, known officially as the Emir's consort, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Misned. Hamad is holding the trophy awarded by FIFA to host the World Cup in 2022, 2 December 2010 (source PBS Newshour https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfyPi5MnPSY, accessed 1 April 2015).*

As told to me by a former member of Khalifa's personal guard, his state-owned private jet had just touched down in Geneva, when he was presented with a telegram from his son instructing him that his services were no longer required. Having gained control of nearly $8 billion, Sheikh Khalifa made public announcements of his intention to regain the throne 'at any cost', while privately trying to build a coalition of neighbouring Gulf countries to help him.[21] A year later Khalifa's failed counter-coup firmly cemented Hamad's domestic and international status as Qatar's legitimate ruler.

From birth Hamad had been groomed to be Heir Apparent. Attending Sandhurst, Britain's premier military academy, prepared Hamad as both the official Heir Apparent and as Commander of Qatar's Armed Forces. Together with his glamorous second wife, Sheikha Moza, Hamad wasted no time in enacting major reforms. Looking back over twenty years of rule it seems he had one, overarching goal for his country: international recognition.

It would be a mistake to view Sheikha Moza as simply the Emir's consort and without her own ambition. By 2015 Moza and her seven children would

[21] Reported in *Time*, 4 November 1996.



Fig. 5.8. *Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani interviewed on 60 Minutes, 'Qatar: a tiny country asserts powerful influence', CBS News 12 January 2012 (source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_ZuXbOtBbo) accessed June 2015.*

head some of the world's most ambitious educational, cultural and research centres, as detailed in Chapter 8.

For his part, the Emir oversaw the establishment of two massive American military bases, home to the US Central Command, and the clearing house for all theatre intelligence and warfare logistics with Iraq and Afghanistan. He continues to court relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Hezbollah and began a muscular foreign policy stance by actively participating in the so-called Arab Spring by sending arms to Libya and denouncing Syria's president. In many ways Hamad is simply walking the same, precarious line his ancestors have always walked. In an interview with Hamad (Fig. 5.8) in January 2012 by the US investigative news program *60 Minutes*, correspondent Bob Simon remarks that '"Qatar's military … picturesque, but not very intimidating, not when your next door neighbours are Iran and Saudi Arabia. So how does the emir keep his island of happiness afloat when the seas are getting rougher every day?"

> Simon: It often seems as if the basis of your foreign policy is to be friends with everyone.
>
> Hamad: Don't you think this is a good policy for a small country?
>
> Simon: Yes, it is if you can pull it off.
>
> Hamad: Well, we are trying.[22]

[22] The following script is from 'Qatar', which originally aired on 15 January 2012 and was rebroadcast on 1 July 2012. Bob Simon, correspondent; Harry Radliffe, producer.

5.6 Conclusion

In this brief chapter we have seen how Qatar and its capital city, Doha, have gone from an impoverished backwater entrepôt of barely 10,000 souls to a globally focused metropolis of over 2 million, with the majority of this transformation happening in just the last fifty years. The meticulous records kept by commercial managers and foreign embassy staff vividly reveal the policy mechanisms developed by successive regimes to balance internal rivalries that arose from its new-found wealth. D.G. Crawford's observed paradox – the more Qatar remains a Bedouin society, focused on upholding 'traditional Islamic values', and basing its bureaucratic structure on courtly life, the longer Al-Thani rule will remain unchallenged – arises because the Emir's dream to create a modern state clearly demonstrates, on the one hand, his desire to share oil rents with all citizens, while, on the other, it proves he is not spending as much as he could on his inner circle. The tension between satisfying traditional institutions and forms of decorum and the desire for the image of a modernist, globally connected city has plagued successive Emirs since oil began flowing in the 1950s. While not exactly a zero-sum game, advancing one agenda has generally been at the detriment to the other, an awkward situation that seems unlikely to resolve itself calmly.

The regime continues to invest heavily in education and health, hoping its people will acquire the skills necessary to transform the basis of Qatar's economy from hydrocarbons to knowledge. What actually defines a 'knowledge-based' economy is never made explicit, and is difficult to precisely deduce. Without an industrial economy it likely means the creation of intellectual property in health care and high technology for manufacture in Asia and sale in Western countries, along with direct investment in foreign economies. The evidence for this transition is seen across Doha in its many new buildings, roads and institutions. But Qatar's generous welfare policies have, for over half a century, undermined the actual demand one might expect for a modern, white collar, business and tourist city. To the many Qataris I interview, and interact with, the city seems unnecessary, at least in practical terms, but all seem to enjoy the image that a new city-scape projects.

In November 2012, seven months before Sheikh Hamad abdicated the throne for his 33-year-old son, Tamim, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency notified the US Congress of an impending sale of a Patriot anti-missile defence system to Qatar. Costing $9.9 billion the system will 'improve its missile defense capability, strengthen its homeland defense, and deter regional threats' (DSCA 2012) (Fig.5.9). With some 90 per cent of all Qatari residents living in or around Doha one expects that its capital city along with key industrial infrastructure will be the most heavily protected. Interestingly, at just this moment I interviewed Participant L, a non-Qatari defence contractor involved in the Patriot missile contract. He revealed that Qatar had been poised to sign nearly the exact deal some five years earlier but at the last moment it backed out. Qatar offered no explanation and my participant always wondered what could have happened. New forms of détente were not emerging. If anything the Arab Spring and Qatar's new muscular foreign policy, very much a turn against Hamad's closing remarks to Bob Simon 'to be friends with everyone', had come to an end, and with it came the urgent need for greater military defence. Speculating further Participant L asked me 'other than their usual spending on infrastructure, was there a single, large investment made? Something that competed with our missiles?' When I told him the 31-hectare Msheireb (Heart of Doha urban development project chaired by Sheikha Moza) had just been announced at this time, it seemed to fit. At $5.5 billion the price tags were identical.[23]

If the speculative contingency between the two projects is correct then one might further imagine that husband and wife Hamad and Moza decided they needed a city (Msheireb), or at least the image of a city, first, and its security should come second. In some ways this story, and it is only that, fits a consistent pattern of regime legitimization through the building of Doha. It also fits the decades-old pattern perfected by Emirs of balancing one external power against another, in this case Saudi Arabia and Iran. If this is a partial answer to why the regime felt the need for a city – one that is newly

[23] The original sale price of the Patriot missile system in 2007 according to my participant was $5.5 billion.

visible, and invisibly protected by missiles – it is also a partial assurance to both the Qatari people and the extended royal family (as well as leading mercantile families) that the regime is spending its oil and gas rents wisely in an effort to stimulate a quasi-private-sector knowledge-based economy, and to raise the physical comfort of all citizens regardless of who actually uses it.



Fig. 5.9. *A launcher for a Patriot air defence system with four canisters for PAC-2 sized missiles seen during the Qatar National Day parade. Source: Qatar Television via IHS Jane's Defence Intelligence, 23 December 2015, accessed 2 February 2016.*

A Year ago we had the honour to be commissioned by your government to prepare a Development Plan for the State of Qatar. We were asked to pay particular attention to the future of the capital city, Doha; to the real and unique character of Qatari life, and to the wishes and hopes of the Qatari people.

– Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor
1972 Qatar Development Plan

Chapter 6. Analysis of Doha's Master Plans: 1972–Present

In the span of a few short decades Doha residents have gone from being at the mercy of the environment to being its masters. There is hubris in bending one of nature's most inhospitable climates to the will of an individual. The power wrought by oil's wealth and held in the hands of just one man, the Emir, has for over forty years fashioned an evolving picture of Doha's future. In this chapter I shall contrast two philosophical views of history that have a bearing on the real and perceptual evolution of Doha as embodied in various master planning schemes of the last forty-five years. The philosophies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Martin Heidegger provide two wholly dissimilar accounts on how history changes from one epoch to another, and how we are to understand patterns of change.

Hegel believes that history is unidirectional, progressive and ultimately concludes with a revelation of perfection. Each historical epoch logically builds upon its predecessors, learning and developing towards an ultimate state of understanding in which

> Progress appears as an advancing from the imperfect to the more perfect; but the former must not be understood abstractly as only the imperfect, but as something which

> involves the very opposite of itself – the so-called perfect as a germ or impulse.
>
> (Hegel 2001:64)

Hegel attributes historic shifts to what he calls 'world-historical individuals', men like Caesar and Napoleon who accomplish great feats through vision and will power. Hegel's historical people both possessed particular individual qualities we might liken to charisma and ego, and they understood the mood of their times, seeking a future very much in synch with the principles, understandings and practices of their particular epoch. Such individuals are those

> Who appear to draw the impulse of their life from themselves; and whose deeds have produced a condition of things and a complex of historical relations which appear to be only their interest, and their work.
>
> Such individuals had no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding, while prosecuting those aims of theirs; on the contrary, they were practical, political men. But at the same time they were thinking men, who had an insight into the requirements of the time – what was ripe for development. This was the very Truth for their age, for their world; the species next in order, so to speak, and which was already formed in the womb of time. It was theirs to know this nascent principle; the necessary, directly sequent step in progress, which their world was to take; to make this their aim, and to expend their energy in promoting it. World-historical men – the Heroes of an epoch – must, therefore, be recognized as its clear-sighted ones; their deeds, their words are the best of that time.
>
> (ibid.:32–33)

In contrast, Heidegger believes historic epochs change, or turn, from one to another through an external agent that constitutes the cultural practices in a new way. While a certain degree of continuity is crucial, history does not progress through reason, by way of will power, or towards an ultimate goal. As Heidegger describes it,

> epochs can never be derived from one another much less be placed on the track of an ongoing process. Nevertheless, there is a legacy from epoch to epoch. But it does not run between the epochs like a band linking them; rather, the legacy always

> comes from what is concealed in the *Geschick* [destining], just as if from one source various streamlets arise that feed a stream that is everywhere and nowhere.
>
> (Heidegger 1991:91)

In Doha's case, I shall argue the act of 'master planning' is both synchronic and diachronic, and has indeed 'turned' the epoch by means of both a Hegelian world-historical individual and a Heideggerian view of discontinuous progress. The change has been abrupt and non-linear, but is nonetheless viewed rationally; it is a logical outcome of oil wealth, propelling the state towards a more 'perfect' end made possible through one man – the Emir. I do not view the two philosophies as mutually exclusive. Doha's first master planning Emir, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani (r. 1972–1995, b. 1932), exhibits a perfect amalgam of both philosophical approaches to historic change.

6.1 Master Plans

Since 1972 two different Emirs have commissioned six different master plans from four different firms to envision a future Doha. This section will briefly examine several of these key documents in the hope that we can uncover how father and son, Emirs Khalifa and Hamad, understood their capital city; and how as ruling elites their actions are understood by Doha's residents.

6.1.1 The First Master Plan: Llewelyn-Davies

On 22 February 1972 Sheikh Khalifa officially succeeded his first cousin, Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Al-Thani (r. 1960–1972, b. 1920, d. 1977), as the sole ruler of Qatar. Since he missed his turn at the throne twenty-three years earlier, Khalifa's rise to power had been slow and gradual. Again sensing the emirship would pass him – and his children – by Khalifa seized control and consolidated his power over a matter of hours in a bloodless coup while his cousin was on a hunting trip in Iran. Publicly blaming his predecessor for Qatar's slow growth, Khalifa immediately set about reorganizing the government, and replanning the city. The tandem acts of enlarging the Cabinet by appointing more ministers, and hiring the British architecture

and planning firm Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor (LWFB) gave Khalifa the means to create a new city.

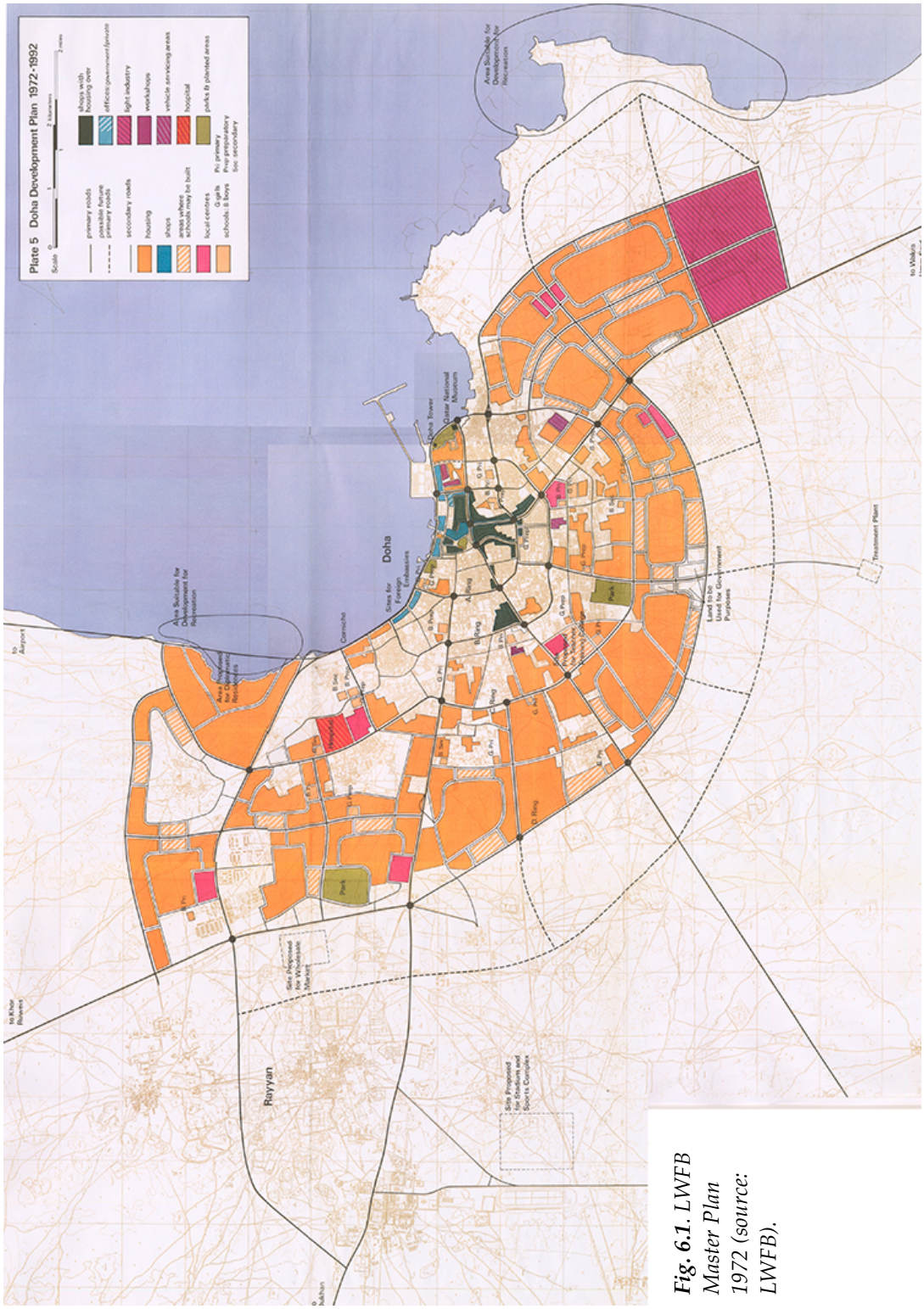

Fig. 6.1. *LWFB Master Plan 1972 (source: LWFB).*

The 1972 Llewelyn-Davies plan (Fig. 6.1) addressed all the levers necessary to build a 'modern' state. The master plan focused primarily on Doha, but also on smaller cities in the peninsula, weaving together planning concepts, financial mechanisms, implementation strategy and governmental oversight. The plan was a clear reflection of Khalifa's desire to right his predecessor's wrongs by demonstrating to the Qatari people the tangible results of his leadership. Indeed, the entire master plan addresses directly the future of Doha's people: 'Where in Qatar will [its] people live and what facilities and services will they need? What should the government do to provide these facilities?' (LWFB 1972:5). The government's role looms large throughout not just the first, 1972 plan but the next two annual updates as well.

The plan uses a three-pronged strategy to bring about urban change over a twenty-year period: reconstruction, expansion, and renewal. Reconstruction understood the close relationship between house (dwelling) and work (labour) in the city's centre – a co-dependent relationship developed over many years that is 'the foundation on which the social and commercial life of the city is built' (ibid.:11). Llewelyn-Davies' supremely sensitive approach called for a balance between rebuilding and conservation, noting that the existing balance of urban life is far from indestructible. Expansion is inevitable due to overall economic growth and because families displaced during the reconstruction phase may prefer larger, more modern accommodations outside the city centre. Lastly, because reconstruction will take place mainly in the city centre, and expansion mainly on its edges, renewal will take place in the interstitial zone between ring roads A and C. This process includes rebuilding and altering small properties, the development of vacant plots, and the government's improvement of streets and public spaces. Crucially, it was envisioned that this process 'will be less dependent on government action since, like all cities, Doha is constantly renewing itself' (ibid.:17).

Housing, then as now, makes up the vast majority of Doha's architecture. Llewelyn-Davies viewed this poetically, saying in the master plan that 'the spirit of the city is more truthfully enshrined within its houses than within

its public buildings' (ibid.:39). They outlined the government loan mechanisms to encourage new home construction, gave particular note of housing for the poor and underscored the vital importance of family and neighbourhood in Qatari life. While Qatar was wealthy, it still had to balance many competing claims. Llewelyn-Davies were sensitive to the state's finances and developed a housing finance scheme that encouraged private development without unduly burdening the national budget. The scheme reasonably predicted that within ten years every Qatari family would dwell in new buildings constructed to the standards set by the Emir as envisioned by Llewelyn-Davies. However, Llewelyn-Davies was keenly aware of the ultimate danger lurking in a housing improvement scheme. To quote from the 1972 report: 'if Qataris are not encouraged to live in the centre of the city, there will come a day when the centre is occupied entirely by foreign residents while all the Qataris live on the edge of the city' (ibid.:11). For many reasons, housing policy especially, this prediction sadly came true. Today, one is hard pressed to see any Qataris residing within Doha's older precincts. Indeed, nearly half of all Qataris live in the adjoining suburb of Al-Rayyan to the west of Doha.

The 1973 progress report to the master plan is far less sanguine. Disheartened by a lack of policy, decision making, and support staff, the update raises the very real concern of failure if corrective measures are not immediately taken. The 1974 update is of a radically different nature.

1974 was a momentous year for Doha. The OPEC oil embargo the previous October quadrupled the price of crude oil. The Western world in particular was caught totally unprepared for $12 per barrel of oil, having enjoyed oil at $2 since the Great Depression. Qatar on the other hand was awash with cash. Having little industrial capacity and almost no foreign direct investment at this time it was nearly forced to throw the money towards urban modernization. The long list of massive construction projects grew daily and trying to accommodate them all was worrisome. From the report: 'attempting to build everything simultaneously would be unwise … a phased programme of development should be in the interests of the country as a whole' (LWFB 1974:3). Amid the plans for a new port, airport, water

and power infrastructure, Llewelyn-Davies were concerned 'that projects of a social nature (those passing on the benefits of the oil revenues to the ordinary people) should not be squeezed out because of competing demands' (ibid.). As opaque as Qatari society often is, Llewelyn-Davies nonetheless saw a growing income inequality tied to land ownership and called for tighter zoning controls, and recommended a building grants programme that compensated the landowner's right to build as he pleases. They also understood such civic-mindedness flew in the face of historic precedent and most importantly 'the government's desire to use land acquisition as an important mechanism by which State revenue is distributed amongst the Qatari people' (ibid.:31).

Sadly, the new oil wealth did nothing to improve the existing city. We can speculate regarding why, but in the end the Emir preferred to create his modern capital from scratch upon the vacant land – and water – that lay just north of Doha. Two recommendations of the Llewelyn-Davies plan were adopted and very much continue to contribute to the city's development: enhancing the city's main road system of concentric rings and crossing radials, and the creation of the Corniche. Llewelyn-Davies' plan was not an approach to modernization in the style of the nineteenth-century Parisian planner of grand boulevards Baron von Haussmann, but rather a delicate scheme to gradually expand infrastructure and density. Judged by the standards of today's *tabula rasa* cities in the Gulf we might argue that the plan was not bold enough and consequently the city has suffered forty years of chaos and congestion. On the other hand, firmly establishing the road network upon the historic corridors has helped preserve an understanding of the basis of Gulf urbanism embodied in the *fereej* system. Of all their work on imagining Doha's future nothing shines as brightly as their concept to complete the Corniche's waterfront arc; reclaim the muddy tidal flats; end the malodorous low tide by deep water dredging; and finally conquer Qatari's historically precarious relationship to the sea by clearly defining its urban edge.

6.1.2 The Second Master Plan: William L. Pereira

We do not know if it was a conscious decision or just a coincidence that the Emir chose a Californian planning firm to design the 'New Doha'. For Llewelyn-Davies it must have seemed like the Empire truly was over when they received the news in 1975 that Los Angeles-based William L. Pereira Associates had been hired to revise all their previous work with particular attention to the New Doha. An upstart from a 'non-city' had now outdone a London-based firm who had planned much of the urban modern Middle East. The Llewelyn-Davies plan called for sweeping social and architectural change to the original tight-knit fabric of Doha. Their civic, sustainable approach that championed public policy, pedestrian passage, and a sensitive balance between old and new could perhaps have only come from a Keynesian era British firm. Likewise, a spontaneous plan to pit the old city against the new one; a new city built with new wealth, to be experienced from behind the wheel of an automobile, and built literally upon the sea itself; an imagined city whooshing up from the ocean's depth could perhaps only come from a place like the New World's Los Angeles suburban sprawl.



Fig. 6.2. *William L. Pereira West Bay master plan road system, December, 1975 (source: William L. Pereira).*

William Pereira was charged with imagining a 'New Doha' directly north of the existing city. Theirs was not a repudiation of the Llewelyn-Davies plan as it had very little to do with rehabilitating Doha's existing condition. The only time Pereira's plan referenced Doha is regarding where the new plan must,

almost unfortunately, overlap the old. The essence of the Pereira plan lay in several bold strokes. First, extend the ring-road system to the north creating a linkage from the historic centre of Doha to the new development areas to the north (Fig. 6.2). Second, propose a series of cul-de-sac residential neighbourhoods very much on the Western suburban model (Fig. 6.3). Third, continue Llewelyn-Davies' earlier proposal to complete the waterfront Corniche by deep dredging of the low-lying sand deposits that stretch north of Doha harbour. This sand, together with other excavations, was used to create much of what is today called 'West Bay' but is in fact the north end of the city. Many residents still refer to the housing area of West Bay by its Arabic descriptive – if somewhat pejorative – term *dafna* (literally burial), meaning landfill. Dafna would be home to the first national university – Qatar University – a new central business district, housing for 'senior Qatari managers',[1] and a hotel and resort area. The Sheraton Hotel, which was to be Doha's largest and tallest structure for many years, first appeared here in 1981. The entire area was linked to old Doha by a series of north–south primary roads and secondary transverse connectors.

In short, New Doha was everything old Doha was not: progressive, educated, home to wealthy 'senior government officials', with a beautiful view of the conquered sea. New Doha represents the moment when Doha decided it no longer needed or wanted a past. Engineering feats funded by oil wealth meant anything was possible. This is the moment when Qataris, like fellow Gulf citizens in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, threw off their traditional understanding of being at the environment's mercy and picked up the new Western mantra that they could be masters over any resource: land, sea, concrete, asphalt, people and, most especially, history.

Although the Pereira plan never received an official Emiri Decree, as had the Llewelyn-Davies plan, the Emir nonetheless thrust it upon the Qatari people in one quick step. New Doha sprang up quite literally from the sea floor, coming to represent both the Emir's vision for his nation and the endless possibilities to refashion the future. Today, much of Dafna's luxury housing looks tired and shabby. The land plots and villas originally built to house

[1] For a detailed description of Qatar's senior staff housing see Al-Derham (1999).

the government elite are minuscule by contemporary standards of 'luxury'. The waterfront is still very much under development and the skyline of nearly 100 high-rise office and apartment towers – none, except the Sheraton, more than ten years old – continues to change almost weekly.



Fig. 6.3. *William L. Pereira West Bay neighbourhood master plan, December, 1975 (source: William L. Pereira).*

Were the Llewelyn-Davies and Pereira plans more Heidegger or Hegel? More abrupt shift or evolutionary growth? As stated at the start, it is my feeling that all such attempts to characterize images of the future contained in urban master plans must be held simultaneously in mind in order for us to gain a full picture of how the city changed and how the changes are understood. However, Llewelyn-Davies' overarching desire to modernize Doha from within Doha itself, to make carefully informed judgments as to how Doha's architecture supports both an ancient and a rapidly changing institutional order is reflective of a Heideggerian view that history may make abrupt changes but a certain degree of continuity is both necessary and sought after in charting a new urban image. Conversely, the Pereira

plan, a bold stroke on a blank canvas, supports a Hegelian view of historic change. Interestingly, the desire for master planning and the implementation of both the Llewelyn-Davies and Pereira designs were decisions made by Sheikh Khalifa. Though Khalifa's son, Hamad, may have done more to change the actual appearance of Doha, I argue Khalifa played a greater role in changing the foundational nature of the urban order. I regard him, in Hegelian terms, as a 'world-historical individual' because he did more than any Qatari Emir to change the future direction of Qatari society. A change he understood could come only through a commensurately modern lifeworld.

6.1.3 The Third Master Plan: Dar Al-Handasah

Exactly ten years after the Pereira contract Sheikh Khalifa commissioned the Lebanese firm Dar Al-Handasah to examine Doha in minute detail, drawing up plans for nearly every area of the city. The report praises the accomplishments of the previous ten years, which 'transform[ed] Doha into a modern centre', but laments the slow progress due to insufficient funding and greater priority given to developing suburban areas west of Doha. The result is an inner city very much 'unfinished and [with] substantial problems' (Dar Al-Handasah 1985:2).

Dar Al-Handasah's twenty-year planning horizon forecasted slower economic expansion and thus less demand for imported labour. Fig. 6.4 compares the plan's predictions against what Doha actually experienced.

Year	GDP	Doha Pop.	Qatar Pop.
1985	$6.1 b (2.5% growth)	332,672	368,006
2005 projection	$10 b	350,000	413,000
2005 actual	$43 b (10% growth)	661,038	820,986

***Fig. 6.4**. Dar Al-Handasah Consultants' population growth predictions (source: Dar Al-Handasah 1985:8).*

The year 1985 represents a watershed moment in crude oil prices and thus the pace of urban development in Qatar and the Gulf region. Computed in year 2011 US dollars, crude oil was $57.61 per barrel. For the next twenty years prices fluctuated generally downwards, spiking to $62 per barrel in 2005. In Qatar's case Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) production, which began in 1985, contributed $900 m or 14 per cent of the 1985 GDP of $6.1 b. In other words, Dar Al-Handasah woefully underestimated the exogenous forces driving Qatar's growth and, by direct implication, Doha's future development.

However, they were exactly right in predicting that the majority of urban growth would occur in West Bay and the New South District, and that both areas would compete directly with Doha Inner City. The planners also identified a curious trend present throughout all of Doha's master plan analysis: the oversupply of commercial real estate. According to the report, Doha added 50 per cent more shopping space from 1980 to 1985 (346,000 square metres). The growth of small shops scattered across the city resulted in the recommendation to eliminate ad hoc establishments and to begin consolidating retail into new shopping centres. In the end, the municipality allowed local shopkeepers to flourish in the urban core, perhaps understanding that basic services are required to serve such a large population; and they promoted the establishment of several extremely large shopping centres on the city's edges to accommodate Qatari suburban sprawl. Allowing small shops in the city centre also kept the migrant population away from the upmarket malls.

The exhaustive master plan largely addresses a perceived lack of urban focus. The authors felt 'Doha Inner City has a unique role as the ceremonial, administrative and commercial focus of the capital yet many Qataris are concerned about its recent decline and consider the city "lacks a heart"' (Dar Al-Handasah 1985:14). Despite the plan's low growth estimates, which very likely were government mandates, its comprehensive scope and balanced approach to development are laudable. The plan's primary objectives all strengthen the urban core by: preserving historic architecture, providing new housing and shopping, and improving vehicular transportation in and

to the city's centre; and by prioritizing public and private investment within the inner core. A hierarchy of function and priority of investment characterize the plan's approach to a balanced, sustainable urban future.

Sadly, the city today suffers from the exact deficiencies identified in 1985: the lack of improved vehicular access, off-street parking, open spaces, entertainment centres or a pedestrian network. Additionally, Dar Al-Handasah identified thirty-seven historic sites worthy of preservation; to my knowledge little has been done to safeguard them, and in some instances such as the Msheireb development entire historic neighbourhoods were razed.

It seems the government invested where it could but left much of the urban development in the hands of private investors, the largest of whom are a handful of family-owned conglomerates. We can only speculate on which policy levers the ministries and the Emir chose to pull, but for the most part it seems priority was given to the area around the Emir's administrative palace, the Diwan, and the adjacent Corniche. Dar Al-Handasah correctly foresaw the struggle between improving Inner Doha and improving the new areas north and south of the city. One can simply view this as another, logical, chapter in the story of Rentier State Theory: the new areas provided luxury villas to senior administrators in Qatar's burgeoning bureaucracy; and the southern expansion was dedicated to the industrial infrastructure needed to both build the country and provide untold wealth to leading merchant families. Other institutional rigidities hindering the Dar Al-Handasah plan include: long-standing land claims, a feverishly speculative real estate market, cemeteries, and a massive low-income economy in the form of migrant labour accommodations and services.

6.1.4 The Fourth Master Plan: HOK

The last major urban master plan we shall look at was completed in 1996 by the American design firm Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK). The circumstances of HOK's contract are eerily similar to those of Llewelyn-Davies. The previous Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, took the

throne as his father had done before him, while the Emir was away. In this case, of course, the Emir was Hamad's father, and, while his father was vacationing in Geneva, Hamad carefully planned his power grab and in a matter of hours secured support from his extensive family as well as full military backing. And like his ousted father, Hamad immediately granted all civil servants an instant and permanent salary raise, blamed Qatar's slow progress on his predecessor's inattention and hired one of the world's largest, most experienced architecture and planning firms, HOK, in collaboration with Louis Berger International. In some ways HOK represents Hamad's desire to continue his father's turn towards strengthening relations with the United States.

Tasked with creating a 25-year plan for the entire nation of Qatar with a special emphasis on Doha, HOK's master plan, or, Physical Development Plan (PDP) as it's called, is largely quantitative and privileges policy recommendations over architectural design. This is in glaring contrast to Dar Al-Handasah's four volumes of A3 sketches of building designs and public plazas. As a policy framework, the HOK master plan is largely concerned with creating sustainable bureaucratic planning processes, particularly the need for a GIS database of Doha's building stock, and a reliable and periodic census. Lacking both at the time of the report, HOK gave best estimates for building densities and population statistics. Twenty years later it is shocking how wrong their predictions were (Fig. 6.5).

Year	Qatari	Non-Qatari	Total	Labour Camps
1995 Population (HOK est.)	121,900	345,850	467,750	103,800
2020 Projected Population (HOK)	282,900	514,200	797,100	150,000
Author's 2020 Projection	281,767	2,741,872	3,023,639	2,500,000

Fig. 6.5. *HOK population grown predictions (source: HOK 1996: ch.5, p.82). Author's projection based upon a regression from years 2005–2015 data. The Qatari natural growth rate calculated at 3.8%. The Qatar Statistics Authority official total country population in May 2015 is 2,374,860. Persistently low oil and gas prices will put downward pressure on the construction industry translating directly to lower labour growth rates.*

Noting the negligible difference between HOK's Qatari population in 2020 and my own estimates we see they chose correct growth rates for nationals. The imported workforce is altogether a different story. One of the report's original authors (Participant P) confirmed that the Qatari government insisted upon what seemed to the team to be ludicrous and unhistorically low growth figures for expatriate labour. Quoting from the 1996 edition:

> The overall average annual population growth rate for Inner Doha is expected to decline from approximately two percent in the 1995–2000 time period to under one percent in the 2010–2020 period. This is due to the assumed decline in the employment growth rate as well as the growing size of the Qatari population and its increasing participation in the workforce. As fewer new jobs are created and more jobs are filled by Qataris, the demand for non-Qatari labor will decline and, as a result, the non-Qatari population will shrink. This will have a significant impact in Inner Doha, where the vast majority of the population (and the resulting population growth) is non-Qatari.
>
> (HOK 1996:ch.3, p.41)

In this quote we see the politics behind the planning. Since oil wealth catapulted Qatar to one of the highest per capita income countries in the world in the mid 1950s every Emir has stated publicly and privately his desire for an educated, productive, engaged Qatari workforce. And every Emir, fearing political unrest, has bought off his people, undermining any intrinsic motivation for work they may have had. For this reason alone the HOK plan was doomed.

The national scope of the PDP comprises six, interrelated elements: physical development patterns, land usage, community facilities, transportation, utilities, and the natural environment. A separate master plan for Doha (Fig. 6.6) alone constitutes a significant portion of the PDP framework. Here, a 25-year view of Doha's future is based largely upon a perception of the previous twenty-five years' 'visionary planning' contained in the earlier master plans that emphasized Doha's family-oriented quality of life – a common refrain in today's planning objectives and tourist marketing. Greater Doha enjoys the Corniche's unique ability to 're-establish the region's links to the sea' and become Doha's most cherished asset (HOK

1996:14). The plan calls for razing the entire waterfront housing fabric, replacing it with parks for 'citizens' (which is currently underway). The souq is another traditional element within Doha's commercial and cultural heart that was used as a catalyst to encourage pedestrian-oriented public space. Soon after the PDP's submission, work began on demolishing Souq Waqif and rebuilding it in traditional style but with modern conveniences. And lastly, the PDP sought little modification of the existing ring- and radial-road system, advising that it provided a strong framework upon which the PDP recommendations could be placed.

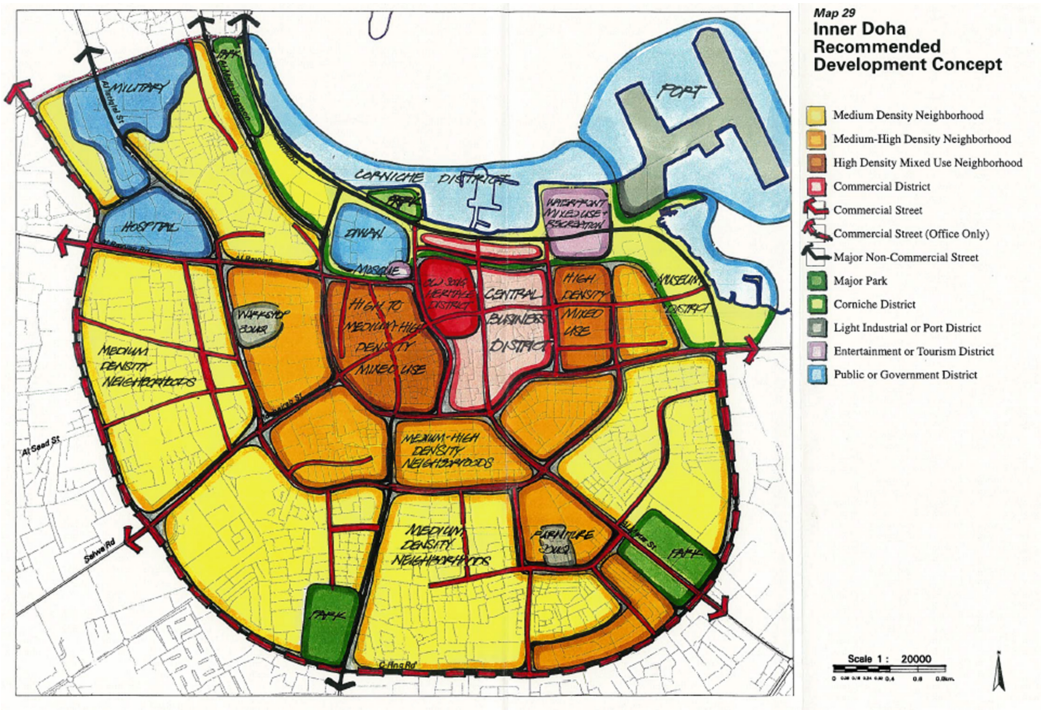

Fig. 6.6. *HOK PDP Areas of Major Change (source: HOK 1996).*

It is fascinating to see exactly which issues from the last master plan of 1996 the Qatari government, under one Emir with almost limitless funds, has acted upon. According to the PDP, Doha's largest deficiency and thus that most in need of improvement is the city's lack of coherence as a central business and commercial hub for Qatar. Rapid growth in Doha's suburban areas has dispersed residential and commercial activity, leaving the inner city a rambling warren of densely packed, south Asian neighbourhoods. It is vital to remember that the Corniche, Souq Waqif, the Emiri Diwan, and several government ministries are all within sight of each other: floating

islands of Qatari pride and identity amid a sea of low-paid migrant labour. The other key deficiencies the PDP identified include: the loss of family cohesion in the clan-based *fereej* neighbourhood due to suburban relocation; lack of green space and street landscaping; and the profusion of vacant land in the inner city, which disrupts the urban fabric and creates infrastructure interruptions. HOK suggests that Doha's lack of clearly defined areas results from the disinterest of commercial developers. A quick view of a 2015 (Fig. 6.7) aerial image reveals large parcels of vacant land still predominate. The PDP cites the deteriorating housing stock within older neighbourhoods, particularly inside B ring road; some of these areas have been slated for development but many of these houses remain today. The plan calls for an additional 18 gross hectares of commercial land by 2020 to more clearly define the central business district of inner Doha, and to accommodate projected commercial space demands. In the same sentence the authors warn of a 'general oversupply of commercial space'. How are we to interpret these two statements? On the one hand a projected need for millions more square metres, and on the other too much vacant real estate?



Fig. 6.7. *Doha 2015. Note the large swathes of vacant inner city land circled in red (source: Google Earth, accessed 23 March 2015).*

The key to understanding lies in the report's statement that in order for the densely packed historic core of inner Doha to serve its residents it needs to more clearly define itself as a 'national centre', presumably in the sense that Qatar is a city-state much like Singapore and requires a clearly defined urban hierarchy distinguishing between centres for business, government and housing. By 2005 Inner Doha witnessed the expansion of the Emiri Diwan along with other large government buildings along the Corniche, and the springing up of a new commercial centre across the harbour in West Bay. Today, dozens of skyscrapers create the image of an international financial centre built to support a 'knowledge-based economy'. And lastly, the impact of formal and informal labour accommodation is concentrated within the urban core but also scattered throughout the more family-oriented neighbourhoods beyond B and C ring roads. The location, quantity and quality of the so-called 'bachelor' and labour dwellings have significant impact on traffic, security, Qatari identity and Doha's global image as a modern, progressive, wealthy city.

HOK took a similar approach to both Llewelyn-Davies and Dar Al-Handasah in cataloguing historic neighbourhoods (Fig. 6.8). Less than ten years after the HOK plan the Emir chose a wholly different approach to urban development: the clean sweep. All previous master plans, except Pereira's – which did not look at the historic core of Doha – called for a rather measured approach to development, seeking to work judiciously within the historic urban fabric, carefully choosing block by block what should stay, go or modernize. One can imagine the Emir and his consort (second wife) Sheikha Moza grew impatient with their own bureaucracy and endless squabbling over land rights and opted for a bold plan to reclaim the 'heart of Doha' as Qatari. In 2010 work began on clearing 31 hectares of Doha's most historic neighbourhood. Having been known as the 'Heart of Doha', the project was rebranded as 'Msheireb', a reference to the original wadi (a dry river bed except during the rainy season) that ran through the site. When finished Msheireb will comprise over 100 buildings and over 760,000 square metres of real estate costing $5.5 billion.

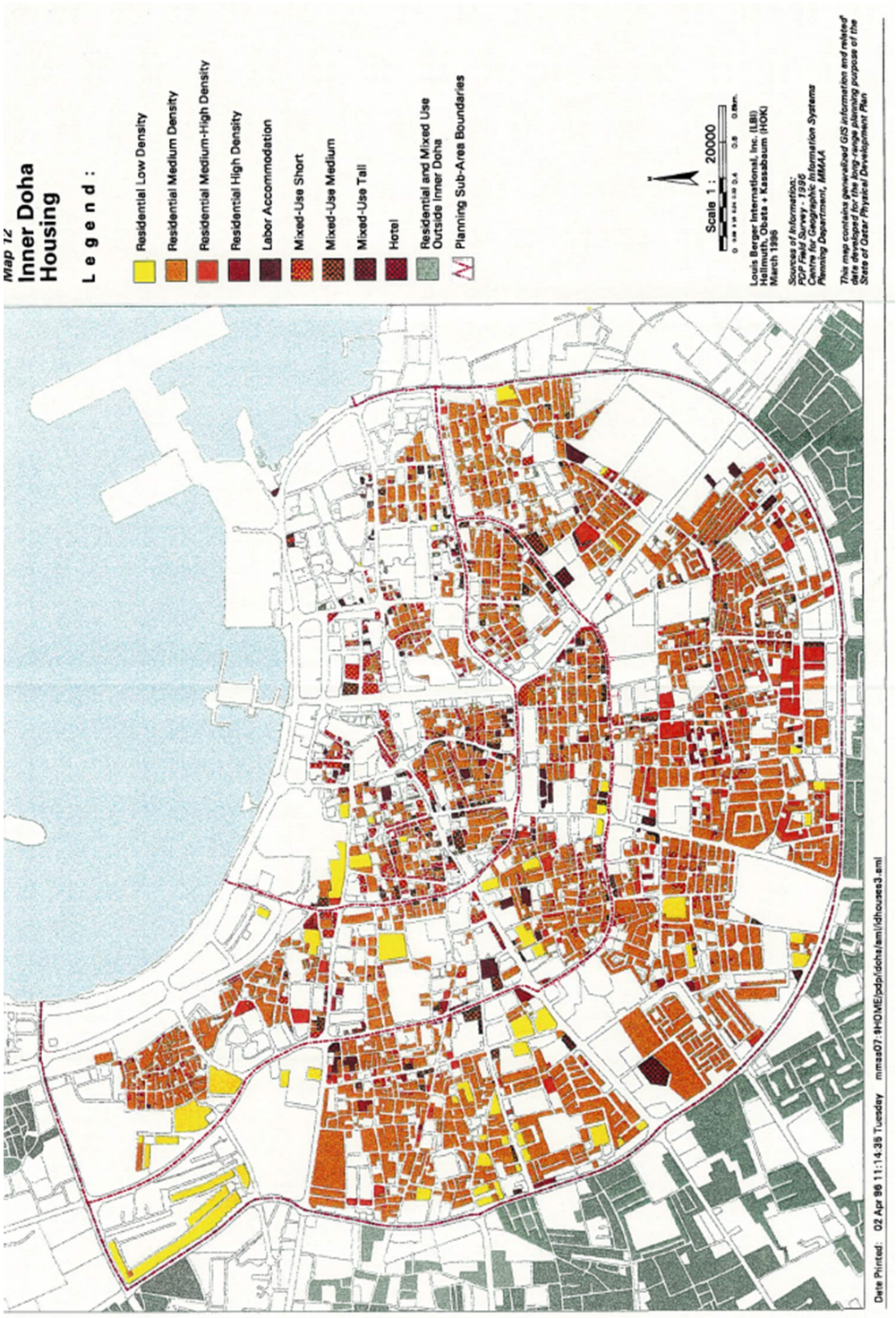

Fig. 6.8. Inner Doha study of existing housing conditions (source: HOK 1996).

6.2 Conclusion

Master planning in Qatar describes both the wishes of the Emir and his ability to enact change. The politics of Qatar's urban planning are consistent with the chief desideratum of most emiri invocations since the eve of oil in

1950: preservation of power. In previous years the Emirs largely sought support from particular family members and leading merchants. A growing population and the ever-increasing appetite for social welfare cast the city in the role of national benefactor. In effect the city became the Emir – a mechanism for redistributing wealth. In this sense we cannot distinguish between the Emir and the city. We also see this same understanding when political coups abruptly change Emirs and so, too, the city's complexion and planned future. The creation of a 'New Doha' in the mid 1970s fits well the view that epochs spring up, lacking 'a legacy from epoch to epoch' without 'a band linking them' (Heidegger 1991). Shifts in the history of Doha's urban topography have a clear connection to the past, and a certain momentum, but the end-state is anyone's guess.

But the city was not razed to the ground. Its planning may have been expansive, and while the entire West Bay and Dafna areas are abrupt shifts in Doha's urban development, they are still intelligible as a logical outcome of Qatar's oil wealth. Though many residents often express awe at the West Bay skyline – barely a decade old – it is that in virtue of which the country understands its new place in the world order. Perhaps Heidegger would agree this fits his definition of a work of art, concealed in the destining of Being, and ushering in a new background practice in virtue of which anything is intelligible as what it is. To be sure, the rising skyline, emerging from an urban master plan extending from Doha's historic centre, supports both an ancient and a rapidly changing institutional order, reflective of Heidegger's view that history may make abrupt changes but a certain degree of continuity is both necessary and sought after in charting a new urban image.

On the other hand, the process of planning a modern Doha feels very Hegelian. The city only makes major changes through the power of one 'world-changing individual'. The two Emirs looked at in this chapter have fully understood the ethos of their time, making changes within the culture's mood, yet visionary enough to usher in a new era and way of comporting oneself. The new buildings, neighbourhoods and roads nonetheless cohere to the existing urban fabric.

Whether we consider Doha's various master plans synchronic or diachronic, an image and an experience of two separate Dohas emerges. Saying the city is built for the wealthy by the poor does not fully capture the polemic. When we see thousands of migrant workers, housed in deplorable conditions working day and night, often giving their lives, to build all of Doha's buildings, images of Fritz Lange's 1927 expressionist science fiction drama, *Metropolis* leap to mind, where wealthy industrialists live and rule the city from towering skyscrapers, while an impoverished class living beneath operate the city's infrastructure. Or, Jacob Riis' photojournalistic essay, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), exposed to New York City's upper classes the shocking poverty in nearby tenements. More recently neo-Marxist urban geographers (Soja 2010; Harvey 2006) have similarly looked at spatial segregation and spatial justice in cities, even continents, the world over. The issue is not how the other half lives; the issue is what are the ethical and philosophical implications when nearly all those building and operating a city have no claim upon it?

Giorgio Agamben (1998) makes the point that mobilizing resources for the sake of a political outcome has moral-political implications. In particular, he sees the inversion of Aristotle's purpose of a city. Instead of working within our resources to create the conditions for deep politics, we instead use our politics to manage resources optimally, efficiently, thus reducing life to 'bare life', mere biological existence. Put another way, planning of the type looked at in this chapter is hardly unique in its attempt to resolve moral-political issues through technological means.

Since making a city such as Doha has occurred in several other Gulf States, the second conclusion I wish to draw from this analysis is that there seems to be an effort to create a new kind of collage-city built from the 'successful' icons of wealth creation in twentieth-century USA and Asia. The Qatari Emir employed the techniques – and iconography – of free-market, democratic society to create a 'city' as recognizable on the world stage as open and democratic but exactly the opposite in the way it is lived.

PART II

CONCLUSION

One of the central themes of this section (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6) has been the use of architecture and urban planning as a political tool of regime legitimization, stability and longevity. But if D.G. Crawford's 1976 assessment, seen in Chapter 5, is correct – Doha's paradox means the more it builds the more unstable everything else becomes – then one is left asking the essential question: what and whom is the city ultimately for?

All Qataris enjoy a material life of wealth, health and education unfathomable half a century ago. Indeed, it is rumoured that of Qatar's 250,000 nationals (my estimate) only 180,000 actually live in the country, the others preferring Manhattan or Knightsbridge to Doha or Al-Wakrah. Of the group that does call Qatar home, not all drive Bentleys; few, if any, live in tents; and almost none live in the city of Doha. As we have seen, wealth distribution policies are purposefully eroding the sense of urban belonging and participation. One need look no further than the current crop of 'heritage' exhibitions going up around town that feature the same three themes: pearl diving, camel racing and falcon hunting – sea, sand and air. Overwhelmingly, these exhibits show Qatari heritage and identity as intimately connected to nature's hardships. The images are starkly poetic, portraying the native Qatari at harmony with an unforgiving, formless landscape of sea and sand.[2] The portraits depict a heroism etched into the sand-blasted faces of Bedouin tribespeople. But with the city casting a shadow over every aspect of life for the last sixty years it is impossible to ignore the modern quality of Doha. Forced to acknowledge the city, these

[2] The travel photos by Wilfred Thesiger are often used as photographic ethnography of ancient Bedouin life throughout Arabia, see *Arabian Sands*, first published in 1959 by Longmans. John Moorehead's 1977 book, *In Defiance of the Elements* also depicts a rugged life in Qatar's inhospitable landscape.

same exhibitions show buildings and roads in much the same light: characters of fierce individuality proudly standing tall against the elements and against international criticism that Qatar is still a backward, Wahhabi state.

Into the urban void are poured two million souls who make their living – ironically – through the continual building of the city. Asian migrant labourers, and Western managerial consultants, are held in Doha in a perpetual state of precariousness. Anyone can be asked to leave for any reason. Throughout the years even Qataris by the thousand have been exiled for coup attempts or crimes against the state. Coming back to Crawford's paradox, some forty years later, we cannot help but see another paradox: the bigger Doha becomes, the less 'urban' (civic) is life within it.

At the heart of Part II of this thesis is an attempt to capture the historic origins that underlie a trialectic between urban form, political stability and civic participation. Essential to this understanding is a view towards how historic epochs have been compressed within a few short years in a maelstrom of tradition, modernity and technology. The impulse, or, as I have argued, the political necessity to create a city annihilates our connection to historic space, leaving everyone in a perpetual state of 'hermeneutic psychosis', of trying to interpret what lies behind the constant flux of the built environment.

The first half of the twentieth century found Qatar locked in a series of existential crises precipitated by exogenous actors. The Ottoman departure, threats of attack and annexation by Saudi Wahhabis, oil concessions with the British, and, finally, the Japanese invention of the cultured pearl and global depression greatly challenged Qatar's early Emirs to maintain Al-Thani hegemony and Qatari unity. Tribal affiliations, patronymic associations and Wahhabism, following the model set by Al Saud to unite disparate clans in the Arabian Peninsula, were all deftly used to chart Qatar's petrodollar future. But the desire for unity and regime legitimization came at an ongoing price in the form of internal threats to the throne by rival Al-Thani branches and leading merchant families. The solution to both

problems was found in limiting citizenship, implementing rentier state policies, and breaking up the clan-based *fereej* neighbourhood system. Undoubtedly, most Qataris could see their material lives made demonstrably better in just the first few years of oil extraction and were glad to leave the pre-oil city's poverty but many were not so pleased to see the end of its enduring structure of social life.

Another price the regime must now pay for having a 'global city' is protection. Possessing the world's largest non-associated gas field, lying in the open waters of the Arabian Gulf, sandwiches Qatar's quarter million citizens between its two vastly larger neighbours, Iran and Saudi Arabia. While theologically divergent from the former, and politically estranged from the latter, Qatar continually finds itself walking the same, albeit far more potentially explosive, line it has always trodden in playing both sides against the middle. Now, however, as a de facto city-state Doha's modern appearance and continuously rapid expansion project an image of power incommensurate with its size. The city of Doha also presents to its opponents Qatar's single largest strategic vulnerability.

With more than 90 per cent of budget revenues and exports coming from the energy sector (IMF, WSJ[3]), the 60 per cent drop in crude oil prices over the last eighteen months[4] will undoubtedly lead to a 2016 budget deficit, Qatar's first ever, and the elimination of its current account surplus. Exactly how much the global energy spot market affects Qatar's ability to finance its construction boom is difficult to determine. Anecdotal evidence, such as reducing the number of FIFA stadiums, discussions about implementing an income tax, and the widely reported layoffs by Qatari and non-Qatari companies, suggests the inelastic demand for oil is forcing the regime to make substantial macro-economic decisions. Yet in the face of this the regime continues to spend heavily on military defence.

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[3] Nicolas Parasie, 'Qatar Risks Budget Deficit in 2016 Due to Low Oil Prices, IMF Says', *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 April 2015.

[4] Crude oil prices August 2014: $97.27; February 2016: $33.87.

Figure 6.9, compiled by IHS Jane's, forecasts Qatar's long-term military spending relative to GDP. Despite near flat economic growth Jane's foresees a 40 per cent expansion of defence spending between 2010 and 2020. The key insight from this metric for our purposes is a partial answer to the question of what the city is for. Or perhaps it is better stated as, what is the city for *now*?

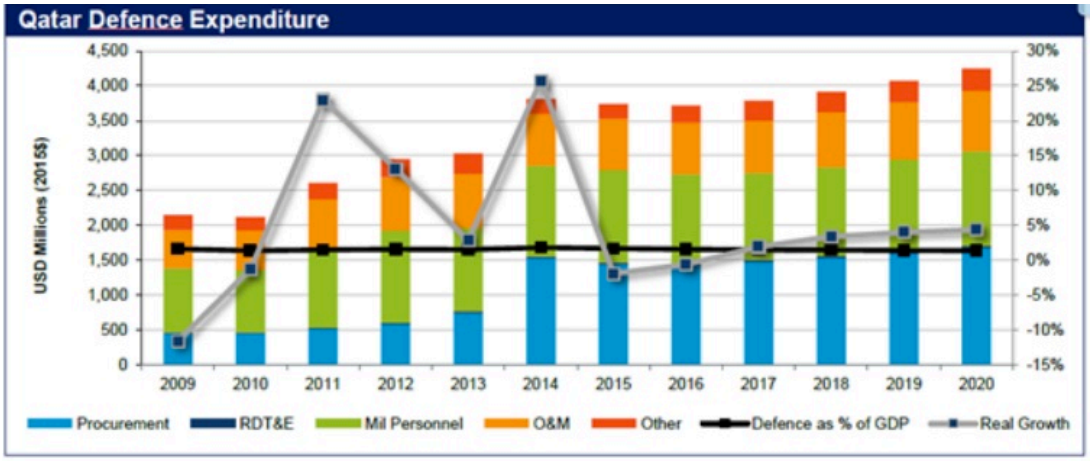
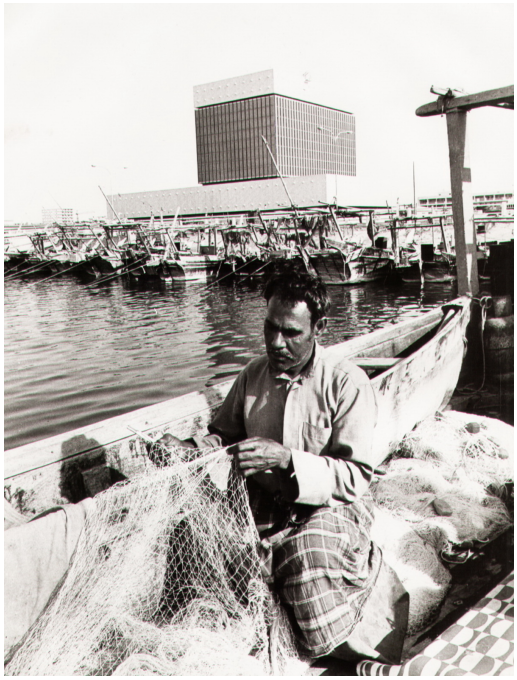


Fig. 6.9. *Chart of Qatar's defence spending relative to GDP. Source: IHS Jane's 2015, http://www.janes.com/article/51935/saudi-qatar-and-uae-defence-budgets-not-shrinking-despite-oil-price-drop (accessed 2 February 2015).*

Obviously there are many reasons why cities exist. Some result from conscious acts of deliberation, some are accidental and others exist through historical momentum. The reason for Doha's twentieth-century development outlined in the last four chapters is certainly the momentum propelling its twenty-first-century direction. But clearly Sheikh Hamad's ardent desire for global recognition, coupled with state security, seems to be the new calculus. The new city's image easily dismisses the perception of Qatar as a zealous Wahhabi state, rich, but xenophobic. Its tall buildings, green parks and Western universities are the very model of cosmopolitan plurality and tolerance. But big cities also project power. Cities the world over generally became large through economic and industrial strength.

Kuwait's population on 2 August 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded was just over 2 million. By contrast Qatar was then barely one-quarter that size. With its population over 2 million today, Doha would likely receive the

same level of international support from the US and other NATO countries as did Kuwait if a similar invasion were threatened. This might not be the case if Doha had remained small. The purpose of Doha in the twenty-first century, whether a contemplated strategic calculus or not, remains: if Emirs have the power to fashion such a city, then surely they also possess the power to protect it.



A fisherman mending his nets, in the background the Qatar Monetary Authority (source: MMUP).

PART III

THE URBAN AND INSTITUTIONAL TOPOGRAPHY OF DOHA

Introduction

Eric Voegelin opens each of his five volumes *Order and History* with the same Augustinian quotation 'In the study of creature one should not exercise a vain and perishing curiosity, but ascend toward what is immortal and everlasting' (Augustine *De Vera Religione* in Voegelin 2000d:32). In Part III of the present study I take the inverse of this prescription. Not because I disagree with Voegelin's approach - indeed, for grand studies of the sweep of history such as his, aspiring towards the cosmologically symbolic allows for a theory of non-linear development rooted in common human participation. For this study, however, the enquiry into the collective

structure of Doha as refracted through the prism of the experience of human existence begins where one is able to find the deepest connection to an ancient source of meaning, persistently sedimented in the urban order. Figure III.1 illustrates the structure of Part III and shows how the analysis proceeds from depth of meaningful topic towards breadth of physical presence in eleven selected situations scattered across Doha.

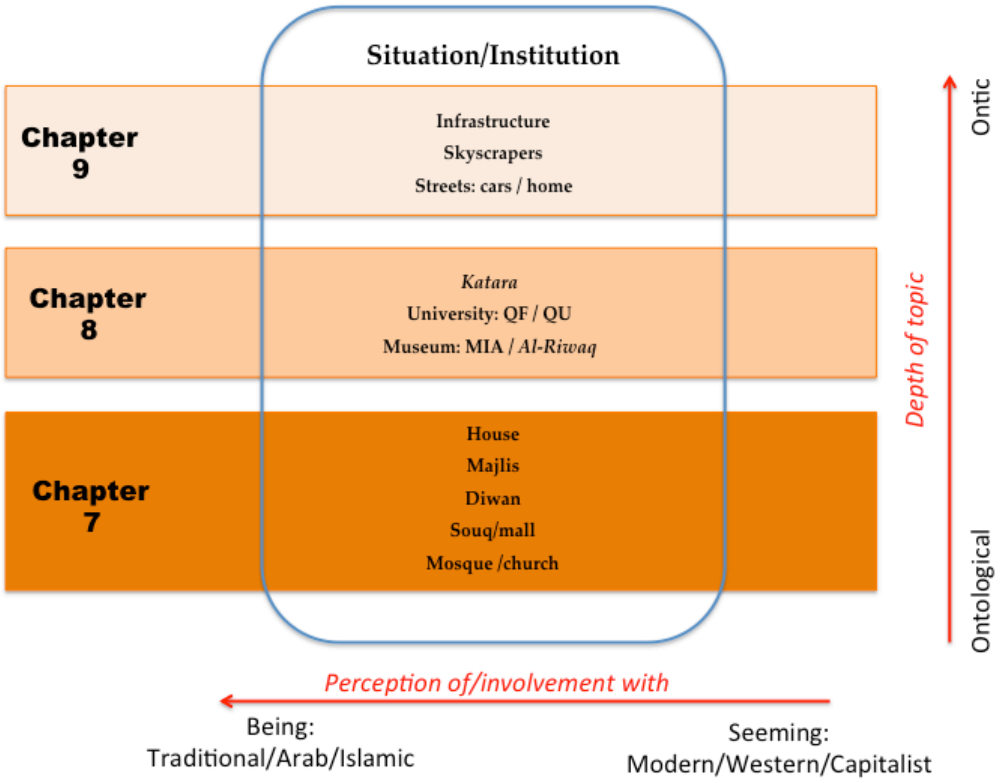


Fig. III.1. *Diagram of Part III's analytical structure.*

The five situations found in Chapter 7 (mosque/church, souq/mall, diwan, majlis, house) form the ancient and enduring institutions found in nearly every Arab-Islamic city. They are also the institutions my research participants found the most significant and the places they most frequented to varying degrees throughout their lives in Doha. Against the backdrop of constant flux in the city's architectural typography these situations provide the conditions by which freedom is most meaningful. This is not to say total, unobstructed freedom, but rather the deepest ground of ethical reflection

between oneself and another, between the regime and the individual, between the individual and the community.

The three situations in Chapter 8 (museums, universities, cultural village) possess historic connections to both Islamic and European traditions. A general theme emerges in interviewee's descriptions of these institutions as, on the one hand, being larger in scale, accommodating greater numbers of visitors and being ostensibly 'open to the public', but, on the other hand, there is an understanding that in practice they are exclusionary. Participants describe these situations less in terms of ultimate meaning or a deep connection to kin or country, but more in terms that suggest they operate as a bridge between perceptions of Islamic tradition and modern culture, creating places of meaningful social action that have, in the eyes of my research partners, a greater degree of individual choice and also fewer explicit rules of behaviour or implicit codes of decorum.

Chapter 9, the last chapter of Part III - the penultimate section of this thesis - looks at the largest, most modern institutions of Doha, what I broadly call 'infrastructure'. The massive buildings, stadiums, roads and metro system are united in their openness and inclusivity, providing, quite literally, the 'common-ground' of Doha. Their ability to grant orientation has everything to do with enabling the pace of rapid urban change. All of my research partners emphasize - and my own non-participant observations support this - the basic necessity of moving from one place to another in Doha. And all do so in a similar fashion in the automobile. These situations exhibit a different type of symbolic value from those in Chapters 7 and 8. While they are clearly useful, practical and necessary for the functioning of a modern state their technological achievement and, at often times aggrandized iconography drawn from humble material culture (sand crystals, goat hair tents, desert trees), conforms to a spectacle of power and command over inhospitable natural conditions. They are, in other words, symbols of the regime's desire for the world to see Qatar as above all else as possessing a form of modernity rooted in technology.

On the surface the symbolic references and architectural forms seek to accommodate all segments of Doha's population – citizen, migrant, tourist – and virtually, the billions who will watch Doha during the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Thus Chapter 9 moves the discussion of how individuals experience the collective structure of Doha on to how the regime wishes the world to see Doha. The architecturally extravagant situations in this chapter are therefore not reflective of a citizen's ontological orientation but give perhaps the deepest insights into the regime's understanding of its city and its people.

Beginning with the mosque in Chapter 7 and concluding with infrastructure in Chapter 9, the analysis progresses from the most fundamental and ontologically orienting institution to the most utilitarian and ontically present. The parallelism of the interpretive structure between depth of meaning and distance in historic time is intentional to show how the collective structure of Doha is narrative in nature, and told as a progressive story rooted in our own meaningful existence of the human *Lebenswelt*.

The hermeneutical method used in the following chapters is meant to offer a philosophical discussion of the dialectics between understanding and explanation, belonging and distanciation, being and seeming that constitutes interpretation in the social sciences. In assessing area studies focused on rapid urbanisation, or those particularly of the Middle East or Arabian Gulf, many critics view cities and their symbols through Marxist or functionalist lenses, seeing them as simply the veneer covering the power politics of domination and subjugation in their depiction of how Gulf architecture is symbolically misdirected so as to conceal environmental and social injustices. A hermeneutical critique as argued by Gadamer and Ricoeur requires that we pay close attention to the ways in which symbols first integrate the social and institutional order before they distort it. Because all social action is symbolically mediated within concrete situations there is no Archimedean point devoid of any symbolic tradition, and this forces the researcher to acknowledge the degree to which they are part of Western traditions, as are most modern scholars. Not just the theological continuity from Judaism to Christianity to Islam, but also the many points of contact

throughout history with political and philosophical Hellenism, that unite the modern interpreter to the subject, and the subject to the same traditions as the modern interpreter. Therefore, in addition to the primary aim of Part II – to cast light on how diversity and difference constitute unity - the subsequent chapters also strive to recognize the degree to which we belong to Western or Eastern traditions and the need to maintain a critical distance from them.

The ultimate point of Part III is to depict how the city is and is not lived: a topography of alienation and acceptance, exclusion and permissibility, threaded through with varying degrees of opportunity for participation. The legibility of institutions in a traditional Islamic city is, in Doha, deeply compromised, even conflicting or confused. Against the usual Western disdain for Doha's architectural manners, however, I have adopted the hypothesis that Doha represents a search for an Islamic city appropriate for the new historical conditions, less a manifestation of global capitalism than a way to recover cultural pre-eminence in a milieu that conflicts with many Islamic beliefs.

The three chapters that follow seek to reveal the symbolic possibilities and deeper institutional structures of Doha that are caught between being and seeming, between what is upheld and what is corrupted, between the regime's dreams and the resident's reality. By charting a topography of institutions, I hope to uncover the often overlooked 'depth' of Doha.

Chapter 7. Islamic Urban Foundations and Traditions

Beginning in the early twentieth century a good deal of scholarly attention was paid to understanding cities in the 'Islamic World'. Labelling vast swathes of the planet as 'Islamic' and similarly the cities contained within these areas presents several difficulties in the study of Muslim societies, including: what, if anything, is an Islamic city? And, despite excellent, often ground-breaking analysis that sheds light upon the social, economic and administrative institutions and their corresponding architectural and urban forms, much of this scholarly corpus drew general conclusions across the entire Arab-Islamic world, burying the subtleties of each city's urban order.

In seeking to understand the urban topography of Doha, a self-proclaimed 'Islamic city', we must address how the Orientalist shadow cast upon the literature also affects everyday parlance and questions of comparative methodology. Undeniably Orientalist in origin, notions of material culture as 'Islamic' began with French historians nearly a century ago. Up through the mid twentieth century, seminal works by Robert Brunschvig (1947), George and William Marcais (1921, 1928, 1939; 1957a, b) and Jean Sauvaget (1934a, b, c; 1941) employed analytical techniques developed to understand medieval European cities, emphasizing through planimetric documentation the stereotypical view that Middle Eastern cities were chaotic, if not uncivilized. Through his work in Aleppo, Sauvaget for example, concludes, 'One can attribute to it nothing but the dislocation of the urban centre. The work of Islam is essentially negative; the city, having become an inconsistent and inorganic assemblage of districts, is "nothing so much as the negation of urban order"' (Sauvaget 1934b:456–457, 1941:247–248; Raymond 2005:210). Sauvaget's contemporary Weulersse (1946) similarly describes the Arab city as a labyrinth without logic or planning. The Arab city, in their view, is a corrupted descendant of the medieval European city, or the Graeco-Roman classical city marked by an orthogonal urban plan, the regularities of which were the result of coordinated political functions. By contrast the Muslim city is a chaotic collection of individuals acting out of self-interest, each unto

themselves. Viewing the Arab city as a corrupted *polis*, Sauvaget says 'the souqs … are but a degeneration of avenues with colonnades, of the basilica, of the agora' (1941:247 quoted in Raymond 1994). Simply put, Sauvaget posits that the '*ulama* – the educated class of Muslim jurists and scholars – were ignorant of what constitutes a city (Johanson 1981).[1]

Following the formal analytical framework of George and William Marcais, post-World War II scholars shifted towards a greater interest in the social construction of Muslim cities and drew largely upon the theories of Max Weber. Objecting to the earlier view that saw Muslim cities as isolated artefacts, possessing special sanctity set apart from the rural countryside in which a full and truly Muslim life is lived, Ira M. Lapidus (1969) reconsiders the relationship of Muslim cities to larger social, religious and geographical environments in which they are embedded. However, Lapidus along with Albert Hourani (1991, 1996) still suffer from the impulse to compare Muslim cities to their medieval European counterparts. Such comparisons inevitably lead to judgments as to the degree of incongruity such cities possess. More recently Raymond (2008a, b), Haneda and Miura (1994) and Abu-Lughod (1987) have sought to move beyond such stereotypes by developing alternative analytical frameworks based upon post-colonial interpretive theories.

Abu-Lughod (1987) breaks with the Orientalist tradition of inferring broad patterns from specific instances by offering a new model based upon a chain (*isnad*) of historic occurrences, or forces, that uniquely determine a city's morphology. Abu-Lughod holds that the forms and physical appearances of the traditional 'Islamic city' result from its own Islamic legal interpretations (*sharīʿah*) – primarily, gender segregation and property ownership (1987). Raymond succinctly puts an end to the Orientalist's negative comparisons of the Islamic city to the perceived order of the Greek *polis* by saying,

[1] See the counter-argument of Baber Johanson (1981), who shows how the *'ulama* applied different legal codes to resolving crimes in one of two manners, either by public officials or by the general public. Though his work contrasts city and rural life, Johanson's use of Hanafite legal interpretation in defining a hierarchy of religious architecture compels an understanding that a town cannot be defined as a religious congregation and thus is subject to varying degrees of legal interpretation, permissibility and punishment.

> [the] very idea of the possibility of urban anarchy is nonsense … the traditional Arab city must also be considered as an urban system with its own originality, endowed with its own specific characteristics, whose structure must be analysed and whose workings understood, even though they may obey principles different to those with which we are familiar.
>
> (2005:213)

Raymond continues his argument by asserting that the 'fundamental feature of the structure of the traditional Arab city is the very pronounced opposition between a "public" centre, where religious, cultural and economic activities are concentrated, and a vast "private" zone which is principally residential' (ibid.). In the larger, deeply historic Arab cities – Damascus, Aleppo, Tunis – one sees such a public zone of institutions of higher learning surrounding the great mosques. A similar economic pattern exists in the souq, with precious goods at the centre of a network radiating outwards towards less valuable commodities. From this observation Raymond sketches a general diagram of the 'double radio-concentric structure of the city' with the wealthy class, luxury goods and religious scholars at the centre, and the lower classes pushed to the city's edges (ibid.).

In overturning the Orientalist view that Islamic cities are the negation of urban order, and that of the subsequent school of Weberians[2] who view the Islamic city as foil to medieval Europe, the class of contemporary scholars, from Abu-Lughod to Raymond, seek to understand cities on their own terms, as possessing their own internal organization. That this structure may at first seem foreign, chaotic, unplanned and even un-urban means we have not looked hard enough to find its essence. In the Western view of urban order, what we perceive in Muslim societies as ambiguous, individualist and segregating, in fact often produces a coherent and original urban system

[2] Surprisingly, Raymond (1994) sees no direct connection between the urban analysis of the post-war scholars such as von Grunebaum and Lapidus to Weber. By contrast Curtis (2009) views his predecessors' depiction of Western modernity and economic advancement over and above their delay or absence in the Orient as unmistakably Weberian. Schloen (2001) acknowledges the commonly held view that Weber suffered from crude ethnocentrism but offers in his defense that Western urban forms are not superior to those of the Islamic city in an absolute sense but that they possess rationalized legal, political and bureaucratic structures helps explain their development. See also Mario Liverni (1997) for a further attack on Weber's Orientalism.

that explains the successful administration, habitation and growth of towns and cities throughout the Arab world (Raymond 2005). The paradox of using comparative methods is while they distract us from comprehending the idiosyncratic structure of our city in question, they remind us that a system nonetheless exists. However, this system must come to light on its own terms.

To be sure, many ancient cities throughout North Africa, the Levant and the Arabian Gulf exhibit consistent architectural and urban qualities. Generalizing across many urban contexts may provide a valuable comparative analysis but it risks diminishing the rich unique complexity inherent in each. For example Mohammed Naciri's description of Fez might very well lend itself to describing Doha's ambitious future: 'Fez was [also] a true city by virtue of its functions. It provided that rare combination of a learned city, a center of academic, religious and theological studies, existing alongside a very active market … a melting pot where various ethnic elements came together in amalgam' (Naciri 2008:822). With only a cursory glance Doha bears a striking resemblance to Naciri's Fez. However, as we shall discover, its own particular interpretation of urban life, its own foreign and domestic political calculus, its own history from village entrepôt to global commodity exporter, and especially its own Wahhabi theology radically recasts our understanding of Doha's contemporary urban order.

7.1 Faith: Mosques and Churches

In theory and practice, the one institution that is the bedrock of Doha's or any Muslim society is the mosque. In all its architectural forms the mosque as institution structures the society, defines the city's daily rhythms, orchestrates its rituals. The mosque is, in Heidegger's terms, 'the work of art working, the thing thinging' (1993) – that on the basis of which the culture's background practices are focused and upheld. It is in virtue of the mosque that everything else in the society is understood. Throughout the centuries many Muslim societies borrowed architectural innovations, such as the dome or basilica, from Europe either through inspiration as we see in the case of the great Turkish architect Sinan, or through conquest as in the

conversion of Hagia Sophia from Byzantine Christianity to Ottoman Islam. In Doha, the city's pre-oil penury, and Wahhabi austerity, destined the city for simple, ancient forms drawn directly from the Prophet's own house as the ideal mosque type.[3]

A mosque, according to Hillenbrand (1994), quoting the Prophet, is any place of prayer oriented towards Mecca – 'wherever you pray, that place is a mosque (*masjid*)'. Thus a mosque need not be a building at all. And this is often the case in contemporary Doha when the hour of prayer arrives, the tiny neighbourhood mosque proving far too inadequate to accommodate the city's burgeoning population and the faithful take over the surrounding streets and alleyways in prostration. Hillenbrand further notes that the mosques of Saudi Wahhabis, and by extension Qataris as well, typify the attempt to reconcile a seminal religious form with 1,400 years of architectural innovation (ibid.). Today, Qatar certainly has a wide diversity of mosque types, from the temporary mobile trailer to grand domes to polished marble opulence.



Fig. 7.1. *The image from 1956 shows one of the larger Doha mosques (seen on the bottom right of the image) adjacent to the house of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Mannai. The Mannai conglomerate is today one of Doha's most prominent merchant families (source: MMUP, 1956).*

[3] For an extensive examination of mosque architectural origins and whether or not the rectilinear sanctuary and enclosing square courtyard are related to the Prophet's house see Ayyad (2013).

Before the 1950s every clan-based neighbourhood, or *fereej*, enjoyed a good number of mosques, each only a few hundred paces from any doorstep. Even in the pre-oil years Doha showed a remarkable diversity of mosque forms. In particular, the mosques associated with the Emir, the Al-Thani clan and other prominent Sheikhs occupied a large portion of Doha both architecturally and culturally (Fig. 7.1).



Fig. 7.2. *This image, likely from the 1940s, shows a typical unpaved backstreet, or sikka, with its neighbourhood mosque (source: MMUP).*

Up until the 1950s all education, available only to boys, took place in the mosque. Basic mathematics, Qur'an memorization and Arabic language all took place within the mosque's school or madrassa (Misnad 2008) (Fig. 7.2).

As we shall see in greater detail in the education section of Chapter 8, establishing an education ministry and building primary schools and ultimately universities occurred entirely outside the mosque's authority. This began to cleave religious learning from general education, a tension that has often reasserted itself in the present period, for example in 2011 when the Supreme Education Council (SEC), the government body responsible for all schools and curricula in Qatar, announced Arabic language and Qur'anic instruction as mandatory components of all k–12 schools, regardless of their public or private status.



***Fig. 7.3**. Al-Yousef Mosque (photo by Lina Mahusein, 2013).*



***Fig. 7.4.** Interior of Al-Yousef Mosque, (photo by Lina Mahusein, 2013).*

As the city grew, mosques either remained in place, dwarfed by the high-rises springing up around them, were renovated and expanded or demolished (Figs. 7.3–7.4). Regardless of their historic status, mosques in Doha today maintain a significant historical continuity, a common architectural element of the city, though with several notable disjunctions. Despite the competing sights and sounds of modern Doha, one simply cannot escape the call to prayer *adhān* (أَذَان) emanating from every mosque's loudspeaker. The syncopated rhythm of hundreds of uncoordinated loudspeakers produces a blanket of sound heard anywhere in the city. One easily imagines the competing *muezzin* (مؤذن), the Muslim mosque officials who call the faithful to prayer five times a day, in the dusty pre-oil city. In other words, as the city grew, so, too, did its ability to compete against the din of traffic horns and construction cranes by reminding all of their utmost Islamic duty as set forth in one of the Five Pillars of Islam. From this author's home, for example, I hear each Friday morning the roaring to life of no fewer than ten minarets each broadcasting the weekly *khuṭbah*, public preaching or sermon. A 1,400-year tradition given to us by divine revelation, the call to prayer

epitomizes what Charles Taylor (2007) calls higher time – occasions of significant importance that are nearly non-existent in the modern world. This foundational tradition, however, is very much under siege. And this is where the continuity ends.

Like all other dimensions of Qatari society, as institutions grow and become more complex, the challenges involved in managing them also intensified. What was formerly handled by the Emir or his inner circle has now been brought under a government ministry. Religion, once overseen by the chief *Qadi* (religious judge) appointed by the Emir is today administrated by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, or *Awqaf*. *Awqaf* is tasked with the effective management of all mosques, their maintenance, construction and, when necessary, demolition. *Awqaf* oversees the collection and distribution of *zakat*, a pillar of Islam that requires those able to donate money to poorer Muslims. *Awqaf* also performs another duty unprecedented in the history of Qatar: the official approval of all Imams and their sermons. The word *Imam* comes from the Arabic for 'to stand in front', 'to face one another', as in a preacher delivering a sermon to the congregation. Unlike most Christian denominations, Islam requires no formal training for an *Imam*. Any male member of the community may perform the *Imam* role. This of course opens the door wide to vastly disparate teachings and interpretations. Therefore, the Awqaf approves all *khuṭbah* sermon topics and their particulars in advance. Because all bureaucracies ultimately report directly to the Emir, the Friday *khuṭbah* essentially broadcasts the same Emir-approved sermon across the country.

Remembering the seminal role mosques played in pre-oil society, including education, religious training, caring for the poor and generally structuring civil life according to *sharīʿah*, drastically reducing the role of the mosque and transferring those institutions to a state-run bureaucracy describe a hitherto unseen interpretation of freedom: positive freedom – the desire to control one's base desires – shifts now from the local mosque, very much a member of the local urban context, to the regime.

If the Gulf monarchies have learned one lesson from the Arab Spring uprisings it is the power of the public sphere and its relationship to the physical and virtual world. Egypt's Tahrir Square uprisings were a prime example of the confluence of massive public demonstrations in the heart of the city, supported by Imams preaching from their *minibars* (pulpits), all echoed in cyberspace. Egyptians came together in – using Habermas' term – a public sphere: a gathering that transcends clan or religion, but one bound by common secular interests. Fear of such demonstrations clearly inspired the 2004 Qatari law banning unauthorized public gatherings of any size for any reason. Research Participant Y within *Awqaf* confided that, for fear that the lingering congregants will be stirred up by the *Imams*, as they commonly are throughout the Arab world, it, together with the Ministry of Interior, enforces a rule that all mosques must clear the congregants and shut their doors within fifteen minutes of the Friday *khuṭbah* conclusion. This too is unprecedented in the history of Qatar. More recently, fears of public incitement have spilled into cyberspace, prompting the new cyber law prohibiting the creation or management of websites to spread false news, or ones that violate social values or principles or publish news, pictures, audio or video recordings related to the personal or family life of individuals – even if true. Considering Qatar hosts the largest news outlet in the Middle East, Al Jazeera Media Network, it remains a hotly debated issue whether such limitations on freedom of speech also extend to the regime's coverage of national and international news.[4]

If the central hypothesis of this thesis is correct, and Doha's urban topography reflects the regime's search for an Islamic city appropriate to new historical conditions, then what, if anything, is the Emir doing to balance what seems like a stripping away of the fundamental cultural condition instantiated throughout the centuries and as embodied in the mosque? The answer: a grand, state-financed mosque.

In December 2011 Emir Sheikh Hamad presided over the opening of the Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque (Fig. 7.5). Named after the

[4] 'Media Watchdog Says Qatar Cyber Law Threatens Freedoms', *The Gulf Times*, 18 September 2014 (accessed 27 May 2015). The law stipulates three years' imprisonment for setting up websites that spread 'false news aimed at jeopardising state security'.

founder of the Wahhabi sect, the grand mosque can accommodate 30,000 worshipers on an historic hill overlooking both the modernist, neo-liberal landscape embodied in the West Bay skyscraper and the Emir's own palace, the Diwan (Fig. 7.6). The state mosque and the Emir's opening remarks make clear statements that despite the regime's interpretations of freedom in regard to how local mosques function, the system's principles are firmly Wahhabi:

> We named the mosque after the great reformer and a renowned reviver Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab in honour of the Muslim scholars, who still carry his thought and call for revival to serve Islam and Muslims …
>
> His walk all through life in the path of light spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula guides people to the right path according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah, removes confusion from the minds and deviations that confounded souls …[5]

During the 2013 celebration that concludes the holy month of Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitr, Sheikh Hamad made clear the symbolic choice of naming the mosque after Ibn Abdul Wahhab, saying the name was changed from the State Mosque 'in reflection of Qatar's intention to revive the nation's symbols and its cultural values'.[6]



Fig. 7.5. *The Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque (photo by the author, 2014).*

[5] 'HH the Emir Inaugurates Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque' Qatar News Agency, 16 December 2011.
[6] 'Thousands Offer Morning Eid Prayers', *The Gulf Times*, 8 August 2013.

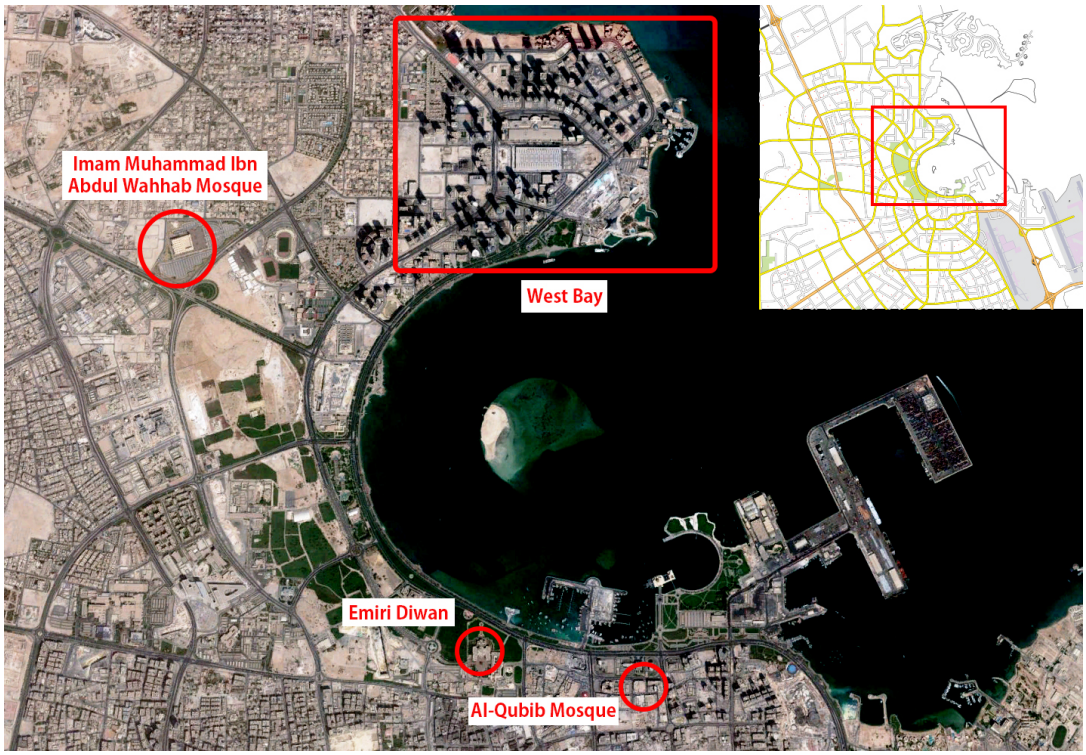


Fig. 7.6. *Map of central Doha locating the Ibn Abdul Wahab Mosque (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

As Mehran Kamrava so astutely points out, 'balancing is to domestic politics what hedging is to foreign policy', something Qatar has done throughout modern history and the previous Emir mastered with seeming ease (2013). In Sheikh Hamad's own words, from his Qatar National Vision 2030, the country's guiding developmental document:

> Preservation of cultural traditions is a major challenge that confronts many societies in a rapidly globalizing and increasingly interconnected world.
>
> Qatar's very rapid economic and population growth have created intense strains between the old and new in almost every aspect of life. Modern work patterns and pressures of competitiveness sometimes clash with traditional relationships based on trust and personal ties, and create strains for family life. Moreover, the greater freedoms and wider choices that accompany economic and social progress pose a challenge to deep-rooted social values highly cherished by society. Yet it is possible to combine modern life with values and culture. Other societies have successfully moulded modernization around local culture and traditions. Qatar's National Vision responds to this challenge and seeks to connect and balance the old and the new.

(GSDP 2008:4)

In light of the Emir's desire to balance modernization and tradition, 2005 stands out as a momentous year, for it was then that Christian churches (Figs. 7.7–7.8) were officially permitted by the regime.[7] One really must pause for a moment to understand the enormity of this decision. Since Islam came to Qatar in the seventh century the official practice of any other faith has been banned, and since eighteenth-century Wahhabiyya took root even unorthodox Sunni sects have been discriminated against. For 1,400 years



Fig. 7.7. *Above. Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 7.8. *Right. Anglican Centre Church. The lack of any Christian symbols or textual references to this building or the adjacent Catholic Church were stipulated by the Emir as a condition for approving the building's construction (photo by the author, 2014).*

successive monarchs, patriarchs and Imams have devoutly upheld Islam's universal practice. In recent years the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait have all allowed churches upon their soil. The UAE's Dubai has gone so far as to allow Hindu temples, a far stretch of tolerance given Hinduism's 'pagan' polytheisms and lack of legitimacy as a branch of the Abrahamic faith.

[7] 'First Christian Church Opens in Qatar', *USA Today*, 15 March 2008.

On the other side of the tolerance spectrum we find the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which officially bans the practice of any religion other than Islam. In 2012 Saudi's Grand Mufti called for the eradication of all churches in the Gulf.[8] In Qatar the enormously influential Islamic scholar Youssef Al-Qaradawi, whose Al Jazeera television programme is seen by millions, voices similar calls for the removal of churches. And in the Ibn Abdul Wahhab state mosque itself Saudi Cleric Sa'ad Ateeq Al-Ateeq, who regularly preaches in Qatar through *Awqaf's* invitation, called for 'Allah, [to] destroy the Jews and whoever made them Jews, and destroy the Christians and Alawites and the Shiites' (Adaki and Weinberg 2015). *Awqaf* quickly promoted the sermon on Twitter and the state-run broadcaster Qatar TV.



***Fig. 7.9**. Right. View toward the grand entry of The Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque (photo by the author, 2014).*



***Fig. 7.10.** The view of West Bay from the Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque grand entry (photo by Lucy Chomowicz, 2015).*

[8] *The Atlantic Monthly* carried the story, 'According to several Arabic news sources, last Monday, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, declared that it is "necessary to destroy all the churches of the region." The Grand Mufti made his assertion in response to a question posed by a delegation from Kuwait: a Kuwaiti parliament member recently called for the "removal" of churches (he later "clarified" by saying he merely meant that no churches should be built in Kuwait), and the delegation wanted to confirm Sharia's position on churches. Accordingly, the Grand Mufti "stressed that Kuwait was a part of the Arabian Peninsula, and therefore it is necessary to destroy all churches in it"' ('"Destroy All the Churches": Saudi Arabia's Poor Treatment of Christians', by Elliott Abrams, *The Atlantic*, 18 March 2012).

This chapter stresses the tension between being and seeming; the frequent disequilibrium created by Qatar's incongruous decisions, embodied in the city's architecture. Such an instance is allowing the construction of churches on Muslim soil while simultaneously promoting their outright destruction from the new state mosque. To the international audience building 'Church City' is consistent with a policy of openness, tolerance and what is expected of a neo-liberal, open access society. To Qatari nationals, steeped in Wahhabi interpretation, such tolerance is incomprehensible but ironically made palatable through religious bigotry. As *The Times* of London reported at the church opening, quoting a Qatari source, 'Though we respect all religions and see the creation of a church in the country as a sign of evolution, we also fear that this could represent the weakening of Islam on our territory'.[9] Because the Emir Sheikh Hamad donated the land to build 'Church City', Qatari nationals are greatly constrained in their outrage: criticizing the regime's decisions, even those manifest in architecture, also criticizes the regime. For his part, it was reported that Sheikh Hamad issued a poll asking the Qatari people their opinion before making his decision. In democratic fashion the people have spoken with some 90 per cent approval for Church City. The Christian community can now enjoy an officially sanctioned and protected enclave (note the police guard in fig. 7.7), and both Emir and expatriate may genuinely boast of Qatar's tolerance. Was this a bid to attract more foreign skilled managers? Perhaps. Was it merely a mechanism to force the closure of 'home churches' that proliferate throughout the city, and to sweep them all into one, observable, manageable, controlled and monitored space? Likely. If so, is it any different than Sheikh Hamad building the new state mosque?

Figs. 7.11 and 7.12, some of the earliest known photographs of Doha, reveal an interesting characteristic of primitive Doha. With barely 12,000 souls in the city, subsisting on meagre rations, battling nature, that they would build such a grand structure says much of Islam's centrality in structuring the urban and institutional order of Doha. In a consistent attempt to balance past and future, it is not altogether surprising the Emir chose to model his state mosque directly upon the historic Al-Qubib Mosque.

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[9] *The Times*, UK, 29 October 2005.



Fig. 7.11. *Al-Qubib Mosque in the background on right (photo by Hermann Burchardt, Doha, 1904).*

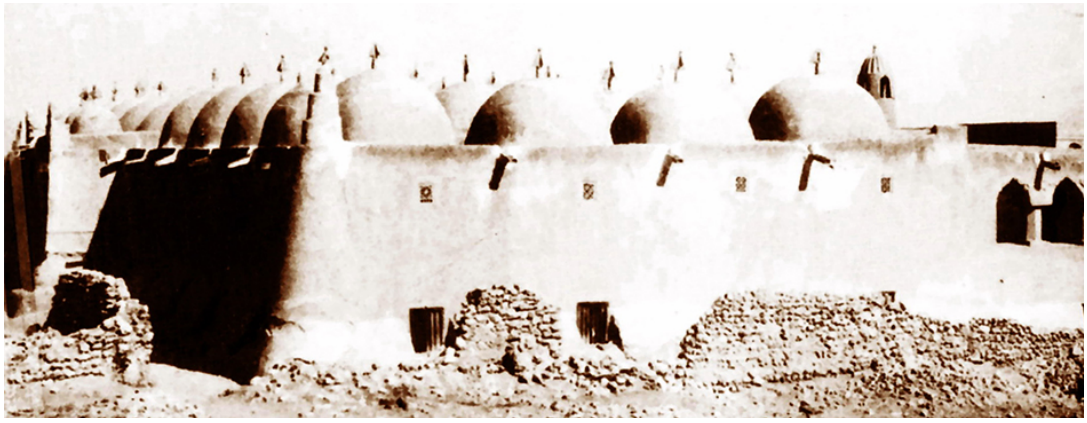

Fig. 7.12. *Al-Qubib Mosque (photo by Hermann Burchardt, Doha, 1904).*

By drawing directly from Doha's most recognized historic mosque, Al-Qubib, in building the Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab Mosque, Sheikh Hamad is making good on his pledge to revive the nation's symbols in order to strengthen cultural values. By placing the monumental mosque in dialectic opposition to West Bay he is also fulfilling his national strategy to mould modernization around local culture and traditions thereby balancing the old and the new. And however deeply removed from public view by the remoteness of their location from central Doha, the Christian churches Hamad built further attest to his desire to grapple with the interconnectedness of a rapidly globalizing world. What is at stake for Qatari society is the extent to which the regime's building schemes seen in this section present an onto-theological synthesis. Qataris in general seem proud of their wealth and Westernization, and their ancient and puritanical faith, the skyline and mosque, respectively, testify to this. They also seem willing to accept the institutionalization of differences, albeit remotely, a

tepid cosmopolitanism if you will, as evidenced in Church City. Taken together, the architecture looked at in this brief section points towards how an institutional order which holds differences in common is emerging from an urban order struggling to keep pace with its own ambitions. The struggles to accommodate the competing claims held and imagined by the institutions might resolve themselves into Sheikh Hamad's balanced utopia; or, the dialectic might cleave the developing city into competing enclaves, neither agonic in the sense of open discourse, a localized *polis*; nor cosmopolitan in the sense of delivering to the wider community the equal work of reason and humanity fundamental to all (Nussbaum 1997).

7.2 Trading: Souq and Mall

Few activities from the Arabian world so capture the Orientalist imagination as the market, or *souq* as it is called in Arabic. We can in large measure thank nineteenth-century British writers, artists and travellers such as Sir Richard Burton for his enduring translation of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, and David Roberts for his evocative prints depicting daily life in Egypt and the Levant. The souq together with the mosque, palace, majlis and house form the essential architectural-institutional heart of the pre-modern Arab-Islamic city. Andre Raymond declares the 'Arab city is, above all, a market-city' (2008b:731). Following Massignon's work in Iraq (1910) and Sauvaget's in Damascus (1934a), Raymond proposes that the Muslim city is founded upon the twin institutions of market and mosque.

Gharipour (2012) asserts that the souq's proximity to the mosque theologically reflects the Islamic concept of *masalih*,[10] or consideration of public interest, by uniting the mercantile community in daily prayer, *Ṣalat*. Conversely the proximity of the souq and mosque similarly promotes business activities among the faithful frequenting the latter.

As noted above, one must exercise caution when generalizing institutions across the Islamic world and through time. To be sure, the souq, as a

[10] See Madjid Khadduri, *EI* VI:738ff, and Ramadan (2004).

ubiquitous and enduring presence in nearly every city within the Islamic world, upholds remarkably consistent social and spatial structures. However, drawing conclusions from the well-studied grand bazaars in Aleppo, Damascus, Istanbul or throughout the Maghreb (Berque 1958; Lapidus 1969; Raymond 2008) to shed light on the village souq of Arabian Gulf entrepôts presents several difficulties.

Following Max Weber we are led to believe Islamic cities lack the coordinated and communal urban institutions found in medieval and modern cities. Schloen (2001) agrees with Weber's judgment that Islamic cities lack larger economic structures, or the guild charters among members so prevalent in European cities. Subsequent scholars prefer to understand the economic organization of a 'typical' Islamic city as governed above all by kinship, family and patriarchy. There is no denying Wheatley's (1976) claim that residents of the traditional Islamic city understand their milieu as a network of social interaction and not in terms of abstract governing laws. Gharipour takes exception to the Weberian ideal type of Islamic city as the counterpart of the medieval European city and states that the complexity and interdependence of market, mosque and Emir necessitated some sort of economic organization.

The Arabic *tawa'if*, or guild, groups together merchants based on craft typologies. Raymond (2008b) does not consider *tawa'if* to be municipal institutions but rather natural business affinities between similar professions in close proximity in residential quarters and homogeneous ethnic and religious communities that tacitly if not secretly structure urban life (Raymond 1974). Such organization creates small cartels that collectively set prices, negotiate with the ruling regime and raise money for religious establishments or lend to new members (*senf*) (Gharipour 2012).

Berque's (1958) seminal work on Fez's physical organization, and what Naciri (2008) calls the mutations of its temporalities, discloses one dimension of the Islamic city's urban order. Berque's stance that 'We pass from a seasonal conception of the passage of time, from a liturgy that intertwined work and days throughout the year, to the conception of a daily

life that encloses you' (Berque 1958 quoted in Naciri 2008) vividly describes Doha's shift from organizing social practices in response to the natural conditions of sunlight, wind, temperature, to a life of interiority wholly independent of the larger natural world outside.

The issue of the souq's economic organization and relationship to religious and political authority is of paramount importance to our understanding of Doha's evolving institutions. While scant literature exists on the socio-economic organization of Doha's main market, Souq Waqif, older research participants and historic photographs describe an environment strikingly ancient and primitive in character. We see in the figures below how the souq evolved in lock-step with oil production, emerging from dirt lanes and mud-brick walls into paved streets and concrete buildings. We also see the geographic centrality of the souq to the village of Doha, and its adjacency to the sea port, the few large mosques, the Turkish fort and the Emir's palace (Diwan) all bounded by the kinship fabric of the *fereej* residential neighbourhood.

Research Participant M who came to Doha as a young boy from Iran in the early 1950s recounted how growing up in the souq provided his first, yet indelible impression of Qatar's ethnic and religious segregation. Reza's (a pseudonym) family came from central Iran, and his father found work as an accountant in a souq shop. He grew up in a small mud-brick house of three rooms: one for him and his five brothers, one for his five sisters and one for his parents. Cooking and washing took place in the small rooms appended to their meagre house. Life for Reza was simple, but admittedly also filthy and harsh. The sea coast would not receive a bulwark for many years. The lack of large tidal flows or currents left the working harbour fetid and foul-smelling, littered with fish remains and excrement (Fig. 7.13). In his view, the sea absolutely sustained life in Doha, providing, fish, pearls and incredibly fresh water that sprang up from the sea floor and was collected in animal skins by pearl divers. But for Reza, there is little romance in the past.



Fig. 7.13. *Doha waterfront under construction in the mid 1950s (source: MMUP).*

Clearly, this impression is a far cry from the Orientalist gazetteer of Western travellers we saw in Chapter 5 on Doha's history. One of Reza's most striking memories was the day his mother told him why all the local boys ran away from him in the souq. She told him they were frightened of his legs, something he had not quite realized until then. All the other boys, who were Arab and Pakistani, wore the long *thobe* or baggy *dishdash* and none was familiar with pants. From that moment on Reza knew his dress, language and religion (Baha'i) would all severely limit his interaction in the highly public marketplace.

Conversely, Qatari participants paint an entirely different picture of tolerance and inclusivity. The photograph below (Fig. 7.14) of the souq in the mid 1960s showing women in short skirts confounds many of my research participants. Some state that such dress was common at the time because the souq was the only place to shop for food and Western women who had no other choices and simply dressed for the heat would frequent the souq. Others find the photograph an anomaly, having no recollection of Western influence upon the souq's social customs. In general, most of my

research participants who remember first-hand the souq of the 1950s and 1960s describe on the one hand a public market highly acceptable to foreigners, particularly those from Iran, Pakistan and India, all of the same economic class, sharing in what was common to all, all counting themselves Muslim. And on the other hand a marketplace of deep conservative conviction, generally hostile to women and primarily the domain of *Khalji* (Gulf Arab) men. Fig. 7.15 reflects the view that women frequented the souq as this was the only market for household goods, but they typically observed a high degree of modesty, such as the woman pictured wearing a loose-fitting *abaya*, her face covered by the traditional leather *batula*.



Fig. 7.14. *Left. Doha, Souq Waqif in the mid 1960s (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

Fig. 7.15. *Below. Doha, Souq Waqif in the mid 1970s (source: MMUP, date unknown).*



Most important for our discussion is the diversity of opinion regarding the souq's heterogeneity. It is expected that Doha's diverse population would view public space according to their own gender, ethnic, class and religious biases. However, all seem of like mind regarding the twin events of the 1978/9 Iranian Revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which sent a shock

wave of conservatism across the Arabian Peninsula, causing an immediate backlash against Western sensibilities, tastes and customs. All my research participants agree, by 1981 Wahhabism was in full force and nowhere more obvious than in the shared lanes and shops of Souq Waqif.

But what of the political-economic structure of the souq? Nelli Hanna's work (2008) suggests that even within monarchic Muslim societies we commonly see negotiations between the souq and the Diwan. We have little oral or written history on the souq's relationship to religious and political registers but the records of the British Eastern Bank provide valuable insights into the relationship between Emir and merchant. From the late 1950s through much of the 1960s the souq and Diwan co-dependently developed Doha's political and economic future. Throughout this period Eastern Bank managers writing confidential memoranda to their home office in London recount the Diwan's overdrawn accounts, ever-growing financial allowances to the extended royal family (what they call the 'civil list') and the high level of credit extended by the souq to the Emir and his family:

> discussions have taken place … between Members of the Family regarding their indebtedness to the souk. Although many merchants have been promised that … they will be receiving money on account, there is no evidence that any concrete steps are being taken to ensure that the Family meet their long outstanding obligations.
>
> (P&C No. 52/72, 5 April 1961)

A consistent report over these years is that of the Emir's rising indebtedness to one of the leading merchant families, the Darwish brothers. With the amount often exceeding £2 million, the Emir seems to have singularly desired the Darwish's downfall. One reason put forth by Mazen Jaidah (2008) is Darwish's shifting of political loyalties from the Ali to the Hamad branches of the Al-Thani family. Through the 1950s the Darwish (Fig. 7.16) had a near monopoly on government contracts and acted as middlemen for the supply of men, materials and equipment. Their political fortunes waned after they backed the wrong limb of the family, and other leading merchant families all with roots in the old souq's minuscule trade and import business quickly rose to form financial empires by courting the regime either directly



Fig. 7.16. *Doha, Darwish Brothers' travel bureau, probably from the mid 1950s (source: MMUP).*

through business partnerships or by remaining neutral, as did the Jaidah family (Jaidah 2008).

Just at this time the Diwan passed Law No.(20) of 1963 preventing foreign firms from establishing a branch or agency within Qatar unless through a partnership where at least 51 per cent was owned by a Qatari national.[11] This law gave the Diwan formal juridical and political control over all commercial activities, particularly in the souq but generally across Qatar as well. As the Darwish Brothers' plight illustrates, the Diwan used the souq to promote sympathetic merchant families while also shackling nearly all the merchants to the growing consumer appetites of the extended royal family made possible by the Emir's financial distribution of oil rents. The merchants could not refuse to sell on account as they greatly feared reprisals, again made vivid in the following private and confidential Eastern Bank report:

> One of the local souq bankers has told us that the market anticipates a number of failures … Despite their plight, merchants still sell on credit, particularly to the Members of the Family. When questioned they state that they dare not do anything else and a recent incident here shows, perhaps why. The Government's new Senior Surgeon and a Shell (Oil) doctor … were assaulted by slaves of one of the Members of the Family under that gentleman's personal direction. As a body the medical team approached the Ruler and informed him that if this type of treatment, which has not been infrequent, continued, they could no longer undertake to be of service to the community in Qatar. We do not think any comment is necessary.
>
> (P&C No. 52/175, 24 August 1961)

[11] The exact clause of concern to the Eastern Bank manager reads, 'Persons whether natural or legal who are not Qataris may not run a commercial or industrial business even with a Qatari partner or partners. Foreigners who run any industrial business are exempted if they have a Qatari partner or partners provided that the capital held by the Qataris is not less than 51% of the capital of the firm' (P&C No. 61/134, 16 June 1970).

Like many public spaces the world over, no less so in Arab League nations since uprisings in Egypt's Tahrir Square in 2011, Doha's souq once saw its share of political demonstrations. Writing in his weekly confidential report a few days after Israel's Six-Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the Eastern Bank manager reports the mood in Doha's souq to his superiors in London:

> The British Bank of the Middle East (B.B.M.E) office was stoned by demonstrators … followed by a run on the B.B.M.E. savings accounts … we experienced crowds of savings deposit holders who closed their accounts and re-opened with the Arab and Qatar National Banks … Anti-British feeling is strong and is encouraged by the Palestinians here who have rather taken matters into their own hands. The atmosphere is far from easy, food stores were closed until two days ago and on re-opening will sell for cash only. The Oil companies have been brought to a virtual standstill as demonstrators forcibly ejected administrative workers from their offices … The leading merchants here express concern about the market in which all operations ceased.
>
> (P&C No. 58/2, 14 June 1967)[12]

The Bank manager further notes 'The Ruler is the only person who can be relied on to provide protection from demonstrators as the so called police and "army" form a large part of the mobs themselves' (ibid.). The souq's central location and institutional primacy made it the natural mechanism to hold differences in common as we have seen in the brief examples above. As Doha expanded, building Western-styled shopping malls, the souq fell into disrepair and neglect. By renovating Souq Waqif to its exact historic character, Sheikh Hamad is again demonstrating his desire to revive the nation's symbols in order to strengthen cultural values. I shall look next at the process of renovation and what it means to Doha's search for historical orientation.

[12] Interestingly it was not until 2004 that the Emir passed Law No.(18) banning public meetings and demonstrations without a permit: 'In implementing this Law, every meeting attended, or which is expected to be attended, by more than 20 persons, or where no special invitation is required for attendance thereof, to be held at a private or public place other than public roads and parks for the discussion of one or more public issues, shall be deemed to be a public meeting (Article 1); no convening, organisation, invitation, announcement or coverage of news on any public meeting shall take place without obtaining a license therefor under this Law (Article 3).'

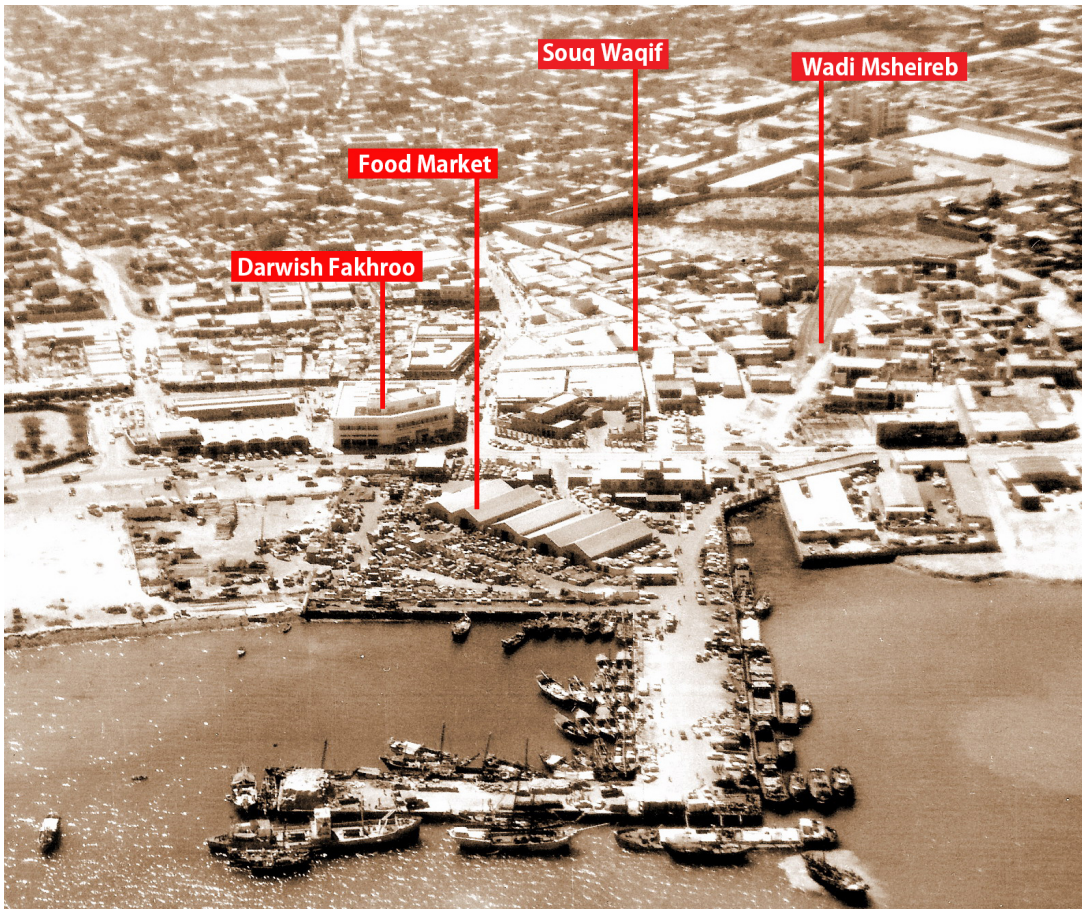

***Fig. 7.17**. Doha harbour in the mid 1950s. Note the central location of the Darwish Fakhroo headquarters (source: MMUP).*

The name 'Souq Waqif' means 'standing souq'. In the souq's pre-tarmac days merchants would gather on either side of Wadi Msheireb, the gentle valley that provides easy access to ships parked along the beach. Tidal flows coming up the wadi and winter rains pouring down left Wadi Msheireb in a perpetual state of muddiness, forcing all concerned to stand, placing their wares upon tables. Increasing trade and mechanization of ships necessitated a deeper harbour and covered areas to protect foodstuffs. Vegetable, fish and animal markets all developed along Doha's shoreline, greatly expanding the souq's economic and architectural footprint (Fig. 7.17). By the early 1960s government ministry buildings displaced the food markets and abattoirs to more distant precincts, but wholesale and retail trades, craft shops, tailors, weavers, carpenters and open air stalls all continued in the souq (Attar 2006). In 1998 Sheikh Faisal Al-Thani opened Doha's first major indoor shopping mall, City Centre, in the heart of West Bay. At that time West Bay enjoyed only a few buildings, including the Sheraton Hotel and PDQ headquarters. Both expatriates and locals favoured the mall's air-

conditioning, ease of parking and variety of Western shops over the souq's dilapidation. By 2004 Souq Waqif was in neglect and disrepair, many concrete shells had replaced historic buildings. Recognizing the loss of Doha's 'heart and soul' as many call it (Salama and Weidmann 2013) the Emir Sheikh Hamad commissioned a complete rebuilding of the souq based upon historic maps, photographs and interviews.



***Fig. 7.18**. Souq Waqif's Wadi Msheireb Street flooded during winter rains (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

Today, as Salama and Weidmann (ibid.) point out, Souq Waqif's centrality to Doha's socio-architectural understanding is undeniable. Its renewed economic success as Doha's tourist destination par excellence has established a firm foothold for it in the city, from which further reclamations are now possible. The Msheireb master plan builds upon this legacy, uniting the souq, Diwan, Museum of Islamic art, *dhow* port and the newly renovated Al-Qubib Mosque to truly seek a recrudescent urban history and identity. The architectural schemes just mentioned mythologize an Arab identity perceived as humble, hard-working and heterogeneous. To varying degrees these sentiments have a basis in fact but are eclipsed by the half-century-long occupation of the area by foreigners. From *With Their Bare Hands*, a book heroizing the hard-fought days of building a nation:

> The centre of activity in Doha, both commercial and social, was the market place, with its scattered cafes like the popular Abdullah Ghanim cafe, on the site of the present Bismillah Hotel, which was never short of customers. The main market place was Souq Waqif which was divided into two parts. One section specialised in fish. This was situated between the present Bismillah Hotel and the cross-roads of Baharna and Najjada streets. The other section, the general market, stretched from Baharat al Jufari to the harbour. These two sections were separated by a large open area which served as the camel market. Here the *al-badiyah* – people of the desert – would assemble to buy and sell camels, and to trade their typical produce of the Bedouin economy, animal fats, camelhair textile products such as blankets and carpets, and firewood, in exchange for provisions and utensils. The market place provided the link between the two traditional communities of the desert and the sea.
>
> (Al Othman 1984)

The images below taken recently (Figs. 7.21–7.22) depict how the renovated souq attempts to preserve a sanitized version of Al Othman's original (Figs. 7.19–7.20). The mixing of many nationalities, the parade of police guards complete with antique rifles and bandoliers, and the many tourist stalls selling carved wooden crafts and carpets fulfil well its task of giving any visitor a sense of the original souq's flavour. By 'anyone' I mean not just tourists or expatriates, but most assuredly younger Qataris who universally seem not to fathom fetching water on a donkey and instead understand 'souq' to mean a shopping mall.



Fig. 7.19. *The 'drive-in' experience of the souq was typical until its renovation (source: MMUP, date unknown).*



Fig. 7.20*. The same view as fig. 7.19 but several years later after the street was finally paved (source: MMUP, date unknown).*



***Fig. 7.21**. Left. Souq Waqif (source unknown, 2012).*

***Fig. 7.22.** Below. Souq Waqif; in the foreground Qatar guardsmen on parade, perpetually 'policing' the souq's main street, behind them a tourist couple enjoy the show from their café table (photo by the author, 2014).*



If Souq Waqif has become a shopping mall in flimsy desert disguise, then what do we make of the many themed Western-styled shopping malls springing up across Doha? Like their counterparts in any mature economy, Doha's malls hold the typical assortment of well-known name brand stores, food courts, coffee shops and restaurants, movie theatres and occasionally a small amusement park or ice rink. Often the malls are

themed, as seen in the image below of Villagio (Fig. 7.27), a Venetian-styled sprawling complex adjacent to the largest sports venue in Qatar, Aspire Park, or at Al-Hazm Mall (Figs. 7.23–7.24), described on its website as having 'classical European style in the heart of modern Arabia'.[13] The increasing ubiquity, size and luxury of malls across Doha seem on the one hand



Fig. 7.23*. Left. Al-Hazm Mall main entrance along the highway (photo by the author, 2015).*

Fig. 7.24. *Below. Al-Hazm Mall. In this photo the mall is seen with its local mosque in the foreground, its tiny minaret lost against the mall's neoclassical façade, the Louvre-styled glass pyramid at the entrance, a Reichstag glass dome and the West Bay skyline in the background (photo by the author, 2015).*



disproportionate to the population, but on the other, when considering the lack of cultural, civic and smaller shopping markets, completely understandable. Because most of the managerial expatriates live in 'compounds' – gated communities of three- to five-bedroom semi-detached homes – most residents must frequent the malls for household necessities. A common theme reported by my Qatari female research participants is that the malls are nearly the only public space visited and enjoyed by women. Men have more options and freedom of movement, but due to strict gender

[13] The mall has a built-up area of 105,158 square metres, or a 46,000-square-metre plot with 60,000 square metres of parking. The complex sits on the gentle ridge overlooking West Bay. Source: http://alhazm.com/index.php/en/ (accessed 28 May 2015).

divisions young male and female Qataris tell me they frequent the malls to meet the opposite sex. The high-end malls typically forbid 'bachelors' from entering, posting signs on the entrances declaring the malls to be 'family only' and these rules are enforced, ironically, by security guards of the same nationality, typically Sri Lankan or Filipino, as those they are restricting. In reality such a prohibition means no unaccompanied men looking like migrant workers, most obviously those in bright-coloured coveralls. Lower-end malls are also appearing on the outskirts of Doha near the Industrial Area, the largest, Barwa, is an 8-kilometre-long three-story behemoth of shops, services and fast food stores (see detailed description in the section 7.5 below).



***Fig. 7.25**. A typical city block with ground-floor shops and several floors of apartments above. As this photo depicts, this older architectural form is quickly disappearing among high-rise developments (photo by the author, 2015).*

How then are we to understand the Doha shopping mall? On the one hand it is, as Marc Auge (2008) describes, a non-place, globally homogeneous spaces of circulation, consumption and communication; and on the other hand, as Andrew Gardner (2014) argues in his essay on Doha's spatial anthropology, one of many zones of permissibility that structure the entire city. Gardner correctly observes how Doha comprises a wide variety of 'exclusionary zones', places that suspend the prevailing adherence to *sharīʿah*: hotels that serve alcohol, educational institutions that bypass the

state's internet filters and malls that bridge gender, class and ethnicity. In this light the malls scattered around town function much like today's Souq Waqif: popular destinations among locals, expatriates and tourists.

In the drama of Inner Doha's rise, fall and recrudescence, Souq Waqif plays the leading role. Historically, the souq fulfilled a great many practical functions that underpinned the socio-economic life of Doha. Today, its clean streets, air-conditioned cafes, *sisha* tobacco water pipe stalls and souvenir shops provide a sanitized Arabian experience. The souq's renovation sparked a wave of urban reclamation that is only expanding and gathering speed, swallowing up the last remnants of Doha's shabby, albeit authentically historic urban fabric of shops and courtyard houses (Figs. 7.25–7.26).



Fig. 7.26. *Inner Doha street market (photo by the author, 2014).*

Any tourist visiting the Souq, walking across the street to the Museum of Islamic Art and taking a stroll on the Corniche with West Bay's skyscraper backdrop on one side and the manicured lawns of the Emiri Diwan on the other cannot help but see in full force the struggle to reclaim huge urban swathes radiating from the Souq, and with them the regime's search for an Islamic city appropriate for its new historical conditions. These are less a manifestation of global capitalism and commodity flows (Sassen) and more an attempt to continue the long practice of late rentierism through the massive Western-styled shopping mall as an investment vehicle. The malls constitute a considerable area frequented by nearly every social segment for everything from necessities to leisure. Gender segregation aside, malls are in

one sense similar to the mosque in that nearly all are welcome. However, as a Western-capitalist institution that not only embodies distanciated economic transactions – in contradistinction to the antique souq's reliance on personal familiarity – it also, like its Western counterpart, is built apart from and in opposition to the historic urban city centre. Though we might be tempted to believe the Emir's desire to recover cultural pre-eminence through a recrudescent architectural iconography embodying ancient institutions, the malls are in fact a necessary facet of the regime's struggle to synthesize within the urban order the culture's understanding of past, present and future in an age of globalization.



Fig. 7.27. *Villagio Mall's Venetian canal and electric-powered gondola (photo by the author, 2014).*



Emiri Diwan, photo by James Morris.

7.3 Power: Emiri Diwan

Few buildings in the contemporary or ancient landscape embody power more forcefully than the ruler's palace. This is true as it is quite literally where the king, president, prime minister or, in our case, Emir conducts state business and often resides as well. Frequently seen as a city-state, Doha must carry all the nation's key institutions and symbolic embodiments. In this brief subsection devoted to the Emir's administrative palace, or Diwan (Figs. 7.28–7.29), I shall seek to understand the historical development of the Diwan as both fact and symbol in the formation and projection of power, and how the Diwan uses the city as backdrop to the country's leading actor.

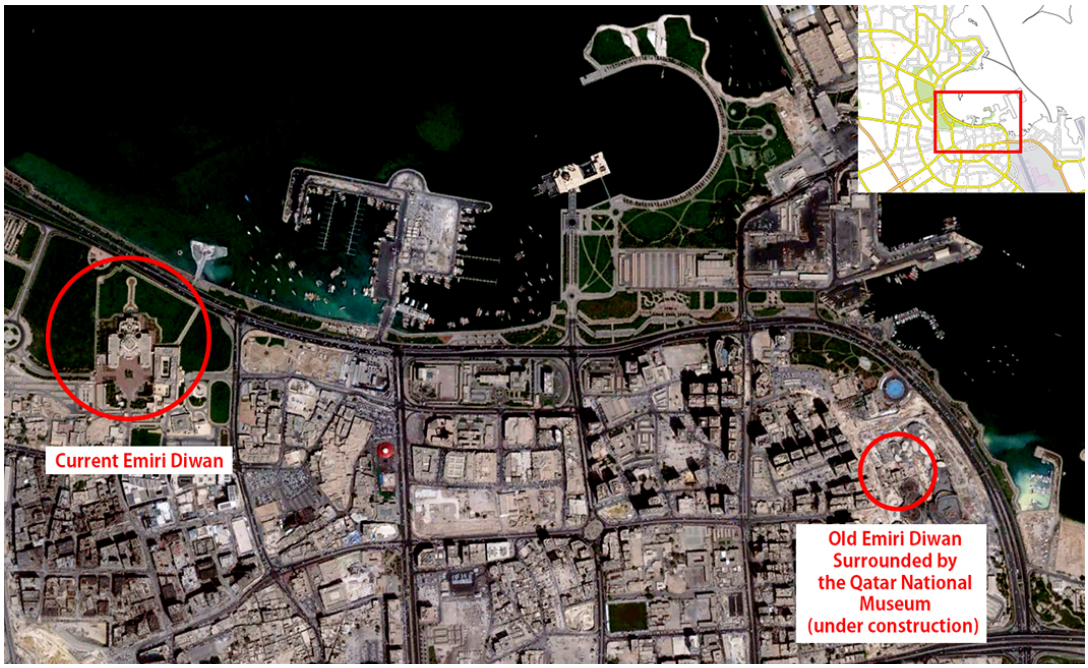

Fig. 7.28. *Map of the current and original emiri Diwan (source: Google Earth, 2015).*



Fig. 7.29. *Emiri Diwan shown in context with the other significant institutions examined in this chapter (photo by the author, 2013).*

A brief history of Doha's seat of power helps us understand the motivations behind the current palace, which, interestingly, are entwined with foreign occupation and perceptions of independence and political regime legitimacy. During the Ottoman occupation of Doha in the late nineteenth century Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani, head of the ruling family,

wished to establish a seat of power independent from the small group of Turkish forces stationed at a fort they had built in central Doha adjacent to the souq, main mosque and harbour.



Fig. 7.30. *Turkish Fort of Doha, Qal'at Al-Askar or Soldier's Fort (photo by Hermann Burchardt, 1904).*

Based a few kilometres from the Turkish fort (fig. 7.30), Sheikh Abdullah carried out his duties as Doha governor, overseeing mercantile and maritime activities and liaising directly with the British government, who installed his father as de facto ruler of the peninsula. After the Turkish withdrawal in 1916 Sheikh Abdullah's growing influence and expanding family continued to enlarge the complex until 1923, when he relocated the seat of government and his family back to central Doha. The old palace remained occupied for another fifteen years until it was finally abandoned. By the



Fig. 7.31. *Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim's Palace before restoration (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

1970s it had fallen into a state of complete disrepair (Holod 1983) (Figs. 7.31–7.32).



Fig. 7.32. *Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim's Palace after restoration (source: Al-Kholaifi (2006), date of photo unknown).*

Free from foreign occupation but still very much assisted by the British Political Agent, the first half of Doha's twentieth century resembled that of a typical Islamic village sheikhdom. Visiting the Diwan in 1952, the exact moment at which life in a typical Islamic Gulf sheikhdom came to an abrupt end, historian Sayf Marzuq Al-Shimlan describes the enduring social construct of regnal power:

> The fort is located at the western side of Doha and along the coast, a large structure constructed over the ruins of the barracks where the Ottoman soldiers resided when Qatar was under the hegemony of the [Ottoman] State. The fort is located on a dais and has two doors. A large door to the south and a second door to the east overlooking the gulf. Along the south wall is a long dakkah [built-in raised bench/seating] where the ruler of Qatar sits in the summer afternoons. As soon as he is seated the dakkah fills up with people. Adjacent to this to the east along the coast is a large Majlis built in the modern style, for HH the Amir.
>
> (Al Shimlan 1952:405)

The first image of a modern state office for the Emir was built between 1958 and 1962 in the city's heart adjacent to the old fort in Al-Bidda, Souq Waqif, and *dhow* harbour. The Emir's family resided with him in the palace, which by the late 1960s held a formal grouping of buildings including the city's iconic clock tower and emiri mosque (Fig. 7.33). In every respect, the rise of the Diwan's stature mimics exactly the rise in urban development and

expansion of the government bureaucracy. Of course this is hardly surprising. Any large municipality requires a well-functioning state apparatus, and certainly a culture as ancient as Doha's needs the visible manifestation of royal power. Interesting for the current study is whether the Emir's Diwan merely reflects growing nationalism and urban expansion, its size commensurate to that of the state; or, whether the Diwan is responsible for generating Doha's urban transformation.

To be sure, Doha's radical expansion and embrace of Western architects and high modernism are at the behest of the Emir. However, in this section I wish to argue that the Diwan, as an architectural element, is not only the literal seat of power, housing the Emir himself, but is also how Doha understands its historical orientation and the direction of its future development.

The 1972 master plan by Llewelyn-Davies envisioned an entirely new city springing forth from the Diwan's doorstep, in a sense linking old Doha to

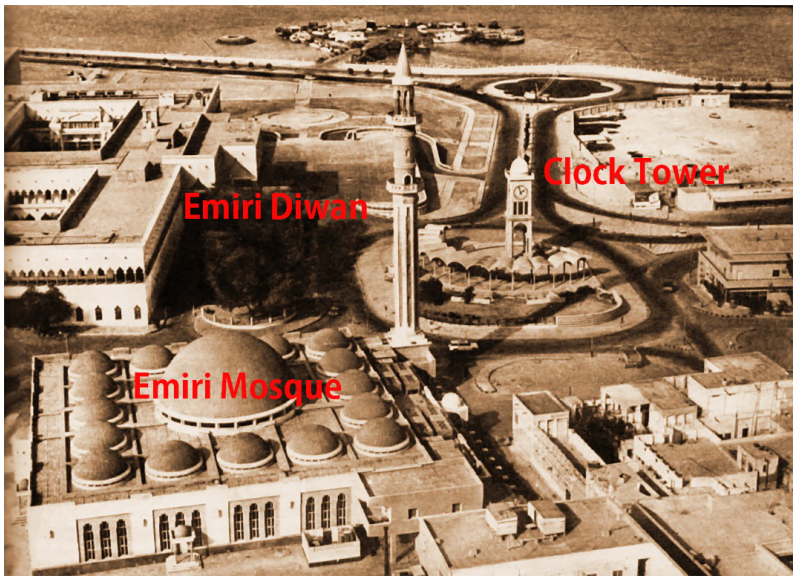

Fig. 7.33. *Emiri complex in the early 1960s (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

the east with a new city to the west. The concept of the New District of Doha (NDOD) at West Bay came in 1975 through the work of Shankland Cox Architects. With the Corniche arc established, ring-road system in place and a vision for reclaiming the land to the north and west of Doha, a desire arose to strengthen the governmental image of the Corniche, creating a White Hall of new ministry buildings that would concretize the modern image of Doha and recast entirely the historic quality of the

seafront. In 1975 five architects were selected to compete for the development, with four submitting final schemes: The Architects Collaborative, Gunther Behnisch, James Stirling, and Kenzo Tange & Urtec. The winning scheme by Kenzo Tange (Figs 7.34–7.36) called for a megastructure linking together all state ministries in one long series of buildings.



Fig. 7.34. *The original Kenzo Tange competition entry of 1975. The Emiri Diwan is circled in red (source: John Lockerbie.)*

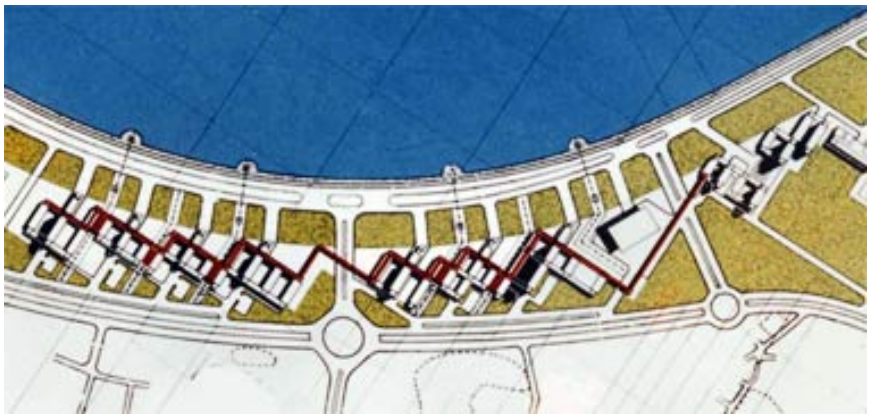

Fig. 7.35. *Kenzo Tange's final scheme for the Ministries Competition (source: John Lockerbie).*



Fig. 7.36. *Architectural model of Kenzo Tange's final scheme for the Ministries Competition (source: John Lockerbie)*

Tange's scheme had the ministry head offices occupying a continuous ribbon overlooking the Corniche, supported by back-office functions extending in the opposite direction towards the city. Ultimately none of the

Corniche competition schemes was implemented and the Diwan again launched another invited Corniche competition in 2003 with entries from: Patrick Berger, Zaha Hadid, Kamel Louafi, Jean Nouvel, D. Paysage Architects and Martha Schwartz Inc. None of these proposals has gone beyond the conceptual stage either.

As a cultural, political and architectural institution the current Diwan firmly keeps one foot in the camp of history and the other in progress. Given Doha's many government buildings designed in a high-modernist style from the 1950s through the early 1980s, it is interesting that the current Diwan, which opened in 1989, is clothed in a variety of abstracted Islamic styles drawn from across the region. It remains unclear if this turn away from high modernism and the embrace of historicism resulted from so-called 'post-modern' architecture in Europe and North America, or the Emir's growing consciousness that the enormous changes he and his predecessors wrought upon the city and her people might just be too much. From a recent book devoted to the Diwan's architecture, and one for which the Emir clearly granted permission for publication, comes a revealing statement:

> The Diwan al Amiri building demonstrates how traditions of Islamic and Arab architecture are capable of adapting and evolving to meet the conditions of modern existence while retaining the cultural essence of those traditions. It bears witness to the way in which Qatar has evolved in a dramatically short period of time from a tribal shaykhdom dependent on pearl fishing into a modern and *democratic*, independent political and economic entity, without losing its specific and deeply-rooted cultural identity … the urban development of Doha has been carefully managed and controlled in order to prevent the transformation of the city into a characterless international interchange of the sort that can be seen across the globe.
>
> (Damluji 2011:10 emphasis mine)

We must take this quote at face value – as the approved sentiment of the Emir. He wishes the royal administrative palace to project a balanced approach to growth: strengthening Islamic identity, securing a sound economic future, thoughtful urban development and a firm hand on

administrative levers, and, of course, like the American version of a big white house in the nation's capital, the Diwan has evolved into what seems a modern and democratic entity. Perhaps behind this statement we see Sheikh Khalifa's rejection of any centralized planning scheme from the 1975 competition, with the winning design smacking of Soviet state planning. Looking for a moment at state offices of Western democracies – Washington DC, London and in post-unification Germany – we see clear divisions and a balancing of powers represented in the city's architecture. Imposing a centralized planning scheme would not only undercut this image; it would also obliterate the objective to build the illusion that state power is decentralized and democratized. The fact that West Bay skyscrapers house many state offices, directly across the bay, helps reinforce an image of political autonomy through the separation of powers (Fig. 7.37). In reality nothing could be further from the truth as all state offices, municipalities, supreme councils, even the Emir's *shura* (advisory) council, all report to him.



Fig. 7.37. *View from the Emiri Diwan directly on an axis with the West Bay business district (photo by James Morris, 2011).*

Many of my older, male research participants describe how as late as the 1990s the Emir still held open *majlis* hours in keeping with ancient custom where any male member of society could petition the Emir, typically for land grants, favours or justice between clans. The practice has since mostly, though not entirely, ceased for security reasons, the sheer impracticability of receiving hundreds of petitioners, and – above all – to reinforce the perception that a modern bureaucracy handles such matters. Interestingly,

however, many of my older, male participants of Palestinian or Iranian nationality, some of whom even worked closely with Sheikh Khalifa, claim to have the Diwan's ear and in particular are patiently waiting for the Emir to grant them and their family Qatari citizenship. Qatari naturalization laws are nearly non-existent and the only way to gain citizenship is for it to be granted by the Emir.[14] Another break with palace tradition occurred decades ago when the former Emir relocated his living quarters to near the historic fort of Al-Wajbah, 15 kilometres south west of Doha.[15] While this may possibly have been for security reasons, the relocation was more likely because Doha could not accommodate the new 1-kilometre-square palace (Fig. 7.38).



Fig. 7.38. *Al-Wajbah Palace. Other palaces belonging to the Emir and his enormous extended family are scattered throughout Doha and the Qatar countryside, but none compares to the size of the palace at Al-Wajbah, 15 kilometres outside Doha. Pictured here the Emir's residential palace compound with separate palaces for each of his three wives (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

[14] For an in-depth review of Qatari naturalization laws see, Babar (2014).

[15] The fortress at Al-Wajbah was built in the late eighteenth century and is one of the oldest pieces of architecture in Qatar. Its importance comes from being the site where Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Al-Thani, then ruler of Qatar, defeated the Ottoman forces in 1893.

The modern Diwan gathers and projects its own power in the search for a traditional role in contemporary society. As the modern instantiation of power, the Diwan oscillates between seeming and being: between seeming to be democratic through the use of decentralized state apparatuses, and actually being ancient and authoritative in the use of centralized power and the cult of the individual clearly on display through the constitutional law of Al-Thani rule and primogeniture. Just like the foreign policy framework of hedging against adversaries, the consequence of the all-things-to-all-people approach is the domestic apparatus necessary to control all that pluralism. As Kamrava says

> balancing domestic politics … is a deliberately calculated policy of keeping an eye on the forces of tradition and culture as cherished and represented by the more conservative members of society, while advancing a broadly defined modernization and becoming a central hub for globalization. The clash of the two, of the amorphous and often incoherent pulls and pushes of tradition and modernity – however vaguely conceived and perceived by those experiencing them – inevitably places the state in difficult and at times contradictory positions. Once again, however, the state's agility, rooted in the centralization of its decision-making processes and the small size of society over which it governs, enables quick and seemingly successful responses to occasional pushbacks and backlashes.
>
> (2013:134–135)

There could be no clearer expression of the hypothesis that Qatar seeks an historic orientation. The royal seat of power, built upon Arabian motifs stretching back to the Assyrian period, the Diwan now occupies the centre of power, presiding over a modern high-rise skyline and a fantastically engineered futuristic horizon (Fig. 7.37). As an essential and historic Muslim institution, the Diwan maintains the perception that together with mosque, market and dense housing district, Doha maintains its patriarchal and patrimonial reality but is tempered by its own vast bureaucracy.

7.4 Liminal Space: the Majlis

Despite the haunting nature of urban disequilibrium for the young Qatari man, stable, familiar, grounded situations punctuate his city's fabric,

anchoring his urban involvements. One of the most enduring cultural-spatial situations for any Gulf Arab is the *majlis*. Derived from the root stem verb 'to sit', the *majlis* historically functions as a liminal space between the very public realm of street (or desert expanse for Bedouin tribes) and the very private world of the home. In the pre-oil era of penury, the *majlis* comprised a simple, multifunction tent or room for eating, conversation and sleeping. Primarily for men, the *majlis* held exceedingly specific ritual functions, many aimed at honouring guests, and respecting elders. These rooms were typically lined with cushions, which invited all to relax, enjoy the host's hospitality, and they served as sleeping mats for those staying the night (Al-Kholaifi 2006). Today's *majlis* is far more luxurious, even opulent. Important changes to the typical Qatari *majlis* highlight how the young Qatari male is involved in a familiar yet changing set of references.



Fig. 7.39. *Floor plans for an approved government-provided house type for Qatari families. Note the dual entry either directly into the home or through the majlis, thus delimiting a guest's involvement with the domestic interior of women (source: Qatar Ministry of Social Affairs Housing Department, no date).*

The interior images in this section are from a typical 'upper middle-class' Qatari family. These homes likely hold one or two indentured female servants, perhaps Sri Lankan or Filipina, a cook and one or two full-time

male drivers. The home contains three to five bedrooms within a free-standing 'villa' within a walled-in 600-square-metre lot given by the government, and built either according to a government design (Figs. 7.39–7.40) or slightly modified. Only those with extreme wealth are financially able to commission unique designs. The floor plans, renderings and photographs in this section depict one option among several available for a government-provided house (called 'public' in Figs. 7.39–7.40) for Qatari families. The various architectural and decorative approaches to the *majlis* reveal its evolving role within the home and its liminal relationship between public street and private interior.



Fig. 7.40. *Exterior rendering of an approved government-provided house type for Qatari families. An Occidentalist image of suburban housing becomes clear when we compare the lack of walls and presence of grass and leafy trees to a typical government house in the Al-Muaithir neighbourhood of Doha in Fig. 7.41 (source: Qatar Ministry of Social Affairs Housing Department, no date).*



Fig. 7.41. *A typical government-provided villa in the Al-Muaithir neighbourhood of Doha (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 7.42. *The Emir's office within the Diwan. The furniture style is similar to that found in many Qatari home majlis. Also note the painting behind the desk by French artist R. Casper of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani with his late son Sheikh Hamad. It is from this family line that the current Emir descends and it was Sheikh Hamad's untimely death that threw the royal line into turmoil in 1948 (photo by James Morris, 2011).*

For unknown reasons most Qataris prefer a highly ornate decorative style within the male *majlis*. Understanding why a Wahhabi conservative society prefers an interior of gilded ostentation to one of simplistic humility is difficult and beyond the scope of our analysis, though one reason might be the style of the Emir's office and *majlis* often seen in the local newspaper (Fig. 7.42). We do know that usually the Qatari wife chooses the décor for the men's *majlis*, describing the interior style as 'Louis XIV' or 'like Versailles' and believing

such forms connote wealth, luxury and comfort for guests (Fig. 7.43).[16] The contemporary interiors illustrated here represent a sensibility distant from that of past interiors that featured floor cushions evoking Western Orientalist fantasies, or even more distantly the authentic Bedouin tent from which those fantasies arose. Important, however, is the stark juxtaposition between a seemingly austere house exterior (Fig. 7.44) and the opulent interior (Fig. 7.43) it envelops that projects wealth and power, specifically political power as few families achieved financial success apart from at the Diwan's largesse. Of the wealthiest fraction, some prefer remote 'palaces' far from the city and well hidden by high walls. Many within the city try to preserve visual privacy by erecting ever-higher walls and screens between villas, while others opt for spectacle (Fig. 7.46).



***Fig. 7.43**. Interior of a Qatari male majlis in 'Louis XIV' style (source: confidential, 2014).*



***Fig. 7.44.** Exterior of a Qatari house, the majlis is seen in Fig. 7.43 (source: confidential, 2014).*

[16] The photographs and interview data in this series are from a confidential source who wishes to remain anonymous.



Fig. 7.45. *The recent photo of semi-detached houses under construction makes clear the general cultural desire for an ornate European interior (photo by the author, 2014).*

An open orientation to the street marks a significant development in *majlis* design. In past eras the *majlis* was either completely within the urban house, as seen in the governmental design depicted in Fig. 7.39, or an adjacent tent. In recent years many families have synthesized both forms by erecting a permanent goat hair, brown-and-tan striped tent in the house forecourt (Figs. 7.47–7.48).



Fig. 7.46. *A large majlis fronting a major east–west highway, Al-Rayyan Road home to many large palaces, several belonging to the royal family. Not only is little attempt made to conceal the majlis from public view, a slip road from the highway takes visitors directly to the front door (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 7.47. *Exterior of a Qatari house, with traditional tent majlis fronting the street (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 7.48. *Exterior of a Qatari house, with traditional tent majlis set back from the street and another majlis with glass façade fronting the street. The traditional majlis is for the house's father; the street-fronting majlis for his sons (photo by the author, 2013).*

The tent's desert iconography and isolated placement clearly announce the expected decorum flowing from Bedouin origins and thus a high desire for rigid gender separation and domestic privacy. In recent years some families have adopted modern glass-box designs, placing the *majlis* directly abutting the street edge (Figs. 7.49–7.50). At night, the fully transparent glazing and dramatically up-lit façades evince a 'transparent' social sensibility. If the dark tent proclaimed privacy, seclusion and a delight for the fellowship of men, the modern *majlis* in contrast declares a new age of openness, dialogue and the welcoming of the stares of strangers from any class, ethnicity or

gender who might wander by. One cannot overstate the radical nature of this architectural adaptation.



Fig. 7.49. *Exterior of a Qatari house, along a busy street in the Bedouin neighbourhood of Al-Muaithir. This majlis is divided into two halves: the right side, a modern glass box, the left side, neoclassical. As in Fig. 7.48 the modern side is for the sons, the 'traditional' left side for the father and uncles of the house (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 7.50. *Exterior of a Qatari house, with street-fronting majlis along a busy street in the almost exclusively Qatari neighbourhood of Al-Rayyan to the west of Doha (photo by the author, 2013).*

Opening the *majlis*' privacy to the public street proclaims the family has nothing to hide, and, more radically, that the conversation, while not open to all, is nonetheless lingering on the threshold of the public sphere. It is worth remembering that any 'public' gathering, no matter how insignificant or apolitical, requires official governmental approval. Because the *majlis* in both history and contemporary practice tends towards a political space, that is a place of political discussion, the transparency and reflectivity of the glass projects a growing desire for openness, perhaps even democratic debate, and begins to shift the *majlis*' privately controlled status towards one

of public (political) participation.[17] While a glass façade does not axiomatically create a public sphere, certainly in the Taylor/Habermas account of public participation, it does run contrary to the conservative desire to maintain a highly private life. In a country whose regime carefully controls so many aspects of private and public life, from internet filtering to dress codes, to house colours, a transparent façade behind which groups openly discuss the matters of the day seems to thumb its nose at the state's pervasive surveillance apparatus. Additionally, the street frontage leaves little room for parking and one readily knows which *majlis* has the most visitors by means of the double-parked SUVs. The curb-side adjacency provides for quick visits to a familiar sedimented institution in an otherwise night-time rhythm within a moving, blurry city.

7.5 Dwelling: Exchanging one city for another, Msheireb (the haves) and Barwa (the have nots)

To be sure, the kin-oriented, clan-based, patriarchal household has formed the predominant structure of the Middle Eastern city, from ancient to pre-modern times (Demombynes 1950; Schloen 2001; Weber 1978). The most basic and common type of socio-economic unit found throughout Muslim urban societies, consistently so in Doha, is the extended or joint family.[18] Such a household typically consists of a married couple, with separate rooms for their unmarried male and female children and semi-attached structures for married sons, their children, and rooms for aging immediate relatives, as well as accommodation for servants and slaves, a system that flourished in nearly all ancient societies in the Middle East (Hourani

[17] See Dr Al-Kuwari *The People Want Reform…In Qatar, Too*, 2011. The book, published in Arabic with an English translation of the opening chapter, has caused much discussion in Qatar. Criticizing the monarchy is a crime that meets with severe punishment, as was made clear by the 2013 life imprisonment of a Qatari poet who wrote an obliquely critical poem comparing Qataris to Tunisians – a reference to the Arab Spring uprisings. Al-Kuwari and his collaborators stopped short of that but nonetheless call for sweeping reform and much greater accountability of the royal family and greater civic participation. Research Participant H remarked that she would gladly pay taxes if she could elect her representatives drives the point home. Participant DD, when discussing *majlis* decorum, remarked that every Qatari *majlis* discusses every night how the monarchy unevenly distributes gas and oil rents. As a political institution the *majlis* historically and in contemporary practice has always enabled a diversity of discussions from wedding plans to monarchic critique. Though the Qatari *majlis* may be as much for entertainment and social intercourse as it is for truly political discussions.

[18] The term 'joint family' is preferable over 'extended family' as the former specifically defines the nature of familial relations. See further discussion in Laslett (1972:28–30).

1991:125ff). As discussed previously in Part II, through a scheme of suburbanization and urban neglect Emirs Ali and Ahmed irrevocably broke the joint household's grip upon the *fereej* to militate against the rising level of domestic threats among clans of increasing size, wealth and political ambition. In this section I shall look at the contemporary consequences of these decisions in an effort to contribute to our understanding of the ways in which Doha seeks to recover ancient hierarchies, balancing tradition with modernity, local with global. The spectrum shall comprise on one end, a massive urban development scheme to replace the 'Heart of Doha' and, at the other, the concomitant expulsion and relocation of Asian residents to a purpose-built enclave, Barwa, outside the city.

The ethnographic and architectural characters of Mediterranean Islamic cities are well known and well documented (Eickelman 1989:95–125; Hourani 1991:125ff). Less prevalent is the scholarship analysing Eastern Arabian towns and villages; nevertheless we may draw inferences from the broader studies, as patterns in the socio-economic and religious conditions remain the same. Similarly, a great deal of literature exists on the nature of urban households in the Near East and North Africa,[19] and, again, we can confidently make the same leap of applicability to the Gulf. For simplicity I shall refer to Doha and its sister Gulf cities as medieval in form and structure up through their transformation into 'modern' or 'boom' cities beginning with oil exploitation in the early or mid twentieth century. This allows for ease of comparison to other, larger Islamic cities in the Mediterranean Basin for which much literature exists. And it is my contention that much of the scholarship on these cities applies equally well to helping us understand Doha's claim to a traditional-historical orientation, because unlike the Orientalist studies of the early twentieth century that understood Middle East urbanism as general and only in comparison with European cities, the studies cited here focus narrowly upon the ancient and durable structure of household dynamics in the Middle East.

[19] See Lapidus (1967, 1973), Hourani (1970), Bonine (1977), Abu-Lughod (1987), and Bonine et al. (1994) for a detailed bibliography.

Obvious to anyone who has visited an Arab city is its ostensible lack of geometrically coherent planning. Urban grids do not exist in the Middle Eastern city unlike in its European counterparts. However, Arab cities nonetheless maintain their own inner logic. Max Weber (1978:1231ff) pointed out the primacy of clans in Islamic urban social structures and the chaotic labyrinth of streets and alleys reflects the similarly complex social structure of joint families, allegiances and indebtedness. Geographer Paul Wheatley (1976) asserts that inhabitants of the Islamic city understand and experience their circumstances as 'pragmatic spaces' based upon relationships and social processes, and not upon abstract structures, urban grids, signage and public transportation routes for example. We must keep in mind that this generalization applies only to adult males; adult women, married or not, have an entirely different view, understanding their access to the city through elaborate routes for communication with fellow female family members out of public view (Al-Naim 2006). Men, by contrast, understand urban access concentrically, beginning with the house courtyard and increasing outwards to encompass the *fereej* but seldom beyond unless they make their living on desert caravans or fishing fleets. I can therefore argue that the most meaningful analysis of the Islamic city must concentrate on the lived experience of the household, and only secondarily on the larger urban patterns and organizations, which, as such, are neither intentional nor present. The intensely private nature of the Islamic home as contrasted with the public nature of Western cities provides Eugen Wirth (1982, 1992) with five essential characteristics of the Islamic city: the blind-alley structure of the residential district; visual privacy and the inward focus upon the home courtyard; distinct residential districts in close proximity; striving for protection and security within walls; and the souq as a special kind of centralized commercial district (1992:22).

Wirth's urban characteristics are not of equal importance or legibility, however. The key to understanding Doha, and possibly the Islamic city in general, is the institutional and spatial primacy of the joint-family structure. Cities like Doha may seem to lack a structure but they simply have a different ordering principle, less visible in part because of the private nature of the home that radiates out from the private house courtyard domain.

Observing Arab villages in the Levant, Abner Cohen found residential neighbourhoods were organized around a leading patriarch whose influence begins in his often extensive joint household and extends to those of lesser economic standing within his sphere of influence (1965). Cohen described the phenomenon with his term 'patronymic association'. Cohen's ethnographic observation fits well the Doha *fereej* system, described and defined not through fixed spatial boundaries but through patronymic associations. And if ever Doha were to have a founding, pre-eminent patronymic association, the *Msheireb fereej* would be it.

7.5.1 Msheireb

In 2010 Qatar broke ground on a massive urban renewal scheme: Msheireb Downtown Doha. The project's original name was 'The Heart of Doha' but this abruptly changed a few years later to 'Msheireb' – an Arabic word meaning 'a place to water animals', and also the neighbourhood's historic *fereej* name. Its tag line – 'a meeting of cultures not a melting of them', which was penned by the project's principal agent, Her Highness Sheikha Moza, the Emir's second wife – was mysteriously dropped. We can infer that the change of name to 'Msheireb' as well as the dropping of the 'meeting not melting of cultures' subtitle indicate a clear desire to reclaim Doha's Arabian urban roots. However, as my local research participants are fond of saying, the old Msheireb was never solely Arab, welcoming traders from across the Middle and Far East. According to the Msheireb website the new tag line reads 'the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project'.[20] The marketing rhetoric moves the project's philosophy away from cultural integration and towards global environmentalism, but in practice Msheireb is defenceless against the familiar criticism that knocking down buildings and segregating ethnic populations is anything but sustainable or ethical.

Msheireb's QAR 20 billion ($5.5 b) budget will raze 31 hectares of the city's oldest neighbourhood (Figs. 7.51–7.52) and replace it with over 100 buildings forming 760,000 square metres of new mixed-use real estate.[21]

[20] Source: http://www.msheireb.com/

[21] Source: http://mdd.msheireb.com/ (accessed 3 November 2014).

Employing some of the largest and most respected design, engineering and construction firms in the world, including, David Adjay, Allies and Morrison, Gensler, HOK, EDAW, Turner and Arup, Msheireb is one of the largest construction projects in the world. In order to gain control of the land Msheireb Properties through eminent domain evicted nearly 50,000 residents and shopkeepers, most of whom were of Pakistani and Indian heritage and who over decades had built exactly the sort of ancient urbanity the new Msheireb strives to replicate. They were moved to a sprawling 'camp' well outside the city's limits. How ironic that Msheireb's master architects, baptized in modernity and modernization, all the direct descendants of modernism's high priest, Le Corbusier – (to quote Marshall Berman) the greatest metaphysician of the highway system – would re-envision and rebuild in travertine marble and polished bronze much the same, if not urban order, at least urban pattern, in the original Msheireb *fereej* (Figs. 7.53–7.54).

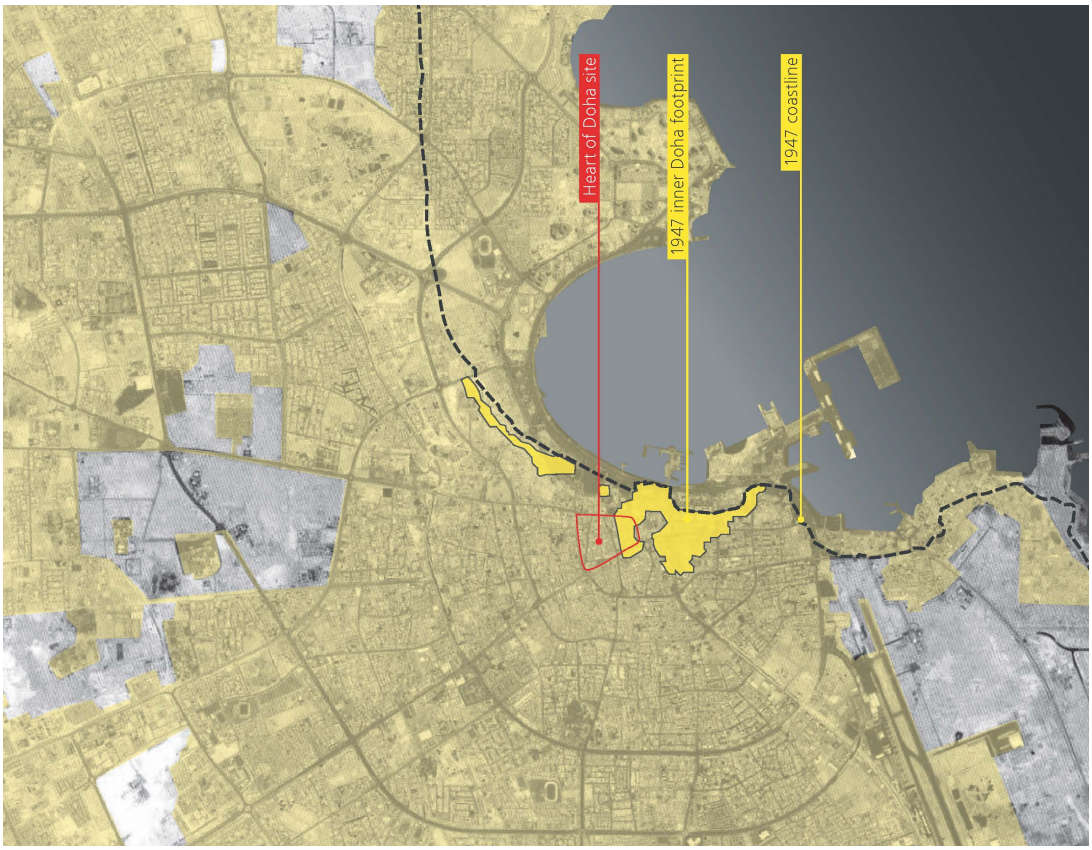

Fig. 7.51. *Map locating the Msheireb redevelopment site outlined in red. The yellow highlighted area defines inner Doha from the 1947 aerial survey. The black dotted line the 1947 coastline (source: EDAW, 2006).*

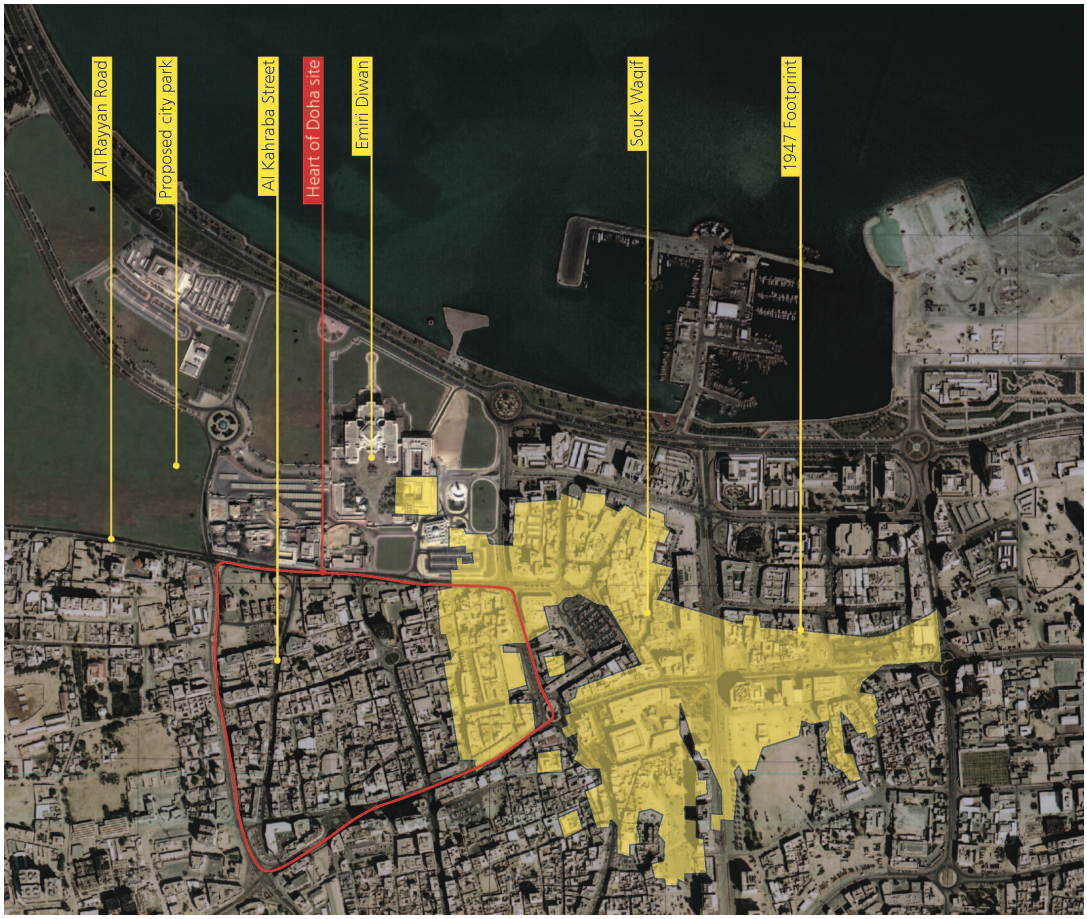

Fig. 7.52. *Detailed view of the Msheireb site indicating key urban institutions and the 1947 city limits (source: EDAW, 2006).*

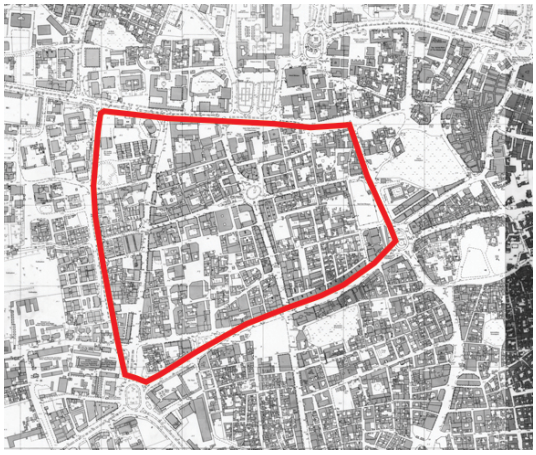

Fig. 7.53. *1980 street plan of the Msheireb fereej, the redevelopment outlined in red corresponds to the digital site plan in Fig. 7.54, note the similarity of the road network (source: Hunting Aerial Survey, 1980).*

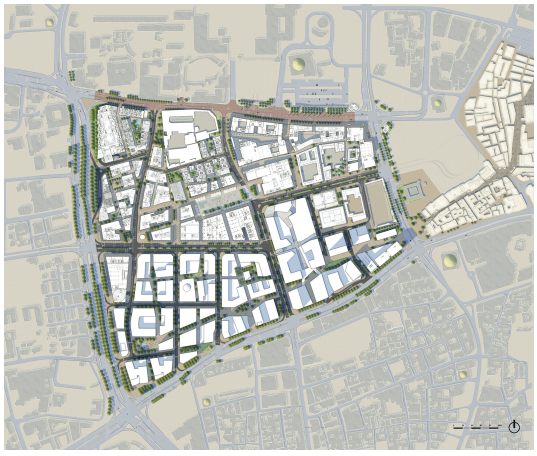

Fig. 7.54. *Msheireb redevelopment site plan (source: Allies and Morrison, 2010).*



Fig. 7.55. *Msheireb prior to demolition in 2006 (source: Msheireb Properties).*



Fig. 7.56. *Digital rendering of Msheireb from the same vantage point as the image in Fig. 7.55 (source: Allies and Morrison, 2010).*



Fig. 7.57. *Msheireb buildings under construction are seen at the end of the street. The surrounding buildings are of the type torn down to build Msheireb (photo by author, 2015).*



Fig. 7.58. *Panorama of Msheireb under construction (photo by author, 2015).*



Fig. 7.59. *Panorama of the neighbourhood opposite Msheireb seen in Fig. 7.58 (photo by author, 2015).*

An odd twist of modernism's 'democracy' is that it should make projects like Msheireb impossible. Without sweeping monarchic power, massive urban renewal is a long, drawn-out affair. A century before Msheireb, French civic planner, Georges-Eugène Haussmann, backed by Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French, ripped boulevards through Paris' medieval neighbourhoods. In the name of hygiene, Haussmann's plan also gave Napoleon military control of the ethnically diverse, migratory population of the slums. Of course Napoleon also sought a capital commensurate with his status (Pinkney 1972). James C. Scott remarks that Napoleon was determined 'to have the new grandeur of the capital city serve as testimony to the grandeur of the regime' (Scott 1998:62). And just like Msheireb, Haussmann's new, spacious and grand urban order pushed the urban poor towards the city's edges.

The twentieth century certainly saw its share of grand urban schemes. In some instances the two world wars created a blank slate for utopian dreams. And in the 1956 plan for Brasilia, any vestige of history was completely ignored and a new capital, in that case hundreds of kilometres from Rio or any coastal city for that matter, was sought. As in nineteenth-century Paris, Brasilia united the political power of Brazil's new populist President, Juscelino Kubitschek, and architects Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa (Holston 1989; Vale 2008). In other instances, city planners took on unprecedented levels of power to reconfigure the city. Robert Moses changed forever the unique, tight-knit neighbourhoods of immigrant New

York by fully embracing Le Corbusier's rational planning doctrine to solve all urban issues through highway transportation (Berman 2010).

In all the examples cited above, not to mention far more totalitarian schemes in 1930s Germany or the Soviet Union, and Msheireb most especially, we see a consistent usage of urban and architectural representation as the mechanism to impose new social prescriptions. Scott notes the ability to impose a sweeping vision touted through the benefits of science and technology is a particular aspect of modernism he calls 'high modernism'. It is the result of three pernicious strands: the administrative ordering of nature and society; the state's unrestrained use of power; and a weakened or disengaged civil society that lacks the ability to collectively organize and resist state planning (1998:88–89).[22] In Qatar's case, as in those of most monarchies, we have the last two strands de facto: a society of subjects serving a king who has unlimited power. I have spoken at length on the first high-modern strand, Qatar's absorption into the technological age; however, new to the discussion is the use of scientism and its representations as a means to social engineering.

Utopian planning schemes throughout history invariably fail. In Qatar's case we see before our very eyes the unintended consequences of state planning. To cite just some examples: marriage and childbirth levels are almost half those of the previous generation (GSDP 2011) – the cause often being pinned on higher education levels for women; and the city's traffic is at an all-time high, with local blogs and newspaper headlines proclaiming 'carmaggedon' and blaming the massive construction required to host the 2022 World Cup. In almost every case where science and engineering were expected to save Qatari society, they only unravelled its very fabric. Progressive state action is met with an equally devastating reaction: the fattest nation on earth – build a new hospital; youth unemployment – invite American universities to instil 'entrepreneurism'; lack of culture – build new museums. And in almost every case the architectural 'solution' is named for the Emir: Hamad Hospital, Hamad bin Khalifa University, Hamad International Airport,

[22] See also the work of Clare Melhuish, Ben Campkin and Rebecca Ross (2014), who examine the use of architects' digital images as a means of political representation to the community at large. Melhuish's unpublished work on Msheireb is particularly striking.

Khalifa Stadium. The only notable structure not bearing the Emir's moniker is the newly completed grand mosque named in honour of the Wahhabi faith founder Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab. The list could be expanded, but the point is that architecture is used to construct new social institutions that are a reaction to yet other grand, utopian schemes, all of them pointing directly to the singular vision of the Emir.

Though the urban utopian visions of Emirs Khalifa and Hamad have largely been realized the corresponding social transformations both intended and unintended fit incongruently within new urban order. Clearly, Qatar's last two Emirs, surrounded by scores of Western planners, policy makers and scientists, have sought technological 'solutions' to what are ultimately ethical issues. The capacity to transform the political and the ethical into the technological circumscribes their urban renewal ethos.

Perhaps palace coups are like campaign pledges: if you don't make good on your promises you too shall soon be out of office. Before the 2013 peaceful (and in the Gulf region unprecedented) handover of power from Sheikh Hamad to his son Tamim, the previous two Emirs had seized power. In both cases a lack of progress was cited as evidence of leadership shortcomings and poor financial stewardship. The Emir's building programmes declare to his people that he is working hard at putting his people first. The city represents progress; the image of tall buildings expresses an understanding that Qatar is technologically modern; the naming gives thanks to a single-minded visionary; the city in other words represents political legitimacy regardless of the social consequences.

So does a scheme like the Msheireb redevelopment mean Hellenism has come full circle? In the transition from Byzantine Christianity to Levantine Islam Hugh Kennedy concludes that

> urban change in the Middle East took place over a number of centuries and … the development from the *polis* of antiquity to the Islamic *madina* was a long drawn out process of evolution. Many of the features which are often associated with the coming of Islam, the decay of monumental buildings and the

> changes in the classical street plan, are in evidence long before the Muslim conquests.
>
> (1985:21)

Kennedy further suggests why public space, so vital in the classical period, becomes moribund under Islam, namely the much reduced size of government, decline of civic involvement by the regime and resulting drop in public participation. In contrast, Kennedy notes, Roman law upheld public property and the city as a collective entity, whereas Muslim jurists generally interpret *sharīʿah* law to first uphold the family and house, permitting the patriarch to do as he wishes as long as it did not harm his neighbours (ibid.). The regime's use of eminent domain to clear the Msheireb site may have harmed those who lived there, but the twin goals of creating a new image of Doha through high technology and traditional street patterns, and energizing Qatari participation in the city's institutions seem to portend a unique mixture of Islamic and modern principles as Doha's new urban framework.

It remains to be seen how the general Qatari population will accept such a transformative, potentially destabilizing urban renewal process. To illustrate, one of my young adult male Qatari research participants (EE) described how as a small child his family would visit his grandfather's abandoned home in the Msheireb district next to Souq Waqif. He said it was his parents' way of reminding their family of their blessings and good fortune, of how far they all had come from fetching water by donkey, he said. When I asked about the 'Heart of Doha', he replied with sadness how his family was forced to sell their ancestral home to make way for the new development. With a sense of irony, admitting to the utter alienation he feels towards his grandparents' Doha, he replied, 'heart of Doha? It's really an artificial heart, isn't it?'

7.5.2 Barwa (where Msheireb's other half now lives)

In contrast to Msheireb's planned irregularity, I shall now look at one planned neighbourhood of regular streets that arose to accommodate those displaced from Msheireb. Examining the Barwa development scheme

necessarily involves a brief excursus into the realm of the so-called 'worker camp'. This topic is again explored in the 'Streets' section of Chapter 9. In the present section I shall constrain the discussion to what I call the 'politics of displacement'. It must be said at the outset that Qatar's treatment of her migrant labour population, together with her alleged support for Islamic terrorists (either private or state-sponsored),[23] are the twin geopolitical criticisms of the tiny state of Qatar. I shall entirely avoid the latter, but in keeping with this thesis' enquiry into the relationship between architecture, politics and ethics we shall address the former through the dialectics of dependent urban planning schemes – Msheireb and Barwa – accommodating respectively the highest and lowest strata of Doha society.

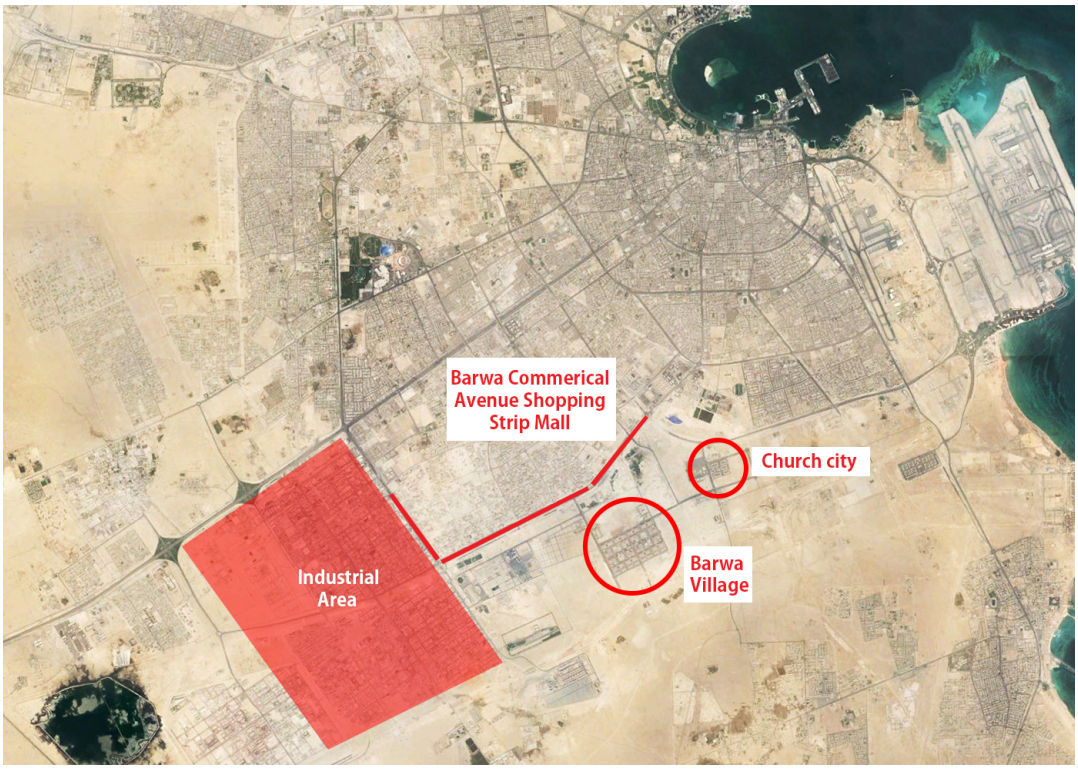

Fig. 7.60. *The 8-km-long Barwa Commercial Avenue Shopping Mall acts as a cordon sanitaire keeping the South Asian migrant worker housing, also called Barwa Village housing estate, Church City and the Industrial Area, home to at least a half million migrant workers out of the city proper (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

[23] The United States Department of the Treasury's published list of Qatari citizens supporting terrorists 'Treasury Designates Twelve Foreign Terrorist Fighter Facilitators', 24 September 2014 is found on their website: http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2651.aspx, accessed June 2015.

Just as Msheireb was breaking ground in 2010 various governmental bodies began issuing edicts that each in their own way all sought to remedy what many Qataris view as the chief failure of Doha urbanism: few Qataris live in Doha and hundreds of thousands of low-paid Asian workers are housed in areas that have suffered decades of neglect and ad hoc construction. In this same year members of the Central Municipal Council (CMC) – a local board of community members who advocate for their jurisdiction to the appropriate government ministries – called for housing 'bachelors' away from populated family areas. Since usually only Qataris and Western managerial expatriates live with their families, in reality the suggestion meant moving Asian guest workers away from the city. The CMC further recommended classifying bachelors into three categories based upon occupation with commensurate housing accommodation in relative proximity to Doha: highly qualified professionals (doctors, engineers); commercial employees (restaurants, shopkeepers) – both of which are permitted to live in or close to the Doha; the third and largest segment is formed by industrial and construction workers, who should be housed in the Industrial Area (Fig. 7.60). At that time there was no law specifically banning bachelors from living within the city's residential areas; building owners were free to rent properties to whomever they chose.[24] In 2011 the Qatar Ministry of Municipality issued an ultimatum to companies and property owners to relocate bachelors from residential areas, forcing their eviction by cutting power to buildings suspected of housing bachelors.[25]

More recently calls for stricter enforcement of Law No.(4) of 1985, which prohibited building modifications without a permit, targeted houses within Doha illegally altered to accommodate multiple families or large groups of 'bachelors', single men living in Qatar under a work visas without their wives or children. A recent article in local newspaper *The Gulf Times* quotes CMC vice-chairman Jassim Al-Malki as saying:

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[24] 'Proposal to House Bachelors Away from Family Areas', *The Gulf Times*, 13 April 2009.

[25] 'Qatar Foreign State Employees Seek Solution for Relocation Dilemma: Inquiry Follows Municipality Decision to Cut Off Electricity Supply to Force Tenants to Leave', by Habib Toumi, *Gulf News*, 28 December 2011.

> The country is going through a massive development process and there are many things which really need to be addressed such as labourer accommodations and shortage of affordable housing units before taking any decisive steps to evacuate violating units. An alternative need [sic] to be devised first and we should bear with the situation for the time being to maintain the stability of the society.[26]

Envisioning the massive displacement of foreign nationals necessary to reclaim neighbourhoods such as Msheireb, Emir Sheikh Hamad had created Barwa Real Estate Development in 2006. According to its website, the name 'Barwa' derives from the Arabic word for 'agreement, contract'. Barwa is 45 per cent owned by the Qatari Diar, the real estate development company in turn owned by the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), often called the 'sovereign wealth fund', which is also developing signature projects around the world, notably London's Shard and Chelsea Barracks.[27] Barwa's twin projects, Barwa Village and Barwa Commercial Avenue, were built together to facilitate the relocation of Msheireb's long-term residents to the outskirts of Doha.



Fig. 7.61. *Barwa Village. The road fronting the housing complex leads to 'Church City', which also contains a sprawling Indian school, and in the other direction directly to the Industrial Area. Across this street the empty lot seen in Fig. 7.64 (photo by the author, 2015).*

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[26] 'Crackdown Worries Expatriates Sharing Villas', by Ayman Adly, *The Gulf Times*, 7 June 2014.

[27] In the economic and political literature the QIA is more commonly referred to as a sovereign wealth fund. According to its website as of 2011 Qatari Diar had over QAR 66 billion (roughly £10 billion) in total asset capitalization, source: http://www.barwa.com.qa/sites/team2/BarwaGroup/AboutUs/Pages/Our-Beginning.aspx (accessed 17 October 2014). The *Financial Times* places the fund's 2015 valuation at $256 billion, 'Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Funds Looks to Diversify in Asia and the US', by Simeon Kerr, 18 June.



Fig. 7.62. *One housing block of Barwa Village. On the left a car park and central mosque (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 7.63. *Barwa Commercial Avenue, an 8-km-long shopping mall (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 7.64. *A 1-km-long segment of the Barwa Commercial Avenue, as seen from the Barwa Village. A typical Friday cricket game is in progress in the foreground (photo by the author, 2015).*

Over 8 kilometres in length and comprising over 1 million square metres of gross floor area (GFA) Barwa Commercial Avenue accommodates low-end retail shops, pharmacies, food courts and entertainment venues. A short distance away, Barwa Village (Figs. 7.61–7.62) measures over 1.8 million square metres (GFA), and describes itself as being 'designed to serve as an integrated workers' city that will accommodate 53,000 workers and employees, making it the Arabian Gulf's largest workers' accommodation'.[28]

When seen together and in close proximity with the religious complex (what locals call 'Church City') and the Industrial Area, the Emir's Barwa developments exactly reflect the sentiments voiced by CMC vice-chairman Al-Malki: If the regime insists on reclaiming inner-city Doha, then it must likewise anticipate and accommodate the impact of urban migration. Because both Barwa and Msheireb are government owned and regime initiated and contingently displace men (nearly all Msheireb residents are male bachelors), we must consider both as what Agamben (1998) might call 'paradoxical spaces of exception'.

[28] Source: http://www.barwa.com.qa/sites/team2/BusinessSegments/QatarRealEstateInvestments/BarwaAlBarahaa/SitePages/Home.aspx (accessed 17 October 2014).

Though Agamben and his philosophical compatriots, Levinas and Arendt, are writing firmly within Shoa's shadow, I shall argue that their writing helps us understand situations such as Doha's. The mere fact that such an analysis occurs well after 1945 is evidence of the need for a radical reconceptualization of the nexus conjoining architecture, politics and ethics. Agamben himself offers a defence for the use of the term 'camp' beyond those of Nazi Germany:

> if the essence of the camp consists in the materialization of the state of exception and in the subsequent creation of a space in which bare life and juridical rule enter into a threshold of indistinction, then we must admit that we find ourselves virtually in the presence of a camp every time such a structure is created, independent of the kinds of crime that are committed there and whatever its denomination and specific topography.
>
> (Agamben 1998:174)

As well as the shared sense of the phrase 'labour camp' in Nazi Germany and contemporary Qatar, the phrase has another sense as a unique political space of modernity and is significant given that institutions such as Barwa at one end of the political spectrum, and Msheireb at the other, arise together with new laws on citizenship and rights of habitation (ibid.:175). Though the Qatar labour camp is not a piece of land placed outside the normal juridical order in Agamben's terms, where inhabitants are stripped of political status and reduced to bare life, it is a spatial locus where politics confronts biology in its effort to define the citizen. Conversely, the city of Doha, too, becomes a vast space of exception through its new laws limiting access and involvements.

To be sure, all of Doha suffers – some would say enjoys – various degrees of social segmentation (Gardner 2010; Dresch 2006). And Doha is hardly unique from a global perspective that sees rising income inequality, the prevalence of gated communities, and a general sense of geographical social injustice (Harvey 2006; Soja 1989, 2010; Tonkiss 2010). Paul Dresch argues that a unique aspect of Gulf socio-spatial segregation is the paradox of, on the one hand, Gulf nationals' intimacy with migrant labourers through the *kafala* system that binds every non-national to his or her employer, and, on

the other hand, their desire to distance themselves from their employees (2006:215). Gardner moves beyond Dresch in asserting Qatar segregates not just foreign nationals based upon ethnicity, each to their own compound, but this same urban spatial discourse regulates and segregates all sorts of behaviours including media coverage, gender proximity, alcohol consumption and property ownership and access (2014).

Anthropologists and sociologists like Dresch (2006), Gardner (2010, 2014), Amin (2012), Sassen (1999) and Wacquant (2008) are each in their own way pointing towards what Agamben believes is a permanent fixture of the modern landscape, what he calls 'dislocating localization': the dissociation of birth (bare life) with the nation-state (Agamben 1998:175). Camps only typify this disjunction between an order without localization and a localization without order. In Qatar's case some 90 per cent of the population have no claim upon the nation but paradoxically are brought firmly under state control by virtue of their exclusion from juridical, physical and social participation. Agamben further argues that such 'spaces' constitute 'the hidden matrix of the politics' in which we are still living, urging us to 'recognize in all its metamorphoses … the *zones d'attentes* of our airports and certain outskirts of our cities' (ibid.:175). In Chapter 9 I shall address directly Doha's emerging 'airport city', but for the moment I wish only to point out that Qatar's 'camps' of dislocated localization span from the most marginalized to the most affluent. In this light the economy's profit maximization comes after the desire for greater efficiency, management and control; where accommodations do not differ in principle, even if more spacious and luxurious.



***Fig. 7.65**. Digital rendering of Msheireb's central square 'Barahat Al-Naseem' or the 'Heart of Doha' (source: Allies and Morrison, 2010).*



***Fig. 7.66.** Construction progress photo of Msheireb's central piazza Barahat Al-Naseem (photo by the author, 2015).*

While Msheireb's materials, fixtures and finishes are exotic, even semi-precious as seen in the translucent onyx façade (Figs. 7.65–7.66) dramatically backlit and glowing at night, one must question whether the experience of Msheireb is altogether and commensurately different than that of Barwa. Both enjoy pedestrian-only streets, piazzas, mosques and a variety of

amenities; both have little connection to greater Doha even if Msheireb is its very 'heart'. And crucially, for Msheireb, the transformation from ancient *fereej* to modern housing, and with it the systematic arrangement of social practices, compels the conclusion that it differs from Barwa only in a manner of degrees. Several notable attempts are made to reinterpret *fereej* life (Figs. 7.67–7.68) but in reality the lack of actual dwelling space, barely 2,000 full-time residents spread over 31 hectares, posits 'city' is an image, a temporary destination for shopping or business, but not a place of sedimented involvements where the notion of dwelling seems unimportant. If anything, this fact places Msheireb further than Barwa into Agamben's sphere of dislocating localization.



Fig. 7.67. *Digital rendering of Al-Kahraba (electricity) Street, so named as it was the first street in Doha to receive electricity in the early 1950s. Ground-floor shopping set behind shaded walkways (source: Allies and Morrison, 2010).*



Fig. 7.68. *According to the marketing brochure: 'Qatari townhouses are clustered around lush communal courtyard gardens, reinterpreting traditional models of community life. Each house has its own private courtyard and basement parking' (source: Allies and Morrison, 2010).*

The ethical philosophy of Doha's displacements and dislocating localizations follow Levinas' belief that 'ethics is first philosophy'. A review of modern moral philosophy is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but the argument that Doha's interpretation of city as a search for an Islamic urbanism appropriate for new historical conditions also discloses the ethical possibilities of conditions for the potential for freedom. The only strand of Levinas' philosophy that I shall draw upon is the ethical foundation expressed when two individuals come face to face (1979). In its most basic terms city and that which is common-to-all provide the conditions for this possibility. Removing whole neighbourhoods based upon class and socio-ethnic determinants, razing their remnants and replacing them with the familiar run counter to ethics of face-to-face mutuality. Michael Morgan points out Levinas' seemingly simple yet deceptively complex idea of the ethical claim another person makes upon me when I encounter his face, what Morgan terms 'dependency-upon-me' (2013). A reciprocity of claims upon each other emerges where one face speaks with authority out of need, and the other who commands remains vulnerable.

Levinas' face-to-face encounter centres upon concrete, situational human involvements. The reciprocal encounter springs from particularity and is

phenomenological, hermeneutical and ethical. If by city we mean that which is common-to-all, then we also mean we are obligated to, responsible for, others who share in what is common. As Morgan says, 'what distinguishes Levinas's view … is that it is deontic; it deals with obligations and ethical responsibility toward others … it is first-personal … situationally embedded' (ibid.:13).[29]

Noted Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan calls for an Islamic reform similarly based upon situational ethics (2009, 2010). While Ramadan does not directly invoke Levinas' intersubjective ethical dependency, he does call for a primacy of ethics through Qur'anic interpretation (*ijtihad*), and that Islam, while universal in nature, must take into account the particular background understandings and cultural practices of any society. Ramadan's situational ethics obviously challenges less tolerant societies but he does wish to push beyond conservative literal interpretations and to advocate a reflective assessment of belief and practice, what he calls 'applied ethics' through intercultural dialogue:

> The point is to compare the country with its own values and to be moving to something that is important. Venture into a dialogue with double reconciliation. The first is to listen to what the other traditions, the other civilizations have to tell you in order for you to reassess what you are doing with your own values. This is the first reconciliation. This is the first self-critical approach. This is so important today in communication. There is no true communication between civilizations without humility, which is the first ethical characteristic that we have to promote.[30]

Ramadan's outlook finds its basis in an often quoted Qur'anic passage on intercultural tolerance: 'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another' (49:13).

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[29] For a deeper understanding of the ethical in everyday social situations see 'The Ethical Content of the Face-to-Face' in the same volume.

[30] Source: http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/thought-leaders/leaders/ramadan-tariq/index.html#section-27953 (accessed 14 October 2014).

The twin developments of Msheireb and Barwa present a paradox. Has the attempt to create the architectural conditions for a 'meeting of cultures' resulted in a segregation anathema to modernity's tolerance of difference, and inconsistent with Islam's history of urban cosmopolitanism?[31] As we have seen, *sharīʿah* provides highly specific yet widely interpretive prescriptions for the treatment of all persons, including foreigners, non-Muslims, women, workers and slaves. Muslim societies throughout the centuries have woven these interpretations into the very fabric of urban architectural and institutional structures. Approaching $10 billion in development costs we must wonder to what extent Barwa Village, Commercial Avenue and Msheireb seek returns on investment in the sense of the Western business model. By stripping away the 'other' we must likewise wonder if the developments have any basis in Islamic juridical or political interpretations. And lastly, with the attempt to unite Western design strategies and notions of 'sustainability' overlaid upon an historic street pattern born from fundamental natural conditions, we are left asking what sort of intelligibility the projects possess? All three questions – the ethical, architectural and political – seem a genuine search for an Islamic city struggling to preserve traditional hierarchies amid a global impulse that levels all meaningful differences.



Fig. 7.69. *View of central Doha from Barwa Village.*

[31] To be fair, developments such as these in the West typically fall under the positive-inflected rubric of 'gentrification'. The chief difference of course is while gentrification may have public policy dimensions it must always abide by economic profit maximization.

Even in its highest achievements art is appearance; the appearance, however, what is irresistible in it, it receives from what does not appear.

- Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

Chapter 8. Negotiating Cultural Differences: Between the Traditional and the Practical

Having looked at five of Doha's durable architectural and social orders in Chapter 7, and before moving on to discussion of Qatar's massive infrastructural projects, I shall, as an intermediary step, briefly examine how the regime bridges past and future, tradition and modernity, Occident and Orient, by succumbing to neither pole in the symbolization of three Islamic institutions manifestly present in the Arab world since the Ottoman period: art (museum), education (university), café (vernacular village). That each of the three also stems from a European style of public culture fashionable since the nineteenth century further underscores how they embody an institutional order vital to urban decorum that also negotiates cultural differences spanning the European and Asian continents. This section stresses how the regime uses these three institutions and their corresponding architectural embodiments in its internal struggle to evolve Qatari culture, and its external striving for international recognition.

8.1 Museums: Art and the Public Sphere

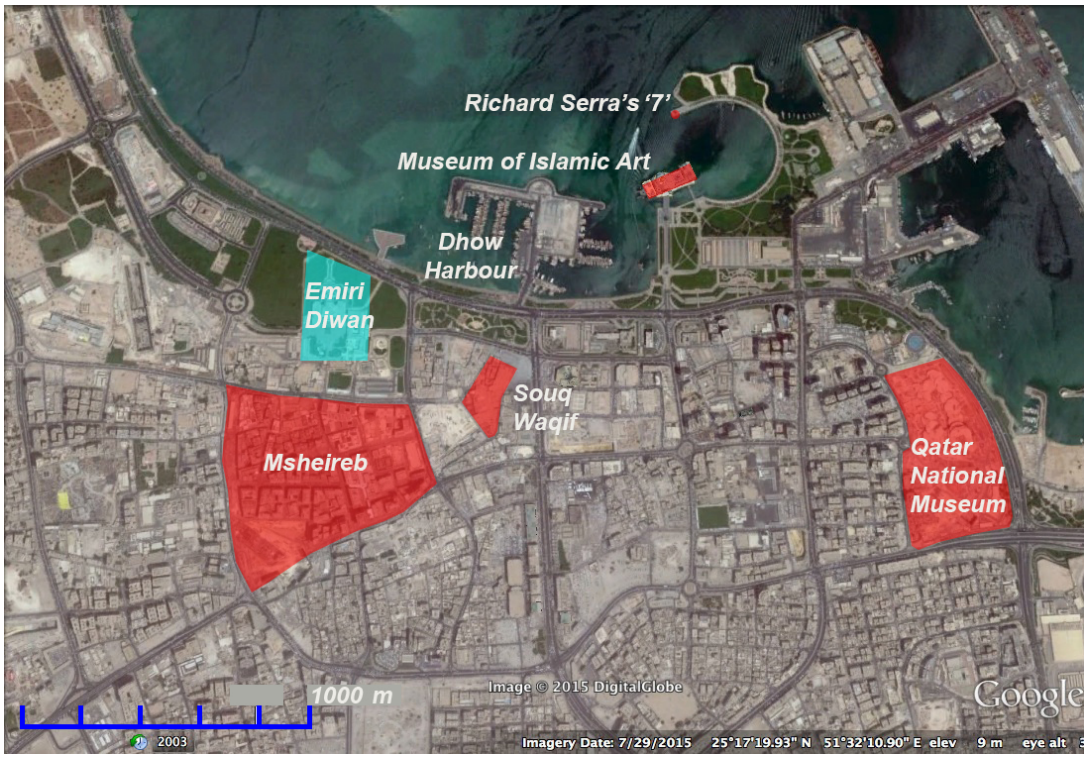

Fig. 8.1. *Map of central Doha showing the close proximity of cultural and political institutions as seen in the Diwan, museums and Msheireb redevelopment, itself home to four new Qatari-themed museums including: the Company House (oil exploration), Mohammed bin Jassim (early twentieth-century city patriarch) and the Slavery Museum (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

Art's private making and public viewing crystallize the dialectic between positive and negative freedom. Both dimensions of freedom describe the extent to which an artist can make and display her art. The measure of this freedom is of course dependent upon situation: what is acceptable in one culture may be abhorrent in another. Given that art creation and viewing exactly mirror shades of public life, from the relatively private studio to the openly public street, one imagines the degree of freedom of expression as being proportionally influenced by the regime.[1] However, this is not the case as evidenced by the 2011 arrest of Qatari poet Mohamed Rashid Al-Ajami, whose poem 'Jasmine' earned him a life prison sentence.[2] The Qatari

[1] See for example Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006); the chapter 'Census, Map, Museum' provides a useful discussion on the political nature of museums and what he calls the 'museumizing imagination' in South Asia.

[2] After much international media attention his sentence was reduced to fifteen years.

state prosecution contends he contravened Qatari law by inciting sedition and insulting the previous Emir, Sheikh Hamad, offering the following lines of his poem as evidence: 'We are all Tunisia in the face of the repressive elite' – a reference to the North African Arab Spring uprisings, and 'I hope that change will come in countries whose ignorant leaders believe that glory lies in US forces' – a possible allusion to Qatar's hosting of two major US military bases.[3] Al-Ajami's defence argued the poems were not recited publicly and not in Qatar, and thus were not subject to sovereign laws. However, acting on his own, even in silence and outside the realm, nonetheless brought swift and staggering punishment.

To make a gross generalization, conservative Islamic cultures, particularly Qatari Wahhabism, tend to shun figural images and embrace the poetic word, yet an intriguing shift of artistic acceptance is taking hold in Qatar. As we shall see, the regime's embrace of highly public visual art that most consider anathema to Islam and its harsh punishment of a national's poetry provide a point of reference to Doha's search for historic orientation among competing global influences. If the Arab Spring's uprisings use of social media and a hashtag of only 140 characters can destabilize an entire region, then we understand better the reaction to poets like Al-Ajami. We might also surmise that the urban use of public art deemed shocking by so many nationals is a mechanism to attract tourists and contribute to Qatari's Western image, or as a distraction from the harsh punishment meted out to a national because of his poetry.

The Al-Ajami case in particular and the acceptance of public art in general illustrate an evolving understanding of how a regime uses its own cultural foundations to manipulate positive and negative freedom. The written word in Islam is above all else sacred. Indeed, the Qur'an only exists in its original Arabic and any translation is merely a facsimile to communicate God's intention. Qur'anic inscriptions, not images, statues or other works of art

[3] Source: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/10/qatar-court-upholds-sentence-against-poet-20131021123723850815.html (accessed 28 September 2014).

have formed the basis of Islamic art history since the seventh century.[4] One reason for the primacy of the word and the disdain for images, particularly of living things, is found in the Hadith, notably:

> The Messenger of Allah [SAW] said: 'Whoever makes an image will be commanded on the Day of Resurrection to breathe the soul into it but he will not be able to do so.'[5]
>
> The Prophet ordered Umar ibn al-Khattab who was in al-Batha' at the time of the conquest [of Makkah] to visit the Ka'bah and obliterate all images in it. The Prophet did not enter it until all the images were obliterated.[6]
>
> The Messenger of Allah [SAW] said: 'Among the people who will be most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection will be the image-makers.'[7]

Doha's almost total absence of chromatic diversity (by law all buildings must be a shade of tan or grey)[8], the near complete absence of visual images, except – ironically – portraits of the Emir, Heir Apparent and enormous photographs of lingerie models in the high-end malls, and the society's deep conservatism in adhering to statements such as the Hadith's condemnation of images make it all the more perplexing why the regime would stand so firmly in opposition to the prevailing culture in choosing visual art to transform itself. Typically a museum is open to all, shared by all, and it represents the tacitly agreed notions of cultural ontology. When state-run, the acquisitions, budgets, building designs and curatorial staff are by definition instruments of the regime. Museums have the flexibility to mirror a culture to itself, import foreign practices or, more radically, to leverage

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[4] Related verses from the Qur'an pertain to Moses and Abraham in VI, 74; VII, 138; XIV, 35; XXI, 57; XXVI, 71.

[5] Reference: Sunan an-Nasa'i 5360; in-book reference: Book 48, Hadith 321; English translation: Vol. 6, Book 48, Hadith 5362 (source: http://sunnah.com/ accessed 24 September 2014).

[6] Reference: Sunan Abi Dawud 4156; in-book reference: Book 34, Hadith 137; English translation: book 33, Hadith 4144 (source: http://sunnah.com/ accessed 24 September 2014).

[7] Reference: Sunan an-Nasa'i 5364; in-book reference: Book 48, Hadith 325; English translation: Vol. 6, Book 48, Hadith 5366 (source: http://sunnah.com/ accessed 24 September 2014).

[8] A confidential memo from the Emir's Private Engineering Office (PEO) citing Administrative Circular No. 69, issued in 2010, reminds architects that all 'Government Building Elevations have to follow the Qatari Architecture theme and exterior paint color shall be painted white and grades (sic) [grey]'.

change within a culture. And this is precisely how Qatar's royal family is using their ambitious museum institution, the Qatar Museum Authority.[9]

The Qatar Museum Authority (QMA) began operations in 2005 through a decree by the previous Emir, Sheikh Hamad, and has since its inception been run by the Emir's daughter, Her Excellency Sheikha Al-Mayassa (Fig. 8.2). Upon its founding, the QMA quickly began buying art, and building its crown jewel – the I.M. Pei designed Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) completed in 2008 (Fig. 8.4). The Museum's wide international critical acclaim centres on Pei's attempt to span the ancient and modern worlds, connecting the Occident and Orient: 'This is first and foremost a modern building – albeit a modern building designed with great sympathy to, and engagement with, Islamic tradition' says *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger (2011).

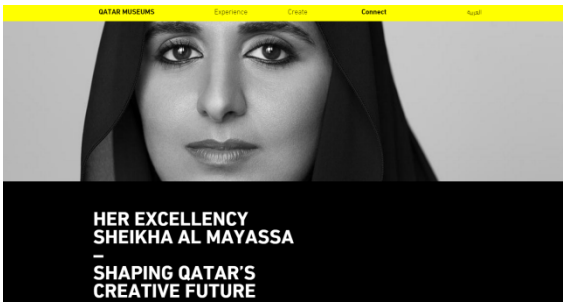

Fig. 8.2. *Photograph of HE Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad Al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums (source: http://www.qm.org.qa/en/her-excellency-sheikha-al-mayassa (accessed 28 September 2014).*



Fig. 8.3. *The ninth-century Cairo Ibn Tulun Mosque (photo by Kris M, creative commons, 2007).*

Pei says he sought to create a building that would embody 'the essence of Islamic architecture'. Lacking familiarity with Islam, Pei 'studied the life of

[9] Recently renamed Qatar Museums in an effort to blur the ultimate ownership and purpose of the state's museums: are they truly governmental as the name 'authority' implies, or held within a semi-public trust administered by the royal family but not strictly speaking an official arm of the regime? I view the move towards obfuscation as an intentional device to repel local criticisms of government misappropriations or, worse, apostasy.

Muhammad … went to Egypt and Tunisia … became very interested in the architecture of defence, in fortifications … the architecture is very strong and simple … there is nothing superfluous' (ibid.). Though Pei does not mention particular buildings of inspiration, certainly Cairo's Ibn Tulun Mosque was a prime source (Fig. 8.3). One of Pei's main challenges was the lack of context; he says, 'Doha in many ways is virginal … There is no real text there, no real life unless you go into the souk. I had to create my own context. It was very selfish'. In this regard, he says, 'the museum is an object … it should be treated as a piece of sculpture' (Ouroussoff 2008).



Fig. 8.4. *Aerial image of the Museum of Islamic Art (photo by the author, 2013).*

The museum, one could say, strikes with a single blow at the heart of Doha's ambition to reimagine and refashion itself. Geographically it sits at the Corniche's apex, a short distance from the governmental centre of power – the Emiri Diwan, the historic mercantile centre of Doha – Souq Waqif, and the *dhow* harbour – a romanticized memorial to the austere life of pearl diving and fishing (Fig. 8.1). Looking north from the museum the modern West Bay skyline is perfectly framed in the terrace arches (Fig. 8.5); looking south you see the constant stream of aircraft arriving at and departing the

new £10 billion Hamad International Airport. Together, all these moments – the commercial, political and historic – orbit the museum, caught in its gravity and its unique ability to unite them.



Fig. 8.5. *The West Bay skyline seen through the arches of the Museum of Islamic Art's outdoor terrace (photo by the author, 2013).*

The MIA is a place for Islamic things. The museum's elegant design, renowned (Western/Chinese) architect and impressive collection support Qatar's and the regime's desire to attract tourists and make Doha 'the cultural capital' of the Middle East; a tall order given Abu Dhabi's plans to build Saadiyat Cultural District, with Guggenheim and Louvre franchises, employing architects Foster + Partners (Zayed National Museum), Jean Nouvel (Louvre), and Zaha Hadid (Performing Arts Centre). In a blunt reply to Abu Dhabi's museum and cultural master plan, Al-Mayassa stated that

> Qatar is trying to grow its national museums through an organic process from within. Our mission is of cultural integration and independence. We don't want to have what there is in the West. We don't want their collections. We want to build our own identities, our own fabric, create an open dialogue so that we share our ideas and share yours with us.

(TED talks, February 2012)[10]

But the fact that Qatar chose to build its own institutions and amass its own collection, spending a reported £650 million per year[11] on acquisitions, speaks to the regime's desire to have complete control over the registers of social and cultural change.



Fig. 8.6. *Exterior of the Museum of Islamic Art with signage for the Hajj exhibition (Source: MIA).*

Two Qatar Museum exhibitions mounted in 2013 perfectly portray the balance Her Excellency strives for. Opening just three days apart in October 2013 two wholly dissimilar exhibitions were widely publicized in Qatar and internationally, and both were critically acclaimed for their scope, ambition and quality. One exhibit was on the Hajj (Figs. 8.6–8.7) (opening 13 October 2013) and was held within the Museum of Islamic Art. It depicted centuries

[10] Source: http://www.ted.com/talks/sheikha_al_mayassa_globalizing_the_local_localizing_the_global?language=en (accessed 28 September 2014) also 'Qatar's Royal Patronage of the Arts Glittering but Empty', by Rooksana Hossenally, *The New York* Times, 29 February 2012.

[11] 'Qatari Riches Are Buying Art World Influence', by Robin Pogrebin, *The New York Times*, July 22, 2013.



Fig. 8.7. *Interior of the Museum of Islamic Art gallery of the Hajj exhibition (source for both: http://www.digitalavmagazine.com/en/2013/10/31/Acciona-integrated-audiovisual-systems-of-the-exhibition-of-the-hajj,-which-takes-place-at-the-Museum-of-Islamic-art/, accessed 2014).*

of artistic expression inspired by one of Islam's fundamental pillars. Ranging from Kufic Qur'ans to abstract art, the exhibition's dark, sombre interior gave a contemplative aura befitting the holy pilgrimage. A few hundred metres away sat the other QM exhibit: the largest retrospective survey of British artist Damien Hirst ever assembled (Figs. 8.8–8.9). Opening on 10 October, just three days before the Hajj exhibition, *Relics*, a 27-year retrospective of Hirst's artistic output, and his first solo show in the Middle East, intrigued local viewers as much as it shocked or bewildered them. Moving beyond the mere depiction of animate objects to their actual usage left an impression upon many in Doha that contemporary art lacks skilful artistic practice and amounts to a self-indulgent curio cabinet.

One difficulty local viewers encounter is their lack of artistic knowledge. Doha's public Arabic high schools have no formal art or art history curriculum. What artistic knowledge a local audience may have comes from widely circulated images of Islamic art, particularly in a political context such as the Dome of the Rock (*Harram Al-Sarrif*) in Jerusalem. Hirst's work simply is unintelligible to nearly all of Doha's local population, which begs the question: why did Al-Mayassa bring it to Doha and in such a public fashion?



Fig. 8.8. *Exterior of the Qatar Museum Al-Riwaq with Damien Hirst sculpture in the foreground retrospective (photo by Prudence Cuming, Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2013).*



Fig. 8.9. *Interior of Al-Riwaq and one of the galleries exhibiting the Hirst retrospective (photo by Prudence Cuming, Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2013).*

The two exhibitions reinforce a generally held understanding uncovered in interviews with my research participants of Doha's inter- and intrastate political strategy: a century-long policy of balancing competing claims. In Al-Mayassa's words, 'The existential and social and political impact an artist has on his nation's development of cultural identity is very important' (TED talks, February 2012). And what better mechanism to exert this force than the museum. Viewing the museum as a mechanism of social transformation (Urry 1996a) operating within Qatari society, and as a culturally legitimizing tool working to change international perspectives of Qatar's cosmopolitanism, we begin to understand why certain artists are chosen over others.

Another exhibition mounted by the Qatar Museums illuminates this selective striving for modernization in image and in reality. The 2012 solo exhibition in Al-Riwaq gallery by Japanese artist Takashi Murakami entitled *Murakami – ego* seeks to create a 'dialog with one's own ego', reflecting the artist's struggle to create a private fictional universe in response to a growing information overload (QMA 2012). Comprising over sixty works from 1997 to the present, the exhibition showcased Murakami's diverse



Fig. 8.10. *A panel from the 2013 exhibition Murakami – Ego by Takashi Murakami (source: QM, 2013).*

artistic practice and painstaking attention to detail. While a viewer may have understood the artist's technique and intention, she would not have known the extent to which Murakami is internationally renowned or controversial. An image from the show gives us a feel for the work displayed in Doha (Fig. 8.10), and for how Al-Mayassa personally welcomed Murakami to the exhibition's opening (Fig. 8.11), and how the exhibition hall, decorated by Murakami, was seen by the public (Fig. 8.13). For those familiar with Murakami's oeuvre, conspicuously absent is the work for which he is most widely known (Figs. 8.12, 8.14).



Fig. 8.11. *Murakami with Her Excellency Sheikha Al-Mayassa touring the 'Ego' exhibition (source: arrestedmotion.com, 2012).*



Fig. 8.12. *Hiropon (1997) (source: the London Modern Tate exhibition by Jim Linwood).*

In her 2012 TED talk Al-Mayassa only mentions briefly the financial dimension of contemporary art: 'You know, art and culture is big business. Ask me. Ask the chairpersons and CEOs of Sotheby's and Christies. Ask Charles Saatchi about great art. They make a lot of money' (TED, February





Fig. 8.13. *Above. The exterior of Al-Riwaq gallery (source: Gion, Designboom, 2012).*

Fig. 8.14. *Right. My Lonesome Cowboy (1998) (source: Sotheby's).*

2012).[12] Apart from knowing that she spends £650 million per year on art acquisitions, which pieces she buys and for how much are closely guarded secrets, except for purchases that claim the title of the highest price ever paid for a single painting, for example some $250 million in the case of Qatar's purchase of Cezanne's *The Card Players*. As *Vanity Fair* points out,

> for its $250 million, Qatar gets more than a post-Impressionist masterpiece; it wins entry into an exclusive club. There are four other Cézanne Card Players in the series; and they are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Musée d'Orsay, the Courtauld, and the Barnes Foundation. For a nation in the midst of building a museum empire, it's instant cred.[13]

Another artist Qatar avidly supports is the Algerian-born French sculptor, Abdel Abdessemed. Like Murakami, and Hirst, Abdessemed's conceptual installations and sculptures make explicit use of the human figure, often iconoclastically, challenging deeply held religious and cultural beliefs specific to Islamic identity (Figs. 8.15–8.18).

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[12] Source: http://www.ted.com/talks/sheikha_al_mayassa_globalizing_the_local_localizing_the_global?language=en (accessed 28 September 2014).

[13] Qatar Purchases Cezanne's *The Card Players* for More Than $250 Million, Highest Price Ever for a Work of Art', by Alexandra Peers, *Vanity Fair*, 2 February 2012.



Fig. 8.15. *Left. Chrysalide, ça tient à trois fils (1999) (source: David Zwirner).*

Fig. 8.16. *Below. Décor (2011) (source: David Zwirner).*



Both artists of course achieve notoriety through auction prices in the millions of pounds, and controversial subject matter. In important ways Abdessemed's Qatar exhibition *L'âge d'or* (6 October 2013—5 January 2014) and public sculpture on the Corniche have raised his local notoriety to



Fig. 8.17. *Left. Coup de Tête (source: Karim Jaafar/Agence France-Presse – Getty Images).*



Fig. 8.18*. Right. Still image from the film Printemps (source: Twitter, 2014).*

eclipse that of the other artists. Two pieces in particular created a heated online debate among locals: the massive bronze sculpture *Coup de Tête*, depicting the headbutt that ended the career of the French footballer Zinedine Zidane in the 2006 World Cup final, and installed in the open sculpture park along the Corniche (Fig. 8.17); and his video *Printemps*, which uses digital enhancement to depict chickens burned alive (Fig. 8.18). A

Facebook post from Mathaf, the Arab Museum of Modern Art and a member museum of the Qatar Museums, said 'The artwork *Printemps* (Spring) by Adel Abdessemed is a FILM. It is an artistic constructed image. The artist uses violent images to denunciate violence.' Both sculpture and film were roundly criticized on social media sites by the Qatari public (Figs. 8.19–8.20).



Fig. 8.19. *Above. Text on the right side of the image translates: 'these things were successfully burned down in the exhibition of the so-called Adel Abdessemed'; on the left, underneath the chickens, it says: 'law, ethics, humanity, and Islamic values' (source: Twitter 2013).*



Fig. 8.20. *Above. Twitter post objecting to the Printemps exhibition (source: Twitter from hyperallergic.com, 2013).*

Many Qataris raised a similar shout at the public installation of 'The Miraculous Journey', Damien Hirst's fourteen monumental bronze sculptures chronicling the gestation of a foetus inside a uterus, from conception to birth, culminating with a statue of a 15-metre-tall anatomically correct infant boy (Figs. 8.21–8.22). In a *New York Times* interview during the furore, Al-Mayassa said, 'To have something like this is less daring than having a lot of nudity … There is a verse in the Koran about the miracle of birth … It is not against our culture or our religion.'[14] Nonetheless, the public's outcry forced Al-Mayassa to relocate the bronzes from the highway fronting the new women's hospital, Sidra, commissioned by her mother, Sheikha Moza (at an estimated cost of $8 billion) to behind the hospital near the service entrance. Al-Mayassa similarly moved Abdessemed's *Coup de Tête* to Mathaf, The Arab Museum of Modern Art, also located on her mother's property, Qatar Foundation (Fig. 8.23).

[14] Carol Vogel, *The New York Times*, 7 October 2013.



Fig. 8.21. *The last of the fourteen bronzes, a nude male infant (photo by the author, 2014).*

Bringing internationally renowned and controversial artists to Doha paints the image of Qatar's seemingly open, tolerant, liberal, multicultural society.



Fig. 8.22*. Two of the fourteen large bronze sculptures in 'The Miraculous Journey'. In the background Sidra Medical Centre (source: asergeev.com, 2013).*

An image exactly opposite to the media portrayal of Qatar's human rights abuses, geo-political meddling and its alleged funding of Islamic terror organizations. Al-Mayassa cannot bring work to Doha so radical or objectionable that everyone universally decries its presence and calls it *haram*, forbidden, and the piece is torn down or relegated to basement storage, labelled an 'investment'. Outright rejection of public art and architecture is no different than bringing work that everyone benignly accepts: both instances have little lasting impact upon the Qatari people. Her gambit in selecting artists, and her mother's in selecting architects, is to push just hard enough to create a lasting range of responses and in so doing

provide a new ground for freedom where voices are debating what is publically permissible – the limits of negative freedom; and the personal choice to view the art or take place in the debate – the limits of positive freedom. The external and internal struggles slot precisely into the two most broadly accepted understandings of jihad: the struggle to create an earthly realm in full adherence to the culture's juridical interpretation of *sharīʿah*, and the internal struggle to lead a pious, obedient life. The sources of Qatar's Wahhabi-inflected interpretations come from judgments and texts originating in daily practice and have long constituted a voice of which regimes have had to take account. They thus represent a counter-culture to that advocated by mother and daughter Sheikhas, which is far more didactic



Fig. 8.23. *Mathaf (museum in Arabic) Arab Museum of Modern Art in Education City, Doha (source: mathaf.org, accessed September 2015).*

and monumental. Richard Serra's monumental steel sculpture '7' (Figs. 8.1, 8.24–8.25) on the Museum's own smaller Corniche more deftly balances the struggle for cultural modernization and international prestige by remaining non-figural, obliquely Islamic in its use of a seven-pointed star found in Arabic geometry, and authored by one of the world's most famous living – Western – sculptors.



Fig. 8.24. *Richard Serra's sculpture '7' in the Museum of Islamic Art park and sculpture garden (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 8.25. *The Museum of Islamic Art park and sculpture garden enjoyed by a great many diverse ethnicities (photo by the author, 2014).*

8.2 Education: Qatar University and Qatar Foundation

To achieve its ambition of becoming a 'knowledge-based' society, Qatar must invest heavily in education (GSDP 2008). The trajectory from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based one – aspiring all the while to preserve memories of a nomadic/tribal culture purified by Wahhabism – requires a fundamental realignment of the entire nation. The first pillar of Qatar's 2030 Vision, penned by the previous Emir in 2008, succinctly charts the regime's direction for his country and his people:

> Hitherto, Qatar's progress has depended primarily on the exploitation of its oil and gas resources. But the country's hydrocarbon resource will eventually run out. Future economic success will increasingly depend on the ability of the Qatari people to deal with a new international order that is knowledge-based and extremely competitive. To meet the challenge, Qatar is establishing advanced educational and health systems, as well as increasing the effective participation of Qataris in the labor force.
>
> (GSDP 2008:10)

There are many things one can say about Qatar Foundation's twenty years, and tens of billions of pounds of investment in education and research, not to mention its architectural patronage. Journalists (The Economist 2013) and architectural critics (Reisz 2014), for example, have described the exclusivity of six American elite branch campuses and choice of high-profile architects for Qatar Foundation projects. Others (Cecchine 2012; Friedman 2012; Kalra et al 2011; Kapner 2013) have looked at the breathtaking ambition needed to create a world-renowned education and research centre in the Arabian Gulf. Western journalists in particular focus on the rising global trend of internationalizing education through the creation of branch campuses in foreign countries and the ontological and epistemological challenges posed by academic freedom and critical enquiry. The former Dean of Carnegie Mellon's branch campus in Education City, Chuck Thorp, described the situation:

> Almost all of them [the students] went to single-sex secondary schools. And as recently as six years ago, the elementary reader in Qatar was the Koran, so students learned beautiful classical Arabic, but they had no experience with questions

> like 'What do you think the author meant by that?' or 'Do you agree or disagree?'
>
> (Lewin 2008)

Like many of Qatar's grand building projects that seek both a social transformation of the Qatari people and a raising of international esteem, 'Education City aims to do for education what Al-Jazeera did for media: achieve unparalleled quality and a global brand, matching or exceeding what the West has to offer, while remaining culturally rooted in the Middle East', remarks the US Public Broadcasting Company's report on Qatar's development. It quotes one of the branch campus deans saying it's all part of Doha's 'grand experiment … to look to the world and influence the world' and eclipse 'sterilized trade capitals, such as Singapore and Dubai, and become a New York, London or Paris instead' (Solman and Collins 2013).

My goal in this brief section is to focus on the political dimension of Qatar Foundation's Education City and its use of architecture as a political tool for social innovation. In keeping with this section's overall theme of using key institutions as dialectical references, I shall describe the conditions of freedom created through two wholly dissimilar institutions: Qatar University and Qatar Foundation.



Fig. 8.26. *Map showing Qatar University and Qatar Foundation's 'Education City' (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

Curiously, Qatar University and Qatar Foundation share the same architectural iconographic origin: an interpretation of Qatar's almost non-existent historic wind tower (Figs. 8.27–8.28). Though prevalent throughout other Gulf countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates, the wind tower was rarely developed in Qatar. Regardless, both institutions chose the wind tower to make intelligible an entirely foreign institution: the university. This is not to say universities are anathema to Gulf Arabs. Many nationals have attended universities in the United States and Europe, and the university holds an important place in the history of Muslim societies.

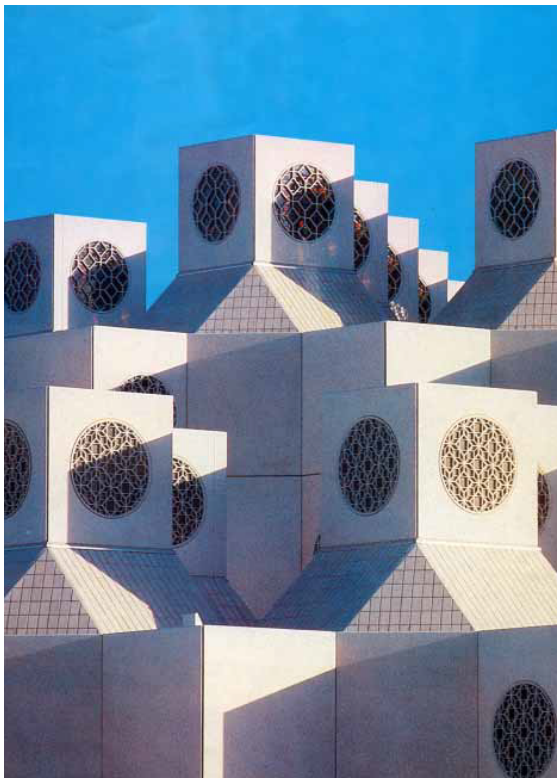

Fig. 8.27. *Qatar University Phase I (source: B. Taylor 1985).*

However, one must keep in mind the exceedingly high level of illiteracy among the Bedouin (Al-Misnad 2008) and even the Emir Sheikh Ali was unable to read or write. The use of a traditional Gulf architectural form, even one rarely seen in Qatar, has the added power of reassuring a basically educated populace that the university shall be very much rooted in local tradition, adhering to Islamic laws and values. But here the similarity between the institutions ends as Qatar University continued in its role of Islamic state university and



Fig. 8.28. *One of the few wind towers (badjir) of Doha, in the house of Mohammed Saied Naser Allah (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

Qatar Foundation embarked on a radical (for a Wahhabi state) path of Western higher education. Both institutions since their founding have continued searching for a balance between Islamic values and cultural traditions on the one hand and modern science and a Western curriculum on the other; and between English and Arabic. Both struggle to find exactly how much change the nation can take.

8.2.1 Qatar University

In 1973, less than one year after seizing the throne from his cousin, Sheikh Khalifa asked UNESCO to assist in building the country's first university. Khalifa, upon UNESCO's recommendation, hired Egyptian architect Kamal El Kafrawi to make preliminary designs for the first two colleges of teacher education. Over the next few years the scope of the university master plan increased dramatically eventually proposing a fully-fledged university campus accommodating 4,650 students in a new location 10 kilometres north of Doha. In 1975 the Emir approved the new plan and authorized QAR 741 million (£127 million) for Phase I. By the time of its opening in 1983 the university had enrolled over 6,000 students (Khosla 1992) and today it has more than twice that number.

It is important to remember the context of higher education in the Arabian Gulf. Prior to the start of oil extraction in the 1950s Qatar had no formal education system; instead, learning to read, write and memorize Qur'anic passages took place in *kuttab* – informal classes in mosques. Formal boys' education came to Doha in 1948, expanding to three government-supported schools in 1954. In 1956 the first girls' school opened, legitimized through a fatwa issued by prominent Qatari scholar Sheikh Al-Mani declaring girls' education consistent with Islam (Al-Misnad 2008). By the late 1970s an equal number of boys and girls attended primary school, studying the same subjects. With education so essential to Qatar's future development it is little surprise that one of the first ministries in Qatar was the Ministry of Education (*Wizarat Al Maarif*) from the mid 1950s (Brewer et al. 2007:20–21).

Turning our discussion to architecture's role in situating education as a driver of massive social transformation we see in Fig. 8.29 from Kamal El

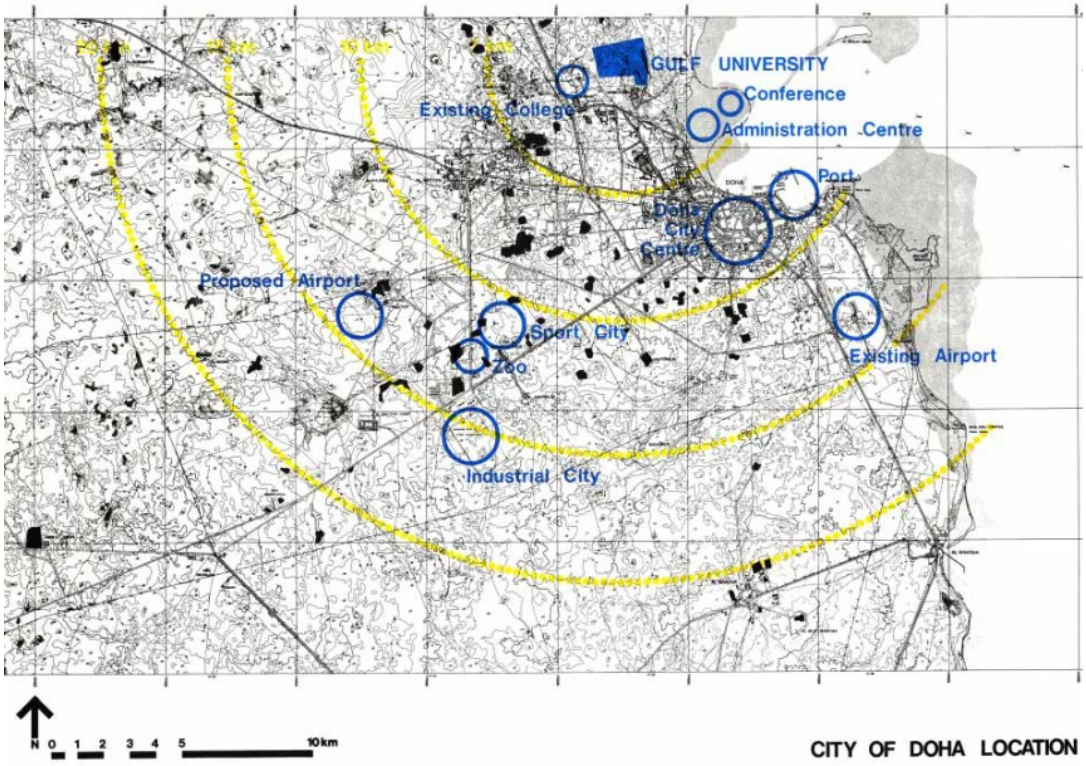

Fig. 8.29. *The 1975 Qatar University master plan by architect Kamal El Kafrawi situating the university relative to Doha's existing and planned major points of interest. Note the circle labelled 'Proposed Airport' is the current location of Qatar Foundation's Education City (source: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 0380.QAT).*

Kafrawi's design report the prominent position of the new university. The diagram depicts the location of the university, which is labelled 'Gulf University', with respect to current and future institutional developments and according to its projected ability to influence Doha's urban development.



Fig. 8.30. *Qatar University under construction in the 1970s. Note the desolate surroundings of the campus (source: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 0380.QAT).*

As mentioned, El Kafrawi's precise architectural inspiration came from one of Doha's very few wind towers, but also from the Egyptian *mashribiya*, a wooden screen surrounding a cantilevered room designed to keep drinking water cool.[15] In the next section we shall see Qatar Foundation's replica, not abstraction or interpretation, of this same image. El Kafrawi's abstraction of the wind tower together with repetitive octagonal geometry creates a sculpturally iconic symbol that seeks to link modernization with tradition. Drawing from Islamic geometry in general and Qatari heritage in particular, El Kafrawi sought to provide a sense of cultural continuity despite the uniqueness and influence of the emerging institution.

Today, Qatar University oscillates between the push of modernity and the pull of tradition. It still keeps a strict gender separation by maintaining both fully functional male and female colleges on opposite sides of the campus. Many of the estimated 12,000 students[16] are first-generation college attendees. As an open access institution the academic standards are exceedingly low but under its former president, Dr Sheikha (aunt to HH Sheikha Moza), the university has embarked on an impressive plan to raise its academic standards and improve its research infrastructure. It is thus all the more puzzling that in January 2012 the Qatar Supreme Education Council decreed that Arabic would be the official teaching language of the entire university, giving departments only nine months to revamp their faculty and curriculum. Students voiced an immediate outcry, asking why, in that case, they had been encouraged to master English throughout high school. At the same time signs began appearing in the women's campus instructing female students on the proper use of the *abaya*, and that wearing it skin-tight was not in keeping with Islam's intentions regarding modesty.[17]

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[15] The word *mashribiya* comes from the Arabic root word *shrbt* to drink.

[16] The figure is provided by a private source within the university.

[17] 'QU Issues New Dress Code for Students', *The Peninsula*, 13 September 2012.

8.2.2 Qatar Foundation

Fig. 8.31 summarizes perfectly this section's, and indeed this chapter's, essential objective: to understand the city's key institutions as dialectical references.



Fig. 8.31. *On the left side of the image is the new Qatar Foundation Headquarters still under construction, designed by OMA; on the right, and a few hundred metres away, the original Qatar Foundation Headquarters built in 1996 (photo by the author, October 2014).*

Qatar Foundation's original headquarters (Fig. 8.33) erected by Sheikha Moza in 1996, the year after her husband Sheikh Hamad took the throne from his father, was her first building after establishing Qatar Foundation with the mandate to devote 2.8 per cent of Qatar's GDP to education and research (GSDP 2011). By contrast, twenty years later Her Highness' new headquarters (Fig. 8.32) designed by Rem Koolhaas/OMA and slated for occupancy in 2016, clearly points in her desired direction for the



Fig. 8.32. *The new Qatar Foundation Headquarters designed by the Dutch firm OMA. The top corner above the zero in the foreground sign is Sheikha Moza's office. The foreground sign celebrates the twentieth year of Qatar Foundation. In the background the Qatar National Convention Centre (photo by the author, 2015).*

embodiment of higher education in Qatar.

According to the Qatar Foundation website, the idea for Qatar Foundation arose early in 1995, when His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Father Emir, shared a vision with Her Highness Sheikha Moza while sitting under a tent at Umm Qrayba Farm. Together, they conceived a plan for the future development of their country that would provide Qatari citizens with a greater choice in education, health and social progress than ever before. They then set about turning this dream into reality and, in August that year, established Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.[18]



Fig. 8.33. *The original Qatar Foundation Headquarters in 1996, one of the first buildings erected in the newly formed Education City (photo by the author, 2015).*

Roughly bookends of Sheikh Hamad's reign, 1995 and today are symbolized in the two architectural interpretations seen in the headquarters buildings. The list of notable architects all contributing to Education City includes: Arata Isozaki, Ricardo Legorreta, Rem Koolhaas, Woods Baggot, AECOM and Cesar Pelli. As the name implies, Education City truly is a city unto itself. Covering over 1,500 hectares, it houses six American university branch campuses, advanced research laboratories, sports stadiums, housing, dormitories, convention centres, a golf course and one of the world's most

[18] See: qf.org (accessed 05 October 2014).

luxurious horse training facilities, all connected by a state of the art light rail system.



Fig. 8.34. *The Weill Cornell Medical School designed by Arata Isozaki and completed in 2003, comprising 39,000 square metres (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 8.35. *On left Texas A&M University in Qatar designed by Legoretta + Legoretta completed in 2007, comprising 61,389 square metres; on right Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar also by Legoretta + Legoretta completed in 2009, 42,946 square metres (photo by the author, October 2014).*



Fig. 8.36. *The Qatar National Library designed by Rem Koolhaas, anticipated completion 2016 (photo by the author, 2015).*

Sheer scale and central location alone tempt one to think such an enterprise will do far more to import Western sensibilities that conflict with Islamic conservatism than anything else. And to a large extent this is true. Adopting an educational curriculum from the United States, with ostensibly the same assurances for academic freedom, unfiltered internet, access to digital library holdings throughout the world, all classes in English and fully gender integrated, make it seem as though Qatar Foundation's alternative to sending college students abroad to avoid Western influence has only expanded the dilemma by bringing the West to Doha and directly permeating the country itself in the form of having Western-inflected teaching on home soil. Though the Emir's sanctioned Catholic Church, Our Lady of the Rosary, forbids any external Christian iconography, Qatar Foundation's Jesuit University (Georgetown) adorns its atrium each winter with a 15-metre-tall Christmas tree. Surely the royal couple is corrupting the – privileged – youth of Qatar, shouts the blogosphere. But are they really?



Fig. 8.37. *Panoramic photograph of Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar on the left side completed 1999 designed by Syrian architect Hazim Abou Nabaa, comprising 8,000 square metres, with Qatar Foundation old headquarters just beyond; on right the original building for Georgetown University Qatar design by Arata Isozaki completed in 2004, 4,000 square metres. Though only ten years apart the two architectural styles point to the iconographic direction Qatar Foundation quickly moved towards (photo by the author, October 2014).*

Education City, renamed in 2012 Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), much to the dismay of the fiercely brand-conscious branch campuses, holds approximately only 2,000 students, barely half of whom are Qatari nationals, the rest are typically born in Qatar to non-Qatari parents, of Palestinian or Iranian origin for example. A paltry number compared to Qatar University's 12,000, mostly Qatari student body.[19] HBKU students are typically, though

[19] There are approximately 7,000 Qatari nationals (born to a Qatari father) born each year, as reported by confidential sources within Hamad Hospital, Qatar University and Maersk Oil.

not exclusively, from the upper class and have long been exposed to Western influence, many spending as much time in Europe or the United States as in their home country. One of the local population's primary criticisms of Education City is of the fences and security gates, which keep everyone out. Despite the many open lectures at Education City the general public has very little direct connection to the campus.

However, at 57 metres in height, the new headquarters is the tallest building in the country apart from the high-rises in West Bay, giving the city a new architectural orientation. Placed along the country's main east–west highway, Dukhan, and directly opposite the Qatar National Convention Centre, the building is fast becoming an urban landmark. A radical departure from the original headquarters' wind tower iconography, modest size and location deep within Qatar Foundation property, the new building clearly articulates who is in charge of Qatar Foundation, and the Western-modernist philosophy it embraces.

The Headquarters' size, central location and pure geometric form help anchor and give scale to Qatar Foundation's previous completed mega

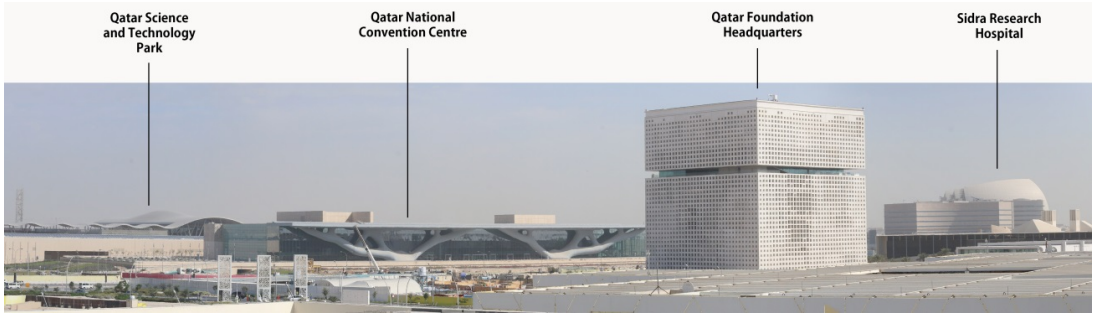


Fig. 8.38. *Panorama view of Education City's largest, most expensive structures. The new Headquarters is easily visible throughout the city (photo by the author, 2015).*

projects.[20] Because a major highway cuts Education City in half, with education on the nearside of Fig. 8.38, and research (basic and applied) on the far side, the Headquarters helps to bind the two halves together keeping within its orbit the many pieces of the organization. On a clear day the new

[20] A confidential source within Qatar Foundation's Capital projects estimates the costs of the surrounding projects in Fig. 8.38 roughly as follows: $1 billion for the Science and Technology Park, $1.2 billion for the National Convention Centre, and, though not complete, Sidra reportedly has cost at least $8 billion.

Headquarters is visible from any part of the city, giving Doha an image of education and scientific advancement to complement the business and economic picture painted by the West Bay skyline. From the Headquarters the dialectic of images becomes palpable in the framing of West Bay by the observation floor of the Headquarters (Fig. 8.39).

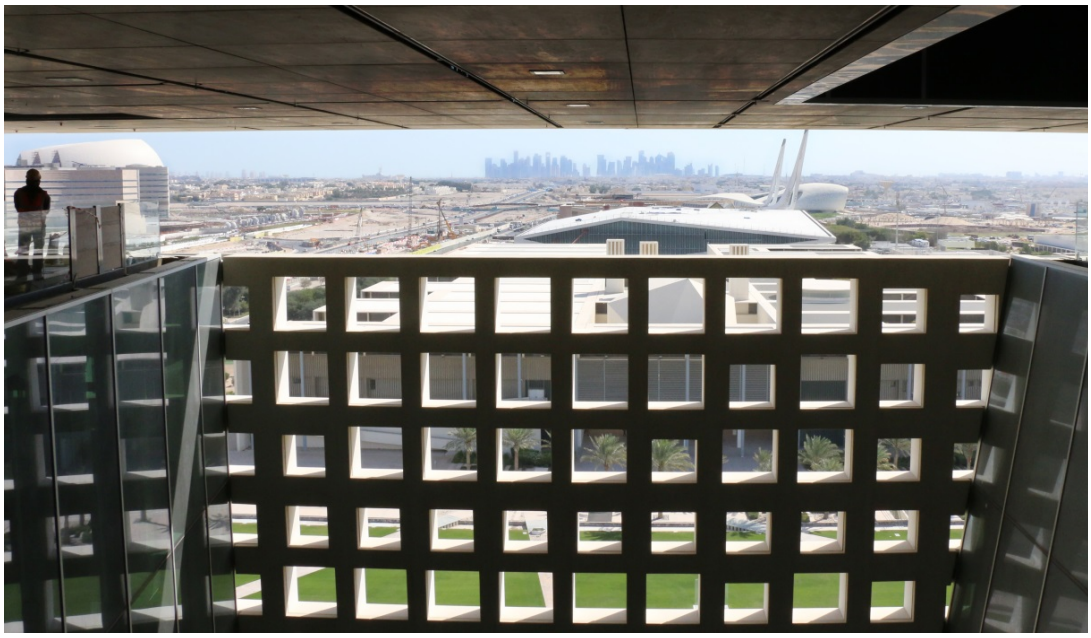


Fig. 8.39. *View from the new Headquarters' observation floor. In the foreground the Weill Cornell Medical School, followed by the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies and its two slanting minarets, and the West Bay skyline in the distance (photo by the author, 2015).*

In a recent series of interviews I conducted with students from Education City none at first wished to discuss the building directly. They understood that criticizing the regime's decisions, and especially the visible expression of its own self, is to criticize the regime directly. Rather, when talking about the campus' architecture several drew a veiled comparison to the Apple showroom in New York City designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson in 2002 (Fig. 8.40). The students described how Muslims, in their view, objected to the use of a cube to sell computers, feeling that the size too closely approximates the holy Ka'ba in Mecca (Fig. 8.42). When asked about the new headquarters, all agreed it bore a resemblance to the Ka'ba but chose to offer no further observations. Conversely, older interviewees vociferously objected to the headquarters, seeing not only a resemblance to the Ka'ba but also an outright challenge to its authority.

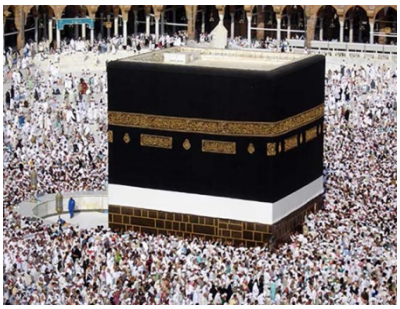


***Fig. 8.40**. Left. Apple showroom, New York City (source: cityup.org, no date).*

***Fig. 8.41.** Below left. Qatar Foundation's new Headquarters (photo by the author, 2014).*

***Fig. 8.42.** Below. The Ka'ba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia (source and date unknown).*





The golden age of Islam epitomized in cities such as Baghdad, Damascus or Cordoba exalted learning. In the sciences, art, philosophy, medicine, languages and foreign relations, Islam's apex of learning looks strikingly familiar to the twin institutions of education and museums run by, respectively, Sheikha Moza and her daughter Sheikha Al-Mayassa. And like the great centres of art, education and research, the Sheikhas are similarly seeking connections to the wider, outside world, fostering internal debate, and struggling to recover cultural pre-eminence in a manner consonant with Islamic beliefs even if the references from which they draw range from benignly local to abhorrently foreign. To the outside world, Education City appears a marvel of tolerance and the summit of a leader's vision for her people. To many Qatari nationals Education City is an elitist china cabinet catering to the regime's clan or leading mercantile families, risking apostasy with each imported textbook. In reality, the grand experiment to refashion a golden age of Islam sits astride both perceptions in its quest to find an authentic orientation in the history of Islam.

8.3 Katara: Image as City



Fig. 8.43. *Map of Katara (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

On the coastal edge of Doha just north of West Bay and abutting the Pearl Island development sits the Katara Cultural Village (Fig. 8.43). Designed by Cansult Maunsell (now part of AECOM) and completed in 2010, Katara covers nearly 100 hectares, whose winding alleyways contain restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries and an open air theatre. Katara combines several urban institutions into one expression of the urban order. Built on reclaimed land, it extends the coastal redevelopment by creating a cultural hub linking the central business district of West Bay to the south with the massive mixed use development island, The Pearl, to the north (Figs. 8.44–8.45). The maze of pedestrian alleyways, and diversity of architectural styles – including a Graeco-Roman travertine theatre (Fig. 8.49), a golden tesserae mosque (Fig. 8.48) and more humble, Gulf-styled stucco and wood beam restaurants (Fig. 8.52), coffee shops and art galleries – are all meant to evoke Islamic culture stretching from Morocco to Isfahan. The name 'Katara' harkens back to the

oldest known name for the Qatar peninsula appearing on second-century CE Ptolemaic maps (it is also the name of Sheikh Hamad's 124 metre private yacht). The post-modern architectural order, the *sharīʿah* compliant atmosphere, Islamic architectural representation and vast parking lot together create a spatio-temporal synthetic worldhood of involvements that says much about what is enduring and what is evolving in Doha's urban order.



Fig. 8.44. *Panorama photograph encompassing the Pearl on the left, the West Bay skyline centre right, and private beach cabanas far right (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 8.45. *A detail from Fig. 8.44 juxtaposing two of Doha's favourite motifs: in the foreground the traditional wooden dhow sailboat used by pearl divers and in the background the modernist skyscraper city, both held together by the Gulf's turquoise waters (photo by the author, 2015).*

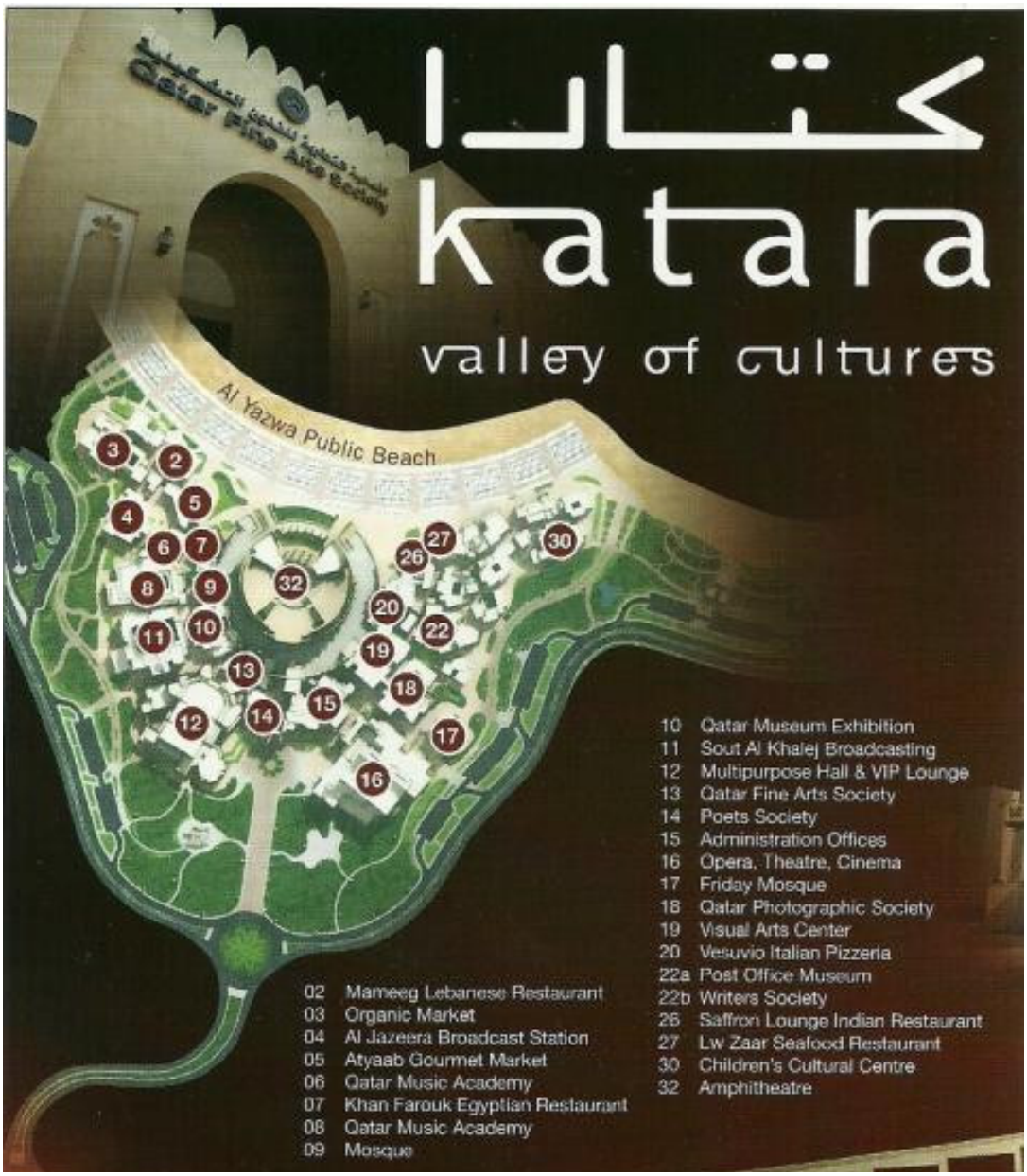


Fig. 8.46. *Map of Katara (source: exploreqatar.com).*



Fig. 8.47. *Katara's colored-tile mosque with West African-styled dovecote (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 8.48. *Katara's gold-tiled mosque (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 8.49. *An alleyway in Katara approaching the main entrance to the open air theatre (photo by the author, 2015).*

Cultural villages such as Disney's Epcot Center exist in many countries, often the legacy of a World's fair, and typically strive to achieve the same goals: to embody the nation's cultural heritage, preserve traditions, attract tourists and promote achievements. And Katara is no different. According to

its website the use of the ancient Greek name, for example, reflects how 'cultural richness plays a very important role in promoting and building the Qatari society. The attachment to our ancient roots together with premeditated modernisation and technological advancement form the solid foundation of Qatari personality and values'.[21]

One can easily forgive the website's marketing rhetoric, but it does, however, succinctly speak to a unique aspect of the village when viewed against similar developments in other countries. Often cultural villages are placed well outside city centres, needing a large area to accommodate their many pavilions and venues. Also, cultural villages act as a foil for rapid urban developments in the capital cities, and preserve ancient customs embodied in dress, food and architecture. By contrast Katara seeks to become a new urban centre, melding modern technologies with heritage iconography. Put another way, Katara seeks not to preserve but rather to create its own urbanism.



Fig. 8.50. *The artificial sand dune was created from the excavated earth to build Lusail Harbour a few kilometres to the north. The tents atop the dunes are rented for private parties. The four-lane motorway leads to Katara's only two entry points. It is on this road and the adjoining slip road fronting the tile mosque that cars of all types will begin 'cruising' as the sun begins to set (photo by the author, 2015).*

At first glance Katara resembles planned communities following the so-called 'New Urbanist' principles. According to the New Urbanist Charter,

[21] Source: http://www.katara.net/english/about-katara/about-us/ (accessed 6 November 2014).

planned neighbourhoods should welcome diverse functions and populations; prioritize the pedestrian while accepting the automobile; be shaped and defined by public spaces and community institutions all framed by a design vocabulary that celebrates local history, ecology and building practices.[22] In the latest phase of development Katara will expand to cover the adjacent artificial sand dunes with a variety of housing types inspired by foreign cultures. Here, Katara complements its Arabian pot-pourri of public spaces and shared institutions with a Disneyesque collection of private dwellings drawn from vernacular architecture around the world.

In keeping with this chapter's attempt to understand Doha's urban order as a set of dialectical references, it is helpful to briefly recall the discussions of Msheireb's urban redevelopment and the themed shopping mall. In many respects Msheireb follows the New Urbanist manifesto, particularly in its



Fig. 8.51. *Katara's animal hospital in the shape of a traditional falcon hood used to blind the animal's sight before a hunt. In the foreground muscle cars, convertibles and exotics are beginning their evening cruise on Katara's main thoroughfare (photo by the author, 2015).*

mixed use programme, recrudescent irregular street pattern, pedestrian primacy and hope for environmental sustainability. However, Msheireb's scale (31 hectares) and modernist building vocabulary fall well outside New Urbanist precedents such as 'Celebration' and 'Seaside' communities in Florida. Msheireb's emphasis on walkability and shared public spaces within the heart of Doha attempts to extend the shopping mall model so prevalent across the city. Msheireb, like its mall counterpart, will share in

[22] From the Charter of New Urbanism, http://www.cnu.org/charter (accessed 6 November 2014).



Fig. 8.52. *The restaurant Mamig, a fusion of Lebanese and Armenian cuisine.*

the franchise phenomenon described by Easterling as spaces of registered trademarks whose ideologies and practices form a landscape of persuasion (2005). Since both mall and Msheireb are commercial real estate ventures we expect rampant consumerism to provide the return on the investment. But Katara's formula and experience are altogether different.



Fig. 8.53. *Qatari women sitting along Katara's corniche (photo by the author, 2015).*

Many of my Qatari male research participants in their twenties or thirties and all of my Qatari female participants extol Katara. They enjoy the ability to walk outside, stroll along the waterfront and

wander between the pavilions. The absence of alcohol and Western brands provides a level of Islamic comfort seldom found in Doha. For their part, young Qatari males enjoy 'cruising' Katara's parking lots and lanes beginning at twilight and stretching well into the night. As pointed out elsewhere, and obvious in the photographs in this section, Qatari men and women have little opportunity for fashion accessories. Men have only their *thobe*'s cufflinks, one chest pocket for a fountain pen and a wrist for a watch; women, only shoes, handbag and sunglasses. But the automobile gives both sexes, the young man in particular, the greatest opportunity to display wealth and bravado. Though Katara's main road is a short 2 kilometres long it nonetheless grants ample opportunity to spin tires, rev engines and make endless laps between exits on the north and south edges. The small drop-off lane in front of the tile mosque and dovecote, chock with evening traffic, allows one to admire and be admired. In a city seeking to find its orientation in history, Katara is a zone of exclusion built through the architectural post-modern interpretation of Muslim societies. The architectural styles are what any Western visitor might hope to expect when visiting the mysterious and exotic East. And having lived with various modernist styles the last half century it similarly fulfils what Qataris might hope and expect their city represents. The double dialectic fulfils exactly what Edward Said describes as 'orientalizing the oriental' (Said 1979:49). It also creates exactly what it hoped, and what Msheireb originally envisioned: a meeting not melting of cultures.



Fig. 8.54. *Qatari boys exiting the tile mosque (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 8.55. *All the images in this series were shot at Katara's main drop-off location: the tile mosque and dovecote. In this image all manner of cars, from the ubiquitous Toyota Land Cruiser, to convertibles, to sports cars are beginning their Thursday evening cruise in the drop-off lane (all images by the author, 2015).*

As the name implies, cultures meet in the Katara Cultural Village through encountering different cultural artefacts and expressions. Similar to Moscow's VDNKh, the 1930s Russian Exhibition Centre, which showcases the achievements of the Russian Federation States, Katara's architecture and choice of restaurants mimic examples from across the Muslim world. But, crucially, Katara also brings creative expression from non-Muslim societies such as the Doha-Tribeca Film Festival, Cirque du Soleil and local and international art, music and design exhibitions. Katara, like many of Qatar's new cultural institutions that feature Western artists, on the one hand receives international recognition from Western critics, while on the other strident objections from nationals that local artists should be supported, not Hollywood. In a pattern often repeated throughout the Gulf, Western imports attract international attention and provide managerial training, but once in place the consultants are asked to leave.



Fig. 8.56. *A custom-painted iridescent blue Mercedes Benz.*



Fig. 8.57. *One of the many exotic vehicles beginning the evening cruise.*

Katara's opening in 2010 coincided with the first Doha-Tribeca Film Festival. Robert De Niro gave the event and the collaboration instant credibility. Four years later, firing Mr De Niro and dissolving the partnership, in the words of Doha Film Institute's new director, Abdulaziz Al-Khater, gave Katara 'the approach to defining a new niche for the film festival, which will serve as a platform for strengthening a home-grown film industry as well as continuing to build our international relations to promote Qatar as a cultural hub.'[23]

Fig. 8.58. *One of the many exotic vehicles beginning the evening cruise.*



Katara, like the other architectural situations examined in this chapter, adds an additional contour to our chart of Doha's urban order. Its use of history, embodied in architecture and inscribed in cultural practices is both an intensive and extensive expression of its search for an orientation caught between the pull of tradition and the push of modernity; between what Qatar seems to be and what it is; between the local and the global. The architecture, like a camera obscura, projects an image of the durable Muslim

[23] 'Tribeca, Doha Film Festival End Partnership', by Nick Vivarelli, *Variety*, 30 April 2013.

society upon itself. And, conversely, like the camera lucida, projects that interpretation back out to all who encounter its terrain.[24]



Fig. 8.59. *Young Qatari female walking the winding alleyways in Katara (photo by the author, 2015).*

[24] I am indebted to the late Jay Fellows for the metaphoric use of the two optical instruments. For his own treatment see *The Failing Distance: The Autobiographical Impulse in John Ruskin*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.

I think that cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object.

– Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*

Chapter 9. The Practical City and the Modernist Image

Having looked at five of Doha's durable architectural and social orders in Chapter 7, and the dialectic between traditional articulations embodied in modernist symbolizations in Chapter 8, I shall conclude this part of the thesis with a discussion of the city's massive infrastructural projects. This section stresses how that which is typically hidden, yet vitally necessary for any city's functioning – infrastructure – is prominently on display as fact and symbol.

Much of the contemporary enquiry into the nature of cities arises from the theory that modern cities are explainable as the consequence of a system of flows. Unravelling human, financial and intellectual flows, so some such theorists contend, will explain urban forms, and institutional functions. The leading proponent of global city theories, Saskia Sassen, sought to give urban experts and the general public 'an x ray of the changes they can see on the street' (2001:xviii). At the risk of sounding anti-theoretical, pedestrian or literal, I am adopting the attitude that to understand the local manifestation of global forces upon Doha's streets, as Sassen says, we must see intimately how life is lived upon its streets, and not, as Sassen suggests, from the perspective of macro-economic datasets.

One notion of the global city model and its accompanying hypothesis I wish to challenge is that contemporary urban life is shaped by mobility, pitting

the global against the local as the defining characteristic of urban development (Appadurai 1996; M.P. Smith 2001; Urry 2000). Any theory of mobility, particularly at a global scale, must have at its base a concept of network. As an originator of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), Latour (2007) offers many urban social theorists the opportunity to rethink the nature of the structure of dependency of actors, what he terms 'networked'. The analysis of Doha's infrastructure, as seen from the point of view of several social segments, follows ANT in the desire to avoid assuming in advance a social explanation. However, in parting ways with ANT I neither wish to restore social science to its empirical foundations nor posit that urban life is governed by naturalistic systems.[1]

Flows of course can be taken literally to mean systems of urban circulation. Street networks, subway systems, bus routes; every mode of transportation, be it physical or electronic, has its attendant impact upon the urban order. An analysis of each system might yield a picture of the city's minutest rhythm and its grandest scale. The discrete nature of infrastructural systems led Lefebvre (2008, 2009,) to assert that movements bind urban space. Even in the most private of places we are still connected to each other through our urban circulatory systems: for example how one's toilet is ultimately connected to every other urban toilet, to the city's supply of water and conduct of waste, and ultimately to the political and administrative apparatus in charge of the whole network.

With the exception of Hamad International Airport's busy daily schedule, Latour's detailed account of urban rhythms governed in bureaucratized time, such as train timetables or fixed bus routes, figure little into Doha's complexion (Latour 1997).[2] Though, one can still readily discern the larger rhythms of daily exchange on almost any Doha street when experiencing the intense and sudden spike in traffic during rush hour, the constant

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[1] Rykwert (1988), responding to criticism by Aldo van Eyck, reminds us of something architects seem to have forgotten: 'that the city was not just a rational solution to the problems of production, marketing, circulation and hygiene – or an automatic response to the pressure of certain physical and market forces – but that it also had to enshrine the hopes and fears of its citizens'; a notion derived from Aristotle's *Politics* where the city is not just for the distribution of goods and prevention of crime. From the preface to the paper edition, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988.

[2] Following Agamben, the coherence of the urban plan is systematic, a co-ordination of systems, rather than practico-religious.

movement of heavy construction equipment and large lorries never ceases, day or night. The only time traffic diminishes is on Friday mornings – the week's holy day – during hours of *khuṭbah* mosque attendance. Other quiet seasons are Christmas, when most Western expatriates leave on holiday, or the month of Ramadan, again, when most city Muslims observe shortened work hours. Alongside the city's architecture, the daily driving rhythms are the most visible, experiential instantiation of modernity and its perceived nihilistic failure: that certain times of the day or year are simply more sacred and deserve a wholly different attitude stems from Doha's Islamic nature and these times are most under threat (C. Taylor 2007).

The erosion of hierarchical time to the times of global affairs, where anything can and does occur at any time around the clock is Doha's greatest urban transformation and what many research participants perceive as the city's most virulent acquired Western disease. For example, without regard to age or gender, I often hear how the mobile phone has profoundly altered familial interaction particularly the time-honoured tradition of spending Friday afternoon with one's family, friends and neighbours. Not long ago almost any other pressing obligation would simply wait for a time after the Friday meal. Today, the mobile phone's ability to instantaneously connect anyone with anyone, regardless of local time zone or geographical distance, competes with Doha's ancient practice of face-to-face communication within the patronymic house. Communication's distanciated instantaneousness now takes precedence over the deliberate and increasingly felt laboriousness of visiting with family.

9.1 Streets

Upon leaving the airport one always enters the city of Doha in a car. The first impression of the city is of a sprawling, chaotic, traffic-choked maze of streets, nearly all of them broken or under construction. Lanes quickly disappear behind orange-striped barriers with barely a warning. Backhoes and bulldozers busily widen streets, exchanging the British-planned roundabout for the American-styled multilane turn-only intersection, or a favourite Middle Eastern amalgam: the multilevel, multilane, roundabout-

flyover, complete with traffic lights and traffic cops. To be sure, Doha's residents spend a high percentage of their day in cars, thrown together upon the city's streets.

Though the roughly 2 million city residents all share the motor vehicle as their only form of transportation, each does so for very different reasons, and each social segment and its associated vehicle illustrate the highly differentiated social structure of the city. The rhythms of daily life viewed from the driver's seat chart the edges of social interaction: which places are accessible, what is shared and common-to-all, what counts as important, which forms of freedom are evinced and the relationship between public and private are all on display through an examination of how Doha's residents take to the streets in their cars.

Sociologist John Urry points out that despite the automobile's transformation of our planet's physical landscape, and humanity's social construction, sociologists have remained neutral on the car's influence, adopting the premise that contemporary social patterns are inevitable regardless of the technology. Urry takes exception to this stance saying, 'the car's significance is that it reconfigures civil society involving distinct ways of dwelling, travelling and socialising, in and through, an automobilised time-space' (2000:95). Generally, the automobile paradoxically grants a coercive freedom. On the one hand, road networks grant access to every urban space, at any time, any speed and with anyone the driver chooses. On the other hand, automobility forces a self-propagating spatial segregation resulting in an increasing expansion of road networks. Families live further apart, employees live further from the workplace, leisure and shopping develop where land is cheapest and infrastructure least developed, all of which forces people to endure longer hours in their cars stuck in traffic (Urry 2000; Thrift 1996; Amin and Thrift 2013).

Life confined within the automobile exposes another sociological phenomenon, described by Goffman as performative (1956). Using dramaturgical metaphors, Goffman understands situational social action as the structured arrangement of actor, audience, stage, props, masks and

costumes all working within and reflective of a culture's normative behaviours. Performances may range from Durkheimian (1984) ceremonies expressive of a community's moral values (Goffman 1956:23) to informal pedestrian encounters. In either case Goffman's performances refer to an individual's activity during specific circumstances and before a particular audience. Any performance requires a stage and one typically imagines performers to enter and exit at particular times, their actions juxtaposed against a static backdrop. Goffman contends social action is similarly enacted, and only in special circumstances such as funeral processions or civic parades does the scenery move with the actors. Not so in Doha.

As we shall see in this section's situational studies the automobile communicates an urban actor's presentation of himself to others, the ways in which he controls how others understand him, and the expectations, limits or excesses of his behaviour during his driving performance. The car as costume, the city as backdrop, all in constant movement, flux and change, highlight a unique facet of Doha's rapid development and the phenomenology of its urban experience. The city performs through its constant interchange of architectural and infrastructural actors; the inhabitants traverse the moving backdrop in a unique choreography that says much about the limits and possibilities of urban civic discourse.

The essential aim of this section is to uncover two unique experiences of Doha's urban order: one, the loss of hierarchical time within a society that until very recently held a sacred-time ontology; and, two, sedimented horizons of involvement occurring within and among a referential totality in constant flux.

9.1.1 Ungrounded Familiarity

One of the most phenomenal experiences we have of Doha is what I shall call 'ungrounded familiarity'. Drawing upon Martin Heidegger's understanding of familiarity – which is another way of saying the experience of disclosedness – Doha's particular situation brings to light two crucial qualities of twenty-first-century urbanism: dislocated 'worldhood'

experienced through the body's involvement with the car; and the rapidly changing physical world of the city itself. Correlatively, the body is to world, as car is to city.

In both *Being and Time*, first published in 1927, and the essay published from Heidegger's course at the University of Marburg in the summer of 1925, by many accounts an early version of *Being and Time*, we see his working out of the problem of familiarity in regards to what sort of activity disclosing is and how it relates to discovering. Disclosing is understood as *Dasein*'s use of available equipment, which can only be used against a referential whole, what he calls 'familiarity' in the 1925 lectures:

> The question is how the world shows itself in everyday concern … The worldly is encountered as itself always *in and as a reference to another* … These referential relations are such that in them a manifold of environmental things shows itself, for example, a public square with its surroundings, a room with its furnishings … Such an environment of the nature of a closed referential totality is at the same time distinguished by a specific *familiarity*. The closed character of the referential whole is grounded precisely in familiarity, and this familiarity implies that the referential relations are *well-known (bekannt)* … the references are precisely the *involvements (Wobei)* in which the concernful occupation dwells; it does not dwell among isolated things of the environing world and certainly not among thematically or theoretically perceived objects.
>
> (Heidegger 1985:186–187; emphasis original)

Thus, the ability to cope with rooms and furniture, my grasp of any situation, does not stem from a set of inner beliefs or suppositions, but rather from acquired skills that are available in the culture. A tacit familiarity exists when the entire situation, the referential whole, is encountered through the conditions and possibilities of *phronesis*, knowing how to act, responding appropriately in any circumstance. Heidegger describes the situational comportment in *Being and Time* as the 'familiarity in accordance with which Dasein … "knows its way about" in its public environment' (Heidegger 1962:405 in Dreyfus 1991:103). In *Basic Problems* Heidegger refers to the constantly engaged manner of skilful coping as the 'site of practical circumspection … our practical everyday orientation' (Heidegger 1988:163 in Dreyfus 1991:103). As a fundamental activity of daily

existence, familiarity is an aspect of what Heidegger calls being-in-the-world. 'Any concern is already as it is, because of some familiarity with the world … Being-in-the-world … amounts to the nonthematic circumspective absorption in the references or assignments that make up the availableness of an equipmental whole' (Heidegger 1962:107 in Dreyfus 1999:104). The essence of this section is an analysis of the motorized vehicle (car, truck, bus) as the urban 'equipment' par excellence, which allows absorbed coping to take place against a background – a referential totality – of the urban topography. The phenomenon is deepened, however, through Doha's constantly evolving architectural background.

Because we are familiar with equipment, hammers, cars, and the referential whole, the workshop, the city, we can make judgments about the appropriateness of tools, and actions. Now, I invoke Heidegger's phenomenology to ask what might our experience be when the equipment, references, totalities and familiarity are in constant flux? For such is the case in Doha. This is the larger question asked in this section: in what ways is the city of Doha experienced and understood as a constantly shifting referential totality? How does this phenomenon affect our familiarity and ability to get a maximum grip on the perceptual whole? This is what I referred to above as ungrounded familiarity.

The descriptions below tell us how particular segments of Doha's society experience their city as ungrounded familiarity. Each story uses a stereotype that gives us a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the typically recurring events particular to Doha, and perhaps shared in similar cities undergoing rapid transformation.

The stereotypes are all of young men who spend most of their day driving. What makes the driver an interesting study is that he is at once a permanent and ubiquitous fixture of Doha's urban terrain, but also an insightful agent of the rapid urbanization phenomenon, of what it is to have a horizon of a shared world in constant flux, and, crucially, from a perspective of the moving vehicle where the horizon is also rapidly unfolding.

9.1.2 Of Cars and Men

Doha in recent years has become well studied, due in large part to the regime's dramatic performances on the world stage, ranging from art buying to geo-politics (Fromherz 2012; Gray 2013; Kamrava 2013; Salama and Weidemann 2013; Al-Maria 2012; Elsheshtawy 2011; Davidson 2008).[3] Similarly, the city's penchant for hyperbolic, hyper-paced construction projects – for example, some US$200 billion in the next few years to host the FIFA 2022 World Cup – also captures headlines and focuses attention on related issues of labour migration, commodity flows and rapid urbanization, to paint the themes with a broad brush. However, one interesting phenomenon is known all too well to every visitor and resident, yet hardly receives mention in the literature: the experience of all this new infrastructure. Aside from the odd popular blog and enduring anecdotal conversation that all Doha residents seem to enjoy, it is at least as important a revelation of what twenty-first-century urbanisation is 'really like' as the more celebrated, explicitly political or monumentally architectural phenomena. As much as other cultures surface in their particular institutions, much of Doha surfaces on the roads. For while ostensibly they are simply about transportation, in actuality they are about masculinity.[4]

To anyone who has come to Doha for even the briefest visit, the volume of vehicles cannot be ignored. The Qatar Statistics Authority reports 8,121 new vehicle registrations for just the month of January 2014, a staggering 100,000 additional vehicles on Doha streets per year, an 8 per cent annualized

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[3] Al-Maria's fictionalized autobiography (2012) provides a provocative insight into the challenges that confront Bedouin tribes faced with rapid urbanisation. As a Qatari-American, Al-Maria also reminds us of the difficulty and limitations faced by anyone conducting ethnographic field research in a highly traditional, gender-segregated, honour-shame society. See also *Cities of Salt* (1989) by Abdelrahman Munif, trans. Peter Theroux, whose fictionalized history of how oil discovery in the Gulf forever ended Bedouin nomadic village life. This book is inexplicably banned in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar's *Qatari Voices* (2010) and *Love Comes Later* (2012) add to our understanding through a first-person narrative of the challenges faced by Qatari youth, particularly women.

[4] Much of this chapter rests upon the earlier anthropological field work of Geertz, Dresch, Lévi-Strauss and Evans-Pritchard. In particular, the notion of 'thick description' is drawn from Clifford Geertz's, *The Interpretations of Cultures* (1973); Levi-Strauss' field work in Brazil contained in *Tristes Tropiques* (2012); Paul Dresch's *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (1989) provides insight into the connection between language and equipment in the chapters 'The Language of Honor', and 'Tribes and Collective Action'. While a good bit older, an important anthropological contribution to method and description is found in E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (1940). All four sources provide important contributions to masculinity in society and are crucial in this chapter's urban analysis.

growth rate of new vehicles.[5] Figures for the aggregate number of vehicles in Doha or the ratio of vehicles per capita are not officially available. However, combining previously published data I estimate Doha's population in March 2014 as roughly 1,700,000 with a corresponding total vehicle count of 1,225,000.[6]

Also unforgettable to any Doha visitor is the intensity of driving. In addition to the new cars added to Doha streets in January 2014, during this same period Qatar experienced 397 road accidents, of which 36 were classified as major, and in 14 cases at least one person died. Extrapolating for the year, Qatar can expect roughly 168 traffic-related fatalities.[7] Officially, one in eight deaths in Qatar occurs on the road.[8]

The indubitable fact that cars – roaring, charging, screaming – are near universal symbols of aggressive masculinity operates unconsciously to confirm a gendered notion of Doha's representation. Just as the wrecking balls and tower cranes hum amid hundreds of thousands of male construction workers in bright-coloured coveralls, unrelentingly reinforcing the image of an aggressively modernizing nation-state, similarly the state's political profile with its 'muscular' foreign policy, which 'punches above its weight' in a 'very dangerous neighbourhood of saber rattling', confirms maleness. The political metaphors notwithstanding, the city's representation through its architecture, infrastructure and 'armies' of workers toiling day and night only helps support its outward image of a nation and a people to reckon with. Interestingly, two of Qatar's most prominent faces are female and never veiled, the former Emir's Consort, HH Sheikha Moza, and her

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[5] Note that the report did not indicate how many vehicles have been permanently withdrawn from use. I am unsure if the figures presented here are net that number.

[6] The figures are computed using the Qatar Statistics Authority's published country population of 2,116,400 (1 March 2014), and applying a rough estimate that 80 per cent of the total country population lives in the greater Doha metropolitan area. The World Bank Country Metadata lists the 2007 ratio of vehicles per 1,000 of the population as 724. I assume the ratio remains constant in the calculation.

[7] The Qatar Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics Monthly Bulletin, January 2014.

[8] 'Dr Hassan Al Thani, Head of the Trauma, Vascular Surgery and General Surgery Sections at Hamad General Hospital, said traffic accidents in Qatar are responsible for 12.5 per cent of deaths. In other words, one in eight deaths is caused by road accidents.', 'One in Eight Dies on Road', *The Peninsula*, 28 December 2013.

daughter, Sheikha Al-Mayassa: the most visible engines of cultural, educational and scientific change in Qatar.[9]

9.1.3 Performance Driving/Driving as Performance

Statistically, a young Qatari male in his late teens and twenties is unmarried, unemployed and likely to be crippled or killed in a car accident. Of the roughly 30,000 male Qataris in their twenties almost 150 will die each year in motor vehicle accidents; this is among the highest per capita rate of road fatalities in the world (Fig. 9.1).

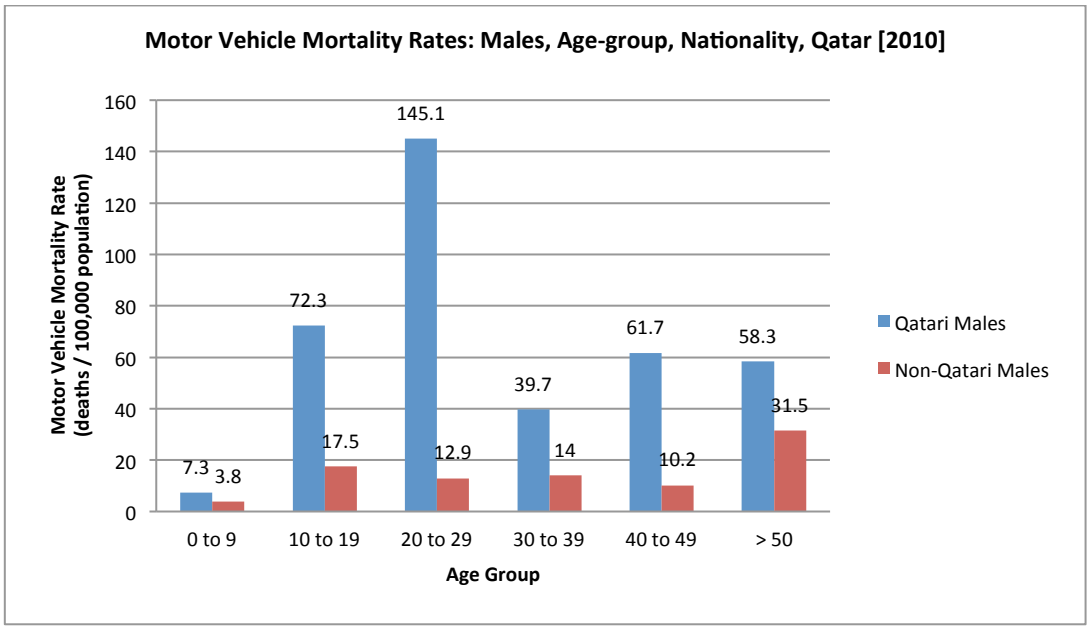

Fig. 9.1. *Source: Rafael J. Consunji, MD, 'The Health Burden from Transport-related Injuries in Qatar [2008–2012] a Focus on Children', Transportation Health Research Workshop for Children and Youth in Qatar for the 21st Century Doha, Qatar 5 November 2013.*

[9] This is not without precedent in the Arab world as other countries similarly have catalytic and exceedingly public royal women leading cultural transformation within their own nations. Examples include Jordan's Queen Noor, a Princeton University trained architect married to the country's late King Hussein; and now her daughter-in-law, Queen Rania; Sheika Hussa Sabah Al-Salem, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family and director of her country's Museum of Islamic Art; and Princess Ameera Al-Taweel of Saudi Arabia. Are the women, often seen outside their countries in glamorously revealing Western attire, no doubt to the great dismay of their conservative subjects, merely iconographic examples to Western democratic states of Islam's progressive nature in their country? Or, is their status genuinely equal to that of their male counterparts? The answer varies of course with every opinion but we can generally say their conspicuous presence explicitly counters the Middle Eastern image of male ethos.

More than forty years have passed since Sheikh Khalifa's 1972 coup and subsequent declaration to his people that he would tackle the persistent 'problem of the idleness of male youth'.[10] Official statistics present the issue less as a problem than a fact: structural elements of the culture's background understanding of itself – young men are rich, bored and seek excitement. I have recounted the many reasons why and mechanisms by which Qatar systematically undermines the intrinsic motivation of her people, men in particular. In this section I shall seek to understand the socio-cultural and spatial implications of male idleness as a contour of the urban order.

Muscles and machines seem to be essential elements of masculinity in any culture. And in Doha in particular, excessive speeding, street drag racing, stunt driving and generally having little regard for fellow motorists and traffic regulations are all common fixtures of the urban infrastructure. Only a few generations have passed since Doha's ragged edges frayed into the desert landscape. Today, the tightly bound ring-road system and urban densification schemes keep traffic within the city. With double-digit population growth per annum, the aging road network is woefully undersized and stretched well beyond its design capacity. For the young Qatari in particular, but also for his elders, the urban infrastructure is not just a means of transportation, of getting from one place to another; it also provides the opportunity to test one's nerves and one's faith.

After an evening at Katara or making stops at friends' *majlis*, young Qatari men might drag race at a predetermined location or perhaps strike up a challenge on a local street. For the young Qatari male much of life's involvements take place behind the automobile's tinted glass, watching the city rapidly evolve, and trying to speed through it as best he can. In more stable urban environments, one moves automatically through the city, navigating by familiar references. But when the references frequently change as they do in Doha then a cognitive process must supersede the corporeal schema to get a grip on the perceptual totality. This is what I mean by ungrounded familiarity.

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[10] A full Arabic and English translation of the speech are found in the Foreign Office record FCO 8-1891.

Merleau-Ponty (2002) describes the temporal nature of the phenomenon when the conditions of expected fulfilment are not met, when the corporeal shock of what is expected differs from what is actually encountered, like expecting a roundabout, hotel or house on familiar Doha streets but finding either something else entirely or more likely only an empty lot awaiting its new building, causing disequilibrium.[11] Thus, Doha's disquieting and despoiling phenomenal experience of 'ungrounded familiarity' explodes past familiarity and future expectation. And only through a proper reorientation of the body schema can one synthesize a perceptual orientation to the changing city.

The car for the Qatari male is a way to enter adulthood, prove his mettle, socialize and learn what it is to be male in a society that overwhelmingly declares a man's power over women, yet which must all too commonly confront the ever-growing power of highly educated, career-driven women. That he feels increasingly confined in his cockpit, with few job prospects, or reasons to pursue them, and that he faces growing competition from highly educated women for managerial positions only further frustrates the young Qatari man and adds to his desire for an unconstrained evening on the open road. Sadly, in fifteen minutes a Ferrari at top speed will travel the country's length and once having run out road must return to the city.

9.1.4 Truck Driver – Labour Camp

Truck convoys stretching for kilometres (Figs. 9.2–9.3) are a common sight in Doha, particularly on the city's edges, and leading to and from the Industrial Area and also around the many massive construction sites. Tankers delivering fresh water or removing sewage, their leaky valves leaving long trails of effluent; lorries carrying all manner of building materials; the odd livestock wagon; or neon-pink fluorescent panel trucks with blinking strobes and the words 'danger high explosives' painted on the side; even the occasional pick-up truck carrying a plywood box painted yellow bearing a

[11] For a fuller description of the *hyletic* phenomenon see *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 2002:280–283).

radiation symbol (Fig. 9.4) all corral cheek by jowl among school buses and daily commuters. This is the world of Doha streets: a mad melee of every imaginable vehicle careening into the same roundabout. There is a certain democratization of traffic: perhaps the roads are the one place in the city where everyone is subject the same laws – laws of physics not politics. This is not the 'public sphere' of Charles Taylor or Jurgen Habermas discussed earlier. No, this is the public sphere of survival of the fittest.





Fig. 9.2. *Above. A morning truck convoy along Al-Waab Road (photo by the author, 2014).*

Fig. 9.3. *Left. A morning truck convoy along Al-Waab Road (photo by the author, 2014).*

Fig. 9.4. *Below. A pick-up truck carrying radioactive material in plywood box (photo by the author, 2014).*



If, as Heidegger asserts, each of us develops skills to cope with particular situations based on the unarticulated background practices within our cultures, and, as Merleau-Ponty posits, our body schema is always seeking the optimum perceptual grip on any situation, then how we act within a foreign culture is an amalgam of what we are brought up in, and what we confront moment to moment.

Today's roundabouts by contrast to their simple forbears are multilane, multi-exit, multilevel maelstroms, with traffic lights and traffic cops – both of which are routinely ignored – where everything from a Qatari-driven Bentley to an Afghan-driven dump truck swirl together, and all too

frequently collide. Research participant K within the Traffic Department in the Qatar Ministry of Interior blames Qatar's high accident rate on the poor habits of drivers from impoverished countries: 'they drive like they are still in India or Pakistan'. The Qatari's sense of lawless impunity he blames on 'the fact that the traffic cops are from Syria or Egypt; you think they will give a ticket to a national? Guess which one ends up in jail!' Stereotypes aside, the deeply ingrained, reflexive background practices of acting in socio-culturally determined ways help us understand each driver's horizon of ungrounded familiarity.

The truck in Fig. 9.5 is a typical Doha eighteen-wheel heavy transport rig. The image conveys a desire to personalize the cab's interior to the driver, while also proudly displaying his cultural-ethnic origins to the wider public. Just as the most common Qatari-owned vehicle is the white Toyota Land Cruiser, a symbol of national hegemonic status, the personalized lorry similarly declares an ethnic status within a social segmentation to fellow compatriots who would understand the message.

In all probability, our driver lives among his own countrymen, most definitely among his own race and gender, perhaps in an aging Doha courtyard house (Figs. 9.6–9.8), or an informal urban infill shanty (Figs. 9.9–9.10) or even a squalid dormitory in the Industrial Area (Figs. 9.11–9.12). To be sure, there are no other habitation options for this driver. His days are spent with men, in the truck, moving between destinations. Working six (or seven) days per week in at least twelve-hour shifts, the driver returns to one of the three dwelling options pictured below where he cooks and washes. The group may enjoy a television and someone in the house will have a computer to call relatives back home on Skype. The city is otherwise off limits to him. His camp will likely not provide transportation to central Doha many miles away, or to any other green park or shopping mall. He exists in the cab of his truck and in his labour camp. It is a characteristic of 'natural states' (North et al. 2009) that those who literally build the city – the prominent image of which is of progressive exhibitionist architecture – live in the least well-built homes of all.



Fig. 9.5. *A decorated truck typical of Pakistani drivers (photo by the author, 2014).*

Fig. 9.6. *Below. A courtyard-style home in the Umm Ghuwailina neighbourhood of Doha (photo by the author, 2013).*





Fig. 9.7. *Interior of the home in Fig. 9.6. (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.8. *Interior of the home in Fig. 9.6–9.7. As if to underscore his professional vocation the man pictured is holding a bottle of brake fluid, always attending to his livelihood (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.9. *A cardboard home on the Education City property. In the background from left to right: the Qatar Convention Centre, Qatar Foundation's new headquarters designed by OMA (under construction), and Sidra Medical Hospital. In the foreground a migrant labourer in blue coveralls brushing his teeth; his truck is parked just out of the frame (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.10. *A typical shanty dwelling in Doha's inner city (photo by Roman Turczyn, 2009).*



Fig. 9.11. *A migrant labour dormitory in the Industrial Area (source: Construction Week, 2011).*



Fig. 9.12. *Interior of a migrant labour dormitory (source: Human Rights Watch, 2012).*

9.1.5 Limousines – Apartments

The official Qatari Resident Permit given to every expatriate lists our next case study's occupation as 'limousine' driver. 'Limousine' is hardly an accurate term as most men in this classification drive an aging white Toyota sedan – often referred to as *kalawandee*, or 'wrong car', in the Indian Malayalam dialect, meaning an illegal use of the car. This section examines what in the West might be called 'gypsy' or 'speedy' cabs. In keeping with the other situational studies in this chapter, I seek to understand the relationship between mobility and stasis, the matrix of infrastructure that holds and connects habitation as a unique facet of the twenty-first-century urban order.

The cab driver provides an essential social service to the people of Doha. The drivers are typically from the Indian state of Kerala and come to Qatar without a guaranteed job. They obtain work and residency sponsorship under Qatari law through the *kafala* system, which indebts all non-nationals to their 'sponsors'. While it is illegal to withhold salary, medical care or passports, this law is regularly ignored.[12] A driver's network of friends and relatives in Qatar helps secure a Qatari 'sheikh's' sponsorship. The visa might list him as a domestic driver, or as an employee within a Qatari-owned business.[13] Depending on the sheikh's demands, the driver will rent a car from his sponsor, or from another business group for perhaps QAR 5,000 per month (£825). The driver must pay all his own living expenses including rent, petrol, food, car maintenance, health care, etc. Any savings are wired home to his family in Kerala.

This structure, despite its vastness and indispensability, violates Qatari law in a number of ways important for our understanding of Doha's urban order. The greatest infraction lies in employees working and living beyond their sponsors' knowledge. This is largely overlooked as it provides a steady

[12] For a detailed account of labour practices, human rights abuses and the *kafala* system in Qatar see the self-published report by the Human Rights Watch, 'Building a Better World Cup: Protecting Migrant Workers in Qatar Ahead of the FIFA 2022', 2012.

[13] By law all businesses must have at least 51 per cent Qatari ownership.

income stream to Qatari families of all classes particularly the middle class.[14] Providing taxi services that are not part of the state's official taxi fleet, Mowasalat, breaks the second law. Again, the sheer demand for taxi services and lack of adequate supply mean the Qatari sponsors and the police, too, also ignore this law.

It is important to remember two facts of Doha life that add to the demand for taxis. First, religiously conservative neighbourhoods frown upon women drivers; second, state law requires all children to travel to school in a vehicle. The vital service, coupled with the income stream from the rented flats, in close proximity to all destinations and customers, give ample justification for leaving the situation alone and ignoring the applicable laws.

The horizon of involvement for the unlicensed cab driver is a rich, vibrant, densely packed neighbourhood, the streets bustling with the hustle of black marketers, mosque goers, fast food shops, tailors, fruit markets and well-hidden prostitutes. Dusty, narrow streets, dark, empty lots, double-parked cars, the constant din of idling engines and construction cranes add to the area's energy. Once in their cars for ten or twelve hours of continuous driving, the city dissolves into the miasma of mayhem and survival described earlier. One driver, lamenting bitterly, commented that driving has become so perilous he fears for his life each morning, and that it is only a matter of time before his wife and daughters in Kerala receive his coffin. With the exception of mosque attendance or playing a game of dirt lot football or cricket on Friday afternoons, there are almost no other activities the drivers are either allowed to engage in, can afford or feel comfortable doing. Malls post signs allowing only 'families' to enter and Indian guards, ironically, enforce these. Middle-aged white men, like your author, are of course never questioned when entering alone.

[14] The practice exemplifies late rentierism's contract between regnal political legitimacy and the public's demand for unearned wealth.

9.1.6 House Driver – Caravan

The indentured driver is the last situational study we shall look at in this section. For cultural and religious reasons nearly every Qatari household employs a driver. The typical vehicle is a large SUV, either Toyota Land Cruiser – itself having connotations of class and status as described above – or one of the many US imports. The windows are often tinted black, in violation of Qatari law, but again this is largely overlooked to protect female privacy. The driver's typical chores include an early drop of kids to school, bringing the maid and cook grocery shopping, taking the adult women to a shopping mall or visiting family and friends, and generally running errands for the family. Like that of the gypsy driver, their day never truly ends, as they are on call all hours of the day or night. A driver's bedroom is always in close proximity to the employer's house, but never within it. When the main home is a palace, perhaps greater than 5,000 square metres, the driver's room will be within the property's walls, likely adjacent to the prodigious car park. In more middle-class neighbourhoods, the house plots do not allow for driver accommodation and thus makeshift huts or dilapidated caravans are parked in the thoroughfare (Figs. 9.13–9.14).



Fig. 9.13. *A house driver's 'home' permanently parked outside his employer's walls along a busy Doha street (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.14. *A house driver's makeshift 'home' complete with outdoor seating (photo by the author, 2013).*

The urban street scene readily describes the neighbourhood's wealth, class and attitude towards women driving. The maleness of the street, in other words, helps us understand a further dimension of the public urban order. Here, the streets are quite literally dominated by men – not just in the cars, trucks and buses as we expect, but in their curb-side dwellings as well (Fig. 9.15). The indentured driver has much the same routine as the gypsy driver but with far less freedom: beholden to a single family-employer means being subject to their complete oversight and rule. Living on the curb further means one's actions are seen and policed by the local community of neighbours. This is not wholly foreign to the original *fereej* concept described earlier, where each family plays a role in protecting the larger clan-based neighbourhood.



Fig. 9.15. *The photo depicts five separate driver accommodations on a typical south Doha neighbourhood street, each belongs to a different household (photo by the author, 2013).*

One is thus tempted to assert that Doha's publicness is male, and its privacy female. While this is largely true of streets and driving, the malls, schools, souqs, museums and, more recently and more commonly, office buildings are most assuredly mixed gender. Add to this the many thousand expatriate Western women and female domestic servants and Doha appears gender mixed but yet highly segregated in particular ways.

9.1.7 Conclusion

This section presents an analysis of architecture as stratified and agonic, gendered and political. By focusing primarily upon how several key segments of Qatari society experience the 'space between place', that is Doha's urban street infrastructure, we come to understand more deeply the experience of the places each social segment can access. All societies are stratified by some combination of class, gender or race, to name the most common sociologic categories. And all cities comprise shades of public ranging from intimate and familiar domestic interiors to anonymous and

strange urban streets. A curious phenomenon in Doha is the reciprocal dialectic of this formula. The analysis of Doha's urban, vehicular transport, as a mode of embodied revealing, shows us what the male drivers of vastly different social and economic strata share in common.

The most basic commonality is the struggle to simply move through the city. The young Qatari in a Lamborghini and the young Nepali in a cement truck may share nothing else in common – not religion, race, class, education, literacy or health; but both are always male, of the same age, seeking the fastest route through Doha. Prejudice and impatience give way in the roundabout's democratization governed by Newtonian laws of motion: right gives way to might. Despite the Qatari's desire for special privilege among the migratory masses, and his ignorance of traffic laws, he nonetheless yields his right (of way) to vehicles that simply cannot stop for him. Thus, in an odd twist, the traffic roundabout assumes an ultimate agonic space of competition. The political structure that otherwise would have determined any other public discourse is pushed aside in the split-second decisions required a million times a day to navigate Doha.

Existentially, each driver thus shares the striving to get a maximum grip on the world. The striving is neither conscious nor intentional, but rather something within each of us, within our body's attitude that seeks greater equilibrium among competing tensions. The underlying premise of the various situational studies is that what is common-to-all is a striving to find one's way about in the world, to find one's self in the world when that world is in constant flux.[15]

A third commonality across the strata is the clarity each driver has regarding which places are accessible. We might be tempted to believe that Qataris feel empowered to travel freely to any urban precinct, and partake in any public venue. Likewise, we might readily assume the limousine driver is excluded from most public places. In reality the two social segments act in ways that

[15] See for example Todes (2001). Building upon Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, Todes gives us an original account of the body's role in situational knowledge through the non-conceptual striving for engaged coping.

co-determine each other's involvements. For example, the large sections of Doha that are home to hundreds of thousands of Indian or Pakistani 'bachelors' are simply of no interest to Qatari men, who often fear their overwhelming numbers. Thus the public nature of South Asian labourers working or at leisure on nights and weekends, crowding the streets and few parks, makes a claim upon the city. Similarly, the shopping malls Qataris frequent are both enforcedly exclusionary and claimed by Qataris seeking racial-spatial segregation on religious and cultural grounds. Both populations fear the hegemony created through the spatial politics of exclusion and inclusion. It is precisely for these reasons that Qatar's urban planning authority seeks to reclaim parks and public spaces through 'dress codes', 'family only' days, and activity specification, for example, only those wearing national dress, sports attire or accompanied by children can use a park.

The concept of freedom circumscribes a fourth commonality among our drivers. Of course freedom, in the manner I shall describe, is universal, and commonly shared by all peoples throughout time. For our purposes, however, I shall draw upon Merleau-Ponty's four-fold limit of human freedom as described in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. The limits fall into two categories. The first comprises those that are corporeally determined, and thus we cannot break free of them – the size, shape and power of one's body – and the perceptual system's mechanism. The second category consists of the other two limits, which are culturally and historically determined, and thus open to modification.

The first of the latter category relates one's own past as a 'sedimented' background, limiting one's actions, what one is able to do. Choosing to repeatedly perform a certain action deeply embeds limits such that we no longer consider the action as stemming from a choice. It just becomes what one always does without thinking, receding into the background. This does not limit freedom per se, as one could strike out against the sedimentation, but it becomes increasingly less likely because one's past precedes and organizes future action. Merleau-Ponty says, 'we must recognize a sort of sedimentation of our life; an attitude towards the world, when it has

received frequent confirmation, acquires a favoured status for us', for example having a life built upon 'an inferiority complex which has been operative for twenty years, it is not probable that we shall change' (2002:513).

Merleau-Ponty's notion of freedom as related to being-in-the-world is important to our urban interpretation. We see the challenge to familiarity, and by phenomenological association the experience of disclosedness, through a constant fracturing of the sedimented urban 'world'. Over time any social segment will feel the inevitable claim upon their behaviour by involvement in various institutions. This section posits that driving is no less a claim than, say, language, religion or ceremony. The repetitive pattern of involvement recedes to a background of unseen familiarity that plots future action upon the same trajectory. However, the phenomenal experience of rapid urbanization stirs this sedimentation, providing new opportunities to challenge the limits of one's freedoms.

Freedom in Islam was, until the Pan Arab movement beginning in the early twentieth century, always related to community and never the individual.[16] Islamic political thinking rarely includes language as to individual freedom or rights. Rather, freedom in Islam obligates the ruling power, be it crown or country, to protect a Muslim community from internal and external threats and most especially guarantee the 'free' ability to conduct religious practices and worship. The absence of a concept of individual freedom stems from the theological view that humankind and everything in the world is a slave (*'abd*) of God. There is no political-theological language available for freedom per se, only the word meaning to not be a slave (*hurriyya*) in the earthly sense. Given Islam's strong sense of community, built upon the intimate bonds of brotherhood within the tribe, the only sense of freedom is acting in ways that a Muslim may justifiably expect other Muslims to act towards him; to expect the ruling power to preserve one's freedom to submit to Islam.

[16] For a lengthy discussion on freedom in Islam see Franz Rosenthal (1960a), and Louis Gardet in Von Grunebaum (1969).

This excursus on freedom in Islam brings us to this section's ultimate conclusion: a unique facet of Doha's urban order is the nature of masculine space as what is common-to-all. It appears men dominate the roads, public thoroughfares and night-time street life as isolated enclaves, each in his own vehicle. Largely this is true. Also true is the vast urban landscape of many square kilometres and many thousands of men who share in exactly the same experiences. Driving for pleasure, pay, thrill or threat might be the disparate reasons why men take to endless hours behind the wheel. But all share the phenomenon of the body schema's struggle to achieve a maximum perceptual grip on the ever-changing urban landscape. Also shared are the institutional horizons of deep cultural significance that place claims upon one's behaviour and action and punctuate the city's constant flux by creating islands of stability in an otherwise fluid terrain. Transcending race, nationality, class or religion, the male drivers share much of the experience of rapid urban change in the same way. Though the sedimented institutions of respite – house, *majlis*, labour camp, shanty, caravan – that punctuate the blurry world outside the threshold may vary widely, what flows around them proclaims a freedom through what is shared by the community as uniquely Islamic.

In this chapter I have attempted to chart the city as an ensemble of references. Places that provide a glimpse into the concrete situations of human involvements. Getting to and from these situations, in our case the home, apartment or camp, gives us the extremis of Doha's experience: a mode of existence common-to-all with little between frenetic movement and calm stasis. The urban society in particular contains its own interpretations. One gains access to them through a contrast of the spatial and temporal modalities of representative segments as seen in typical situations in Merleau-Ponty's sense of what counts as typical, and common-to-all. Each typicality, it is hoped, sheds light on Doha's urban orders.

9.2 Skyscrapers

> *From its offices come the commands that put the world in order. In fact, the skyscrapers are the brain of the city, the brain of the whole country. They embody the work of elaboration and command on which all activities depend. Everything is concentrated there: the tools that conquer time and space – telephones, telegraphs, radios, the banks, trading houses, the organs of decision for the factories: finance, technology, commerce.*
>
> – Le Corbusier (1929)



Fig. 9.16. *West Bay skyline at night: Burj Qatar slightly to the right of centre illuminated as a golden tower (source and date unknown).*

I have previously touched upon cultural change from one epoch to another using Heidegger's and Hegel's contrasting views as guideposts. In this section I wish to take a slightly more sociological view with the help primarily of Anthony Giddens and his view of modernity. In *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), Giddens points to three underlying causes

for contemporary discontinuities: the pace of change, the scope of change and the nature of modern institutions. All three are clearly expressed in the emerging high-rise architecture of West Bay. The pace of change has been addressed in previous chapters – in the case of West Bay the fact that it simply didn't exist before 1975 is testimony enough. As a fact, West Bay's high-rise buildings enable new government, commercial and residential enterprises. As an image, West Bay announces a constitutive interconnection to other waves of social transformation happening across the globe, embodying institutions simply not found in any prior historical Arab-Islamic epoch. The skyscraper invokes an urban image of a capitalist, neo-liberal, open access society: wage labour, global finance, international brands and the freedom to choose where one lives and works are all conjured by the skyscraper. Even the very idea of living or working vertically is anathema to a desert-bound understanding of Bedouin social relations but has since become an object of pride, joining the rest of the modern, urban world.

Giddens specifically cites the city as an example of such discontinuities: 'Modern urban settlements often incorporate the sites of traditional cities, and it may look as though they have merely spread out from them. In fact, modern urbanism is ordered according to quite different principles from those which set off the pre-modern city from the countryside in prior periods' (1990:6). Throughout this thesis I have examined different facets of Doha's transition from tradition to modernity. This section shall focus specifically on the role of the high-rise building – a uniquely modern fact and symbol – as a manifestation of the tensions underlying the institutional and urban order of Doha's development.

9.2.1 Gulf Skyscraper History: Dubai and Doha

It is useful to briefly compare the high-rise developments in Dubai and Doha. Though the skyscraper image conjured by the two Gulf neighbours may seem identical, the mechanisms and objectives are quite dissimilar. Lacking significant oil or gas reserves, Dubai's rulers aggressively adopted real estate speculation as the means to financial prosperity. Doha, by

contrast, has only portrayed the image of a late-capitalist real estate development, preferring in reality to cling to Wahhabi values and late rentier wealth distribution.

The British architect John Harris, who also drew up Dubai's first master plan, designed Dubai's first multistory, steel-reinforced concrete structure, The World Trade Centre (WTC) on Sheikh Zayed Road. The World Trade Centre, which opened in 1979, was the Gulf's first, and, at thirty-nine stories, tallest building for some twenty years. The presence of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at the grand opening, photographed on the roof terrace with



Fig. 9.17. *Queen Elizabeth II is shown aerial pictures of 'early Dubai' at the top of the Dubai World Trade Centre, after she inaugurated it in 1979 (image Credit: Gulf News Archive).*

Harris and Dubai's Emir Sheikh Rashid (Fig. 9.17) indicates Dubai's lofty urban dreams and global ambitions (Figs. 9.18–9.19). The opening's audience together with the building's unique size and name presaged two



Fig. 9.18*. Dubai, World Trade Centre in the 1980s (image Credit: Gulf News Archive).*



Fig. 9.19. *Dubai, World Trade Centre and Sheikh Zayed Road, 2010.*

key aspects of Dubai's future: the Emir's desire for a global trade hub, and for a real estate-fuelled economic and urban boom. Both desires are an interrelated development strategy in response to Dubai's relatively small oil reserves. Seeing its wealthy neighbour, and national capital, Abu Dhabi, blessed with vast oil fields, Sheikh Rashid needed an alternative strategy based on direct foreign investment. The result, simply put, is the 'spectacle of Dubai'.[17]



Fig. 9.20. *Doha, QGPC in the early 1980s on the far right of the image (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

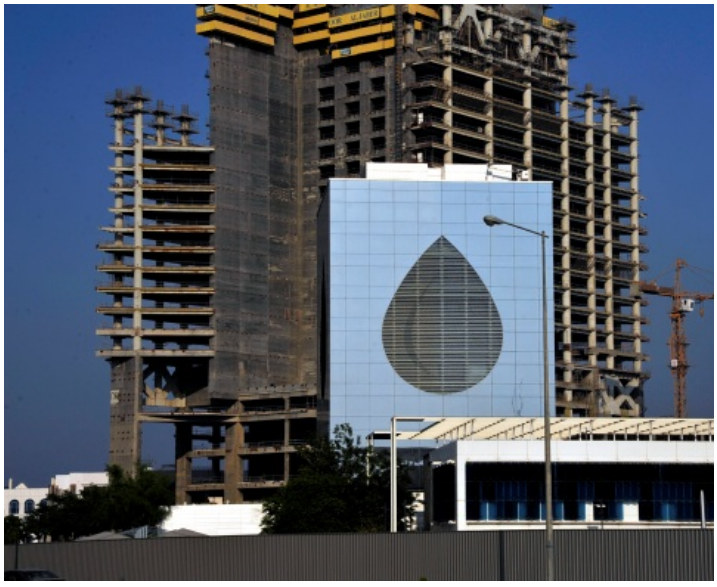

Fig. 9.21. *Doha, QGPC 2013 re-clad in reflective glass (photo by the author, 2013).*

In 1978, only one year prior to the WTC's inauguration, Doha's first multistory, steel-reinforced concrete office block – the headquarters for Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) – was completed (Figs. 9.20–9.21). Three years later, Doha received its first truly monumental structure: the pyramidal Sheraton Hotel (Figs. 9.22–9.23). The Sheraton was the tallest

[17] See Elsheshtawy (2013).

Qatari building for nearly twenty years and it together with the QGPC were the only buildings of note on the artificial peninsula for at least fifteen more years. The nascent 'high-rise' developments in both Dubai and Doha highlight a pivotal moment in Gulf political history.



Fig. 9.22. *Doha, Sheraton Hotel (source: Sheraton Hotel and Resorts, 2010).*



Fig. 9.23. *Doha, 1980s Sheraton and QGPC (source: MMUP, date unknown).*

The Sheraton Hotel in West Bay, completed in 1981 by Californian architect William L. Pereira, was met with great suspicion upon its opening. The artificially constructed West Bay peninsula and the Sheraton Hotel upon it were imagined to be too unstable for occupation. It was not until 2001 that West Bay saw its next major development in the 120,000-square-metre City Centre Shopping mall. It took yet another five years for the high-rise boom on West Bay to begin in full.

It is important to recall the larger political landscape in the Gulf during the early 1980s. Iran ousted its Shah and his Western backers, particularly the

US intelligence and corporate communities; oil was at an all-time high, jumping 250 per cent in less than two years (from $14 per barrel to $36); and Afghanistan's Mujahedeen were successfully repelling a Soviet invasion. The Gulf States reacted to these events by, on the one hand, seeking Western-backed investment and development opportunities with the oil revenue windfall, and, on the other, by reasserting Wahhabi religious conservatism. Doha and Dubai walked a delicate line: developing Western businesses and importing their icons of success while simultaneously advocating puritanical Islam and its rejection of Western influences. In both the Doha Sheraton and Dubai World Trade Centre the buildings' locations give us a clue to resolving the contradictions.

In Dubai, the WTC was located kilometres from the coastline, well beyond the historic settlement, and far from the Emir's palace; it was simply in the middle of nowhere. Similarly, the Sheraton, the second structure on the artificial, reclaimed peninsula of West Bay, was far from anyone, or anything. Both locations – the empty peninsula and the barren Sheikh Zayed Road – imagined a central business district dedicated to commerce and wholly separate from its traditional society. Both buildings heralded the arrival of what has been called 'late rentier state capitalism' (Gray 2011, 2013).



Fig. 9.24. *Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai (source: http://propdubai.com/realestate/location/21/index.php, accessed May 2015).*



Fig. 9.25. *Conference Centre Street, Doha (photo by the author, 2015).*

Recalling briefly the discussion of Rentier State Theory (RST) from Part II, we remember RST as the trade-off between individual wealth and political power. The theory holds that since the state receives an 'unearned' income – oil and gas 'rents' in our case – and freely distributes these to society at large, it relieves its citizens of taxation and also their political participation, but presumably grants loyalty. Late rentierism (Gray 2011) holds that the state is more entrepreneurial and supportive of private enterprise. This in turn hopefully alleviates some of the state's financial payment burden while giving some of its citizens the keys to unimaginable wealth (Kanna 2011). This new phase of Qatar's political economy marked by entrepreneurial state capitalism and activist microstatism linked the emergence of government ministries and private, or rather semi-private, enterprise. By creating a bureaucratic apparatus to promote businesses, such as the ministries of petroleum, economics and finance, the state gave itself the levers of political control: the state employs its citizens in government ministries charged with promoting and often investing in quasi-state-owned businesses that in turn are staffed by its own citizens. In other words, state-financed entrepreneurism is another means to grow and diversify the economy primarily to ensure the ruling family's political legitimacy through an exchange of wealth for power.

It has been said that oil 'rents' are both a blessing and a curse (Ross 2013). The blessings are obvious; the curse comes from a capital – not labour – intensive activity beholden to global commodity spot markets. In an effort to insulate itself from global events, Qatar created downstream industrial activities, such as the manufacturing of fertilizers and polymers, a decades-long strategy of economic diversification. A further diversification through tourism and trade – the Sheraton and QGPC being prime examples – is a logical next step in Gulf political economy (Gray 2011, 2013; Kamrava 2013).

The year 1980 appears to have been a watershed moment for the greater Gulf region in general and Qatar in particular. To turn simultaneously towards a full embrace of its eighteenth-century Wahhabi origins while inviting Islam's perceived antithesis, America – the 'great Satan', to use Iranian parlance – appears unprecedented in its short history. In fact such cognitive dissonance is quite consistent with Qatari history. We recall from the chapter on Qatar's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history the precarious line constantly trodden, playing superpowers off each other (the British and Ottomans for example), not to mention the many regional tribes, and the ideological conflict between Sunni-Wahhabi Islam of the Nejd and Shia Islam in Persia. The next chapter will look at tensions such as these more closely; tensions arising from various juxtapositions in the development of institutional and urban order.

9.2.2 Dislocation of Space, Place and Time

A hallmark of the modern age is our ability to control time and space independently. For all of human history until the invention of mechanical clocks, events occurred in a physically specific situation, and were rooted in fundamental natural conditions and the belief in a divinely created cosmos. The clock and concomitant rise of industrial production and economic specialization broke this ancient relationship. Few images in our social imaginary conjure this notion more powerfully than the glowing office tower. One imagines thousands of workers toiling behind computer terminals, connected to global markets, trading in commodities or simply

exchanging information the world over. Day or night, shifts of arbitrageurs trade the world's resources.

We do not know if West Bay's current high-rises are truly occupied by fleets of financial wizards as in Wall Street or Canary Wharf, but within a few years West Bay will have its own financial centre, the Qatar Petroleum District (QPD). The new QPD financial enclave will, according to the developer's website, comprise almost 700,000 square metres of gross floor area, including hotels, corporate training centres, banks, food and retail outlets and prayer rooms.[18] Though nearly in the heart of West Bay, it is nonetheless advertised as forming its own district, much as in the way we think of peripheral financial centres like London's Canary Wharf, or New York's World Financial district. The concentric architectural rings reinforce its insular image (Figs. 9.26–9.28), almost as if a nascent financial 'centre' must be hermetic and on the city's dilapidated fringe.

Comparing the billboard image affixed to the site (Fig. 9.26) and the actual building itself (Fig. 9.27), we wonder what different role each plays in the image of Doha, what I shall refer to below as the 'urban imaginary', a term borrowed from Charles Taylor's (2007) essay 'Modern Social Imaginaries'. Taylor's term, in turn taken from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006), is a framework for probing the ways in which societies think of social reality not in a disengaged mode, but rather, as Taylor says, in 'the ways in which they imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations' (C. Taylor 2007:171).

Taylor's view, and in keeping with the hermeneutic nature of this thesis, moves beyond social theory because to speak of an 'imaginary' means to interrogate how everyday people 'imagine' their surroundings; it expresses what is widely shared in a culture; and (here Taylor speaks as a background theorist) the social imaginary 'is that common understanding which makes

[18] Source: http://www.astad.qa/en/projects/office-buildings/qatar-petroleum-complex-project-qpcp/ (accessed 5 April 2015).

possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy' (ibid.:172). My extension of Taylor's 'social' imaginary to 'urban' imaginary focuses our attention on the spectrum of symbolic articulation embodied in architectural language ranging from pure form to projected image.



Fig. 9.26. *Architectural rendering of the new Qatar Petroleum Financial District designed by KEO International on the construction site (photo by the author, 2013).*

Fig. 9.27. *Photograph of QDP under construction (photo by the author, 2013).*



In the case of the QPD, the image of a definitive financial district seems to matter most; its 'realness', whether or not traders are actually trading, seems less important.

The business activities of many global financial districts often enjoy little direct connection to localized activities; yet they remain indebted to nearby

cultural centres, for example Wall Street to Tribeca, or Canary Wharf to the West End. But in the high-rise district itself space, place and time operate semi-autonomously, fostering relations between absent partners. As Giddens rightly says:

> In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locals are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the 'visible form' of the locale conceals the distanciated relations which determine its nature.
>
> (1990:19)



Fig. 9.28. *QDP. Qatar Petroleum District and billboard for Msheireb. The representation of the 'real' in one mega-development flows together with 'real' in another (photo by the author, 2015).*

For Giddens, the separation of time, space and place is crucial to modernity's extreme dynamism because it provides the fundamental mechanism of modern social life, namely the rational bureaucratic organization (state, corporate, etc.) through a 'disembedding' of social activity from its situated context. Modern organizations depend on vast, interconnected networks, what Sassen (1998, 2001, 2007) characterizes as flow: the movement of bits, bytes, money and men across the globe at the behest of global capital centres such as those mentioned above. Such a 'disembedding' of social systems, says Giddens, lifts out social relations from local contexts and restructures them across immense spans of time-space.

Giddens' characterization of urban evolution fits Doha well. Doha harbour embodies both the city's historic locus and the contemporary view of the city's centre. Around the Corniche we find the three main nodes of Doha master planning: the airport in the south, government and culture in the mid-arc, and the commercial district in West Bay at the northern tip (Fig. 9.29).

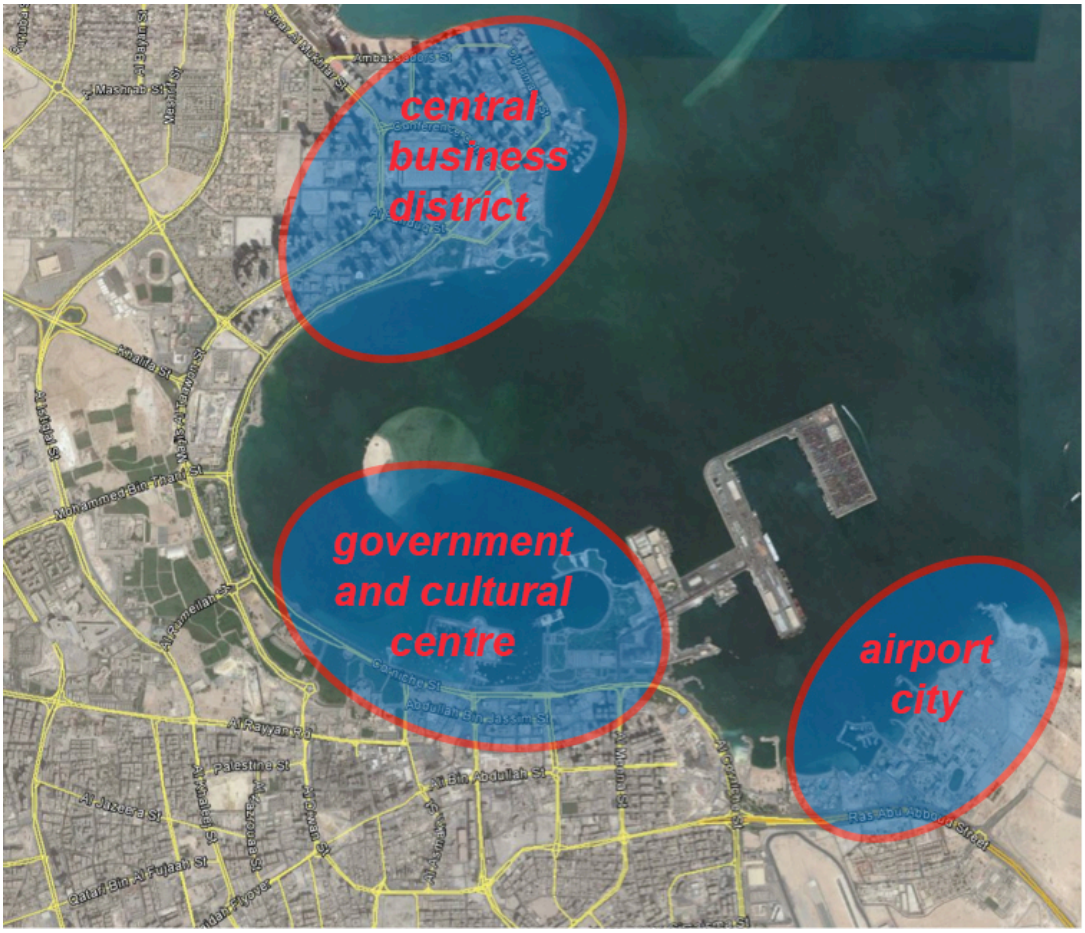

Fig. 9.29. *Map of Doha harbour highlighting the three primary zones of activity (source: Google Earth, 2015).*

The dialectic of urban fragments embodied in the high-rise skyline when seen from the Corniche promenade pits the new against the old; the image of modernity in glass and steel as if rising from the sea itself (which it is given West Bay is an artificial peninsula of seabed reclamation) against the image of tradition in dusty and dilapidated concrete blocks sprawling out towards the desert's expanse. Horizontal: earthen, tribal, ancient, Islamic. Vertical: glass, democratic, modern, bureaucratic. However, ancient tribal

practices and Islamic customs are still very much alive within the glass towers across the bay. Visiting government ministries, as I often did in the course of researching this thesis, readily exposed me to the more obvious hierarchies and segregations, for example women-only lifts and areas within open plan offices for women, their cubicle walls higher than those of their male colleagues. Less obvious is the primacy of face-to-face communication, trust built from personal engagement and not letters of introduction or one's national or professional status. Deal making and decision making are, in my personal experience, and as expressed by all my research participants working within or alongside government ministries, very much beholden to traditional clan affiliations and animosities, some dating back generations.



Fig. 9.30. *West Bay seen against the traditional Arabian dhow sail boat (photo by the author, 2013).*

One cannot mistake West Bay as being made for and by Westerners. In addition to the many American and European hotels, banks and company headquarters, most foreign embassies are also found here (West Bay's alternative name is the Diplomatic District), along with dozens of apartment towers. All of these institutions and for the most part their equally foreign architects vividly paint a distanciated portrait. Each building is in its own way a disembedding 'symbolic token', the medium of interchange that we might find in any city the world over (Giddens 1990:22). This reminds us of the early work of Scofidio and Diller in *Back to the Front: Tourisms of War* (1996): the further tourists travel and the more exotic their surroundings, the greater the desire for the familiar. Coming to Doha in the early 1980s may not have been exotic but it held a certain Gulf-Arabian authenticity. In the period photos (Figs. 9.20, 9.23), the pyramid motif seems at home on a barren desert plain but without any other context for the hotel it no doubt

felt as if a space ship had landed. Nearly all of my participants in their mid thirties and older vividly describe life alongside the new hotel. Some view it as a lodestone of sorts, a temporal and directional compass to judge urban development and one's location within the constantly changing landscape. One could easily find oneself among the new streets and buildings springing up around Doha by referencing the hotel, they say. And one could easily see the rapidity of West Bay's development as the Sheraton became engulfed by its surroundings. The younger interviewees in this group, particularly women, remember fondly family picnics on the sandy peninsula accompanied only by the hotel. In Giddens' parlance the Sheraton Hotel is a symbolic token by which the city's inhabitants reflect on the rapidity of distanciation.

Distanciated symbolic tokens abound in West Bay, none more potent than the economic image of the skyscraper. Anyone can inhabit the office tower provided they pay rent, performing activities within that are always based on electronic commerce and information exchange instantiating the symbolic token of money (Lefebvre 1991; Debord 1994). For Marx, money, the 'universal whore', broke the personal relationship between exchanging partners by substituting an abstract medium. Anything can be traded for anything through money's universality as a pure commodity (Marx 1973:141, 145, 166–167 in Giddens 1990:22–23). The rise of financial engineering over the last few decades, particularly futures contracts, points to money's space-place-time distanciation mechanism. It is Georg Simmel, however, who gives Giddens a view of money's spatial implications:

> The role of money is associated with the spatial distance between the individual and his possession … Only if the profit of an enterprise takes a form that can be easily transferred to any other place does it guarantee to property and the owner, through their spatial separation, a high degree of independence or, in other words, self-mobility … the power of money to bridge distances enables the owner and his possessions to exist so far apart that each of them may follow their own precepts to a greater extent than in the period when the owner and his possessions still stood in a direct mutual relationship, when every economic engagement was also a personal one.
>
> (Simmel 1978:332–333, quoted in Giddens 1990:24–25)

Simmel and Giddens move us beyond the generalizing rubric of West Bay's high-rise landscape as representing a neo-liberal economic model (which it does) and dive deeper into money's ability to hold disparate events simultaneously. This is a new institutional horizon in Qatar's history.[19]

In *Dubai: The City as Corporation*, Ahmed Kanna compellingly argues for an understanding of Dubai's urban morphology as a capitalist, profit-seeking enterprise. In particular, says Kanna, the 'urbanscape of the contemporary Emirati city is envisioned by rulers and urbanists … as a visualized and imagistic city' (2011:137) – meaning the Emir must have architectural icons designed by internationally renowned 'starchitects', and these structures, when taken in aggregate as a cityscape, in turn represent a neo-liberal, free-market-driven form of globalization that is both a kind of family-state power and inclusive cosmopolitanism (ibid.). Dubai's current Emir, Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, often refers to himself as Dubai's CEO, a reference, Kanna believes, that extends across the city creating an image of the ruler as entrepreneurial, efficient and always acting in the best interests of his 'shareholders'; the shareholders, Dubai residents national and expatriate alike, are similarly inspired towards a life of commercial business interests.

Though both Dubai and Doha share a history of Emirs cultivating family members and prominent clans towards the creation of family corporations, Dubai ultimately chose a different path, one that encouraged foreign direct investment to offset dwindling oil extraction. As a result, Dubai enjoys a number of enormous free-trade zones that exempt employees from UAE employment and visa requirements, and media censorship, while allowing foreign corporations full ownership and profit repatriation of their Dubai operations. By contrast, Doha has only one free-trade zone, the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), which operates under the Qatar Foundation on a different model from Dubai's. Furthermore, Qatar's highly restrictive *kafala* labour laws bind expatriate employees of any status from

[19] For a full treatment of the development in human history from limited access or natural states to open access orders see North et al. (2009).

domestic maid to managerial professional to their employers. While Doha may appear as capitalist and free-wheeling as Dubai, in reality its business climate is far more insular, and highly controlled by the Emir (Gray 2013).

9.2.3 The Architecture of West Bay

In the architecture of West Bay we often see motifs extracted from across the Arab world and used in ways foreign to their origins. The desire of the – mostly Western – architects to appear 'local' and knowledgeable about 'Islamic' customs requires the importation of the motif from elsewhere in what, to a Westerner, is 'Islamic architecture's' cultural field; this is a practice acceptable to Qatari clients who wish to appear 'cultured' to the global audience and respectful of traditions to locals. The architectural situations below are chosen as examples of these tensions underlying the institutional and urban order of Doha's development.



Fig. 9.31. *The Burj Qatar (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.32. *The Burj Qatar at night shown with one of several computer-controlled lighting patterns (photo by the author, 2013).*

It is probably safe to say Doha's most 'iconic' (that is both widely recognized and admired) building (Figs. 9.31–9.32) is the Burj Qatar (Qatar Tower) designed by French architect Jean Nouvel and completed in 2012.

According to Hafid Rakem, a partner in the Office Jean Nouvel, the façade's star-shaped pattern was inspired by a column in a local Doha mosque, and *mashribiya* skin permits the use of clear glass, which is highly unusual in the Middle East (Ephgrave 2012). The *mashribiya* (Figs. 9.33–9.34) referred to by

Rakem is a simple screening device found throughout the Islamic world but particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean.[20] When combined with geometric patterning the *mashrabiya* is now one of the Gulf's most ubiquitous architectural motifs.

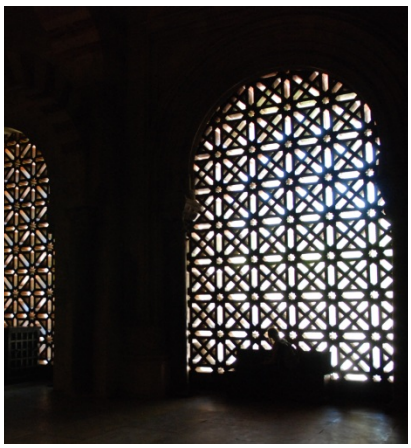

Fig. 9.33. *Mashribiya in the Mezquita, Cordoba, Spain (photo by the author, 2009).*



Fig. 9.34. *Mashribiya in Cairo Egypt (source and date unknown).*

Everything from window shades, fences, gates and even etched patterns on highway underpasses to the supreme example of the Burj Qatar are adorned with interlocking star patterns. With Doha lacking a richly developed iconography of its own, most Western designers use southern Spain, Iran or ancient Baghdad and Damascus for inspiration for their highly evolved aesthetic innovations rather than the humble motifs of Gulf origin.

Wrapping the tower in a *mashribiya* accomplishes several practical goals (Fig. 9.35). First, it greatly helps reduce solar heat gain by limiting the sun's direct contact with the inner glass curtain wall.[21] Varying the density of the *mashribiya* to correspond with the sun's arching intensity helps reduce the

[20] Linguistically, the word stem, ***shrbt***, means 'to drink', which reveals the word's architectural origin denoting an oriel window cantilevering from a second floor room that holds cool water. The projecting space, which is surrounded by a wooden lattice on three sides, allows ventilation to cool the stored water, and promotes cross-ventilation for the entire floor, eliminates direct solar heat gain and in the ultraconservative Gulf enables women to see what is going on in the street below without permitting foreign eyes to see inside their homes. A more extreme version of the *mashribiya* is found in an architectural device particular to the Gulf, the *tarma*, from the Arabic word for dumb or mute, which is a small earthen or wooden box protruding from an upper story into the 'public' alley or *sikka* below. The *tarma* allowed women to perch themselves above their front door to hear life outside their cloistered home without revealing themselves. As the name implies the women could not speak to or see the people below. And of course those on the street never knew when someone might be listening from within the *tarma.* For a lengthy discussion of the *tarma* and other privacy practices in the Arabian *fereej* of Saudi Arabia see Al-Naim (2006:222).

[21] Despite the aluminium outer skin designed to reduce solar heat gain, the building's enormous elevator core placed on the north side of the circular plan misses the easiest and least expensive opportunity to shade the south-facing interior, likely a decision based upon the desire to maintain the more dramatic view over the harbour to the south.

façade's monotony while improving the interior view and increasing natural daylight. Like the original *sikka mashribiya* (narrow alleyway *mashribiya*) that prevented strangers from peering inside domestic interiors, Nouvel's façade similarly helps keep public eyes from peering into the lit interior spaces at night. And, of course, the polished aluminium skin when combined with programmable exterior lighting creates its dramatic night-time image (Fig. 9.16, 9.32).

The Burj, like Norman Foster's similarly shaped AIG tower in London, makes no attempt to create a public realm connected to the street. Indeed, the Burj's main lobby, submerged one level below the street (Figs. 9.37–9.39), further enhances its separation from the city. Dappled light filtering through the aluminium canopy and water vapour from the irrigation sprayers create a grotto-like atmosphere. Entry to the Burj's main lobby through a submerged, hidden garden removes the building's connection to the street in two senses: from the physical street of cars, traffic and pedestrians, and from the street of human interaction. Creating a verdant oasis in the middle of arid, sandy Doha is somewhat of an Orientalist cliché: Howard Roark reading *Tales of the Arabian Nights* under a Najd date palm.



Fig. 9.36*. The Burj Qatar mashribiya skin (photo by the author, 2013).*

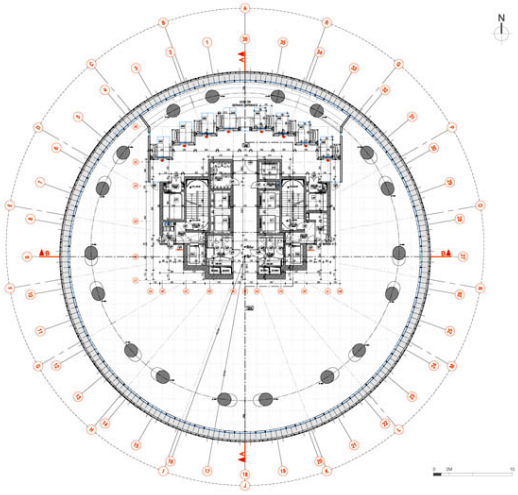

Fig. 9.35. *Burj Qatar typical floor plan (source: http://free-d.nl/project/show/id/47, accessed 3 June 2015).*

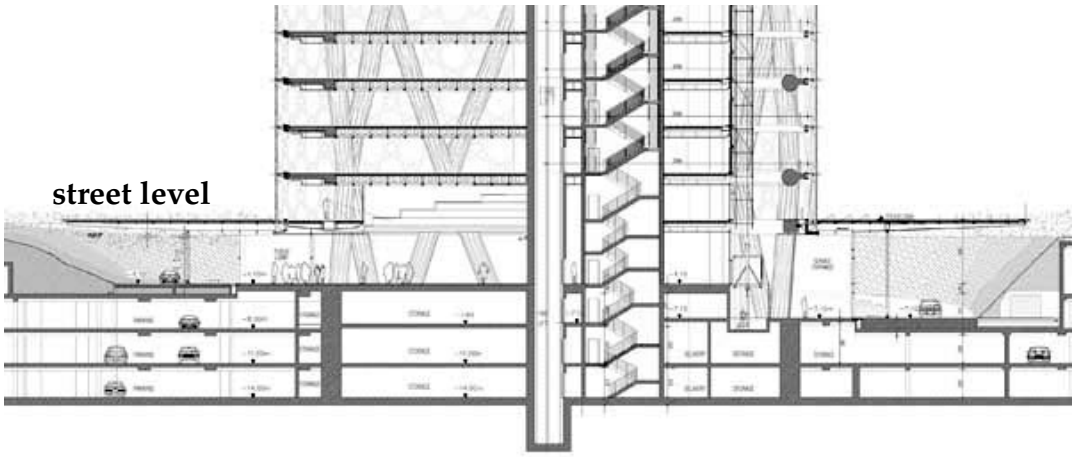

Fig. 9.37. *Burj Qatar vertical section (source: http://free-d.nl/project/show/id/47, accessed 3 June 2015).*

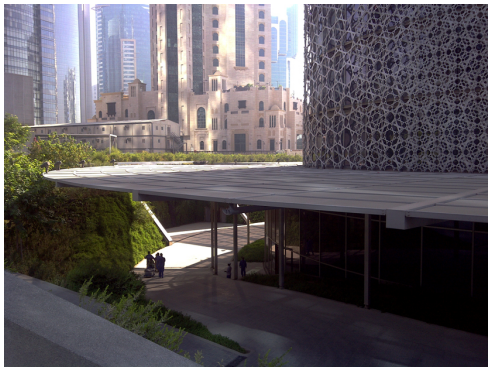

Fig. 9.38. *Burj Qatar 'grotto' one level below street grade (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.39. *Burj Qatar 'grotto' one level below street grade (photo by the author, 2013).*

The Burj Qatar's architectural language, rooted in cultural signs such as the *mashribiya*, makes the foreign high-rise form intelligible through its connection to the background language operating in the culture, even if we understand 'local culture' to come from distant Arab lands.[22] The building clearly expresses a Western, highly technological modernity, yet its façade pattern consciously acknowledges the humble domestic screen. Like the Burj Qatar, the three examples below of West Bay skyscrapers are chosen to illustrate different architectural attempts to bridge cultural meanings. The Barzan Tower (Fig. 9.40), completed in 2000, houses the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and was designed by Qatari architect Ibrahim Jaidah of the Arab

[22] The main criticism of the Burj Qatar is its striking resemblance to Jean Nouvel's previous tower in Barcelona, Spain: the Torre Agbar.

Engineering Bureau.[23] A short distance away is the Supreme Educational Council (SEC) headquarters (Fig. 9.41), designed by Ashghal, the Qatar Public Works Authority.[24] Both buildings attempt to synthesize a modernist high-rise and Arabic heritage; the resulting hodgepodge of vocabularies underscores Doha's reliance on architectural image to reconcile iconographic differences and the more deeply held beliefs they represent. Vesely (2004b) points out that nineteenth-century European architecture found it increasingly difficult to relate a contemporary 'style' to its past. Overshadowed by historists who held history as discrete epochs, the only arc of continuity relating one period to another is the change in style and not in underlying concepts. In both Europe and Doha the problem of style corresponds to the conflict between ideas as ahistorical representations of tradition and the historically bound uniqueness of an epoch (ibid.:262).

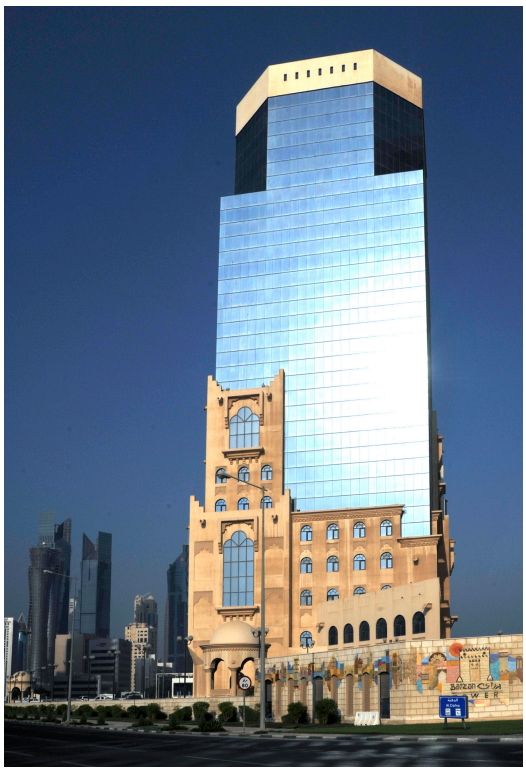

Fig. 9.40. *Barzan Tower, also called the Ministry of Labour building (photo by the author, 2013).*



Fig. 9.41. *Supreme Educational Council (SEC) building (photo by the author, 2013).*

[23] 'The building is known by its developer name, Barzan Tower. A multistory office building clad in deep-blue reflective glass and aluminium curtain walls, with rental office space of 13,600 square metres. The first nine floors are treated in a traditional architectural style, in contrast to the 21-story glass-clad tower above. A rigid central cast in-situ reinforced concrete core was developed around a central vertical service shaft that contains lifts, staircases and services. The architect's challenge was to achieve a balance between the requirements of a modern office building while preserving traditional Qatari architectural methods'. Source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture – from arcnet.org (accessed March 2015).

[24] Date of the building's completion unknown.

The Barzan Tower makes no apology for creating an 'Arab street' façade that gives way to a featureless curtain wall above. The blue glass skin seems embarrassed by its own presence, seeking to dissolve into the colour of the sky. A similar treatment is seen in the third example of this triptych, the Samriya Towers residential apartments (Figs. 9.42–9.43).[25] Here, the blue glass façade without parapet or edge articulation dematerializes against the Qatari sky, losing its sense of scale, appearing shorter than it is when compared to the neighbouring high-rises. Unlike the use of Arab architectural imagery in the Barzan and SEC Towers, Samriya's use of ancient Greek iconography at the street entrance to link the two towers is perhaps only a marketing ploy to seek greater appeal to Western residents. The SEC building aggrandizes and abstracts the parapet crenulations of Arab mud-brick forts found mostly in Oman, completing the architectural pot-pourri with a mosque-like structure embedded midway on the façade. The three examples act as co-determiners of action, to use Charles Taylor's words. They act as high-rise buildings, what is expected in West Bay, but still seek



Fig. 9.42. *Samriya Twin Towers, main entrance, completed in 2011 (photo by the author, 2014).*



Fig. 9.43. *Samriya Twin Towers, backside seen from West Bay (photo by the author, 2015).*

[25] Owner: Gulf East Trading & Contracting Co. W. L. L. (chaired by Mr. Ali Bin Mohammad); architects: MZ & Partners Architectural & Engineering Consultancy.

intelligibility to an Arab-Islamic social construction. Each is an individual actor in its own right, but through their agglomerative design approach help co-determine each other's presence.

Ashraf Salama's interpretation of the Barwa and SEC Towers, based upon an empirical study in which the building users and CEOs were asked to respond to each building's aesthetics in a closed-end survey, indicates that most of the respondents view the two buildings as emblematic of a unique identity, based on local traditions and Islamic values (Salama 2014). Building upon Kenneth Frampton's (1983) notions of critical regionalism Salama concludes such buildings reflect a commitment to sustaining an image of Doha as having both glass skyscrapers and relating to the regional culture; the amalgam of styles, in other words, produces a unique image befitting Doha's unique circumstances, but the image is only at the behest of the city's elite property developers and lacks a deeper critical discourse.

While Salama's interpretation offers an interesting, albeit commonsensical, insight shared by the buildings' users, it does little to help us see the deeper tensions at play between the institutional and urban orders; nor for that matter does the view that cities like Doha are only caught in 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt 2002) or 'identity crises' (Lewis 2003). All cities the world over express varying degrees of the 'consequences of modernity' (Giddens 1990). What I wish to add is the notion that cities like Doha express through architecture a restless dynamism between the divine order – what, from Taylor, I call a vertically oriented culture – and a separate human order, the horizontal. The tension between the two orders as centres of power is manifest in the architectural dialectic across the bay: ordered and rational Western-inflected buildings on one side of the bay and, to use a phrase from the Msheireb redevelopment architect Tim Makower, a higgledy-piggledy, chaotic neighbourhood, on the other side. Figure 9.44 of Doha in 2008 illustrates the dialectic of what I am calling the horizontal versus vertical urban and institutional order. Figure 9.45, a 2010 digital rendering of Msheireb development, reveals why the regime wished to erase the image in Figure 9.44 and replace it with a 'modern' version, or, according to Msheireb's own marketing strap line attributed to the Emir's

wife Sheikha Moza, 'A rising homeland that confidently embraces modernization and proudly observes tradition' (Sweet 2009). In the cross-bay dialectic we indeed see both homelands rising, in that the buildings are getting taller, and both are struggling against their own height and scale to remain 'traditional'. The key point I wish to emphasize is the institutional order within both 'rising' landscapes struggles to remain ontologically Islamic against its modern embodiment.



Fig. 9.44. *In the foreground, Msheireb fereej, 2008 (source: Msheireb Properties).*



Fig. 9.45. *Nearly the same perspective as Fig. 9.44, a computer rendering of Msheireb Downtown Doha, with the West Bay skyline in the distance (source Allies and Morrison Architects, 2010).*

The speed of creating the West Bay's skyscraper landscape testifies to the regime's ability to easily overcome the kinds of resistances we might expect in other vertically oriented cities: money, planning and nature. Creating an image of modernism we might say 'cut and pasted' from the icons of late capitalist cities, and combining it with a similar view of Islamic iconography's transportability ostensibly describes a vast planning matrix whose warp of traffic movements and weft of historical references attempt to synthesize the modern with the traditional. Underlining West Bay's grand plan are the remnants of antique custom that claim to observe and preserve power. However, the resulting city is no more local than its models such as Canary Wharf or the World Financial District. In its search for a 'city' commensurate to its historical orientation, Doha's leaders neglect the

manner in which the 'actor' is claimed by the stratification of contexts, the claims made by culture.

The rapid creation of West Bay's institutional depth begins with an abrupt rise from primordial conditions – the sea – to establishing earth, supporting a city, comprised of architecture, enabling customs embodied in typical situations, culminating in *praxis*, authentic action within a culture's commonly held concerns. The full arc of the institutional horizon from what is most common to all – earth – to *praxis* connects the particular to the universal, bridging the 'actor' to her lifeworld of meaningful social action. Within urban topography and its structure of differentiation, architecture provides the immediate horizon of praxis. Yet in West Bay this stratification as I have just outlined omits the deeply held connection between articulation and embodiment. Instead of finding a range of articulations from the most abstract to the most concrete and a corresponding spectrum of architectural and symbolic embodiments we find instead an ambiguity that veers between ancient Islamic hierarchies and modernism's nihilism. The irony of West Bay is it seems every bit as much a 'city' as its high-rise contemporaries, but lacking a coherent institutional horizon what remains is a continual search for what a 'city' truly is.

9.2.4 Ceremony in the Urban Order

Fashion in Qatar gives everyone an instant understanding of rights, privileges and normative behaviours within an ancient hierarchy. For example the Emir, and men from the royal family or wealthy sheikhs, wear crisp white *thobes*, and on special occasions a gold embroidered *bisht* (robe). Next in the social hierarchy is the typical male Qatari national, who wears a white *thobe* and head covering, the *guttra*, and for women a black *abaya* and some form of head or face covering. Western managerial expatriates typically wear business attire; their wives dressing modestly in loose-fitting skirts. At the bottom of the chain sit the 1.5 million Asian workers in bright coloured coveralls. However, on certain occasions the urban landscape transforms our understanding of Doha's caste system.

Take for example 'National Day', the annual celebration of Qatar's independence. Since 2007 the country's residents have thronged to the Cornice to enjoy a spectacular firework display, wave flags and parade along the coastal highway (Fig. 9.46). The event has become so massive that the entire city is gridlocked for hours by the thousands of cars pouring towards the coastal urban edge. The great collective ritual of a cheering crowd suspends for a moment class and caste; we unite in common action to cheer the nation, but given that the spectacle takes place within the urban representation of the West Bay backdrop, we cheer just as loudly for the city and the Emir who made it all possible. We imagine ourselves to be living in a triumphant metropolis, one that started to rise from the sea only a few years before. Fireworks and crowds once a year do not a city make. But the common, shared action, in a shared public sphere, tends towards the key horizontal forms of the social imaginary.



Fig. 9.46. *Father Emir Sheikh Hamad during National Day parade, 2012 (source: http://www.infoqat.com/news/sports/4304/emir-greets-people-on-national-day, accessed March 2014).*

Benedict Anderson refers to events like Qatar's National Day celebration as emblematic of national identity, in stark contrast to religious or regnal identity (Anderson 2006). The actual event that National Day celebrates is not widely known. One might imagine that memorable dates such as 3 September 1971 when Qatar ended its protection treaty with the British and became independent, or 22 February 1972 when Sheikh Khalifa overthrew his cousin would be worth celebrating. Why then did Sheikh Hamad in 2007 declare 18 December as National Day? Officially, the date commemorates the historic day in 1878 when Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani succeeded his father as leader of the tribes of Qatar. This day in history is every bit as much a national fiction as the contemporary celebration. Better

to cheer an historic transition of power rooted in clan supremacy than either its colonial underpinnings or history of internecine conflict and political coups. Architecture and its image are used cleverly to further implant the



Fig. 9.47. *National Day Parade (source: Al Jazeera News, 2014).*

regime's political legitimacy. Everyone, regardless of class, gender, ethnicity or nationality, celebrates an urban triumph made possible by the seamless power handling of the Al-Thani. Conversely, the urban high-rise backdrop that literally shadows National Day symbolizes Al-Thani rule. We have previously seen the use of real estate, vacant land and architecture in the formation of national identity and political power consolidation from the early 1950s. West Bay moves this impulse to an international level.

In the celebration of National Day what is shared is not common action as we might expect but rather common emotion. The spectacle of the event,



Fig. 9.48. *Vodaphone online advertisement using National Day.*

enjoyed by millions, magnifies our attachment. We are caught up in the moment, something larger than ourselves drawing from us a deeper sense of belonging. Nearly all of Qatar's 1.5 million migrant workers are 'bachelors', single young men, living and working in Qatar solely to support families in India, Nepal or the Philippines. I routinely ask my taxi driver, whom I use almost every afternoon to drive home from work, how his day is going. His answer is always the same, 'just work sir, nothing else. My life is only work and money.' The middle-aged Qataris I interview, particularly women, feel intensely the push of modernity: education, career, leadership; and the pull of tradition: marriage, children, family, spending their day in the constant negotiation between work and home. Both social segments – the Indian bachelor and the Qatari female – spend much of their lives deeply embedded within the bounded confines of their socially constructed lifeworlds. This is hardly unusual in any city, though in Qatar the highly segregated nature of the culture accentuates life's insularity. The Emir and his urban imaginary help attune the nation to something outside themselves, lifting the widely divergent social segments out of common, everyday life and uniting them in an urban spectacle. The high-rises give us a belief that our hard work is contributing to something larger than just ourselves. When we celebrate the city we cheer the Emir and the urban institutions.

Despite the widely held belief in the West that our age is secular, the vast majority of Doha residents are decidedly not. Religion plays the defining role in the understanding of Being for the many Muslims, Hindus and Christians in Qatar. This makes it all the more possible to accept a 'calling' from a singular personality, such as the Emir. In the vertical, higher-time society that I have been arguing is the structuring principle of Qatari society, despite its secular age imagery, the king fulfils his traditional and historical role as sovereign over his people and Allah sovereign over all things. John Calvert (2010:215) points out the incompatibility of this view with the modern doctrine of state sovereignty. While the Emir's political power seems absolute, he is theologically very much equal to his fellow co-religionists. However, the implication that his authority is divinely mandated further blurs in what ways his power is absolute. The Emir's city

is not Heavenly Jerusalem, but it is a singular imaginary, holding Qatar's vastly divergent populations in common, at least for a moment. For the briefest instant when hundreds of thousands join on 18 December, the city becomes what Hannah Arendt (1998, 2006) describes as a public sphere of differences held in common.[26] The question thus arises: what is the 'city' on the other days of the year?

The drama of National Day set against the skyscraper backdrop looks tremendously like something that would happen in a democratic state, Macy's fireworks in New York City on the 4th of July for example. The strong sense of collective identity, solidarity, belief in the rule of law and commitment to one another typical of democracy seems conspicuously on view during Qatar's National Day. Western expatriates often feel, perhaps through our association with our North Atlantic homelands, that the state is for the people, whose freedoms and expressions are guaranteed. Such an understanding was simply not possible in pre-modern societies. Doha's urban imaginary, particularly on National Day, fuses politics and religion in a bewildering way. Jurgen Habermas describes the historical dimension of religion in the public sphere:

> [The] law and the monarch's judicial power owe their sacred aura to mythical narratives that connected ruling dynasties with the divine. At the same time, archaic ritual practices were transformed into state rituals – society as a whole represents itself in the figure of the ruler. And it is this symbolic dimension of the fusion of politics and religion for the description of which the concept of 'the political' can properly be used. The collectivity sees itself mirrored in the ruler's self-representation as a political community that *intentionally* – i.e., consciously and deliberately – produces its social cohesion through the exercise of political power. Thus 'the political' means the symbolic representation and collective self-understanding of a community that differs from tribal societies through a reflexive turn to a conscious rather than spontaneous form of social integration. In the self-understanding of this kind of polity the locus of control shifts toward collective action. However, 'the political' as such could not become a topic of discourse as long as mythic narratives remained the sole means of symbolic representation.

[26] See also Weber (1966).

(Habermas 2011:18; emphasis in the original)[27]

While I acknowledge that Habermas' theory of communicative action, outlined in the above quote, fails to distinguish levels of involvement, privileging rational thought excessively, he does remind us that 'the political' was inseparable from theology and political authority was defined and justified in sacred higher time. He further suggests that modern secular states operate without such an order. Since the seventeenth century the sacral foundation of 'the political' has been replaced with an egalitarian view of society. Habermas further notes, that 'the secularization of the state is not the same as the secularization of society' (ibid.:23); nor in our case is the secularization of the image of a society the same as the secularization of the underlying society. In the European transformation of political authority from cosmic-religious to secular, a void nonetheless remains at the central spot once held by the central authority. Claude Lefort suggests in the course of the democratic transformation, 'the political' has not completely lost its association with religion (Lefort 1988:219 quoted in Habermas 2011:27): 'We can say that the advent of a society capable of organizing social relations can come about only if it can institute the conditions of their intelligibility, and only if it can use a multiplicity of signs to arrive at a quasi-representation of itself' (ibid.: 2011:29).

Paradoxically, Qatar inverts this formula. The Emir very much retains his historic, cosmic-theology at the society's centre, but he goes to great lengths in creating the multiplicity of signs and symbols that represent not itself, as Lefort suggests, but rather its complete opposite, namely a secular, horizontal democracy.

The skyline on any given day represents our participation in some form of collective emotion. There is no football club, stadium or hero without adoring fans. There is no corporation, skyline or Emir without a supplicant public. The role of the image allows adherence to God and belonging to the state at the same time. One need not belong to the institutions in the image. I

[27] Kantorwicz (1997) posits sovereigns have two bodies, one institutional and one personal; the more the king is absorbed in ritual, the less import his personal life has.

can still adhere to God, and belong to the state, which seem contradictory, by not participating in the state's institutions. I enjoy, take pride in the image, but I do not find meaning in it.

9.2.5 Power

I wish to conclude this section of Chapter 9 with a brief discussion of political power as embodied in the West Bay urban image. We have spent a good amount of energy understanding the skyscraper as modernity's image par excellence. However, an alternative reading emerges when we once again consider the urban skyline as, ironically, something more ancient, more attuned to Islam's birth as an urban religion, and more consonant with Islam's scientific and cultural apogee in its so-called 'golden age' centred in Damascus and Baghdad. With near limitless resources, were the successive Emirs Khalifa and Hamad drawing from Islamic urban heritage in building Doha? Is modern Doha a resurrection of Islam's glorious past that is synonymous with urban complexity, not just including magnificent architecture, but also holding within its ranks multiple understandings of self, other and the cosmos? Is resurrecting an image of Islam as fundamentally urban, like that of its predecessors which held in tension vastly different peripheral cultural practices, undermining the culture's Wahhabi bent or is it finding a more 'pure' Islam in its own golden age? These are some of the questions without easy answers arising from Doha's symbolic architectural fragments.

Looking for a moment at Doha's first tower yields clues as to Sheikh Khalifa's understanding of the role tall buildings might play in socio-cultural and economic transformation (Figs. 9.49–9.50). The first tall building contemplated for Doha was never built, and by most definitions was not a 'building' at all, but rather a monumental sculpture.

Designed by William L. Pereira, the same architect of the Doha Sheraton and master planner for the entire West Bay area, the 100-metre tower required its own artificial island slightly to the east of the Emiri Diwan, the present site

of the *dhow* harbour. The tower was to contain a restaurant at mid-level, observation deck at the top and a radio/TV mast atop the entire structure. Pereira completed design development in April 1977, with construction slated to begin by year's end. We shall perhaps never fully know why the tower design was shelved, but given the history of Doha waterfront

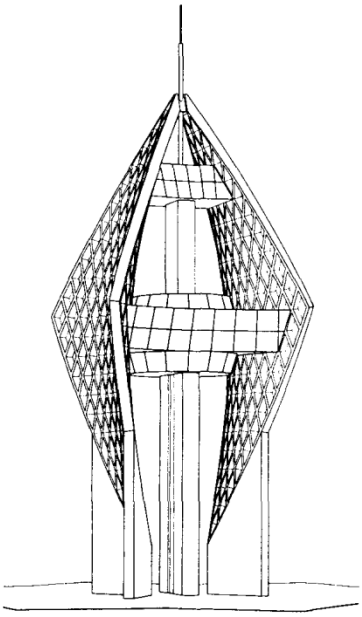

***Fig. 9.49**. Perspective view of The Tower at Doha (source: Willford and Croft, 1977).*

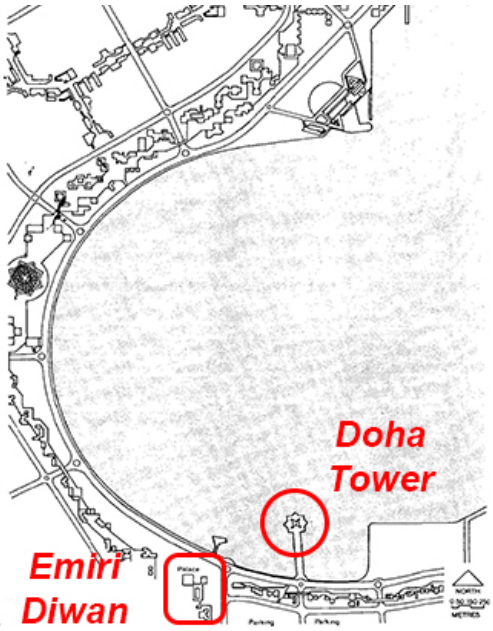

***Fig. 9.50.** Site plan of The Tower at Doha (source: Willford and Croft, 1977).*

development we can venture several guesses, all of which discloses the proposed tower's symbolic role, and, more importantly, the symbolism of what was actually built.

With Qatar GDP at $3.6 billion in 1977 (it is over $200 billion in 2015), and the tower only costing £19 million and construction estimated to last three years, it is doubtful that finances played a role. But it is possible Qataris viewed the tower as arrogant, a proclamation of the Emir's ego, particularly because it was the tallest tower in the region, only steps away from his administrative palace and serving no particular function – other than self-aggrandizement and a vantage point from which to contemplate the Emir's sweeping urban power; nor was it owned by an important clan or family. Local fishermen no doubt objected to the destruction of their centrally

located, historic harbour, and likewise older Qatari families may have decried the loss of Doha's historic connection to the sea. Though the tower was never built, Pereira did build the equally iconic Sheraton Hotel just four years later. Both architectural forms pay homage to Pereira's perception of geometry's organizing role in Islamic art and architectural history. But Khalifa's tower presciently envisioned the Corniche's high-rise development, the Diwan's muscular if not surreptitious political role in architectural development, and the global influence the tiny nation-state plays in international media through Al Jazeera; and, as noted above, the cancelling of a monument in lieu of a for-profit Western hotel directly points to Qatar's economic ambitions. Perhaps in Heideggerian terms the tower constituted a new work of art by a new thinker-poet, a new cultural paradigm. Says Heidegger, 'there must always be some being in the open, something that is, in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy' (Heidegger 1971:61). The cultural paradigm is that which refocuses the current cultural practices to disclose a new world. In the mid 1970s such a monument was so culturally and architecturally foreign that perhaps Khalifa sensed not the ontological challenge per se but the discomfort among his people to such an extent that he opted for a work of art far more familiar and far more practical: the pyramidal Sheraton. But the impulse to use architecture as a cultural catalyst was bequeathed to Khalifa's son Hamad.

9.2.6 Conclusion

In this section I have attempted to understand in what ways Doha residents are involved with their city through an analysis of the high-rise skyscraper. The analysis has been broadly sketched out across two axes: the first ranges from cultural, embodied engagement within particular architectural situations to the opposite extreme of disembodied projection as a representation of a utopian imagination. The second axis looks at the difference between a vertical, higher-time oriented society and that of a horizontal, equidistant society: the difference between sacred and secular.

Both dimensions of the analysis, seen through architecture's unique cultural role, begin to illuminate facets of Doha's particular urban order.

Unlike earlier historical epochs in which architecture and architectural space are represented in pictorial, perspectival images, Doha, because of Islam's prohibition on the image, is forced to rely on architecture as image; not the image of architecture, but architecture's ability to carry representational meaning in communicating differences held in common. In an era when media and images mediate our perception of social reality, we have, in Doha - a city stripped bare of visual references - a unique opportunity to understand the cultural and ontological legacy bequeathed to us through modernism in general and modern architecture in particular.

The modernist vertical skyline of West Bay, set against the traditional, low-rise rambling residential neighbourhood across Doha Bay embodies a tension felt throughout Doha's institutional and urban order. We might, on the one hand, believe the city, and regime, have cultivated a kind of synthesis between the modern understanding of individual agency and a world divinely ordered. On the other hand such glaring ontological juxtapositions could not be anything but unstable and destined to collapse. Seen another way the search for city pits the hierarchy under Allah, embodied in the Emir, enshrined in *sharīʿah*, and articulated in customs against the absence of hierarchy – except of course the power wealth brings. Power in free-market capitalism, as referenced in West Bay, is only that of wealth. In Doha's case the regime, his immediate family and several mercantile clans therefore occupy the apex of both religious and economic hierarchies. Whatever the case, and I believe it is too early to formulate a telos for Doha, these tensions provide stability in its own right as a search to orient the culture among the presence and absence of hierarchy.



Fig. 9.51. *The Emerald City (photo by the author, 2013).*

9.3 Infrastructure: Holding It All Together



'A trillion of anything is a lot, especially money'

– Research participants within the Central Planning Department

This section's central aim is to uncover a unique facet of Doha's urban order: the experience and understanding of that which is typically hidden. In most large cities urban infrastructure is vital for the orderly functioning of urban life. The cohabitation of millions in densely packed proximity is possible only through what we broadly call infrastructure. From turning a faucet to catching a metro we take infrastructure for granted, only noticing its presence when it fails. As such, infrastructure is phenomenologically in the background of daily experience. Infrastructure enables urban life, but like water to the fish, it sustains us without our noticing it. Doha inverts this common expectation by structuring daily life around the constantly felt presence of its emerging infrastructure. For the last decade Doha residents have understood and for the foreseeable future will continue to understand infrastructure as the foreground, as the proximate, situated relationship one has to the city's other institutions through the unavoidable experience of the massive construction schemes. As a foreground, close-at-hand experience, Doha's emerging infrastructure uniquely functions as an urban institution in its own right.

A recent headline in a local newspaper read 'Qatar World's Second Infrastructure Market' and told the story of how total infrastructure investment will exceed US$200 billion in the next ten years.[28] MEED Digest

[28] 'Qatar World's Second Infrastructure Market', by Satish Kanady, *The Peninsula*, 27 November 2014.

estimates Qatar's infrastructure closer to US$300 billion, an amount corroborated by research participants within the Central Planning Department, and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SCDL, the governmental agency responsible for the 2022 FIFA World Cup), who said Qatar will spend upwards of QAR 1 trillion preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Without question, Qatar's recent surge in infrastructure investment is transforming Doha like nothing else. In this last chapter of Part III and the penultimate section of the entire thesis I shall step back from the detailed descriptions of architecture and its attendant institutions and survey broadly how the massive investment in bridges, rail, stadiums and airports is changing nearly every aspect of Doha's urban order. The projects highlighted below are not explicitly viewed through a theoretical or philosophical lens, except to say the sheer size and ambition readily reminds us of Guy Debord's 'Society of the Spectacle'; and the unique experience of infrastructure is in the foreground when we typically expect it to be hidden in the background of any urban order. For if there is one thing above all else driving the infrastructure investment it is the globally consumed spectacle of sport.[29]

Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup in 2022, which will be the country's most globally visible moment. While it currently grabs negative headlines in the Western media for its human rights abuses of migrant labourers, many of whom are building the projects described in this section in direct support of the 2022 games, the regime hopes to present a far more positive face to the several million visiting, and several billion viewing, Qatar in 2022.

9.3.1 Stadiums, and Other Really Big Things

Using major sporting events to catalyse urban transformation on a massive scale began in Doha as far back as 1976 with the creation of the country's first football stadium, Khalifa Stadium, to host the Gulf Cup football tournament among GCC nations. Named after the ruling Emir himself, Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, the 20,000-seat stadium underwent a complete

[29] For a lengthy discussion of Middle East states using sporting events as national development strategies see Amara (2012) and Bromber and Krawietz (2013).

renovation in 2005, doubling its seating capacity and creating a larger sports complex, Aspire Park, to host the XV Asian Games in 2006. The stadium and surrounding park are again undergoing a massive expansion and refurbishment to accommodate the 2022 FIFA World Cup.



Fig. 9.52. *The 2010 FIFA award presentation to Qatar. Pictured from left: the then Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani; his second wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Misned, Qatar Foundation Chairperson; Sepp Blatter, the then FIFA President; and Hamad and Moza's son Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Thani, Chairman of the Qatar 2022 bid committee (source: PBS Newshour, 2010).*

To be sure, hosting the World Cup is the regime's single vision, its crowning achievement. The original FIFA bid submitted in 2010 included presentations to the FIFA executive committee by Sheikha Moza and her son Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Thani, Chairman of the Qatar 2022 bid committee (Fig. 9.52). Also in attendance were other members of the royal family and the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabber Al-Thani. The original bid proposed nine new and three significantly renovated stadiums, complete with innovative, if untested, mechanical and structural systems, and a plan for the necessary infrastructure investment required to host such an event. A recent *Business Insider* article reports that Qatar will only build eight stadiums, it will likely scrap the carbon-neutral plan to keep field temperatures in the mid 20 degrees Celsius, despite the average summer climate of over 40 degrees, and the proposal to use modular construction thus allowing the stadiums to be disassembled and shipped to developing nations after 2022, creating twenty-two new stadiums abroad. These, and other claims, in the original bid now seem unattainable.[30] Cost overruns, competition for scarce resources among other massive

[30] 'Qatar Is Quietly Breaking The Promises That Won It The 2022 World Cup', by Tony Manfred, *Business Insider*, 25 April 2014, 2:11 PM, http://www.businessinsider.com/qatar-world-cup-promises-2014-4 (accessed 6 February 2015).

infrastructure projects and the tight time schedule will likely further reduce the scope of FIFA 2022 projects. For our purposes, the stadium designs, whether they are built or not, translate literally Qatari cultural metaphors into massive buildings (Bromber 2014). We see this in many other large projects, such as Sidra Hospital's resemblance to a *dhow* boat; the Qatar National Convention Centre's sidra tree façade; and the National Museum's entire form mimicking a sand crystal. These are attempts to find an orientation in history that situates thoroughly modern institutions within a rapidly shifting urban topography.

Looking a bit closer at a few of the stadium designs lays bare the use of cultural icons to balance tradition with modernity. The architectural messaging cuts in two directions. To Qatari nationals the use of intelligible, widely accepted instantiations of collective memory reassures the populace that the regime will never embrace foreign practices, ideas or religions at the expense of their own 'culture and religion'. To foreign audiences the use of cultural metaphors writ large furthers a trend seen in other Gulf cities to create a new Orientalism (Said 1979). In looking at cultural revival projects in other Gulf cities Al-Hararneh (2006) and Steiner (2014) adopt the theoretical position that arbitrary and eclectic combinations create ambiguities that erase the distinction between imagination and reality (Steiner 2014:23). Such new embodiments constitute Baudrillard's 'third-order simulacra' (2007) resulting in a new hyper-real Orientalism in which tourists enjoy an 'Arabian' experience but without the flies or beggars found in more ancient urban quarters.

Qatar's regime seems desperate not to repeat the Dubai experiment in which it lost its identity at the expense of prosperity, though the Burj Khalifa's plan, an abstracted hymenocallis flower (Fig. 9.53) purportedly seeks a similar role mediating between the natural and artificial, tradition and modernity, its architects, SOM, describing the tower's overall design as 'inspired by the geometries of a regional desert flower and the patterning systems embodied in Islamic architecture.'[31] In nearly every mega-architectural or infrastructural project lies some form of the following

[31] Source: http://www.som.com/projects/burj_khalifa, accessed 22 October 2015.

marketing strap line: Qatar is dynamic and changing, yet remains rooted in its culture and in Islam. John Urry (1990) contends that prominent tourist destinations embody dialectical images such as ordinary and fantastic, native and foreign. Rooting spectacle in culturally specific notations compels the tourist to entertain the fantasy of the exotic (Rojek 1997). Ritzer and Liska (1997) posit in their 'McDonaldization' thesis that tourists increasingly travel to foreign lands only to experience familiarity, to have surprises driven out from novelty, and replaced with predictability. Ritzer and Liska's (1997) 'McDisneyized' neologism expands their thesis of familiarity to include the tourist industry's theming not only of amusement parks but of any destination, including cruise ships, malls, towns and cities. If the McDisneyized thesis is correct, tourists travel, as Urry maintains, for the dialectical reasons of curiosity and comfort. Given the negative stereotype of the Middle Eastern city in the minds of many Westerners – to generalize grossly: dirty, chaotic and dangerous – one easily understands the Qatari regime's employment of public relations firms to spin the narrative (Scharfenort 2015)[32]. But this only paints half the portrait. I wish to posit that the McDisneyized thesis holds equally true for Qatari nationals as it does for foreign tourists.



Fig. 9.53. *The hymenocallis flower.*

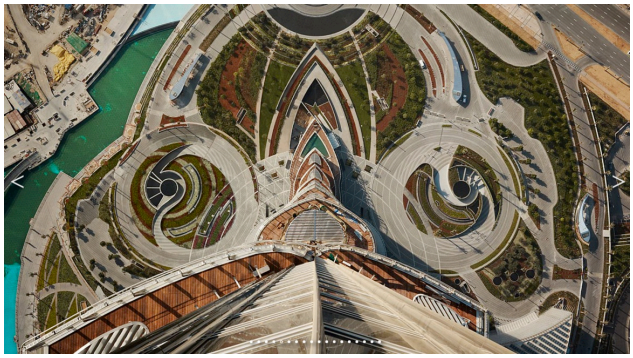

Fig. 9.54. *View of the Burj Khalifa ground plan (source: SOM, accessed October 2015).*

[32] I recently met with the Sheikh Tamim's public relations firm, Portland Communications, who desperately tried to convince me that the *Guardian's* estimate of 4,000 killed to build the FIFA 2022 stadiums (see 'Qatar World Cup construction "will leave 4,000 migrant workers dead"' 26 September 2013) is wildly inaccurate as, according to their own 'research', the poor nutrition and lack of health care in the migrant worker's home countries would have resulted in their early mortality regardless of how they are treated in Qatar.

A common theme among my middle-aged Qatari interviewees is how they feel like strangers in a strange land. For them, the buildings, streets, people and, most crucially, the social practices they are accustomed to are 'under threat' or 'unrecognizable'. Building stadiums in the shape of intimately familiar objects drawing on culturally embedded references helps instil a sense among Qatari nationals that the regime is acting in their best interest to preserve their culture, their religion. This is clearly expressed in the stadium descriptions accompanying each image below (Figs. 9.55–9.57).

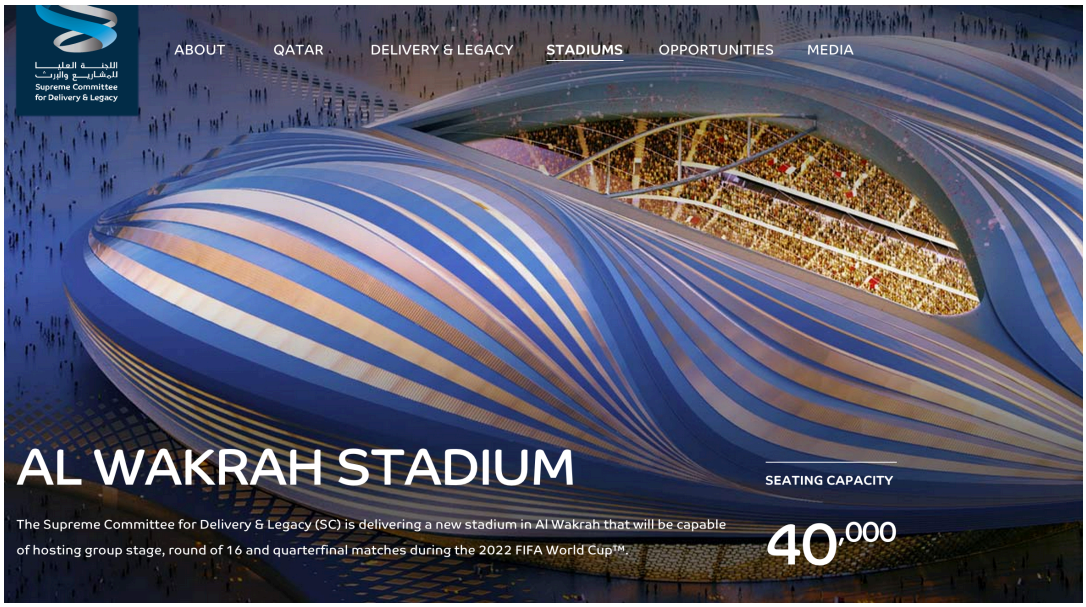

Fig. 9.55. *Al-Wakrah Stadium. The SCDL describes the stadium as follows: 'Located approximately 15 kilometres south of Doha, Al Wakrah is one of the oldest continuously inhabited areas in Qatar. Taking the dhow boats that carried generations of Qatari fishermen and pearl divers as inspiration, the design of Al Wakrah Stadium and the approximately 586,000m² surrounding precinct weaves together the city's cultural heritage with Qatar's progressive outlook, as defined in the Qatar National Vision 2030 [GSDP 2008]. In addition to the stadium and precinct, Al Wakrah's seafaring identity will be incorporated into the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ fan experience' (source: http://www.sc.qa/en/stadiums/al-wakrah, accessed 13 February*

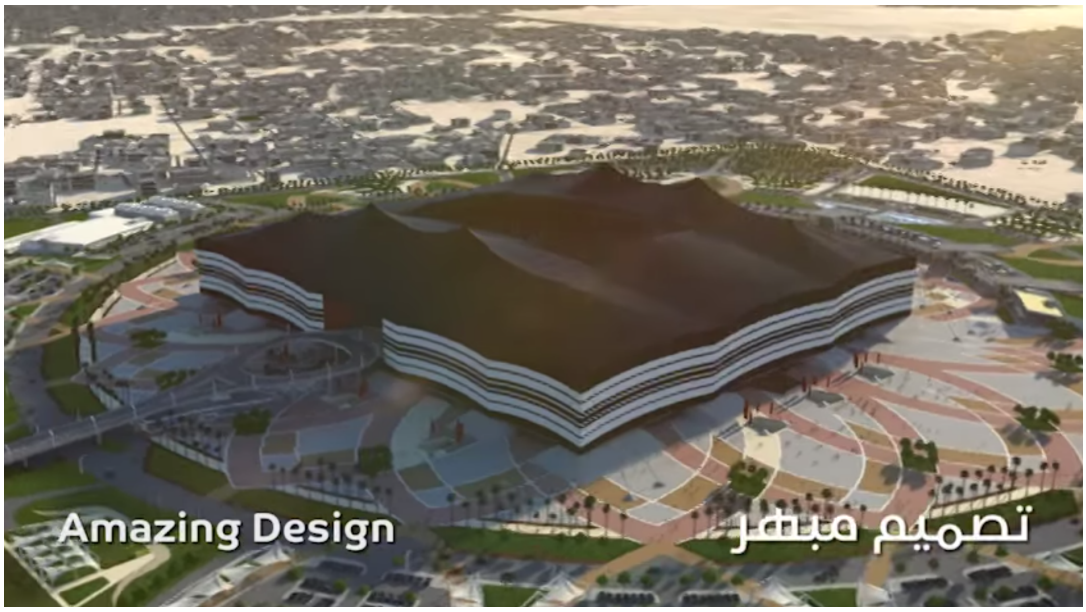

Fig. 9.56. *Al-Bayt (the house) Stadium. The SCDL describes the stadium as follows: 'Al Bayt Stadium – Al Khor City perfectly embodies the spirit of Qatar. Using the latest technologies and breathtaking innovations, it tells the story of a nation that has welcomed visitors into its warm embrace, in times of both scarcity and plenty, and treated them as family – regardless of differences in background, history or culture. For centuries, Qatar has been home to both nomadic and settled populations. The nomadic population lived primarily in the desert and herded animals, including camels, sheep and goats. The country's settled population primarily lived along the coastline, engaging in pearl diving, fishing and trading with neighboring villages, towns and cities. Although located close to Qatar's coast, Al Bayt Stadium – Al Khor City will introduce fans and visitors from around the world to the culture of the desert' (source: http://www.sc.qa/en/stadiums/al-bayt-stadium-al-khor-city, accessed 13 February 2015).*

While the main façade of Qatar National Convention Centre (Fig. 9.58) mimics the profile of a native sidra tree, and, according to the QNCC website, draws its inspiration from the traditional meeting place of Qatari scholars and poets (Fig. 9.59), its form pre-dates the commission by several years. Structural engineer Mutsuro Sasaki's 2002 entry for an international design competition to design the train station in Florence, Italy (Fig. 9.60) experimented with what he calls Extended Evolutionary Structural Optimization (ESO). When Sasaki collaborated with QNCC architect Arata Isozaki it appears his ESO research had finally found a home. But perhaps because the symbol of Qatar Foundation is likewise a sidra tree, the 250-metre-long façade directly adjacent to Qatar Foundation Headquarters is simply using the architecture to brand Her Highness' effort to modernize her country. At a cost of US$1.2 billion, and comprising 177,000 square

metres, the QNCC is one of the largest convention centres in the world, and one of the country's largest political adverts.[33]

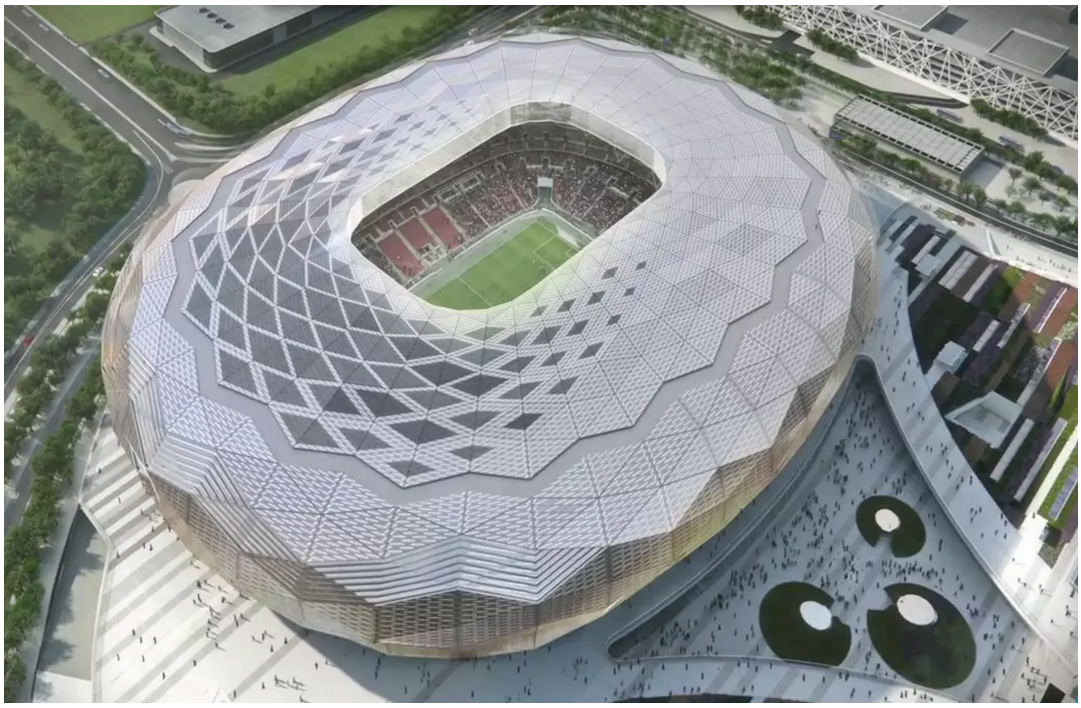

Fig. 9.57. *Qatar Foundation Stadium located in Education City. Whilst the design is drawn from geometric patterning, and not specific Qatari icons or images, the SCDL description epitomizes the use of large-scale architectural projects to balance cultural change: 'The design reflects Qatar. It is a country that is dynamic and changing, yet remains rooted in its culture and Islam' (source: http://www.sc.qa/en/stadiums/qatar-foundation-stadium, accessed 13 February 2015).*



Fig. 9.58. *Qatar National Convention Centre (source: http://www.qatarconvention.com/home, accessed 15 April 2015).*



Fig. 9.59. *Sidra Tree inspiration for the QNCC (source: http://www.qatarconvention.com/home, accessed 15 April 2015).*

[33] Source: http://www.designbuild-network.com/projects/qatarnationalconvent/ (accessed 13 February 2015).



Fig. 9.60. *New Florence, Italy, train station competition entry by Mutsuro Sasaki, 2002 (source: Morphogenesis, 2007).*



Fig. 9.61. *Sidra Hospital. In the foreground are Damien Hirst's fourteen bronze sculptures, 'The Miraculous Journey', commissioned by Her Highness Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad Al-Thani (photo by the author, 2013).*

Adjacent to the QNCC, Qatar Foundation is erecting a US$8 billion, 200,000-square-metre research hospital for women and children;[34] it is, oddly, named 'Sidra' (Fig. 9.61), but resembles a boat rather than a tree. Iconic architecture inspired by the Arabian *dhow* began a decade prior to Sidra's inception with Dubai's Burj Al-Arab hotel (Fig. 9.63). In Sidra Hospital we see a novel use of infrastructure as projection screen and backdrop for fourteen enormous bronze sculptures by British artist Damien Hirst (Fig. 9.62).

[34] The investment is the largest endowment to such a facility anywhere in the world (source: http://www.gulfconstructionworldwide.com/news/8848_Sidra-Medical--Research-Center.html, accessed 13 February 2015).



Fig. 9.62. *Unveiling of Damien Hirst's site-specific sculpture 'The Miraculous Journey' in front of Sidra Hospital (source: Penny Wang, Flickr https://www.flickr.com/photos/penny-yi-wang/10141829903, accessed February 2015).*

Apparently neither Sidra Hospital (the *dhow*) nor QNCC (the tree) are unique architectural metaphors or icons. And both, particularly because they stand next to each other along Qatar's main east–west highway, reveal the regime's political use of architecture as image. I say image for the simple fact that most Qataris will never set foot inside either structure and will, like most of the city's two million inhabitants, only understand them as symbolic structures viewed from a car window while speeding along the highway. Though both buildings are enormous, the QNCC hosts events targeted towards an international business audience, such as research conferences or trade shows; and Sidra Hospital's 'five-star' elite status will provide only 350 beds and focus exclusively on maternity health for wealthy Qatari women.



Fig. 9.63. *Dubai's Burj Al-Arab hotel (photo by Jaideep Abraham, http://www.amazingplacesonearth.com/burj-al-arab-dubai, accessed February 2015).*

Qatar Museum's National Museum (Fig. 9.64), though still under construction, takes up a slightly different symbolic role in the urban topography. The museum aims to have a broad visitor appeal among Qatari nationals, expatriates and tourists. Research participants working within Qatar Museums reveal how few Qatari nationals visit any of the state-run museums, and, it is hoped they say, a museum that celebrates the nation will draw greater local participation. The museum's form mimics *exactly* the shape of a 'desert rose' sand crystal (Fig. 9.65) that is particular to Qatar. The building's French architect, Jean Nouvel, describes his design as

> a testimony to Qatar's golden age. It's a building that represents the modernity and audacity of this country and which also shows that this country has an ancient history. This is why I chose a symbolic image which is one of coming-together, a crystallization … something which also evokes the passage of time and it reflects our time… The extraordinary modernity that characterizes Qatar today.[35]

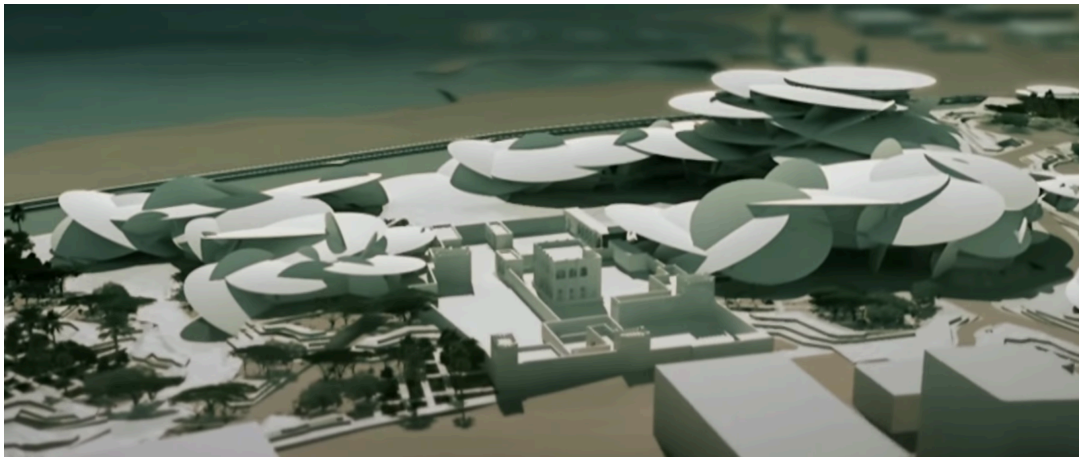

Fig. 9.64. *Architectural rendering of the Qatar National Museum. The Emir's early twentieth-century Diwan is seen in the centre of the image surrounded by the museum's elipses (source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxz33itieBs, accessed 14 February 2015).*

By placing the National Museum around Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani's original palace, both his family home and seat of Qatar government in the early twentieth century, the museum complex will 'celebrate his life … give voice to Qatar's heritage whilst celebrating its future', where 'visitors can learn about Qatar's ancestors and the formation of early cities, as well the modernization of Qatari society. Exhibitions will combine historic

[35] Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxz33itieBs (accessed 14 February 2015).



Fig. 9.65. *Image of a desert rose sand crystal from the museum's promotional video (source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxz33itieBs, accessed 14 February 2015).*

objects and contemporary influences, opening up a dialogue around the impact of rapid change'.[36]

It is widely accepted – though never formally – that the current lineage to the Qatar throne is only one of several competing family claims (Kamrava 2009). As other branches of the sprawling Al-Thani clan gain wealth and power, so, too, grows their ability to mount a credible political and military challenge. By constantly reinforcing the message in the public sphere both constitutionally (by allowing only descendants of the current regime to rule) and architecturally (by creating buildings that celebrates the founding fathers), few questions remain as to who rightfully may rule. But political legitimization strategies aside, the museum, much more than the other symbolic structures looked at in this section, seeks a genuine dialogue that celebrates the city's contradictions; it is an invitation to ask how Doha should understand its own history, its future direction and how to live with the tensions arising from its rapid development.

Resting upon the work of French sociologists Jean Baudrillard (2007) and Pierre Bourdieu (1984), Christian Steiner (2014) sees Qatar's iconic urban development as moving from hyper-realization to simulacra in an attempt to offer easily marketable, image-ready, consumable spaces; and as a means of political legitimization. According to Baudrillard, the simulation of reality begins with equivalent imitation, moves to identical reproduction and culminates in so-called third-order simulacra where signs and symbols, purged of historic references, are *sui generis*, dissolving the distance between symbolic representation and reality. Steiner correctly characterizes Gulf heritage destinations such as Souq Al-Arsah in Sharjah, UAE – and though

[36] Source: http://www.qm.org.qa/en/project/national-museum-qatar (accessed 14 February 2015).

not mentioned by Steiner I would add Bastakiya in Dubai, and the previously discussed Katara Cultural Village in Doha – as examples of first- and second-order simulacra (Steiner 2014:21–22).

However, Doha's aggrandizement of cultural artefacts fits neither Baudrillard's nor Steiner's development categories, but does seem closer to those of Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu, wealth and thus power are unique symbolic structures that require physical manifestations that legitimize and enhance the socio-political position of their owner, in our case the Al-Thani regime (Bourdieu 1984:28). Bringing tourists to Doha on its state-run airline, Qatar Air, and similarly broadcasting events in Doha on its state-run media channel, Al Jazeera, to living rooms around the world easily satiates the global appetite for media entertainment. Steiner's use of Bourdieu to understand Gulf mega-projects seems exactly correct, if slightly short-sighted, by not seeing how other instantiations of the regime work in concert with each other to produce an image of reality based on any object, cultural or natural, from clam shells to ship sails; that is, phenomena without a history of human involvements or situatedness: one does not live in a tree, or a rock. What then is the ultimate symbolic value of making massive building schemes from minute natural objects?

The artefacts chosen by the regime for spectacular architectural aggrandizement represent the very few symbols in Qatar's near or distant past that depict the structural features of an authentic historicity. Qatar's barren desert-scape, compounded by Wahhabi austerity, leaves little material culture to celebrate. Perhaps this is what Jean Nouvel refers to as Qatar's 'golden age': pure, unadorned, geometric form. Each element holds up to the Qatari people a sense of historic orientation rapidly slipping away. The desert rose, sidra tree and wooden *dhow* describe a world, in Heidegger's parlance, of human involvements, where social roles and practices are universally understood; where each fragment works in concert with a larger set of references making anything intelligible as what it is. Symbolic references to desert and sea pay homage respectively to Qatar's

two social strands: nomadic tribesmen, the Bedouin; and settled fishermen, the Hadar.[37]

Such symbolic literalism is exceedingly recent in the Qatari experience. For the last half century, since oil extraction first provided the means and desire to create a modern city, Doha has pursued with vigour a modernist architectural identity. The original Qatar Ministry of Interior (MOI) headquarters provides a clear example of how the regime has shifted its symbolic use of architecture. The first MOI building from 1976 along the Corniche near the Emiri Diwan displays a high-modernist design sensibility, common in most government and commercial headquarters buildings from the 1950s forwards (Fig. 9.66). Contrasting the original MOI headquarters with its much expanded successor set on a hill overlooking the Corniche we see a clear shift in aesthetic – and political – sensibilities.

The new MOI (Fig. 9.67) like the new Traffic Headquarters (Fig. 9.68), Al-Shamal Sports Club, Al-Wakrah Hospital and countless shopping mall complexes are based upon some vague notion of Arabian military architecture, which is totally absent in Qatar's history. In the MOI's case inspiration seems to be drawn from archaeological and Orientalist views of ancient Babylon (Figs. 9.69–9.70). Because the Emir's own design and construction office, the Private Engineering Office (PEO), develops public institutions such as government offices and hospitals, we must conclude that the radical shift away from European modernism – the city's true founding image – towards a regional post-modernism is a foil to the contemporary high-rises of West Bay, and 'starchitect' designs of Qatar Foundation. To quote from the description of the new Qatar Foundation stadium, 'the new design reflects Qatar … a country that is dynamic and changing, yet remains rooted in its culture and Islam'. The trend in recent years for Qatar's regime to wrap thoroughly modern and bureaucratic institutions in post-modern Arabian (or neo-Babylonian) skins is perhaps the clearest example yet of Doha's architectural topography as political symbolism.

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[37] For a lengthy discussion of Doha's ethnic factions, the *Bedu* (Sunni Arabs), the *Hawla* (sunni Arabs from Persia) and the *Ajam* (Shi'a Persians) see Nagy (2006).



Fig. 9.66. *Ministry of Interior Headquarters built in 1976 (source: MMUP, date unknown).*



Fig. 9.67. *The new Ministry of Interior Headquarters under construction (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 9.68. *The recently completed Traffic Department Headquarters (photo by the author, 2015).*

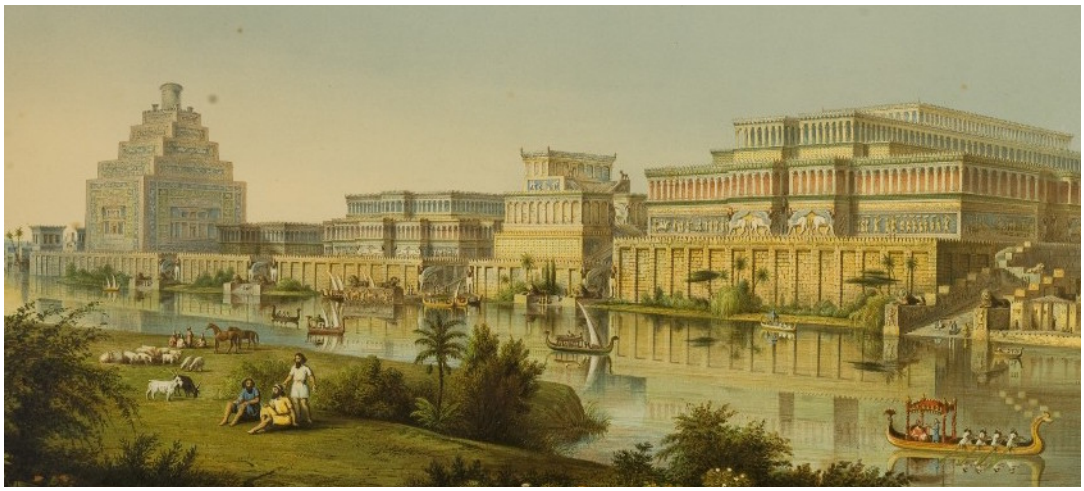

Fig. 9.69. *'Nimrud Restored', 1853, imagined by the city's first excavator, Austen Henry Layard and architectural historian James Fergusson (source: Layard 1853).*

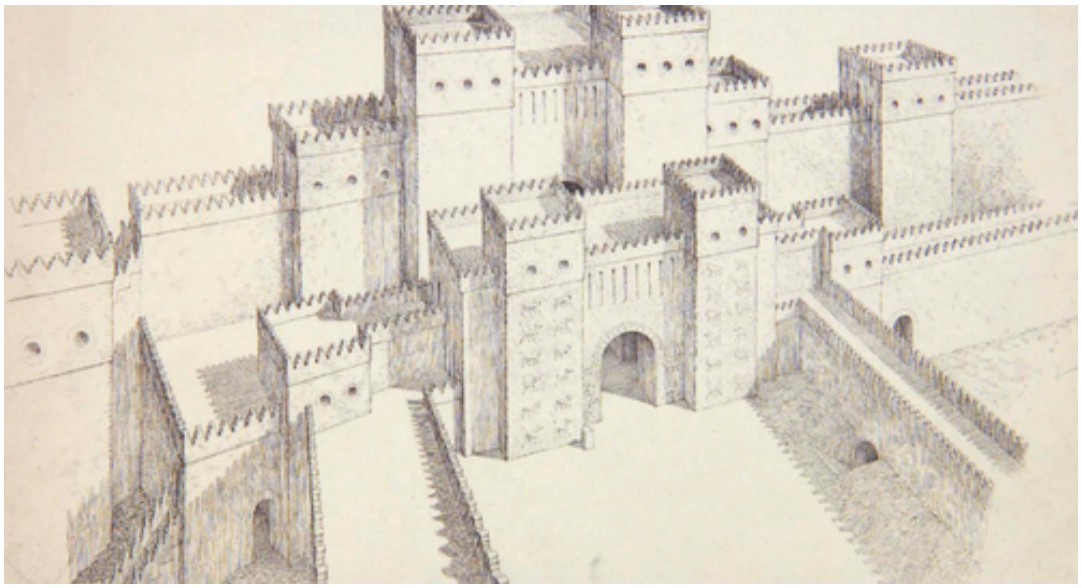

Fig. 9.70. *Reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate, Babylon (Neo Babylonian Empire 626–539 BCE) (source: Vorderasiatische Museum, Berlin).*

This brief detour from infrastructure to mega-architectural projects is necessary for two reasons. First, the scale of the buildings, their proximity to roads and rail and their appearance from the air blur the distinction between architectural places and purely symbolic structures. And second, they work in close coordination with infrastructure as the regime's tools of political legitimization and as levers of socio-cultural change.

9.3.2 Buses and Trains

Attitudes towards public transportation in Doha highlight a facet of the city's dichotomous urban order. Doha's exact, or even approximate, population statistics are impossible to obtain (2 million a good guess), but for this brief look at bus and rail transit in the city I shall assume the population falls roughly into two halves: migrant construction workers residing in labour camps at the city's outskirts, and everyone else. In the first category, the migrant construction labourer has little access to private vehicles, and in order to leave the camp he must either board a camp-provided bus or walk to a public bus stop on his one day off per week (see map Fig. 9.71). Qatar's national public transportation system, Mowasalat (Arabic for 'transportation'), founded by the Emir Sheikh Hamad in 2004, operates an extensive bus network and taxi fleet across Doha and the nation.

A quick glance at Doha's bus map (Fig. 9.71) reveals how nearly every precinct of Doha is accessible by public bus. Mowasalat understands the urban implications of mass transportation, describing on their website how

> Cities are exploding with population and urban congestion and pollution levels are on the rise … Cities and states who developed roads and infrastructure without much attention to public transport but focusing on single occupancy vehicles are now seeing the impact of this through a declining economy. There are also cities and states who despite a strong public transport network and various modes of travel are subject to urban congestion and severe pollution.[38]

Mowasalat's observation of urban ills seems a critique directed at Doha's Ministry of Municipality for Urban Planning (MMUP) for their inability to properly forecast urban growth or build roads with excess capacity. The statement also directs attention at Doha's hazardous air quality: the city has the twelfth highest level of small- to medium-sized particulates out of 1,600 cities surveyed in 2014 by the World Health Organization.[39]

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[38] Source: http://www.mowasalat.com/en/staticpages/page/af347fcc-cf98-4681-ae16-0eaf21e5191e (accessed 15 February 2015).

[39] The World Health Organization Ambient (Outdoor) Air Pollution in Cities Database 2014, http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/cities/en/, accessed January 2015

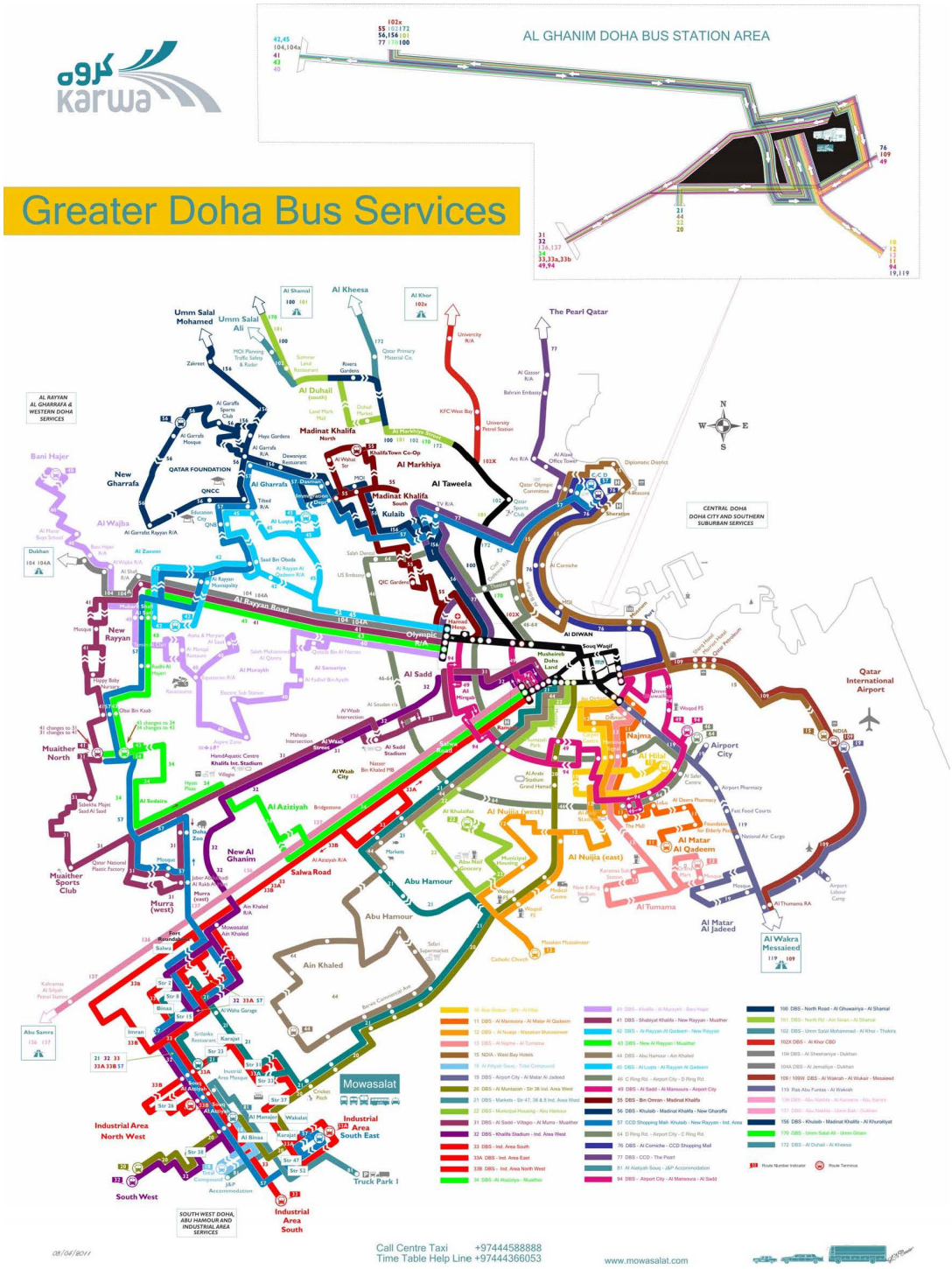

Fig. 9.71. *Doha bus routes (source: http://www.mowasalat.com, accessed 20 February 2015). The bus routes serve the entire city regardless of neighbourhood affluence or social strata; however, only those without access to private vehicles use the bus.*

Further, Mowasalat believes 'that public transport boosts the economy and what we plan for sustained mobility solutions today will provide better

quality of life and environmental justice for our younger generation'.[40] With Mowasalat's decade of experience, ever-expanding fleet, a well-established urban network and a corporate philosophy built upon economic and environmental sustainability, one must ask why would the regime invest a staggering US$37 billion into building a rail network from scratch?[41]

The Doha Metro is only part of a larger long-distance passenger and freight rail network connecting Qatar's largest population and industrial centres, forming an intermodal network across the Arabian Gulf (Fig. 9.72)[42].

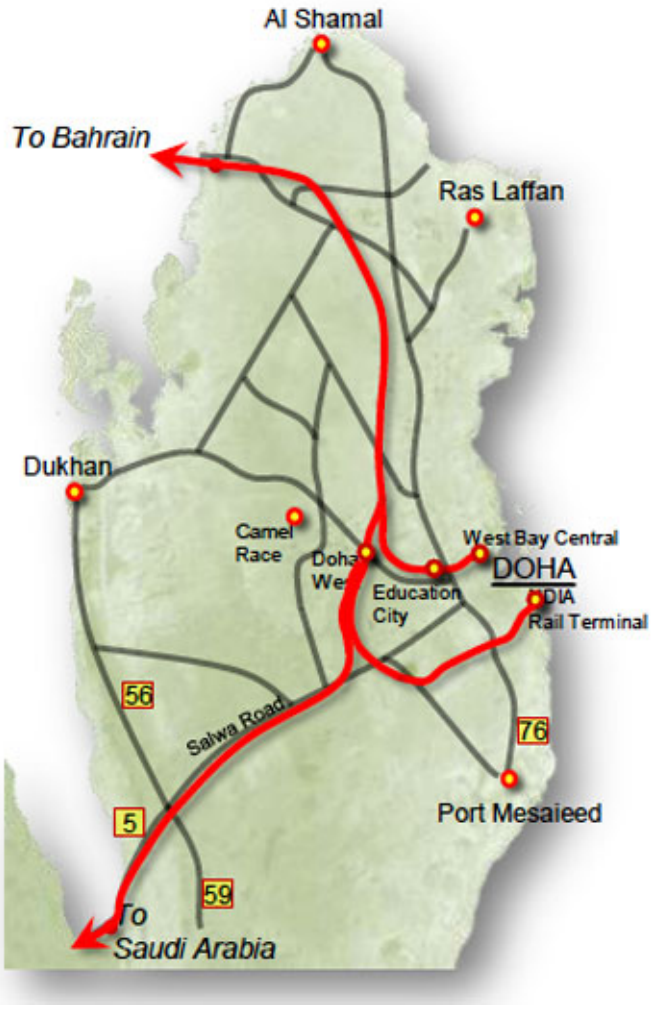

Fig. 9.72. *Qatar's long-distance passenger and freight rail plan (source: Deutsche Bahn International, 2015).*

According to the Qatar Rail Development Program (QRDP) Qatar's long-distance rail networks will eventually cover 510 kilometres and will surpass Mowasalat by offering a 'quick and safe mode of public transport to communities and their citizens because of their segregated right-of-way', which also helps 'in reducing

[40] Source: http://www.mowasalat.com/en/staticpages/page/af347fcc-cf98-4681-ae16-0eaf21e5191e (accessed 20 February 2015).

[41] 'Qatar Drives Forward with Doha Metro', by Peter Kenyon, *TunnelTalk*, December 2011.

[42] Note the red arrow connecting Doha to the island nation of Bahrain. At 40 kms the Qatar-Bahrain Causeway will be one of the world's longest bridge projects. Originally approved for construction in 2001 the causeway has experienced many delays due to adding rail to what was originally a vehicular bridge and the ongoing political dispute of the nearby Hawar Islands.

carbon and other green house gas emissions. A single rail journey replaces several hundreds of private car trips, and uses efficient technology such as electricity. This produces less pollution and reduces fuel dependency [sic]'.[43]

When completed in 2030 the Doha Metro will serve many of the same destinations as the Mowasalat bus network. At the time of writing much of Doha is given over to the Metro's construction. Embarking on the construction of an entire urban rail system requiring twenty tunnel-boring machines to work around the clock building the Metro system has disrupted daily street life like nothing before it. Which brings me to the central question mooted at this section's start: who will ride the Metro?



Fig. 9.73. *Doha Metro Phase I to provide four lines terminating at Msheireb before 2022 (source: http://www.samsungcnt.com/EN/cnt/pr/401000/articleRead.do?board_id=6&article_id=4089, accessed 7 February 2015).*

[43] Source: http://www.qr.com.qa/English/Projects/Pages/Long-Distance-Passenger-and-Freight-Rail.aspx (accessed 13 February 2015).

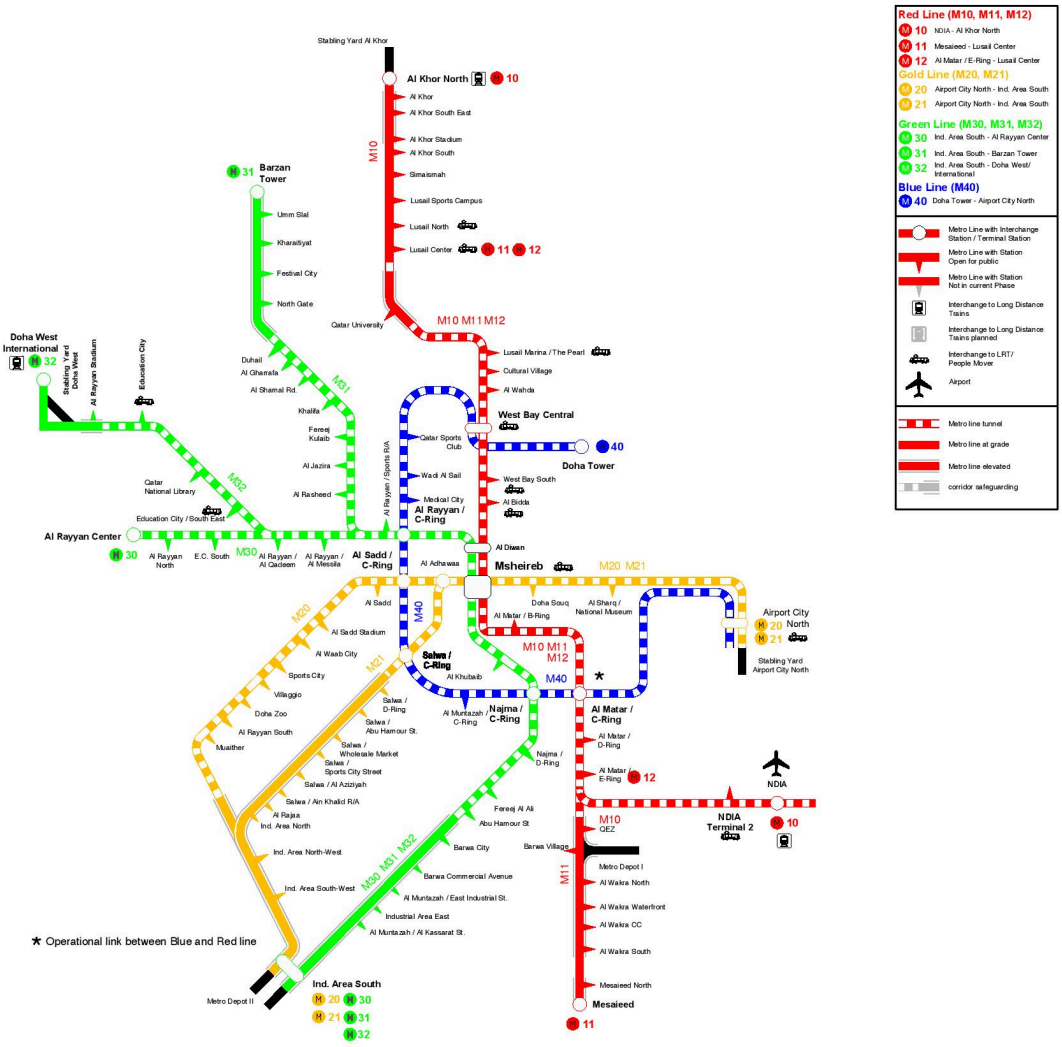

Fig. 9.74. *Doha Metro Phase II; anticipated completion 2030 (source: Qatar Rail, 2015).*

This is one of the most common questions asked by Doha's other 50 per cent – the non-migrant-labour population. As shown in the master planning of Chapter 6 of this thesis, Doha's first roads were built when automobiles began to be imported in the early 1950s; and the urban morphology we see today is thus a direct result of the practice and experience of driving a car. Successive architectural and urban consultants, supported by three Al-Thani regimes, have promulgated the car as Doha's primary organizing principle. All of my interviewees, regardless of class, gender, age, nationality or ethnicity, marvel at the rail system's unprecedented scope and all repeat, when asked for their impression of how Doha might change as a result, 'who will ride it?' Common observations among interview subjects include: Qataris will never give up their cars; women nationals will always for convenience, modesty or cultural-religious sensibilities prefer a car's

backseat behind dark tinted glass; and while the North Atlantic population might prefer mass transit and are certainly more accustomed to it, preferring its environmental if not egalitarian benefits, they will find rail travel inconvenient as the stations are too far from their gated compounds. Others ask if first-class cars are provided: a clear allusion to Doha's class structure in which nationals and Western expatriates rarely mix with South Asian workers. Most comment that without sidewalks and pedestrian road crossings, especially during the many months of blistering heat the stations will appear virtually inaccessible. The Metro map, like the bus map, serves all points of Doha; notable are the Red Line, which connects the affluent and image-conscious Corniche, and the Gold Line, which connects the Industrial Area – home to over half a million low-income migrants – directly to Msheireb, the Heart of Doha. On paper, the rail network looks the very model of a Western urban plan of open access, neo-liberal egalitarianism. Only time will tell if the Metro, unlike the bus line, is enjoyed by all.

9.3.3 Planes

Like most of Qatar's massive state-financed development projects, Doha's new airport is named in honour of the man who perceived its importance and provided US$15.5 billion for its realization: the former Emir Sheikh Hamad. Hamad International Airport (HIA) now shares its name with Hamad Hospital, and Hamad bin Khalifa University, to name the largest, multibillion dollar public development projects.

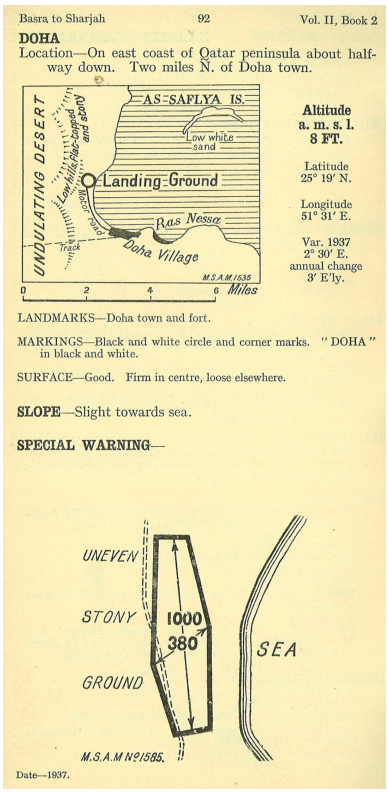

Fig. 9.75. *Doha air landing navigation. Basra to Sharjah Vol. II, Book 2, Air Publication 1937 (source: RAF Museum).*

Before Doha had roads, electricity or even a steady supply of fresh water it had air transportation. The map excerpted from the

1937 Royal Air Force's Air Route Book (Figs. 9.75), illustrate Doha's first landing strip and its regional importance in establishing a British Empire air link from Cairo to the Arabian Gulf to India, Pakistan and Iraq.

By the 1960s Doha was receiving daily flights from Europe, North Africa and Asia. Given Doha's exponential population increase over the last decade it is surprising the old airport lasted as long as it did. The new airport will initially handle 30 million passengers per year. Once the planned expansion is finished the airport's capacity will rise to at least 50 million passengers per year,[44] making Qatar the second largest air hub in the GCC and easily



Fig. 9.76. *Doha Airport (source: MMUP, 1960).*

within the top ten busiest airports in the world.[45] Fig. 9.77 illustrates air passenger transit levels for the six GCC countries. While the UAE has currently twice the level of Qatar, it is important to remember the UAE has two major hubs in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

[44] According to Qatar Airways, http://www.qatarairways.com/iwov-resources/temp-docs/press-kit/The%20Story%20of%20Qatar%20Airways%20-%20English.pdf (accessed 7 February 2015).
[45] According to Airports Council International 2014 statistics of passenger traffic defined as the number of persons enplaned, deplaned and in direct transit.

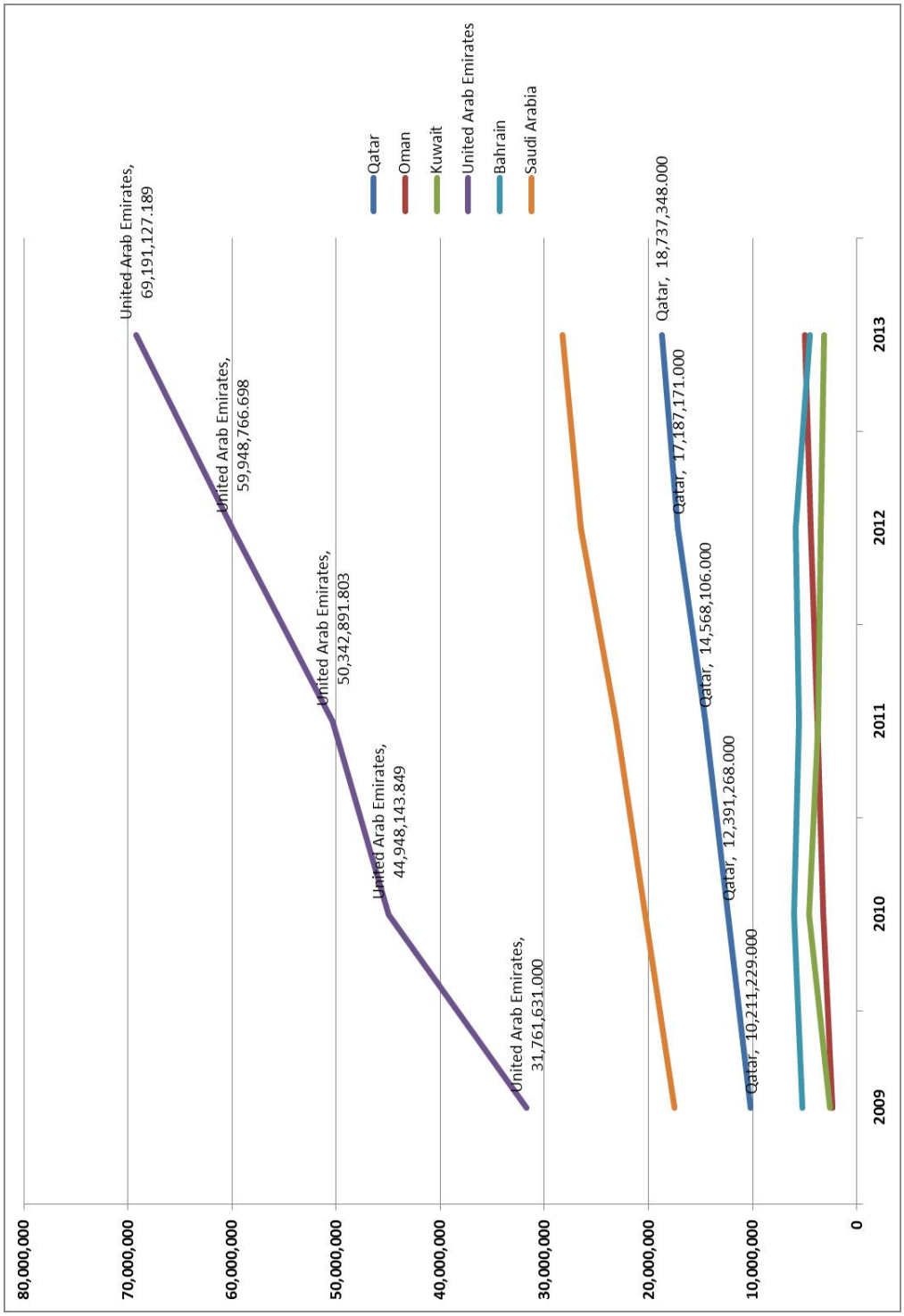

Fig. 9.77. *Passenger transit in the GCC 2009–2013 (source: http://data.worldbank.org/country, accessed 10 February 2015).*

According to Qatar Air a key feature of the new airport is that 60 per cent of the site is built upon landfill. A series of geo-political events led to this decision. In the education section of Chapter 8 the 1970s planning diagram for Qatar University (Fig. 8.29) shows the new airport located near the site of

present-day Qatar Foundation's Education City. This proposal was likely scrapped once planners and the regime realized Doha's growth projections would require annexing more land for urban and suburban development. In the 1980s the new airport was built a few miles southwest of Doha in a barren stretch of land beyond the current Industrial Area. However, after the first Gulf War ended in 1991, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia asked the American government to remove its military presence from its country. With the United States needing a strategic base of operations in the region, and the Qatari regime wishing to bolster their own poor national defences, the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Hamad, invited the US military to occupy the newly completed airport. In April 2003, the US Combat Air Operations Center for the Middle East moved from Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia to Qatar's Al-Udeid Air Base, south of Doha.

With Al-Udeid now occupied for the foreseeable future by the US military, planning began for a new, much expanded passenger and freight air transport hub. Two years later in 2005 construction began with an expected completion date of 2009.[46] Many costly delays added five years, and the airport was officially opened in April 2014. The current HIA now comprises 600,000 square metres of terminal space designed by US architectural firm HOK.

The increase in Doha's landmass is also slated to accommodate Airport City, a 10-kilometre-square, 200,000-person 'city' devoted to supporting HIA (Fig. 9.78). Dutch architecture firm OMA was selected in 2013 as the winner of an international design competition to link HIA with Doha proper. The airport city master plan comprises four circular districts aligned parallel to the main runway each with its own programmatic and design identity. Phase I of the thirty-year master plan will largely be complete in time for the FIFA 2022 games, linking the air transportation hub to the existing city through hotels, retail, residences, maintenance, logistics and the necessary support functions for a 'city' of 200,000. OMA's Rem Koolhaas described the project as

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[46] 'Qatar Delays Opening of $15.5bn Hamad International Airport Over Safety Concerns', 4 April 2013, http://www.airport-technology.com/news/newsqatar-delays-opening-hamad-international-airport-over-safety-concerns/ (accessed 10 February 2015).

'perhaps the first serious effort anywhere in the world to interface between an international airport and the city it serves'.[47]

Each of the four circular districts of Airport City will be unique within the master plan's overall identity. The Business District will centre on a major new transport hub linking with greater Doha; the Aviation Campus will accommodate office headquarters and educational facilities for aviation authorities; the Logistics District will provide cargo and warehousing facilities; and the Residential District, adjacent to the new Doha Bay Marina, will accommodate future employees.[48]

Airport City seems to follow exactly the formula for future urbanism set forth by John Kasarda, a phenomenon he termed 'Aerotropolis' (2010).



Fig. 9.78. *OMA's design for Airport City located on the site of the old airport seen here in the rendering as four circular neighbourhoods connecting the new airport with the city's dense residential fabric. (source: OMA, 2015).*

[47] Source: http://www.oma.eu/news/2013/oma-masterplans-airport-city-for-hia-airport-in-doha,-qatar/ (accessed 10 February 2015).

[48] Source: http://www.oma.eu/news/2013/oma-masterplans-airport-city-for-hia-airport-in-doha,-qatar/ (accessed 10 February 2015).

Throughout their history, airports have served and supported their adjacent cities. Twenty-first-century urbanism, according to Kasarda, will see an inversion of this formula, with cities now radiating out and supporting their airports. Like the historic, urban core of most older cities with central rail road termini, King's Cross, or Euston Station in London for instance, new airports increasingly enjoy a 'central square' in the main terminal's various specialized goods and services shops. Moving outward from the centrality of both the historic rail road terminal and contemporary airport come zones containing central business districts holding hotels, offices and convention and exhibition halls. The third concentric band of development comprises the lower-cost, lower-value functions of airplane maintenance, logistics, shipping and the myriad supporting institutions of schools, housing and food markets that support the Aerotropolis (Kasarda 2010). Looking for a moment at the HIA's central terminal we see Kasarda's high-rent 'central square' complete with boutique shops, global brands and public art that once adorned New York's Park Avenue (Fig. 9.79).



Fig. 9.79. *Hamad International Airport's main departure terminal enjoys Urs Fischer's bronze sculpture, Lamp Bear (photo by the author). The 7-metre-tall bronze sculpture was first displayed outside the Seagram building in New York City and sold for $6.8 million in 2011 according to Christie's website (accessed 10 February 2015).*

Returning to the earlier discussion of the spectacular quality of Doha's infrastructure, travellers arriving at HIA experience the city in several ways

discussed by Debord. The terminal bearing Sheikh Hamad's name, whose cavernous entry (Fig. 9.80) recalls images of glamorous rail travel in Europe's great nineteenth-century rail stations, is manifest by the opulence of $15 billion in materials and craftsmanship.



Fig. 9.80. *The check-in counter at HIA (photo by the author, 2015).*

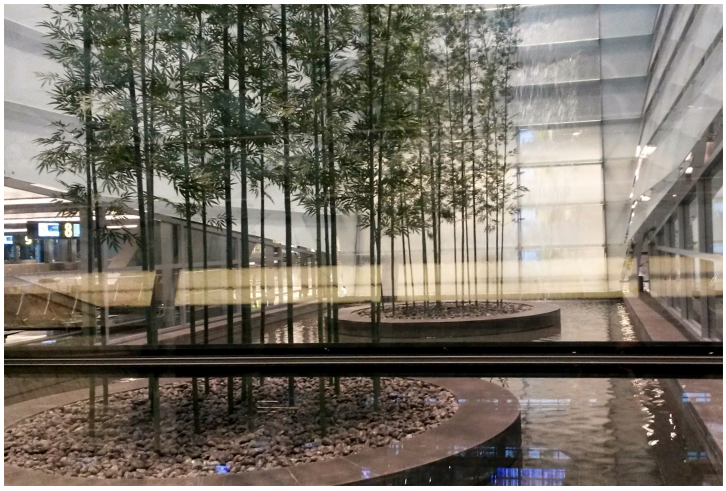

Fig. 9.81. *Bamboo water garden in HIA's arrival terminal (photo by the author, 2015).*

Less intimate but altogether more visually stunning is the view of Doha from the plane. Most flights heading westward fly over the Corniche and West Bay, and those seated on the plane's left side, witness the regime's spectacular ambitions embodied in the redevelopment of Doha's entire waterfront edge. In the conclusion to this thesis I shall continue the discussion of the urban coastline as that which collects and holds the regime's visions and aspirations. For the moment,

here I wish to highlight only how the airport and city work in careful orchestration as spectator and stage, showing the 50 million annual passengers who fly through Doha an image of urban and thus of civic life exactly as the regime wishes it to be seen not as it actually is.



Fig. 9.82. *HIA departure drop off (photo by the author, 2015).*



Fig. 9.83. *The Emir's private air terminal adjacent to HIA (photo by the author, 2015).*

9.3.4 Bridges and Tunnels: The Sharq Crossing

So far in this chapter I have attempted to show how large infrastructure projects are both shaping the city's institutional organization and reinforcing the regime's desire to globally project an image of Doha as modern, open, tolerant and highly functional. Both rail and airport development projects

reinforce the scenographic sense of the coastal proscenium.[49] In this last section I shall turn our gaze towards another mega-project; this one, however, dialectically uses the sea and city as both backdrop and audience.

Consisting of three bridges, ranging in length from 600 and 1,310 metres, linked by 8 kilometres of subsea tunnels, the West Bay Crossing, now called the Doha Sharq (east) Crossing is estimated to cost US$5 billion (Fig. 9.84).[50] Designed by famed Spanish engineer Santiago Calatrava, the Sharq Crossing is slated to begin construction in 2015, with completion in 2021 on the eve of the FIFA World Cup.

Like HIA, the Sharq Crossing fulfils a very real need – in its case, to improve traffic flow from the large development projects at the north end of Doha – West Bay, the Pearl – to the HIA, bypassing the Corniche road. Unlike the HIA, the bridge-tunnel scheme provides an intimate, situated experience of



Fig. 9.84. *Rendering of the Sharq Crossing (source: Santiago Calatrava www.infoqat.com, accessed 10 February 2015).*

[49] Ashraf Salama's (2012) use of 'cultural politics' in the wider Arab-Islamic world is an interesting lens through which to view Doha's development; however how Doha's 'scapes' function beyond the metaphor of drama is not addressed.

[50] Source: www.infoqat.com (accessed 10 February 2015).

the city through riding the roller-coaster-like trams (Fig. 9.85) or marvelling at the bridge's structure while walking along the Corniche (Fig. 9.86). However, one best comprehends the project's scale in a distanciated Google Earth image or from an aeroplane taking off from HIA.



Fig. 9.85. *Rendering of the Sharq Crossing's roller coaster metro (source: Santiago Calatrava, 2015).*



Fig. 9.86. *Rendering of the Sharq Crossing as seen from the Corniche. Note two of Doha's most iconic buildings, the Sheraton Hotel and Burj Qatar (source: Santiago Calatrava, 2015).*

Practical function, exorbitant cost and technological wonder aside, the Sharq Crossing is the regime's most clever use of infrastructure. Connecting several of the country's largest, most iconic development projects, the Sharq Crossing unites the Katara Cultural Village, the West Bay business district and HIA. A satellite view reveals how the outer arc of the bridge-tunnel completes the Corniche's circular arc begun in the mid 1970s (Fig. 9.84). Much of the Corniche between the Airport and West Bay is busily being turned green and pedestrian friendly. In 2012 US architectural firm Perkins Eastman was selected by the Emiri Diwan's Private Engineering Office (PEO) as the competition winner to design Al Doha Park (Figs. 9.88). While the project is currently on hold in order to complete the Metro running beneath it, the rendering provides a clear view to the future development of the entire Corniche as a cultural and entertainment park stretching from the Museum of Islamic Art to West Bay. From the Sharq Crossing much of the city will appear green, lush and exceedingly public. A wide green belt of shared involvements. From the Park the Sharq Crossing's metro, bicycle and walking lanes similarly appear the very model of public transportation. The key motif in the Doha Bay dialectic is public: the city's circular Corniche now evinces a mood of a common ground where anyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality or class, may fully enjoy the image of a modern, twenty-first-century city.



Fig. 9.87. *Rendering of the Sharq Crossing (source: Santiago Calatrava).*



Fig. 9.88. *2012 Al Doha Park rendering (source: Perkins Eastman Architects).*

9.3.5 Conclusion

In this section I have attempted to describe how the interpretation of massive construction schemes by the regime provides an orientation to history within a culture that ostensibly eschews hierarchies. Infrastructure as a structural fact and political symbol contributes mightily to the city's global image. It allows those abroad to see Doha as a background scene for a narrative of spectacle – the result of spectacular economic success. For those within Doha, infrastructure establishes a form of scaffolding from which its inhabitants continue to puzzle over the regime's intentions, always wondering how it all fits together to order an urban life.

The analysis of Doha's infrastructure makes use of experience as the spontaneous dimension of one's embeddedness in what Gadamer calls 'tradition'. Infrastructure, and I include large buildings and parks in this category because they, too, make claims on how Doha residents are involved

with the city and with each other, ranges from engaged situatednness to distanciated symbolization. From a positivistic view point Doha's infrastructure would typically be considered facts – rates of traffic flow, water consumption or air transportation, for instance – which are methodologically isolated from their contexts. In this regard we might view Doha as a topography of facts rather than phenomena. That is to say, such metrics determine planning schemes and the global ranking of a city's 'liveability'.[51]

If infrastructure is the primary connective tissue, a purely instrumental substance of describable properties, into which architectural facts are inserted and the buildings are abstracted forms bearing no connection to their function, then their associations are free to range from urban-branding iconography to late capitalist wealth mechanisms. Accordingly, visitors with a developed experience of urbanity, expecting adjacency, diversity or hierarchy, will find Doha puzzling. The great distances between things is pure background, the matrix of infrastructure set in the confrontation of desert and sea. In viewing an architectural fact as a form, which houses activities, embodied in materials, the question arises as to how 'transparent' one's involvement is: the more prominent – the larger – the more exclusionary. Or, if one is invited to participate, such as in an airport lobby, does the spectacle elicit the awe it was intended to? The prominent edifices looked at here share in the concept of 'monument', an embodiment of didactic iconography. These attributes, when made into abstract form – quite ambiguous as to scale, which is often gigantic – combine to give the edifices a radical, self-sufficient autonomy, like that of a fact. One thing that is achieved by embodying the regime in a dispersed topography of architectural facts is a greater remoteness between 'citizen' and the figures of authority.

[51] See for example the Economist Global Intelligence Report on city livability found here: http://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=Liveability2015.

The order of history emerges from the history of order.

– Eric Voegelin

PART III

Conclusion

Taken together, the three chapters of Part III describe a particular aspect of Doha's collective structure: its in-betweenness. For both Augustine and Voegelin the drama of human history progresses from the 'existential exodus from the pragmatic world of power' towards the '"intermingling" of the *civitas Dei* [city of God] with the *civitas terrena* [city of man] as the In-Between reality of history' (Voegelin 2000d:230). Voegelin's In-Betweenness of the ecumenic age or what he often calls the essential 'tension of existence' relates the human experience to the span from the transcendent to the mundane, and circumscribes the essential aim of Part III: to understand the collective structure of Doha as a series of diverse metaphoric fragments held in tension between what they symbolically appear to be and actually are, uniting within Doha's orbit human and divine sources of meaning.

Voegelin's ecumenic age commenced roughly with the first millennium BC so-called 'axial age' of universal monotheism and ended when Islam filled the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Roman and Sassanid empires. This period repeatedly witnessed 'spiritual outbursts' or revelations by such men as Moses, Christ and Muhammad, founding 'the sources of meaning in history and of such knowledge as man has of it' (Voegelin 2000d:50). Unable to see a coherent pattern in these epiphanies, Voegelin was forced to develop a new historical framework in which 'the analysis had to move backward and forward and sideways, in order to follow empirically the patterns of meaning as they revealed themselves' (ibid.:106). History, on Voegelin's account, is the story of humankind's 'participation in a flux of divine presence that has eschatological direction',

whose symbols arise from concrete events enacted by concrete human beings (ibid.:50).

Speaking specifically of the ecumenic age's *terminus post quem*, Voegelin notes that

> there can be no doubt that Islam was primarily an ecumenic religion and only secondarily an empire. Hence it reveals in its extreme form the danger that beset all of the religions of the Ecumenic Age, the danger of impairing their universality by letting their ecumenic mission slide over into the acquisition of world-immanent, pragmatic power over a multitude of men which, however numerous, could never be mankind past, present, and future
>
> (2000d:198).

The outburst of ecumenic-imperial conquest, says Voegelin, forced tribal cultures into new theocratically centred societies. For Ibn Khaldun the possession of *'assabiya*, or group spirit, only present in Bedouin tribes, and whose purity of spirit, unadulterated by the licentious distractions of urban life, allowed its members to deeply imbibe the pure Muhammadian revelation. United in spirit, hardship and self-sacrifice, *'assabiya* together with the revelation facilitated power politics, creating great empires and magnificent cities, only to see them crumble under the weight of their own urban-fed corruption. Thus in this historical cycle of the rise and fall of empires, says Ibn Khaldun (2005), we see the manifestation of *sunnat Allah* – God's way of working in the world – as from our human perspective being both divine and earthly.

While I do not wish to assert Doha's 2 million residents derive the city's sources of meaning in the manner described by Voegelin in the *Ecumenic Age*, we do, however, see a similar pattern of moving from concentrated to differentiated symbolism in an immensely shortened time span. A process, says Eugene Webb, such as the one 'by which one notices and develops an articulated, explicit consciousness of a previously "compact" (comparatively implicit, unarticulated) field of experience' (1981:120).

What took centuries in other empires took the Qatari regime a mere matter of years, and this marks Doha's uniqueness with its starting point of transformation, as we have seen, only in the mid twentieth century, not at the end of the Persian, Roman or Hellenistic periods. One conclusion I wish to draw at the end of Part III is that the origins of Doha's Islamic ecumenism are so close to us in time that they very much persist throughout the institutional and urban order, struggling with notions of imperial custom and courtly life inherited from earlier Islamic epochs, and a human-centred world imported from Western civilization, and characterize the unity of the urban order as its in-betweenness.

In Voegelin's view the modern experience of symbolism inherited from ecumenic humanity is disintegrating largely due to our contemporary doctrinal adherence to scientific rationalism that is always in conflict with fragmentary renewals of faith and poetics, placing an emphasis upon individual freedom and its psychology. Voegelin posits that

> 'the return from symbols that have lost their meaning to the experiences that constitute meaning is so generally recognizable as the problem of the present that specific references are unnecessary. The great obstacle to this return is the massive block of accumulated symbols, secondary and tertiary, that eclipses the reality of man's existence in the Metaxy'
>
> (2000d:107).

Following Plato, Voegelin's use of Metaxy expands throughout the *Ecumenical Age* from the symbolism of Being within situation to the nature of reality, the cosmos and history. This range of symbolic meanings closely mirrors those found in the preceding chapter's eleven situations. In the ecumenic age humankind became conscious of its humanity as an existence complicit with, and in tension towards divine reality, engendering mythopoeic events in the knowledge of existence in the divine–human in-between (ibid.:50).

The experience of divine reality as the ordering force in the cosmos and in the knowledge of one's personal existence comes to reconcile a dialectical

structure of reality in the Metaxy. And any attempt to symbolize divine reality beyond the Metaxy can only be a symbolization of myth (ibid.:83). Doha over the last half century has witnessed epiphenomena springing up from sources utterly foreign to its insular past. These challenges to a divine source of meaning are certainly not outside the history of the Islamic experience. Indeed, the history of Islam might be characterized as the ability to seed a new source of being (intelligibility) within and complementary to pre-existing societies and their symbolic representations. In other words, Islam, far from being a *deus ex machina*, fuses the earthly with the divine in unique ways particular to the lands in which it spreads: this is unity within diversity and difference that characterizes Islam in general and Doha in particular as seen in Part III.

The historical questions posed at the start of Part III of the present work included: In what way is Doha a concrete society? What is the range of symbolic distortions? How are dialectical tensions resolved, if at all? And at the deepest, ontological level what are its primary sources of meaning and how are the human and divine held in simultaneous tension? In pursuit of these questions the analysis acknowledges the reciprocity and porosity between historicized mythology and mythologized history. The depiction of Doha as seen in the eleven situations underlies the symbolic hypostatization of its dialogic imagination fluctuating between a divine mandate for a proper earthly life, and an earthly mandate to accommodate the divine. This topic is taken up at length in the following chapter: the thesis' main conclusion.

'Not to be born prevails over all meaning uttered in words; by far the second-best for life, once it has appeared, is to go as swiftly as possible whence it came.' There he also let us know, through the mouth of Theseus, the legendary founder of Athens and hence her spokesman, what it was that enabled ordinary men, young and old, to bear life's burdens: it was the polis, the place of men's free deeds and living words, which could endow life with splendour.

– Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*

PART IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR SYNTHESIS

Chapter 10. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have specifically targeted positivist interpretations of city life in an attempt to critique the prevailing view that cities are best understood through theoretical frames of causation. Such views not only hold us hostage to objectivist scientism – imprisoning us in Weber's 'iron cage'; they also fundamentally undermine the depth and richness of the urban lifeworld. By failing to ascertain the concrete conditions of meaning – where human beings speak and act – such views, based on vague notions of 'space', strip out how a life is capable of splendour.

It may seem odd that I should now concede several important points to the theorists I have striven to upbraid. In this conclusion I shall step back from the detailed descriptions of meaningful social action as embodied in architectural situations. This view from above is both literal and metaphoric.

On the literal level I shall describe a view of Doha's entire coastline, some 20 kilometres (slightly less than the diameter of London inside the M25), that in many respects best encapsulates the themes discussed throughout this thesis. On the metaphorical level, stepping back helps put our understanding of Doha into a wider perspective of global urban trends, and, more crucially, of how political philosophy undergirds the institutional order, which is a more fundamental ontology than that afforded by theory alone.

The first concession to make is the value of understanding social agency in a global world. Sassen's (2001) Global City concept posits the need for a new conceptualization of urbanity based on the fact that cities are increasingly the hubs within a global network of commodity, information and labour 'flows': wealth aggregation in the hands of only a few corporations acting outside national boundaries, or as often the case, government policy conforming to corporate interests, is responsible for increasing disequilibrium; for example in the disconnection between urban centres and their immediate regions; the marginalization of the local population whose low-paying jobs squeeze them out of the local market; and the trend in income inequality by channelling wealth surpluses to the already wealthy elite instead of more broadly through tariffs and taxation to the population in whose countries their global headquarters are located.

To be fair, with roughly 2 million residents, Doha is a long way from the global elite cities of New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, London or even neighbouring Dubai, whose exceedingly large populations and highly developed financial centres Sassen counts as putting them in a league of their own. However, looking at Doha through the global city framework aligns well with the city's recent development patterns, and the regime's ambitions. First, the entire urban edge is controlled by a handful of elite individuals, or perhaps only one individual, the Emir. Second, the fact that at least 90 per cent of the city's residents are migrants also demonstrates the nature of the global economic system's ability to 'flow' resources as efficiently as possible. The sum total of this view is that perhaps the Emir is seeking simply to build a city whose image is commensurate with that of

other global elites. That is to say, if we seek an explanation why, with almost unlimited wealth, and certainly unchallenged power, the Emir and his inner circle would fashion Doha in the manner they have it is the image and not the lived reality of Doha they are after. This is all well and good, and goes a long way to explaining how the Emir views the purpose of his city. However, this 'reason why' fails to address the ontological significance the urban situation holds for its inhabitants. It also fails to address how the real, or imagined, relates to its many parts, each particular and culturally specific, and within concrete horizons: how architecture mediates the particular with the universal. Over and above the question of what is *a* purpose of Doha, we should ask what is *the* purpose of Doha or *any* city for that matter? With this brief introduction in mind I shall now turn to a more nuanced discussion of Doha's purpose as embodied and reflected in its urban edge.

4.1 The City's Edge

I began this thesis with a phenomenological proposition: the most meaningful understanding of the city comes through our engagement with concrete, everyday existence. The eleven situations covered in Part III describe the various ways in which segments of Doha's diverse population understand, experience and describe the city. Each perspective was shown to reside within particular architectural situations ranging from durable and ancient, as seen in Chapter 7: Islamic Urban Foundations and Traditions (mosque, souq, Diwan, *majlis* and dwelling); to hybrid conditions explicitly bridging past with future, in Chapter 8: Negotiating Cultural Differences (museums, universities and the cultural village); to contemporary urban necessities, in Chapter 9: The Practical City and the Modernist Image (streets, skyscrapers and infrastructure). In this conclusion I wish to step back from the minutia of each symbolic situation and look more broadly in perspective and in meaning at how and to what they add up.

If there is a singular image the regime wishes to construct of Doha, surely the waterfront edge is it. We commonly have images in our minds of many cities both from the ground and from the air. Think for a moment of New York's jagged skyscraper skyline when seen from across the Hudson River or while walking among its towers in Times Square or Wall Street. The same

can be said for the Eiffel Tower's ability to instantly place us in Paris and our alignment to it while strolling the Champs-Élysées. Let us now think for a moment of this same air-to-ground experience in Doha as a tourist or business traveller.

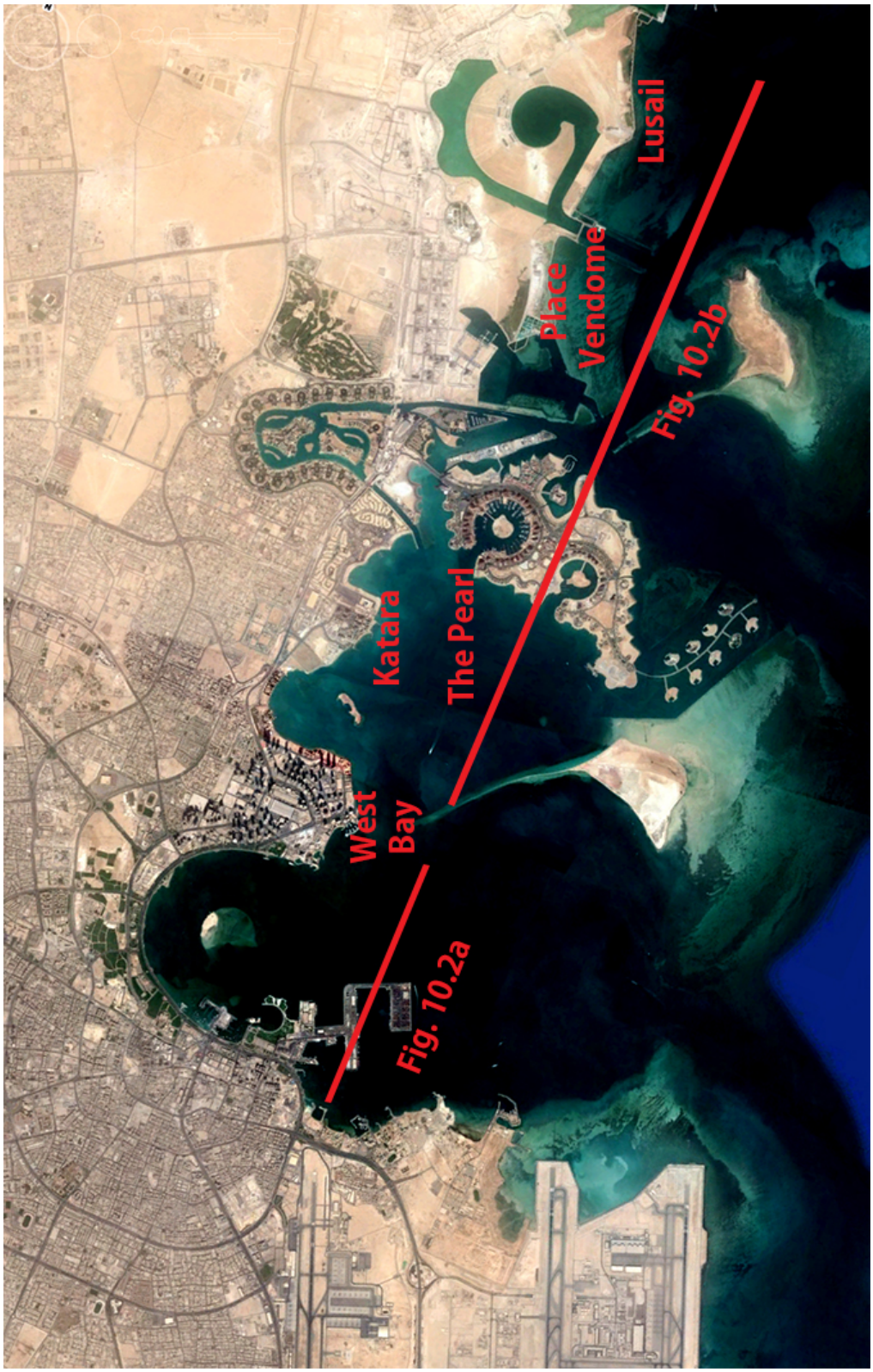

Fig. 10.1. *2015 image of Doha coastline (source: Google Earth, 2015).*



Fig. 10.2a. *Top. Doha coastline stretching from the Museum of Islamic Art to the West Bay business district (photo by the author, 2013).*

Fig. 10.2b. *Bottom. Doha coastline stretching from the West Bay business district to Lusail City (photo by the author, 2013).*

Depending on the plane's landing approach, our view of Doha might possibly take us south along the city's edge, circling over the emerald green Arabian Sea and landing at the recently completed Hamad International Airport. From here we take a taxi to a five-star hotel in West Bay (Figs. 10.2a,b). Along the way we pass many of the sites examined in Part III

starting with our entry to the Corniche Road and the Museum of Islamic Art. We pass the *dhow* harbour on the right with the gleaming towers of West Bay as its backdrop. On the left, new bank headquarters, Souq Waqif, Msheireb and the Emiri Diwan all in quick succession. We then come to a wide expanse of manicured lawn, palm trees and topiary shrubs, Al-Bidda Park. A few minutes later we near the hotel, driving between West Bay skyscrapers. Our hotel room is new, opulent and clad with marble. Our view might be to the south along the very route we just took, or to the north towards tonight's dinner destination and a view of entirely new cities dotting the coastal edge.

After a quick rest we are picked up at the hotel portico amid permanently parked Bentleys and Lamborghinis and driven north along the next stretch of Corniche Road (Fig. 10.2b). We are dropped at Katara near the tiled mosque and take a leisurely walk through the twisting alleyways, past cafés and art galleries, past the travertine amphitheatre, finally emerging on the Katara corniche where the fading sun sparkles off the skyscraper façades and the quickening evening breeze brings the sea's scent. It's hot but not unbearable. After a sumptuous dinner overlooking the sea and the floating towers of West Bay we enjoy a mint tea and *sisha* pipe before our brief walk back to the tiled mosque where our driver takes us the short distance to the Pearl Island for some shopping. The Pearl's Corniche is lively with all sorts of pedestrians: Western women in short skirts and sleeveless shirts; Arab families with their children and Asian maids a few steps behind – the blond hair and the black *abayas* almost waving to each other in the blowing evening breeze. After we have shopped at our favourite brands, and had a guilty peek inside the Rolls Royce showroom, our host takes us for an alcoholic nightcap in our hotel bar. After meetings the following day we enjoy a similar experience along the stretch of Doha Corniche south of our hotel: a tour of the Museum of Islamic Art followed by outdoor dining, and a Turkish coffee at Souq Waqif, where we watch the Qatari colour guard stride back and forth on horseback and all the while marvel at the seamless integration of old and new, and how Doha lives up to our Orientalist image of Arab hospitality.

If this sounds very much like a travel brochure or marketing narrative that is because it is. Figures 10.3–10.6 are still images from the marketing video of the Place Vendome booth at the 2015 City Scape Doha convention. Place Vendome, an 800,000-square-metre[1] hotel and shopping complex sits between Lusail City and the Pearl (Fig. 10.1). The narrative runs identical to



Fig. 10.3. *Place Vendome seen from the air. Adjacent to the video screen is a detailed architectural model of the development as photographed at City Scape: Doha, May 2015 (photos by the author).*

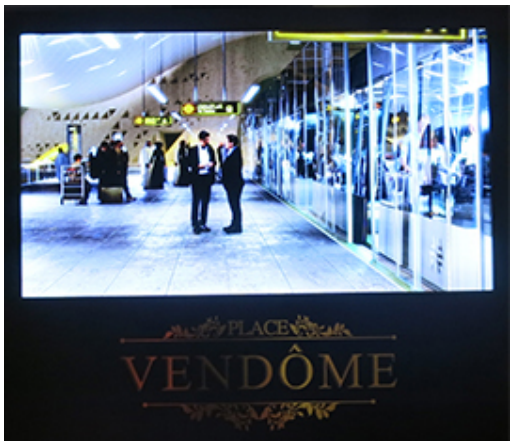

Fig. 10.4. *Arrival terminal HIA.*



Fig. 10.5. *On the Doha Metro.*



Fig. 10.6. *Outdoor dining at Place Vendome.*

the fictional arrival described above: (Fig. 10.3) descending through the clouds we see Place Vendome in a perpetual state of celebratory pyrotechnics; followed by an easy arrival at Hamad International Airport (Fig. 10.4); a short ride on the Metro (Fig. 10.5); and finally an outdoor

[1] Source: http://placevendomeqatar.com/ (accessed 28 May 2015).

'urban' dining experience (Fig. 10.6). The narrative's arc of descending through clouds, surveying the idealized city, airport arrival and Metro ride brings us to the city's front row seat whereby the whole urban experience presents itself in one grand tableau. The air-to-ground and ground-to-air experience now complete.

The above accounts seem to parallel the regime's narrative for how we are to imagine, understand and experience Doha. The drama weaves together several subplots: economic and political (neo-liberal, equal access, horizontal, capitalist); cultural and touristic (redevelopment, stadiums, museums, hotels, cultural villages, shopping malls, updated Arabian markets, ports); modern and efficient (Metro, bridges, tunnels, airport); and Arabian. Islam seems absent. For city residents the new Ibn Wahhab Mosque, and the scores of neighbourhood mosques, large and small, spread throughout the city provide the most obvious manifestations of Islam's architectural embodiment but these are nearly non-existent to the tourist. Taken together the subplots contribute towards the grand narrative of Doha's struggle with cosmopolitanism.

4.2 Cosmopolitanism or Syncretism?

In Doha, there is only one acceptable answer to the common question, 'how are you today?' – Al-ḥamdu lillāh (Arabic: الحَمْد لله) meaning 'thanks be to God'. The same answer applies to questions of any type ranging from the mundanely rhetorical, as in 'how is your day?' to 'how is your hospitalized child?' All of life – the material possessions of the world to the eternal paradise that awaits the believer – comes from the one, true, transcendent deity, Allah.[2] This linguistic idiosyncrasy, common throughout the Muslim world regardless of the native language, points to the onto-theological orientation of the local culture. I say 'local' as we can only count with certainty the roughly 250,000 Qatari nationals as both Muslim and as the decision makers of Doha's built environment. However, the 1.75 million

[2] The Arabic word *Allah* combines the definite article *al* (the) with the word *ilah* (god, deity) forming the meaning that there is only one God – 'The god'. The same construction is found in the northwest Semitic cognate word for God, *El*, 'the one who is'. See a lengthy discussion in Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971.

non-nationals, comprising a wide spectrum of religious belief and background, include many Muslims from the Arab world, but also from Iran, India, Pakistan and Indonesia. From Europe and the Americas are many Christians and those of no practising faith, along with hundreds of thousands of Hindus and Buddhists mostly from India and Sri Lanka.

Doha's ethnic and religious complexity pulls the city in several competing directions. The most basic tension for non-Muslims – again, the vast majority of the city's population – is living under Islamic law (*sharīʿah*). For the Qatari nationals, all of whom are Muslim under threat of the death penalty for apostasy, the most basic tension is living among the forms and representations, men and philosophies, coming from non-Muslim societies. For over half a century Islamic and Middle Eastern scholars adopted the view that such societies were presented with a stark polemic: either choose to look towards Mecca or towards mechanization (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:22; Berger 1964, 1970:719–720).

Through the 1960s and 1970s modernization theory framed how industrialized nations formulated their development policies. It also dominated much of the scholarly literature in assessing the causality and impact of economic specialization and technological change on developing economies in general. In the Islamic world, modernization theory would, in Halpern's (1963:129) view, force societies to choose between 'neo-Islamic totalitarianism' intent upon 'resurrecting the past', or a 'reformist Islam' enabling society to cope with the rate of change. The limitations of such dichotomous explanatory theories centre on their use of generalized categories, pitting 'tradition' against 'modernity' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2000). If, for example, modernity unites societies through an egalitarianism manifested in equal rights that transcend ancient hierarchies, then a turn towards tradition can only mean the perpetuation of systems based upon caste or patriarchy (Binder 1988; Black 1966:27; Hudson 1980; Madan 1987:748).

Marxist interpretations of social action in Middle Eastern cities focused on the hegemonic power of the neo-patriarchal middle and ruling classes

enabled by so-called 'traditional values' (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:24), a term used widely by Gulf governments to explain everything from shopping mall closures on Friday mornings in proper observance of the week's holy prayer time to permission for men to beat their wives.[3] Complex societies require nuanced, multifaceted methods of enquiry. By reducing the complexity to a zero-sum game of either/or, often resulting in the impoverished simplification that neo-patriarchal ruling classes schizophrenically embrace both tradition (a backward view) and modernity (a prospective view), they never fully develop a unified political or economic approach towards development (Moghadam 1991). Being caught between a mythical onto-theological understanding of reality as mediated by an omnipotent divinity, on the one hand, and an objectivist scientism, on the other (Sharabi 1988), such perseveration retards social development. While Sharabi offers a more nuanced approach to understanding tensions arising within rapidly 'modernizing' societies, he nonetheless finds fault with those societies who cannot live with the tensions and rather must 'overcome [their] innermost disease, patriarchy, and … become modern … The coming of modernity, secular democracy, and libertarian socialism' will eventually displace 'the neo-patriarchal status quo' (ibid.:155, quoted in Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:25). This would lead us to believe that the countries of the Arab world would tend towards either isolationism or exceptionalism.

The data on international migration from Middle Eastern countries indicate at first glance how much of the Arab and Islamic world has become markedly less tolerant of other religions and ethnicities in the last hundred years.[4] I say 'at first glance' because the root causes of migration are far from clear and often involve interrelated geo-political or environmental circumstances such as wars of revolution and invasion, natural disasters, famine, disease and economic depressions. In general, levels of national intolerance, while always an issue in any country throughout history, took a

[3] In the MENA region, 52 per cent of women aged 15–49 years think their husband is justified in hitting them under certain circumstances: UNICEF global database, 2012, accessed 25 May 2015. A common justification is found in Surat An-Nisā 34.

[4] See datasets in UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase, accessed August 2015.

sharp rise with the redrawing of Middle Eastern borders after World War I, and greatly accelerated after World War II with the creation of the modern state of Israel. Since the 2001 invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent destabilization of Iraq and Syria since 2011, the refugee crisis has only intensified in step with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In Europe ultranationalist political parties, running similar campaigns of anti-immigration, have gained steady support in recent years, with some enclaves calling for secession for instance in Scotland and Flanders. Against this larger backdrop of isolationism and religious and sectarian violence, we have the Gulf countries peacefully coexisting among dozens of nationalities, a variety of religions, while the GCC nationals themselves remain a tiny minority in their own homelands. It would similarly appear the Arabian Gulf countries are in full embrace of Western-styled cosmopolitanism.

By 'cosmopolitanism' I am referring to a question first articulated by the ancient Greek Stoics that asks what moral or ethical obligations are applied equally to the foreigner as to the citizen; the question discloses the cultural, ethical and legal frameworks of the political order. With the emergence of nation-states in the last 200 years and the concomitant rise in globalization and the associated increase in labour migration, a series of nested questions emerges: Who is a citizen and under what circumstances? What obligations do wealthy countries have towards poorer ones? What sorts of immigrant restrictions are developed? How are capital flows and wage remittances controlled? (Brock and Brighouse 2005:ix.)

Despite the current state of migration in the Arab world, and in spite of an Islamic caliphate stretching from the Maghreb to the Indus Valley and lasting in various forms until the Ottoman Empire's collapse in 1918, little is known of historic Muslim attitudes towards cosmopolitanism. The fourteenth-century cosmopolitanism of the great medieval Arab historian Ibn Khaldun can be delineated across two axes with the city at the nexus. In the horizontal dimension Ibn Khaldun's wide travels across distant lands helped him see the commonalities and differences among groups of people. Within particular civilizations he saw the depth of tradition circumscribed by its institutional order, a vertical scale. Where the two met, the natural

conditions of geography and the depth of tradition, interwoven by the Islamicate, was the city. The mediative ability found in the urban order best characterizes Ibn Khaldun's Muslim cosmopolitanism, what Bruce Lawrence (2014) calls his 'in-between-ness'.

In a similar fashion contemporary Islamic scholar Yusef Al-Qaradawi (b. 1926) advocates for a moderation between extremes as the path to a good Muslim life. Born in Egypt and educated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Qaradawi's close association with the Muslim Brotherhood caused him to flee Gamal Abd Al-Nasser's persecution and settle permanently in Qatar in 1961. With the support of successive Emirs and now with his programme on Al Jazeera, Qaradawi enjoys a global standing as a pre-eminent Islamic theologian. In addition to serving as one of Qatar's leading religious scholars for the last half century and having an enormous influence over the country's religious development, his interpretive view of Islam is of most interest to us. Qaradawi's striving for moderation comes at the rejection of two extremes, either the belief that Islamic interpretations closed in the tenth century, or a full embrace of Western-influenced behaviour (Zaman 2005:99).

Departing from Ibn Khaldun's cosmopolitan view that differences can be held in common within historically and spatially bounded situations, a *polis* formulation, Qadarawi's cosmopolitanism is more typical of Islamic scholars as an evangelical apologia that brings the universality of the revelation to all peoples in such a way that it transcends particular cultural conditioning. Qaradawi does share the linguistic sense of cosmopolitanism with Ibn Khaldun in his use of contemporary electronic media to bring his message and the message of Islam to the world's people in a language they understand. And his message is consistently expressed as

> the message of moderation and balance, on which combines the … spiritual and material, the ideal and the real … the individual and the collective, science and faith … and such other opposites whose union people have thought to be impossible. Under the shadow of Islam, they all come together in harmony.
>
> (quoted in Zaman 2005:101)

In as much as Qaradawi stands for religious reform through mediation of tradition and modernity across the *Ulamāʾ* (scholars of religious Islamic law) he also stands more narrowly for Qatar's religious, and I would add architectural, direction. The root of Qaradawi's approach stems from the Islamic concept of interpretation (*ijtihād*). The word *ijtihād* means 'the exercise of independent judgment', and applies to either casuistic, apodictic or more generally to a rule of law where the Qur'an and Hadith are not explicit. *Ijtihād*'s approach of working from general principles came to an end around year 900 CE when Sunni jurists concluded no further legal interpretations were warranted, which was summed up in a pithy expression commonly accepted that 'the gate of *ijtihād* was closed' and any adjudication arising through novel circumstances would be handled by theologians and jurists empowered to interpret and explain eternal truths and apply eternal laws (Lewis 1988:129, note 11; Watt 1985:73).

Like Qaradawi, internationally acclaimed Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan (b. 1962) sees the vital need for *ijtihād* in synthesizing the modern world with the ancient, uniting science with faith. From the introduction of his book, Ramadan says

> the awakening of Islamic thought necessarily involves reconciliation with its spiritual dimension on the one hand, and on the other, renewed commitment and rational and critical reading (*ijtihad*) of the scriptural sources in the fields of law and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) … Today's Muslims, both in the East and West, urgently need contemporary *fiqh*, distinguishing what in the texts is immutable and what may be changed.
>
> (Ramadan 2009:1)

A key difference between Qaradawi and Ramadan is the former believes *ijtihād* rests in the hands of the *Ulamāʾ*, while the latter sees it as every Muslim's responsibility to critically examine spiritual tensions for themselves (Ramadan 1997). The difference goes to the heart of a cosmopolitan debate on how Muslims are to live in foreign lands, and, conversely, how non-Muslims are to live within *sharīʿah* governed societies.

Qaradawi's mediation is far from symmetrical, warning of the dangers in imitating the West

> which seeks to govern our intellects and orient our lives … to bow our head to Western thought … to divest us of the roots of our faith and culture, our civilizational identity, our religious and intellectual characteristics … [this] is, without question, to be refused, for it represents foreignness (*ightirab*) for us today just as does the imitation of our own ancestors … as for the Westerners, they are farther removed from us, for their points of departure are not ours, their goals are not ours, and their methods are not ours. Their imitation is thus all the more reprehensible.
>
> (quoted in Zaman 2005:99–100)

Ramadan's grandfather Hassan Al-Banna was the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Like Qaradawi he was also exiled by Gamal Abd Al-Nasser, in this case settling in Switzerland. Perhaps because Ramadan was born and educated in Europe, his reform project aims to help Muslims live in Western or Westernized nations. But his project is far more ambitious and seeks to integrate 'the Universe and social and human environments (and therefore all related sciences) into the formulation of the ethical finalities of Islam's message' (Ramadan 2009:5).



Fig. 10.7. *Pictured from left: Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Tariq Ramadan, Mustafa Ceric (Muslim Brotherhood leader in Europe), singer songwriter Yusuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens) on the launch of Qatar Foundation's Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE), 12 January 2012 (source: Qatar Foundation Telegraph Issue 51, 26 January 2012).*

I invoke this brief discussion of Islamic theology because in many respects the views represented by Qatar's two most prominent Islamic scholars (Fig. 10.7) bracket the regime's cosmopolitan views in two ways. First, the notion of *ijtihād*, while divergently embraced by Qatar's leading Islamic thinkers, Qaradawi and Ramadan, has clearly influenced and shaped Sheikh Hamad's approach to modernization and global participation. And second, that approach, as articulated by the religious *Ulamāʾ* of Qatar, seems embodied in the urban and institutional order of Qatar – a striving for synthesis between extremes.

In looking at Doha's development we are tempted to view the striving for synthesis as a syncretic amalgamation embodied in the city's architecture. Islam as a practised faith has an inward and an outward obligation. Some Hadiths define Islam as submission to God expressed by deeds, above all the prescribed acts of worship and also conducting good works (*islam*), and by an inner belief in God, His angels, in the prophets, in the resurrection (*iman*). Both are necessary preconditions for entry to paradise in the next life. One may view a Muslim as someone who both adheres to the practice of personal observances and to a community of those who acknowledge the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. It is in the nexus between personal practice and normative behaviour, perhaps, far more than in any 'sacral' conception of the political organization, that this specific spiritual-temporal fusion of the Muslim City has its roots (EI VII:173). That is to say a central characteristic of urban centres in Muslim societies is the tension between precedent (*taqlid*) and interpretation (*ijtihād*); tradition and modernization; spirituality and scientism.

The striving for synthesis outlined in this chapter has foundational roots within medieval Muslim societies worth noting. Despite the rise and fall of numerous caliphates from the seventh century, the realization of an Islamic state fully under *sharīʿah*'s reach proved difficult to maintain. Within pre-modern Muslim societies the desire for a publicly administered, normatively observed religious law was far from monolithic. Islamic legal historian

Joseph Schacht describes the range of observation and adherence present in Muslim societies:

> We can distinguish three different kinds of legal subject-matter, leaving aside the cult and ritual and other purely religious duties, according to the degree to which the ideal theory of the *sharīʿa* succeeded in imposing itself on the practice. Its hold was strongest on the law of family (marriage, divorce, maintenance, &c.), of inheritance, and of pious foundations (*wakf*); it was weakest, and in some respects even non-existent, on penal law, taxation, constitutional law, and the law of war; and the law of contracts and obligations stands in the middle.
>
> (Schacht 1982:76)

As we saw in Part II Doha's *wakf* played an important role in real estate contracts and the adjudication of land disputes in the rapidly urbanizing years of early oil exportation. The interpretive practice, which mostly accorded with the Emir's political wishes, was often at odds with a strict interpretation of Islamic law. In neighbouring Bedouin lands, Oman and Yemen in particular, customary law, though influenced by *sharīʿah*, finds its basis in pre-Islamic Arab tribalism that openly opposed Islamic Law (ibid.:77). Thus we find an ever-increasing tension between *sharīʿah*'s outward obligations and culture's inner practices and customs. As Schacht succinctly notes: 'The theory of the sacred Law did not fail to influence practice and custom … but it never succeeded in imposing itself on them completely. This failure resulted chiefly from the fact that the ideal theory, being essentially retrospective, was from the early 'Abbasid period onwards unable to keep pace with the ever-changing demands of society and commerce' (ibid.). This dilemma left Muslim societies two choices: either accept human limitation in striving for the divine; or work uncompromisingly to create an Islamic utopia in full adherence to conservative legalism. Of course it was rare in the history of Islam to see internal revolution due to the leader's lack of conservatism. Ibn Khaldun offers several reasons for the political rigidity, both are on vivid display in Doha. Says Ibn Khaldun:

> A ruler can achieve power only with the help of his own people. They are his group and his helpers in his enterprise.

> He uses them to fight against those who revolt against his dynasty. It is they with whom he fills the administrative offices, whom he appoints as wazirs and tax collectors. They help him to achieve superiority. They participate in the government. They share in all his other important affairs.
>
> (Ibn Khaldun 2005:146)

Ibn Khaldun goes on to describe how a ruler inevitably claims all glory for himself, pushing 'away his people with the palms of his hands' (ibid). When this happens the people who first installed and protected the ruler now become his enemy. In order to prevent his former allies from conspiring for power he must find new friends who 'will become closer to him than anyone else … to be preferred and to be given high positions … He singles them out for preference and for many honours. He distributes among them as much (property) as (he does among) most of his own people' (ibid.:146–147). H. A. R. Gibb's generalized view of the modern Middle East substantiates Ibn Khaldun's view that a balance between utopian goals and practical realities requires a coordination between the ruler and the *Ulamāʾ*:

> So long as the secular governments did not interfere with the social institutions of Islam and formally recognised the *sharīʿa*, the conscience of believers was not outraged and the task of building up a stable and universal Muslim society could go on. But long centuries of submission to secular government induced a tradition of political quietism which cannot easily or quickly be shaken off and still further inhibited the development of political thought and its application to changing circumstances.
>
> (Gibb 1972:66)

As argued throughout this thesis Rentier State Theory and the natural state described by North, Wallis and Weingast (2009) explains exactly Ibn Khaldun's observation that a ruler must 'buy off' his people beginning first with his inner family and, fearing a coup, next with leading community figures using government offices and property distribution, which is exactly the case in Doha from 1950 to the present.

For centuries the close, porous relationship between the institutions of Diwan and mosque, between Emir and *Ulamāʾ* that excluded the majority of citizens has constituted a durable and ancient institutional framework very

much undergirding Doha's contemporary institutional order. That the secrecy and introversion of the collaboration is now embodied in a thoroughly modern, open, egalitarian architecture makes Doha ostensibly all the more bewildering. However, once we consider there is now a transformation of courtly protocol to the new conditions set by global capitalism and international media, where the two key places decisions are made – the *majlis* (tradition) and the boardroom (modern) – we understand, because both are occupied by the same inner-circle close to the Emir, that an antique and stable institutional order has found a new architectural embodiment. One that, ironically, is instantly recognized the world over: wealth and power occupy the same space. This inner circle and the socio-economic-political coordination between Emir, *Ulamāʾ* and a loyal merchant class creates a stability of synthesis today every bit as much as it did for Ibn Khaldun, with, however, one key difference. In Ibn Khaldun's time architecture depended on long-established, very slowly evolved traditional situations and relationships, a capacity within society to link the institutional order with its architectural embodiment. Mosque and Diwan were possible because the medieval social order understood the implicit and explicit symbolic content of each. By contrast, much of Doha's 'modern' architecture conceals cultural values and symbolic understandings. With no control over the meaning of a glass-clad skyscraper, much of Doha can freely assume any expression ranging from totalitarian to capitalist. The distortions arising from open interpretations and conflicting ideologies, a direct descendant of Western capitalism's ability to inflict neutrality and mutability upon architecture, making any form available to any culture, make Doha seem right at home among its rapidly developing rivals.

In the contemporary Muslim world the tensions described above and its resulting stability, however awkward, range from the feverish embrace of Western manners and conspicuous display of capitalist modernism in Dubai to the savage genocide and wanton destruction of the material world perceived un-Islamic in the territories held by ISIS. Between these extremes we find Muslim societies wrestling with the tensions arising from *ijtihād* and the severing of eidos from ethos. Even Islam's birthplace and holiest city, Mecca, strives for a version of cosmopolitanism and reconciliation among

competing visions of proper worship. Perhaps because there is only one Mecca and it is every Muslim's responsibility to perform a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba at least once in their lifetime if they are able, it has in recent years adopted an architectural embodiment commensurate with and intelligible to Islam as a world religion (Fig. 10.8), speaking an architectural language positioned between Qaradawi's 'reprehensible' imitation of Westernization, and Ramadan's reconciliation between the immutable and the novel. A modernism, or post-modern architectural vocabulary, embodying the tension between that which should, above all other places on earth, strive for a pure *sharīʿah*-compliant utopia and an immutable alignment between the strata of articulation and embodiment, is left instead with a Tower of Babel constructed by shouting voices drawn from dialects the world over.

The struggle between architecture and the city assumes an epic yet uncertain quality. What Tafuri says of Piranesi's Campo Marzio in Rome applies equally well to Mecca or Doha, declaring it is not 'possible to define new constants of order through the act of designing. This colossal *bricolage* reveals only a single truth: that the rational and the irrational must cease to be mutually exclusive' (Tafuri 1969:11). As Tafuri further asks of Piranesi we must ask of our fellow architects, have we the tools to translate the dialects of contradiction into form? If not we 'must therefore limit [ourselves] to proclaiming, emphatically, that the great, new problem is that of balancing opposites, the appointed place for which must be the city, lest the very notion of architecture itself be destroyed' (ibid).



Fig. 10.8. *View of Mecca in Saudi Arabia with Ka'ba in the foreground, 2013. Towering above it is the Abraj Al-Bait tower, also known as the Mecca Royal Clock Tower Hotel. It boasts the world's largest clock face and is the world's third tallest building at 601 metres. The tower hotel was designed by Dar Al-Handasah, the same firm who drew up a Doha master plan in 1985 (source: http://imgur.com/gallery/8cidrsG, accessed 25 May 2015).*

4.3 Purpose of City

In her book, *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt quotes Sophocles, who reminds us then as now why cities matter: 'what it was that enabled ordinary men [and women], young and old, to bear life's burdens: it was the *polis*, the space of men's free deeds and living words, which could endow life with splendour' (Arendt 1990:281). As Ronald Beiner points out, this quote summarizes Arendt's entire political philosophy, that 'politics is meaning conferring' (Beiner 2014:2). In Arendt's particular formula the stakes are high in the all-or-nothing equation of a life of splendour made possible only through a shared 'space' of difference; or lacking such a ground that holds differences of speech and action in common, life is reduced to what Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2000) calls 'bare life', mere biological existence. And her model for the shared space of difference is the Athenian *polis*.

To be sure, in ancient Greek discourse city and politics were inseparable. The *polis*, most commonly translated as city, or city-state, was for Aristotle the 'political community' (*koinōnia politikē*), and the title of Aristotle's *Politics* is more accurately translated as 'that which concerns the polis'. Human beings, that is the participating citizen, lay at the centre of this view as he and she '[are] by nature a political being' (Aristotle 1969a:1253a2). Therefore, the *polis* and public life are together the highest, most virtuous attainment of human endeavour. In Aristotle's words,

> Every polis is a community; and every community is established with a view to some good, for men act in order to obtain what they think to be good. The polis aims at the highest good, insofar as it is the highest community, embracing all the others. The highest and all-embracing community is specifically called the political community or polis.
>
> (ibid.:1252a 1–6)

In drawing directly from the Greek notion of the *polis*, Hannah Arendt says in *The Human Condition*,

> The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be. 'Wherever you go, you will be a *polis'*: these famous words became not merely the watchword of Greek colonization, they expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly.
>
> (Arendt 1998:198–199)[5]

Arendt's 'space of appearance', what, after Heidegger, she calls 'world' is in her terms 'public' and what is common to all as a

[5] Beiner (2014) points out the common misunderstanding many Arendt commentators make in thinking she is in some sense neo-Aristotelian. In particular, Charles Taylor and Jurgen Habermas (1973, 1990) make this mistake.

> human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together. To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men [and women] at the same time. The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak.
>
> (ibid.:72)

One reason, among many, I invoke Arendt's political philosophy is its relationship to the other themes discussed throughout this thesis, namely how orientation is a function of differences held in common by the situation, its topic and the inherent communicative intersubjective gap, the 'table … between those who sit around it'. Peter Carl (2015) characterizes those differences as agonic, existing at all levels of human involvement, from oneself upon reflection, to each other in particular situations, and, as Taylor (2007) and Habermas (1991) argue, between groups united by sharing enough culture to communicate in the public sphere. And each level of agonic tension exists within a corresponding institutional order ranging from the highly formal enshrined in legal code, to the less formal claims made by self-organizing social groups, down to the primordial structures of language, religion and custom formed through fundamental connections to the natural world (Carl 2015).

A central characteristic in Arendt's political philosophy, and a central theme in this thesis, is the relationship between 'life' and 'world'. Life is a span of time from birth to death, the interval of biological existence of no lasting consequence. World, by contrast, is a lasting framework of shared practices that outlive one's life, and form the sedimented whole of human experience. Belonging to, and acting in, a 'world' is what gives life its meaning. In the following quote Arendt voices her concern over the limitation in the prevailing positivist approach to understanding history and the human sciences, and conversely the significance of everyday life:

> The justification of statistics is that deeds and events are rare occurrences in everyday life and in history. Yet the meaningfulness of everyday relationships is disclosed not in

> everyday life but in rare deeds, just as the significance of a historical period shows itself only in the few events that illuminate it. The application of the law of large numbers and long periods to politics or history signifies nothing less than the wilful obliteration of their very subject matter, and it is a hopeless enterprise to search for meaning in politics or significance in history when everything that is not everyday behavior or automatic trends has been ruled out as immaterial.
>
> (Arendt 1998:42)

From Arendt the central point I wish to emphasize is the ontological nature of her claim arising from the relationship between rare deeds and everyday events embodied in artifice held by the public sphere:

> the human artifice, a product of mortal hands, is as mortal as its makers. This, on the contrary, may also intensify the enjoyment and consumption of the things of the world, all manners of intercourse in which the world is not primarily understood to be the *koinon*, that which is common to all. Only the existence of a public realm and the world's subsequent transformation into a community of things which gathers men together and relates them to each other depends entirely on permanence. If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the lifespan of mortal men. Without this transcendence into a potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm, is possible … It is the publicity of the public realm which can absorb and make shine through the centuries whatever men may want to save from the natural ruin of time.
>
> (ibid.:54–55)

Though inferred in the above quote I shall make explicit that public space and public realm are, for Arendt, physical constructs. A central argument in this thesis, and why I chose to quote Arendt at length, is architecture's unique role in transforming the 'public realm' 'into a community of things which gathers men [and women] together and relates them to each other'. That which is common-to-all finds at the rock bottom the cosmic conditions of human finitude as mediated between the earth and the divine through the erection of monuments we 'make shine through the centuries'.

4.4 Sources of the City

I began this thesis with a hermeneutic proposition: the most meaningful understanding of city comes through our engagement with concrete, everyday existence. In so doing, Gadamer reminds us, to be watchful of our prejudices, on guard to how our pre-reflective understanding of the unarticulated background might, on the one hand, fuse with a foreign culture yielding ever-deeper levels of understanding; and, on the other, distort our understanding of the very things we are trying to understand. After six continuous years in Doha, the majority of that time spent working on this thesis, I must in this conclusion acknowledge my insights on Doha's urban order as at once enabled and hobbled by my Western biases.

Thus, in this conclusion, I wish to withdraw from the deeply embedded life of the researcher and cast Doha in the light of a larger world picture and ask what, if anything, is Doha's regime up to? Was it successful? And if so, by what measure of success? Striving, as I believe Doha's leaders are, to synthesize their many tensions arising from, simply put, the pull of tradition and the push of modernity, we must likewise evaluate Doha's urban-institutional order both on its own terms internal to its own logic and religious traditions, and on those of the Western bent for a secular society that Doha seems to, if not invite, at least portray.

If, as I have endeavoured to show, Doha's striving for world recognition means its forms, structures, images and institutions are meant to convey an onto-theological synthesis balancing puritanical Wahhabi Islam with secular modernity, we must also acknowledge its role in geo-political affairs of the last half decade. Since I began this thesis the Middle Eastern and North African predominantly Muslim societies have experienced a range of gut-wrenching crises. Revolution in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia are far from resolved; sectarian tensions in Bahrain due to demographic imbalances always threaten to re-emerge; proxy wars between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shi'a Iran continue throughout Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. Against this Qatar continues its old game of playing many sides against each other: funding the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt much to the dismay of the other GCC countries, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular; and (the alleged)

support of ISIS in Syria and Iraq much to the dismay of the United States and many other Western nations. Doha is a welcomed home to Hamas and Taliban leaders; the US military and UNESCO. All this is to say, as much as Muslim societies are in a state of deep division, so much so is Doha.

The events of September 11, 2001 and subsequent wars, revolutions, overt and covert, across the Middle East and North Africa highlight the great extent to which the Islamic world remains bitterly divided on core foundational and doctrinal questions. This is not to say the West has adequately resolved internal tensions either broadly across its geography or specifically within particular traditions, but Islam has not found its Martin Luther, or gone through an extended period of self-examination. The Enlightenment's recentring of the self as the primary interpretive source of meaning brought with it a profound anxiety. Inhumanity on an industrial scale over the last two centuries forces a critical re-examination of our own 'enlightened' progress. Many have argued that at the heart of our age's nihilism and inhumanity is a loss of absolute truth as articulated in morality and religion. And despite, or perhaps because of, our moral relativism, the Enlightenment tradition permanently militates against an uncritical acceptance of political authority. Islamic culture, broadly speaking, knows many subtle and extreme variations, and to paint with a single broad brush the rich diversity of over 1 billion people invariably invites swift and justifiable criticism; but, at the risk of sounding universalist, I think it safe to say Islam was never forced to confront its onto-theological foundation.

By oversimplifying the Enlightenment's vast complexity, we are able to highlight several key aspects that illuminate in which ways Doha might be following a similar developmental path, and how the Qatari regime might be seeking a resolution to similar tensions that first arose in sixteenth-century Europe. By the end of the European Middle Ages God (the divine) was removed from the continuity of creation and placed in a supernatural realm. God's separation from nature and his creation changed the transcendent conveyance of meaning. No longer had an integral part of the cosmic order of meaning come through the subject's objective understanding of what she considered real. As Louis Dupré notes,

> reality split into two separate spheres: that of the mind, which contained all intellectual determinations, and that of all other being, which received them … this double breakup: the one between the transcendent constituent and its cosmic-human counterpart, and the one between the person and cosmos (now understood in the narrower sense of physical nature).
>
> (Dupré 1993:3)

Until this schism at the end of the Middle Ages the onto-theological synthesis of much of Western culture remained unchallenged. The breakdown of the theoretical ideal did not occur overnight. Along the way one unique period, the Baroque, enjoyed a synthesis of competing tensions unlike any age before it or since. Louis Dupré again describes this exceedingly dynamic period in Western history:

> despite tensions and inconsistencies, a comprehensive spiritual vision united Baroque culture. At the center stands the person, confident in the ability to give form and structure to a nascent world. But – and here lies its religious significance – that center remains vertically linked to a transcendent source from which, via a descending scale of mediating bodies, the human creator draws his power. This dual center – human and divine – distinguishes the Baroque world picture from the vertical one of the Middle Ages, in which reality descends from a single transcendent point, as well as from the unproblemactically horizontal one of later modern culture … the tension between the two centers conveys to the Baroque a complex, a restless, and dynamic quality.
>
> (ibid.:237)

A number of political philosophers and architectural theorists (Dupré, Vesely, Perez-Gomez, Harries and Hans Urs von Balthasar) have commented on the power of Baroque church architecture to hold differences in common, what Vesely calls 'divided representation'. 'Because any representation', says Vesely, makes claims to universality, it 'is inevitably partial, there is always a residuum of reality left out, which has to define its own mode of representation. The result is a duplication that may best be described as "divided representation"' (2004b:177).

Church architecture in particular facilitated divided representations of how tensions could be upheld and even celebrated; how angels mediate the human world with God; how the person mediates between the divine supernatural realm and the cosmos of God's creation; how the architecture of the church mediates between a reflexive finite interiority and an projective infinite exteriority. Taken together, each mode of mediation simultaneously makes truth claims about itself while also pointing towards higher spiritual reality.

While we are tempted to view the diverse mixture of architectural styles as simply post-modern attempts at a cultural continuity linking 'tradition' with 'modernity', it is my view that the city, its architecture, reflects, embodies, represents a reform movement, a movement meant to seek an orientation in history and contemporary world affairs. The movement is energetic and participatory; it is also static and individualistic. This range of responses is evident in the rapidly evolving urban order. Architecture in Doha plays the multiple roles of articulating, embodying and enabling this orientation, a quest, a struggle for synthesis. The struggle is deeper than merely tradition versus modernity. It is an onto-theological dilemma, which, I argue, is expressed in the city's architecture and urban order as a mechanism to enable a shifting institutional order. What the regime apparently fails to see is how new institutions might arise within new forms, which in turn yield new embodiments and new articulations. This is Doha's struggle for synthesis: the constant attempt to reconcile what the world seems to be with what it is.

4.5 The Search For City

The primary aim of this thesis is to understand city as embodiment of the institutional order; and when applied to the particular case of Doha this understanding demonstrates that a city's urban order is best revealed through an examination of the tensions arising from its apparently conflicted metaphoric fragments. By examining Doha's architectural and institutional topography we begin to chart the limits and possibilities of civic involvement in the twenty-first-century rapidly evolving city. The

tension between what the city seems to be and what it actually is arises from instantiations of political discourse, and is important for three reasons.

First, I agree with Aristotle and Arendt, among others, that politics confers meaning through the dialectic arising from conflicting viewpoints. Because architecture embodies the common ground of difference, an analysis of the conjunction of politics and architecture reveals the depth and complexity of the sphere of human existence.

Second, viewing Doha as an agonic structure of dialectical references helps reclaim the lost possibilities of civic participation.

Third, the achievement of successive regimes to build a modern metropolis comprising seemingly incongruous juxtapositions generates a dynamic form of equilibrium that seeks above all else to find an authentic orientation in history; however, in this search it has forgotten what a city actually is: the conditions for the possibility of freedom.

As has been shown Islamic traditions are very much alive in Doha, woven throughout its institutional order. Within the constant theme of interpretation we find Western architects striving to find fragments of tradition on which to base their designs. The distortions of imported Western motifs, on the one hand, and of no less distorted traditional motifs on the other, conspire to make the foreign intelligible and acceptable to all citizens, national and immigrant alike. If Doha cannot be viewed as a twentieth-century *polis*, despite its extensive bureaucratic and iconographic borrowings, then why seek the affinity of a late-capitalist city in the first place?

For Doha's regime, late Western capitalism provides the means and methods to preserve ancient hierarchies. By utilizing 'master' planning to correlate enormous migratory populations with the necessary infrastructure to support them, modern economic 'development' ultimately suppresses political virtues for those of profit generation. In Doha's case this is compounded by the need to concentrate and legitimate power within the

hands of the regime, while distributing wealth to its inner circle. The disempowering of the individual, regarded as a hidden crowd to be controlled, runs contrary to the alleged neo-liberal idea of a public. Similarly, instead of placing equal opportunity in the hands of each individual, as modern economic theory proclaims, the regime inverts this formula to use Doha's individuals to support the regime. Such an impulse circumscribes the very definition of a pre-modern natural state: peaceful coexistence through political manipulation of the economy to create privileged interests (North et al. 2009).

The key point is that the tensions are not resolved so much as built into the city's fabric and identity. If that means Qatar exists as a contradiction, then so be it. In fact such contradictions between what a city seems and what it is should be celebrated as the means to surface how one might design, build, rule and live in a twenty-first-century city.



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