



Balancing Globalization and Heritage Conservation in Gulf Cities: Case Studies from Doha and Jeddah

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ABSTRACT

Western influences have had a significant impact on Gulf cities in the early periods. With rapid modernization, cultures have been affected and planning ideologies have expanded to a global scale. As a result, it has affected the development in the global cities, the significant historic locations and the aspects of city identity. This paper analyzes the impact of globalization on historic cities in the Gulf. This is approached by exploring a number of case studies in the Gulf. The research implies the need for a thorough investigative method to these conflictual circumstances and that their misleading antinomy is still ambiguous than the literature proposes. More than the result of two opposite or even contradictory patterns, conservation of the historic cities and modern development is, in fact, the illustration of the call for similar “global urban product. Both approaches focus on generating an attractive image that lures the transnational elites and encourages the investment for better outcomes. It also states that the development and expansion of global interdependence, coupled with the right policies, management approaches and actions, affect the macro- and micro-urban changes by effecting essential components that ensure the continuity of historic sites while not stifling their urban growth.

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INTRODUCTION

Our times are marked by rapid change, primarily driven by globalization over the past few decades, with significant administrative and social implications. This convergence of forces, echoing government strategies, primarily stems from technical evolution, particularly in transportation and communications (Bang & Markeset, 2011; Bauernfeind, 2006; Garrett, 2000; Harris, 1993). Although globalization has increased living standards in various nations, its benefits are not yet universally enjoyed. While global economic integration has enhanced the success and wealth of many modern cities, it has negatively influenced historic locations, which are key features representing the soul and identity of a city (Haggag, 2004; Kara, 2019; Vilkelė & Ramanauskas, 2013).

Cities, as integral parts of broader societies, reflect the economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental structures of their regions (Abu-Lughod, 1989). Urban areas have historically served as centers for organizing production, trade, and broader cultural societies. Moreover, they are essential for protecting human wellness, fostering social creativity, and enhancing cultural diversity. Cities also function as hubs of cultural heterogeneity, knowledge, investment, and industry, driving societal transformation and innovation. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize cities as vital sources for future advancements (Acemoglu, 2001; Arrighi, 1994; Braudel, 1986; Curtin & Curtin, 1984).

Cities are dynamic, with social structures and needs constantly evolving and physical contexts adapting accordingly. Factors such as rapid urbanization, globalization, and modernization demands have threatened many urban characteristics and identities (Verdini et al., 2016). The need to conserve historic sites versus the drive to develop modern cities has resulted in two conflicting trends. One trend views historic sites as transcending geographical boundaries and essential to modern cities, despite threats of annihilation. The other trend focuses on modern approaches, using iconic buildings and forms concentrated at city centers or historic areas, creating tensions and slowing planning, management, and implementation processes (Gravari-Barbas, 2016; Sklair & Gherardi, 2012).

In the Arabian Gulf, the discovery and exportation of oil in the 1950s and 60s led to revenues that encouraged modern tools, attracting global interest and achieving international competitiveness. Consequently, globalization's impacts are evident in the development of picturesque urban waterfronts and global business districts in cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, and Doha. The conservation versus globalization dilemma necessitates further scholarly investigation to critically analyze this conflict (Sklair & Gherardi, 2012).

This research examines the implications of globalization on historic cities, analyzing their advan-

tages, disadvantages, and problems in changing urban environments. It investigates the contradictory dynamics in Gulf cities, which have been subject to interventionist policies and exposed to diverse ideologies, technologies, and objectives. Using case studies from Doha and Jeddah, the research employs qualitative methods, including archival research, field observations, and interviews with key players in urban planning and heritage conservation.

Focusing on Doha and Jeddah, the case studies emphasize their historical significance, the influence of globalization on their urban environments, and methods for reconciling modernization with cultural heritage conservation. The research compares and contrasts measures used in both cities to assess the efficiency of various solutions for resolving conflicts between globalization and conservation. It explores challenges and successes in each scenario, highlighting broader implications for Gulf urban growth.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how globalization affects historic Gulf cities, offering a comparative analysis of both successful and problematic approaches. The findings aim to assist legislators, urban planners, and heritage conservationists in comprehending the complex linkages between globalization and urban community. Additionally, the study proposes new frameworks and tools for monitoring and controlling changes in urban development, ensuring that historic cities maintain their integrity and distinctiveness amidst global pressures.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative method to examine the impact of globalization on traditional Gulf cities, with an emphasis on Doha and Jeddah. This method seeks to give a thorough knowledge of the complex relationships between globalization, modernization, and cultural heritage conservation in urban settings. The case study technique was chosen for its capacity to provide a thorough examination of each city's distinct experiences and reactions to globalization (Yin, 2018). Doha and Jeddah were selected as case studies owing to their historical and cultural significance, as well as the substantial urban changes brought about by globalization. These cities represent the larger trends and issues encountered by traditional Gulf settlements (Boussaa, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Indraganti & Boussaa, 2018; Stake, 1995).

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. Archival Research: The researchers analyzed historical materials, municipal planning records, and policy papers pertaining to urban development and

heritage conservation in order to gain insight into the historical background and progression of urban policies in Doha and Jeddah.

2. **Field Observations:** Field surveys were carried out in significant historical and modern urban areas of both cities. The observations were mostly centered on the physical state of cultural assets, current development initiatives, and the interplay between contemporary and historical urban components.
3. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were held involving key people concerned in urban planning, historical conservation, and development initiatives, such as government officials, urban planners, architects, historians, and representatives from heritage groups. These interviews provide valuable perspectives on the tangible difficulties and tactics used in effectively handling the consequences of globalization on ancient cities.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data underwent thematic analysis to discover prominent patterns and topics pertaining to the impact of globalization on historical cities. The research analyzed many essential characteristics:

- Evaluating the efficacy of policies designed to safeguard cultural heritage in the face of rising urbanization and globalization challenges.
- Integration of Contemporary Infrastructure: Examining the integration of new infrastructure projects into the existing historic urban environment and assessing their influence on the overall urban scenery.
- Assessing the socioeconomic consequences of urban expansion generated by globalization on local communities, including examining topics such as displacement, gentrification, and alterations in social dynamics.
- Examining the concepts of preserving architectural integrity and repurposing old structures in the context of contemporary projects.
- Environmental Sustainability: Examining the integration of sustainable methods in urban development projects and their compatibility with cultural and historical conservation objectives.
- Community Engagement and Participation: Assessing the degree and efficacy of community engagement in planning and development procedures, guaranteeing that local perspectives and cultural principles are acknowledged and included.
- Policy Frameworks and Governance: Evaluating the policies and governance systems that either facilitate or impede the equilibrium between modernity and heritage conservation.

A comparative analysis was undertaken to investigate the differences and similarities in the approaches of Doha and Jeddah, particularly focusing on the strategies used to reconcile globalization and conservation efforts.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study gained ethical clearance from the relevant institutions and organizations concerned. Prior to the interviews, each participant received information on the paper aims and gave their affirmative agreement. The research ensured the conservation of participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study enhances the current body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of the influence of globalization on historical cities in the Gulf region. This study offers a comprehensive examination of effective and ineffective approaches to manage the balance between modernity and heritage conservation. The purpose of the studies is to provide policymakers, urban planners, and heritage conservationists with information on successful strategies and instruments for achieving a balance between development and the conservation of cultural identity in a globalized context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MODERN CITIES AND GLOBALIZATION

Economic rivalry among cities encourages them to seek financial assistance and investments, which influences their development activities and innovative tactics for success and recognition. This economic competition drives cities to use creativity as a strategy for distinctiveness and competitiveness (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007). The impact of global forces is seen in metropolitan regions, where real estate expansions convert cities into gorgeous, attractive, and enticing capital investment locations. This change often entails the transfer of resources from advanced, mature cities to emerging urban regions with limited resources (Ritzer & Ryan, 2002). Moreover, the pursuit of global competitiveness has led cities to establish new regulations supporting neoliberal and entrepreneurial market regimes. These policies are designed to attract foreign investments and enhance economic growth, but they also reshape the urban landscape and socioeconomic dynamics (Taşan-Kok & Van Weese, 2007).

Globalization, as a result, became the recurring topics worldwide, encompassing many aspects of modern development due to its influence on economic and social considerations. Prominent scholars such as Healey et al. conceive it as a global phenomenon, subject to varying

opinions and perceptions depending on the practiced domain and backgrounds (Brenner, 1999; Healey, 2006). Globalization is defined as the evolutionary solution to the paradox between capital growth and its national political and social structures. It is characterized by increasing interactions in international trade, domestic and foreign investment, capital markets, and the evolving roles of governments in economies (Henry & Springborg, 2010; Marcuse & Van Kempen, 2011). Consequently, globalization has influenced cities in both tangible and intangible aspects of life, such as social lifestyles, culture, images, ideologies, and beliefs (Amin & Thrift, 1995; Jessop, 1998; Mascareño & Sassen, 2001).

As cities around the world navigate the forces of globalization, it is essential to differentiate between related concepts such as globalization, modernization, and westernization. Globalization refers to the process by which businesses, technologies, and cultures develop international influence or operate on an international scale. This involves the integration of economies, societies, and cultures through a global network of trade, communication, and transportation economies (Henry & Springborg, 2010; Marcuse & Van Kempen, 2011). Modernization, in contrast, is the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society, encompassing economic growth, technological advancement, and changes in social structures and values (Amin & Thrift, 1995; Jessop, 1998). Westernization involves the adoption of Western culture, values, and lifestyle by non-Western countries, often including the emulation of Western political systems, economic practices, and cultural norms (Brenner, 1999; Healey, 2006).

SYMBOLIC TOOLS OF GLOBALIZATION: “STARCHITECTURE”

The interplay of these concepts is evident in the symbolic tools associated with globalization, modernization and westernization, particularly the use of architecture and urban design. In architecture, they are commonly defined as “Starchitecture.” Scholars have shown that cities aspiring to join the ranks of “world cities” often construct universally recognized buildings that serve as globally iconic architectural landmarks (Amin, 2002; Jencks, 2006; Mascareño & Sassen, 2001; Rennie-Short, 2013). These iconic buildings, acting as territorialized symbols, have become crucial targets in the global market. However, this trend often erodes local cultural identities, as cities seek to distinguish themselves in global competition. The focus shifts towards the impact of the buildings rather than their function or purpose, leading to a unique yet sometimes homogenized urban landscapes (Ponzini, 2013).

Klingmann highlights the relationship between ‘globalizing’ trends observable nearly the end of the 20th and early 21st era and the contemporary architectural

production (Klingmann, 2007). In addition to economy that characterizes contemporary societies, where the proposed product is the experience itself, the third world is moving towards consumption no longer of items but of lifestyles and sensations as well (Klingmann, 2007). The project of a city setting as a landscape (skyline) provides a mode to the design of ‘signed’, ‘branded’ surroundings of (brands capes) provided by famous architects and urban planners.

Globalization utilizes “architecture” as a strategic instrument to express economic and cultural transformations. In architecture, branding displays an identity, either for the business or for the city where it is developed. For instance, cities like, New York, Bilbao or Shanghai have adopted iconic buildings to enhance their image, from economic growth, counter the global economy’s demands to develop tourism and showcase themselves among the international tourist destinations. Therefore, iconic architecture can be identified in the context of the “experience economy”, in a period defined by the mix of design and urban marketing. Iconic architecture is used to reflect, a self-fulfilling prophecy, the prosperity of the areas in which it takes place; “iconic projects provide tangible evidence of the quality of place they are, in effect, symbols of a place where creative people can feel they will belong” (Miles & Paddison, 2005).

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INTERACTION

Local and international interactions have converted cities into global arenas and channels for the convergence, integration, and development of new frameworks of place-making under globalizing conditions (Geniş, 2007).

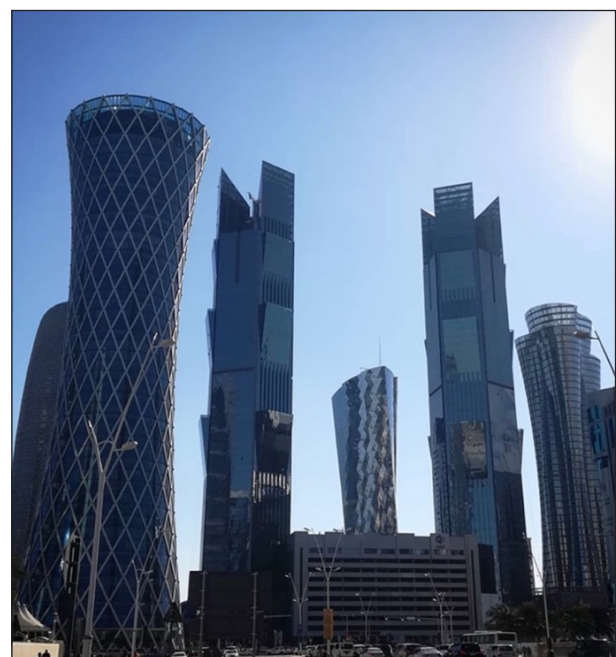


Figure 1 Impact of Globalization on the West Bay, with its high-rise towers with international designs and styles (Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2024).

These connections have far-reaching consequences for cities' social, economic, and physical environments. Brenner and Sassen demonstrate how global economic flows and transnational networks affect urban policies, governance structures, and spatial configurations. (Brenner, 1997a, 1997b; Sassen, 1991). The rapid and frequently dramatic changes brought about by globalization pose considerable obstacles to sustaining a cohesive and coordinated urban development process.

The globalization of urban areas entails a complex interaction of global influences and local conditions, resulting in distinct hybrid types of urbanization (Figure 1). These shifts often include the adoption of global architectural designs, economic practices, and social standards, which may sometimes overwhelm local traditions and identities. The incorporation of foreign economic and cultural influences into local urban fabrics has resulted in the creation of new urban landscapes that represent both global connectedness and local individuality (Geniş, 2007).

As cities negotiate globalization, they must strike a balance between contemporary growth and the conservation of their historical and cultural identity. This balance is critical for ensuring that cities retain their own identity despite the push for modernization and global competition. The problem is to integrate new infrastructure and development projects into existing historical urban landscapes while maintaining their integrity and individuality.

THE IMPACT AND BENEFITS OF HISTORIC SITES

Although meeting socioeconomic needs is critical to ensuring sustainability, unrestrained urban planning often undermines a city's character by ignoring its historical context. Historic sites, which should be protected as cultural and architectural assets, are often copied or combined with new cultural influences, resulting in their replacement with updated characteristics. As a result, at the end of the 2000s, the involvement of decision-making concerning the future of cities was called upon, putting an end to many upcoming projects of urban development for which mounting criticism produces a flagship (Amin & Thrift, 1995; Clammer, 2003; Crawford, 2007; Kreimer, Eriksson, Muscat, Arnold, & Scott, 1998).

The decay of historic sites appears to have accompanied conflicts throughout history, including those occurring within legal frameworks for urban planning processes yet involving contention between actors. Several factors can drive such actions, including attempt work or the consequence of conflict turns of war, in which removal of the historical evidence of another civilization is caused by conflict and the desire to maintain or regain identity and rights. Another motivation is to avoid replicating earlier failures, including of ethics and regional conflicts, such as injustice state of social/self-willpower, connected to the

desire to exclude and replace old paradigms with new and better systems. The motivation for these actions is systematically linked and is not black and white or straightforward, so that one-dimensional efforts to prevent damage cannot be sufficient or sustainable over the long term (Crawford, 2007).

Properly protected historic surroundings bring several advantages to a city's social, economic, and environmental elements. For instance, the Tower Bridge in London demonstrates how adaptive reuse of all ancient building may considerably contribute to a city's current economic activities (Ertan & Egercioğlu, 2016; Gravari-Barbas, 2016). Historic cities can restore certainty, improve the outlook, attract investment through current facilities for social enterprises, catalyze and reverse economic decline. In tourism, attracting domestic and foreign tourists can lead to a significant urban regeneration of historic cities (Oktay & Bala, 2015).

Historic areas and buildings can host social and community facilities accessible for business space and affordable housing, forming the alteration of failing areas while creating new opportunities (Oktay & Bala, 2015). They promote the adaption of new uses in order to generate variety by promoting new and small sectors such as tourism. Conservation is a sustainable kind of development that avoids the waste of limited resources caused by destruction and reconstruction. Historic locations help to sustain local values and beliefs while also providing aesthetic value as human accomplishments in art, design, and architecture. These constructions contribute to a city's spiritual and cultural development (Hull IV, Lam, and Vigo, 1994). These benefits are seen in several successful historic city initiatives that have enhanced the quality of life in struggling cities and communities (Hull IV, Lam, & Vigo, 1994).

This understanding of the impact and benefits of historic sites sets the stage for further exploration of how globalization influences historic cities and how they can harness their heritage to foster sustainable and inclusive urban development.

CULTURAL RESILIENCE AND SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

Historic places and buildings are also enterprises for innovation; they offer diversity and support innovations, creative industries, newly formed small businesses and knowledge-based employment (Ertan & Egercioğlu, 2016; Gravari-Barbas, 2016). They also encourage the adaptation of new uses to create diversity by developing new and small industries such as tourism. Conservation is one sustainable form of development; for as this avoids the wastage of limited resources when it comes to demolition and redevelopment. Historic areas contribute to supporting local values and beliefs, in which it bears the aesthetic value as human achievement in art, design and construction. These structures are further used for

the spiritual and cultural growth of a city (Hull IV et al., 1994). These advantages are viewed in many historic cities as successful projects led to improve quality of life in declining cities and areas.

Cultural resilience must be included into urban design in order for historic cities to retain their distinct identities in the face of globalization. Cultural resilience refers to a community's capacity to maintain its cultural identity and history while responding to external challenges and changes. This resilience is essential for instilling a feeling of continuity and belonging in inhabitants, which promotes social cohesion and communal well-being. In numerous historical cities, effective initiatives have shown that maintaining cultural assets may enhance quality of life. For example, adaptive reuse of historic buildings may result in thriving cultural centers that attract tourists, stimulate economic activity, and give opportunities for community participation. These examples demonstrate how historic locations may act as drivers for urban development, mixing the old and modern in ways that honor and embrace regional customs.

Furthermore, historic conservation helps to ensure the environmental sustainability of cities. The latter may lessen their environmental impact and preserve resources by reusing old buildings instead of dismantling them. This strategy is consistent with wider sustainability aims, supporting environmentally responsible growth in cities that respect both cultural and natural heritage. Cultural resilience also promotes diversity by developing inclusive places that reflect a city's rich history and

character. Historic places may accommodate a variety of cultural and community events, generating a feeling of place and belonging among various communities. These venues have the potential to serve as platforms for cultural exchange and conversation, improving the city's social fabric and encouraging mutual understanding among diverse groups.

Historic sites' role in promoting innovation, sustainability, and community participation emphasizes their significance in current urban design. Cities that include cultural resilience into their development plans may guarantee that their history remains a dynamic and important asset in the face of globalization and modernity. This strategy preserves the past while also paving the path for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

FINDINGS

Globalization spreads quickly until it takes away the historical praise of the ancient sites; people are demonstrating an interest in urban life and rapid urbanization forms a threat to historic sites. For instance, a number of historic areas in the Gulf have since been demolished to pave way for modern development and infrastructure that meet citizens' changing demands. Some cases have seen governments neglect the historical sites, such as old Doha, with the focus shifting on other areas perceived to be for the public good, such as the West Bay area in Doha. Following extreme globalization and culminating demand for modernization, cities' visual integrity and local identity, influenced by their historical development and distinctive culture are directly changed. As mentioned, the destruction and deterioration of urban heritage results from quick uncontrolled urbanization, thus threatening the communities' identity, local culture and cities' sense of place (Verdini et al., 2016) (Figure 3).



Figure 2 Souq Waqif, Doha (Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2022).

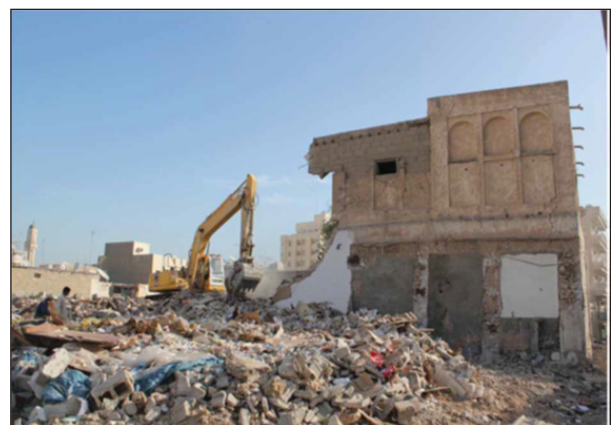


Figure 3 View of Al Asmakh house partially demolished in old Doha, Qatar in 2013 (Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2013).

HISTORIC CITIES IN THE GULF; GLOBALIZATION AND RESILIENCE

During the period 1950–1970, after the discovery of oil and independence, the Gulf region underwent a period of massive growth and transformation at various levels, social, cultural and economic. Consequently, when cities were trying to catch up with the world modernization, entire historic districts and buildings were demolished and replaced to make room for global environments. For instance, the historic urban pattern has been completely changed; by roundabout and geometric street system and car-oriented cities functional zoning replaced the traditional urban fabric of the Fareej (neighborhood). Moreover, the use of concrete, steel and glass radically transformed the local character that once reflected the low-rise houses built in coral stones and roofed with Chandal (wood logs) (Boussaa, 2014a, 2014b; Boussaa et al., 2021; Indraganti & Boussaa, 2017).

During the 1990s and 2000s globalization reached the Gulf region, thus its urban development was guided by Westernization leading to radical urban transformations. Aspirations for rapid development of those cities and the parallel formation of new cities with altered contemporary forms has given to overlook or abandon those inherited traditional values. These historic cities shaped the groundwork of sustainable urban development and societies founded on culture as a means of life (Bousaa, 2010).

Dubai is a city of many contributors to growth and development like the originators of development,

executors, builders and distributors who were mainly foreign expatriates. Both the professional citizens of Dubai and the foreign expatriates controlled the assets and funds of a city's expansion. Combining the information communication system's use of this development project system has significantly influenced the city fast expansion processes (AlMutawa, 2018). The impacts of these aspects can be fully seen in the imported global architectural style and urban forms. This is more seen in Dubai's central areas, such as Dubai Marina Project, Mall of the Emirates Project and Burj Khalifa, which is the highest tower in the world with a height of more than 800m. Dubai's exquisite outline is generally established on the base of state-of-the-art infrastructure and flourishing economic status, a path that can hardly be changed. A line that offered good investment, wealth, global and national relationship and a sophisticated lifestyle.

The potential area for interurban measures has been established at two extremes, the total demolishing -also known as "*Tabularaza*"- and the establishment of new city expansions (Bianca, Orts-, & Landesplanung, 2000). The "*Tabularaza*" approach means to lay the new urbanite on top of the historic sites by eliminating the main existing buildings and sites, as seen in many global cities such as Dubai, Doha, Riyadh, Kuwait and Jeddah (Mehan, 2017). In Dubai, the current construction projects formed the first step towards establishing the city's modern identity (Figure 4). It was also the cause of extensive erosion process that resulted in several stages of destruction of



Figure 4 City of Dubai and the Globalization era, UAE (www.business.hsbc.com).

historic areas and buildings. For instance, in old Dubai, out of 3000 historic buildings only 250 have remained. Modern structures were built adjacent to historic areas such as Al Fahidi (Bastakia), Al Ras and Al Shindagha areas, often overshadowing the old structures and blocking any views towards them (Boussaa, 2014a).

Building a new city on a new land without connecting it to the existing urban form is another way of development, which allows the development of a global environment without demolishing the old. This phenomenon can be seen in Doha, with the development of the global West bay few kilometers away from old Doha. Besides, this method is seen as a plan to solve different issues related to urban development, such as population scarcity and overpopulation (Mehan, 2017). During the last ten years, Riyadh has worked hard to become a global city, the city is currently made up of several areas within its borders and they reflect multiple images. Therefore, this case happened when Riyadh expanded beyond expectations and absorbed the surrounding smaller villages (like the historic site of Dariyya).

Besides having, a new business district, other factors, such as rapid expansion of a city area and international population growth (4.5 million inhabitants) between 1990 and 2000, played an important role in making Riyadh a global city. Implementing the Riyadh Development Authority (ADA) plan in case the population exceeds 10 million in 15 years, to maintain the urban standard and quality of living will be challenging. Yet, Riyadh has already established itself as a regional and international financial center (Figures 5 and 6) (Elsheshtawy, 2008).

Gulf cities still host significant monuments and structures of architectural and historical importance, which echo the

identity of their cities. The noticeable physical decline of these historic hubs has intensely dulled and weakened the Gulf city's identity. Recently, new initiatives have emerged to regenerate a number of resilient historic urban centers in the Gulf. In Dubai, Al Fahidi district started to be rehabilitated during the late 1990s. In Jeddah, Al Balad has been rehabilitated, enabling it to become a World heritage site in 2014. In Doha, to counterbalance the globalization effects in the West Bay, two major regeneration projects have been launched in old Doha; Souq Waqif during 2004–2010 and Msheireb project during 2008–till 2018 (Figures 2, 7 and 10) (Boussaa, 2014a, 2014b, 2018; Boussaa et al., 2021, 2023; Indraganti & Boussaa, 2017; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023).

OLD DOHA; GLOBALIZATION AND RESILIENCE

Within four decades, Doha has developed from a small village to a bustling global city with high dreams. In 1995, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa succeeded his father and became the ruler of Qatar, despite its small size, the new ruler's vision was to make Qatar a modern and internationally known country. With the launch of the broadcasting channel Al Jazeera in 1996, Qatar started to exhibit itself on the global scene. For instance, Doha's area grew from just 130 hectares in 1950 to 7,100 hectares in the 1990s; a 55-fold increase in just 40 years. This indicates that Doha was set to become a city-state hosting about 80% of the total population. In early 2000s, promoting tourism based on sports events became another alternative to oil-based economies. To provide infrastructure to host the Asian Games of 2006, a large number of hotels were built along the corniche. Following the same target of branding the city for tourism the Museum of Islamic Arts opened to public in 2008



Figure 5–6 Iconic architecture in Riyadh; (Left) Faisaliah Tower (Right) Kingdom Tower and the Business District. (www.pinoyarabia.blogspot.com and www.photos.com).

(Figure 7); designed by the famous Chinese American Architect I.M. Pei and constructed on an artificial island. It has become a major landmark in the city within a walking distance from Souq Waqif (AlSuwaidi, 2024; Al-Malki et al., 2024; Boussaa et al., 2023; Boussaa & Madandola, 2024; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023).

During the late 1990s, the era of global development through mega projects and magnificent buildings began



Figure 7 View of the Museum of the Islamic Arts, in Doha, Qatar (Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2022).

in the West Bay area, few kilometers away from old Doha. Al Dafna (Local name of the West Bay), which runs along the Corniche, has become a new center of development, with government buildings being built as new landmarks (Jencks, 2006).

In less than a decade, more than 50 high-rise towers were built, of which 18 are about 150 meters high (Figure 1). In the West Bay, all kind of spectacular towers can be seen as reflecting the new global city of Doha, designed by famous international architects and consultants. For instance, the 200 m Tornado tower was designed by SIAT Consultants, the 215 m, Al Bidda Tower (Figure 8) was designed by GHD Consultants; the 232 m Burj Qatar designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel and the 245 m high Palm towers was designed by MZ and Partners. The tallest tower that includes the Kempiski residence of 254 m was designed by the Qatari architect Ibrahim Jaidah (AEB).

All these formed a hybrid of competitive towers with different images and each one trying to create a distinctive identity thus creating a cocktail of global styles and characters that generated more confusion and disorientation (Figure 9). The rate of vacancies is very high in the West Bay due to costly rents, congestion and inadequate parking, which make people reluctant to live in this area. The result is the standing alone of these towers in a lifeless area, apart from people commuting to the City Center Mall or going out from hotels or ministries for work.



Figure 8–9 Left: Al Bidda Tower and Burj Qatar (Source: Google Earth, 2024), Right: The Kempiski Residence (Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2024).

Within a mere of decades, the population found itself in a new global environment that promotes and encourages consumption on a scale never experienced before.

Old Doha was neglected and left to face its own fate of decay and dilapidation, most of the vacant land in old Doha, which resulted from the destruction of many historic buildings, was used for multi-story office buildings, apartments, and informal parking. This trend has accelerated the disappearance of many historic districts and buildings in old Doha. To stop this cycle of annihilation of old Doha, in the early 2000's, several voices began to appear for reconstructing connections with the past. For instance, the rehabilitation of Souq Waqif started in 2004 and was completed in 2010 (Figure 10). This project is considered the first successful urban regeneration of a historic district in Doha. Following Souq Waqif, another regeneration project in Msheireb was launched in 2008 and was completed in 2018.

MSHEIREB; A NEW IDENTITY INSPIRED FROM THE PAST

To face the globalization trends in the West Bay, Msheireb Downtown Doha attempts to transform the center of the capital city, by recreating a way of living that is rooted in the past. The aim of this project is to bring back

the Qatari families to downtown after their massive departure during the 1950s and 60s. The Msheireb Master plan aims at recreating the heart of Doha, a rising homeland that confidently embraces modernization and proudly respects the local traditions. In addition, it strives to improve the environment and through boosting the economy activity of the previous redundant area (Scharfenort, 2016).

In 2008, a huge urban regeneration project, "The Msheireb Downtown Project", was launched in Old Doha, which completed its first phase, the "Heritage Quarter" in May 2015. The project covered an area of 35 hectares south of Souq Waqif with a mixed used development. The mission is to create an alternative model of urban regeneration of historic urban centers in the Gulf. The project is based on an innovative approach by blending the past and present in an innovative way; far away from any copy-paste approach of the past (AlSuwaidi et al., 2024; Al-Malki et al., 2024; Boussaa & Madandola, 2024).

The Msheireb project was headed by her Highness Sheikha Moza (the present Emir's mother) and sponsored by Qatar Foundation. The project aimed to recreate the original *fareej* of Mohammed bin Jassim and established a contemporary neighborhood inspired from the past (Figure 11). In short, the following were the main objectives of the master plan: (Law & Underwood, 2012: 133).

- "To promote a sustainable way of living within a compact city framework that reduces automobile usage, increases density and promotes public transport and mixed use;
- To renew a piece of city infrastructure so as to reduce its reliance on fossil fuel;
- To promote better integrated social communities at the heart of the city where locals and expatriate workers are walk able neighborhoods, public spaces and amenities;
- To modernize a piece of Qatar's capital city in ways that will resonate with local history and cultures".



Figure 10 View Souq Waqif (Source: Suwaidi & Boussaa, 2023).



Figure 11 The Msheireb Development in Doha (Source: www.msheireb.com).

The master plan proposed a safe, well appointed, well served and a thriving residential/commercial center comprising facilities and amenities within a walkable distance. In Msheireb, streets and neighborhoods are designed as collective ensembles rather than being scattered (Figure 12). The compact layout offers many advantages in terms of creating shaded streets reflecting the traditional *sikkas* (alleys) which encourage inhabitants to walk.

The scale of intervention lies at mid-way between the high-rise towers of the West Bay and the low-rise houses of Souq Waqif, with structures reaching 10–12 stories on Msheireb and Kahrabaa streets. Msheireb Downtown Doha will become a new social and civic hub; a place where it is enjoyable to live, work, shop, visit and spend time with family and friends. Msheireb will create a living district featuring premier office space, retail, leisure facilities, townhouses, upscale apartments, hotels, museums, civic services and exciting cultural and entertainment venues. Cars are strategically placed underground in several basement levels, ensuring a pedestrian and friendly environment (mdd.msheireb.com/exploreproject/projectoverview.aspx#sthash.xJpWsA2l.dpuf).

The diversity of heritage and new structures has emerged to make the experience memorable. ‘Sheikha Moza said “Our architecture is simple and elegant, it’s not ornamentation, pattern, color; it’s not Morocco or the Alhambra.” (Hunter, 2011). For us the most important thing was looking at the history. In 1947, it was just a fishing village, then the in 1950s oil and gas money hit and there were big urbanization and eventually suburbanization issues” (Hunter, 2011). The approach of Msheireb is to establish a new distinctive identity that is inspired from the past. Lessons from the past have led to the establishment of seven principles to guide the development of the master plan; timelessness, diversity, unity, form, geometry, home and street aspects, climate-

sensitive design and architectural elements (Law & Underwood, 2012: 143).

Several other questions could be raised on the Msheireb experience. One of the major criticisms is the *tabula-rasa* of a complete historic quarter; from which only four houses from the old district have survived. It can be said that more sympathy could have been devoted towards the original *fareej* where more houses could have been sustained to strongly reflect the past identity of the city. Msheireb develops another alternative that counterbalances the high-rise developments in the West Bay. In contrast to Souq Waqif approach, it marks a new identity based on the “new” inspired from the past. One of the major drawbacks of the Msheireb project is the disappearing of one historic district Fareej Sheikh Mohamed Bin Jassim causing the displacement of 7,000–9,000 residents (Scharfenort, 2012: 8). Although the design of the project gives the impression of a well-planned venture, nevertheless “Msheireb” does not respect either particularly or functionally with its adjacent areas of Souq Waqif, Al Najada and Al Asmakh.

Despite that, a complete neighborhood had been completely erased except four old houses, however, the result is more interesting and by reusing the traditional architecture of Qatar in a more innovative way. The Msheireb project was inspired from the past and developed a new urban identity that confronts the West Bay global waterfront. This project is innovative in developing a new way to look at the past; neither a complete ignorance such as in the West Bay and nor a complete conservation such as in Souq Waqif. It stands in a middle way, yet modern but respecting the past, innovative and not a copy-paste from the past. Yes, this approach needs further critical assessment to be implemented in other historic cities in the Gulf and the Arab world.

BALANCING MODERNITY AND TRADITION IN JEDDAH’S URBAN LANDSCAPE

Jeddah, the second biggest city in Saudi Arabia. One of the most important historical districts of Jeddah is called Balad, which literally translates to “The City.” The city of Jeddah’s historical center, Al-Balad, was established in the seventh century and has been there ever since. It was in the 1940s that the defensive walls of Al-Balad were destroyed (Ibrahim, 2018). The historical importance of this location is contrasted with its function as a contemporary economic center, which reflects the overarching themes of conflict, resilience and the quest for new identities in the face of globalization (El-belkasy & Wahieb, 2022).

UNESCO designated Al-Balad neighborhood in Jeddah as a World Heritage site in 2014. This neighborhood is known for its traditional multi-story homes built of coral stone as well as its archaeological market. These



Figure 12 Msheireb Masterplan (Source: www.msheireb.com).

characteristics are examples of the city's rich cultural legacy as well as its distinctive architectural style. The conservation of this historic quarter, on the other hand, has been significantly hindered by Jeddah's fast modernization and expansion, notably over the course of the last several decades. The infusion of Western influences, in conjunction with the need to modernize and develop the city's infrastructure and economy, has resulted in a conflict between the conservation of the old urban fabric and the need to meet the needs of globalization.

The solution to these difficulties in Jeddah has been multifaceted, showing an urban approach to urban development that strives to strike a balance between the conservation of legacy and the modernization of the city. It is the goal of the initiatives that have been made to repair and preserve the ancient structures and infrastructure of Al-Balad in order to regenerate the region while preserving its cultural and historical integrity (Ibrahim, 2018). In order to illustrate the twin goals of retaining local identity while interacting with global trends, these activities are a part of wider plans that are being implemented to boost the city's attractiveness as a worldwide destination for tourists and investment.

In addition to the street vendors and open-air Souqs (also known as Eastern Markets), Al Balad is home to commercial malls that include premium fashion. The National Commercial Bank (NCB) is among the most well known of the several Saudi government-owned

corporations that have their headquarters at this location. Gordon Bunshaft of Skid More Owings and Merrill (SOM) excelled in his work on the structural design of the award-winning building, which is commonly considered to be the first Arab skyscraper.

In the year 1990, the Historical Area Conservation Department (HAPD) was founded with the intention of preserving the historic buildings that are located inside the Balad. Additionally, the department hoped to assist in the promotion of cultural tourism across the nation. In 1991, the Municipality of Jeddah founded the Jeddah Historical Conservation Society (JHPS) to preserve the historical architecture and culture of Al-Balad.

In 2002, \$4 million United States dollars were offered for the conservation activities. They little knew that they had established the cornerstone for one of the most thriving and cosmopolitan neighborhoods of the Gulf world. Al-Balad (Figure 13) consists of a beautiful blend of the modern and the classic where the glass facades of modern skyscrapers rub shoulders with historical buildings with the distinct horizontally embedded wooden beams that have come to symbolize Al-Balad over the years, explained De Pint, (2005). By the year 2007, a significant number of Jeddah residents had relocated away from Al-Balad; yet, the streets of Al-Balad continued to be packed with people during the holy month of Ramadan. At around the same time, the Jeddah Urban Development Company (JUDC) was established with the purpose of revitalizing Al-Balad.



Figure 13 Al Balad, also known as the Gate to Makkah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (Source: [www. Richard Wilding .com](http://www.RichardWilding.com)).

In addition, Jeddah's development strategies have been placing an increased emphasis on sustainable urban expansion, including the incorporation of contemporary urban planning ideas while maintaining a respect for ancient landmarks. The creation of new cultural and commercial developments that strive to complement the ancient urban environment rather than overpower it is included in this category. As an example, the Jeddah Waterfront project has been responsible for transforming the shoreline of the city into a lively public place that honors the city's historical connection to the sea while also offering contemporary conveniences and recreational facilities.

This method highlights the consequence of the study, which is that the conservation of ancient cities in the Gulf area in the face of globalization is not only about fighting change; rather, it is about integrating new developments in a manner that respects and revitalizes past identities. By demonstrating that cities can successfully traverse the difficulty of global interconnection and urban expansion, Jeddah's experience illustrates that cities may do so with the appropriate policies, management systems and activities. This will ensure that historic sites are preserved. This equilibrium between conservation and growth reflect a greater realization of the importance of cultural heritage as a component of a "global urban product" that draws transnational elites and investment, so contributing to the building of sustainable urban futures.

Although there has been significant progress achieved, there are still a number of challenges that need to be overcome in order to ensure the conservation of Al Balad. Examples of these problems include legal roadblocks, financial constraints and the need for technical expertise in the field of cultural protection. On the other hand, these issues also present opportunities for creativity and the development of new models for effectively integrating the conservation of historic buildings with the expansion of urban areas. Adaptive reuse is the process of reusing existing buildings for contemporary use in order to guarantee that they continue to be relevant and sustainable.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this research highlight the intricate relationship between globalization and heritage conservation in Gulf cities, specifically focusing on Doha and Jeddah. This section provides an analytical perspective on these findings, exploring the dual trends of development versus conservation, the influence of globalization on urban identity, and the significance of resilience in urban design.

DUAL TRENDS: DEVELOPMENT VS. CONSERVATION

The contrasting phenomena of rapid modernization and cultural conservation are clearly apparent in Gulf cities. The study suggests a widespread inclination towards adopting contemporary progress, strongly affected by globalization. This is defined by the creation of renowned tall buildings and modern city areas that are intended to display a worldwide image and entice foreign investments. Notable instances include the construction of tall buildings in Dubai's Marina and Business Bay, which have greatly changed the city's appearance and established it as a major hub for business and tourism worldwide. These advancements often demonstrate a desire to exhibit economic strength and contemporary qualities, while conforming to international benchmarks and aesthetics in order to attract global elites and enterprises.

However, there is a noticeable inclination towards conserving cultural assets, with the objective of safeguarding the historical and cultural uniqueness of the cities. Projects such as the Msheireb Downtown Doha project and the revitalization of Al Balad in Jeddah exemplify this strategy. These initiatives aim to combine contemporary urban growth with the conservation of historical places, resulting in a balanced integration of old and new that both honor cultural heritage and meet current urban requirements. The achievements of these initiatives highlight the possibility of adopting a well-grounded strategy that respects both tradition and progress. The Msheireb Downtown Doha project exemplifies the integration of traditional Qatari architectural features with contemporary infrastructure, highlighting how history and progress can live together.

Nevertheless, the study also emphasizes the difficulties linked to this dual strategy. Urbanization's fast pace often exerts substantial strain on historical places, resulting in tensions between development objectives and conservation efforts. Oftentimes, commercial interests and the need for modernity overshadow the significance of safeguarding historical sites. Consequently, other ancient districts, such as old Slata in Doha, have suffered from decay or destruction as they were removed to accommodate new urban projects. These activities not only destroy tangible edifices, but also disturb the societal framework and shared recollections of the community.

In this context, evaluating the efficacy of policies designed to safeguard cultural heritage in the face of rising urbanization and globalization challenges becomes crucial. The integration of contemporary infrastructure projects into the existing historic urban environment must be examined, assessing their influence on the overall urban scenery. Moreover, the concepts of preserving architectural integrity and repurposing old

structures in the context of contemporary projects need thorough examination to ensure that the historical fabric is maintained while accommodating modern need.

INFLUENCE OF GLOBALIZATION ON URBAN IDENTITY

The process of globalization has significantly influenced the urban identity of cities in the Gulf region. The results demonstrate that globalization has facilitated economic expansion and the rise of cities, but it has also caused the gradual disappearance of traditional cultural identities. Historical neighborhoods and landmarks have often been disregarded or destroyed to accommodate new projects, leading to a substantial erosion of cultural continuity and legacy. This shift often places more importance on economic benefits rather than the conservation of cultural legacy, which is indicative of a wider worldwide pattern of prioritizing modernity at the cost of heritage.

Urban landscapes are often altered by globalization, resulting in the adoption of architectural styles and urban plans that conform more to global norms rather than local traditions. The trend may be seen in the increasing number of “starchitecture” buildings in locations such as Dubai and Doha. These buildings are created by globally renowned architects and exhibit innovative designs that represent modernity and global interconnectedness. Although these structures contribute to the international reputation of the city, they often fail to establish a link with the local cultural and historical background, resulting in a uniformity of urban scenery worldwide.

Nevertheless, the study also emphasizes instances when the delicate equilibrium between globalization and cultural conservation has been achieved with success. The Jeddah Waterfront project has rejuvenated the city’s historical association with the water by offering

contemporary conveniences and recreational features. This project exemplifies the integration of contemporary advancements with historical and cultural features, thereby safeguarding the city’s identity in the face of globalization (Figure 14). These examples illustrate that by carefully planning and designing, it is feasible to strike a harmonious balance between contemporary development and the conservation of cultural heritage.

Evaluating the efficacy of policies and governance systems that either facilitate or impede the equilibrium between modernity and heritage conservation is essential in this context. Furthermore, assessing the socioeconomic consequences of urban expansion generated by globalization on local communities, including displacement, gentrification, and alterations in social dynamics, provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact on urban identity.

RESILIENCE IN URBAN PLANNING: CASE STUDIES OF DOHA AND JEDDAH

Resilience in urban design is critical for overcoming the problems of globalization and modernization in Gulf cities. The Msheireb Downtown Doha project and the rehabilitation of Al Balad in Jeddah are excellent examples of how resilience can be included into urban design to combine historical conservation with new development. The Msheireb Downtown Doha project demonstrates how resilience may be achieved by combining traditional Qatari architectural components with contemporary infrastructure. This initiative attempts to bring back a way of life from the past, luring Qatari families back to the city center. Green construction approaches, renewable energy sources, and sustainable water management technologies are all part of the project’s sustainability emphasis. These initiatives not



Figure 14 The Jeddah Waterfront project (Source: www.godwinaustenjohnson.com).

only protect the area's cultural legacy, but also improve its capacity to adapt to future problems, resulting in a more resilient urban landscape. Furthermore, the Msheireb initiative encourages community interaction and participation, which ensures that local perspectives and cultural values are honored. This inclusive strategy develops a feeling of ownership and connection among inhabitants, so increasing the community's resilience to socioeconomic and environmental change.

The redevelopment of Al Balad in Jeddah exemplifies resilience by rejuvenating the ancient area while also offering contemporary facilities and infrastructure. This initiative has effectively converted Al Balad into a thriving cultural and economic center, drawing both visitors and locals. By conserving the district's distinctive architectural style and historical relevance, the initiative strengthens Jeddah's cultural identity and resistance to the homogenizing impacts of globalization. The Al Balad project also promotes adaptive reuse, which involves transforming old structures for current usage while preserving their architectural integrity. This method not only protects the area's historical fabric, but also guarantees its economic sustainability by offering long-term prospects for local companies and craftspeople. Furthermore, the proposal incorporates eco-cultural zones, which include green areas and sustainable urban activities. These activities strengthen Al Balad's environmental resilience by tackling challenges including water shortages and energy usage, as well as fostering a livable and sustainable urban environment.

In these projects, the incorporation of sustainable practices into urban development, as well as their compatibility with cultural and historical conservation goals, are crucial. Furthermore, the degree and effectiveness of community participation in planning and development processes guarantee that local perspectives and cultural norms are recognized and integrated.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Globalization has had a wide-ranging cultural and social influence on Gulf cities. Globalization has facilitated cultural contact, resulting in a more cosmopolitan urban environment. The advent of expats and multinational enterprises has resulted in new cultural norms and ways of life, hence increasing the cultural diversity of cities such as Dubai and Doha. Cultural mixing has the ability to strengthen social structures and promote the growth of dynamic, diversified communities.

Conversely, the presence of global cultural influences may lead to the marginalization of local traditions and practices. The growing acceptance of globalized lifestyles and consumption patterns in Gulf cities poses a risk of destroying the particular cultural identities that have established over centuries. The overpowering influence

of global culture may overshadow traditional customs, languages, and social norms, creating a sense of cultural displacement among local residents.

Furthermore, the focus on developing global cities often prioritizes catering to the needs and aspirations of expatriates and international visitors above those of local residents. This may result in the formation of social inequities and conflicts, since rural inhabitants may feel excluded from the benefits of urbanization. For example, the expensive costs involved with living in newly developed areas may compel indigenous people to abandon their traditional settlements, resulting in gentrification and social displacement.

Understanding the cultural and social repercussions requires assessing the socioeconomic impacts of globalization-driven urban growth on local populations. This involves investigating issues like displacement, gentrification, and changes in social relations. Furthermore, reviewing the efficiency of legislation aimed to conserve cultural assets and the level of community involvement in planning and development processes is vital for ensuring that local viewpoints and cultural norms are recognized and integrated.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Gulf towns suffer significant economic implications because of globalization. Foreign investment has expanded dramatically as metropolitan environments have changed and new infrastructure has been built, resulting in economic development and job creation. Gulf cities have positioned themselves as major global players in areas such as banking, tourism, and real estate because of the building of iconic landmarks and luxury developments. Nonetheless, economic progress typically comes at a cost. The focus on attracting foreign investment may lead to the development of speculative real estate markets, typified by inflated property prices that make housing unaffordable for a large section of the local population.

Furthermore, prioritizing large-scale upgrades and notable projects may divert resources away from critical services and infrastructure needed by local residents. In this context, assessing the efficiency of policies and governance structures that assist or hinder the balance between modernity and heritage conservation is critical. Assessing the socioeconomic implications of urban development, such as displacement, gentrification, and changes in social dynamics, offers a more complete picture of the economic effects on local communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The environmental impacts of rapid urbanization and globalization in Gulf cities are equally important. High-rise building and large-scale urban developments may put a strain on local ecosystems and deplete resources.

The rapid pace of urbanization exacerbates problems such as water scarcity, waste management, and energy use. The challenge is to create urban models that are both economically affluent and ecologically responsible. Msheireb Downtown Doha and Jeddah Waterfront projects demonstrate the viability of integrating sustainability into urban building. These projects use ecologically friendly building technologies, renewable energy sources, and sustainable water management systems, setting the benchmark for future developments in the region. These initiatives show that it is not only feasible, but also important, to achieve a balance between environmental concerns and urban development in order for cities to endure future problems.

In this context, it is critical to assess the incorporation of sustainable practices into urban development, as well as their compliance with cultural and historical conservation goals. Furthermore, evaluating the degree and usefulness of community participation in planning and development processes ensures that local opinions and cultural norms are recognized and integrated..

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Globalization in the Gulf has been going on for almost the past 30 years and most governments focused on creating the new while ignoring the old. Anything that was “old” was considered invaluable and there was very little chance for safeguarding it from destruction and extinction. In many cases, historic sites and buildings were viewed as signs of poverty and a reminder of the misery of the past that everyone should delete from its memories. Therefore, historic neighborhoods were deserted by their owners to be replaced by hundreds of low-income workers seeking better living opportunities in the city. The latter, occupied these courtyard houses, subdivided them into smaller rooms to accommodate more tenants. With over-occupation and lack of maintenance, numerous old houses fell into disrepair and with time, they collapsed. These historic remnants were either demolished such as old Slata in Doha or left to decay such as the old districts of Al Najadah, Al Ghanim and Al Hitmi (Bousaa, 2010).

Conflicts between globalization and historic cities have proved complicated to most scholars and researchers. Most Gulf countries have focused on modernization at the expense of native social and cultural values. As a result, these features of the society have been erased and replaced by alien ones to catch up with the “global” world. The inquiry of what the Gulf cities reflect assumes a vaguely distinguished meaning when deliberated by native academics and scholars. Many scholars argue that the forces of globalization imply that it is now possible to

refer to the Gulf cities as “new centers” of the Gulf world and the new face of the local identity. On the other hand, there are scholars with opposing views, they contend that Gulf cities represent its identity if they borrow their models, their ideations and visions from the West (Al Qassemi, 2013).

This study concludes that contemporary cities and their historic centers exhibit dual trends. The first trend involves the development of iconic scenarios, often driven by politicians keen to leave a lasting mark on their city. The second trend focuses on heritage conservation, with supporters and defenders striving to stand against neo-liberal and globalized capital outbreaks by developing and sustaining the past. Both trends highlight the importance of integrating resilience into urban planning to ensure sustainable, adaptable, and culturally rich urban environments.

New approaches to urban renewal that are firmly grounded in the social, cultural, and historical circumstances of Gulf towns might be suggested by looking closely at the Msheireb Project in Doha and that regeneration of Al Balad in Jeddah. The goal of these approaches is to find fresh approaches to urban renewal by drawing on the specifics of the case studies.

1. **Platforms for Cultural Narratives:** This strategy, which takes cues from the Msheireb Project’s method of fusing current life with Qatari history, places an emphasis on the development of platforms that tell cultural stories via contemporary media. In keeping with Amin & Thrift’s discussion on the importance of integrating cultural identity within globalized spaces and Klingmann’s exploration of architecture as a medium for expressing economic and cultural transformations, these platforms would use storytelling methods and technology to translate a region’s identity and cultural values. They would serve as educational and promotional tools (Amin & Thrift, 1995; Klingmann, 2007). Utilizing augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies can create interactive historical tours and cultural exhibitions that bring the past to life in the modern urban context.
2. **Multi-Purpose Historical Centers:** Create historical centers that can serve many purposes, as Al Balad did when it became a thriving cultural and commercial hub. To promote local economies, community engagement, and cultural identity conservation, these centers would include residential, commercial, educational, and cultural functions; they would be situated inside historic districts. In their handbook on maintaining heritage in changing urban contexts, Verdini et al. emphasized the significance of architectural integrity and the principles of adaptive reuse, which are echoed in this method (Verdini et al., 2016).

3. **Eco-Cultural Zones:** Drawing inspiration from the Msheireb Project, creating cultural zones can be approached, incorporating eco-cultural zones into restoration initiatives for old cities. These zones would build resilient and livable environments by integrating green spaces, urban gardens, and sustainable water and energy systems. This would create a harmonious blend of ecological sustainability and cultural conservation, in keeping with the sustainable urban development perspectives mentioned by Ertan & Egercioglu (Ertan & Egercioglu, 2016).
4. **Reviving Traditional Crafts and Artisan Skills:** Public art displays, workshops, and markets would all play a part in this attempt to revive traditional crafts and artisan skills, building on previous regeneration initiatives in Al Balad. In keeping with Gravari-Barbas's observations on the monetary and social advantages of preserving historic sites, cities can retain their distinct cultural identities and offer economic opportunities to inhabitants by bolstering local craftspeople and incorporating traditional arts into the city's fabric (Gravari-Barbas, 2016).
5. **Cooperative Urban Laboratories:** Setting up cooperative urban laboratories, taking a page out of the community-based programs in Al Balad and Msheireb. Community people, architects, planners, and officials would all come together in these workshops to co-create solutions for city development that respect the historical and cultural context of cities. The collaborative and innovative approaches outlined by Scharfenort in relation to the Msheireb project are consistent with this participatory approach (Scharfenort, 2016).
6. **Historic Elements as Living Museums:** Presenting and utilizing the Historic Elements as Living Museums: This approach, which takes its cue from Al Balad's success, envisions historic districts as museums in which history plays an integral role in modern urban life. In the same vein as the revitalization strategies outlined by Ibrahim, this method would facilitate cultural tourism and the active incorporation of heritage into daily life by means of interactive displays, cultural performances, and community-led tours (Ibrahim, 2018).
7. **Cultural Resilience:** Emphasizing cultural resilience involves ensuring that cultural heritage is not only preserved but also actively integrated into the everyday life of the community. Projects like Msheireb and Al Balad show that incorporating cultural heritage into urban development can foster a strong sense of identity and continuity. This can be achieved through educational programs, community events, and cultural initiatives that celebrate and sustain

traditional practices, languages, and social norms. By promoting cultural resilience, cities can protect their unique identities against the homogenizing effects of globalization.

These innovative urban regeneration methods, inspired by the case studies of the Msheireb Project and Al Balad's revitalization, propose a multifaceted approach to integrating cultural heritage with modern urban development. By emphasizing community participation, sustainability, and the celebration of cultural identity, these methods offer a forward-looking perspective on regenerating historic urban districts in the Gulf region and beyond.

This study establishes the need to produce a further critical analysis of these conflicting scenarios between globalization and the survival of historic cities in the Gulf. It is being demonstrated that the antinomy of these scenarios is relatively more ambiguous than suggested by research. New approaches and discussions will be centered on how to conserve integrity, identity and continuity in a global world? Which approaches can help to alleviate and diminish the adverse impacts of globalization? What are the most appropriate tools to help monitor changes and identify priorities between preserving values, fulfilling social needs and promoting well-being? Which approaches or strategies can lead to policy development at the interface of the static views of conserving traditions and introducing modern values cities' or preserving the existing values or nurturing new ones?

Cities and local governments have considerable powers to influence policies and actions on sustaining the surviving historic sites from disappearing. Equally, central governance mechanisms have the final say in historic sites, as they are national treasures and symbols of identity. Often, the difference in interests makes it difficult for the regulators of socio-cultural policies to arrive at common grounds for the good of people and tourists in historic sites. Therefore, striking a balance between development and conservation remains a challenge and an opportunity to further explore in the emerging global world.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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