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Perceiving Urban Liveability in an Emerging Migrant City

Abstract (176 words)

Gulf cities have witnessed rapid urban growth where new migrant communities from various cultural backgrounds have been evolving over the past two decades. This paper explores perceptions of liveable urban environments in Qatar's capital city, Doha. An attitude survey of 280 migrant professionals from different cultural backgrounds engaged in the high service sector was conducted. A profile for each cultural group including westerners, middle-easterners, Indians, Southeast Asians was developed to analyse the way in which key liveability factors are perceived. Factors were classified into two overarching categories: urban life and urban spaces. Urban life category included aspects that pertain to traffic and movement experience, residential satisfaction, shopping experience, and satisfactions of leisure and service spaces. Urban space category included attractiveness, iconicity, and familiarity, which were attitudinally explored in four public open spaces. The inquiry uncovers a number of concerns related traffic experience, housing quality, parking spaces, school facilities, and shopping opportunities. This may stymie the city's global attractiveness success on the global stage while warranting the need for addressing livability as part of future development plans.

Keywords specific to this article

Liveability; Multiculturalism, Doha; Sustainability; Migrant city

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5 **1. Introduction**

6 Gulf cities have witnessed rapid urban growth and a transformation of social and economic
7 structures due adopting new development strategies. The vision to develop Gulf cities into global
8 hubs is based on the fortunate geographic location between rising markets in combination with the
9 still remaining wealth on fossil fuels in the region. The main pioneer of this new development model
10 has been the Emirate of Dubai, which was the first to initiate a freehold property market stimulating
11 an unprecedented construction boom at the beginning of the 21st century. The direct consequence
12 has been extensive immigration and a subsequently shrinking share of the local population to less
13 than 15% (Davidson, 2009). In most Gulf cities, the migrant backgrounds of mid-income to high
14 income groups are rather diverse, while a large majority of low-income labourers were recruited
15 from South Asian countries. Particularly, new economies within the emerging high service sector
16 have been built on migrants from various origins leading to a multicultural society.
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24 Taking Qatar's capital city Doha as an example, it was a fishing and pearl diving settlement. Today,
25 it is home to more than 90% of the country's 2.0 million people, including over 80% foreign workers
26 from other countries. Up to the mid-1960s, the majority of the buildings in Doha were traditional
27 houses that presented local responses to the surrounding physical and socio-cultural conditions.
28 During the 1970s, Doha was transformed into a modernized city. However, in the 1980s and early
29 1990s, the development process was slow compared to the preceding period due to a discouraging
30 political atmosphere and the first Gulf war (Salama and Wiedmann, 2013-a). Since the end of the
31 1990s, the city has acquired a new geo-strategic importance. Through the shift of global economic
32 forces, it is being developed as a service hub, joining other major cities in the region and entering a
33 fierce competition (Wiedmann, Salama and Thierstein, 2012). One key aspect to establish Doha as
34 a regional centre of service sectors is however continuous immigration.
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43 The multicultural aspect of a migrant, multicultural city is expected to have an increasing impact on
44 future urban developments. Until today, little attention has, however, been paid to this aspect,
45 including the understanding of the resulting inhabitants' spatial and lived experience and their
46 attitudes toward the new urbanized spaces. This paper bases its argument in this regard on the
47 premise that the global condition has created a sense of "placelessness" in many cities, and Doha
48 is no exception (Salama, 2013-b). As a reaction, evoking a sense of place through creating urban
49 diversity by introducing mixed-use developments and a wide variety of activities and fostering
50 liveability and the quality of urban life have become primary concerns in contemporary discourse on
51 urbanism (Fainstein, 2005). As in the case of many emerging cities worldwide, Doha's economic
52 future will therefore heavily rely on its attractiveness as a residence for multicultural migrant
53 communities.
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5 Developing competitive service sectors postulate that Gulf cities will increasingly rely on the long-
6 term commitment of educated workforce to settle and subsequently to invest in Doha. The frequent
7 exchange of migrant communities means a significant loss of knowledge as well as capital and thus
8 great difficulties in establishing new economic sectors. In order to attract high-income groups, Doha
9 should be perceived as a liveable place providing a wide range of urban qualities. This paper
10 attempts to add important empirical research to the current struggle to gain insights into how
11 attractive urban environments are perceived and experienced. Based on key theoretical
12 underpinning a methodological approach is established to examine the various ways Doha is
13 perceived by the four main cultural groups within the present mid-income migrant society. The
14 paper is concluded with an outlook that articulates that major challenges to improve liveability in the
15 city.

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23 **2. Selected theoretical underpinnings on liveability**

24 Liveability is the totality of the features that add up to a group, a community, or a city's quality of
25 urban life - including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and
26 equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities (Partners for
27 Liveable Communities, 2012). Most liveability definitions involve aspects related to effective
28 transportation, community, and quality. Yet, there is no one-consensus definition.

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34 Two important perceptive points must be made in the context of theorizing liveability. The first is that
35 recent research reveals that there is a conceptual overlap between liveability and sustainability
36 (Ministry of Environment New Zealand 2011). Industries and government agencies worldwide have
37 addressed liveability as an important aspect of healthy cities (Philips Professional and Public
38 Affairs, 2010). Nonetheless, a growing body of knowledge is emerging to support each separately.
39 The second point posits that there is a clear distinction between "urban" and "built" where the former
40 is about inhabitants, while the latter is about buildings. On the one hand, an "urban environment" is
41 any street, neighbourhood, suburb, or city with enough people, typically more than a thousand. A
42 "built environment" is one that has a high ratio of buildings and structures to open space, and where
43 those buildings are used for a variety of activities (Chase, Crawford and Kaliski, 1999). In a recent
44 comprehensive literature study on liveability and sustainability, commonalities emerged due to a
45 lack of definitional distinction between the two terms. This underscores, however, the development
46 of an interconnected relationship between both concepts (Young and Hermanson, 2013). Clearly,
47 urban environments and built environments are the same thing - a high population requires a high
48 density of buildings. This connotes that liveability involves duality; two major dimensions. The first is
49 physical and relates to objective measures of the built environment, and the second is intangible
50 and relates to subjective aspects that pertain to feelings and perceptions of the people living in that
51 environment (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom and Schmid, 2008).

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6 With their varied socio-physical, socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political presence, cities
7 have always been highly differentiated spaces expressive of heterogeneity, diversity of activities,
8 entertainment, excitement, and pleasure. They have been (and still are) melting pots for the
9 formulation of and experimentation with new philosophies and religious and social practices (Glazer
10 and Moynihan, 1963). Thus, the perception of the liveability of a city highly depends on the various
11 backgrounds of inhabitants. Yet, a multifaceted view seems to dominate recent debates on
12 liveability. Such a view involves common topics such as smart growth, complete streets, lifelong
13 communities, context sensitive design and planning, transit-oriented development, and place
14 making. While additional liveability premises exist, these most common topics represent those with
15 the most established literature. Liveability is about pleasant and appropriate urban environments
16 that offer and reflect cultural values and foster individual career aspirations. According to Shaftoe
17 (2008), key principles integral to this aspect are equity, dignity, accessibility, conviviality,
18 participation, and empowerment.
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27 In the context of Gulf cities, liveability expresses the notion of a place that is good to live, work, and
28 play in an urban environment where people enjoy a high quality of urban life based on their own
29 perceptions. The term “liveable” is thus not limited to a strict set of certain qualities of an urban
30 environment. It similarly applies to the degree to which diversity is achieved to enable inhabitants to
31 identify and attach to places. This includes their satisfaction with the quality of urban life, the quality
32 of their residence and movement within the city, among other issues. Any quality is however
33 assessed by the individual based on past experiences and gained values. Thus, similarities how
34 certain urban qualities are perceived can be detected in the case of a group of people who grew up
35 in a comparable environment. Subsequently, the cultural background of immigrants plays an
36 important role in to what extent emerging cities are perceived as liveable and thus attractive.
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44 The work of the Henri Lefebvre has had a large impact on the contemporary understanding of
45 space as a product of complex ‘social superstructures’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 85) arguing that space
46 cannot be understood as a simple collection of elements because a society’s space is actually a
47 product that has been created through its own individual spatial practice and perception. Lefebvre
48 introduced the term ‘lived space’ as the unconscious, non-verbal direct relation of humans to space.
49 Also known as ‘representational space’, it is directly lived through associated images and symbols
50 (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). Thus rooted in the past experience it is essentially subjective wherein the
51 outer physical space resonates with the inner imagination. Specific locations within a locality can
52 become focal points due to their position and status within the representational space of the
53 particular community of people who use that locale (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 45). Thus, the perception of
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5 liveability depends on this individual relationship between inhabitants and surrounding space
6 (Purcell, 2002).
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9 **3. A methodological framework: Examining liveability**

10 In order to explore the various perceptions of liveability in Doha a comprehensive survey was
11 conducted by the authors in 2012-2013. It aimed to investigate key parameters that foster the
12 development of insights into a better understanding of liveability. The investigation is exclusively
13 focused on mainstream middle class expatriates and their perceptions due to their key role in
14 introducing demand-driven incentives as consumers and investors. An attitude survey was
15 distributed to employees in 43 companies within the advanced producer service sector in Doha.
16 The companies were selected according to their key roles in current developments and their overall
17 size. More than 70% of the selected companies have been in Doha less than ten years and have
18 recruited mainly expatriates. Overall 351 employees participated in the survey and 280 complete
19 responses were received.
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27 Encompassing multiple-choice and open-ended questions the survey was constituted in three
28 sections. The first was about basic information related to age, gender, country of origin, years of
29 residency in Doha. The second concerned itself with urban life aspects such as mobility, housing,
30 and city services. This section was analysed into “*urban life perceptions*” by comparing the
31 responses of each cultural group. The third section aimed at exploring respondents’ experience of
32 key urban spaces in the city where questions were supported by photographs to establish an
33 understanding of “*urban space perceptions.*” Participants were given one month to fill in the
34 questionnaire and were offered the opportunity to contact the authors for clarifying the questions as
35 needed.
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42 The initial step of the analysis involved an identification of four main groups of migrants with a
43 comparable background: Middle Eastern, Western, Indian, and South-East Asian. Notably in this
44 step, the cultural background is defined only by the country of origin of the participants based on the
45 understanding that several sub-cultures may exist within a country. Therefore, the study assumes
46 that most of the participants from one world region share a certain set of experiences and values.
47 Overall, 280 survey forms were utilized for assessing and comparing results, with approximately 70
48 forms were selected to represent each group after the exclusion of incomplete questionnaires.
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54 **3.1 General profile and cultural background of the survey participants**

55 Despite the fact that all participants work in the advanced economic sector the salaries often differ
56 depending on education, experience and country of origin. In this context, a degree holder or an
57 experienced professional from a Western country usually demand and is offered a higher salary.
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Thus, it can be assumed that participants who originate from Europe, North America or Australia earn a higher average salary or have entitlement to certain allowances. While around 76% of all Western interviewees originate from Europe and mainly from the United Kingdom (49%), the remaining share is constituted by North Americans (20%) and Australians (4%). The high average age of 39 years in the case of the Western respondents can be interpreted as a further indication that they occupy senior positions in companies identified. The female share of the respondents with an Indian background is lower when compared with the other three groups. The average number of years of residence in Qatar the Middle Eastern group as a whole is the highest (Table 1).

Cultural Background	Gender		Average Age	Years in Doha	Car Ownership
	Male	Female			
Indian	81%	19%	35	8	73%
Middle-Eastern	61%	39%	31	12	84%
South-East Asian	44%	56%	35	4	46%
Western	59%	41%	39	3	81%

Table 1. Overview of the four main groups of survey participants.

The majority of the Middle Eastern survey respondents originate from the Levant including Lebanon (39%), Syria (13%) as well as Jordan (11%) and Palestine (11%). Egyptians constitute the remaining 26% of this cultural group. Their average age is the lowest of all the four groups although they have spent the longest time on average in Qatar. This is a clear indication that many Arab expatriates have decided to reside in Doha in parallel to or before the recent construction boom and that there is a general tendency of long-term commitment to the city. This can also be observed in the case of respondents from India, who have spent on average 8 years in Qatar. More than 94% of all Southeast Asian participants are from the Philippines, while only 6% are from Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition to their rather short average stay in Qatar the largest share of female respondents characterizes this group at 56%, with the lowest rate of car ownership at only 46% for the whole group.

3.1 Relocation motives and residential profile

All participants were asked to assess their main motives of why they have relocated to Doha (Figure 1). Key parallels can be detected between Western and South-East Asian respondents, whose main motives are the job opportunity itself, the professional experience and higher salaries than in their countries of origin. In both cases cultural factors play no role at all, while family life and safety are perceived as minor motives. This is in clear contrast to participants from the Middle East, in which case all motives seem to play an equal important role, which can be interpreted for a clear

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5 indication that many of them are prepared to stay in Qatar long term. In the case of Indian migrants
6 a large majority of respondents identifies safety as a major motive in addition to the high salary.
7 Moreover, family life seems to play an equally important role within their motives to move to Doha.
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10 Participants were requested to share their residence location as well as their residence type. More
11 than half of the respondents (54%) live in apartments in central urban areas followed by 38% who
12 live in villas or apartments in gated residential communities in the urban periphery (Figure 2). The
13 remaining share of 8% lives in exclusive residential towers along the Northern waterfront. Notably, a
14 majority from Western countries (56%) lives in the urban periphery, while only 26% live in central
15 districts. For other groups most respondents live in apartments in the rather densely populated
16 areas close by C-Ring Road, one of the major urban arteries in the city. Neither Indian nor South-
17 East Asian resides in waterfront developments. Approximately, about 20% of the respondents
18 within each group did not choose their own residence, which is provided by their employers.
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25 **4. Perceiving Urban Life**

26 The urban life component aims at understanding how different groups perceive key liveability
27 factors. Factors included traffic experience, residential quality, shopping experience, leisure, and
28 the overall attractiveness of the city.
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33 Participants were asked if they experience traffic in Doha as chaotic, moderate, or pleasant. A
34 majority of those from Western origin (73%) assesses the traffic conditions in Doha as chaotic.
35 While only a slight majority of Middle Eastern respondents share the opinion that traffic experience
36 is moderate (55%), a majority of 66% and 79% perceives it as moderate and even pleasant in the
37 case of Indian and South-East Asian respondents. Most respondents rely on their own cars, while
38 the remaining share uses taxi services and personal drivers. When participants were asked if they
39 would actually prefer public transportation instead of using a car or taxi due to climatic conditions
40 more than 70% prefer to drive a car instead of using a bus service. Only in the case of migrants of
41 Western origin a major share of 41% would rather use public transportation, which is likely based on
42 their perception of traffic conditions as rather chaotic and their past experiences regarding the
43 standards of public transportation in their home countries, especially Europeans. Public
44 transportation services are not yet provided to all inhabitants and limited to a few bus routes.
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53 Approximately 90% of all respondents are satisfied with their current residence, but in none of the
54 four groups a majority can be found who would perceive their present housing conditions in Doha
55 as an improvement to their former residence outside Qatar. In the case of respondents with a
56 Western or Middle Eastern background only 20% experience their new residence as an
57 improvement on their previous standard, while almost 40% of Indian and South-East Asian
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5 interviewees identify their housing conditions as a significant improvement. They were furthermore
6 asked to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the situation of commercial services
7 and leisure spaces in Doha. Shopping malls are currently the main centres for shopping as well as
8 for entertainment in Qatar. Most interviewees share the preference of shopping malls instead of
9 shopping streets in central areas due to weather temperatures and humidity as well as their
10 accessibility by car. It is observed that old downtown areas are to a large extent avoided by most
11 respondents. While around 50% of the South-East Asian and Middle Eastern survey participants
12 visit the old city centre every month, around 64% and 52% of Western and Indian respondents visit
13 it only a few times per year. While Middle Eastern and Western respondents mainly prefer to visit
14 central areas in order to go to certain quality restaurants, a majority of Indian and South-East Asian
15 participants visit downtown areas only to experience shopping. 50% of all interviewees within each
16 group are satisfied with the current supply of commercial services in Doha.
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24 Participants were asked how many hours per week they spend for leisure outside their residence.
25 While 40% with a Middle Eastern or Western background usually spend more than 10 hours per
26 week outside in shopping malls, hotels or public leisure spaces, less than 20% of the respondents
27 with an Indian or South-East Asian background spend a similar amount of time outside. The main
28 leisure spaces identified by the respondents are four major shopping malls, the old historic city core,
29 the waterfront promenades as well as hotels. In contrast to the other three groups, a high
30 percentage of Western participants prefer to spend their leisure time in hotels (78%). While in the
31 case of Middle Eastern survey participants a majority prefers to spend leisure time in restaurants in
32 the old city core, South-East Asians and Indians clearly prefer shopping malls and public spaces,
33 such as the Corniche/the waterfront or Aspire Park. In addition, Indian and South-East Asian
34 respondents perceive the distances to leisure spaces as too far from their residences, while only
35 around 25% of the survey participants share this perception in the case of the Middle Eastern and
36 the Western groups. In all four groups a slight majority of around 58% assesses the existing leisure
37 spaces as generally attractive.
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47 Asking about their general impressions regarding the attractiveness of Doha as their city of
48 residence a majority of respondents in all four groups can imagine residing in Doha long-term.
49 While almost 90% of Middle Eastern respondents would like to settle in Doha more permanently,
50 approximately 70% of all respondents in the other three groups would be interested to live in Qatar
51 beyond their initial contracts. In order to assess the general impression of the city participants were
52 asked how attractive they have perceived Doha on arrival and how they perceive it today. In the
53 case of Middle Eastern interviewees no major difference can be assessed and a majority of
54 approximately 70% shares the opinion that Doha is an attractive city. A significant shift between
55 initial perception and current assessment can be noticed in the case of the other three groups, in
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5 which cases the share of a positive perception of Doha has increased from around 55% to more
6 than 71%. In addition, a large majority of respondents share the opinion that Doha will continue to
7 become more and more attractive in future.
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10 **5. Perceiving Urban Spaces**

11 In attempting to understand inhabitants' perceptions about key urban spaces or nodes within the
12 city participants were asked to identify the most representative urban spaces in Doha. The most
13 frequently mentioned urban space was the high-rise agglomeration in the West Bay viewed from
14 the Corniche/waterfront. However, most respondents perceive the old historic market, known as
15 Souq Waqif (the standing market), as most representative urban space. The Souq was restored
16 between 2004 and 2007 and was shortlisted for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Other urban
17 spaces including the exclusive residential areas with public access such as the Pearl development,
18 and the Museum of Islamic Art were mentioned as important urban spaces representing
19 contemporary Doha. In order to get a closer insight of how urban spaces are perceived by the
20 participants, four urban spaces were identified to examine whether they would be perceived as
21 familiar or unfamiliar, attractive or unattractive as well as iconic or subtle.
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31 The first urban space was the Corniche/waterfront due to its dominance. The Corniche/waterfront
32 was designed by the British architect Llewlyn Davis and built during the 1970s on partially reclaimed
33 land. The 7 kilometre long promenade links the old port area close by the historic city core and the
34 new urban extension in the West Bay. Since the end of the 20th century West Bay became the
35 main centre for high-rise projects in Doha, which was ignited by the announced move of public and
36 semi-public institutions. In 2008 the Museum of Islamic Art, designed by the I.M. Pei, was
37 completed on the opposite side of West Bay forming an ensemble of postmodern and traditionally
38 inspired architectural landmarks (Salama and Wiedmann, 2013). Due to its size and position the
39 Corniche/waterfront is often perceived as the main centre of Doha in spite of its prime function as
40 transition zone. All four groups are very familiar with the Corniche/waterfront and in the case of
41 each group a majority perceives this key urban space as attractive and iconic. Only in the case of
42 the South-East Asian group a significant share of respondents of 33% would not identify the
43 Corniche/waterfront as iconic and around 20% do not perceive it as attractive (Figure 3). Reasons
44 could be the very limited availability of commercial services and the constrained accessibility for
45 pedestrians due to the insufficient traffic lights and crossing points. **Nonetheless, in spite of the fact**
46 **that the high-rise waterfront has only been constructed a few years past, it has become the main**
47 **landmark representing modern and globalized Doha in the view of all cultural groups.**
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58 The restored historic market area was the second urban space examined (Figure 4). In addition to
59 the Souq Waqif, the historic part of Doha is currently regenerated by a major development, known
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5 as Msheireb. Today the rebuilt traditional market is the only urban space where the historic
6 vernacular architecture can be experienced. Most respondents are familiar with the urban area due
7 to frequent visits. Southeast Asian respondents are however the least familiar with the urban area
8 at only 64%, while Middle Eastern respondents are the most familiar with it. Most Southeast Asians
9 furthermore identify the historic core as neither very attractive nor iconic, while all other groups
10 share the perception that it is very important for Doha as an attractive and iconic urban space
11 representing the heritage of the city. In particular, Europeans perceive the Souq Waqif as an iconic
12 landmark of Doha due to their general widespread idea of a historic core reflecting the main identity
13 of a city.
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20 The C-Ring Road along the Al Sadd district was selected as third key urban space (Figure 5). The
21 ring road encircles the old downtown area and in recent years it became the main centre for office
22 developments as well as apartment buildings. Due to the extending urban periphery the Al Sadd
23 district became one of the most accessible and increasingly important business districts. Today a
24 majority of companies are currently located in the area and its surroundings. Thus, most
25 respondents reside in apartments within or close by the Al Sadd district. Due to the previous
26 restrictions on low-rise residential developments along C-Ring Road, the recent transformation to a
27 high density and mixed-use urban area has led to a rather fragmented urban structure. Thus, only a
28 minority of respondents within each group would perceive this urban space as attractive or iconic.
29 Particularly, respondents with a Western background assess the space as unattractive and rather
30 unfamiliar due to its chaotic structure, while Middle Eastern and Indian survey participants are
31 highly familiar with the environment and are generally rather neutral when they assess its
32 attractiveness. Southeast Asian participants are less familiar with the spatial configuration but
33 similarly neutral.
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43 Participants assessed the particular urban landscape in the suburbs, which is defined by residential
44 areas mainly occupied by locals, compound developments and large-scale shopping malls. Today
45 more than 60% of the overall urban area is covered by these urban typologies. The most prominent
46 areas can be found in the North and West of the city. Similar to the case of Al Sadd urban space a
47 majority of participants is housed in compounds in these urban areas. Due to the high walls
48 protecting the privacy of Qatari families and compounds and due to a missing supply of proper
49 pedestrian walkways, public spaces or integrated services, the urban periphery of Doha is currently
50 perceived as rather unfamiliar and unattractive. Participants with a Western background are mostly
51 repelled by the current built environment in Doha's suburbs, while Middle Eastern interviewees
52 perceive the urban space of these areas as less conflicted and mainly neutral. A substantial
53 majority of Indian and Southeast Asian respondents are not familiar with this urban setting and
54 perceive it as rather unattractive (Figure 6). The negative perceptions are mainly based on the
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5 missing street life and the rather deserted public spaces in suburban areas as well as the general
6 impression of rejection and introverted privacy as well as the often missing pedestrian walkways.
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10 The comparison of the four urban spaces reveals the fragmented nature of City's peripheries that
11 are currently perceived as less attractive. While key landmark urban spaces, such as the
12 Corniche/waterfront, shape an impressive image of Doha as an emerging international and modern
13 metropolis, the actual everyday urban environment of most respondents in suburban and downtown
14 areas differs dramatically from this designed urban stage. The rapid urban growth coupled with
15 missing regulations led to fragmented and chaotic urban landscapes with hardly any distinct
16 characteristics. Despite fact that the dense built environment of central areas is in clear contrast to
17 the low-rise urban sprawl along Doha's periphery, both urban landscapes are an expression of
18 randomness and supply-driven mechanisms within local real-estate markets. Doha is therefore an
19 archetypal case of a late 20th century-born city in the Global South in which key spaces are
20 overemphasized in order to brand a city with a globalized image, while most urban areas are
21 replaceable, repetitive and repelling (Brenner and Roger, 2011).
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29 **6. Lessons and Challenges: Toward a Liveable Doha**

30 The inquiry into liveability and its underlying factors uncovers a number of concerns and alarming
31 figures. Traffic experience appears unsatisfactory, and low quality housing construction and
32 maintenance and insufficient parking spaces, school facilities, and shopping opportunities are major
33 sources of discontent for the majority of respondents. Today, the continuous exchange of migrants
34 hinders the demands of communities from having a more efficient impact on development patterns.
35 It should be noted nonetheless that life in Doha is often still perceived as attractive due to high
36 salaries, general safety and many professional opportunities in certain areas, such as construction,
37 research and education (Nagy, 2006).
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44 While this research involves investigations of liveability perceptions as they relate to middle and
45 upper middle class expatriates other segments of Doha's society including the labour class are not
46 included. In essence, this represents one of the limitations of this exploration. However, it generates
47 a discussion on social sustainability and the challenges involved in achieving the balance between
48 actual demands and current supply of urban environments. Doha's society is facing the
49 consequences of the large-scale inflow of an expatriate and migrant labour workforce over a short
50 period of time. This large population segment of expatriate workers is in addition to skilled or
51 professional med-income and high-income expatriate groups engaged in newly emerging economic
52 sectors. The various cultural differences, as well as the widely diverging income brackets, have led
53 to strong social segregation.
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5 Based on the fact that the local population is a small minority of approximately 13 per cent of the
6 total population, there is no coherent majority within Doha's society apart from the diverse groups of
7 expatriates. Segregation patterns between nationals and expatriates are zealously maintained;
8 furthermore, constraints to developing a less anonymous and more integrated society are also due
9 to the continuous labour movement patterns and exchange of a large percentage of the expatriate
10 workforce on a regular basis. In addition to social segregation by residential area, little effort,
11 coupled with a lack of desire, has been made by decision-makers to develop more integrated
12 environments and public realms to be used as platforms for an emerging society. Today, while
13 shopping malls are the most frequently used leisure and entertainment spaces for higher income
14 groups, low-income groups usually shop and stay close to their residences, a clear indication of
15 social and income demarcation which extends beyond residential patterns.
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23 While future development plans of the city may seem to address specific groups and cater to
24 specific age groups or cultural backgrounds, a more inclusive approach to the design of urban
25 spaces presents a challenge. Urban design as a discipline and a profession focuses on creating
26 environments that promote opportunities and experiences for all city inhabitants. Therefore, it is
27 crucial that most of the urban space actions and activities are made available to and enjoyed by the
28 majority of the city's population. In this respect, the lesson learned is that the urban development
29 process of the city necessitates a consideration of the development of spaces based on the
30 perception and understanding of different groups. This needs to be adopted as one of the key
31 factors in developing liveable urban spaces that involve a wide spectrum of urban and spatial
32 qualities relevant to the multicultural nature that characterizes such a globalizing context.
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40 **7. Conclusion**

41 Often oversimplified the perception of a majority of mid-income inhabitants regarding the city as
42 being a familiar and highly attractive place is an increasingly essential factor for the inner
43 consolidation and thus sustainability of a city in the age of rapid globalization. Only a society with a
44 shared level of identification to its environment can take responsibility for it. Today, the immense
45 social segregation between social groups in Doha is not experienced as a very grave potential
46 threat to stability. The images created in contemporary Doha are, however, fragile due to their
47 superficial nature. Thus, creating identity is not only the challenge of city-branding strategies.
48 Identity is to a large extent created when inhabitants can become active participants in the spatial
49 development process rather than excluded observers. This goes along contemporary literature on
50 urban identity (Lalli, 1992; Oktay, 2002; Sutton & Kemp, 2011) which asserts that urban identity is a
51 constituent of urban liveability and an integral component in the process of creating liveable
52 environments in changing contexts. Therefore, one of the major challenges is to integrate migrant
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5 communities in the development of future Doha while sustaining Qatar's distinct local cultural
6 identity despite the overall shrinking share of the native population.
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9 The continuous exchange and movement of a majority of a fairly transient population exacerbate
10 this situation of a conflicted identity. As such, Doha's contemporary society consists of several
11 parallel societies as well as fragmented and often-isolated social groups, leading to anonymity and
12 in some work situations, such as those of domestic helpers, isolation. Many Qataris feel threatened
13 by this constant influx of people who they often feel are invading and changing their local culture.
14 Thus, both future migration patterns and the willingness of the native population to adapt to the new
15 situation of continuous internationalisation will therefore play a key role in shaping Qatar's new
16 identity.
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19 This study therefore contributes to the international and regional research efforts to understand
20 urbanism in the Gulf region, as exemplified in Doha, and the potential impact of rapid and extensive
21 migration. The newly emerging Gulf cities have attracted a rather diverse mixture of cultural groups,
22 who share their one main common interest to earn higher salaries than in their home countries. This
23 effect of the globalization process has however led to replaceable urban landscapes
24 accommodating the urgent needs of consumption rather than integrating and reflecting cultural
25 diversity. Exploring the perceptions of migrant communities can become the basis of further in-
26 depth research regarding the various potentials of how new demand-driven mechanisms, e.g. within
27 housing markets, can diversify spatial developments in future. Thus, the outcomes of this study can
28 be regarded as a first attempt to point out the potential key role of the various migrant communities
29 in shaping a new urban identity in Qatar by investigating current perceptions of different cultural
30 groups.
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32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 **Acknowledgements**

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47

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Figure Captions:

- Figure 1. The main motives of the four groups to move and stay in Doha
- Figure 2. The three main locations of residences and the share of each group
- Figure 3. The waterfront promenade along the Corniche and the perceptions of the four groups
- Figure 4. The restored historic city core and the perceptions of the four groups
- Figure 5. The Al Sadd District along C-Ring Road and the perceptions of the four groups
- Figure 6. The suburban landscape in the North of Doha and the perceptions of the four groups

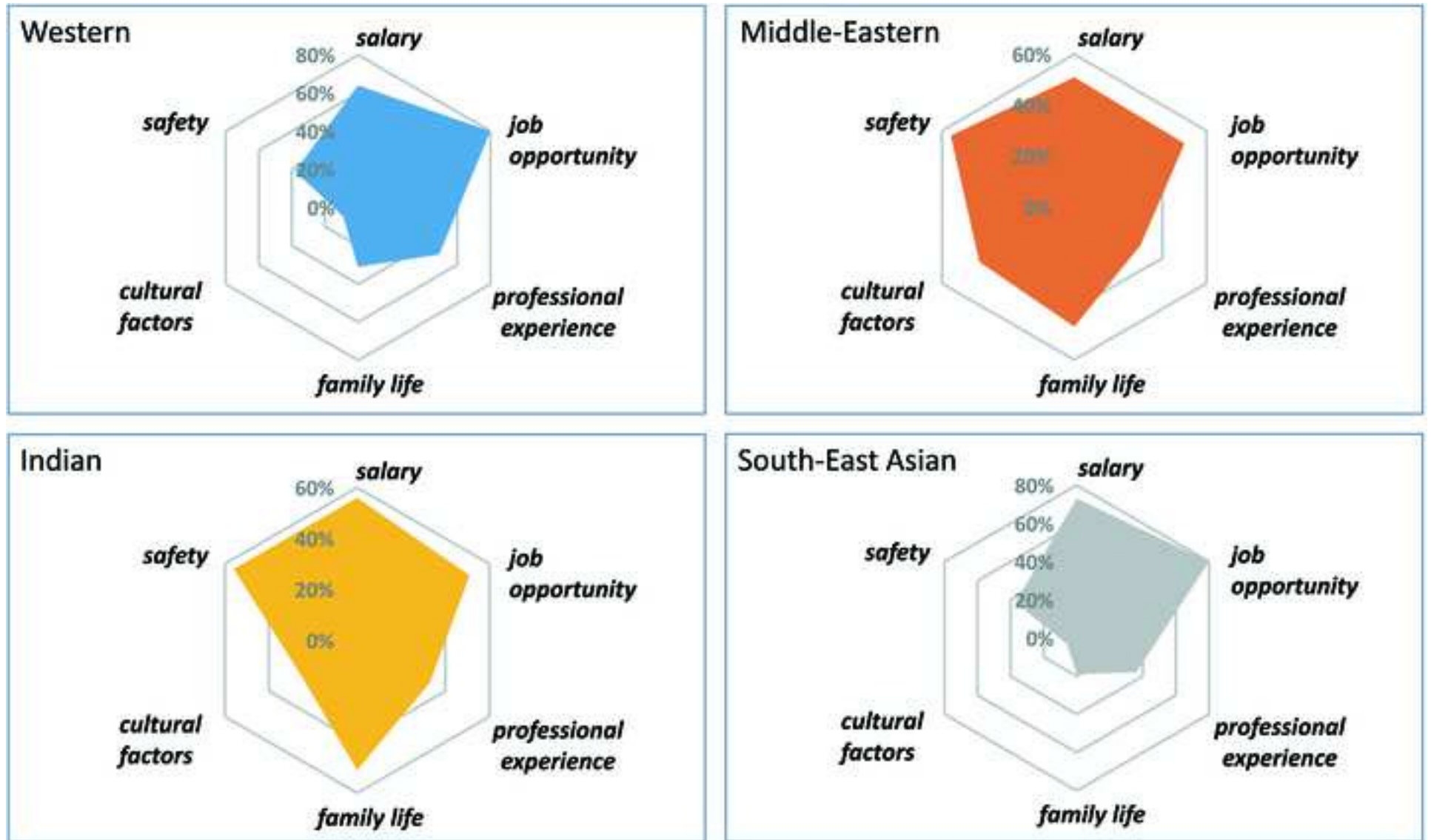
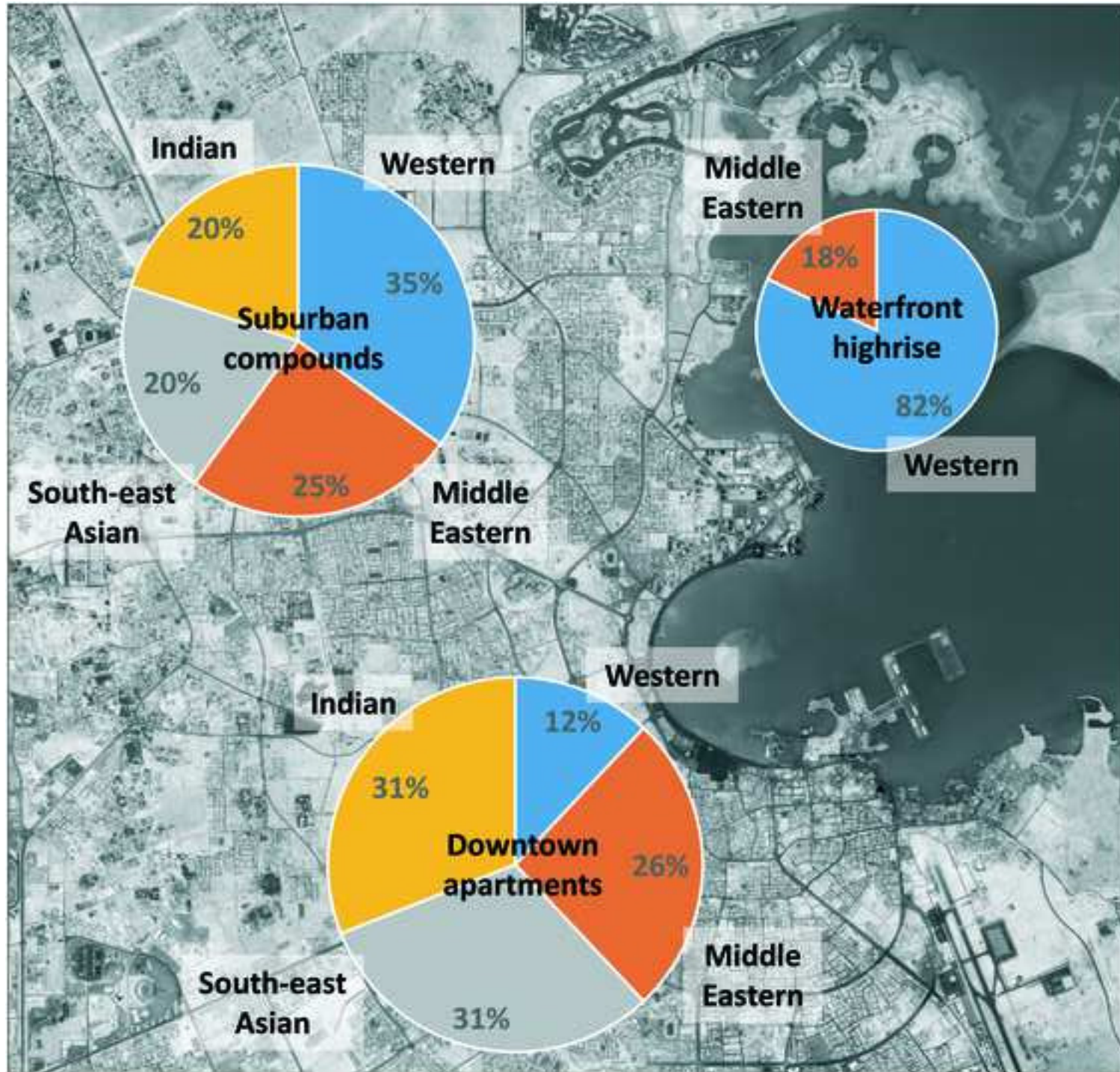
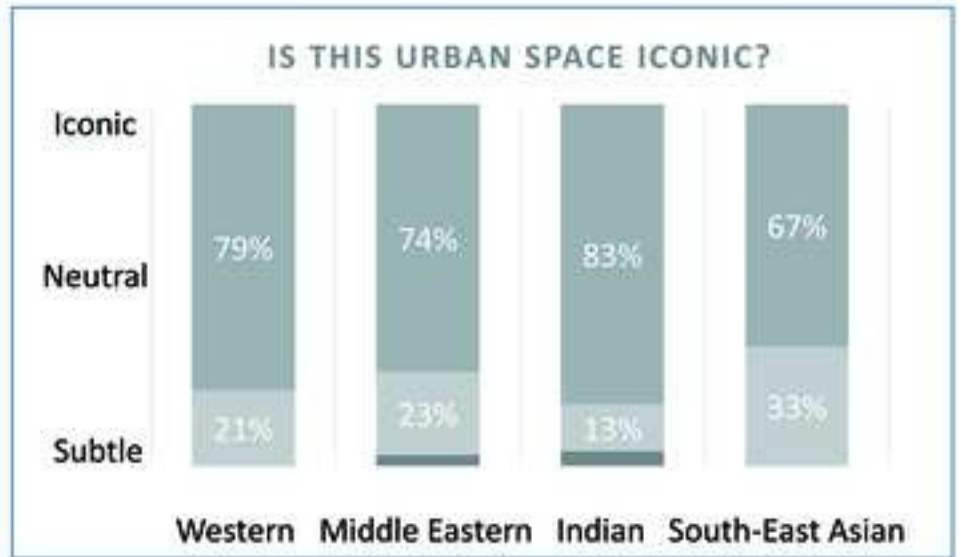
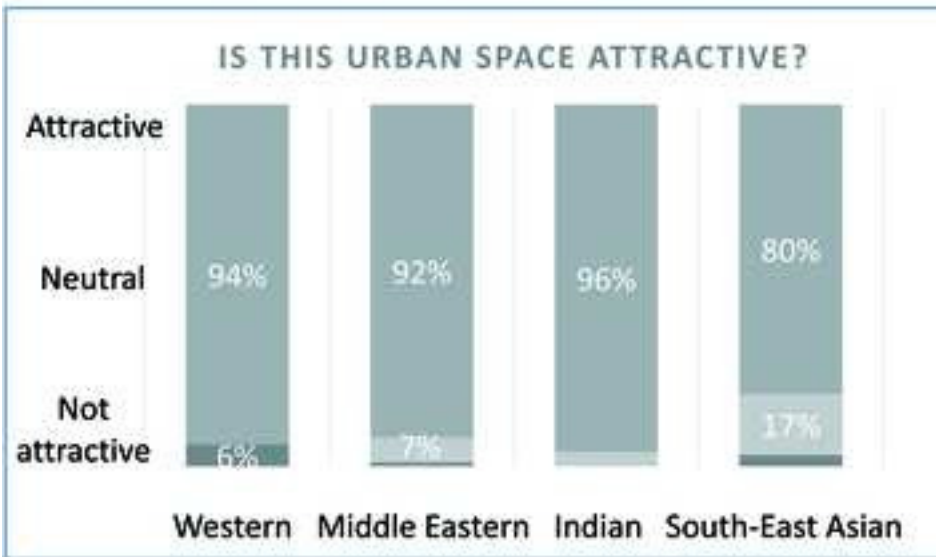
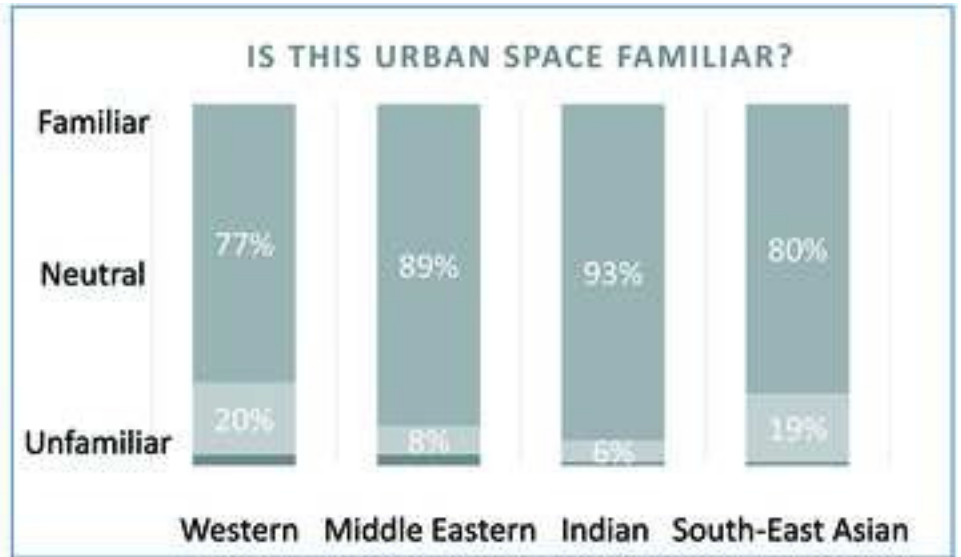


Figure 2

[Click here to download Figure_2_The three main locations of residences and the share of each group.tif](#)





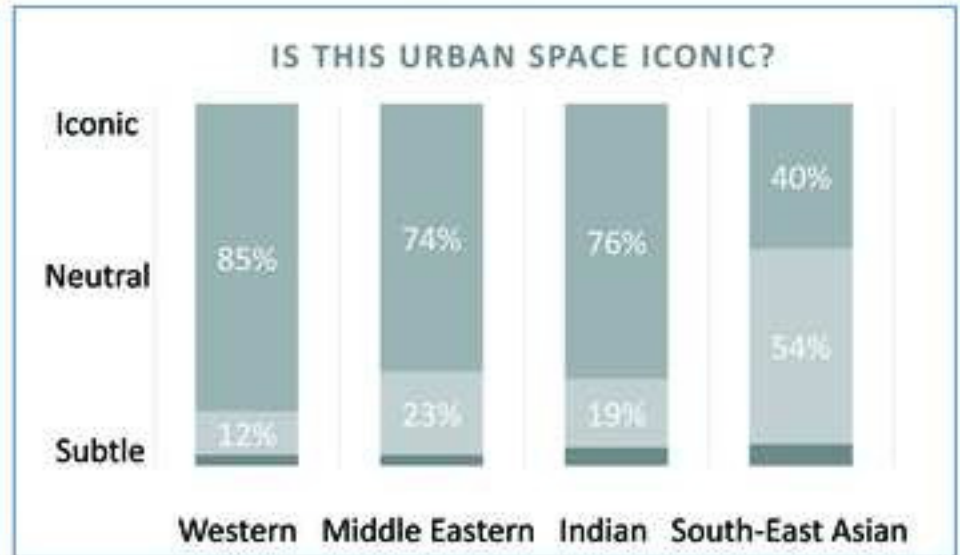
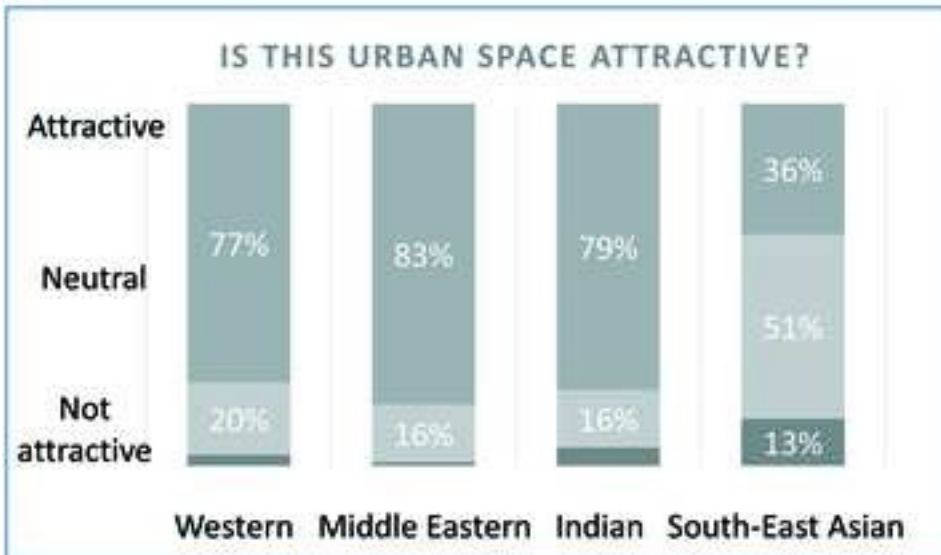
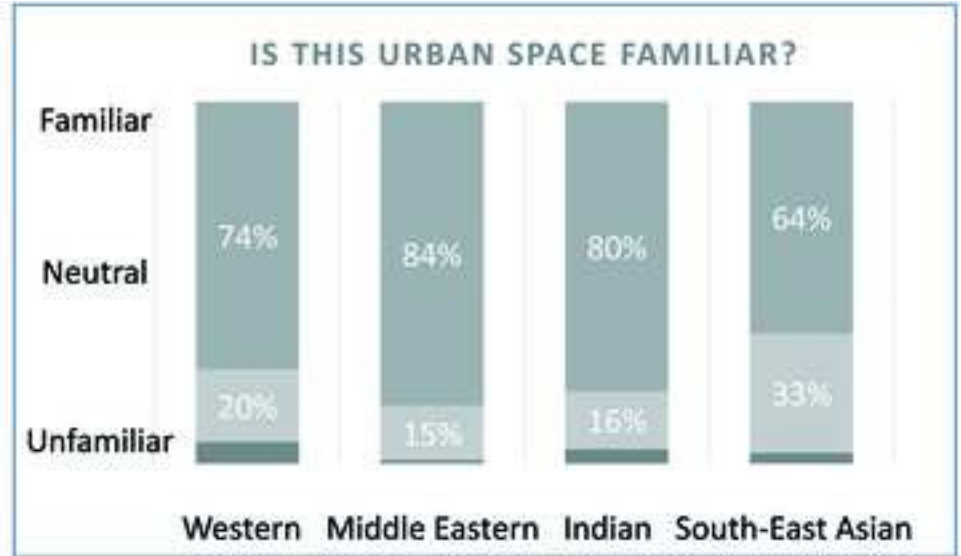
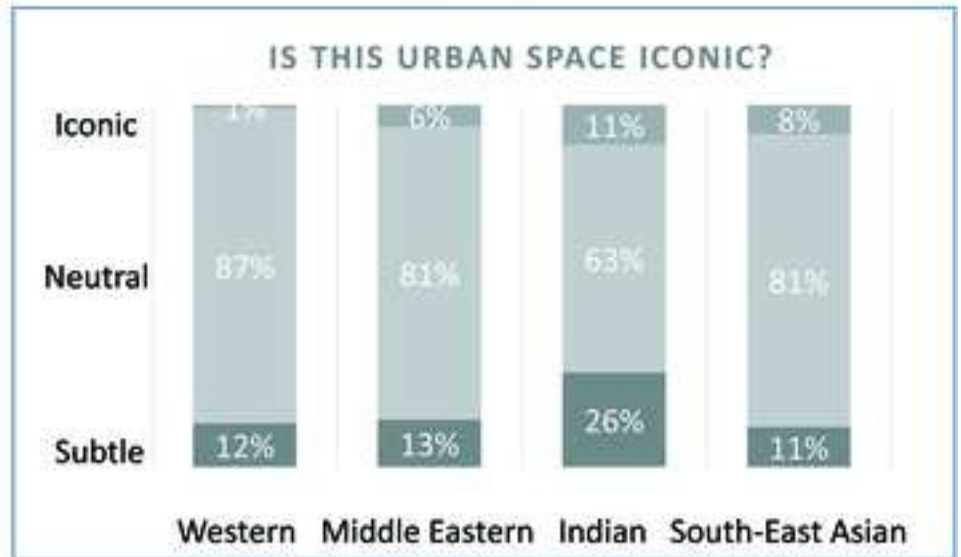
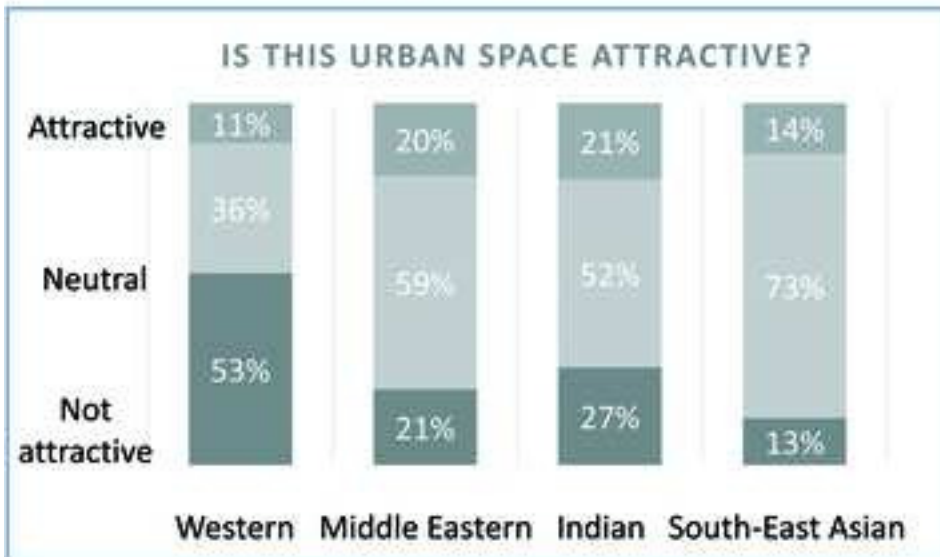
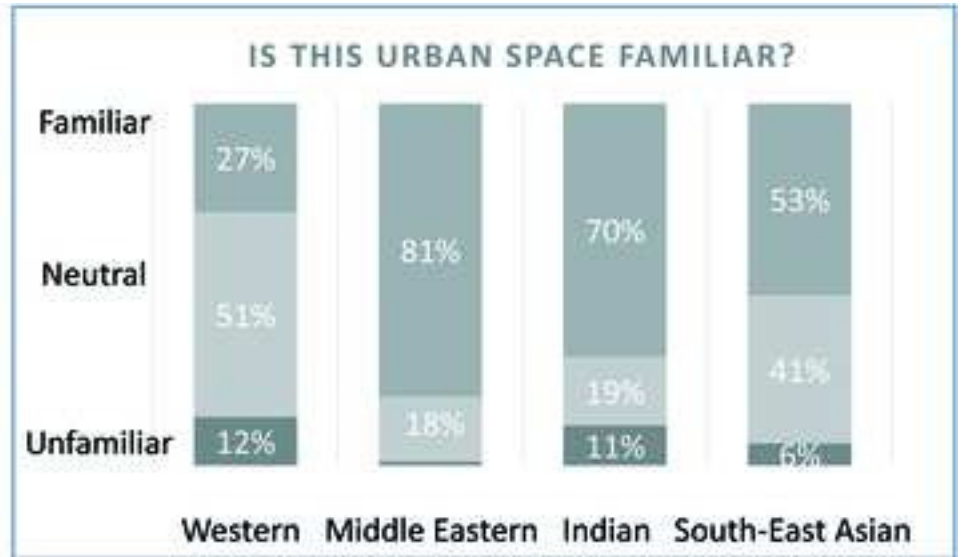
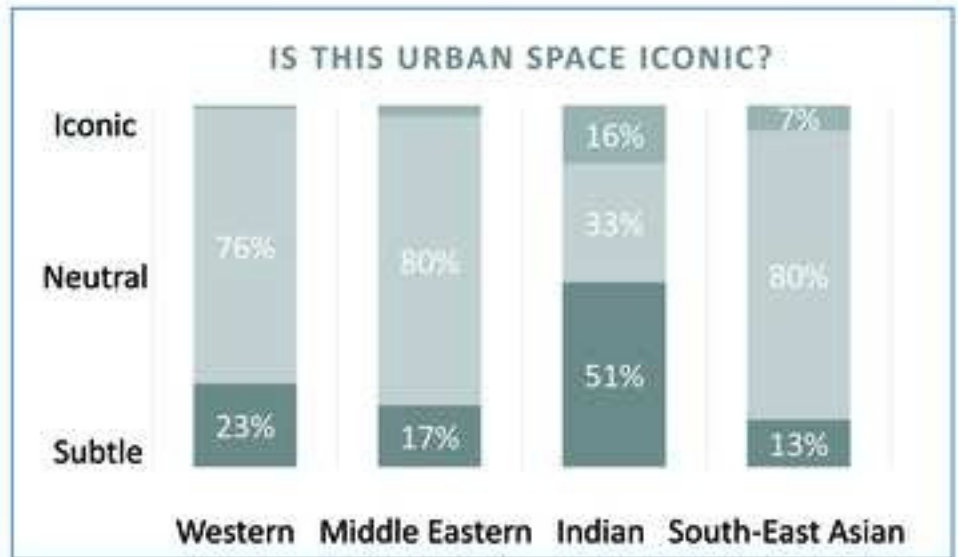
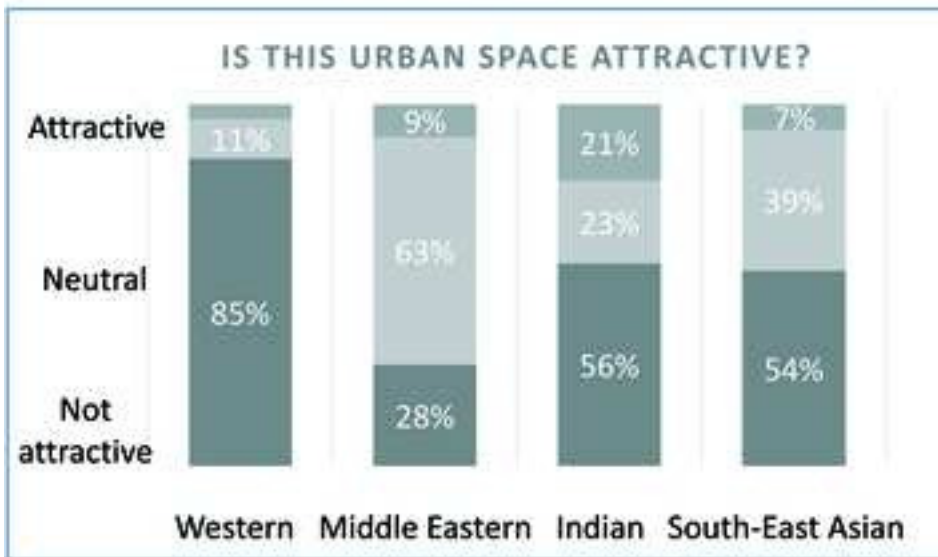
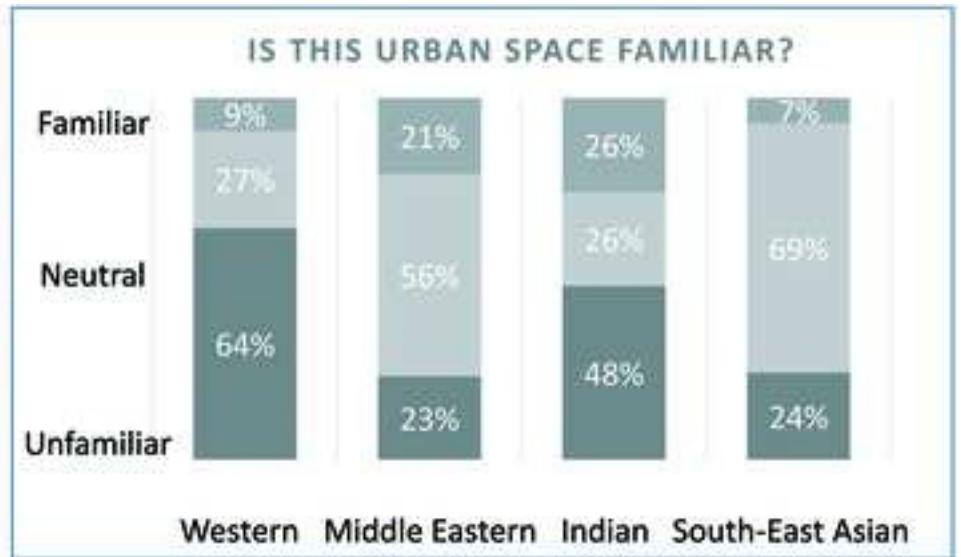
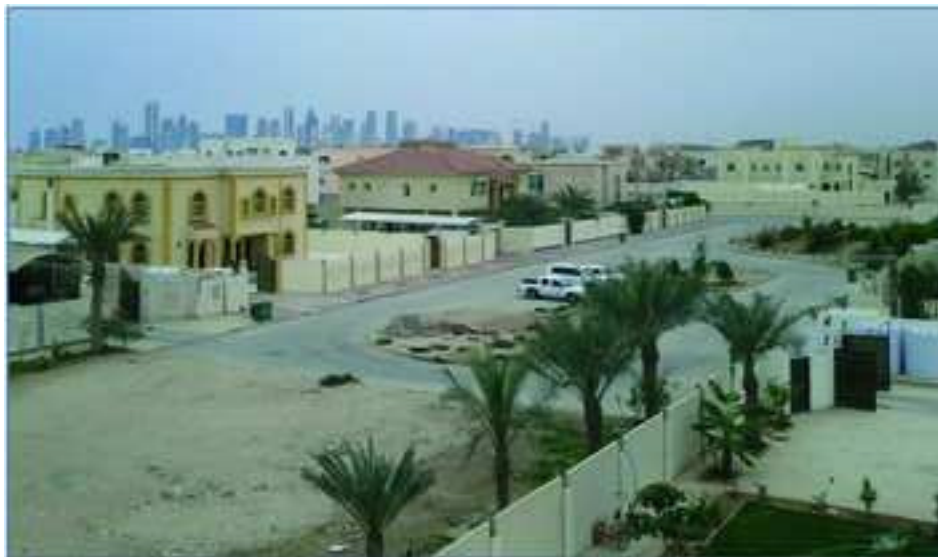
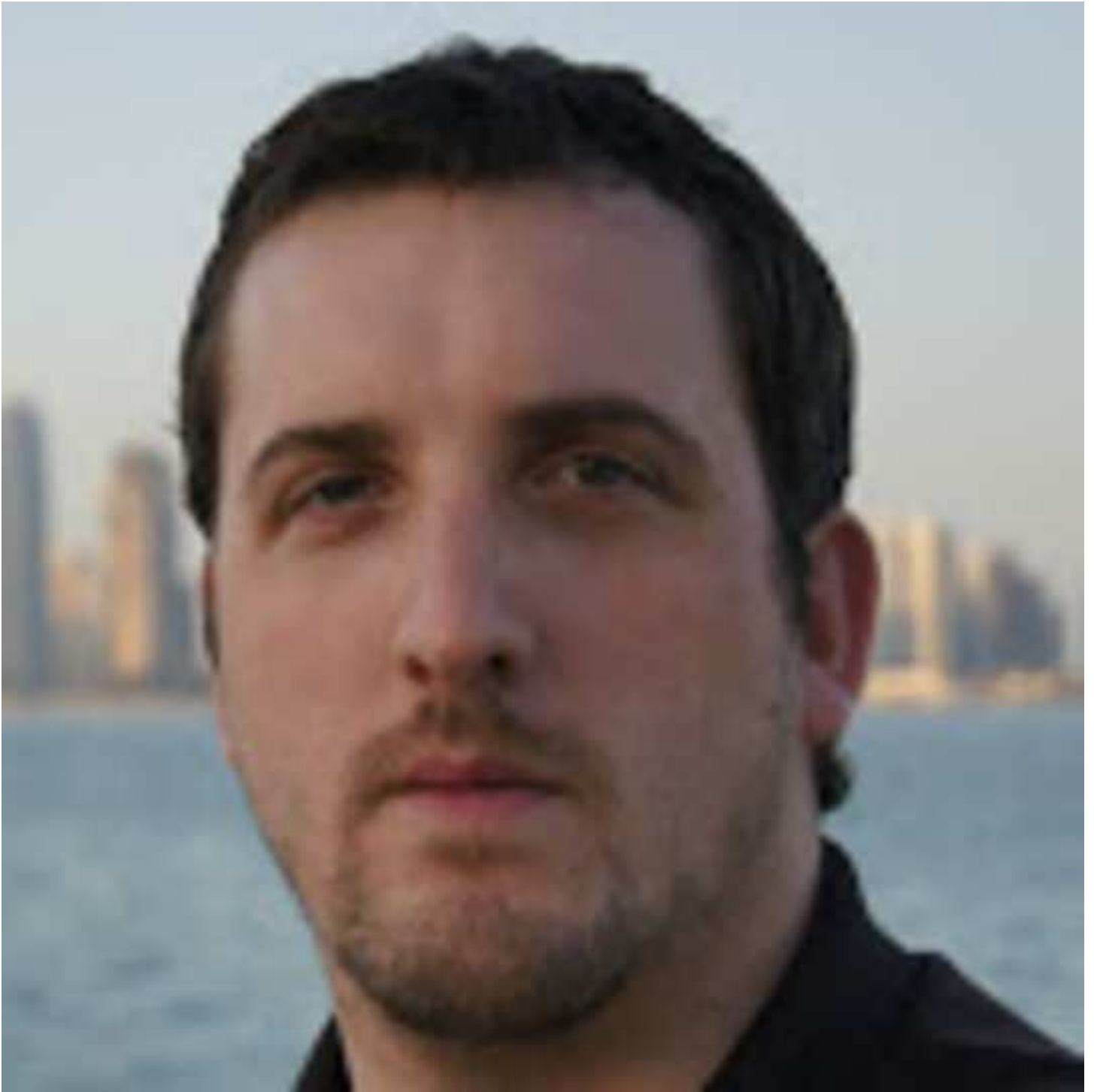


Figure 5









Please note that the reviewers' comments were in essence similar in terms of requesting a subdivision of the cultural groups. The authors have done their best to address this comment.

As well, one of the reviewers below indicated that enough text should associate the figures – The authors have addressed this comment thoroughly to offer more clarifications.

One reviewer together with UDP assessor requested the addition of a conclusion/conclusive statement and relate to the theme of this special issue. The authors have addressed this comment by adding a conclusion that reflects on material presented in the body of the paper while relating this to the notion of globalization and identity (from the perspective of livability and the presence of multi-cultural groups).

Please note that all added text has been highlighted in the new version of the paper.

We thank the editor for an excellent review process and hope this final version of the paper rises to the expectation.

Regards,
Ashraf Salama (First Author).

Reviewer #1: As many Middle-Eastern cities are developing in a highly competitive and fast manner, this paper offers a very timely insight into the importance of user experiences. It is such experiences that will determine the ultimate success of such urban developments. The paper is very well-written with a lucid focus. The range of multicultural groups surveyed is vital as well as critical. The theoretical approach, methodology, and analysis of the results are clearly presented. The paper addresses a key issue and will no doubt receive a wide readership.

The only minor suggestion would be to expand on, if possible, on the internal variability of each cultural group. There is indeed a mention of it in the paper, but it would strengthen the paper if elaborated a bit more. For example, does someone prefer/regard as neutral the 'urban chaos', not because of their cultural background but because they come from an urban neighborhood in their home country, hence the 'chaos' may be a fond or nostalgic recall (similar to place attachment) of their hometown. This could pan across the four cultural groups surveyed. For example, someone from New York and another from Mumbai may have such positive attractions to high traffic (vs. relatively emptier roads), because high traffic may remind them of a familiar image of home. In this regard, the concept of 'familiarity' can be elaborated more.

I highly recommend the publication of this paper!

Reviewer #2: The paper is very well structured and the argument made by the author is very interesting. It is supported by a rich theoretical background that explicates a better understanding of the term "livability." The paper recognizes the diverse social structure of Doha. It highlights the

importance of urban quality and livability in making a global city like Doha capable to compete in the new world order.

My only concern is the scale of the survey and the categories used to sort the results. For example, the "Middle East" category covers very diverse group of people with different backgrounds and motives of coming to Doha. Same applies on the category titled "Westerns." I suggest a brief comparison between more specific groups that represent major migrant communities in the city such as Egyptians verses Filipinos.

Reviewer #3: This is a very valuable paper seeking the impacts of new rapid developments of Qatar and its socio-cultural effects on the previously intact society. The theoretical foundations of the paper are well underpinned by the seminal literature of liveable cities and the methodological approach, in terms of structure of the survey (which builds upon well recognised factors and variables of liveable cities), sampling strategies, approach to analysis etc., is robust and defensible. The presentation and the quality of English language is also outstanding. All these make this paper valuable and potentially suitable for publication in UDP.

Despite all merits mentioned above, this reviewer believes that the paper needs some minor revisions in order to make it clearer for the readers. One main issue is that, the results could be explained with more detail. Figures 1-6 contain invaluable facts, but these are not presented with enough details in the text. In other words, there is too much reliance on the graphical representation of the figures. I believe that each figure needs additional few sentences in order to represent the thoughts of the author(s) more clearly. This can mainly be done with emphasis on the interpretation of author(s) from the statistical facts, or where appropriate linking these to the seminal literature.

I also believe that a formal conclusion section is missing in this article. Although the author(s) have discussed the implications of the results in each respective section in a very scholarly way, a conclusion section could really help to showcase the author(s) more high-level thoughts about the findings, impacts, benefits and contributions of the study, and need for future research.

Assessor: This is a very valuable paper seeking the impacts of new rapid developments of Qatar and its socio-cultural effects on the previously intact society. The paper is very well written, clearly structured, and has a strong theoretical foundation. All these make this paper suitable for publication in UDP in general. However, it is believed that the quality of the paper will be higher if the comments by the referees are taken into consideration. In addition, in order to better match with the theme of the special issue ("Urban Identity in the Era of Globalisation"), creating links with the theme urban identity (at least in the conclusion section) is highly recommended.