

THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN QUALITIES IN THE EMERGING CITY OF DOHA: Urban Space Diversity as a Case for Investigating the 'Lived Space'

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Abstract

Centred on investigating urban space diversity this paper introduces a framework that enables the examination of urban qualities in emerging cities in the Gulf. The rapidly growing city of Doha is selected as a case study due to its rising importance in the region. Lefebvre's perceived-conceived-lived triad is outlined to illustrate how it can be utilized to identify factors that impact the production of urban environments. Notably, little attention has been paid to several growth aspects including the understanding of urban space diversity and the resulting inhabitants' spatial experience, their attitudes toward evolving urbanized spaces. Utilizing an attitude survey, the paper explores urban spaces in the city of Doha as experienced by different groups. An investigation of a number of key urban spaces is undertaken through the identification of key urban nodes. Spaces are examined from the perspective of the city's inhabitants using 490 responses to the survey. The results delineate that urban spaces lack key conditions amenable to creating urban diversity. Nevertheless, they corroborate the notion that urban spaces are perceived and experienced differently by different groups based on their gender, age, and cultural background. The paper concludes with suggestions toward a more inclusive approach to the understanding the production of urban qualities and the design of the city's urban spaces.

Keywords: Doha; urban qualities; urban space diversity; emerging city.

INTRODUCTION

Modern urbanisation in the Gulf began in the middle of the 20th century and was instigated by the oil production. The first settlements were built under the rulers' attempt to share the new oil wealth with the population of the newly born Gulf States and to initiate industrial development. The large-scale immigration of expatriate workers enabled the construction of modern infrastructure and the establishment of the first oil and gas related industries. Due to their geopolitical location cities along the Gulf understood their role as trading hubs and invested in large harbours and airports (Scholz, 1999, p. 82). Because of their limited oil resources the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Emirate of Dubai were the first to explore alternative economic sectors such as banking and trading (Sassen, 1997, p. 44). After major investments in harbours and an international airport during the 1970s, Dubai experienced a high growth rate of companies when it introduced its first free trade zone in Jebel Ali in 1985 (Schmid, 2009, p. 63). At the end of the millennium Dubai was again first to liberalise its local real-estate market, accompanied by major diversification strategies to attract knowledge economies including finance and high-tech sectors (Pacione, 2005, p. 260).

The initial success of Dubai's development model for establishing a regional hub by liberalising local markets during the 1990s had a huge impact on the entire region. It introduced a fast track process to diversify Gulf economies and enter global networks. One of Dubai's current competitors is Qatar and its capital Doha, the rulers of which were keen to diversify economy and services by building on a limited but key number of elements in contrast to Dubai's less

discriminating approach. While Dubai has pursued development in almost all its economic sectors in parallel, Doha is currently focusing on specialising in its main sectors only and developing its future economic role in the global network gradually. In this respect, exclusivity defines its economic development strategy rather than undefined expansion (Adham, 2008, p.248).

Although Doha's real-estate market has never been as liberalised as in Dubai and freehold developments have remained restricted to certain areas, real estate projects have become the predominant factor in the recent economic diversification process. One of the most prominent examples is the 400-hectare reclaimed island known as 'The Pearl', which offers freehold properties on leasing contracts of 99 years (*Colliers International*, 2008, p. 1). While residential developments have been located mainly in the north of the city, the new West Bay District at the Corniche has become the centre of commercial developments with its high-rise towers (Figure 1). The evolving skyline expresses an attempt of decision makers to establish the image of Doha as an emerging international service hub. Over the past few years, more and more real estate projects were launched in various scales and at differing locations with an obvious tendency towards the waterfront along the northern shoreline.

Current extensive development of the city Doha is characterized by a fast track urbanization process, resulting in the creation of new urban nodes that are used by different groups for different purposes. While this unprecedented urban growth of the city continues to be a subject of discussion, little attention has been paid to other growth aspects, including the understanding of the resulting inhabitants' spatial experience, their attitudes toward emerging urbanized spaces, and whether these emerging spaces are diverse enough to accommodate the multicultural society the city enjoys.



Figure 1. The global skyline of the West Bay in the city of Doha (Source: Authors).

In this paper, a framework is introduced referring to the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's work on space production in cities. This framework attempts to integrate the necessary aspects and factors shaping urban environments including the role of inhabitants. The impact of inhabitants in diversifying urban environments is often ignored in contemporary urban discussions and in particular in the case of emerging cities, such as Doha. The paper investigates this aspect by analysing eight key spaces that were selected based on parameters that include density, commercial activity, and public accessibility. Spaces are examined from the perspective of Doha's inhabitants using an attitude survey. Results of implementing the survey tools corroborate the assumption that urban spaces are experienced differently by different groups based on their gender, age, and cultural backgrounds. In essence, this suggests a more inclusive approach to the design of the city's urban spaces.

A FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTIGATING THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Henri Lefebvre's theory of space production can be utilized as basis for a framework that combines analyses of factors that impact urban development. Lefebvre expressed his idea of the production of space using a triad consisting of conceived, perceived and lived space. Firstly, he defined 'conceived space' as the space conceptualised by scientists, planners, social engineers, etc., also known as 'representations of space'. These representations are abstract as they are rooted in the principles, beliefs and visions held by such practitioners, decision makers and others who are in a position to impose their personal notion of 'order' on the concrete world and so create a practical impact on space within social and political practice (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 41). 'Perceived space' is the space of 'spatial practice', which Lefebvre defined as the space where movement and interaction take place, where networks develop and materialise. Thus, it includes both daily routines on an individual level and urban realities such as the networks that link places designated for work, leisure and 'private' life (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Lastly, 'lived space' is comprehended as the unconscious, non-verbal direct relation between humans and space. Also known as 'representational space', it is directly lived through associated images and symbols (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39).

Based on Lefebvre's ideas, the production of urban space can be analysed by investigating each factor in this process using the perceived-conceived-lived triad. Thus, all the factors that affect the nature and structure of the urban fabric in the production of space in emerging cities such as Doha can be sought for and examined with a special focus on understanding the role of inhabitants and their impact (Figure 2).

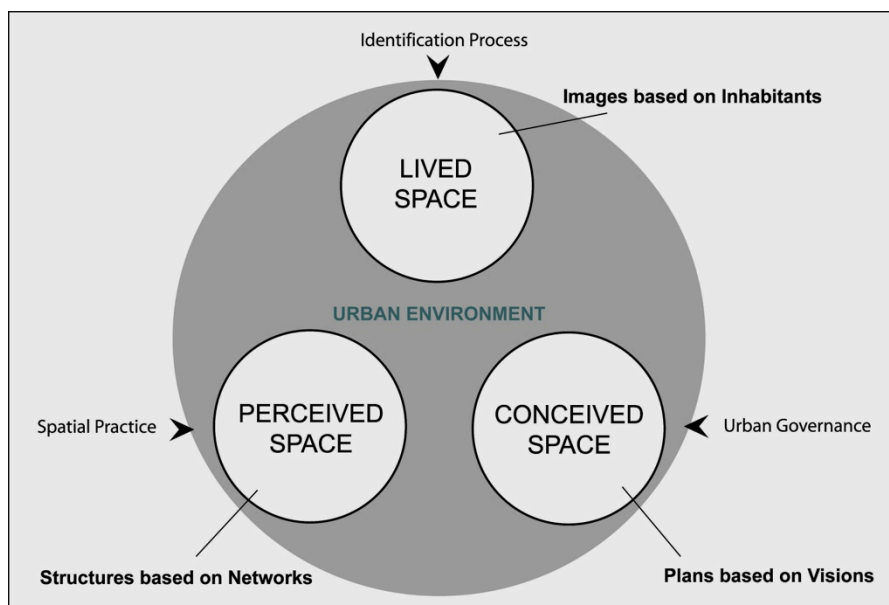


Figure 2: Framework for investigating the production of urban environments based on Henri Lefebvre (Source: Authors).

In most urban studies the influence of lived space on the production of urban space has been neglected due to the difficulty of measuring its role scientifically. Lived space is assumed to be the subjective personal relationship between inhabitants and the urban environment. Such a relationship affects their active involvement in urban spaces. It is expressed in images, symbols and associations and has a major impact on the coherence and continuity of a society and thus on urban development. While in cities with long urban histories lived space is often neglected as a major factor in spatial development due to the implicitness of its existence, in the case of emerging cities a lack of lived space is expressed in the form of an intense struggle for identity

and a relatively low degree of influence by inhabitants on development decisions. One consequence of this vacuum in cities that are built from scratch is branding with certain images in order to attract investment. The image of a city is influenced by conscious planning. Yet, it is also affected by spatial practice as well as the image of a city held by its inhabitants has an impact on planning. Analysing lived space thus uncovers how inhabitants relate to the city and its images.

Lived space is produced by the individual identification of inhabitants with space and expressed by their use and behaviour in space. In this respect, the reasons for a close intimacy between inhabitants and urban environments are best described in images – the image of liveability, the image of success and the image of cultural values. The image of liveability is enhanced if an urban environment creates the impression of being a healthy and comfortable place. In turn, the image of success is increased if the surrounding developments suggest perspectives for individual growth and prosperity. The third image of cultural values is mainly expressed by the aesthetics of the built environment, which can cause inhabitants to identify with their space if it coheres with their idealised and familiar values. These three images cooperatively create the identification of a society with its surroundings, which is the basis for developing urban qualities. These urban qualities are strongest if all the members of an urban society are part of this identification process. Urban qualities needed for sustainable urban structures are thus produced by a coalescing society identifying with its surrounding environment.

THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE DIVERSITY

The quality of urban space diversity is a result of all factors within the production of urban environments. One of its main preconditions is the active participation of a society based on an emerging identification with the surrounding physical and non-physical conditions. Investigating the existing lived space in cities is thus essential in order to understand the potentials to develop urban space diversity. Urban space diversity is one of the most important urban qualities, since it is needed to attract economic growth, to establish balance between social groups and to contribute to ecological developments. Thus, the production of urban space diversity is a complex interaction of decision-making, spatial practice of users and the identification process of inhabitants.

A successful urban space is primarily the timeless space, where activities run throughout the days and years without losing their boost and action. Lang argues that, “the more multi-purpose the public realms... many more actors are involved. The more open and diverse a society, the more intricate and involved is the debates over ends and means and the more diverse the opinions about the results achieved (Lang, 2005, p.22).” In essence, in order to create a vital urban space, diversity would be a determining factor. Diversity involves mixed activities and various environments for a wide range of users. Traditional cities or urban spaces have witnessed several layers of activities and add-ons through time, which built up the liveliness and variedness of experiences as important parameters of diversity (Salama and Ghraib, 2012).

In recent rhetoric, diversity denotes, in generic terms, a mosaic of people who bring a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact. However, in urban discourse diversity has been addressed as having multiple meanings that include mixing building types, mixing physical forms, and mixing people of different social classes, racial and ethnic backgrounds. While the concept has been discussed heavily in the urban literature (Fainstein, 2004; Gummer, 1995; Jacobs, 1961; Jacobs and Appleyard, 1987; Jones et al, 2007; Lovatt and O’Connor 1995; Talen, 2006; Tiesdell et al, 1996), this overview places emphasis on those writings that delineate the multi-dimensional aspect of urban space diversity.

Jacobs (1961) asserts that public places should rely on a mixture of uses that need an enormous diversity of ingredients, stretching from the daily functions, enterprises, markets, and entertaining magnets. In order to generate diversity within the built environment, Jacobs introduced a number of essential conditions. First, the public places or even a series of interconnected urban spaces should offer multi-functions to ensure that user groups are present

and benefit from several choices. Second, the physical setting of the public place should be designed to serve walking users, allowing diversity of views and perceptions. The physical architectural context is also an important condition that should offer diversity of styles and sizes in order to engage different tastes and economic enterprises. Finally, there should be a high density of people with different backgrounds, cultures, as well as different social strata. This later condition primarily serves the concept of 'see and be seen' by allowing people to socialize and interact.

While local distinctiveness and the physical or tangible dimension of an urban space will eventually construct a unique 'sense of place,' there are other dimensions that contribute to diversity. The social and emotional perception is as valuable as it ensures that users and visitors will invest their efforts, time, and emotions; it is important to satisfy their needs, freedom, and most important the sense of 'individuality within collectiveness'. The increase of satisfaction with and attachment to urban space will increase the presence of people to turn spaces into places, making them vibrant, and living organisms within the city while creating a sense of civic responsibility. Lovatt and O'Connor (1995, p.128) state, "... however superficial and spatially circumscribed ... the emphasis on play, strolling and idle socializing could have wider effects." In essence, backgrounds of social groups are an important aspect without which urban space would not have the quality of diversity.

Social and physical dimensions are complementary and contribute together toward the achievement of diversity. The size and surrounding enclosures need to be distinguished appropriately; buildings should be distributed in an adequate manner to correspond the different activities. Jacobs and Appleyard (1987, p.106) argue that, "buildings should be arranged in such a way as to define and even enclose public space, rather than sit in space." Good urban design is to create places, enhancing the public place via people-friendly vision to serve the physical and the social composition (Tiesdell et al, 1996).

Diversity essentially creates a wide variety of uses to generate vital places. Gummer (1995) pointed out that, "Mixed-use development should increasingly become the norm rather than the exception... We will be expecting developers to think imaginatively in future as to how proposals can incorporate mixed land uses, to produce lively and successful developments over both the short and long term, and provide a positive contribution to the quality of our towns and cities." The objective is to make places generated under economic foundation; this requires adequate distribution of uses in the urban space while achieving a responsive integration with the existing functions. Diversity in terms of mixed use and mixed communities (social, tenure) also extends to the temporal use of space, – both built and open: e.g., markets, parks/squares, festivals, public art/animation, through the evening economy, 'leisure shopping' and 'mixed-use streets' (Jones et al., 2007).

The preceding overview suggests that urban space diversity involves a number of dimensions toward the creation of vital urban places while offering functional and behavioral opportunities for different socio-economic groups. It implicates three major dimensions. The first is physical tangible dimension that pertains to the qualities of the material context. The second is investigating lived space and thus the social and emotional intangible dimension that pertains to the way in which the material dimension impacts users of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The third is a dimension that concerns itself with types of activities and the nature of use. Investigating the three dimensions would result in a comprehensive insight into the understanding of urban space diversity.

METHODOLOGY FOR INVESTIGATING URBAN SPACE DIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DOHA

The methodology adopted is multi layered and involves two procedural investigations. The first is an analytical description of eight key spaces within the city that are believed to represent different urban and spatial qualities catered to different groups (Figures 3 & 4). The second procedure establishes and implements an attitude survey questionnaire, which aims at exploring ways in which the identified key urban spaces are perceived and experienced. Using the metaphor of 'city

centre' and 'city peripheries' two major questions were conceived: a) how does the city's population perceive the identified key spaces as centre(s) or peripheries, and b) how are centre(s) and peripheries experienced based on the population's gender, age, and cultural background? The term 'centre' is introduced as an urban node that is visited most by the inhabitants, while the term 'periphery' is introduced as an urban area that is rarely visited by the inhabitants (Salama, 2011).



Figure 3: Eight key urban nodes selected to explore centre (s) and peripheries in the city of Doha as perceived by a sample of its inhabitants (Source: Authors).

The two questions were translated into a questionnaire that involves a) basic information about the participants including education, age, cultural background, and status in the city, b) whether participants believe that the city has one or multiple centres or peripheries and whether they are able to name those spaces representing centres or peripheries, c) their reactions to images that may represent the centre and those that represent the city, d) identifying places that are visited most, how often they are visited, with whom, for what purpose, and the frequency of visits, e) issues that pertain to accessibility to space, parking availability, and other visual and environmental preferences queries. As shown in Figures (4) and (5), the spaces identified reflect different spatial qualities: 1) Aspire/Villagio Mall, 2) Al-Sadd Commercial Strip, 3) Musheireb Intersection, 4) Ramada Junction, 5) Water Front a: Near Sheraton Hotel, 6) Water Front b: Near Main Restaurant, 7) Water Front c: Near Museum of Islamic Art, and 8) Souq Waqif (traditional marketplace).

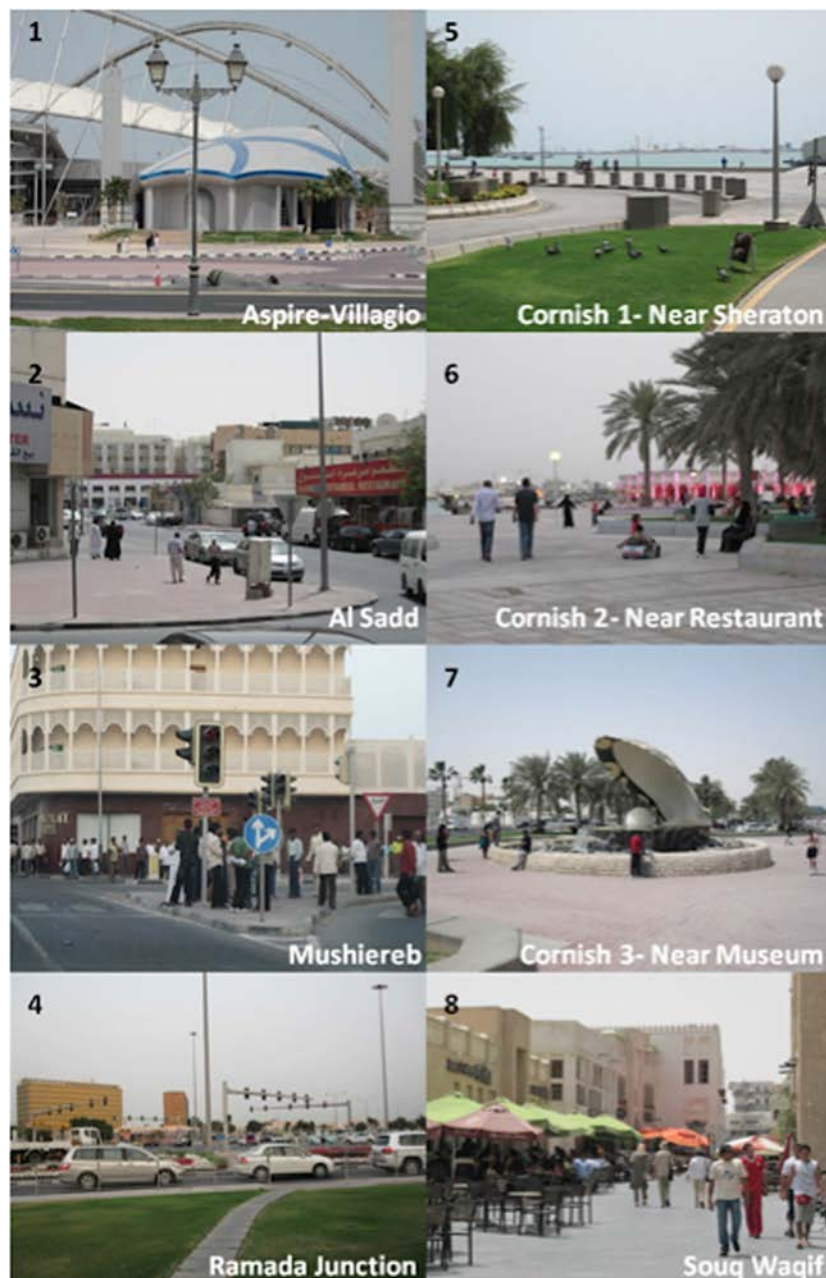


Figure 4: The spatial qualities of the eight key urban nodes (Source: Authors).

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The descriptive typological analysis of the eight spaces reveals that each space enjoys specific spatial typology with relative similarities and differences across the eight spaces. It indicates that the profile of users of each space varies according to the nature and type of activities introduced. The analysis delineates that there are different degrees of accessibility, traffic congestion associating the spaces, and availability of parking.

490 valid responses to the questionnaire were received out of 560. They were analysed at the level of the overall sample utilizing a frequency procedure. However, by performing a cross tabulation procedure relationships between age, gender, cultural background as dependent variables and the key spaces representing centre(s) or peripheries as independent variables, were elucidated.

Respondents represent the spectrum of population in the city. This is evident in their overall profile, where 260 males and 230 females representing 53% and 47% of the total number of responses respectively. It is also apparent that age groups are well represented where 12% represent age group (15-20), 47% represent age group (20-30), 21% represent age group (30-45), and 18% represent age group (45-60). Considering that the population of the city is young, the over-60 age group also reflects the actual population of the city and represents only 2% of the total number of respondents. For the purpose of categorizing different cultural backgrounds, cultural groups were generically classified as Africans, Americans, Arabs, Asians, Europeans, and Qataris. Representation of these groups reflects the figures currently estimated for the city's population. They include 37% Qataris, 28% Arabs, 14% Asians, 11% Africans, 5% Europeans, and 5% Americans. However, it should be noted that the percent of Qataris in relation to the overall population of the city does not exceed 20%.

Diversity in Perceiving the Key Urban Nodes

Across the total responses Souq Waqif appears to be the most important urban space representing the centre of Doha since it has received 57% of the responses that identify it as a centre, while only 8% identify it as a periphery. Nevertheless, it has received 39% of the responses as the most visited place. In essence, this can be attributed to the historical significance of the Souq and the diversity of activities including arts and crafts galleries and ethnic restaurants. The Aspire/Villagio comes as the second most important space that represents the centre of the city since it is identified by 39% of the respondents as a centre and by 61% as most visited. While the space addresses middle and high-income groups, the large scale of the mall and the magnitude of diverse shops together with the nearby sport facilities appear to be determining factors in making the space attractive and favoured by the majority of these groups.

While Al-Sadd urban space is identified by 39% of the respondents as a centre, only 16% identify it as most visited and as representing the city since it caters to specific segments of society and the lower income population. The two water front spaces near Sheraton hotel and near the restaurant seem to be favoured by a considerable portion of the respondents since they were identified as centres by 37% and 31% respectively and as most visited spaces by 22% and 29% respectively. The fact that these two water front spaces involve sufficient recreational space along the 7 kilometre water front promenade, with either green space, pedestrian walkways, or support services make them relatively attractive while witnessing a strong presence of diverse groups. The water front space near the museum does not seem to be favoured by the majority of respondents since it is identified by 22% of the responses as a centre and by 16% as most visited (Table 1). This can be attributed to the difficulty in accessing the space while lacking amenities or support services unlike the other two water front spaces.

Table 1: Identification of spaces by the city inhabitants as centres, peripheries, representing the city and most visited (Source: Salama and Gharib, 2012).

Key Spaces	Identified as Centre	Identified as Periphery	Identified as representing the city	Identified as most visited
Aspire/Villagio Mall	39%	16%	31%	61%
Al-Sadd Commercial Strip	39%	18%	16%	16%
Musheireb Intersection	33%	39%	22%	10%
Ramada Junction	25%	31%	18%	25%
WF a/ Sheraton Hotel	37%	10%	20%	22%
WF b/ Restaurant	31%	14%	16%	29%
WF c/ Museum of Islamic Art	22%	20%	16%	16%
Souq Waqif	57%	8%	49%	39%

The preceding discussion and the participants' reactions suggest that Souq Waqif and Aspire/Villagio urban spaces appear to be perceived by many of the respondents as spaces

representing the city of Doha. Souq Waqif is identified by 49% of the respondents as a space that represents the city and its culture, while Aspire/Villagio is identified as a space that represents the city by 31% of the respondents. This is due to the unique qualities that each space enjoys whether physical or social or activity related. No major differences were found in all other spaces in terms of representing the city. This can be attributed to the absence of distinctive and unique qualities that make such spaces as significant within the overall city.

Diversity in Visiting Patterns

Urban spaces identified as most visited by the respondents seem to be having frequent visiting patterns. Approximately 70% of the respondents visit the space identified either once a week or several times a week. While 25% of the respondents visit the space once a month, only 8% mentioned that they visit it few times a year. Times of visits to spaces that are most visited seem to correspond to the work styles of the respondents and the hours of work in the city. 82% mentioned that they visit the space either in the evenings or late afternoons. On the other hand, only 11% mentioned they visit the space in the mornings or middays (Table 2).

As shown in Table (2), the most visited spaces appear to be visited by groups rather than individuals. 74% of the respondents mentioned that they visit the space with family members (43%) or with family and friends (31%). On the other hand, only 16% mentioned that they visit the space on their own. It should be noted that a wide spectrum of activities take place in the most visited spaces where 24% of the respondents mentioned that they visit the spaces for a combination of reasons including walking and shopping, relaxing and sitting, dining, and playing. However, over 50% of the respondents mentioned that they either visit for exclusively walking and shopping (30%) or for exclusively relaxing and sitting (21%). On the other hand, only 16% mentioned that they visit the space for the purpose of dining and 3% for the purpose of playing and outdoor exercising.

Table 2: Visiting and activity patterns in most visited spaces (Source: Salama and Gharib, 2012).

Nature of Use	Most Visited Spaces					
	Frequency of Visits	Several times/week		Weekly	Monthly	Few times/year
	33%		34%	25%	8%	
Times of Visits	Evening	Late afternoon		Midday	Morning	No difference
	42%	40%		5%	6%	7%
Profile of Users	Family & Friends		Family	Friends	On their own	
	31%		43%	20%	16%	
Activity Patterns	Walking/ Shopping	Relaxing/ Sitting	Dining	Playing	Combination	Other
	30%	21%	16%	3%	24%	6%

The results suggest that the most visited spaces enjoy a number of qualities that while they are frequently visited, they do not seem to offer enough diversity of uses (Figures 5, 6, & 7). Since Aspire/Villagio is the most visited urban space across the total respondents (61%) it is evident that the dominant activity of the space is walking and shopping despite having nearby sport facilities. The dominant activity of Souq Waqif as the second most visited space (39%) appears to be dining due to the wide variety of ethnic restaurants and cafes. The dominant activities of the water front space b/near restaurant (29%) are a combination of playing and outdoor exercising, and relaxing and sitting. This can be attributed to the strong presence of a pedestrian spine that penetrates the open tiled space and also due to the availability of walking areas. While the space enjoys the presence of a restaurant and an outdoor café, dining does not seem to be a reason for visiting, especially that the restaurant caters to high and middle-income groups.



Figure 5: Aspire/Villagio, the most visited space (Source: Authors).



Figure 6: Souq Waqif, the second most visited space (Source: Authors).



Figure 7: Waterfront Space b-near restaurant, the third most visited space (Source: Authors).

Gender, cultural background, and age group differences in reacting to central and peripheral urban spaces

Preliminary findings on the gender, cultural background, and age group are analysed and discerned. Across the respondents, major differences between males and females are found. For example, while 35% of males believe that the city has one centre, only 8% of the females believe the same. There appears to be an agreement between males and females on perceiving peripheries, where 64% of males and 69% of females believe that the city has several peripheries. No major differences are found in the reactions to the spaces that represent the centre. Clearly, similarities are found in male (19%) and female (22%) respondents in perceiving Aspire/Villagio as a centre and in perceiving Souq Waqif as a centre. 38% of male respondents and 35% of female respondents believe that Souq Waqif represents the centre. Differences are found in the responses to the spaces that represent peripheries. While 35% of female respondents identify Ramada Junction as a periphery, only 10% of male respondents identify it as a periphery (Figure 8). Strikingly, while 10% of male respondents identify each of the waterfront spaces near Sheraton hotel and near restaurant as a periphery, none of the female respondents identify them as peripheral spaces (Figure 10). This is due to the openness, scenery views, and the green and tiled areas available in these spaces while offering multiple opportunities for activities including walking, jogging, biking, sitting and enjoying the scenic view of Doha's Skyline, and photographing.

Dramatic differences across the responses of different age groups are evident. Souq Waqif, as perceived as a centre of the city, has received 65% of the responses of the age group (20-30), while it has received 100% of the responses of the age groups (30-45), (40-60), and over 60. On the other hand, the Musheireb public space, as perceived as a periphery, has received 83% of the responses of the age group (15-20), only 26% of the responses of the age group (20-30), and 33% for each of the groups, (30-45) and (45-60). Notably, the two spaces are geographically in the same vicinity.

Across the respondents from different backgrounds differences exist. While 73% of Arabs, 75% of Qataris, and 85% of Asians believe that the city has more than one centre, less than 40% of each of those of American and European background believes the same. Strikingly, despite these differences in perceiving centres, similarities in perceiving peripheries are found, where 54% of Arabs, 50% of Americans, and 50% of Europeans believe that the city has several peripheries.

The majority of Qataris identifies Souq Waqif as a centre since it has received 69% of the responses received from participants of Qatari background. This can be attributed to the historical significance of the Souq while establishing association with the past in a rapidly growing city. All the respondents of American background and the majority of respondents from Asian (67%) and African (60%) backgrounds identify Aspire/Villagio urban space as a centre. This can be attributed to the dominance of the mall culture in areas representing these backgrounds while at the same time due to the availability of sport facilities. On the other hand, respondents from Arab

and Asian backgrounds identify Al Sadd Commercial Strip and Ramada Junction as centres. This reflects the tendency to favour dense urban areas, which are similar to the physical environment they are coming from. Despite their geographical location, the majority of respondents from European and American backgrounds identify Waterfront spaces as centres. This is due to tendency to favour open spaces and the association with natural settings rather than with dense urban fabric (Table 3).



Figure 8: Ramada Junction. (Source: Authors).



Figure 9: Waterfront Space a-near Sheraton Hotel. (Source: Authors).

Table 3: Cultural background differences in reacting to central and peripheral urban spaces (Source: Salama and Gharib, 2012).

Key Spaces	Cultural Background					
	Qatari	Asian	European	Arab	African	American
Aspire/Villagio Mall	31%	67%	00	36%	60%	100%
Al-Sadd Commercial Strip	31%	50%	00	82%	00	00
Musheireb Intersection	38%	17%	00	36%	20%	00
Ramada Junction	25%	67%	00	18%	00	50%
WF a/ Sheraton Hotel	44%	67%	50%	18%	20%	50%
WF b/ Restaurant	31%	33%	50%	18%	20%	100%
WF c/ Museum of Islamic Art	19%	33%	00	9%	20%	100%
Souq Waqif	69%	33%	00	46%	60%	50%

CONCLUSION

Urban spaces mean different things to different communities within the city of Doha and thus are used differently. The juxtaposition of the results with the understanding of urban space diversity delineates the fact that urban spaces within the city of Doha lack one or more of the three important conditions that contribute to the achievement of diversity. The results reflect the dynamic nature of urban spaces identified as centres, invigorating the assumption that urban spaces in the centre are not necessarily standing as unique entities. Results, however, indicate that urban spaces on the peripheries are emerging to compete with those in the centre. The understanding of what constitutes centres and peripheries in the minds of the city's inhabitants contributes to the understanding of their spatial experience and their attitudes toward what is perceived as centre, or as periphery or as emerging centre. The perceptual and the spatial experience of inhabitants reflect the needs and wants of different groups according to their gender, age, and cultural background that in the context of Doha varies dramatically.

Referring to the introduced framework based on Henri Lefebvre's work on space production it can be argued that Doha's urban environment is primarily a result of investment and

deregulation strategies to establish a global hub and subsequent real estate speculations. This has led to fragmented patchwork patterns and an evident lack of integration with important elements missing from its public open spaces. The missing participation of inhabitants in producing urban spaces in Doha is reflected in low urban space diversity in most cases. Inhabitants are left to use prefabricated structures for consumption and production with limited means to appropriate these structures according to their needs and desired form. Analyses of contemporary urbanism in Doha need to address this reality by integrating the response of inhabitants to spaces by interviewing and observing them. This work can be seen as a first step in this research direction and introduces a study within a larger framework in order to integrate this important perspective.

While future development plans of the city may seem to address specific groups and cater to specific age groups or cultural backgrounds, a more responsive approach to the design of urban spaces needs to be in place. Urban design as a discipline and a profession focuses on creating built environments that promote opportunities and experiences for all city inhabitants. Therefore, it is crucial that most of the urban space actions and activities are accepted and enjoyed by the majority of the city's population. The urban development process of the city needs to consider the development of spaces based on the perception and understanding of different groups. This needs to be adopted as one of the key factors in developing successful inclusive urban spaces that involve a wide spectrum of urban and spatial qualities relevant to the diversity characterizing the city of Doha.

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