



Towards Meaningful Spaces:

**RECLAIMING CULTURAL CONTEXT TO ITS INHABITANTS IN GCC CITIES
THROUGH THE CONCEPTUAL PHASE OF URBAN DESIGN PROCESS**

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ABSTRACT

The motive of the present thesis has been the realization of lack of cultural impact and meaningful representation within public open urban spaces that fall in between areas of urban planning and construction in the GCC cities. In pursuit of aiding towards the reclamation of meaningful spaces, this study demonstrates methods of providing a framework of cultural context design during the conceptual phase of the urban planning process. In doing so, the emphasis falls both on public users' and professionals' opinions and perception regarding cultural elements, physical experience and design processes that take place within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) cities.

The understanding and framework of levels of comprehension and awareness of cultural implementation derives from the theory of the *Circuit of Culture*, resulting both in an epistemological contemplation of the existing situation and the inter-relationship between culture and design. Meanwhile, the study of the elements that define the *Circuit of Culture* starts to form a strong cultural reference point for the future amelioration of definition of strong identity in-between spaces, within the urban context. The elements of this theory are based on the five aspects of Production, Identity, Regulation, Consumption and Representation.

The implementation of these cultural elements are drawn in reference to the Double Diamond design model, considering its four aspects of discovery, definition, development and delivery, where the first two stages make up the conceptual phase, and the latter two stages make up the implementation phase of design. Therefore, while the thesis stresses the problem of cultural identity of in-between and vacuum spaces of the GCC cities, it suggests the *Circuit of Culture* as a method for reinforcing a thorough cultural consideration within the conceptual phase of design (discovery and definition).

The thesis seeks to develop the process of design integration through an evolving methodological approach for studying the cultural development and cultural concern of urban spaces that fall in-between well planned schemes. In this work, cultural identity and cultural representation are of fundamental importance.

KEYWORDS

Circuit of Culture, Double Diamond design process, GCC cities, public urban spaces, cultural context, identity, representation, implementation, conceptual phase, urban planning.

PRIMARY HYPOTHESIS:

It is felt that GCC cities face some cultural gaps within the conceptual stage of design construction. Through the integration of a design framework that reclaims urban spaces' cultural content during the conceptual phase of designing, based on designs' primary motif, more meaningful spaces may emerge.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

It is considered important for this thesis to initially present the background of the current situation taking place in the GCC cities due to the condition of globalized incentives, the surge of economy, the deterioration of cultural integrations and the problems of design and urban planning. Although the problem has been presented thus far in a narrative way, aiming to explain the primary incentives of this work and the interest of the author, Chapter One starts to face the issue in a more investigatory way, through the presentation of evidence and facts that seek to demonstrate its importance.

While terms such as 'GCC cities', the 'Double Diamond Design', the 'conceptual stage' of design, the 'implementation stage' of design, and the 'three aspects of socially produced space' have been mentioned and briefly explained from the start of the work, a further analysis of the terms is made in the literature review of the following chapter. The present chapter studies the importance of the thesis from a twofold perspective:

The international scene and the regional scene. The Circuit of Culture, as demonstrated in the thesis, gathers elements that could be seen as acceptable, and that define culture internationally. Therefore, the presentation of this new methodology aims to become applicable not only to cities of the GCC context, but also to any cities globally, facing similar problems of cultural identity and representation.

This contribution of international applicability and local specificity of GCC context leads to the ultimate aims and objectives of this work, which bring forth the methodological goal of early conceptual implementation of cultural elements. The aim and objectives become twofold as well: the investigation of the current situation regarding habitants' and professionals' urban cultural perception, to which a number of cities may find relevance, worldwide; and the proposal of a new methodology that will try to improve the gaps of the current situation that is being observed.

The chapter further analyses the structure of the study, introducing the sequence of the thesis that covers all the intentions and goals. Therefore, the readers understand the primary act of establishing elements that define the cultural characteristics of cities in order to justify the Circuit of Culture; the secondary act of locating the existing priorities of spaces' design incentives in the GCC states to cover the existing degrees of cultural awareness; and the tertiary act of

suggesting a new methodology aiming towards the integration of the Circuit of Culture for the conceptual phase of the design process.

1.1. Background

Living in a better environment is an intentional matter for all inhabitants around the world. However, the meaning or the value of “better” might vary from one nation to another, which means that each culture and each geographical location has a different perspective in defining a space, the surrounding objects and their corresponding significance. Yet, the process of globalization is rapidly increasing which may lead towards the deterioration of cultural images for some communities. Nowhere is this tension more evident and forceful than in the cities of the Arabian Gulf where petrodollars have fuelled a massive expansion in the scale, scope and ambitions of cities (Davis, 2006). In fact, the Arabian Gulf culture image is hardly noticeable in a city like Dubai which makes Emiratis question their identity (Fakhreddine, 2008).

Design and Culture have always been closely interrelated, but in many instances design is flaunted as the true measure of culture, rather than belonging to part of cultural context of the society. Design has become the embodiment of a larger process of creative ‘culture-mongering’ that has become a means to capture ideation, innovation and enterprise and made to stand for cultural identity (David Report, 2011).

Traditionally, cultural critics, urbanists and historians like Clark (1984), Davis (1990), Dimaggio (1982), Schorske (1980) and Zukin (1991; 1995) have consistently sought to link urban places with culture. According to Scott (1997) "the two are persistently intertwined with one another. ‘Place’ is always a locus of dense human interrelationships, and culture is a phenomenon that tends to have intensely place-specific characteristics thereby helping to differentiate one place from another".

This work therefore engages with cultural theory through an innovative design framework named the circuit of culture, in an attempt to define the early design stages of conceptualization of the public open urban spaces. The aim is to assist in the integration of cultural elements after studying the problem of cultural gaps within such cities.

1.2. Thesis concept:

The concept of the thesis is to design and develop a methodology that will enable the development of a cultural design framework, enabling design professionals and urban planners to understand and promote the cultural context of urban spaces in the GCC cities, based on their primary intention.

1.3. Terminologies and Concepts

1.3.1. GCC cities:

GCC cities are Cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council, otherwise known as the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. This intergovernmental, political and economic union consists of the Arab states that belong to the Persian Gulf, excluding the state of Iraq. Therefore, GCC cities include the Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

1.3.2. Double Diamond model:

The Double Diamond model describes different modes of thinking that take place during the design process of a project. Its specificities and relationships to this thesis are further elaborated in Section 2.5 (Design Process in Spatial Design Projects).

1.3.3. Conceptual Stage:

The conceptual stage of a design project defines the concept of the design while at the same time making a feasibility review. During this stage, there is an effort to fill the gap of the cultural context that aims to integrate it with the approach of the evolving methodology for the study of urban spaces. Further discussions on this topic are being made in Chapter Two, section 2.1 and Chapter Three, section 3.1.

1.3.4. Implementation stage:

The implementation stage of a design project refers to the implementation of the project, during which a concept review takes place. This consists of stages from developing to delivering, while passing through a chain of concerns that are all based on the conceptual stage diamond. Further discussions on this topic are being made in Chapter Two.

1.3.5. The 3 Aspects of socially produced space:

These are defined according to Levebvre (1991, orig.1974), and include the three concepts of 'perceived space', 'conceived space', and 'lived (metaphysical) space'. Further elaborations and bibliographical references are made in Chapter Two.

1.3.6. The Circuit of Culture:

The Circuit of Culture or Circuit is a tool or framework which was initially created for the purposes of a tool for cultural analysis by members of the British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Following its evolution, it was later developed in 1997 as a conceptual model on cultural, media and identity contemplations. Its essential context in fact inspires the current research at the urban planning level, intending to use its basic principles as a framework of methodological design process towards the amelioration of public spaces' identity in the GCC states. However it may be applied to any city in the world, as its principles are universal, suggesting that culture should be studied through five aspects: representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. This theory emerged during the cultural study of the Walkman cassette player. A noteworthy person elaborating on the theme has been Du Gay, who suggested the ability of any cultural analysis to be speculated through those five elements (Du Gay et. al., 2013).

The framework of the Circuit of Culture is one that may relate to the built environments of new construction as new complex socio-technical systems that require the framework for organizing complex socio-technical systems, which require various considerations of the five elements of representation, production, identity, regulation and consumption. The implementation of the Circuit of Culture into a new design methodology could aid towards the existential collaboration of cultural aspects, striving for identity and sharper awareness during the design decision-making process. This not only would enhance the conceptual framework of the design itself, but would also influence human behaviour in relation to one's history and background. Furthermore, the Circuit of Culture would promote knowledge towards all five elements mentioned above, therefore supporting their coherent and not fragmented existence within the context of urban architecture. Further discussions on this topic are being made in Chapter Two.

1.4. Research Problem:

The fundamental research problem that forms the basis for this thesis is the definition of those elements that express culture in terms of public urban space design interpretation. This research is found to be necessary due to the contemporary struggle for constructing cultural identity with the expression of narratives through architecture and urban form on the map of architectural and

urban discourse in the Gulf region. Some theorists have seen this as a human need and necessity, while others regard it as a process of constructing meaningful places based on certain priorities of cultural attributes as opposed to other sources of meaning (Salama and Wiedmann, 2016). Through the definition of elements that express culture in terms of public urban space design interpretation, an extracted model of cultural consideration will aim to create a model for developing Middle Eastern countries that face similar problems of inexhaustible contrasts (Golzari, 2016). Therefore the research does not only hold importance in terms of proposing a design process solution, but also in terms of proposing a new philosophy that revives awareness with regards to local cultural heritage.

The next task will aim to search for the gaps of cultural design interpretation that exist within cities of the GCC, from the public's and the urban planners' point of view, in order to determine the degree of an identity crisis in these cities. Through a set of questionnaires and interviews that seek to comprehend the understanding of the above individuals' perception on cultural existence within their cities expressed through urban spatial design, the thesis will aim to locate the current cultural crisis and understand the design elements that are necessary for the improved conceptual execution of contemporary projects that would have something to say about culture. Therefore, towards the creation of meaningful places, the ultimate research problem is finding a solution towards the amelioration of the urban design problem, in order to benefit the future of the GCC cities in terms of qualitative conceptual interpretation and a more meaningful representation of their urban image. Consequently, the major concern becomes the finding of a methodology that will be based on fundamental research on culture, space and urbanism that will ultimately benefit the contemporary urban spatial construction of these cities. This methodology will aim towards an effective study of urban spaces within their cultural context that could be used by design professional as a referencing system for proper conceptual direction. The work introduces a new scope for dealing with urban conceptual designs that allow residents to reclaim their cultural space thereby amplifying the geographical and symbolic sense of space. The above research problem derives through addressing the following questions concerning the attached illustrations above:

- How is cultural identity defined, represented in public spaces?
- How do different groups of people from different backgrounds experience and define a particular design? How does that design or space appear to each group?

- How has the emotional response of their public space been altered by the current globalization influence? Would this alteration apply in conceived, perceived spaces?
- Are these spaces culturally fulfilled, and why? What is the possible assumption for such an issue?
- What are the calculations of merging the Circuit of Culture, the Double Diamond Process and the three aspects of public response in an integrated process development? Would this merging possibly allocate a new scope for urban design studies? (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992)

1.5. Gap and contribution to the knowledge:

The state of the art for a research concerning cultural identity in relation to urban development concerns the innovative methodological procedures that become exemplary for the international stage, while solving problems in a regional level. The loss of cultural identity is an issue that concerns a number of states across the world, while several of those are starting to recognize their deficiency in public space evolution (Kirmayer, 2004) and could be seen as prototype case studies for their own development.

The new knowledge may be broken down into a number of points, expressing the qualitative development that is sought to be strived:

- There is a wealth of knowledge about the interrelationships between designing and cultural expression, but it is fragmented and distributed across different types of professionals, who work at different stages in the lifecycle of buildings and urban areas. These could be cultural historians, building preservers, conceptual designers, archaeologists, etc. When dealing with the design process of new buildings or that of existing renovated ones, it is important to gather together this wealth of knowledge in the early, conceptual phase.
- Knowledge within built environment disciplines may be highly related to behavioral theory and behavioral science to the policy-making process. Therefore, a sophisticated understanding of behavior in relation to cultural attributes may help achieve a better design outcome, either alongside existing policy tools, or in order to inform more innovative interventions that are in any case tied to culture.
- A set of principles for design practice that focus on design priorities and means of putting cultural knowledge into practice.

- Guidance based on available primary and secondary evidence and examples of good and bad practice that are needed to support the application of the suggested methodology.
- There are great gaps in the knowledge and awareness of the area of cultural application in design practice of the GCC states, and this thesis identifies the key requirements of some of the applications that need to be considered.

1.5.1. From an international perspective.

Public spaces and urban design strategies are topics that are growing more and more within the circuits of urban planning and architecture professionals all over the world. Living in a contemporary world of globalization and rapidly-changing urban issues due to the technological progresses and many other economic, social and political effects, a number of cities are experiencing a situation of ambiguous cultural definition. This increases the sense of lack of belonging, decreases the affiliation to the surroundings and the feeling of urban safety, while it stops offering stimuli of visual perception that are vital for the creation of memories and urban habitable cohesion.

Consequently, the origins of perceptual civic expression are being lost, while the semiotics of place with its history, culture and current events lack connectivity and cohesion. Contemporary cities world-wide are facing this vast urban development that is associated to technological and financial growth, while the human-scale places start to lose their cultural affiliation and symbolic sense of a *locus*.

Therefore it is understood that the present study becomes a strong reference point through two levels of importance:

- The presentation of a methodology that serves as inspiration towards cultural theories and design.
- The involvement of cultural identification within the design process of urban planning integration.

1.5.2. From a regional perspective (Middle East and GCC countries)

This dissertation is perhaps even more important from a regional perspective concerning Middle Eastern countries, and particularly the GCC cities, which are experiencing a high level of tension between localization and globalization. Due the massive developments over the past ten years, there are many signs of

fragmentation, organizational confusion and lack of cultural story-telling, which partly are consequences of rapid expansions and neo-liberal planning regimes. Therefore, cultural theories are of vital importance for such regions, for the understanding of the cultural context of a place and for its implementation into new design interventions. This will help preserve the identities of these regions, which are essentially extremely strong and profound, however lack an expression within the context of urban construction (Castells, 2011).

The thesis does not only provide a prototype of a methodological approach that offers explored data of cultural understanding, but also provides a platform for further explorations and evolutions of design processes that remain sensitivetowards cultural awareness.

1.6. Aims and Objectives:

This section explains in a clear way the aim of this thesis, supported by three steps. The objectives of the following sub-section describe all the knowledge parameters that are achieved during the process of this research investigation. This section leads towards the diagrammatic representation of a design framework, which is mirrored into the philosophy behind creating a *parti diagram* during the design process of creative decision-making.

1.6.1. Aim:

The aim of the research strives to be described in one sentence, similar to a *parti diagram* of a design conceptual phase, seeking to explain the whole composition of a design problem into a few simple lines. Therefore any design action that takes place along the way of creative implementation, is justified by the one diagram alone, which explains the concept. In a way, as the *parti* diagram becomes the code of encryption of an architectural or urban design, in a similar way does the aim justify all research actions that are being executed in the methodology of the thesis, done for purposes of clarity and concise communication. The aim is to:

Establish a framework of the early conceptual design process, in order to provide guidelines for urban developers to understand and develop cultural awareness of urban populations in the GCC cities.

This aim is supported by establishing elements that define the cultural characteristics of GCC public spaces through interlinked aspects of

Representation, Production, Consumption, Identity, and Regulation (Circuit of Culture); locating the existing priorities of the spaces' design incentives in the GCC states in order to understand the existing degrees of cultural awareness; suggesting a new methodology aiming towards the integration of the Circuit of Culture into the conceptual phase of the design process, based on their primary incentives of design.

1.6.2. Objectives:

The objectives are very much related to the importance of the theme, further punctuating the value of this investigation in pursuit of exploring and measuring the amount of influence that cultural context has on the design process of the GCC cities. Consequently, and following the aims stated above, the following objectives seek to be achieved:

- To determine the most operational elements which define culture.
- To measure the inhabitants' satisfaction towards the appearance or presence of their urban cultural images within public spaces.
- To illustrate a framework for the filling in of missing aspects of the design process, while creating dialogue between urban planners (discovering stage of the design process) and public space users (delivery stage of the design process).
- To explore the most appropriate design process that fits GCC cities' characteristics.
- To generate a cultural-based model that through its application, will aim to enhance the process of spatial design in the GCC cities.
- To strengthen and understand what is already known and what is not known on the relationships among representation, production, identity, regulation and consumption, in the design process method.
- To identify examples of good and bad practice of existing design methodologies and to evaluate their degrees of consideration towards integration of cultural elements.
- To identify a methodology using all five characteristics of the Circuit of Culture in order to promote the designing of culturally-based constructions.
- To make recommendations for future research based on the use of these elements that could define the establishment of culturally-based construction in the GCC cities.
- To establish cultural sustainability through visual awareness.

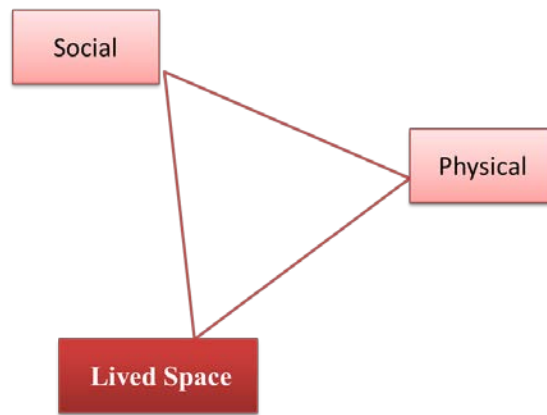
A series of sub-questions help identify the objectives for this research, and define the methodology of the dissertation. These sub-questions are:

- 1- How fulfilled do the local communities in the GCC cities feel, with regards to urban spatial design?
- 2- What is the gap between designers' intention and public perception?
- 3- What are the most effective processes that define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities?
- 4- What design process model or which methods do the GCC cities' urban planners mostly use?
- 5- What kind of method/model/process can be suggested to minimise the gaps between urban planners' visions and inhabitants' perception?

1.7. Stages and Diagrammatic Expression

The thesis stages that take place during the course of the research are based on a theoretical integration of cultural elements in relation to public space and urbanism, and a methodological establishment of a process that will aim to assist towards a more successful and sensitive cultural implementation during the design phase. The two following existing diagrams and the areas defined within them are used to form the basis of areas that will be researched in the literature review. Furthermore, they offer a visual overview of the interlinked procedures that take place during the course of the thesis and act as a summary towards the theoretical and methodological sequences that are to take place. These models will be discussed further in section 1.8 of this chapter.

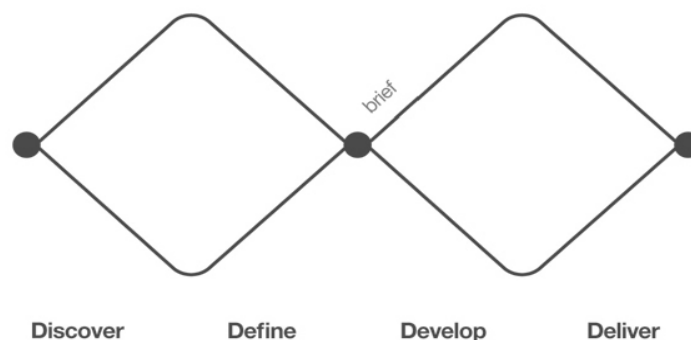
The first phase involves the study of Lefebvre's three aspects of socially produced space, as shown in Figure 1.1 below, out of which emerge keywords that start to identify the elements of cultural establishment within societies. This stage that is studied within the thesis is very important for the theoretical contemplation on meaningful spaces, which is the final goal of the thesis.



- The 3 Aspects of socially produced space**
- Perceived Space
 - Conceived Space
 - Lived Space (Metaphysical)

Figure 1.1: *Three aspects of socially produced space*

The second stage involves the consideration of the Double Diamond design model, which is one of the most fundamental sequences of design construction, expressed briefly in Figure 1.2 below. The Double Diamond design model was developed by the British Design Council to enable designers to examine in more detail various details of the design process. This is being used as a key directional element in the manifestation of this thesis. Through the consideration of this sequence, the thesis points out its focus on the first two phases of the design model which make up the conceptualization of a project - those phases of Discovery and Definition.



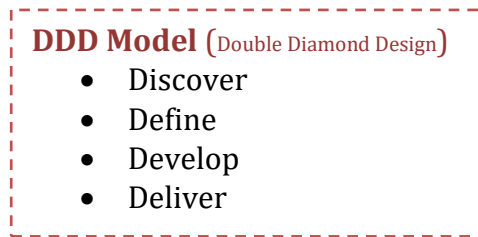


Figure 1.2: *Double Diamond Design model*

The Double Diamond Design Model has been chosen due to its simplicity and targeted early design focus that strongly applies to the intention here: An insight into the problem during the Discovery-phase, and identifying the area to focus upon during the Definition-phase. Due to these two early phases of “divergent thinking”, the framework suggested in the thesis emphasizes the need for creative cultural integration while looking at the problem freshly and pinpointing the areas of importance; the areas that matter most; and the need to clarify “a creative brief that frames the fundamental design challenge” (Design Council, 2015). Due to its simplicity and universal application, it may be easily integrated to projects of globalized impact, providing a very basic framework of design language that may be applied in similar contexts world-wide.

The use of the Double Design model for referencing this thesis’ framework considers all aspects of the conceptual phase that aid towards solutions of impact during the Defining stage of areas such as product design and urban planning. From the stage of “Initial Insight” until the “Plan” phase, the defining stage of the Double Diamond considers aspects of understanding the market, considering consumer empathy, contemplating on design strategy, tackling ideation, considering prototypes, and forming a strategy based on research and experience. Within the design practice, this method has proven to produce concrete designs (Merholtz, 2013). One example of its application has been seen within a three-week summer school, in UCPH, where during the Defining stage of the framework, the aspects of design contemplation included: the presentation of the case and the problem; the contextual analysis, the problem analysis, and the opportunity analysis; the workshop design expressed through its problem definitions, its contextual analysis and the various design contemplations; and finally the discussion on the problem and the understanding of the specific case. Once these initial considerations of the conceptual phase are being met, which derive from the stages of inspiration and arrive at the exploration stage, the final creation stage is ready to be ultimately faced (Design Council, 2005).

The third stage of the thesis involves the concluding establishment of a cultural circuit that emerges as a result of the preceding processes and that is aimed to act as a framework for conceptual design implementation. As will be justified in chapter two through the speculation upon fundamental and contemporary theories on meaning, culture and space, the Circuit of Culture Interlinked Processes will strive to become the basis for the methodological result, broken into elements of Identity, Consumption, Production, Regulation and Representation. As will be justified in this research, the ultimate aim of the conceptual phase of a design process recommends the integration of all five interlinked processes after the identification of the project's primary intention of design.

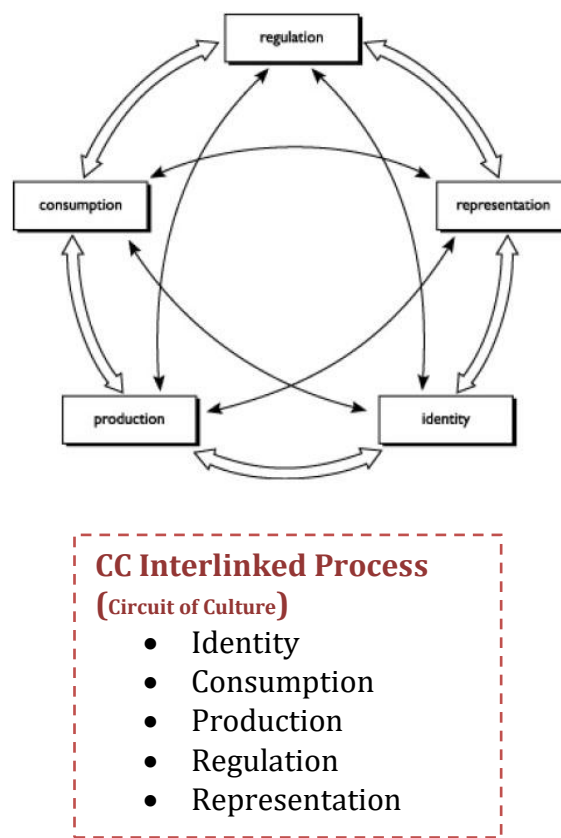


Figure 1.3: *Circuit of Culture Interlinked Process*

The following Figure 1.4 shows in summary the relationships among the above phases and processes, in sequence of emphasis and in demonstration of the primary concern. In essence, this diagram is vital for the compositional understanding of the thesis in terms of its sequence of layout and methodological layout.

- The heart of the problem is the definition of the Cultural Context and the meaningful representation of urban spaces within the GCC cities.
- This Cultural Context is aimed to be punctuated through the correct execution of the Design Process through the concentration upon the conceptual phase of the Double Diamond design model, for the early establishment of cultural concern.
- This Design Process will aim to create the proper Public Response through the three aspects of socially produced space, which are those of perceived (physical), conceived (visual) and lived (metaphysical) space.
- It seeks to develop a methodology which enables urban planners and designers to create meaningful urban spaces.

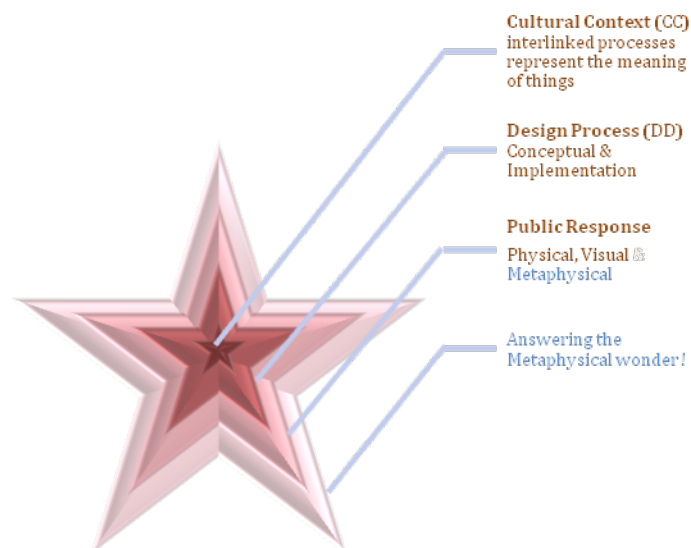


Figure 1.4: *Thesis Stages and Diagrammatic Expression*

The above figure also expresses the symbol of the star, which is used to define the new methodology of cultural consideration. The use of the star symbol holds a particular significance because it is a cultural symbol that fits the Circuit of Culture expression, while it defines an interlined process of relationships where processes and decision-making are based on an open-ended loop, where all nodes gather an equal importance. Within the purposes of representing research stages, the diagrammatic expression of a star becomes equally relevant, as it highlights the nucleus of the aim, which is that of cultural consideration, from which the Circuit of Culture emerges.

This star, expressed with the five nodes of the Circuit of Culture elements, forms the simplest version of the star-symbol which is the pentagram. Profound in its meaning, it also withholds the golden ratio, while it is a common ideogram used throughout the world, therefore stressing the thesis' potential for global application. However because the thesis concentrates on the GCC states, the shape of the star becomes even more appropriate within its cultural context as it has been a Muslim symbol for centuries, seen most notably on flags and decorations.

Ultimately, the five-pointed star expresses in essence, the process of the cultural design framework application, since the symbol is often inscribed within a circle, characteristic of the Pentagram. This formal expression, serving as a *parti* diagram of the methodological procedure, shows the circular process of the design application framework as well: When arriving to the end process of the cultural element considerations, the beginning is once again the point of arrival within the conceptual contemplations. It is the representation of a circular diagram, where each node or spike is a different starting point depending on the primary purpose of design and on the viewpoint and engagement of each approach.

More analytically, the different stages of the thesis and research procedures illustrate the concept of the thesis in a schematic and interpretative way, which also forms the basis of the model, method or information graph that is suggested in order to minimize the gaps between the urban planners' visions and the inhabitants' perceptions. Referring to the first stage it is evident that the core of the thesis is the Cultural Context expression of the GCC cities, through interlinking processes that represent different meanings. Of sequential importance is the Design Process of the stages, which is studied in order to capture the degree of conceptual standards and their implementation within the process of construction design. Third comes the Public's Response in terms of physical, visual and metaphysical perceptions, and finally is the consideration of the 'Metaphysical Wonder', which suggests a means of structured interpretation in order to solve the problem of comprehension and awareness of culture through the urban design of the GCC states.

The final diagram in fact presents the hypothesis of the thesis, basing a conceptual design structure on the keywords that define a philosophical theory of the Circuit of Culture. Consequently, the study aims to found the Discovery and Definition stage of the Double Diamond design model on the keywords of Representation, Identity, Consumption, Production and Regulation. This investigation is based on the three aspects of socially produced space, which are

founded on the notions of 'perceived space', 'conceived space' and 'lived (metaphysical) space'.

1.8. Study structure:

The outline of this thesis follows a framework of bringing together two main categories of research: A literature review on the topics involved, and primary research involving the various stakeholders' understanding and actions upon the issue at hand. The thesis finally presents a synthetic analysis of the findings of both means of investigation, aiming to succeed in the exploration of the amounts of influence that cultural context has on the design process in the GCC cities. This will be done through the application of questionnaires and interviews, seeking to understand the stakeholders' feedback on these issues.

Primarily through the secondary review on cultural context and urban design processes, the dissertation is able to extract the impressions and opinions of the stakeholders in order to generate a cultural based model form that will enhance the process of spatial design. This model will aim to be very similar to the *parti* diagram of a design compositional expression, but within the context of cultural fulfilment; very simple to understand, and very direct in its intention.

The literature review is elaborated in Chapter Two of this thesis. The first half of Chapter Two focuses on the topic of space in relation to cultural context, touching upon aspects of meaning of culture and meaningful spaces, as well as cultural theories involving the Circuit of Culture and its subcategory themes of Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption, and Regulation. The second half of Chapter Two focuses more on the topic of space in relation to space and urbanism, touching upon aspects of urban planning and design process that specifically relates to the role of urban planners, the importance of the profession in reclaiming cultural values, and the specific case of the GCC cities with regards to this issue. Finally this chapter extends more specifically on the concept of design process in spatial design projects, bringing forth as an example the CoC Design Process (Circuit of Culture), which offers a case study of planning process that implement guides, tools, online training, and other resources for the promotion of a community's commitment towards a specific culturally-oriented design goal.

Chapter Three breaks down the methodology used for the next chapter of demographic data collection, starting with the methodological overview which summarizes once again the aims and objectives for this dissertation in order to create a reminder for the understanding of the decision-making process that

follows. Therefore the first section of this chapter outlines the different kinds of mixed method analyses according to Creswell (2003), and justifies the selection of the concurrent triangulation method that is implemented here. This chapter then further analyses the concurrent triangulation design framework in terms of methods, techniques, samples and locations, which are applied to the two different categories of recipients; public inhabitants and urban planners. It analyses the categorical characteristics of the research samples, and the means by which calculations were made. The section goes further into explaining the two different research methods of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews used for defining the public's incentive and understanding of a cultural gap, while also introducing the implementation of structured interviews with practicing professionals, in order to evaluate and discuss the findings of the primary data. This part also shows the relationship of the findings to the Literature Review of the previous chapter, with a demonstration of contextual overlaps that will lead to a synthetic presentation of the findings. Overall, this chapter presents in an analytic way the methodology used for the primary research by the respondents, both in graphic and explanatory form.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the Questionnaires, Semi-Structured and Structured Interviews, while analysing the demographic factors of the respondents. It lists the cities in which respondents lived, as well as the percentage factors corresponding to each one; other percentages relating to the age of the respondents and their level of education; and their correlation to the study regarding religious principles and their understanding of the cultural aspect of design. The chapter goes further into gathering feedback regarding the cultural aspect of design, the cultural identity and the understanding of the overall design of the cities through answering the main questions of whether overall designs are understandable to the respondents. Furthermore, Spearman's method of correlation index testing is used to study the navigation realities through the cities, while gathering feedback on respondents' opinion on the degree of difficulty for navigating through GCC cities. Other graphical and explanatory findings include the respondents' opinions regarding the design of urban cities, and aspects of public space projects in the GCC cities, including urban planners' concerns towards cultural issues, and their awareness of any conceptual gap. This chapter finally employs a qualitative analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, while it also presents the full responses of the structured interviews with the practicing professionals, as conclusive remarks towards the gathered and analyzed data.

Chapter Five brings together all the results from both the Literature Review and the Primary Research in order to form conclusions on the main objectives for this research: The levels of satisfaction for GCC city residents regarding urban

planning and cultural identity, the understanding of a missing aspect of a design process, the understanding for a need of operational levels for cultural definition, and whether or not GCC urban planning, as it exists, is appropriate for cultural identification. Finally, the conclusion presents an information graph that becomes a conceptual diagram for the possibilities of GCC city enhancement.

The cities selected for the investigations of the primary research, include the following:

DUBAI (United Arab Emirates)

The example of Dubai of the United Arab Emirates is a prime situation of global influence, defragmentation of culture and space, and loss of focus points. It is a city that seems to be a prime example for examining aspects of 'socially produced space' and identity loss, as it is often seen as a physical space of constant change while perpetuating old socio-economic divisions that become more and more pronounced through globalization and neoliberal restructuring (Kathiravelu, 2016). Dubai is often criticized for its hectic urbanist ideology, highlighting strong border-like identity lines that separate images of a "vanished village" and "nostalgic and nationalist critiques of the New Dubai" (Kanna, 2011). Evidently so, it brings forward an overall urban image that seems to have become vastly and rapidly affected by the recent economic development, while upsetting its local cultural, religious and national identity resources (Alsharekh and Springborg, 2012).

Dubai is one of the selections for researching the problem of cultural gaps in the conceptual phase of design processes, and with a population of 2,100,000 (17% Emirates) was favored against the Abu Dhabi capital due to its popularity and global attention. Tall buildings burst out like mushrooms, with no boundaries or visual borders, while traditional lifestyle is being constantly lost against the re-emerging of foreign influences. Representation seems to be the principal priority, but with no consideration on the essence of identity that is associated to a certain cultural background. It is world-wide evident that this city is striving to impress through size and grandeur, through the creation of icons that grasp for global attention. One wonders what the cultural message of this city is, when two of its most distinct images, Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa, are the city's symbolic expressions of luxury and style. Evidently, the priority is not that of cultural expression, but of "economic valuable knowledge" (McNeil, 2009). Figure 1.5 shows this expression of grandness in Dubai, but with an evidence of public open urban voids that fall in-between and when experienced from up close, create feelings of non-places. A similar situation, from a ground perspective, is shown in Figure 1.6 in Abu Dhabi, where the spaces in between the high rises seem

expressionless and unfriendly to the public. Orientation is only hinted by signs, where public space occupation is covered by the automobile.



Figure 1.5: *Dubai from the roofs* (Live Journal, 2013)



Figure 1.6: *Abu Dhabi, center of town* (SEGD, 2015)

Other GCC cities are experiencing very similar problems. Even projects that aim towards some integration of cultural affiliation are quickly affected by consumerism and production, transforming in large modernized centers of investment. One example is seen in SouqSharq mall of Kuwait City, whose name implies a traditional souq intention; however the place quickly converted into one of Kuwait's liveliest social venues of luxurious boutiques and designer stores, cafes and restaurants of contemporary images and design practice.

The image below (Figure 1.7) shows another situation of Kuwait where all attention is being put on the high rises seen in the background, standing tall and hierarchical, whereas the open spaces of the foreground are left untreated and with lack of character. This is a situation that is found very often in open spaces that have not been properly planned or considered, whereas all the attention falls upon the creation of emblematic structures.



Figure 1.7: *Kuwait towers* (Lindmark, 2004)

DOHA (Qatar)

Doha is a very good example for examining the aspect of cultural vagueness in Qatar, known for a city with evident friction between the global and the local. This Qatari city, with its recent growing economy, has been discussed for its westernization and its progressive lack of cultural identity in terms of local characteristics, traditional urban elements and building forms (Lombaerde, 2010). But even through this attempt of modern development, Doha has been criticized for its majority of newly constructed buildings using low-quality materials and shoddy finishes, particularly within residential constructions. A statement in Salama's and Wiedmann's *Demystifying Doha* (2016) offers a representational image of the wider urban situation, where "Traditional imaging in the form of false wind towers has become the only reference to the local climate and culture of Doha's contemporary architecture".

In fact, Doha does not present evident architectural characteristics of cultural identity, but aspects of heritage sensitivity are shown through virtues of the family, the tribe, and lineage. As elaborated by Golzari (2016) in his effective volume of *Architecture and Globalization in the Persian Gulf Region*, the city illustrates a Qatari identity that "was never linked to the physical aspects of a

place.” Consequently, the need to create a cultural identity within Doha, along with some modern attempts to preserve some Qatari identity, have made Doha a very appropriate example to use as a case study relevant to the topic of this research theme.

Examples such as the Souq Waqif in Qatar should cause one to wonder on the success of such projects (Walker and Butler, 2010). In 2006, the government launched a restoration program with the purpose of preserving its architectural and historical identity. Buildings constructed after the 1950s were demolished whereas older structures were refurbished. Walking through this souq in the center of Doha, another city selection for this study, one lives through the authentic recreation of a traditional market, as the place bustles during the night and is always full of sounds, visual impressions and aromas of a genuine Arabic market. One could spend hours browsing through this place’s warrens of alleys, which consist of everything traditionally imaginable from clothes, fabrics and household items to foods, spices, nuts and cooked food. Doha, with a population of 900,000, also intended to host the 2022 FIFA world cup, has been accepting a driving attention similarly to that of Dubai, therefore motivating its selection for study of its cultural gaps of conceptual design. Figure 1.8 below, shows the problem of scale in Doha, much similarly to the problem faced in the rest of the cities studied in this thesis. Surrounded by infrastructural networks that seem non-friendly to the common pedestrian, the contemporary structures merge out like tall mushrooms, making everything else on ground-level look tiny and insignificant. The human scale in between these structures is often neglected, while the pedestrian might wonder where to look for the next cultural stimulus that might orient and create a feeling of security and ground-friendly perception.



Figure 1.8: *Commercial district in Doha* (Russavia, 2012)

JEDDAH (Saudi Arabia)

Jeddah is a city that has undergone a lot of modern and westernized transformations, with works formally resuming as early as 1958, similarly to other Saudi cities (Golzari, 2016). Particularly from the mid-twentieth century and onward, the city of Jeddah has been noted to shift from a “tradition-directed” approach to a “self-directed” pattern of social organization. Particularly evident in residential dwellings, the concentration went from traditional spirituality of expression to modern physicality and spatiality of form (Jomah, 1992).

Jeddah is a city of multi-cultural nature, in the sense that it is a multi-ethnic and multiracial place with people coming from all parts of the world to work (Qadeer, 2016). Its transformation has been one of vast evolution, as it became a leading regional and local centre of commerce, business, manufacturing and services, while growing far beyond its ancient limits not only in wealth, but also in terms of geographical expansion (Benna and Garba, 2016). It illustrates a prime example of a Saudi city that in the midst of rapid growth had no time to think of saving the city’s cultural heritage. Specifically, a number of historic buildings were demolished or left to deteriorate. One characteristic example is the sweeping away of Jeddah’s city gate Bab Mecca, which was later reconstructed (King, 1998).

This city of Saudi Arabia, with a population of 3,400,000, was considered due to this cultural variety comparing it to other Saudi cities. It is selected in favor of the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh due to the latter city’s size, which is too large to consider within the frameworks of the other selected GCC cities. Other cultural facts of Jeddah reinforce this selection, including the Old City’s traditional multistory buildings and merchant houses which are losing their grounds in favor of more modern developments and puts weight on some very modern-looking and abstract creations that have nothing to do with local identity. Figure 1.9 shows King Abdullah Street of Jeddah, which indeed lacks a feeling of locality, other than the palm trees that express a geographic orientation referring to the climate. The problem of infrastructural cut within the context of tall and newly developed buildings is one that is often seen in the city of Jeddah, and is an urban problem in most contemporary cities around the globe. The infrastructural problem is also seen in Figure 1.10, depicting some truly beautiful local architecture, but intruded by the infrastructure shown in the foreground. This expresses the problem of pedestrian accessibility at the human scale. Figure 1.10 in fact indirectly expresses the problem of the spaces in between, that connect

the old with the new, and the urban historicity with the swift development of the city.



Figure 1.9: *Jeddah. King Abdullah Street* (Ammar, 2007)



Figure 1.10: *Batha Street, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia* (Almzargha, 2014)

MUSCAT (Oman)

Muscat was chosen as an example of a city that seems to abide by local cultural characteristics, and similar research will be done on this city to discover if the maintained cultural values are actually the experience of the residents. In fact,

Muscat and the wider region of Oman is known for its “post-traditional statism” (Peterson, 2004) characterized by traditions and modernization processes that “insist on traditional political values and structures associated with pre-modern states” (Nassar and Hewitt, 2016). Muscat in particular is not a self-centered city, but one that considers the whole Omani landscape in its urban planning design in an effort to abide to long-set traditions of urban continuity and enduring values – a characteristic that seems to have become extinct in the above mentioned GCC cities. In fact, the state accepts and puts value on the complementary tribal, regional, and communal identities (Peterson, 2004) that form a sweeping scope of complexity within urban contexts, in the midst of a period of systemic global change (Nassar and Hewitt, 2016).

Perhaps it is a contrasting example in relation to the rest, as Muscat superficially seems to give one a feeling of what a GCC city looked like in the past, or how it might partially retain its historical glory. It has a population of 1,300,000 and a vertical height construction limitation of ten stories, it presents an evident exception of visual individuality, referencing the original character of the city. Therefore, one initially approaching and walking through Muscat immediately is drawn to its different scale, its unique character of urban approach, and its effort to retain its cultural roots. This description is very nicely expressed in Figure 1.11, which depicts the beautiful and originally-scaled local architecture that takes place in the region.

Muscat seems to implement a fair amount of research and professional actions in order to retain its local cultural values in terms of architectural imaging and urban planning traditions. One example of measures undertaken to promote urban cultural identity (also found in Amman in Jordan) is the imposing of tighter building controls on the use of materials, as to promote cohesion (Golzari, 2016). Furthermore, research involves aspects of scale control not only in terms of the architecture as a whole, but also in terms of its individual parts and making sure that each technological intervention aesthetically maintains the cultural identity of a building. This creates organized and planned responses to “reverse the negative aspects of globalization under a rubric of reflexive modernization” (Hewitt, 2005). One example is using specific guidelines for sizing shading devices for typical residential houses (Al-Hashim et al., 2014).



Figure 1.11: *Image of the city of Muscat (McGinley, 2010)*

CHAPTER TWO

(Literature Review)

2.0 Introduction

After discussing the aims, objectives and key conceptual frameworks underpinning the thesis in Chapter One, the readers are able to grasp the need for a targeted literature review on the key issues of space and cultural context that relate to the even more specific topics of meaningful spaces, the relationship between culture and space, and the different elements that define urban culture. In fact, these considerations cover two of the three intellectual stages and process that are explained at the beginning of this work, involving the Three Aspects of Socially Produced Space as explained by Lefebvre (1991), and the five elements defining the Circuit of Culture. However there is a strong progress within the current and next two chapter that follow, involving the process of the three intellectual stages: the first half of the literature review concentrates on the nucleus of the intellectual investigation, which is Culture; the second half concentrates on the secondary phase of intellectual investigation, which is the Design Process; while the chapter on the primary research's findings and analysis (Chapter Four) concentrates on the tertiary phase of intellectual investigation, which is the Public's Perception.

This progress aims to prove the interlinked structure of the thesis concept, involving all aspects of urban spatial theory, cultural elements of integration, the early phases of design process, and the three aspects of socially produced space.

The intention of the first half of the literature review chapter is to thoroughly present the intellectual stages that are considered important for this thesis for the basis of urban cultural design research. This review will eventually aim towards becoming the theoretical base of a practical methodology for urban planning professionals. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the overarching aim of the thesis is to develop a new methodology of urban space design that would narrow existing gaps between designers' intentions and inhabitants' understandings and engagement with public spaces. Thus, the research strives to influence design planning strategy in a way which would allow inhabitants to reclaim their cultural values.

Even more specifically, the first half extends the argument of the previous chapter and delves deeper into key bodies of literature that relate to the main research questions. It aims to take a critical overview of existing debates on the role of urban place/space in the context of globalisation; at the same time, it pays

close attention to the implications of such debates on the citizens and residents of those places. It has been noted that while global cities such as London, New York and Tokyo have formed the cornerstone of many discussions about the 'global city,' far less attention has been given to rising cities of commerce such as those in the Middle East and the Arab Gulf States. Keeping in mind this gap in the literature, it was discussed in Chapter One, Introduction, section 1.1, that the Sultanate of Oman can be thought to provide a case study of the changing (and growing) tensions between a globalised, homogenous 'style' of buildings (and architecture) and indigenous, specific geographies of culture in places like the Arab Gulf states. At the heart of this enquiry is how the design of public spaces in places such as the GCC cities can reconcile cultural identity born of millennia of history and heritage with the demands of a cosmopolitan, Western aesthetic that threatens to banalise or even destroy uniquely 'local' features of public spaces.

Therefore, this first part of literature review, in line with the three intellectual stages of the thesis' structure, studies the extent to which cultural context may be altered or guided by design processes and aspects of socially produced space.

Consequently, while investigating the emergence of an "epoch of space" that shifts dramatically while coming closer to the end of the twentieth century (Soja, 1989), and while strongly considering Henri Lefebvre's discussion on the production of space as a formulaic account of perceived, conceived and lived space (Glass and Rose-Redwood, 2014), some key questions that emerge and that are being answered in this thesis, include the following:

- What is the meaning of culture in GCC cities in this chapter, and how does it affect the design process and urban perception of public spaces?
- What is the theory behind the meaning of spaces, and how can it form a foundation for the study of a design framework that enhances such meaning?
- What is the relationship between culture and space in cities of a contemporary globalized influence, and specifically in those of the GCC cities?
- Which are those elements that may define the cultural context of urban design practices?

The addressing of the above questions lays out the key framework that aims to identify and bring together existing gaps in the literature. Concepts of culture, civic identity, urban representation and public space design are studied through

the perspective of spatial culture and the local Arabic Gulf context, in an effort to identify the key elements of the Circuit of Culture, aimed towards urban planning design application.

In the effort to apply the urban design of public spaces within a cultural context, the literature review of the thesis dedicates this chapter towards the second half of theoretical contemplations that deal with the design aspect of space and urbanism. Therefore, revolving around the intellectual stage of the Double Diamond design process, the second half of this chapter aims to target those elements which influence, affect and shape the conceptual phase of creation, and therefore the overall appearance and character of public spaces of the GCC cities. The knowledge extracted from this chapter deals with understanding who urban planners are in order to comprehend their role towards the reclamation of cultural values and urban planning in the Arabic Gulf region. With the discussions of the previous chapter on Lefebvre's three aspects of socially produced space and the politics of public space and culture, this chapter brings together all three of the intellectual stages and process of the research that are based on the hypothesis of a philosophical theory that forms a structure of conceptual design creation. Always targeting towards the nucleus of the goal which is that of cultural consideration, the chapter elaborates on the design process of Discovery and Definition from the point of view of urban planning professionals. The ultimate goal is the theoretical understanding of professionals' association with the elements of Identity, Consumption, Production, Regulation and Representation, the public's response, and the further justification of the Circuit of Culture methodology.

While the first half of this chapter shortly studies the interrelationships between these intellectual stages and the condition that takes place in the Arabian Gulf States, the second half is the one to specifically start touching upon the problem of space and urbanism in the GCC cities and in relation to the process of the Double Diamond design model.

Consequently, while noting the astonishing contemporary transformation of the GCC cities' architecture and urbanism (Katodrytis and Mitchell, 2015), and their criticism for "lavish construction schemes" (Wippel et al, 2016), some of the key questions that are being answered here include the following:

- What is/are the gap(s) between designers' intentions and public perceptions of those intentions?
- What are the most effective processes to help designers identify and clarify the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities?

- What design process model or method do urban planners in GCC cities mostly use?
- What kind of method, model or process can be recommended to minimise the gaps between the visions of urban planners and citizens' perceptions of how these cities should be?

After the above contemplations on space and urbanism, the methodology of the primary research begins to hold a solid justification, aiming to gather professionals' and the public's perception on the gaps of cultural context of public spaces in the GCC cities. This goal concentrates on the third intellectual phase of public perception and the aspects of socially produced space, investigated through the primary research findings that deal with questionnaires and interviews. The character and context of the questions are all a result of the knowledge and keywords extracted from the literature review of the current and previous chapter.

2.1. Space and Cultural Context

Public spaces of the urban environment have always been opportunities for people to feel and express the relationship between space and a corresponding cultural context. Cultural context relates to many categories of themes, which have been focus points of study regarding a variety of specifications. These specifications touch upon various levels of studies, including philosophy, sociology, semiology, anthropology and urban studies.

Cultural context may hold semiotic significance, when studying the relationship of objects with one another, or even the relationship of individuals with those objects. These relationships are all perceived according to the cultural background of individuals, and interpretations may vary significantly when cultural awareness is strong (Eco, 1979). Vice versa, urban residents may learn a lot about their cultural background even indirectly and subconsciously, when the spaces that surround them hold some semiotic significance. Such significance may pass hidden messages through those forms which are perceptually apparent; this happens because vision is a key sense (Gombrich, 1982), through which forms are apparently perceived and understood, whereas their meaning and significance may hold a variety of interpretations, histories, and layers of understanding. Therefore, space and cultural context become interrelated in a very mystified and at the same time true and realistic way (Gombrich, 1969).

Space may be also used to tell stories about the cultural context of an environment. This story-telling process has much to do with the sequential logic by which objects are being understood. Also Rossi very wisely stated, that “the emergence of relations among things, more than the things themselves, always gives rise to new meanings” (Rossi, 1985). When connecting such contemplations with semiotic researchers and theorists such as Umberto Eco, who studied the different kinds of relationships between spatial forms and culturally represented individuals, then new levels of urban interpretations came to rise. For example, there are ‘integral relationships’ that define a parallel and simultaneous interpretation between the spatial forms and the cultural objects that are being implemented. Therefore, all objects are treated as one single unit of environmental reality, creating a cohesive and expressive interpretation of cultural awareness and historical continuity (Eco, 1968).

Then there are also the semiotic speculations of ‘applied relationships’ between space and culture, in which the architectural objects are being perceived first, and then followed by some interpretational meaning that is perhaps initially hidden, and not perceived at first glance (Eco, 1968). This understanding of culture follows in a greater degree the story-telling process, using the objects to catch the attention of the viewers and to pass a message that may be comprehended according to the willingness of the individuals, or according to their abilities to comprehend.

Finally, there are those ‘related relationships’, in which there is a theme taking place within a public space, but it is standing alone, detached from the architectural elements. Temporary art installations that are trying to pass a cultural message of a momentary period of time are a perfect example of such means of execution.

In the contemporary city that is full of performative stimuli such as theatres, shops, exhibitions, sports, music, and club events, club events, culture acquires an open-ended style, representing perhaps in the form of an international exhibition, a demonstration of a variety of lifestyles within one given space. The result of these exhibitory spaces is the expression of cultural lifestyles, where specific, or a variety of ethnic identities, live and interact. With the existence of ethnic expression that is inspired by an environment, further cultural designing becomes inspired, resulting in a never-ending cycle of cultural creativity and urban expression.

Examples are presented in Coates’ *Guide to Ecstacity* (2003), in which he describes how a story becomes a building with references to both high and popular cultures. Specific examples in which culture inspires the creation of

space, take place for example in *The Metropole* and *Caffè Bongo* in Tokyo (Figure 2.1), which is a restaurant bar filled with surreal gatherings of objects such as antique fittings and furniture to reproduce a giant artifact wing; also *Noah's Ark* (Figure 2.2), a 1988 project of a restaurant bar in Sapporo built in order to resemble an Etruscan temple carved out of rock; or even *The Wall* in Tokyo (Figure 2.3), a 1990 spatial design of a project “which places a series of bars and cafes behind a fictional piece of Roman city wall” (Coates, 2003).



Figure 2.1: *Caffè Bongo, Tokyo* (Coates, 2013)



Figure 2.2: *Noah's Ark in Sapporo, 1988. Branson Architecture + Dan Sekkei Architects. Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan (Taro, 2015)*



Figure 2.3: *The Wall, Tokyo, 1990 (Nigel Coates, 2015)*

All of the above examples use culture in a broader, cinematographic sense of understanding, in order to attain global interpretations that are open for imagination and personal likeness. Therefore the two concepts of space and culture, which are both abstract in Coates' eyes and perhaps in present reality, come together to offer contemporary structures and spaces of fantasy that go beyond local traditions and pre-conceived perceptions of established architectural norms.

Culture, as has been noted by many theorists, is a rather difficult concept to define in any comprehensive, exhaustive way. It can refer to what makes people different and unique (Hall, 2003), and may often be expressed through the architecture and spaces that surround them. Culture often becomes symbolic, elaborated by Charles Jencks who speaks about architecture committed to communication and local culture through the example of Le Corbusier in Chandigarh, India and Ronchamp, France (Jencks, 2012). In these cases, cultural elements become symbolic layers of communication (Leontiadis, 2011), expressing emotions and feelings that people share, while helping them make value judgements of what counts as right, wrong, acceptable or civilized (Kaulius, 2013).

Culture, for a number of modern-time scholars who tried to improve upon the problems of its developing extinction, is the establishment of relationships between things, and the promotion of spatial discontinuities through isolated touches that express some historical process, meaning, and pattern (Alexander, 1979). It can be very well argued that this shifting of pattern is similar to what Zhang (2006) describes as the perception of space, which is looked from three "shifting" points of view; "conceived space, perceived space and lived space".

Therefore, at the effort towards understanding the organization of one given space, is to be able to investigate it from different perspectives that are considered to be moulded and crafted into an individual's mind according to the corresponding background of experiences, culture, knowledge and personal enlightenment. In fact, this cognition of a perceptual society that is based on past experiences, instinct and memory, is what distinguishes human nature from other living forms, making culture a strong conceptual concept that is understood by people who share common beliefs and preferences.

The word 'culture' is also used to designate sub-groups of people that partake of similar tastes and activities that express those preferences. Nowadays, 'popular culture' and the global sharing of information (internet) takes in a whole gamut of tastes, lifestyle preferences and mass consumption behaviour, which is very

hard to pin down and even harder to assign to specific groups or populations within cities.

What seems undeniable is that cities in our time have spawned a distinctive global urban 'culture' that is characterized by global chains such as Starbucks, McDonald's and H&M. At the same time, cultural theorists debate notions of the global/local divide, problematizing the ways in which globalisation have tended to erode regional, local cultures. The McDonaldization thesis (Ritzer, 2014), for instance, argues that a wave of standardized, homogenized products have swept away particularities of indigenous culture. Such views can be contested for their overly critical views of global big business and 'exoticisation' of local culture (Archer and Francis, 2006).

Perhaps in a globalized world, meaningful spaces are those that express the contemporary multi-cultural reality of the cross-global situation. Or perhaps, meaningful spaces are those, which retain a place's identity through time, able to adjust to contemporary realities while still expressing a historical and rich cultural background. Nigel Coates, in his *A Guide to Ecstacity* (2003), in a way rebels against the pre-determined norms of meaningful spaces, through a process of re-imagining the city as a dynamic cross-cultural political empowerment of all things found in fragments of cities around the world.

As the contemporary reality is starting to lose its cultural values and urban spaces are starting to become contextually lost, Coates speaks of meaningful spaces in a non-physical way, juxtaposing unrelated sites similarly to the juxtaposition of a television's countless channels.

We're talking about time and space collapsing into one another, and freeing yourself to enjoy sensorial maelstrom. Then, amidst all this motion, you will find the space to check your sense of reality. Places crop up within this vectored cat's cradle. These are the alleys, gullies and conduits of the urban condition connected through its bazaars, linking basements and adjacent rooms. Private spaces switch to being public; a door opens as a parallel reality; Brick Lane turns into Kalbadevi. Heaven turns into Ipanema, Meji Dori into 8th Avenue.(Coates, 2003).

Coates suggests a whole new dimension of meaningful spaces within cities, which helps us define meaning and culture from a new and different dimension of imagination, innovation, and cultural abstraction, as reality's situation calls for. He puts meaning into the motion and constantly changing forms of the urban fabric, calling observers to free themselves from pre-conceived cultural norms, in pursuit of creating their own guidelines of cultural understanding. This idea is

in fact very appropriate to this present dissertation, which tries to establish gaps in cultural identities, through the understanding of the level of comprehension of the viewers towards a city's syntax and structural pattern. Therefore, for Coates the city becomes like a maze; with its alleys, gullies and conduits – all of which offer stimuli for spatial interpretations and solid reference points for establishing senses of reality.

A seminal thinker of what he calls 'the science of space,' Henri Lefebvre's work stands as an exemplar of how a philosophically rigorous conception of space (and its different conceptualisations) can open up new insights into the ideological, political, cultural and social uses of physical space. Lefebvre offers a critique of how space is often used as an ideological and political tool to conceal capitalist forces of production. It represents, in his words, "the political (in the case of the West, the 'neocapitalist') use of knowledge" (1991). Most of us, he contends, are blind to this use of space because we forget that the word 'space' refers not only to the spatially defined realms but also to mental and ideological spaces that arise out of *forces of production*: labour, capital, wages. Indeed, 'space' in this sense 'implies an all-encompassing truth that is never unmasked or critiqued. It is an

[...] ideology designed to conceal that use, along with the conflicts intrinsic to the highly interested employment of a supposedly disinterested knowledge. This ideology carries no flag, and for those who accept the practice of which it is a part, is indistinguishable from knowledge. It embodies at best a technological Utopia, a sort of computer simulation of the future, or of the possible, within the framework of the real - the framework of the existing mode of production. The starting-point here is a knowledge which is at once integrated into, and integrative with respect to, the mode of production. The technological Utopia in question is a common feature not just of many science-fiction novels, but also of all kinds of projects concerned with space, be they those of architecture, urbanism or social planning.(ibid).

In a sense, this is the equivalent of a kind of global control over minds and hearts that is both inescapable under a capitalist system and also one that gives the illusion of control and freedom. This speculation is indeed very relevant to the study of the circuit of cultures on representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation and in relation to the construction of urban spaces and the walkman effect (Hosokawa, 1984) – which was the 1997 motivating framework for the cultural studies within the perception of urban occurrences. In fact, the walkman effect speaks of exactly this very situation of control over minds and hearts, by capturing one's sole attention through music, fully engaging, and allowing for no interruptions. Also suggested as an urban strategy

(Hosokawa, 1984), it has also been described as urban “auditized looking” (Bull, 2000), which affects the listener’s perception, which could otherwise be more traditionally perceived by sole eye contact, for example. In particular relation to urban spaces, Du Gay (2013) translates this phenomenon into “meanings and practices”, where the walkman effect may take on the role of an image, an idea or a concept, translating itself into a sign or symbol, which passes on messages of communication to people, in a variety of contexts. This further translates into the new creation of “sonic identity of our culture” through which urban planners are being motivated to create “visually based culture” in which the products of design are not pure structural and physical entities, but artefacts of inspiration (Belgiojoso, 2014).

Lefebvre delineates three forms of space: the physical, the mental and the social. While we may think of these three spheres as distinct, however, Lefebvre argues that each overlaps with the other and carries within them specific illusory qualities. In fact, all space treated by humans is (socially) produced. The physical spaces that seem easy to understand and use, already carry within them strong residues of mental constructs, conceptions, embedded prejudices and so on – social products, in other words. Further, every society can be said to *produce its own space* (Lefebvre, 1991). Space becomes a kind of crucible for a society’s beliefs, values and self-image. In this sense, they have agency within it. However, space, within the capitalist mode of production also takes on a “sort of reality of its own, a reality clearly distinct from, yet much like, those assumed in the same global process by commodities, money and capital” (ibid). Thus, money is both a tool of service and also one of domination. On the one hand, people can be said to design spaces mentally, using their imaginative powers and influencing the product, as it were; at the same time, space takes on its own character depending on the cultural context, constraints and accepted boundaries of public use and behaviour. Overlaying these factors is the power of the state to commission, allow, forbid or otherwise influence planning policy, urban design, city life, infrastructure, transport and so on. In these ways, (social) space, according to Lefebvre is concealed *qua* social product.

The whole process by which mental constructions and images become physical (in the form of urban artefacts such as parks, gardens, alleys, and so on) is therefore ideological: it is concealed from most people who use those spaces innocently. Space seems to have that innocence, as Lefebvre points out, but it is very far from being that. It only seems to be transparent:

(h)ere space appears as luminous, as intelligible, as giving action free rein. What happens in space lends a miraculous quality to thought, which becomes incarnate by means of a design (in both senses of the word). The

design serves as a mediator between mental activity (invention) and social activity (realization); and it is deployed in space. (27/8).

Figure 2.4 below illustrates in a diagrammatic form the design's role that circulates among invention, realization and its deployed function in space, supporting Lefebvre's fundamental argument that material life holds a primary importance towards the production of conscious thought and action. Therefore for him, socially produced space is where the dominant relations of production are reproduced (Soja, 1989).

The conceptual triad shown below demonstrates a Marxist totality, supporting a unity among physical, mental and social space. The Spatial Practice shown at the peak of the triad is the physical form of the real space, forming the routes, networks and patterns of the social space. It is what we register with our senses, forming the material expression of social relations. The Representations of Space shown in the lower left node of the triad, otherwise referred to as 'conceived space', expresses the process of designing space as conceived by planners and technocrats through logic, maps and mathematics. This part of the triad is the dominant space in any society, taking its form through verbal signs, knowledge and codes. The design of it may be expressed abstractly, holding a strong concept, similarly to how geometry may inform the actual configuration of spatial practices, affecting the overall social and political practices. The Representational Space shown in the lower right node of the triad invested with symbolism and meaning, refers to space as produced and modified over time and through its uses. This portion of Lefebvre's Conceptual Triad expresses the lived spaces of inhabitants and users, therefore passively experienced. These spaces may or may not implement codes and they do not need to follow any rules of consistency or cohesiveness, as they seek to be triggered, changed or appropriated by the imagination of the users (Elden, 2004; Reynolds, 2007).

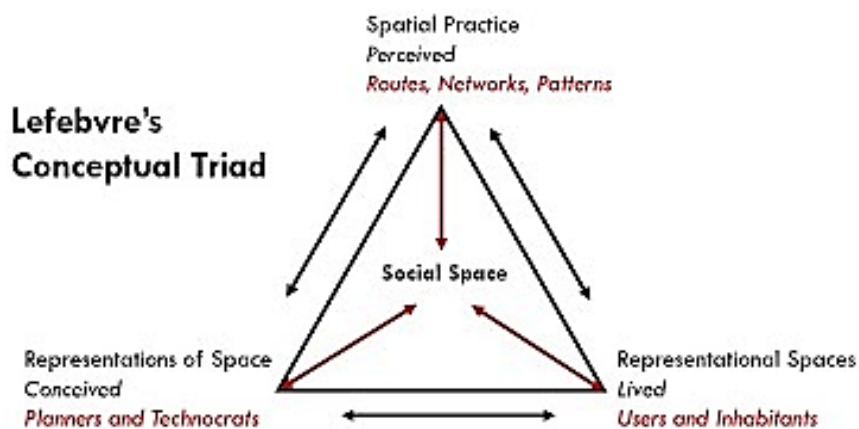


Figure 2.4: *Three aspects of socially produced space*

Here, the template for a kind of conceptualisation of 'design' emerges. It bridges what is mental and its realization in physical form. At the heart of this process is (social) production, the relations among people, power and places. How people relate socially produced space(s), however, remains a question that needs to be addressed. This question is directly linked to the complex notion of 'culture'. How does culture, space and people intersect to produce what we call 'design'? Some solutions come through Charles Jencks' interpretation of "double-coding" where the situation of multiple codes within the globalized environment creates a need of combining the modern universal technology with local culture (Jencks, 2012).

Lefebvre's Triad provides a framework for analyzing hospice space and interconnections between architecture, landscape and social relations (McGann, 2016) in a cyclic process in which space is always changing as conceptions, perceptions and lived experiences change (Milgrom, 2008). The above speculations are very relevant to the situation of the GCC cities, where individual realms contribute differently to the production of space according to a variety of different local qualities and attributes, and according to each time period.

A further theme in the spatial politics of urban design is the constitution of 'public' versus 'private' space. Urban spaces may well be defined as *public* spaces but are they necessarily so? This question is important to consider because different cultures have different conceptions of what constitutes the public, the private and everything in between.

In fact, the public space in Western culture has, since the time of the Greeks, acted as the site of democratic participation – the *polis* or *agora*. As Low (2006) points out, however, the *polis* of ancient Greece was not really 'public' in the sense of being accessible to all and sundry. Women, slaves and others of the lower orders were excluded from some of the spaces; only a certain privileged class of elites was given access. The malls, streets, plazas and other public spaces we recognise in most modern cities today are more democratic from this point of view, although here, too, many of the "constituents" of those spaces are privately-owned and regulated. Today, we still use the expression 'take to the streets' to mean the act of joining or organizing a mass protest of some sort. Mass protests and demonstrations still take place in places where the public can gaze upon those who participate and democratic rights to dissent and debate are enacted in those spaces as well.

There is a strong association between public spaces and cultures of democracy (Parkinson, 2012). At the same time, the literature on public space and culture is strongly Western European, deriving much of its impetus from cases and studies

in the U.S and elsewhere in the Western world. Although ethnographic studies such as Low's (2000) study of Latin American spaces and newer studies based in Asian contexts (Lai et al., 2013) are notable exceptions to the rule, it remains true to say that there exist very few studies of Arab public spaces from this perspective. A detailed discussion of 'culture' is included in the next section; suffice to say at this point that public space in the Arab context is far less well-explored than it is in the Western context.

Some points, however, are helpfully raised in the rich literature on the politics of urban space. First, there is the question of how public spaces are designed (or not) with the excluded sections of society in mind: the homeless, the slum-dwellers, the immigrant workers or transient workers. How would they participate in public discourses and debates in urban spaces that privilege certain classes and groups? Are they also 'inhabitants' that have an equal say as anybody else in the way urban spaces are designed and used? Do they feature in urban designers' intentions and visions, and if so, how?

Secondly, how would urban designers access 'cultures' that are different from those of the mainstream? Would these even be easily identified in the Arab context? If so, how would this occur? Thirdly, and perhaps the most pertinent to a discussion on local culture, how are we to theorize the making or re-making of public spaces by inhabitants who are not even from the Gulf (i.e. not born and bred there)? As Nagy (2006) observes,

Visitors and even long-term residents in the cities of the Arab Gulf commonly, and accurately, comment that most of the people they meet in the course of their visit are not in fact from the Gulf. A visitor to Qatar's capital, Doha, is likely to be assisted at the airport by a Nepalese luggage handler, driven to their hotel by a Yemeni taxi driver, greeted by an Indian front-desk clerk and checked into a room prepared by a Sri Lankan housekeeper.

The fact of the reliance of the Gulf Cooperative Council cities on immigrant labour makes a definition of local culture tricky due to the proportions of natives in relation to working foreigners. Some statistical data gathered in 2008, showed a total of 50.6 per cent of foreigners in Saudi Arabia; a 83.2 per cent of foreigners in Kuwait; a 76.7 per cent of foreigners in Bahrain; a 74.6 per cent of foreigners in Oman; and an 85.0 per cent of foreigners in the United Arab Emirates (Winckler, 2010). Yet, it would not be quite accurate to deny the existence of something like 'Qatari culture' or 'Omani culture'.

These questions are thrown into sharp relief by the segregation of populations in GCC cities according to the richer locals, professional expatriates and other

migrants. Spatial configurations reflect how each group perceives itself in relation to others and also how the political order perceives each of them:

The spatial distribution of social groups provides a useful starting-point for an inquiry into diversity in the cities of the Gulf. Methodologically, a focus on residential distribution serves as a material lens through which more abstract expressions of diversity can be viewed. Theoretically, the relationship between social and spatial forms has been extensively theorised in fields as far-reaching as archaeology, sociology and urban planning. Recent literature on 'global cities', for example, generally describes newly transnationalising cities as comprising a multiplicity of cultural environments, each serving various populations or housing particular activities (Nagy, 2006).

Nagy (2006) concludes in her study of Doha, therefore, that “multiple frameworks’ would be necessary for accommodating social diversity and the planning of urban spaces for residents. The social differentiation, class differences and religious context of Gulf cities are played out in urban spaces and show the agency involved in making them work. She observes, finally, that “to understand patterns of residential distribution, we need to combine our understanding of policy-making and planning with research into the lived experiences of urban residents”.

Many of the insights in this study can be extrapolated into other Gulf cities although, of course, important differences exist between them. It is fruitful, perhaps, to speak in this context of ‘designscapes’ that can incorporate lived experiences with the kind of place branding that has transformed the fortunes of other cities like Singapore, Barcelona and Amsterdam (Julier, 2008).

In this context, urban designers have been drawn to another constellation of concepts: ‘urban designscapes’ and ‘aesthetic urbanism’ (Julier, 2005). These signal a shift from thinking about design as a product-centred process or methodology to one that ‘scales up’ dramatically to incorporate the “aesthetic orchestration of systems” (ibid). By doing this, the private as well as the public realms of design consumption are included at several levels. In the 1990s, theorists were not occupied with showing how the regeneration of public spaces was tied to how the public perceived them, ironically enough. Instead, decisions were taken top-down rather than bottom-up. The private tastes of public citizens gradually filtered into the info-sphere and public communications domain, facilitated greatly by social media and the Internet. To bring the private and the public realms of participation together requires a model that includes the physical, visual, tactile and sensorial dimensions of place, as Nagy (2005) argues:

A consideration of the term, 'urban designscares' provides a conceptual model for looking at how public and private consumption are connected within the framework of design-led regeneration, how the actor networks of agglomerations produce aesthetic consent and what kind of aesthetic consent this might be.

The concept of 'aesthetic consent' leads to other interesting ways of considering the role of local views in shaping urban design. Here, urban design and architectural processes aim to use the hardware of buildings, the streets and the public spaces as means through which a city can differentiate and communicate, through the conceptual integration of marketing strategies and place branding (Julier, 2005). Cities in the UK, for instance, draw upon a range of actors in devising their campaigns, especially within the fields of culture and science, in which new facilities have been set up, as for example the Baltic Gallery (Figure 2.5), aiming to encourage the development of cultural activities and industries (Punter, 2009).



Figure 2.5: The *Baltic Gallery*, Gateshead, UK (Shaefer, 2005)

Lash observes that 'culture' was now to be considered in three-dimensional terms: as much tactile as visual or textual, all around us and inhabited, lived in rather than encountered in a separate realm as a representation (Lash, 2002).

Thus, culture is, in a sense, that which is *inhabited*. Culture encompasses all elements that constitute the lived experience. Although this conceptualization appears overly totalizing and generalizing – can ‘culture’ mean *all* lived experience and hence, not mean very much at all? – it actually denotes something quite specific. It is that which is not defined by ‘representation’. Lash is setting up an ontological contrast between that which is experienced and that which is ‘represented’.

Yet, as we shall see in later sections, and as explained by other theorists such as Richard Johnson and Paul du Gay (2013) culture *is* a form of representation. Put another way, ‘culture’ is not simply that which is lived – it is precisely that which *is* ‘represented’ by all kinds of media and communications. This view of culture has gained currency in media studies, cultural studies, management, sociology and other fields in the arts, humanities and social sciences and holds explanatory power as to how ‘culture’ gets produced, reproduced and disseminated throughout societies and peoples. What this conceptualization of culture leaves out is the sense of its aesthetic richness (Lash, 2002).

For the moment, these two apparently contrastive views of ‘culture’ can be held jointly while we examine how urban space and culture intersect.

2.2. Culture and Space

A cultural background may be a manipulator of the physical environment, as it acts as preset knowledge towards the perception of a given space and the image-making process. Kevin Lynch, in his *The Image of the City*, places this manipulation on several factors that may be in fact influenced by age, sex, culture, occupation, temperament, or familiarity (Lynch, 1960). The presence of culture then, directly affects the image that one individual creates in the urban spatial context, and vice versa, urban planners must and should be knowledgeable on the culture behind a space in order to be driven to create appropriate spaces of habitation and everyday use.

As stated by Lynch (1960), “public images” are perceived by a large number of people, and therefore should represent a physical reality of “a common culture, and a basic physiological nature.” Culture and space, according to the same author, have been influenced together by systems of orientation which have been widely used throughout the world and through different landscapes.

Culture is also established by the spatial form of landscape that surrounds a particular city, as it forms a “social role” and a named environment that is familiar to all who inhabit the city. “The landscape serves as a vast mnemonic system for the retention of group history and ideals.” Furthermore, details of the surrounding countryside are cues to myths, all hinting to sources of a common culture (Lynch, 1960).

The process of globalization has had profound and possibly irreversible effects upon the lifestyles and consumption choices of citizens across the world. This phenomenon, as argued in the previous chapter, has affected many parts of the developing world. Although the literature on cultural change, assimilation and localisation is still in an emerging phase of development, in-depth research and study of the effects and implications of globalisation upon the cultures of design with the Arabian Gulf states is significantly under-developed. As explained, this gap in the literature offers an opportunity to add to existing knowledge about how the design of urban spaces link to cultural drives and imperatives.

It is widely recognised by researchers that globalisation has myriad and contradictory effects, depending on one’s intellectual and cultural orientation, context, locale and values (Appadurai, 1996). For millions, globalisation has brought greater material prosperity, political transparency, technological advancements and new opportunities, including the increase of traffic among disciplines, regions and institutions that is due to the growing access of information and knowledge (Appadurai, 2013). For others, it has meant redundancies, loss of control over one’s habitat and professional occupation, intensification of work pressures and cultural dislocation (Sassen, 1998). All these effects carry a paradox in that as time zones become universal (trading takes place simultaneously in the major financial centres of London, New York, Zurich, Tokyo and Singapore) while work cultures can remain rather localized. To put it simply, globalization creates a kind of place-less place for many people. As more and more of us migrate online and into cyberspace for many aspects of our lives, we feel both very near to others but are also deterritorialized in terms of our cultural moorings and identities. As noted by Sassen (1998) in her provocative piece on ‘The Global City: the De-nationalizing of Time and Space’, globalisation represents a “tearing away of the ‘context’ or the ‘surrounding’ and its replacement with the fact of the global”.

The balance that has to be struck by architects, urban planners and designers between the global and the local is the focus of this chapter. Whatever one’s views are on the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation, it is clear that it has profound impacts on how individuals and communities live and locate their

place in the world. The word 'place,' in particular carries particular resonance in the case of urban design and cities.

As millions continue to migrate from rural regions to cosmopolitan cities, people's sense of themselves inevitably changes. In an important sense, one's lived environment is not only what one inhabits; it also inhabits one. Cities, in particular, draw human beings like never before. Today, over 54% of the world's population lives in cities (United Nations, 2014), making our era the most industrialized and urbanized in history. This industrialization and urbanization has created various shifts affected by the media and the underpinned physical spaces, and consequently affecting the overall cultural phenomenology and significance of otherwise invariant structures and places (Seamon, 2006). Great professional evolution takes places within these new phenomenological realities however there is a question of how cultural qualitative standards can keep the identity of an individual or group culturally intact.

Cultural commentators and business gurus have lauded the city as a force for good: greater employment opportunities, a crucible for creative and entrepreneurial talent, a hotbed of innovation and economic dynamism (Florida, 2002). There is no doubt that global cities attract both the highly mobile, high-earning professional as well as the much less empowered and mobile underclass. Both groups (and everybody in between) sustain the complex and massive infrastructure and technology that keeps cities humming and functional.

Other scholars, notably Sassen (1996, 1998) and Zukin (2010) have argued for a far more pessimistic view of globalisation and its effects on urban design and architecture. In Sassen's view, globalisation stands for a "narrative of eviction" (Sassen, 1998), characterised by mis-location, fractured identity and economic as well as political powerlessness. In this view, "Global cities are the sites for the overvalorization of corporate capital and the further devalorization of disadvantaged economic actors, both firms and workers" (Sassen, 2006). Zukin (1995) echoes such sentiments, stating that she sees too many instances in New York of people, streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces being "[...] upscaled, redeveloped and homogenized to the point of losing their distinctive identity." Zukin represents a school of scholars on urban places that tries to defend 'authenticity' and 'local culture' against the marauding forces of globalisation.

In pursuit of resolving the negative effects of globalization, we should keep in mind that the term should not be confused with that of homogenization. At the same time though, globalization involves a variety of instruments of homogenization which are used by local political and cultural economies, "only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free

enterprise, fundamentalism, etc.” Appadurai distinctly relates this syndrome to the problems of heritage within a globalized society, in which “the central feature of global culture is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another”(Appadurai, 1990).

Numerous other scholars have written about this situation of a ‘geography of nowhere’ (Kunstler, 1994), resulting from this very lack of authenticity and cultural identity of the ongoing globalization expansion; a direction in which cities started from the once coherent communities that were well established and then were led towards a situation where no place was much different than the other. This created urban zones of characterless realities and machine-systems of purely functional behaviour. This homogeneity of urban behaviour is the very essence of the problem of globalization and has been tackled by scholars and designers who have been trying to find solutions towards the re-establishment of relationships and pure identity within urban places and spaces (Wilson and Peters, 2005). Christopher Alexander of the University of California at Berkeley is one academic who has deliberated upon an alternative vision, where urban space elements begin to form individualized identities that are all connected with one another in such a way that cultural characteristics are brought out, rather than being hindered.

Alexander (1977) argues:

The elements of this language are entities called patterns. Each pattern describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the solution to that problem in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice.

These repetitions are perhaps outcomes of comfort patterns; consequences of psychological security that have resulted from repetitions of habitual societal behaviour and unplanned processes of faulty perceptual evolution. For the very reason that urban patterns are not always a result of coherent cultural understanding and urban encryption of true needs, there is a need for contemporary perceptual innovation, offering new ground for spatial interpretations and new identities of visual comfort and inherent security (Mumford, 2009).

The question, however, that naturally arises as a result of these debates is: *whose* identity is at stake and why does it matter, ultimately? To answer these questions, we turn first to rather different conceptualisations of space and place. To a number of urban theorists whose work shall now be considered, the global

gives rise to many localities. The global is neither oppositional to the local nor vice versa. In the postmodern era, the global generates multi-scalar juxtapositions of territories and people, thus completely reinvigorating notions of how globalised spaces can be infused into local cultures.

The processes of globalisation over the past three decades have left very few countries and cities untouched by its influence. This is particularly true for the Gulf cities of Dubai, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Petrodollars and ambitious, visionary royal families, combined with a building boom and the influx of investments have seen the Gulf cities develop rapidly into destinations in their own right. Dubai is often held up as a beacon of the kind of ambitious design concept that the oil-rich Gulf States can hope to achieve. Iconic buildings like the Burj-al-Arab (Figure 2.6), the Palm Oasis – Palm Island (Figure 2.7) and some of the world’s most lavish entertainment venues, restaurants, and beaches have served to seal its reputation as the playground of the rich and the famous. Since the 1990s, Dubai has progressed rapidly to become an important regional player in tourism, infrastructure development and a convention and exhibition hub for some of the world’s ‘state-led entrepreneurial approach’ (Pacione, 2005).



Figure 2.6: *Burj Al Arab* Dubai (Ito, 2007)



Figure 2.7: *Atlantis, The Palm Island* (Humphreys, 2014)

The notions of 'culture' extensively discussed in this chapter take on an intriguing aspect when considering the case of Gulf cities like Dubai. According to Davis (2006), imagineered urbanism has fed into massively artificial snow-domed mountains, entertainment hotspots and entire islands devoted to hedonistic living on a scale previously unimagined. An army of expatriate workers build these visions at a frenzied pace, further adding to the sense of dislocation and haste. In such cases, confusion and anxiety can be the result among local populations, as this excerpt from a study of the impact of globalization upon the fast-developing Asian economies of the late 1980s and 1990s (South Korea, Singapore, Japan) shows:

In recent decades, especially in the 1990s, Asian countries' new policies of development have coincided with the rapid globalization of a late-capitalist market economy, of the electronic media and communication industry, as well as a general distintegration of all established notions of boundary, nation, identity, morality...Modernization in many Asian countries, which has been considered as a process of re-enforcement of national identity, sometimes even religious and ideological identity, is ironically accompanied by a general deconstruction and disintegration of established values and cultural modes... 'theme-parkization' of urban space, which mixes cultural clichés and mere consumerism of difference is a clear symptom of...an anxiety, a kind of horror vacuii (Hanru and Obrist, 2007).

The paradoxical effects of globalization upon Asian identity are clearly identified here as largely frightening, negative and disempowering for Asian citizens who, while having benefitted greatly from the economic prosperity unleashed by globalization, have also suffered some of its less salutary effects.

It is also notable that – with increasing globalization – people everywhere are becoming more attuned not only to what democracy can bring but also what it takes away. Urban design is not immune from the mass movements we see in the world today for greater transparency and civic engagement. Any large gaps between designers’ visions and public views are more, rather than less, likely to be picked up by consumer surveys and other kinds of consultations now commonly undertaken as a matter of course by governments, councils, municipal authorities and tourist boards in many developed countries.

How unused or disused spaces should be put to better use for the good of the community is another matter of debate. In the following section, we look at processes of involving users’ perceptions in this area.

2.3. Circuit of Culture

Culture is clearly a multi-layered concept. It is not the author’s purpose here to provide anything approaching an exhaustive account of the literature on the subject; rather, the focus here is on how the concept takes on meaning when humans craft spaces to reflect a variety of purposes.

The literature indicates that culture is inseparable from what we do every day: rituals, routines, public and private ways of negotiating a whole series of conditions. These observances are themselves expressions of images, beliefs and values that many societies do not make explicit and yet which help us make sense of our environment in every moment. In this way, objects and physical spaces (Lefebvre), take on meanings in our heads. They thus partake of what Du Gay et al. (1997; 2013) calls “The Circuit of Culture,” a highly influential concept first mooted as a textbook written for the Open University but which has come to interest researchers and students from diverse fields outside cultural studies: cultural historians, marketing and branding researchers, sociologists and management theorists.

In the circuit of culture, a set of interlinked concepts circulate in a seamless loop of meanings.

Operating within the flow of an endless circuit that brings out cultural meanings, these five domains play a crucial role in this process are 'cultural intermediaries': these are professionals in the advertising, marketing and design industry. These intermediaries have tremendous influence and impact on how products and spaces are consumed and reproduced in our societies.

The role these intermediaries play in the regulation, consumption, identity, production and regulation of cultural processes is highly pertinent to the discussion at hand. Urban designers, too, are cultural intermediaries of a particularly influential kind since they create, design and execute plans for public spaces. At the same time, they are increasingly under pressure to take into account the views, opinions and preferences of the 'publics' that use those spaces.

However the Circuit of Culture framework requires further elucidation in order to assess more accurately the extent of its usefulness for the purposes of addressing the author's research aims and objectives. To begin with, the framework was designed to explain the rise and mass consumption of the Sony Walkman, a mobile device that took the world by storm in the 1980s and which has since secured iconic status as the precursor to modern-day equivalents like the Apple iPod. The possibility of listening to music through headphones that could work anywhere, anytime, was revolutionary in that time. It came to be seen as a symbol of what was 'cool' and cutting-edge. Du Gay (2013) and his colleagues showed how technological innovation pioneered by Sony used sophisticated feedback calibration systems to tap into a particular consumer identity; as this process was occurring, simultaneous controversies were taking place about the private/public boundaries of how the Sony Walkman was supposed to be seen and used, leading to tweaks in production and subsequent changes in consumption. Next follows a more detailed discussion on the five elements of the Circuit.

2.3.1. Representation

As mentioned above, it has been noted by Hall (2003) that part of what makes up 'culture' is not just a set of practices or objects but also a system of shared symbols or signs that allow individuals, groups, communities and societies to convey meaning. Such meanings are most commonly expressed through language (not necessarily verbal or textual): language referring broadly to a whole array of communicative tools, from emotions to facial expressions to gestures, dress and music. These signs help us represent meanings, both to

ourselves as well as to others. Importantly, they allow meanings to be shared (Du Gay et al., 2013).

As the modern city is being culturally evolved and accepting a variety of different stimuli and external affiliations, new urban interventions are looking for new sources of representation, but often may have a superficial engagement with cultural connections, that relate to some specific concept and reasons behind planning choices. The freedom of conceptual choice has made the need for freedom from stereotypical representation ever stronger, which can cause the confusion regarding the sharing of meanings, the use of communicative tools, and the continuation of the profound idea of representational cities of strong identities.

One of the first representations of the 'ideal city' was illustrated by the model of Leon Battista Alberti (1991) and is an excellent example of the need behind creating representational prototypes that through symbols or signs convey meanings that express different cultures (Figure 2.8). Alberti's 'Cittá Ideale' is rendered in an almost perfectly symmetrical composition of certain rigidity and spatial emptiness, but appearing almost dead without the animation of actors in the setting (Bollerey, 2000). The illustration is a great example of representation being defined by one sole viewer; with the incorporation of actors within the image, the representational value immediately changes, as it varies according to the individualization of the cultural background of those involved. This is where psychology becomes involved as well.



Figure 2.8: *Tavola di Baltimore, veduta di cittá ideale; "Cittá ideale", mid-XV c. Unknown painter (perhaps Leonardo da Vinci) (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore)*

Such messages of representational value are also expressed by Giorgio de Chirico paintings (Merjian, 2014), which bring out representations of expression of solitude and anxiety of an empty stage (Figure 2.9), quietly waiting for the actors to come out and begin performing (Marinoni, 2007) (Figure 2.10).



Figure 2.9: “*Melancholy of a Beautiful Day*”, Giorgio de Chirico, 1913, Paris, France (Wikiart: online)

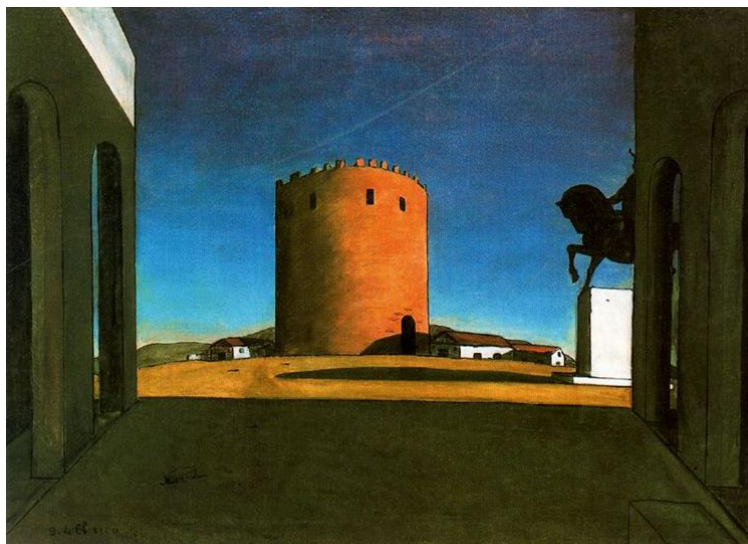


Figure 2.10: “*The Red Tower*”, Giorgio de Chirico, 1913, Peggy Guggenheim Foundation, Venice, Italy (Wikiart: online)

However, illustrational means of representation are only an intermediary of the urban space and of the cultural impact of people involved. Even architecture itself as a standing object, is only one more intermediation; one medium between the message communicated, the concept, and the ‘real thing’ itself (Andreadou and Karamanou, 1997). For this reason alone, urban designers and planners are not to remain on the theories and practicality of representation through paper drawings and listed notes, but must investigate deeper cultural impacts and representational layers of meaning within public spaces of constant transformation and interiority. Such investigations may involve pragmatic interpretations of public space design showing the interaction among partial

interests in the generation, care and use of localised common goods to stimulate public space transformation (Serreli, 2013).

Deep cultural impacts and representational layers of meaning that demonstrate another level of transformation are evident in European cities where urban spaces of strong historical importance are treated as contemporary loci of public action “made durable” (Madanipour et al., 2013). Therefore, the representation of the urban space itself becomes a concretization of heritage. Leontiadis (2015) describes this as “the concretization of heritage [which] takes the form of living, organic and effective memory of members, persons, events, beliefs, rites or social rules which are components of its identity”.

This ‘representational interiority’, as Jarzombek (2000) calls it, is the tool to be used in order to analyze the context – whether that is of urban, artistic, historical or psychological form. The interpretation of urban spatial representations thus acquires even epistemological domains that those of the individual elements that define them. This representational context analysis has been contemplated even since the time of Plato, who was one of the first scholars to question the mimetic and narrative representations of the environmental surroundings in relation to human actions (Worth, 2005). For Plato, pure narration took the form of representation by mimesis, therefore justifying all aesthetics as faithful interpretations of nature around (Herman et al., 2010). Using this Platonian theory, all contemporary actions should mimic the processes of the ancestors whose marks are still evident within the urban fabric. Therefore, urban identity evolves naturally through the common frame of mimetic actions.

Furthermore, meanings circulate and are constantly produced and reproduced through different *media* (Hall, 2013) and *systems of representation* (ibid.). Thus, we receive, interpret and re-interpret meanings not only through the popular press, television, radio, film, books and so on but also through shared cultural codes. Language does not refer solely to what is communicated through words, spoken and written. It also refers to any system of signs such as photography, dance, and museum exhibitions (ibid.). How we represent things and others to ourselves is a crucial means of what we call our ‘identity’.

In fact, this effort for cultural representation, when incorporated within the context of public spaces, is the touch that is often expressed through what contemporary scholars call civic art defined through time in many ways, and holding many meanings, including the description of solitary artefact in urban landscapes; urban compositions of a grander scale; urban art in the form of graffiti or ornamentation; and land art (Leontiadis, 2011). Leontiadis has tackled the tracking down of these civic art definitions from modern times up until contemporary incorporation, coming to the conclusions that such representations embody the perceptual interpretations of the surrounding atmosphere and of human emotion, applied into emulative and systematic compositions of new forms (Leontiadis, 2010; 2012). One realized example of such representation is Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin, Germany (Figure 2.11), demonstrating a cultural reality of a challenging era through "highlighting human loss and material absence" (Chametzky, 2008); here it is clearly seen that architectural expression describes the perceptual interpretation of a historical event, embodying a cultural reality that exerts human emotion. Within the context of a multicultural community, the creation of urban spaces has strong potentials of creating experiences of global and cultural visions that bring out "sophistication and contemporaneity" (Hall, 2006). The potentials of cultural urban representation may thus become extremely interesting and almost theatrical, and as expressed by Kugelmann (2000) and Young (1993), as a historically-themed, presenting enough aspects for effective local identification.



Figure 2.11: *Jewish Museum Berlin, Berlin, Germany, 1999, Studio Libeskind.
Client: Stiftung Juedisches Museum Berlin (Libeskind.com: 2016)*

2.3.2. Identity

Representation is inextricably tied to personal identity. Identity is a sense of who we are, how we see ourselves, a way of belonging in the world. Although the word often connotes a fixed state of being, it is, in fact, a creative *process* rather than a product: identity/identities can be fluid, dynamic and changeable. Although society lays out official markers of identity such as birth names, age, gender, religion and so on, individuals' identities are far less easy to demarcate or define.

Kevin Lynch defines identity in relation to the urban context in his successful and noteworthy work *The Image of the City* (1960), in which he states that any environment may be analyzed through three different ways, of which *identity* holds the primary and foremost mention, with the other two being *structure* and *meaning*. In fact, an identity of a place is the collection of those characteristics of sums of objects that differentiate themselves from other objects, from the point of view of the observer. This collection of characteristics holds an interpretative representation by Aldo Rossi's "Analogous City" (Figure 2.12), vindicating the role that must be played by the collective memory of citizens in the process of designing their city (Rossi, 1985). Shown as a collage of significant memories and places, this image and theoretical base becomes in part the origin of evolution of Lynch's interpretation of identity, providing orientation in a living space. For Lynch, a space "must be sufficient, true in a pragmatic sense, allowing the individual to operate within his environment to the extent desired." Consequently, the attribute of identity leads to an effective memory of a place. In other words, the construction of a mental image, leads to the famously called attribute of a city's "imageability" (Lynch, 1960).

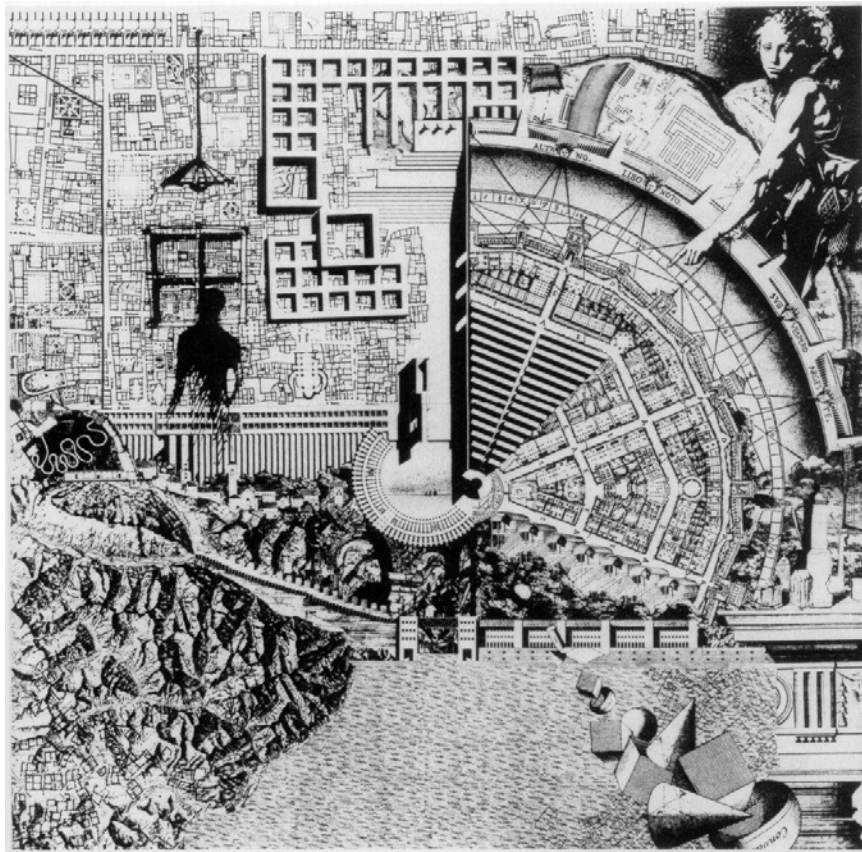


Figure 2.12: Aldo Rossi's "Analogous City", 1979 (Archiobjects.org, 2015)

When speaking about the identity of a city and the public spaces and places that define it, we inevitably begin to search its characteristics that make it distinct from another one; its physical forms and functions that are expressed in its cultural, spiritual or symbolic background (Mihelic and Pollak, 2010). This search for an open space's identity may very well be the *Genius Loci* that gather together the roots, the substance and the embodiment of the *topos* into one organic unity that defines the character of the place. This semiotic comprehension of the atmosphere to be identified is the overlapping of the symbolic and the practical; the situation where the space's functions become its sign (Viana, 1997). Going back to Lynch (1960), such semiotic elements of identity expression may be hidden or evident within the shape, colour, or arrangement which composes an outstanding impression, a powerful structure, or some sort of a "highly useful mental image" that enhances the legibility and visibility of an urban environment.

It is inevitable searching this identity of an urban environment within the past, through heritage elements of pre-defined qualities, where the public environment might appear as a fragmentary survival of the memory of a lost city. In cities where this past appears still in the eyes of the viewers, but in an abstract

form of functional events, the images might bring forth a situation of mythologization and nostalgic memory (Yawn, 2011).

However, searching for identity through lost remnants of heritage that is no longer purely identifiable and visually present is dangerous towards the re-establishment of cultural meaning with the open spaces of urban fabrics, as the outcomes are often those of “imitation, false naturalism, the insertion of falsely decorative elements, statues, or false works of art, urban equipment, or illumination that trivializes the space, elements that are inappropriate for the site and the particularities of the project” (Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou and Yerolympos, 2000). These outcomes are results of regressive cultural re-interpretations that hold much danger towards “gypertrophic and undifferentiated megalopolises” (Miotto and Muret, 2000). Such examples may be found in any contemporary city that seems to lack symbols of identity and cultural affiliation within urban design interventions.

Consequently, the concentration, as stated once again by Lynch (1960), should be that of a solid establishment of identity and structure within the mental perception of the observer, in order “to illustrate the special relevance of this quality to the particular case of the complex, shifting urban environment.” This is much similar to the contemplations also made by Coates on this speculation on matters of identity, where the past should be respected and referenced upon. In fact, the past becomes the reference point with which the present identity of a city is being understood and inspired upon, providing “a perceptual undercurrent that makes sense of the new”, combining “vulnerability and curiosity” (Coates, 2003) in one unifying city.

2.3.3. Production

Production within the context of urbanism may relate to the relationship between the city and the industry, which causes urban transformation and manufacturing activity. The definition and redefinition of production is often an element that influences the spatial, economic and social context of an urban cultural reality (MIT, 2014).

The ‘production’ that relates to a space, goes hand in hand with the next section, which relates to ‘consumption’, as the prerequisite of consumption, is that of production. This may related to any one of the following things that relate to the urban space: products, services, ideas, and experiences. As a consequence of the impacts of globalization described previously, it is important for retaining of spatial identity to maintain the cultural values that should stand beyond the

realities of industrial production; it is the swiftly growing rate of productive mania that should be fought in order to protect the qualitative habitation of a city.

Production should be used in a positive matter, as it is what remains, and as stated by Coates in his *Guide to Ecstacity* (2003) regarding cities of contemporary realities, “even when destroyed, their ruins cannot disguise the ideological battles that have shaped them.” In fact, contemporary contemplations on the notion of Production in relation to the cities’ realities should go steps beyond the over-realized perceptions of the cities of modernity of the 1920s and onwards, concerning “taylorized workers”. Even though the public space has been visited and re-visited since the more specific contemplations of CIAM 8’s concern on *The Heart of the City* (Sert, Rogers, and Tyrwhitt, 1952), the essence of qualitative production has been lost, but rather concentrating on “virtual realities’ without a scintilla of human reality” (Coates, 2003) involved.

Meanings on the notion of Production, according to Du Gay et al. (2013) are not fixed and unchanging. Rather, they are constantly produced between people and societies. Meanings circulate through a culture or set of cultures through production/consumption of these meanings. Production and consumption are two facets of the same coin, as it were. As Du Gay et al. (2013) explain, “production [...] is at the same time consumption and consumption is, at the same time, production”. They feed into each other in an endless loop: “one could not exist without the other”.

Therefore, production and consumption are part of their own circuit, belonging to the greater concept of the Circuit of Culture that is defined here in this dissertation. What a city produces, inevitably defines its culture and its ideological trend. Theorists such as Coates argue that societies must not be trapped into the specificities of what is produced and how it is produced, as this creates restrictive modes of creative interpretation among observers and inhabitants of any given city. He states that “we should give preference to diversity and freedom over the production of controlled space as the ultimate commodity” (Coates, 2003). Furthermore, it is important to dwell a bit more on the writings of this author, as he successfully tackles on the correct interpretation of production that comes in unison with the desired meanings of cultural extraction, criticizing the traditional production means of reworking building blocks of architecture in terms of the column, the arch, or the dome. Rather, architecture and the design of space through cultural context should be a “living art that interacts dynamically with the cultural waves of the time”, while respecting a place’s past (Coates, 2003).

This idea of production perhaps comes in opposition with possible debates on the traditional notions of urban planning (Freestone, 2000); but contemporary resolutions in pursuit of overcoming the cultural problems of the GCC cities find solutions in section 2.5 of this same chapter. The aim at this stage of the thesis is to continue to investigate the elements of the Circuit of Culture, in order to extract its true pursuits in relation to the context of urban spatial planning and cultural resolution.

2.3.4. Consumption

In this work, the notion of consumption is very strongly related to the interpretation and the cultural understanding of spaces within cities; those are the spaces in which consumption primarily takes place. As noted by Carter and Donald (1993), public spaces are places where eclecticism takes place, which is the careful selection of activities according to the cultural preferences of individuals' within cities. There, "consumption and leisure are meant to be constructed as 'experiences' (Carter and Donald, 1993), while outlining any kind of cultural differentiation from the point of view of the observer.

Consumption refers, broadly speaking, to the purchase, use or re-use of products, services, ideas and experiences in any culture, in other words, that which is produced. What is produced could not have any meaning unless it had an object, namely, the consumer. A car that is never driven, admired or painted, for example, is only a *car in-potentia*: it is yet to be realized as a product. Only when it comes into use can we speak of it as a product.

A further point is that consumption encompasses the non-material as well as the material. Thus, one may speak of consuming places, spaces and experiences – all these modes of consumption are now well-established areas of research in their own right in the marketing and design literatures. For example, there is the idea of neo-liberal expression through the increasingly high profile of consumption with regards to the emergence of a neo-liberal city due to the changing nature of urban governances (Ward, 2003). Thus, one may speak of consuming design in the sense that design is what comes into being at the point of use. This point is vital for the purposes of this argument presented in this work. As observed by Du Gay (2013): "design is centrally located at [the] point where consumption is articulated to production" (Du Gay, 2013) and it becomes part of the very fabric of the public realm (Gotham, 2005).

It has been argued primarily through recent studies, that consumption and cultural identity come hand in hand and nicely stated by Miles (2013) that

“consumption can only be fully understood in the context of a broader sociological process in which the very cities in which we live have themselves become branded entities”. In other words, the direction of consumption is what establishes the cultural identity of a city, its ‘moral compromises’ and its frameworks of daily lifestyle. Yasser Elsheshtawy, in *his Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle* (2009), criticizes the false direction of consumption through the use of malls that hold new cultural affiliation and no true punctuation of one’s true and inherent likings. Opposite to the pursuit of trying to relate urban spaces to cultural affiliation, seems to be the case of Dubai for example, where consumerism takes over human behaviour, becoming tempted to revolve their daily lives around superficial practices of materiality, rather than cultural involvement, traditional awareness and sentimental perception (Lee et al., 2013). The results are ambiguous and unstable states of identity, as well as what he calls a “cognitive acquisition”; “the imaginative prelude of actual buying.” (Elsheshtawy, 2009) It is interesting to quote here an excerpt by Crawford, meaningfully describing these public places of consumptions that have nothing to do with cultural affiliation and local identity:

Dramatic atriums create huge floating spaces for contemplation, multiple levels provide infinite vistas from a variety of vantage points, and reflective surfaces bring near and far together. In the absence of sounds from outside, these artful visual effects are contemplated by the ‘white noise’ of Muzak and fountains echoing across enormous open courts. The resulting ‘weightless realm’ receives substance only through the commodities it contains (Crawford, 1992).

The situation of the mall is a phenomenon that is seen and noted expansively within the context of newly established consumption centres. With an initial shift in the early 1950s when it started to become a preferred alternative for buying, the potentially creative process of consumption has started to turn into enclosed public spaces of cultural neutrality, rightly characterized by Celik et al. as “prevailed as internalized, privately managed surrogates for the public” (Celik, Favro and Ingersoll, 1994).

In the midst of such problems of globalization and fragmented identities, consumption must be regarded with care within the context of expanding cities, particularly in urban situations where the primary aim is to lure consumption flows into its space (Harvey, 1989). As deliberated by Jessop and Sum (2000), the risk of such lies within the boundaries of fragmented city environments that fall within the framework of globalized city characteristics of disproportionate realities. Another interesting speculation by MacLeod (2002) is that consumption then becomes pure perception that has nothing to do with the

functional reality of the urban context. This is what he describes as zones of 'urban glamour' of the neoliberal city that are the product of 'a highly selective and discriminating urban renaissance' (Miles, 2013).

There is a solution of applying culture-ideology of consumerism, where culture is used "as means of endowing commercial space" (del Cerro Santamaria, 2013); which would in a way take advantage of the existent restricted consumerist urban vision in order to lead the vision towards a different and more appropriate direction. Through the balancing of consumerism with other elements that embody the cultural realities of globalized and multi-cultural states, urban planning studies among other aspects, examine the relationship between architecture and society, seeking to satisfy the growing pressures of contemporaneity and globalization (Kaminer, 2011). This thesis suggests that through the balance of all elements of Identity, Representation, Consumerism, Regulation and Production, the cultural ideology of GCC cities may be improved towards more meaningful spaces.

2.3.5. Regulation

Regulation, as interpreted by Carter and Donald, is closely associated to themes of discipline, fortitude, and devotion to duty, "delivered in a diction which values social order and the exercise of stern political control, undercut by the flamboyance of metaphor and the banter of puns" (Carter and Donald, 1993).

The case of the Sony Walkman showed how production and consumption were also tied to issues of regulation. In this case, regulation centred within the boundaries between the private and the public. The early adopters of the Walkman faced curious or hostile stares from people as they listened to their devices on trains, buses and walking along the road. Nowadays, of course, we do not look twice at someone doing this, but several decades ago, someone with headphones on, seemingly lost in their private world, appeared strange and threatening. New technologies often call into question existing laws, rules of behaviour and cultural norms. Licensing, intellectual copyright, privacy, security and confidentiality in the age of digital data and social networking/media are all ongoing issues for governments, which also the civil societal groups need to address. Consequently, products must be part of the regulatory issues, due to their consumption by so many people across so many cultures, all coming from diverse backgrounds of customs and rules. This is highly relevant to urban planning processes, as urban planning schemes must consider all aspects of technological innovations that eventually play a part in the daily urban lives of inhabitants.

The regulation of public spaces is particularly pertinent to the discussion here, because culture is speculated in relation to space-specific situations within the context of a county, a town, a village, a school, a part, or a patch of grass where people gather for a specific or generalized purpose. Therefore all regulatory aspects that take place within these urban spaces should ideally deepen the notions of culture. On the contrary, in a globalized world of no cultural consideration, tensions are deepening among regulatory realities, causing urban spaces to be perceived as non-local, and as generalized spaces where almost everything goes.

The locality of public spaces may be influenced very much by those regulatory conditions that influence the perceptual security of open urban spaces, defining conditional spaces (of a specific purpose and of a specified cultural context) of fixed correlations. When one arrives to such place, each individual element within the urban fabric of open space should create an identifiable relation to the whole, becoming culturally expressive, affecting all three notions of place, placement and system (Teyssot, 2000).

These fixed correlations that are associated to perceptual security and cultural respect of regulations are breathing spaces (Arnheim, 1977) that establish comfortable and safe environments, visual centres, and other forms of perceptual structures that define compositions and intimate cultural experiences. The location of identifiable elements within spaces are the very 'quick sensory fix[es]' that Beckmann (1998) speaks about when deliberating upon perceptual orientation and clarification of theme, that concentrate the regulatory consciousness of people. This means that through people's realizations of cultural stability and visual identification within an urban environment, one's regulatory sense is further triggered, causing a conviction of urban order.

This situation seems to be highly related to legislative awareness within the civil urban context (Saura, 2011), creating a mental construct that consequently leads to less tension within city environments. The elimination of tension inevitably also affects the relationship of people moving within the urban environment, as perceptual interpretation of regulatory visual states and actions causes specific character attributed to specific environments. When strong visual and culturally-related narratives are extracted from these relationships, then all physical, muscular, sensory and psychomotor perceptions take place (Gubler, 2003). Consequently, the psychological state that is derived from fundamental regulatory principles, affects the degrees of accepted civic behaviour.

2.4. Urban Planning and Design Process

Given the issues raised above, it is important to consider the multiple dimensions of how city spaces are designed. Clearly, this is a complex issue because it involves a multiplicity of both state and non-state actors, agglomerations of capital flows, vested interests, cultural formations – ranging from museums, urban parks, mixed-use developments, theatres, galleries and others – as well as political constraints related to immigration, demographics, governance and so on and many others that form the stakeholders in an urban development project.

Developed in this way, the notion of scale takes on an important theoretical dimension: because the global and the local are ultimately different in terms of scale, it would be wrong to speak of the global colonizing or overpowering the local. In fact, as Lefebvre (1992) argues:

...the worldwide does not abolish the local...the local is never absorbed by the regional or even the worldwide level.

Whether or not this statement stands in the face of increasing globalisation and a networked global economy remains to be seen. It is widely recognized by urban theorists, economic historians and sociologists that there are both winners and losers in this game. Whilst ‘the hegemony of neo-liberal concepts of economic relations with its strong emphasis on markets, deregulation, and free international trade has influenced policy in the 1980s in the United States and Great Britain and now increasingly also in continental Europe’ (Sassen, 2010), there is very little research still on how countries outside these centres of influence address issues of urban design, city spaces and civic participation in those spaces.

Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) have tackled the problem of cultural globalization in terms of multilingualism relating to the notion of scale, cultural competence and interaction through social-linguistic analysis and interactional perspective theories, which are relevant to this dissertation. Concluding in their article that multilingualism is a result of the globalized environment and interactional emergence and not vice versa, leads to the suggestion that scalar judgments are what determined the contemporary values and the levels of cultural depth. Of course, the establishments of different scales have much to do with political structure and notions of power and control. If we accept that states structure spaces for political and civic ends, then how can a research agenda along these lines tackle citizens’ perceptions of urban design and the intentions

of designers? In this section on globalisation, there has been an effort to delineate some of the tensions between global forces and local culture, albeit in a slightly simplified manner. As this chapter goes on to show, these questions are complexly interwoven with questions of local identity.

A corollary of these questions relates to the question of 'culture'. As said previously, the tensions inherent in discussion of local culture and global forces take on particular urgency in cities of the Arabian Gulf where petrodollars have triggered massive expansion in the scale, scope and ambitions of cities (Davis, 2006). Dubai, for instance, is regarded as a spectacular city for its architecture and landscaping, seen nowhere else in the world. Elsewhere in that part of the world, a construction boom is taking place that appears to attract investment and tourism but which leaves the question of cultural identity unexplored. It is important, therefore, that we now turn to theories of how culture is produced and consumed. As we have seen, it is at the point where production and consumption converge that 'design' is articulated (Du Gay et al, 2013).

On this very articulation of consumption, Aldo Aymonino in his recent contemporary debates on the disagreements between culture and politics and the effects of identity and societal means of articulation, boldly states that the existence of commerce, tourism, and various other systems, might surely become pervasive in a city's aesthetic manifestations, yet are well thought out and well-organized in their political and social modalities. Therefore he believes that urban planning and urban design may very well become an expression of this fragmented reality, "joined together a posterior, instead of proposing an overall design ex ante" (Aymonino, 2006).

It is time to put more flesh bones on the concept of 'design'. While it is relatively easy to imagine the design of a digital device, a piece of furniture or jewellery or a shoe, speaking of 'urban design' throws up a plethora of issues. It is not an easy task to define urban design because it is inherently a multidisciplinary endeavour.

Carmona et al. (2010) observe that design sits at the intersection of space planning and place architecture. In other words, urban design involves both 'direct design' and 'indirect design'. In the latter, designers get involved in investment decisions, policy planning and guiding, sitting on decision-making and regulatory commission meetings; in the former, designers actually shape the places which people and objects will interact. Since the 1920s, three key moments of urban design can be identified. According to Carmona et al. (2010), these are the 'aesthetic,' the 'social usage' and the 'place-making' phases of urban design.

The 'aesthetic/technical' phase focused on the visual product itself, broadly speaking, to the detriment of social, cultural, economic and spatial environment associated with it. It is the equivalent of the 'production' orientation in social theory and marketing theory, with little attention paid to how the building would be used or consumed. The 'townscape' of the 1940s and 50s was an example. Public perceptions were not considered important. Instead, the pictorial product was what mattered to urban designers. In the recent deliberations of this aesthetic and technical concentration, professionals in favour of this emphasis are often criticized to hold a nostalgic and regressive behaviour. One example of such scholar are those sharing the views of Robert Krier, who in his *Urban Space* of 1975 calls for an urban design movement of rediscovery, while criticizing the fragmented spaces of the growing globalized world that lacked orientation, qualitative variances, meaningful activities and pedestrian movement (Krier, 1979). This lack of perceptive qualities described by Miotto and Muret (2000) are the new civic spaces taking the form of centres, "evolving towards hypertrophic and undifferentiated megalopolises".

Consequently, the aesthetic/technical phase opposes the more complex realities of urban evolution and the inevitable enlargement of scale. Therefore, this townscape of the 1940s and 50s was considered the sensitive approach, calling for a re-evaluation of urban priorities. The nostalgic feel towards the aesthetic/technical public space and public place has been especially evident in writings of the 50s, 60s, which become highly relevant in this thesis as well, discussing overlapping points of loss of social, ideological and cultural values, reflecting upon western civilizations (Dimenberg, 2004) while also being emulated within the Arabian Gulf culture image.

The 'social usage' phase, by contrast, goes one step further by taking into account the mental images, perceptions and views of the users of a space (Carmona, 2010). These views and perceptions shape the planning process and the structure and appearance of public spaces. In this way, urban design ceased to be for elites; it would also not be an end in itself but instead have users' views as an object of the design of spaces. The social usage phase of public places and public spaces often created hierarchical orders, as spaces were designed and seen through the eyes of the authorities, progressively evolving into formalistic expression of urban perception and eclectic usage. One example where the creation of the public space is influenced by social condition was the condition in Greece during both the Byzantine and Ottoman conquests, during which hardly any public spaces were constructed. This shows an opposition towards democratic social gatherings by the local governments, which strived to create

mental images that involved lack of freedom and lack of independent and spontaneous expression (Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou and Yerolympos, 2000).

On a different note, social usage of the public place by Hellenistic and Roman empires involved the orthogonal compositions that strived for the articulation of hierarchical relationships among quarters of the society while incorporating vital religious elements that expressed the citizens' priorities and ideals. In contemporary realities of urban space design and planning, the social usage of the open space becomes more organic in character, expressing the spontaneous formation of societal realities but also the confusion of public expression through the ongoing existence of functional urban voids. In pursuit of establishing public spaces of identity that have become lost in the midst of globalization and anarchic spontaneous behaviour, it is perhaps useful to locate the historical background of once-existing geometric rigor that was outlined within a city's foundational schemes and locate new steps of contemporary newly defined patterns (Aymard, 2000).

'Place-making' extended this user-centred view of design even further by including the behaviours of people in how city spaces are conceived and designed. This approach is co-productive of both planners' and users' visions, combining both the human/behavioural aspects of building use as well as the physical, hard structures of the buildings themselves. Therefore, place-making is highly involved with the perception of a public space, as it involves both the concept behind the design, and also the reaction of people towards it. There has been much deliberation on the prerequisites and characteristics that define a successful establishment of place-making, formally initiated during the 1952 congress of *CIAM, The Heart of the City*, and partaking in Hoddesdon. There, was stressed the place-making aim of establishing a public space "feeling of being 'cuddled'", establishing a "sense of protection" (Sert, Rogers and Tyrwhitt, 1952) and the perception of "being at home in public", as defined by Moore (Johnson, 1986).

Some interesting speculations on the notion of place-making are also established by visual experts such as Gombrich, who on matters of perceptions offer great insight towards the handling of urban space when speaking about the optical world as a part of sampling of the eye and visual experiential sensations that affect human behaviour and conception. His mentioning of "a fixed correlation between the physical world, the optical world and the appearance of the world in our experience" (Gombrich, 1982) is tremendously reflective of both planners' and users' visions, indeed combining the behavioural aspects of buildings' functionality and the bold existence of the buildings as mere urban entities within their respective sites.

An emerging trend over the past two decades, in response perhaps to increasing criticism by social movement groups, environmental activists, the media and various public sector bodies around the world, is the rise of sustainable development. The buzzwords in building, construction and urban design circles are 'sustainability' and 'eco-design' or 'green design'. Over and above the conventional building requirements and specifications is the imperative to cut CO2 emissions, meet rigorous new standards in the use of building materials, traceability in the sourcing of raw materials, new kinds of certifications and other types of ecologically and environmentally sustainable and friendly ways of building and managing the built environment. Although much of the impetus for such movements has come from the Western nations – with Europe taking a lead – other countries around the world have also signed up, some more slowly than others, to the Kyoto Protocol, with attendant effects upon the urban design industry. Gradually, there is a better recognition that humans are part of a much larger ecosystem and buildings play a role in the rejuvenation – as well as devastation – of the natural environment. Design experts put forward a new kind of vision for the industry at the recent 50th anniversary celebration of the Penn-Rockefeller manifesto for America's Urban Design:

The new urban designer will need to feel comfortable operating under conditions of ambiguity, appreciating the fact that the science and art of integrating sustainability into urban design is an evolving challenge, involving the adaptation and advancement of ideas as they emerge [...] the urban designer is[...]someone who is able to describe potential futures for the city in visual, technical, and narrative terms that foster social involvement, political action, and economic investment to make reality the post-carbon city (Abramson et al., 2008).

Urban design clearly has to go beyond focusing only on either the physical structure of buildings or the less tangible aspects of human use and interaction with urban spaces and places (Carmona, 2010); a socially aware urban design shows the ability to integrate them. Sustainability is a key part of good urban design, design that is inclusive both of local needs but also global imperatives to be much more sensitive to and vigilant about, our carbon footprint.

A number of theorists have sought to identify key features of 'good' urban design, both locally and globally. For example, Kevin Lynch (1981) identifies key performance dimensions of good design. First, there is the quality of 'vitality,' the extent to which places support the functions and biological requirements as well as capabilities of human beings. Second, there is the 'sense,' or the degree to which places can be clearly seen and identified by users. Third, there is the 'fit,'

or the degree to which urban places are appropriate for the intended (and perhaps future) behaviours that people engage in. Fourth, there is 'access': the degree to which activities, people, information and communications can be reached by users. Finally fifth, there is 'control,' or the degree to which people are able to control and manage access to services that they need.

Jacobs and Appleyard (1987) also contribute to the debate by identifying seven objectives of good urban design for the future: liveability, identity and control, access to opportunities, imagination and joy; authenticity and meaning; community and public life; urban self-reliance; an environment for all. All these features, taken together, empower citizens and residents of a place/space in cities because they facilitate a clean, healthy environment where people feel like they belong to communities and local groups, have access to community activities and can use them freely without negative impacts on the environments. These are aspirations to which all economically developed, as well as developing, cities share, to one degree or another. The call for cities to nurture lives of 'imagination and joy' strikes a particular chord with millions, surely, because cities are not just magnets for the talented and creative (Florida, 2004); they are also places where people want to live in peaceful, happy ways with their friends and families.

The above dimensions are interconnected. Good urban design draws them together in an integrated manner and also leaves room for further creation and re-negotiation among citizens and residents, governments and local councils, designers, architects, planners and other civic authorities to craft continually expanding visions for communal life and well-being. To the question, therefore, on what a 'good' urban design is, no perfect answer can be given. This question cannot be answered satisfactorily without a clear grasp of how the design is put to use and solves problems of citizens and residents as they go about their everyday lives. Traditionally, cultural critics, urbanists and institutionalist scholars such as Clark (1984), Davis (1990), DiMaggio (1982) and Zukin (1991; 1995) have consistently tried to link urban places with culture. As Scott (1997) mentions, "the two are intertwined with each other". The relationship, however, has been unequal. Design is sometimes conceived of as *the* true measure of culture, rather than as an extension or expression of it.

So far, we have discussed features of urban design. But there is a bigger point to be made in the context of the research being undertaken. The argument is that urban design plays an even greater role than that of serving citizens and residents, even in the kinds of extremely aspiring ways described up to this point. Urban spaces can be designed in such a way as to create nurturing and

creative conduits for the expression of local culture. This point brings us back to the global/local nexus described in detail above.

It was hinted at, earlier in this chapter, that while globalisation can certainly have detrimental effects upon local culture – expressed in very general terms – it can also rejuvenate local customs and bring all kinds of benefits to residents. In some locations, certainly, globalisation creates sameness and a standardized ‘look and feel’ but it can also accentuate cultural, religious, spatial uniqueness. Crang (1998), for instance, argues that if “places are becoming increasingly alike, the rewards for standing out are increasing.” Other researchers observe that urban design in a local context is “[...] torn between the representation, and even celebration, of the global and the enhancement and often the rescue of the local” (King, 2000).

In contrast to places that reflect unique characteristics to those who live in a certain place, there is also “placelessness,” a concept which refers to a sense of loss or the absence of belongingness (Meyrowitz, 1985). This phenomenon is exacerbated by mobility and communication technology that often flattens local differences among how people live, work and play. It can be argued that urban design has a role to play in mitigating some of its cultural, social and personal effects. For instance, place marketing can use iconic images to identified local and non-local audiences to help them feel connected to what is familiar to them. For many tourist destinations, for instance, a McDonald’s restaurant makes people ‘feel at home,’ although people also know that such symbols are artificial and deliberately generated.

There are several problems with the approach of using commonly recognized symbols. For instance, there could be a mismatch between image and how people actually live and work in a city; a mismatch between the image and locals’ perceptions of what that image should be. These problems are further complicated when one talks about the use of iconic buildings for place marketing purposes. We all know of the Eiffel Tower and the Sydney Opera House as universal markers of difference for the cities in which they are found. However the Eiffel Tower (Figure 2.13) or the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Figure 2.14) in Chinese cities both establish peculiar twists on this concept. Universal icons can be manipulated in myriad ways to render local distinctiveness problematic. At the same time, local preferences can result in the creative re-reinvention of global symbols in unexpected, refreshing ways.



Figure 2.13: *Eiffel Tower replica in Chinese town of Tianducheng (Gadd, 2014)*



Figure 2.14: *A 1:4 scale replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Shanghai (Business Insider, 2014)*

It may, perhaps, be more appropriate to speak of the fusion of the global and the local in design contexts. Bull et al. (2007) argue convincingly for ‘cross-cultural urban design’ that effectively showcases the interweaving of global and local culture in any city in the world, from Shanghai, to Bangkok to Singapore. In other words, the goal for urban designers today is to aim for a harmonious co-existence of what is economically attractive in terms of tourist dollars, inward investment and cosmopolitanism and what local people value in terms of cultural pursuits, beliefs, customs and history. Parin (2007) notes that the

concept of local identity is multi-layered and presents challenges to the notion of a *globality* that connotes standardization and homogenization; at the same time, it would be wrong to regard globalisation as necessarily having negative effects on local identity.

The notion of 'ancient-ness' (Reigl, 1903) is particularly interesting here because it is a concept that is often invoked to defend the value of local cultures. It is used by different stakeholders to argue for the preservation and conservation of material artefacts of all kinds as well as to structures such as monasteries, sacred sites and natural wonders. More importantly, it is used as a means of contrast against global cosmopolitanism, which is deemed to be somehow devoid of history.

Urban designers today have to navigate issues like all the above listed here. The process is complicated still further because local identity evolves rather than remains static: it is not a constant against which all newer spaces or structures can be measured in an objective way. On a global scale, cities emerge constantly in new forms and new guises, thus challenging older paradigms of who lives in them and how spaces are used. 'Asian,' 'Arabic,' 'Middle Eastern,' and so on may still be used to describe local cultures but these nomenclatures are increasingly fluid; local and global may fuse, collide or co-exist peacefully.

Urban planners are key actors in the spatial design of cities. They have come to occupy increasingly important roles in how residents of cities perceive, consume and engage with spaces in urban areas. The profession, however, is still not well-understood outside its domain. Urban planners are closely related to the cultural definition and cultural understanding of a city, as well as its cultural amelioration and evolutionary development towards proper definition of an identity. Lynch mentions in his *The Image of the City* (1960) that urban planners are interested in the identification of external agents that create those interactions that produce environmental images that are worthy of creating images that are held in observers' memories. Furthermore, urban planners are responsible for creating and organizing urban images that will be representational for a group of people who agree on the similar values. Consequently, in a way, urban planners contribute towards the punctuation, ascertainment, and evolution of urban cultural definition that will inspire the *imageability* of many people.

An interesting academic study on urban planners in California (Guzetta and Bollens, 2003) found that urban planners differed from planning-related professionals (the latter tended to work in environmental management, environmental economics, even finance and marketing). Urban planners tended

to work in the public, versus the private, sector. Furthermore, 'public-sector planners value more highly the ability to communicate their ideas through the written word and through formal presentations (ibid). Planners were also found to be more sensitive to legal and policy matters than planning-related professionals.

In fact, the role of urban designers and urban planners is more complex than the mere designing of functional places and spaces of habitation. Mark Jarzombek in his book *The Psychologizing of Modernity* (2000) speaks about deeper urban planning values that deal with the linkage among ranges of emotional comfort and of a "basic structure to the fabric of their contact" (Jarzombek, 2000). These concepts were extensively developed with the parallel progression of Gestalt psychology as well, being largely nurtured in the Berlin School, where the senses and the cultural expression were highly linked to the services of urban designers' and urban planners' form-forming capabilities through emergence, reification, multi-stability and invariance (Leontiadis, 2010).

It seems that urban planners and designers actually take on the role of architects, spatial experts, psychologists and semioticians, in an effort to combine all the elements that will preserve identities and communicate ideas that will trigger the public. Through investigation of the science of semiotics in relation to the urban context, this mission includes a few vital considerations of pre-existing codes that must be contemplated, re-centralized, and newly articulated through self-defined elements within the public space, referring to idiolects of their own. Umberto Eco provides a number of strong hints towards this difficult task of urban planners and designers for the re-definition of open spatial identities that are affected by the crisis of globalization: He advises not the referral towards pre-existing codes, but the evoking and negation of it by a rather new one intended to be contemplated and communicated freshly (Eco, 1986).

Urban planners and designers strive to create fundamental semiotic relationships between buildings and space, which take the form of integral relationships with a parallel concept of buildings and spatial elements; applied relationships where the building is conceived first, prior to spatial considerations; and related relationships, in which the spatial theme is related to the structural surroundings, but standing alone and independent. These guidelines are very useful for the urban professionals who strive to establish cultural identities and almost become semioticians. An example of an integral relationships of a civic space occurs when there is a strong tendency to express an evident concept of paradigmatic evolution, where the space is treated as an environment where all factors assemble as a single unit, and expressing the emotional aspect of a particular time with a simultaneous contrast of

interchange between perspectives and volumes (Leontiadis, 2012). Examples of applied relationships in an effort to create cultural identities are virtual space, bringing forth an assemblage of information as knowledge, and creating intensive spatial experiences of illusionary virtual cannibalization of space (Beckman, 1998). Examples of related relationships take place when certain geometries and architectural forms are being assembled under certain rules and compose a variety of formalistic perceptions and syntactic interpretations. As a result of this, the spatial reality may communicate a diversity of messages (Eco, 1986), becoming a perfect scenario and solution for the effort of identifying meaning within fragmented situations of globalized cities.

More concretely, perhaps the meaning of who, urban planners are, comes down to their attribute towards controlling urban life, and clarifying the serving of interests; those related to political interests, or residential populations. According to Friedman and Wolff (1982), they are called upon to clarify the issues, while trying to understand the forces at work and rethink their basic practices in pursuit of gaining control and ascendancy over the forces.

Conclusively, urban planners and designers, within the globalized context of multi-oriented realities and synthetic problems of interpolation, require to be enablers, technical advisors, social workers, and bureaucratic problem solvers, in order to expand and develop the cities' capacities for the present and future, through healthy public space design interventions (Sanoff, 2006). It is therefore being argued within the context of urban planning spatial intervention regarding cultural concern, that planners become "more mindful and more critical of the role they play within the planning process" (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015).

Although the urban designer does play a role in activating change in the public spaces of cities, as described above, it is also important to understand, as previously mentioned, that political processes and political interests play a crucial role in how far urban designers can go in influencing the 'culture' of a place for its residents:

Notwithstanding the force of global processes, local context also prefigures how global forces are operationalized and impact upon cities in different parts of the world. A key factor is the political ideology of the state. Whereas in the USA city planning is undertaken by a range of development agencies with only limited co-ordination at the city-region scale, in Western Europe the state is involved more centrally in urban planning and development. Dubai represents a hybrid model between state control and economic liberalism in which urban development is determined largely by the planning vision of the ruling family within an environment of market capitalism that

seeks to attract foreign investment and reduce restrictions to free enterprise (Pacione, 2005).

Many aspects of local culture affect what, and how, urban spaces are built and what happens in the spaces-between-spaces of cities – the ghettos, alleyways, back streets, and so on. Similarly, the uses to which urban spaces are put reflect the cultural and economic priorities of its citizens and residents. The professionalism that hides behind the field of urban planning is vital in organizing, programming and understanding these ‘between’ spaces, even though the decision domains are shrinking within the expanding regulations of the globalized world. Urban planning may promote the urban culture of a city through facility programming, information gathering methods, programming research facilities, participatory programming, participation techniques, and speculation of case studies (Sanoff, 2006). In fact, with considerations such as the above, urban planners may be able to succeed in reclaiming cultural values that draw away from the ongoing model of fortified zoned, divided and dangerous cities, as described by Featherstone (1995).

A city’s culture is also a key tool to attract economic, intellectual and financial capital into a city’s production and consumption systems. London, for example, is known all over the world as a financial hub but also as a fascinating and exciting cultural destination for its diverse and innovative cultural and artistic offerings. More than this, London is a brand in the sense that it possesses unique, differentiating symbolic attributes that transcend its functional qualities. It would be impossible to separate its rich history and past from its present-day attraction as a place brand par excellence. Interestingly, it is not often commented upon that London’s cityscape and urban spaces are probably much more ‘managed’ than they might appear. Its apparent organization and authenticity are sold so well to tourists that many aspects of its urban management are not so visible to the casual eye. By contrast, cities which seem to have sprung straight out of the desert – such as Dubai– seem to have developed out of a vacuum, although, of course, Dubai itself has a rich and fascinating history.

Celebrities, artists, managers, professionals and the creative class also play a role in what kinds of urban spaces get designed and built. As cities are now engaged in a ‘war for global talent,’ such individuals are often overtly or subtly lured or coaxed into visiting or living or purchasing homes and properties in various cities. Dubai was clearly marketed as a playground for the rich and famous, attracting the likes of David Beckham, Bono and other B-list celebrities to its hotspots and residential and commercial venues. These strategies may seem artificial to some but much of the ‘sea-sand-sun’ ecosystem that is natural to

Dubai also played well into the imaginations of the target audience. Pictorial representations of Dubai also represented its natural assets. This pictorial representation is in fact what urban planners are asked to understand nowadays, in reclaiming cultural values: finding new ways of architectural expression, rejecting modernist dogmas and instead find inspiration through the spontaneous, the “gritty real life” and the pursuit of a synthesizing “instinct of experience” (Coates, 2003). In fact, as further elaborated by Coates in his *Guide to Ecstacy* of 2003, the very importance of urban planners in contemporary pursuit of cultural identification, is their failure or success towards bringing together dissimilar images and events through the release of architecture and urban spaces. Sometimes such efforts include “radical juxtapositions and ricocheting materiality” that reach extremes of dematerialization and vocabulary that “coincides uncannily with the maelstrom of information space” (Coates, 2003).

A clue to the differences between what seems ‘natural’ and what seems ‘artificial’ lies, arguably, in the spaces *between* places, more of which will be said in the next section. Pavements and intersections can tell stories. The space between a fountain and a restaurant may resonate with residents for various reasons. The little street that links walkways and shopping centres may hold unique attractions that hint at a bygone era. And so on and so forth. Culture, in this sense, is also what is observed in these spaces. Therefore, how people use these ‘in-between’ spaces are also to be considered by urban planners and designers.

In the large volume of *The Endless City* (Burdett, 2008), a large number of contemplations on the importance of urban planning takes place with regards to the resolution of these ‘in-between’ spaces, which are often a result of developers’ effort towards homogeneity, evident in Sennett’s essay on the “The Open City”, found inside the book (2006). In fact, understanding the importance of urban planners in reclaiming cultural values, comes in close affiliation with the way by which solitary objects are being treated, which may hold some form of strong cultural identity within. Therefore, rather than trying to create homogenous results of developmental profit, as is often done in GCC cities as will be further elaborated below, it is the role of planners to learn how to isolate important monumental buildings while at the same time making them part of the urban fabric. Consequently, some of the volumetric elements will become completely disclosed, which result in perceptual incompleteness. Sennett, in his “The Open City” essay found within *The Endless City* (Burdett, 2008), marks of this incompleteness as an essential attribute towards the contextual understanding of buildings’ importance through time; very similarly to how Hadrian’s Parthenon in Ancient Rome co-existed with the less distinguished buildings that made up the complete urban fabric. Consequently, contemporary

need for cultural identification calls for an urban planning understanding of un-homogeneity, in which culturally identifiable elements will stand alone, tell a story, and stimulate the growth of other objects of identifiable importance.

Further on in this chapter, the process of designing spatially consistent and responsive spaces will be further developed.

Currently, many public spaces in urban centres are commercially produced and orientated. "Attention to lifestyles has given rise to new, highly visible consumption spaces, such as nouvelle cuisine restaurants, boutiques, art galleries and coffee bars. It has also generated new complex, retail strategies, combining advertising, sales real estate development and entertainment" (Shaftoe, 2012) which cause us to question the value and the intention of each public space design and if it compromises the commercial essentials with the human and cultural needs. This potentially leads us to a point where we should consider the anthropology of space and place: "Both conceptual and material dimensions of space as well as of built forms and landscape characteristics are central to the production of social life" (Low, 2003).

Social life is constantly evolving and producing new forms. The question of the natural/artificial, the historical, ancient and organic versus the ultra-modern, new and inorganic is particularly pertinent for the urban design scene in the Gulf States. Urban planning in the GCC cities must now be considered in the light of all that has been said with regards to globalization, local identity, representation, production, consumption, regulation and cultural value. In particular, the above discussion on political influence and the politics of public participation should be borne in mind as the discussion is being commenced.

Urban spaces and public participation:

It has been noted that planners and architects have tended to focus on buildings rather than *the space(s) between buildings* (Moughtin, 2003). The life between buildings is often neglected. Participation by the public in urban development and the design of the spaces between buildings are keys to a better and more participatory culture.

The goal of these participatory exercises is to create new localized and hybridized urban environments that find a stitching purpose among fragmented realities of contemporary urban situations. A good example of such treatment is towards the American cities, which have faced various crises of public abandonment and under-used public spaces, for which Graham Shane suggests means of rapid adaptability against urban loss. The suggested solution here

becomes an organized articulation of multi-centred cities with strong scattered cores, *heterotropic* planning, mixed-use situations of local ecology, urban parks of strong public involvement, agriculture as a means of open space participation through productive work, but also small-scale antique flea markets, green or farmers' markets featuring local organic produce, temporary community street fairs, seasonal carnivals, flower markets, sidewalk Christmas-tree sellers and mobile fruit and vegetable carts (Shane, 2007).

One of the reasons for the lack of public participation has, perhaps, to do with the fact that urban designers are trained in a "rarefied atmosphere" and where "the subject is taught with little or no reference to the public for whom the product is intended" (Moughtin, 2003). The result is a poor understanding of local or sub-cultures. Are urban designers generally, therefore, out of touch with the public? While there are certainly exceptions to the rule, it is becoming increasingly recognized by city planners and local councils in many countries that, generally speaking, the gap between designers and the client is "wide and goes unrecognized by many" (Moughtin, 2003). We should be careful to identify the 'client' as the person or group or collective that pays the designer; what tends to be forgotten is that the taxpayer is, therefore, closely implied in this transaction. A key factor to recognize is that the degree of public participation is a *political*, rather than a purely cultural or economic issue. This speculation goes far back in history, with an example of the 17th century Roman city and the spectacle peaks that partook within the public places of the Pincian Hill. During these events, all messages of political, social, cultural and economic involvement took place, bringing to the surface themes of visual economy, hierarchy and predominance, symbolism and cultural identity (Napolitano, 2011). We shall come back to this point of political involvement later.

Urban designers and planners are necessarily forward-looking individuals. Cultural change is, of course, a primary concern to them. In this sense, urban designers are anthropologists of space. From another perspective, the urban designer is a special force for change, an agent for designing and adapting to cultural change. In this sense, the designer can, under certain circumstances, actively influence how users of spaces acculturate and regenerate the spaces she/he designs, in collaboration with multiple agencies and other actors. An array of tools and techniques are now available for such co-production of urban visions. These techniques can be anthropological data-gatherings, user studies or planning surveys, exhibitions, press notices, press releases, user forums, public enquiries, public meetings, community focus groups and control groups as well as specially-commissioned reports (Moughtin, 2003). Of course, some participatory exercises may be less sincere or useful than anticipated by users.

They may be a form of tokenism or be non-inclusive in some way or other. There are degrees of participation, in other words.

The political nature of public engagement with the urban planning and design process cannot, therefore, be ignored. Totalitarian regimes differ from democracies in how they approach such issues. An autocratic system may conduct consultation exercises but the final decision may not reflect majority opinion, if in fact people feel able or willing to give their views in the first place. Different types of democratic governance – participatory, parliamentary and so on - also call forth different responses. There can be a communication gap between the vision of the urban designer, on the one hand, and the politician and the people, on the other.

The concept of power, therefore, becomes the key to understanding how publics may choose to engage or not with urban design. Public space policies and urban strategies are therefore aligned (or otherwise) to the extent that powerful interests and civic concerns converge or diverge or meet on some middle ground. The next section considers the interplay of these factors in the case of cultural value.

The GCC countries in the Arabian Peninsula consist of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, and the Republic of Yemen. Excluding Yemen, these countries comprise the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It becomes interesting to focus the thesis on these cities alone, as various statistics on economics show that their financial growth is stronger than the rest of the Arab world (Larice and Macdonald, 2012).

Oil revenues (hydrocarbon revenues) in the GCC allow them to provide for their citizens through an extensive welfare system, and very little to no taxation on local companies and residents (Fasano and Iqbal, 2003). The GCC countries have large expatriate work forces and are able to import skilled professionals at internationally competitive prices to maintain high levels of activity in manufacturing, construction and services (ibid.). The countries show important structural and economic differences. Bahrain, for instance, is dependent on banking and insurance while Oman is developing its natural gas resources and tourism. Economically too, the GCC countries are diverse, with per capita income ranging from \$8000 in Oman to \$28,400 in Qatar (ibid.). Volatility in oil prices and high levels of current expenditure contribute to fiscal deficits but overall GDP growth is robust in most of the countries.

Islamic ideology pervades the culture of the GCC countries and the lack of separation of religion and politics is a distinguishing feature of the ideology,

together with the principle of grassroots, communitarian engagement. A class-based structure of society (with either elites or minorities taking precedence over the majority of the citizenry) is strongly discouraged in Islam. For this reason, there is no 'priestly' caste or group such as those in Christianity and Hinduism. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to undertake a detailed exposition on the principles of Islam but several salient points will be addressed as we move through a review of the GCC cities' experiences with regards to globalization, consumption, production, political participation and urban design/planning.

The Arab cities exemplify, in many ways, the tensions between globalization and localization. Elsheshtawy (2004; 2008) argues that Dubai and Abu Dhabi, having been developed massively over the past ten years by the diktats of the royal family, are showing signs of the kind of fragmentation, social disintegration and confusion that result from rapid expansion of neo-liberal planning regimes. There is widening inequality between the rich Emiratis and the disenfranchised immigrant workers, gated communities, a rise in the number of slums and a loss of identity. This 'narrative of 'loss' is most clearly felt in cities where the public has had very little say in how urbanization and globalization would occur with respect to them.

The 'treadmill of superlatives,' trotted out by Dubai especially, has done little except to put the city on the map of investors and on the glossy pages of magazines. Elsheshtawy further argues that the recent economic downturn in Dubai appears to have made the Emiratis re-appreciate the 'everyday reality' of life in the city, the 'real' versus the manic building boom that has seen the city transform itself over the past decade. This rapid transformation of Dubai sees many dangers in its planning evolution, contemplated by Elsheshtawy in another work of his, *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle* (2009), in which he specifically contemplates on the false targeting of homogenization and developmental structures that lack cultural sensitivity. This type of urban planning process raises another line of economic demarcation with the raising of rent in low-income areas, and the demolition of poor neighbourhoods, therefore leading to the driving away of local poor residents. As a result, Dubai is being planned in an involuntary pursuit of becoming a "city of walls", therefore presenting the challenge for urban planners to undertake design process by which there is integration between the various sub-groups (Elsheshtawy, 2009).

This kind of global polarization, together with the *spectacularization* of urban design, combine to make the Arab city a case study in future design and its implications for identity, production, consumption and regulation. At the heart of the matter is political governance. Elsheshtawy warns against further

"exoticization" of the Arab city by Western commentators and the *Orientalization* of what it represents in terms of culture, religion, class and gender stereotypes. In recent years, it appears that locals are beginning to be irked by this kind of "placeless" stereotyping and the lack of historical, cultural *situatedness* in the popular imaginings of the Arab world except for what appears in the Western media. As a result, there is increasing interest among scholars to better understand how the citizens in this part of the world are reclaiming their identity. Perhaps the solution lies in the changing of shift of focus in planning, as suggested in works such as *Urban Megaprojects: A Worldwide View* that recommend culture-led developments (DEL Cerro Santamaria, 2013), towards other suggestions such as legislative reforms and policy statements at different administrative levels. Such new suggestions would bring to the forefront the concept of "strategic planning" (Salet, 2008) in pursuit of more meaningful and targeted urban development.

Urban planning in the GCC cities is an issue that should widely concern the urban and architectural design professionals, striving to find solutions for definitions of identification and means of cultural, religious and identity expression, which indeed has long marks in history. Falling within the trap of an industrialized-capitalist perspective, the GCC cities ought to renew their approach of urban planning and place-making away from the technocratic-minded seeking for new rationalized conceptual frameworks of comprehensive and cultural frameworks; through the unfolding of centres of historic and identifiable cities that reveal stories of the past and away from the administrative, economic and social pressures. Struck by the above influences and globalized results of a rapid-developing region, the GCC cities need more than ever an expression of historical continuity, built heritage, vistas and memories that are all related to the art of civic design; which is the formal organization of symbolic presences, expressive gathering forums, well-identifiable boulevards and concentration points of profundity (Celik, Favro and Ingersoll, 1994).

2.5. Design Process in Spatial Design Projects

In pursuit of studying the design process as a cultural analysis of meaning within urban spaces of a problematic identity, the direction of the research inevitably goes towards the study of 'circuits of power', in order to study any kinds of social inequalities, matters of cultural heritage, the scanning of cultural landscape, and the role of designers within the existing problems. This compositional speculation consequently forms a synthetic coherence of the previously analyzed topics, while moving closer to the dissertation's aim towards the extraction of a

methodological design procedure that will fill in any kinds of gaps involving cultural understanding.

To account for the evolving consciousness of citizens in the Arab world to social inequalities and cultural heritage, urban designers that work in this part of the world need to scan the cultural landscape for sources of meanings that may be incorporated in these spaces/places. The analysis of meanings can take place in multiple ways and design is one of those ways used by urban designers to 'make sense' of a culture. The cultural landscape of different societies has always been a point of reference to understand the sources of power. Understanding that open spaces and landscape have been the target point of cultural direction helps understand how important it is to use open space for the correct expression of cultural context. This is due to the fact that landscape has timelessly been an expression of power and of society, structured around symbols, whether dolmen, triumphant arches, monumental buildings or holy fountains – all of which come in unison with their ecological surroundings and specific characteristics of the place (Berti, 2013).

Richard Johnson (1986), in his influential essay titled, "What is cultural studies anyway?" proposes a fresh way of thinking about the abstractions *and* the singularities of the concept of 'culture.' Instead of noting either the general notion of 'culture' or as a fragmented, inchoate concept, Johnson recommends that we understand how power works to produce culture. In this way, the public and the private, the subjective and the ideological, become more clearly delineated:

I have stressed these elements of power, at the risk of some diversion from the main argument, because cultural studies practices must be viewed within this con-text. Whether it takes as its main object the more abstracted public knowledges and their underlying logics and definitions, or it searches out the private domains of culture, cultural studies is necessarily and deeply implicated in relations of power. It forms a part of the very circuits which it seeks to describe (Johnson, 1986).

Although Johnson puts out a careful argument about Marxist notions of commodified capital and the power structures that inhere within circuits of capital, his notion of cultural studies goes beyond abstract explanations of production and consumption. Instead, he calls for a richer account of lives lived in the moments of struggle when humans have to constitute themselves politically. Thus,

[...] the problem is how to grasp the more concrete and more private moments of cultural circulation. This sets up two kinds of pressures. The first is towards methods which can detail, recompose and represent complex ensembles of discursive and non-discursive features as they appear in the life of particular social groups. The second is towards "social inquiry" or an active seeking out of cultural elements which do not appear in the public sphere, or only appear abstracted and transformed (Ibid).

For Johnson, then, cultural identity is formed out of struggle, a struggle with subjectivity and the accretions, narratives and expectations of others. He calls for a reading of others' history as one that takes into account inherent subjectivity rather than abstract categories or classifications. Such struggles and changes in political power that are often followed by transformations within cities, are naturally prone to causing the loss of historical identities, and subjectivity lies upon the effort of examining new purposes and identities. A useful case study that relates to this conception is that of Istanbul with its loss of Ottoman identity with the arrival of the new political regime and social system change: with the fall of the Empire, its once strong and well-established cultural identity was lost. The only way to retrieve historic values was the re-definition of "a new concept of Turkishness", according to Pamuk (2006). Narratives and expectations of multicultural realities of an imperial age belonged to the past, and realities of a new monotonous and monolingual town had to invent new urban planning interventions that would cause an establishment of a new identity.

Consequently, such monotonous and monolingual realities must find new reference points for the basis of design process in spatial design projects, moving away from the blunt and general distribution of basic elements. As elaborated in Coates and his imaginative city of *Ecstasy* (2003), urban places that face the contemporary problem of lack of identity and cultural clarity, should rather focus on hotspots, "incipient and potential, and committed to sensory, vivid phenomena: popular events, new facilities or old monuments." The idea of such design process is to take the monuments and historical artefacts as solitary works of inspiration that will create new projects of renewed experiences. Therefore, existing and perhaps forgotten monuments that are currently lost and unidentified, are used as icons, logos, mascots, references of memory, or even "may exert a power of time, setting, wherever actuated, a symbolic schedule to personal narratives, city routines or ritual and popular festivity" (Coates, 2003). Conclusively, the virtual becomes real in opposition to the current trend of creating virtual impressions through real monuments and solid compositions.

Much similarly, the GCC cities have much epistemological and ontological weight to shift. Neoliberal pressures, aggressive urbanization and a vision of place and

space that has not included citizens' views and perceptions – combined with the exoticization noted by Arab scholars of urbanization – add to the complex task of uncovering citizens' subjectivity and their struggle to historicize themselves and their lived reality.

The design process in spatial design projects therefore becomes the defining task in order to respond to economic and political pressures through the creative and constructive provision of information which would define and locate the evolution trends. Such actions have been momentarily described by urban spatial design research as process which are able to locate informal settlement areas that grow uncontrollably and significantly; as process which uses potential design models that provide general trends of feasible urban expansion while considering all relevant environmental and agricultural laws; as process which develops cities of new conceptual frameworks as reference points for all urban planners who are dealing with particularities of space; as process which generates decision support documents for future planning and monitoring plans, provided by local authorities and other stakeholders (Weber and Puissant, 2003).

In design terms, processes have to be found that could integrate the principles of cultural life and those of urban planners. Such processes regard the sound implementation of urban planning principles that place a strong emphasis on the cultural characteristics of GCC cities, which relate to all aspects of land use and mobility, economic and demographic growth, housing provision, urban character and design, heritage management, a provision of integrated facilities, civil harmony and sustainable strategic solutions. These are urban planning challenges that involve the conceptualization of a city which includes “many cities” (Elsheshtawy, 2009), however this is the very essence of the problem of designing urban spaces that face challenges of lost cultural affiliations and strive to fill gaps. This challenge comes back to the major question of this dissertation: What frameworks would be appropriate for aligning urban designers' visions and the lived reality of Arab citizens?

The Circuit of Culture may perhaps be related to what Nigel Coates speaks about on “flywheel monuments”, where culture is the representation of objects, compositions, spaces or concepts of identity, which look for ways though which they may cycle in time, through “fluctuations in cycles” (Coates, 2003). The imaginary abstraction of city realities that Coates creates is a perfect example of the theoretical cultural theory of the Circuit of Culture, in pursuit of seeking new attraction points and sources of inspiration in order to continue and evolve the notion of historical growth, the renewal of energies, and the fresh growth of innovative ideas. This goes back to the role of the urban designer of such vision,

seeking to shape a given world, “rather than impose a given notion of style” (Ibid).

The Circuit of Culture has much to do with the life and death of evolving elements, referencing to the recycling of ideas, the retaining of successful ones, the experimentation of questionable ones, and the disposal of failed ones. This Circle is similar to Jacobs’ seminar book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1992), outlining such processes of spatial design projects and famously describing the everyday urban condition as a “ballet of the street”; describing the unpredictability, theatrical nature and constant movement of this very Circuit of life, or Circuit of Culture that stigmatizes every city.

Culture is often defined as a way of life or, the production and circulation of meanings. These meanings are woven into everyday life through the use of rituals, language, beliefs, images, signs & symbols in objects, the built & the natural environment. Thus, culture enables us to ‘make sense’ of things around us. It is however important to note that objects and spaces on their own have no meanings, but it is we who through the process of using words and images pull together our experiences and analogies to give meanings & form concepts in our heads that help ‘refer’ to objects/ spaces in the real world.

Each of these processes is interlinked in an on-going process of cultural encoding & distribution of *meaning*. For example, the way culture is *represented* affects how it is *identified, produced, consumed* & finally *regulated*. This rule holds for all the other four processes as well. Further, this model is of particular relevance to the creative domains as it demarcates the links between the five interlinked processes as being populated by cultural intermediaries; meaning professionals in the advertising, marketing and design industry and their impact on the derived meaning of products and spaces.

In summary, the Circuit of Culture is defined by five interlinked processes: Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and Regulation.

The Double Diamond process (Figure 2.15) was developed by the Design Council (Britain) in 2005 – a charity recognized as a leading authority on the use of the strategic design aiming “to tackle major societal challenges, drive economic growth and innovation, and improve the quality of the built environment” (Design Council, 2016). The process of the Double Diamond was redefined in 2007 in a graphical way and denotes a four-stage process by which aspects of users’ perceptions can be explored and used to deliver a richer, culturally nuanced design process. These are:

- Discover –identify, research and understand the initial problem.
- Define – limit and define a clear problem to be solved.
- Develop – focus on and develop a solution.
- Deliver – test and evaluate, ready the concept for production and launch.

The model's origin is within the field of Industrial Design with regards to creating tangible objects, and involved the researching of thought processes of eleven world-leading companies in their fields while using qualitative research methodology. The relation to the current study regards the virtues being sought for, including the managing of complex, global issues, developmental processes, state-of-the-art design processes in modern design practice, and unique approaches that set some designs apart. This research collaboration was with: Alessi world leading manufacturers of designer kitchen and tableware; BSkyB multi-channel television in the UK; BT communications service provider; LEGO design company; Microsoft operating system software; Sony electronics, games and entertainment; Starbucks coffee shop originating in Seattle; Virgin Atlantic Airways; Whirlpool Corporation leading manufacturer of major home appliances; Xerox office automation technologies; and Yahoo! internet portal. The reason why the above collaborations were chosen, were because they all illustrate “a public commitment to the use of design to improve their brand strength and product and service offering” (Design Council, 2007).

Despite that there are many theories and guides for urban space planning, and that these design process models are contributed and accessible to everyone, many urban organizations and authorities in the Gulf States seem not to be following them (Appendix 3: Cultural Elements). However, some municipalities have their own structure of processing design projects, which could be similar to the *Double Diamond* model, but, with less concern for the first stage that highlights the discovery and definition processes. Therefore, the diamonds have been separated into two major stages; conceptual stage (feasibility review) and implementation stage (conceptual review), which both assist in developing the research hypothesis and methodology. With this in mind, the first stage is of major concern, as the feasibility would have to be ascertained in order to fill the gap of the cultural context that would allow for the integration with the developing approach of an evolving methodology for the study of urban spaces. Moving to the implementation stage, which deals with developing to delivering, the procedure would pass through a chain of concerns that are all based on the conceptual stage diamond.

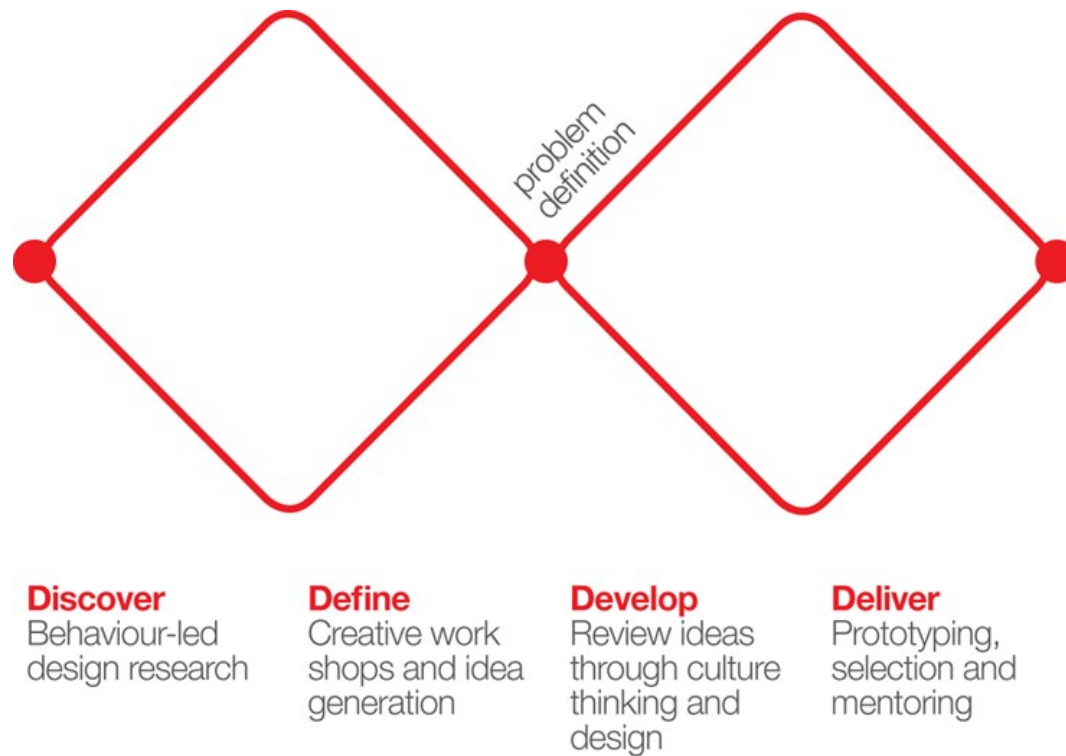


Figure 2.15: *The Double Diamond*

The Double Diamond process consists of two overlapping, yet distinct, diamonds that, taken together, map the human and design aspects of urban planning. It is led by behaviour rather than leading it. It takes into account cultural identity and how different groups of people identify with spaces and places. The following questions are an illustration of how the process might be operationalized:

- How do we define the cultural identity of both, interior and exterior public spaces?
- How do different groups of people from different backgrounds, experience and define particular design? Or, how does that design or space appear to each group?
- Has the emotional response of their public space been altered by the influence of globalization? If yes, how? And would that apply in conceived, perceived spaces?
- Are users or inhabitants culturally fulfilled by the design of their lived urban environments? Why? What is the possible assumption for such an issue?
- What are the calculations of merging the Circuit of Culture, Double Diamond Process and the three aspects of public response in an integrated process development? And would they possibly allow new scope for urban design studies?

The process is by no means the ideal solution to the problem posed by this piece of research, namely, to develop a methodology that would allow inhabitants of a city like Salalah, Oman to reclaim their cultural values. Urban design is a multi-layered, multi-faceted and evolving process. The process is 'behaviour-led,' meaning that prototypes of design work are guided directly and pervasively by what is found 'on the ground,' by people's views of what spaces ought to look and feel like.

The Double Diamond process allows us to go back to Lash (2002) from where we began this chapter. Lash defined 'culture' as a lived experience, as a three-dimensional construct of the visual, tactile and textual nature rather than as what belonged to another realm. This aesthetic conception of culture can now be complemented by the cultural intermediaries helpfully described by the work of du Gay and others. Designers are intermediaries of the aesthetic. In this sense, they help to translate ideas into their physical manifestation. The inhabitants of a lived reality – whether they are called 'citizens,' 'residents,' 'inhabitants' or 'foreigners' – are not put in any kind of hierarchical order by the Double Diamond Process. Instead, there is room to accommodate all views. While striving for such framework, architectural and planning professionals, prior to jumping into a project's design vision, should approach the process from a perspective of cultural creativity and invention while considering the research aspect of emotional affiliation (Meen et al., 2013). Consequently elements such as environmental research, user research, management information, and design research group become of vital importance, while exploring a variety of different solutions for every different project site. Such interventional process would undoubtedly facilitate towards "the precise determination of the details of the project, as expected to be implemented at the development stage" (Rau, 2015).

This theory comes very close to Lefebvre's vision of transforming modern society into a humanistic society of urban evolution. Therefore while considering all sorts of everyday life activities, urban revolutions and economic transformations, what precedes the actual design development process is a speculative effort to organize social relations (Gottdiener, 2010). Then by default and quite naturally, the planned design and control of spaces becomes a conscious effort to mould, shape or determine the behaviour and activities involved within the use of public spaces.

The Double Diamond design process, through its sequence of discovering and defining prior to developing and delivering, seems to help towards the re-shaping of contemporary urban spatial forms during a state of uncontrollable and inevitable expansion (Andrzej and Zieleniec, 2007), therefore becoming very fit for this research's purposes. This brings us back again to Lash's definition of

'culture', in pursuit of causing the idea to resurface within the urban environment as a lived experience that re-considers traditional social relations through discovery and local definition.

A more detailed view of how the Double Diamond process can be integrated *into* the 'Circuit of Culture' framework – representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. See figure 2.16 below and further illustrations in chapter six:

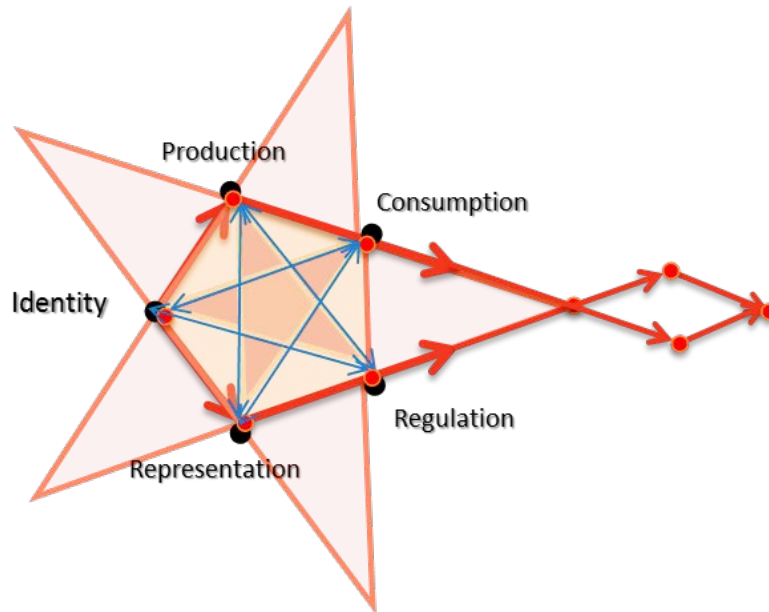


Figure 2.16: *Double Diamond integration into the CoC framework*

The above design process model focuses attention on how urban design process works in cities like Muscat, Oman. A process of behaviour-led research is embedded within circuits of culture, thus fusing the local with the global realities of the production and consumption of mass culture. Such a design process, if followed by urban planning authorities in the Gulf States, may well facilitate a more well-rounded and inclusive urban landscape to be created, thus narrowing the gap between designers and inhabitants.

Despite the fact that all these theories and guides of urban spaces, such as design process models are contributed and accessible to everyone, many urban organizations and authorities in the Gulf States do not, unfortunately, give it full consideration. However, some municipalities have their own structure of processing design projects, which could be similar to the *Double Diamond* model, but with less concern for the first stage that highlights the 'discover and define' processes. Therefore, this research has separated the diamonds into two major

stages; conceptual stage (feasible review) and implementation stage (concept review), which assist in developing the research hypothesis and methodology.

This research seeks to ascertain if it is feasible to fill the gap of the cultural context that would allow the researcher to integrate it with the approach of evolving methodology for the study of urban spaces. Moving to the implementation stage towards the delivering process, the project would pass through a chain of processes that are all based on the conceptual stage diamond. During this process, in pursuit of answering the questions raised in section 1.6.2. (Objectives), the research merges theoretical configurations on public spaces for dealing with urban conceptual designs that allow residents to reclaim their cultural space, thereby amplifying the geographical and symbolic sense of a place.

Based on a perceived gap *between the urban planner's intention and the public perception*, this research aims to provide a robust framework to address the lack of coherent culture participation in public space design strategies. The hypothesis that this research is testing intends to take a quantitative approach to provide concrete data on which further studies may be based upon. Also, it will measure the possibility of using the Circuit of Culture Double Diamond (*CCDD*) configuration as a new conceptual design method that combines the meaning of things through the engagement with them, in a cultural context. A comparative approach will be used to test findings in the following clusters: urban planners and space users in four major cities of GCC countries; and DD Process will be merged into the CC process to form CCDD processes, to characterize the potential breach in public space design processes and strategies with the intention to evolve a new methodology through new research recommendations and advanced proposals.

2.6. Discussion

The first half of this chapter has begun to look at a lot of relevant bodies of literature, underpinning how urban design, urban space and urban place-making can inter-relate one another, starting to form a thought process of interlinked conceptual design behaviour. Issues of globalization and debates on localization emphasize the existing problem of cultural identification within the GCC cities, and from the extraction of these localized problems, it becomes easier to move on towards a critical discussion on the meanings of cultural affiliation for the improved identity of these cities. In fact it becomes evident, through the theories and concepts that have been discussed in Chapter Two that the circuit of culture helps illuminate some of the issues of production, consumption, representation,

identity and regulation, while aiding towards the understanding of how culture operates in media-rich and deeply-technologized societies today.

The topics presented here open the ground for some salient issues for urban designers that are relevant to the topic of cultural sustainability in terms of local identity, taking on a “cultural turn” that may be described in terms of production and consumption (Du Gay, 1997). At the same time, it refers to how culture is regulated, disseminated and reproduced. The circuit of culture framework described above is an integrative and useful way of conceptualising the inter-dependencies among cultural production, consumption, regulation and the ways in which they are being represented so as to achieve a certain consumers’ identity for.

Culture is constantly being made and re-made; it is never static. Through myriad means – texts, media, technology, buildings, manners, values – it is constantly evolving according to innumerable conditions, changing according to human needs and desires and is based on past experiences and values. Having said this, we cannot help but represent cultural products of all kinds in a certain way in order to represent ourselves in society. Such representations are what give the circuit of culture its particular power.

We can discern, therefore, that cultural stereotypes, as well as how an innovation is both similar to and also different from what is around it at the time, are key features of successful design, in the broadest sense of the word.

It would be inconclusive to state that the Circuits of Culture framework can be easily translated into the field of urban space/design. The possibilities of such a framework alone are, however, extremely provocative for a discussion of Arabian culture and urban design and also on how designers in the GCC cities try to stand out in increasingly standardized landscapes of design while also striving to reflect what is unique about that culture.

The design process through urban planning is one that causes much contemplation on the existence of cultural awareness, not only with regards to the existing conditions of the GCC cities, but also with regards to the need of awareness for such design framework. Cultural context is therefore very place-specific, and must be treated using a more generalized plan of cultural integration, so that global situations do not abolish the local, as Lefebvre (1992) argues in his writings on cultural concern.

This second half of Chapter Two starts to clarify the need for cultural concern in the GCC cities specifically, presenting strong evidence on the effects of globalization, while urging for perspective qualities of locality. Perhaps it is

useful looking within the context of the Byzantine and Ottoman urban development, as done specifically in section 2.4 on Urban Planning and Design Process. This is important to relook, as it involves situations in history where a variety of cultures came together in order to start forming their own cultural identities within specific geographical sites, which are nowadays visited and appreciated for their cultural depth. For example in the city of Thessaloniki of Greece – a multi-layered situation of multi-cultural conglomerations – a profundity of cultural interpretation takes place, evident within the urban spatial environments of the city. Leontiadis et al. (2013) suggest the framework of a digital heritage application service, which contributes to the valorization of a certain cultural route, while offering practical implementation insight. This very similar suggestion helps create “essentially a platform striving to resemble the complicated task of memory recollection, education, and monument appreciation” (Leontiadis et al., 2013). This is indeed an inverse comparison to the present situation; whereas the above mentioned example is a tool of digital recording of multi-cultural expression of a certain time period and a certain space, the innovative suggestion of this thesis is the use of multi-layered framework that will enhance the profundity of cultural speculation within the context of a specific time and place.

Consequently the present thesis, which is suggesting a framework of cultural collection and consideration within a five-point interpretation of Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption and Regulation, is very similar to the above mentioned multi-layered production of spaces that fall within one specific geographical context. It is the urban planners’ role to locate these different layers early on and within the design process, in order assure the expression of a specific place’s elements which define culture.

The case of the Arab Gulf states remains a provocative challenge for the field of urban design and urban space theory. While Dubai is often held up as *the* case of interest (Fakhreddine, 2008) because of growing evidence that the Emiratis are questioning the costs of unbridled urban development and the implications for cultural rootedness and the residents’ sense of belonging, other Arab Gulf states have tended to fall below the radar of investigation by academic researchers in the field. As stated earlier, filling this gap is the aim of this thesis.

In Chapter Three, several relevant frameworks will be discussed at greater length and in detail, followed by an examination of the methodological issues and choices guiding the study.

CHAPTER THREE

(Methodology)

3.0. Introduction

The methodology of the thesis involves the primary investigation that will aim to demonstrate and prove the gaps that exist in the understanding and perception of cultural context within the urban spaces of the GCC cities. The goal is to speculate the degrees of awareness by people involved with new projects on the topics of urban design process related to the preservation of their cultural values. These people include those who finance such projects, governmental representatives, urban planning professionals, and of course the public.

More importantly, the primary research aims to locate the understanding of the primary incentives of urban spatial designs and those of the local users, which will most likely represent one of the elements of the Circuit of Culture: Representation, Identity, Consumption, Regulation and Production. After locating the primary incentive of the urban planner or architect, and that of the public users, the methodology will aim to lead the design process towards the covering of all other elements of cultural affiliation. Therefore, the gaps found will most likely be the remaining elements that are not characterized as the primary incentive, while the concluding observation on the main interest may become the conceptual design focus. This process would justify the thesis hypothesis that there is a gap of cultural consideration within the conceptual design phase of public open urban space designs in GCC cities, while striving to satisfy that gap.

Consequently, the literature review extracts knowledge in order to establish the theoretical framework of the Circuit of Culture, while the second part of the work consists of the primary research, which aims to understand the existing degrees of cultural awareness within GCC cities. Finally the work locates the existing gaps and negotiates the ongoing conditions and problems. This chapter that forms the methodological explanation demonstrates the mean by which this investigation is made. The ultimate goal is the suggestion of a new methodology of design process conceptualization.

3.1. Methodological Overview

(Aim, Objectives and Research Questions)

The following section summarizes the aims and objectives of the research, while presenting the methodological design used for the qualitative and quantitative study of this dissertation's context.

Aim:

Establish a framework of the early conceptual design process, in order to provide guidelines for urban developers to understand and develop cultural awareness of urban populations in the GCC cities.

Objectives:

- 1- To measure the inhabitants satisfaction towards the presence of their cultural images in their public spaces.
- 2- To discover any missing aspects of design process between urban planners (discovering stage) and public space users (delivery stage).
- 3- To determine the most operational elements which define culture.
- 4- To explore the most appropriate design process that fits GCC cities characteristics.
- 5- To generate a cultural based model that will enhance the process of spatial design in GCC cities.

Main Question:

To what extent are design processes influenced by the cultural context in the GCC cities?

Research Sub-questions:

- Do the local communities in GCC cities culturally fulfilled?
- What is the gap between designers' feel of intention and public perception?
- What are the most effective processes that define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities?
- What design process model/method do GCC cities urban planners mostly use?

- What kind of method/model/process can be suggested to minimise the gaps between urban planners visions and inhabitants perception?

The methodology of the dissertation is based on the Stages and Diagrammatic Expression, elaborated in the introductory part of the thesis, which serves as the reference point of investigation for the carrying out of research strategies. The Cultural Context of the issue at hand has been investigated by the literature review, while the primary research that will follow will study the levels of comprehension of the public towards its existence in the GCC states. Design Processes have also been contemplated within the literature review that preceded in Chapter Two, section 2.5 and are to be elaborated upon further in Chapter Six. The primary research aims to extract the different kind of entry points of cultural concern, in order to study the possibilities of primary incentives and in relation to the remaining elements of cultural concern that have been studied. This research mainly involves the Public Response of the inhabitants of the selected GCC cities, questioning the physical, visual and metaphysical comprehension of their cities. It also involves semi-structured interviews of a number of professionals from all studied cities in order to extract commonalities on feedback upon cultural perception in relation to urban planning and architectural design. The primarily research also involves the structured interviews of professional practitioners in order to discuss with them the multiple entry points from which the realization of a design project may take place, verifying the results of the study. Chapter Six of the conclusions will also answer the “metaphysical wonder” of potential solutions. The strategic stages are the following:

The dissertation uses four main categories of research for answering the above questions and reaching its aims and objectives: Questionnaires, Semi-structured Interviews, Structured Interviews and Literature Review.

The Literature Review has already been presented and largely contemplated upon, and it has been the basis of guidance for forming the questions for the primary research. The Literature Review is not independent to the methodology of the research and findings that will take place; rather, it is a fundamental part into drawing qualitative conclusions for the present study, as it is wholly based on opinions of professionals and academic scholars. In fact, the Literature Review is part of the Qualitative Research however it is not considered a primary source of research, therefore not included in this current chapter. However, all conclusions presented in Chapter Six are a result of all primary (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews) and secondary (literature review) research.

The study aims to answer the above questions through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data sources, while analyzing the findings simultaneously. The methodology in this section, although analyzes the primary data gathered from the primary research of qualitative and quantitative context, also includes the role of the literature review (secondary research), being of qualitative nature. The differentiation of the role of primary and secondary research is mostly seen in section 3.9 of this chapter, where there is a correspondence of each question to the weight that each type of research holds.

For the purposes of the conclusion, all qualitative data are the results of the semi-structured interviews, the structured interviews and the literature review. These results are highly epistemological, as they have been carefully selected, and are the outcomes of studies and systematic contemplations of architectural and urban design professionals, who have been concentrated on the specific topic studied here. The quantitative data on the other hand, is done in pursuit of extracting the cultural perception of individuals living in GCC cities, who are randomly selected and non-experts. Therefore these results will be formed by the taking place of numerous questionnaires partaking in different GCC cities.

In order to clarify the data collection and organization of this dissertation, it is vital to note that most part of the qualitative research has taken place in Chapter Two through the Literature review. However, it should also be emphasized that equally important are the qualitative results of the primary research that takes place in the form of interviews, further elaborated below.

Chapter Four presents all of the results of the primary research, therefore excluding any elaborations of the Literature Review. Chapter Five creates a discussion on the findings and results, while Chapter Six presents through thoughtful criticism and synthetic contemplations of all the conclusions based on both the qualitative and quantitative investigations of the primary and secondary results.

The following three subsections show an overview of the three different means of gathering quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) data for the further design organization of the methodological procedure. The last section shows the implementation of the Literature Review into the methodological process.

3.2. Questionnaires

This section elaborates on the context of the questions and introductory statements that will be read by the respondents in order to understand the context of the research. The introductory part is important for the people to understand to what they are responding, in order to decide whether or not they want to participate. It also shows that the present study is done for the purposes of a doctoral dissertation. Do refer to the Appendix 2 for a thorough listing of all the questions distributed.

There are numerous advantages to the use of questionnaires regarding this study. First of all, a large amount of feedback information was able to be collected during a short period of time. The results may be used to compare and contrast other research and may also be used to measure change. For the purposes of this dissertation, the results will be compared to the findings of the literature review, and will contribute towards filling the knowledge gap for understanding cultural cohesion in urban planning of the GCC cities, and suggest a framework of cultural theory design. This becomes acceptable with the collection of the questionnaires' data, as it is accepted by positivists that new theories or hypothesis may be suggested or created, with the presence of quantitative data. However this research goes a step further and also considers the results through qualitative research as well.

As with any method of research, there are disadvantages to the use of questionnaires that must be mentioned as well. These include the lack of information that involves human emotion (such as changes in emotion, changes in behaviour, and feelings regarding some or all questions), affecting the validity of the results. Furthermore, it is a belief of phenomenologists that the questionnaire method of quantitative research creates a framework of pre-expected results by the researcher, therefore affecting the course of the hypothesis. This happens through the type of questions, the form of articulation, and the inclusion of only a limited amount of information without explaining the intentions behind each question. Additionally, there is the question of the respondents' accuracy in their replies, as they might be lying or forgetting, or they might not understand the questions along the lines of the researcher's intentions. Finally, there is the issue of imposition during the questionnaire's development, which refers to the weight of importance given for a question, which might be different or assumed unequally among the researcher and the individuals asked (Popper, 1959; Ackroyd and Hughes, 1981).

The questionnaires that respondents were given had questions that were based on the literature review which highlighted particular areas that could be

investigated further. These are elements that define cultural aspects of design in relation to religious principles, visual responses and individual experiences of cultural identification; elements that define physical experience of design in relation to degrees of meaningfulness and conceptual coherence and navigation issues; and elements that define the design process in relation to priorities of public space importance, importance of cultural concern and opinions on conceptual enhancement. The questions were all constructed based on the literature review analysis upon which the author found most appropriate for this particular research.

The questionnaire was tested on a couple of people prior to being distributed. Furthermore, the conditions under which the questionnaires were replied were controlled, with 50% of them being distributed face to face. Those had to be filled out within an enclosed space, therefore not allowing for any external urban spatial environmental distractions that might alter the general conception of the existing urban condition. The remaining 25% were distributed over the internet and the last 25% were distributed through friends and relatives.

The questionnaire that was distributed to participants can be seen in Appendix 2.

In summary, the main elements of cultural consideration that define the questions being asked, concern:

- Religious principles
- Cultural aspects of design
- Experiences and cultural identity
- The overall understanding of the city
- Navigation within the city
- Preferred methods of guidance within the city
- People willing to serve users
- Opinion regarding urban design
- Important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities
- Urban planners' concern towards culture
- Conceptual gap

The analysis and findings of the above questionnaire are presented extensively in Chapter Four and are being discussed in Chapter Five. Within these two chapters, all demographic factors of the respondents are being evaluated and discussed upon. The tables found there demonstrate demographic factors of the respondents, referring to the number or representatives for each city of Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat, Doha, and other randomly selected GCC cities. Demographic factors also include a listing of the respondents' age, in order to understand the range of diversity within the pool of primary investigation, covering ages from below 25 up to 60 years and over. Equally diverse is the respondents' level of education, seeking to reach people with a level of education ranging from a below high school degree up to PhD holders. Consequently, responses seem to reflect upon a large range of people, who sequentially demonstrate through their replies their opinion towards religious principles and cultural considerations of design; their understanding of the overall design of the their corresponding city with regards to cultural comprehension and cultural identity; their outlook while navigating the city; their opinion regarding the design of their corresponding city; and their opinion regarding aspects of public space projects in GCC cities specifically within their corresponding cities and in GCC cities in general as well.

3.3. Semi-structured interviews

The reason for selecting a semi-structured interview approach for the extraction of qualitative data is because this type of interviewing has been established as having the largest potential for gaining insightful, unbiased and more profound responses from individuals. At the same time, due to its semi-structured format, it includes a lesser risk of guiding the respondents towards one particular reply, therefore giving them the freedom to express their opinions with regards to their personal experiences, and not with regards to the context of structured and rigid questions. Consequently, the respondent is the one who leads the direction and course of the interview, rather than the interviewer, whose role is to only provide some baseline questions to assure a consistency in theme among the different respondents of the whole study. These baseline questions also allow for a more effective comparison during the analysis of the findings and results of Chapters Four and Five. Therefore, the primary characteristic of the semi-structured interview is that the dialogue is largely controlled by the respondent, leaving great room for exploration of the topic in a much more profound and professional way. This is why this method has been selected for questioning the design and urban planning professionals, rather than the public, whose opinions might be more superficial and less focused.

The importance of unstructured nature of the interviews lies on the conception that the formation of questions is one of the most essential elements of underlying preconceptions and unconscious manifestations caused by the researcher.

With the conduction of interviews, whether structured, unstructured or semi-structured, there are always ethical considerations to consider which involve the human factor. Especially when dealing with individuals that come from a diverse cultural and ethnographic background, there are matters of racial discrimination that affect decision choices and opinionated responses, or the arriving to conclusions that are based on preconceived, established, or standardized conceptions. This characteristic even holds true within the context of professional behaviour. It is important to note here however, that within the context of these semi-structured interviews, there were no fixed outlines for the structure of the responses, therefore the respondents were not 'forced' to reply towards one specific direction that could influence their opinion in any way.

In any case, with the presence of questions alone, there is a risk of creating a biased response relating to the direction of the theme and expected outcome of the reply. Other limitations to the semi-structured interviews, is that individuals may not be given the opportunity to offer their complete opinion regarding any question, due to limited amount of time, or due to the structure of the questions. Perhaps there are even confidentiality-issues regarding their true professional opinion, as they may be related to a company or group which does not wish to express a holistic and honest opinion on the topic.

Finally it is important to mention that the context of the questions of the semi-structured interviews are based on the same questions that take place within the questionnaire, in order to attain a consistency of context and thematic understanding. However, details of the questions are not being asked, while only those questions of general guidance are chosen, in order to let the experiences of the professionals guide the destination of the replies, rather than providing multiple choice replies. This is important to differentiate because urban design professionals might have different experiences than those of the general public or might express opinions that were not thought of by the researcher.

The professionals are therefore being interviewed upon the three main categories of "Cultural Elements" (Appendix 3), "Physical Experiences" (Appendix 4) and "Design Process" (Appendix 5).

The professionals chosen for the interviews were individuals either working independently, within larger urban planning and architectural firms, or within

their corresponding municipalities, currently involved in the construction and planning process of their cities. Some that were chosen due to their popularity, had to be dismissed from the research due to their lack of availability however most were able to collaborate. They were initially contacted through the phone, where the author briefly spoke about his research thesis and the main objectives of the work. When interest was shown, a meeting was scheduled, in most cases in the office of the respondent but with the exception of respondents from the city of Jeddah, who were interviewed over the phone due to geographical reasons. The interviews were private, and usually took approximately twenty minutes each.

Most respondents chose not to have their names revealed in the research, and therefore all names of the respondents are not being presented for purposes of identity protection. However below is shown some statistical data of the design professionals' background:

Dubai Respondent 1: Male Architect, age 43, specializing in public space design, both in Dubai and internationally. Owner of his own design firm, with 21 years of experience.

Dubai Respondent 2: Male Architect, age 53, specializing in high rise design in the city of Dubai. Working for a private design firm, with 28 years of experience.

Dubai Respondent 3: Male Architect, age 40, concentrating on public space design in an urban planning design firm. Working within the private sector, with 15 years of experience.

Dubai Respondent 4: Female Urban Planner, age 37, involved with urban planning projects within the municipality of Dubai. Partner in a private urban planning firm, with 10 years of experience.

Dubai Respondent 5: Female Architect, age 33, also an academic, involved mostly with private projects granted through international competitions. Working for a private architectural design firm, with 8 years of experience.

Jeddah Respondent 1: Male Architect, age 39, involved mostly with public space projects granted through international competitions. Working for a private architectural design firm, with 11 years of experience.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Male Architect, age 51, involved with international public space projects and originating from Jeddah. Working independently, with 33 years of experience.

Jeddah Respondent 3: Female Urban Planner, age 56, working locally and independently on smaller scale public space projects, with 30 years of experience.

Jeddah Respondent 4: Female Urban Planner, age 44, working as a partner in an urban planning firm. Involved with both local and international competitions and realizations, with 10 years of experience.

Jeddah Respondent 5: Male Urban Planner, age 37, also an academic, being involved with projects mostly within the GCC cities. Working both for the public and private sectors, with 14 years of experience.

Muscat Respondent 1: Female Architect, age 39, also an academic, being involved mostly with competitions, theoretical contemplations and scholarly activities, with 13 years of experience.

Muscat Respondent 2: Male Architect, age 27, working in a private architectural design firm. Working on a variety of scales and project types, with 5 years of experience.

Muscat Respondent 3: Female Architect, age 32, working for the municipality on urban planning projects within the city of Muscat, with 7 years of experience.

Muscat Respondent 4: Male Architect, age 55, involved with private architectural projects mostly within the city of Muscat. Partner in a design firm, with 32 years of experience.

Muscat Respondent 5: Female Architect, age 48, involved with both private and public designs of an often historical affiliation. Working both for the private and public sector, with 18 years of experience.

Doha Respondent 1: Male Urban Planner, age 29, involved with international projects and also active within the city of Doha. Working independently and collaborating with other design firms as well, with 6 years of experience.

Doha Respondent 2: Female Architect, age 48, working for a private architectural firm on large scale projects mostly within the GCC cities, with 16 years of experience.

Doha Respondent 3: Male Urban Planner, age 50, involved with the municipality of Doha on spatial planning and development. Working for the public sector, with 22 years of experience.

Doha Respondent 4: Male Urban Planner, age 26, working for the local municipality on public spaces, with 3 years of experience.

Doha Respondent 5: Female Architect, age 60, working in her own private design firm on local small scale complexes, with 36 years of experience.

The above respondents were chosen after reviewing some of their recent work and portfolios, which dealt with the creation of spatial influence within their corresponding cities either in a purely contemporary way, or while integrating some cultural aspects in their design. Some demonstrated both approaches through their practices, especially those with a longer-term experience. The aim was to choose a wide range of professional approaches and philosophies, discerned from a variety of urban typological and thematic constructions. By doing so, a more objective conclusion could be drawn on weighing the professionals' opinions on the importance of cultural awareness during the design process.

Below are noted the main questions that create the framework of questions, from which the respondents are free to proceed in an elaborative manner or not, according to each individual case:

Regarding the CULTURAL ELEMENTS of urban design procedures of the GCC states, the questions asked were:

1. "Do you find religious principles being considered in the designs of your cities, and in what ways?"
2. "How is your cultural influence related to your visual response in your city, as a professional, and how do you respond to that as a designer/planner?"
3. "What recent experiences within your professional experiences have been prime examples of cultural identity?"

Regarding the PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES of urban design procedures of the GCC states, the questions asked were:

4. "Do you find the overall design of your city meaningful and conceptually coherent?"
5. "Do you think that there are navigation problems related to your city?"

Regarding the DESIGN PROCESS of urban design procedures of the GCC states, the questions asked were:

6. "What do you think is important in public space projects in your city, or GCC cities in general?"
7. "How does cultural concern affect your design process, and is it at all important?"
8. "Do you have any ideas about what would enhance the conceptuality of public space projects in GCC cities?"

With regards to the semi-structured interview section within the Findings and Analysis of Chapter Four, it is important to keep in mind that in most cases, questions were not asked as stated, as they have only been used as guidance for contextual homogeneity of the responses. At the same time, a lot of information was provided that did not relate to the contextual needs for the purposes of the present dissertation. Therefore, the main themes are being noted only, as well as those particular responses that provide feedback for the effective formation of conclusions.

The qualitative data was extracted by using statistical summaries of percentages in reference to each contextual theme chosen. Therefore the key consideration was finding common points within the responses, in order to form conclusive data that formed patterns of beliefs and impressions.

Therefore, statistical data that emerges from the semi-structured interviews are expressed in the form of percentages and involve the following themes:

- Importance of religious principles for their implementation into culturally oriented urban design.
- Belief of a correlation between identity and culture.
- Calligraphy and geometry as aspects of cultural identification within the local architecture.
- Public spaces as a strong reference point for cultural identification. Identification of prime examples of cultural heritage.
- Opinion on whether the respondents' corresponding city is meaningful and structurally coherent.
- Identification of navigation problems within their corresponding city and elements that currently enhance this navigation.
- Identification of important target points for future designs.
- Opinion on the importance of cultural design in the professional process.

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews is being realized using the qualitative tool of Thematic Analysis in order to analyze the textual data of the interview results (Appendix 9). This is the most popularly used form of analysis used for qualitative research (Guest, 2012) and serves the aim of pinpointing certain commonly found replies, examining the contextual themes, and recording thematic patterns and key words within the collected data (Braun, 2006). The purpose of the Thematic Analysis is the coding of the textual data in order to achieve: familiarization with the data, generation of codes, searching of common themes among the codes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the final report (Discussions, Chapter 5) (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Each research question that is being stated is studied separately, dividing the data analysis first into contextual themes. Later, for each contextual theme are collected keywords and considerations in terms of: most popular responses (found more than three times among the respondents of all four different cities), secondly most popular keywords and considerations (found three to four times among the respondents of all four different cities, and thirdly most popular responses (found twice among the respondents of all four different cities). Finally, the importance of each major theme (a major theme is each semi-structured interview question alone) is recorded by analyzing how frequently

the respondents agree, disagree or remain neutral within their elaborative responses. Here it should be noted that each respondent may express more than one opinion of agreement, disagreement, or neutrality, based on the elaborative context of each reply.

Conclusively, each research question forms a major theme of the Thematic Analysis that forms a major category of analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Then certain pattern sets of responses create secondary contextual themes that are important to the description of a phenomenon associated to a specific research question (Daly et al., 1997). Each secondary contextual theme collects a number of keywords and considerations based on response popularity. Finally, the importance of each major theme is evaluated by analyzing the context of each point made within the respondents' replies.

3.4. Structured Interviews

Structured interviews were held in order to show to the practitioners the built in process of the public's opinion, and understand whether or not it is a good possibility to actually test the process and design from each angle of approach based on the replies. During these interviews, the results of the questionnaire and of the structured interviews were shown and discussed, followed by a discussion on the possibilities of implementing a potential model during which the planners' design process would start from the primary intention of the users, and then move on from there towards the development phase. Note that much of the context of the structured interviews' questions involves the analytical results of the statistical data that is mentioned and discussed in the following chapter, in Sections 4.9 (involving the questionnaires) and 4.10 (involving the semi-structured interviews).

Consequently, the purpose of the structured interviews is to evaluate the final deliverables through professionals' opinions.

Question 1: Our present study considers the possibility of implementing a methodological framework of cultural consideration into the design process of architects and designers. The goal is to aid towards the implementation of cultural elements into the GCC cities. What would be your initial reaction to such an idea?

Question 2: During your practice, have you come across similar methodologies? In what ways were they similar or different, and what were the results?

Question 3: After distributing a series of questionnaires to habitants of different cities of the GCC cities, we were able to form a list of elements that were thought to be important in relation to the cultural state of the user's corresponding city. The lowest correlation seemed to be between the overall understanding of the city and experiences and cultural identity. Do you find this to be reflective based on your practical experience?

Question 4: Following the previous question, the highest correlation seemed to be between the concern of the urban planners with regards to culture, and the conceptual gap that exists within GCC cities. What is your personal response to this?

Question 5: During a series of semi-structured interviews, 100% of the respondents agreed on the importance of cultural design in the professional process. Do you also agree with this point of view?

Question 6: With regards to the most important elements to consider in future design, the element of scale had the lowest percent (5%), followed by urban cohesion and orientation (15%), followed by heritage conservation and building restoration (30%), followed by the consideration of the environment and public open spaces (60%). How much do these percentages reflect your own personal philosophy and point of view?

Question 7: The new proposed methodology of cultural design implementation strives to take the public and professionals' strongest interest point as the design's primary incentive, and then continue with a design sequence that targets all elements of cultural identification. These, according to the Circuit of Culture theory, are known to be Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption and Regulation. This method would allow for multiple entry points for the planners, while ensuring the covering all different aspects during the process. Would such a methodology be interesting for professionals and would it have a good public response?

The first respondent works for a large architectural and urban planning firm based in Dubai, being mostly involved with local projects. The second respondent works for a large architectural firm in Doha, involved also with international projects, of a wide variety of typologies. The third respondent works for a small-medium sized architectural and urban planning firm based in Muscat, involved primarily with local projects and conservation works. All three respondents have more than twenty-five years of experience under their belt. Responses were given after each individual was informed about the detailed content of the present research. Furthermore, all images of Chapter 6, showing

the methodological results and graphic representations, were shown and explained as thoroughly as possible.

3.5. User community questionnaire of deliverables

Brief questionnaires in order to evaluate the final deliverable were also distributed to twenty members of the user community. The questions that were formed were based on the questions that were asked during the structured interviews targeted for the professionals however formed in a much simpler way not requiring any knowledge of specific professional terms on urban and architectural design. Since the purpose of these evaluations is to gather an idea of satisfaction levels on the final deliverable, the analysis of the results is a pure expression of public opinion that will supplement the Conclusions section of Chapter Six.

Thirty respondents were chosen from random cities of the GCC which face a variety of contextual urban situations – from low-income areas to high-income districts, and involve a variety of ages and educational backgrounds.

Prior to fulfilling the questionnaire, each participant was privately consulted for ten minutes in order to explain to each as simply as possible the final deliverable, while showing and explaining the diagrams that are shown in Chapter Six of the Conclusions in order to make the final deliverable more comprehensive and realistic to their imagination and understanding.

The questions asked are the following:

Question 1: This study comes up with a design framework through which an urban planner or an architect is encouraged to use cultural considerations into his/ her design. Do you find this useful?

- a) I find it extremely useful
- b) I find it somewhat useful
- c) I think it is of little use
- d) I find it pointless

Question 2: Do you think that culture should be of prior concern for urban planning and architectural professionals?

- a) I think that it should be of prior concern
- b) I think that it should be a concern, but not a primary one

- c) I think that it should be of little concern
- d) I think that culture has no relevance into urban planning and architectural design

Question 3: Do you think that GCC cities face a problem of cultural coherency and cultural expression through their architecture?

- a) I think that they have a great problem in this aspect
- b) I think that there is some problem, but not a major one
- c) I think that there is a very small problem in this aspect
- d) I don't see a problem at all

Question 4: Do you find this methodology unique and interesting?

- a) I find it extremely unique and interesting
- b) I find it somewhat unique and interesting
- c) I find no uniqueness or interest in this methodology

Question 5: Do you think that there is awareness of cultural identity when navigating your city?

- a) I am strongly aware of a cultural context when walking in my city
- b) I am somewhat aware of a cultural context when walking in my city
- c) I see no cultural context when walking in my city

Question 6: Are you concerned about new urban planning and architectural projects that should perhaps close a conceptual gap that might exist in the GCC cities?

- a) I am greatly concerned
- b) I am somewhat concerned
- c) I am not concerned at all

Question 7: What do you think should be the most important element to consider in future architectural and urban designs?

- a) The scale of the project
- b) Urban cohesion and orientation
- c) Heritage conservation and restoration
- d) Environment and public open spaces

Question 7: What do you think should be the least important element to consider in future architectural and urban designs?

- a) The scale of the project
- b) Urban cohesion and orientation
- c) Heritage conservation and restoration
- d) Environment and public open spaces

Question 8: Do you agree with taking the public and professionals' strongest interest point as the design's primary incentive, and then continuing with a design sequence?

- a) I highly agree and think it would be effective
- b) I somewhat agree I find it would be somewhat effective
- c) I see many problems with this approach

Question 9: Do you agree that elements of cultural consideration include all five elements of Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption and Regulation?

- a) I highly agree
- b) I somewhat agree
- c) I don't agree at all

3.6. Literature Review Interpretation

The reference towards the published literature analysis that takes places in Chapter Two, speculates all the different levels of information that are necessary for the topics of cultural interpretation of urban design in terms of spatial context, and the concept of space and urbanism from the point of view of urban professionals and experts. These theoretical interpretations are all relevant to the specific questions that take place during the primary research of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, making an association that integrate a variety of different viewpoints. The findings of the literature review conclusions are mostly extracted from published and peer-reviewed articles of professional journals that relate to urban and architectural planning and design, or from published book volumes. They all offer targeted feedback from specialists in the field.

3.7. Methodological Limitations

Some of the limitations of this dissertation study may have been the limited amount of primary research particularly with regards to the qualitative data of design professionals and the amount of semi-structured interviews that took place. Surely, a great amount of this type of data, would have offered more epistemological conclusions, however the results of replies even with this amount of collected data was consistent enough in order to form of view and make the relevant speculations on the issue at hand. Nevertheless, the reasoning behind such limitation is the fact that professionals who are being involved with this particular topic of cultural definition with regards to urban planning and particularly public urban space development, are part of a very narrow field of expertise, therefore the pursuit of more semi-structured interviews would have been excessively difficult and perhaps even unrealistic.

Regarding the structured interviews and questionnaire distributions on the final deliverables, perhaps the respondents were not a great many. However regarding the structured interviews with the professionals, the number limitation is balanced through the expert opinion offered through their thorough responses. Regarding the user community questionnaires, even though the respondents were only thirty, they cover a wide variety of contextual living situations and backgrounds. There is also the chance that they might become biased during the ten-minute consultation prior to fulfilling the questionnaire however its completion was done at their own personal and private time, therefore were free to ponder on the topics and decide on their own critical conclusions.

3.8. Mixed Method (Pragmatic) Creswell et al., 2003

There are different types of design methodology that may be related to a mixed method analysis of data, including sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, sequential transformative, concurrent triangulation, concurrent nested, concurrent transformative design. All of these methods involve the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, during which one may follow the other, or may both take place at the same time. This type of prioritizing depends on the design type that may be chosen, In the case of this dissertation, where qualitative and quantitative data are desired to be collected and analyzed at the same time while given equal importance, a concurrent triangulation method may be chosen. The choice of a design type also depends on which stage the data of the dissertation the data will be integrated for the formation of conclusions; in this case, the integration is desired at both

interpretation and analysis phases for the parallel and simultaneous formation of critical results. Consequently, a concurrent triangulation is granted ideal. Finally, a theoretical perspective may be present, considering the vast extend of the literature review considerations.

With the implementation of both quantitative and qualitative methods in this dissertation, a number of which are predetermined prior to the formation of conclusions, a mixed method (pragmatic) methodology is chosen to be applied, according to Creswell et al. (2003), who involve the discipline of educational context and also social and behavioural research. Furthermore, this method allows for the emerging of new issues to be complemented during the design and research process, making the process more flexible and open for discussion. Therefore, the design has both fixed and emerging aspects of categories. Concurrent timing takes places when the researcher implements both the quantitative and qualitative strands during a single phase of the research study. This is extremely relevant in this dissertation, as the results of the literature review discussion will be evaluated parallel to the results of the interview studies in order to form conclusions on the main research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2010).

The diagram below illustrates the most popular design types of a mixed method research, highlighting the implementation priorities for each one, in addition to the desired stages of integration, and the existence or not of a theoretical perspective. Therefore the choice of a concurrent triangulation is wholly justified also in a diagrammatic and clear way.

| Design type | Implementation | Priority | Stage of integration | Theoretical perspective |
|---------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| Sequential explanatory | Quantitative followed by qualitative | Usually quantitative; can be qualitative or equal | Interpretation phase | May be present |
| Sequential exploratory | Qualitative followed by quantitative | Usually qualitative; can be quantitative or equal | Interpretation phase | May be present |
| Sequential transformative | Quantitative followed by qualitative or Qualitative followed by quantitative | Qualitative, quantitative, or equal | Interpretation phase | Definitely present (i.e., conceptual framework, advocacy, empowerment) |
| Concurrent | Concurrent | Preferably | Interpretation | May be present |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| triangulation | collection of quantitative and qualitative data | equal; can be quantitative or qualitative | phase or analysis phase | |
| Concurrent nested | Concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data | Quantitative or qualitative | Analysis phase | May be present |
| Concurrent transformative | Concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data | Quantitative, qualitative, or equal | Usually analysis phase; can be during interpretation phase | Definitely present (i.e., conceptual framework, advocacy, empowerment) |

Table 3.1: *Different Types of Mixed Methods Approaches.*

(Creswell et al, 2003)

3.9. Concurrent Triangulation Design

The strategy of concurrent triangulation involves the following characteristics:

- There are two concurrent data collection phases (quantitative and qualitative)
- There should be an equal priority given to both phases, however may be given to either quantitative or qualitative side.
- Data are integrated during interpretation phases. The integration extractions signify either a lack of convergence that disproves the hypothesis, or a presence of convergence that strengthens the knowledge claims. This data integration may also occur during the analysis phase of the dissertation. For this dissertation, it takes place during Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis and Chapter Five: Discussion.
- The primary purpose of this Design is to confirm the accuracy of the hypothesis, through means of corroboration and cross-validation within the study.

The strength of this methodological application approach is that it is familiar to many researchers within the field of urban planning and design. Furthermore, the time required for the collection of data is significantly shorter than the time required when compared to sequential methods, therefore allowing more time for analysis and speculative thought during the

process of collection. This characteristic offsets the weaknesses inherent to one design by using both.

Finally, a great deal of expertise and effort is required in order to study the phenomenon under concern while using two different methods of qualitative and quantitative research, demonstrated in this dissertation. Through the comparison of two different types of data, a number of discrepancies may arise, which may be resolved through critical speculation and analytical thought that demonstrates a profound knowledge of the topic in hand (Teller, 2011).

The diagram below demonstrates the two cluster categories used and analyzed through the mixed method approach of concurrent triangulation. It becomes evident here that the quantitative data collection comes from the source of the public, which in part evolves from the handing out of 400 questionnaires in the cities of Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai and Doha. The qualitative research results, in addition to the results gathered from the literature review of Chapter Two which presents the epistemological findings of urban and architectural planners, professionals and academics, present also the findings of designers, architects and urban decision makers through the form of semi-structured interviews, and from choosing twenty candidates (5 from each city of Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai and Doha).

The diagram below shows in an organization way this cluster differentiation, while highlighting the method, technique, sample and whereabouts of this methodological design.

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Clusters | Public: inhabitants/ space users / locals | Urban planners: designers/ architects/ decision makers |
| Method | Quantitative | Qualitative |
| Technique | Questionnaires | Semi-structured Interviews |
| Sample | 384 (400 questionnaires will be distributed, 100 questionnaire for each city) | 20 (5 candidates from each city) |
| Where | Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai, Doha | Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai, Doha |

Table 3.2: *Cluster Differentiations*

3.10. The research Sample

The diagram below demonstrates the research sample that is involved with the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. As stated above, it has already been well understood that the method of questionnaires is being distributed to citizens of Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat and Doha. The additional information presented here is that individuals under the age of 18, as well as foreigners, are not being included in the sampling. Furthermore, the sampling technique used is that of proportional stratified random sampling, which is the process of dividing members of the sampling group into homogeneous subgroups that are proportional to that of the total population.

With regards to the method of semi-structured interviews, it is shown that these apply to groups of urban planners, consisting of designers, architects, urban decision makers (city councils, municipalities and authorities) and academics. The sampling technique used for this method is that of random purposive sampling, meaning that the selection is based on the judgement of the researcher in terms of professional identity and expertise however it is random in terms of who those professionals might be.

| Method | Sampling Technique | Group | Population | Sample |
|----------------------------|---|---|------------|--------|
| Questionnaires | Proportional stratified random sampling | Citizens of- Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat, Doha - excluding under age of 18 and foreigners | --- | 384 |
| Semi-structured Interviews | Random purposive sampling | Urban planners: designers/ architects/ decision makers, stakeholders authorities | --- | 20 |

Table 3.3: Primary Research Analysis

The sampling size for the questionnaire is based on a most common used formula which was suggested by Cochran (1977, cited in Gill and Johnson, 2010):

$$n = \frac{p(100 - p)Z^2}{E^2}$$

E2

Where:

n = required sample size

Z = is the z value corresponding to level of confidence required

p = percentage occurrence of a state or condition

E = the percentage maximum error required.

In calculating sample size for the purpose of this research, the confidence level (Z) is 95%, (p) is estimated to be 50%, and the confidence interval (E) is 5%, which means plus or minus 5. According to Gill and Johnson (2010), these percentages are acceptable in most social research.

3.11. Objectives and Research Questions

The diagram below demonstrates the method used for each of the research's questions that leads to the main objectives of the dissertation. Consequently, this section largely helps towards the formation of conclusions that will take place in Chapter Six, as each question will be contemplated based on shifting the weight towards different parts of the research that took place throughout the methodological process. Therefore, for the first question of whether the local communities in GCC cities are culturally fulfilled, the majority of the conclusion-base will be extracted from the quantitative research results that will emerge from the questionnaires. In sequence, while trying to define the gap between designers' intention and public perception, the conclusions will be drawn from a synthetic contemplation of both the professionals' responses during the semi-structured interview, and also the questionnaire results of the public. The literature review conclusions are by a large part responsible for outlining the most effective processes that define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities, while in negotiating what design process models and methods are mostly used by urban planning professionals in GCC cities, both the results of the semi-structured interviews and the literature review are being considered. Finally, for the final objective of defining the kind of method, model, or process that can be suggested in order to minimize the gaps between urban planners' visions and inhabitants' perceptions, the key considerations are based on primary research findings.

| Objectives and Research Questions | Method | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Qualitative | Quantitative | Literature Review |
| Are the local communities in GCC cities culturally fulfilled? | | ✓ | |
| What is the gap between designers' intention and public perception? | ✓ | ✓ | |
| What are the most effective processes that | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities? | | | ✓ |
| What design process model/method do GCC cities urban planners mostly use? | | ✓ | ✓ |
| What kind of method/ model/ process can be suggested to minimise the gaps between urban planners visions and inhabitants perception? | ✓ | ✓ | |

Table 3.4: *Objectives and Research Questions Methodologies*

CHAPTER FOUR

(Findings and Analysis)

4.0. Introduction

The current chapter is the presentation of the results that have been observed during the undertaking and analysis of the primary research which aims to locate the gaps of knowledge that exist concerning the awareness of cultural concern when dealing with urban spatial design. Although the analysis of the results in relation to the presentation of the new methodology are being made in the next chapter which form the concluding section of the thesis and the finalization of the thesis' innovation, this chapter shows the statistics of the responses, the correlations that have been found, the degrees of understanding on specified topics that form the body of the investigation. These themes involve religious principles and cultural aspects of design; the understanding of cultural design, cultural identity, and urban design; opinion on ease of navigation through cities; opinion on the design of the corresponding cities of habitation; and aspects of public space projects in GCC cities.

The observations of these results strive towards the correct direction for the reclamation of cultural context through strengthening what is already known and what is unknown about the relationships among representation, production, identity, regulation and consumption. The understanding of these levels of knowledge may then be integrated in the interpretation of early design models.

This chapter is the foundation of these results, demonstrating all the information that lies behind the data, involving the demographic factors of the respondents, the respondents' age, and their level of education. Then, results considering cultural context of the topic is being analyzed. The correlation between the religious principles and the design characteristics shows whether the public and the urban planning professionals consider evident a religious reference to the conceptualization of the buildings. This shows indeed the level of preference of people concerning religious principles and how religion is a characteristic which can define identity in a culture. The questions regarding the design aspects of spaces and the understanding of a concept, clarify the level of emphasis on the early phase of the Double Diamond design model, which is that of Discovery and Definition.

Lastly, it is considered important to mention at this point that although the context of the primary research questions and investigations are being based on the findings of elements and keywords that have been extracted from the secondary research of the literature review, there is one more aim during the process of the questionnaires and interviews: This aim regards the asking of free opinions without providing any hints of possible answers, therefore allowing space to comment on additional elements of cultural identification that may not have been considered.

The discussion of these findings ends with the contemplation on the urban planning professionals' replies, which are considered very vital for the creation of more specific and targeted responses, especially regarding the aspect of gathering information and ideas that might have not been considered by the author's judgement or by the literature review. However it is helpful to note early on, that all responses and questionnaire results have encouraged the thesis' hypothesis of the elements that form the Circuit of Culture (on Identity, Representation, Consumption, Regulation and Production), therefore offering a good introduction to the next concluding chapter in which the new methodology is being presented.

4.1. Demographic Factors of Respondents

This section studies the demographic factors of the respondents, the majority of which were chosen from four cities of the GCC: Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat, and Doha. The percentage of respondents from other GCC cities was low (13.8% all together), so the remaining of the cities were put into a category of their own, named "other GCC".

| | City | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Dubai | 55 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| Jeddah | 77 | 21.8 | 21.8 | 37.3 |
| Muscat | 124 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 72.3 |
| Doha | 49 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 86.2 |
| Other GCC | 49 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.1: Cities

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the percentages of the questionnaire responses gathered from the different cities involved. It is evident that most of the responses came from Muscat, gathering 39% of the filled-in questionnaires, followed by a fairly equal distribution of percentages among the remaining cities of Dubai, Doha and Jeddah, with 15%-16% of all questionnaire responses for each. The remaining GCC cities which did not gather a percentage high enough to be considered each alone, add up a collective 15% of all the questionnaire responses.

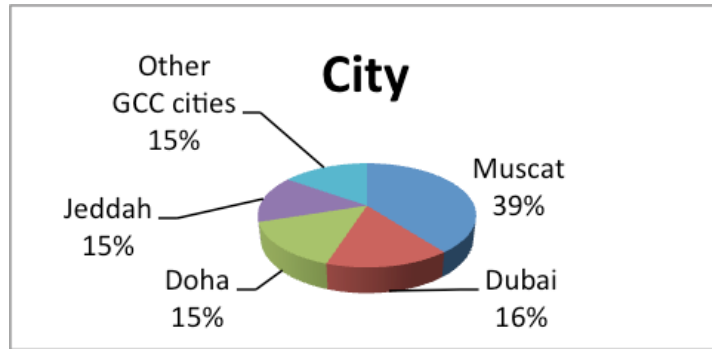


Figure 4.1: Samples percentage according to their Cities

Muscat has the highest number of respondents at 35%, with a frequency of 124 respondents. This is followed by Jeddah with a percentage of 21.8% of the respondents and a frequency of 77.. Meanwhile, Dubai was represented by a cumulative percentage value of 15.5% and a frequency of 55, as Doha and other GCC cities share the percentage response value of 13.8%, each category with a frequency of 49 respondents.

4.2. Respondents' Age

The graphical analysis demonstrating the demographics for the respondent's age breaks down the findings into five different age groups: below 25, 25-35yrs, 36-45yrs, 46-59yrs, and over 60yrs of age.

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Below 25 | 139 | 39.3 | 39.3 | 39.3 |
| 25-35 yrs | 94 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 65.8 |
| 36-45 Yrs | 49 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 79.7 |
| Valid 46-59 yrs | 44 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 92.1 |
| 60 yrs plus | 27 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 99.7 |
| 33 | 1 | .3 | .3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents

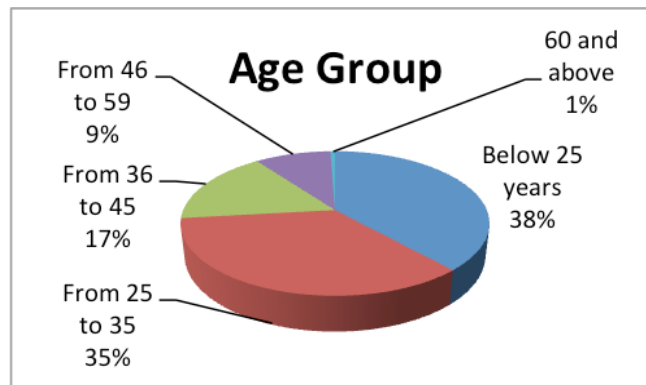


Figure 4.2: *Samples percentage according to their Age Group*

From the data analysed, the majority of the members interviewed were below 25 years old. This was represented by approximately 39%, with a frequency of 139 individuals. Meanwhile, 26.6% of those who were interviewed fell between 25-35 years of age counting a frequency of 94. 13.8% or 49 of those interviewed were in the age bracket of between 36-45 years old. Providently, 12.4% were between 46-59 years old, with a frequency of 44 individuals, while the minority of the count included the representatives of those aged 60 years and above, counted for 27 individuals, or 7.6% of the total respondents.

4.3. Respondents' Level of Education

The table below demonstrates the statistics gathered from the level of education of the respondents. As this dissertation investigates the level of comprehension of GCC city residents with regards to the cultural context of their corresponding cities, it is important to have a general overview of their level of education, as the higher that level would be, the better the awareness might be towards the issue. It is also important to have the largest amount of respondents be at an average level of education, or at a level which corresponds to the average status of residents of the GCC cities. The results are in fact very satisfactory with regards to expected frequency of each category, with the majority of respondents falling among the categories between high school education and a bachelor degree.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Below High school | 47 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| | High school cert | 98 | 27.7 | 27.7 | 41.0 |
| | Intermediate | 76 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 62.4 |
| | Bachelors degree | 91 | 25.7 | 25.7 | 88.1 |
| | Masters | 39 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 99.2 |
| | Phd | 2 | .6 | .6 | 99.7 |
| | 22 | 1 | .3 | .3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 354 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.3: Level of education of the respondents

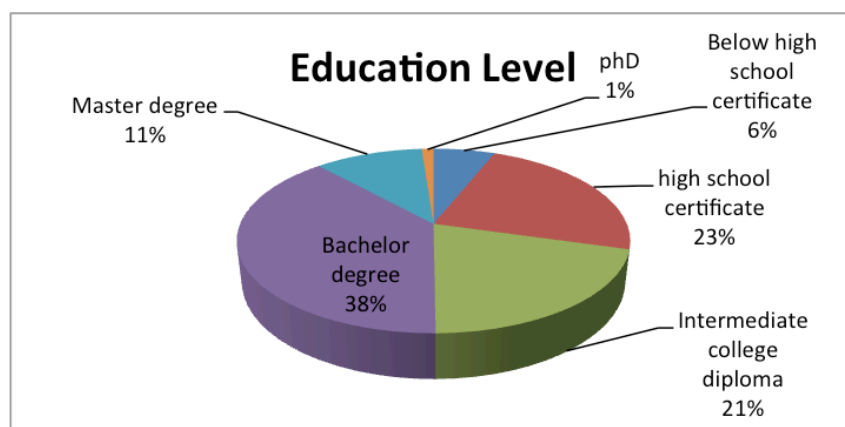


Figure 4.3: Samples percentage according to their Education Level

312 out of a total of 354 of the respondents were beneficiaries of bachelor's degree and lower certification. In fact, those with a high school made up the highest percentage of the respondents asked, with a frequency of 98 individuals, comprising 27.7% of the total respondents. From the data received, 13.3% of those interviewed, or 47 in total, admitted that they have an academic certification, which is below the high school level. Meanwhile, 27.7% of the interviewees had attained a high school certificate, with a frequency of 98 individuals. This is comparable to the 21.5%, or 76 of the respondents who had intermediate certification. 25.7% represented those with bachelor's degree, counting for 91 respondents, and 11% represented Masters, counting for 39

respondents in total. The minority, 0.6% had PhDs, who summed up for only 2 individuals.

4.4. Correlations: Religious Principles and Cultural Aspects of Design

In order to study the degree that religious principles hold in relation to cultural aspects of design, a Pearson Correlation was used, which is a correlation method that measures how well two sets of data are related, or how well they depend upon one another. The Pearson Correlation or Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) is the most commonly used one, and it shows whether or not a line graph represents the set of data. The results of the Pearson Correlation are between -1 and 1, where 1 is a total positive correlation and -1 is a total negative correlation. The closer the value reaches 0, the greater the variation the data points are around the line of best fit. Consequently a Pearson Correlation of 0 signifies no correlation.

The table below demonstrates the results of how much religious principles depend on the cultural aspect of a design, and vice versa.

| | | Religious principles and design | Cultural aspects of design |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Religious principles and design | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .017 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .756 |
| | N | 354 | 354 |
| Cultural aspects of design | Pearson Correlation | .017 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .756 | |
| | N | 354 | 354 |

Table 4.4: Correlations: Religious principles and cultural aspect of design

Correlation analysis between the two variables, religious principles, and design incorporated in the design of the GCC cities reveals that there is a significant kinship between these two variables since the correlation index of the two variables fall within the significant levels. Essentially, it means that there are poignant moderate and positive kinship between these two variables. Religion, as a cultural construct, seems to be a significant determinant factor in the planning of the GCC cities

4.5. Cultural Design Aspect, Cultural Identity and Urban Design Understanding

The table below demonstrates interrelationships of three contextual factors: the cultural aspects of the design, the implementation of experiences into cultural identity through design, and the understanding of the overall design. At this point the quantitative research is starting to show negative correlations or no correlations (with values falling at 0 or below 0).

| | | Cultural aspects of design | Experiences and cultural identity | Are overall designs understandable? |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cultural aspects of design | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .013 | .000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .804 | .997 |
| | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| Experiences and cultural identity | Pearson Correlation | .013 | 1 | -.168** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .804 | | .001 |
| | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| Are overall designs understandable? | Pearson Correlation | .000 | -.168** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .997 | .001 | |
| | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.5: Cultural aspect of design, cultural identity and the understanding of the overall design of cities

At a significant level of 0.01, the relationship between the three variants, cultural aspects of design as incorporated in the GCC planning framework, experiences and cultural identity in the planning, and understanding of the overall designs of these cities reveals an interesting relationship. The Pearson correlation index outlines a negative relationship. This essentially means that these three variants lack any significant kinship. Most of the respondents interviewed thus are unable to understand the overall design principles in the GCC cities especially in relation to the two variants of cultural aspects of design and the experiences of cultural identity amongst the respondents regarding the GCC cities

4.6. Navigation through Cities (Ease of Use)

For the evaluation of the relationship between the citizens' impressions towards navigation and location finding and preferred methods guide, a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used, assessing how well the relationship between the two variables can be described using a monotonic function. For the understanding of the table, it is important to note that a Spearman correlation of 1 results when the two variables being compared are monotonically related, even if the relationship is not linear. The interpretation of Spearman's coefficient is similar to that of Pearson's, meaning that the closer the value reaches +1, the stronger the monotonic relationship. However, Spearman's coefficient is characterized as nonparametric, in contrast to Pearson's which only gives a perfect value when the two variables are related by a linear function.

The table below demonstrates interrelationships of two contextual factors: the ease of navigation through the city and the finding of locations, and the use of a preferred method guide.

| | | | Navigation and location finding | Preferred method guide |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Navigation and location finding | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.027 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .616 |
| | | N | 354 | 354 |
| | Preferred method guide | Correlation Coefficient | -.027 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .616 | . |
| | | N | 354 | 354 |

Table 4.6: Navigation through the cities

The Spearman's correlation index testing the link between navigation through the GCC cities and the method guides preferences points out to a very positive relationship. It is critical to explore in this discourse that most respondents find the navigation through the GCC cities not very hard. With a positive index of 0.616, there is a positive kinship between the navigation capacity through the GCC cities and the preferential guides used in the same

4.7. Opinion on Design of Urban Cities

The table below demonstrates interrelationships of three contextual factors: the impression of how well people are willing to serve you, opinions regarding urban design, and important aspects of public space projections within GCC cities.

| | | | People willing to serve you | Opinion regarding urban design | Important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Spearman's rho | People willing to serve you | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .034 | .099 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .523 | .063 |
| | | N | 353 | 353 | 353 |
| | Opinion regarding urban design | Correlation Coefficient | .034 | 1.000 | .074 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .523 | . | .165 |
| | | N | 353 | 354 | 354 |
| | Important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities | Correlation Coefficient | .099 | .074 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .063 | .165 | . |
| | | N | 353 | 354 | 354 |

Table 4.7: Opinion regarding the design of the urban cities

Exploring the opinions regarding the design of the cities explores the three variables subjected to statistical analysis. At a value of 0.523, well within the significant values, there is a positive link between these three variables, demonstrating that what people find as important aspects of public space design projects in GCC cities involve how well people and urban professionals are willing to serve you. The results also show that there is a high opinion of people regarding the field of urban design and its overall role within the quality of urban living.

However, all three variables are subjective in their contexts, as they are mainly concerned with the opinions of the respondents. Evidently, these opinions are quite poignant factors in defining the design mentality of the GCC cities.

4.8. Aspects of Public Space Projects in GCC cities

The table below demonstrates interrelationships of three contextual factors: the important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities, the urban planners' concern with regards to cultural affiliations and interpretations, and the conceptual gap that exists between what is there, and what should be contextualized and understood by the public.

| | | | Important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities | concern of urban planners to culture | Conceptual gap |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Spearman's rho | Important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.057 | .065 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .286 | .226 |
| | | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| | concern of urban planners to culture | Correlation Coefficient | -.057 | 1.000 | .175** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .286 | . | .001 |
| | | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| | Conceptual gap | Correlation Coefficient | .065 | .175** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .226 | .001 | . |
| | | N | 354 | 354 | 354 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.8: Aspects of public space projects in GCC cities

The correlation coefficient tabulated in the work is a revelation of a positive relationship between the public space projections in the GCC cities under study and the cultural concern of the urban planners during the design. A correlation coefficient of 0.175 is a sufficient scientific and statistical evidence of the relationship. Culture of the social construct in the GCC cities must be having a very strong influence on the planning of the GCC cities. Furthermore, the presence of a conceptual gap draws this research towards effective conclusions that reinforce the allocation of a new scope for urban design studies and applications within the GCC context.

4.9. Questionnaire results

Putting the concentration on the correlation factors that determine the various relationships between the elements of cultural consideration defined in the questionnaires (summarized in Section 3.2.), all results are being listed in sequence, from the most negative correlation to the most positive correlation. Therefore an overview of prioritizing takes place, from the point of view of the users:

There was a negative correlation (- 0.169) between experiences and cultural identity, and the overall understanding of the city by the users.

There was a negative correlation (- 0.057) between important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities and urban planners' concern towards culture.

There was a negative correlation (- 0.027) between navigating the city and using a preferred method guide by the users.

There was a positive correlation (0.013) between experiences and cultural identity, and cultural aspects of design.

There was a positive correlation (0.017) between religious principles and cultural aspects of design.

There was a positive correlation (0.034) between people willing to serve you and opinion regarding urban design.

There was a positive correlation (0.065) between the presence of a conceptual gap and important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities.

There was a positive correlation (0.074) between opinion regarding urban design and important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities.

There was a positive correlation (0.099) between people willing to serve you and important aspects of public space projects in GCC cities.

There was a positive correlation (0.175) between urban planners' concern towards culture and the presence of a conceptual gap.

4.10. Semi-structured interview results

As noted in section 3.3 of Chapter Three in the methodology, the semi-structured interviews took place with 5 different professionals of urban planning within 4 different GCC cities; Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat and Doha, for a total of 20 interviews and a total of 160 question replies. The results have been summarized in order to target the specificities of each question that will help towards the key issues of the thesis.

Table 4.9 below outlines the types of professionals involved in the qualitative research and Thematic Analysis results:

| Type of respondent (age) | Workplace (yrs of experience) | Themes | Tool | Number | Total |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Male architect (43) | Dubai, private design firm (21) | Public space design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male architect (53) | Dubai, private design firm (28) | High rise design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male architect (40) | Dubai, urban planning design firm (15) | Public space design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female urban planner (37) | Dubai, urban planning firm and academia (10) | Urban planning of municipality | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male architect (39) | Jeddah, private architectural firm (8) | Public space design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male architect (51) | Jeddah, freelance (33) | International public space design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female urban planner (56) | Jeddah, freelance local (30) | Small-scale public space design | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female urban planner (44) | Jeddah, partner in urban planning firm (10) | Local and international competitions and realizations | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male urban planner (37) | Jeddah, freelance and academia (14) | Projects in GCC cities for public and private sector | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female | Muscat, | Competitions, | Semi- | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|---|---|
| architect (39) | freelance and academia (13) | theory and scholarly writing | structured interview | | |
| Male architect (27) | Muscat, private architectural firm (5) | Variety of scales and project types | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female architect (32) | Muscat, municipality (7) | Urban planning projects of Muscat | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male architect (55) | Muscat, partner in design firm (32) | Private architectural projects of Muscat | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female architect (48) | Muscat, private and public sector (18) | Private and public designs of historical context | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male urban planner (29) | Doha, freelance and external collaborator (6) | International and local projects of Doha | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female architect (48) | Doha, private architectural firm (16) | Large-scale projects of the GCC | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male urban planner (50) | Doha, municipality of Doha public sector (22) | Spatial planning and development | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Male urban planner (26) | Doha, local municipality (3) | Public spaces | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |
| Female architect (60) | Doha, private design firm (36) | Local small-scale complexes | Semi-structured interview | 1 | 1 |

Table 4.9: *Outline of participants of semi-structured interviews.*

Regarding the consideration of religious principles within the designs of the cities, the majority of the responses recognized the lack of their expression however it was found most evident within the presence of mosques which in many cases serve as landmarks within the urban context. Dubai seems to experience an ongoing lack of religious contemplation within design, whereas Jeddah, being a destination point for religious pilgrimages and also a World Heritage Site at its centre, experiences more sensitivity towards the issue. However in all cases, respondents seem to touch upon the issue of a secular atmosphere within the design practice, impacted by globalization and the demands of the international market. Some characteristic quotes of this secular shifting include:

“[...] a lot of the contextual characteristics of new buildings in Dubai go against religious principles [...]” (Dubai Respondent 2),

“Religion is of secondary importance when it comes to [...] spontaneous interpretation of urban problems” (Dubai Respondent 5),

“[...] it is difficult and unpractical to [implement aspects of traditional architecture in their design] because there is a secular demand as a result of globalization” (Jeddah Respondent 2),

“Jeddah is becoming more secular” (Jeddah Respondent 4),

“[in] Muscat [itself] [rather than in smaller cities and villages] one experiences the strength of religious influence to a lesser degree” (Muscat Respondent 1),

“[...] putting Muslim religious elements in a city where so many expats live, would not be so relevant” (Muscat Respondent 3),

“The culture of religion is becoming lost in the expression of buildings, as it was once the case” (Muscat Respondent 5),

“Religion plays a very important part in GCC culture and should be considered in more buildings that are of monumental character” (Doha Respondent 2),

“[...] it would be more appropriate to express religious architecture within the context of the city” (Doha Respondent 3),

“Religious stimuli are not enough [...]” (Doha Respondent 4).

Furthermore, most respondents expressed their cultural awareness as professionals, especially for those of the older generations. The majority of them expressed a disheartening realization of the design direction of the large cities, while some dwelled on the memory of once-practiced architectural ornamentation such as geometry, calligraphy, and other religious references. Other cultural design speculations contemplated on the matter of scale of buildings, the need for marriage between old and new, and the inevitable visual transformation of the urban skyline due to the skyscraper phenomenon. The existence of cultural awareness mostly seems to be overtaken by the visual condition of the diversity that expats create, leading to the generation of a

secular atmosphere. Professionals with the highest evidence of cultural awareness seemed to touch upon issues of building preservation and restoration for those areas and individual constructions of traditional importance, stressing the need to work more on the specific topic of design implication.

The majority of the respondents saw a great opportunity of cultural expression integrated in contemporary projects, bringing up a few cases of their professional experience that were prime examples of cultural identity. The mentioning of such examples, include:

Emirati architecture (Dubai Respondent 1),
Dubai Heritage village (Dubai Respondent 2),
The Historic Centre of Al Bastakiya (Dubai Respondent 4, Dubai Respondent 5),
Dubai Museum (Dubai Respondent 4),
Entrance to Mekkah (Jeddah Respondent 1),
Al-Shafe'j Mosque in Harat Al-Mathloum (Jeddah Respondent 2),
Bicycle Roundabout (Jeddah Respondent 3),
House of Al Zubair (Muscat Respondent 1),
Seeb Seafront Plaza (Muscat Respondent 4, Muscat Respondent 5),
Msheireb project (Doha Respondent 1, Doha Respondent 2, Doha Respondent 4),
Souk Waqif (Doha Respondent 3, Doha Respondent 4),
Fareej Al Asmakh district (Doha Respondent 5).

Not referring to some particular project but to some act or movement striving to integrate cultural identity within projects is the mentioning of the Historical Buildings Restoration section established in 1991 by the Municipality of Dubai (Dubai Respondent 3); the collaboration with Space Syntax in 2006 (Jeddah Respondent 5); Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM) by Gehl Architects of Denmark (Muscat Respondent 2); the restriction of the building heights in Muscat (Muscat Respondent 3).

Regarding the professionals' impression upon urban conceptual coherency, the majority of them found a lack of meaningful coherency within their corresponding cities, bringing up issues of globalization, mega-buildings with no true meanings, a lack of character, socioeconomic problems, social segregation, a lack of sense of ownership, urban sprawl and district segregation. Since urban conceptual coherency often goes in parallel with navigation issues within a city, it seems interesting to note that navigation problems are not often the case, however present in some cases mostly due to the confusion upon the street names – not directly related to the spatial layout of the city. In fact, navigation seems to shine through large monuments used as orienting landmarks, the layout of the streets cases such as Jeddah, which carries an orthogonal grid and a

relationship to the sea and the relationship with the surrounding landscape as with the case of Muscat.

On the other hand, urban coherency is being recognized in those urban areas that carry a meaning through the organization of neighbourhood districts (Jeddah Respondent 1, Muscat Respondent 2), the use of natural features as orienting elements that define the city such as in the case of the mountains in Muscat (Muscat Respondent 1), and the successful differentiation between the historic districts and the new modern developments (Doha Respondent 4).

On the professionals' opinion on public space projects in their corresponding cities or GCC cities in general and the improvement of local conceptuality, most respondents touched upon issues of scale, the implementation of open courtyards, pedestrian consideration, heritage implementation, district connection, hygiene, materiality, cultural preservation, sustainability, understanding of density patterns and public amenities.

Drawing statistical information extracted from the interviews and according to the discerned thematic patterns elaborated in section 3.3, the following outcomes emerge:

- 75% of the respondents believe that religious principles are important for their implementation into culturally oriented urban design.
- 85% of the respondents are firm believers that identity and culture are strongly correlated.
- 20% of the respondents mention calligraphy and geometry as aspects of cultural identification within the local architecture.
- 45% of the respondents mention public spaces as a strong reference point for cultural identification.
- 75% of the respondents consider restoration projects, architecture of symbolization, public spaces and characteristics of scale as prime examples of cultural heritage.
 - o From the above 75%, 65% of the respondents mention the aspect of restoration as an important part of cultural preservation. The restoration projects that appear as prime examples of cultural heritage preservation include: the restored historical area of Bastakiya (Dubai), the Quran gate (Dubai), the Al-Shafe'j Mosque in Harat Al-Mathloun (Jeddah), the House of Al Zubair (Muscat), the Seeb Seafront Plaza (Muscat), Souk Waqif (Doha), the Msheireb project (Doha), Msheireb historical area (Doha).
 - o From the above 75%, 35% of the respondents mention other building typologies that play a part in cultural identification. These include: Dubai Heritage Village, shishas, barns, traditional restaurants, residential districts, wind towers, art galleries and private museums.

- 60% of the respondents find their cities to be meaningful and structurally coherent. From these, 100% of Muscat's respondents found their city meaningful and structurally coherent.
- 75% of the respondents said that there are no serious navigation problems in their cities, while 35% of the respondents referred to a variety of elements that aid towards an effective navigation:
 - o 40% of these made a correlation to monuments and landmarks;
 - o 30% of these made a correlation to the surrounding topography;
 - o 30% of these made a correlation to the configuration of the infrastructure;
 - o 15% of these referred to the effective numbering system. (Note: a few respondents referred to more than one of the above).
- 60% of the respondents mentioned public open spaces and environmental consideration as the most important target point for future designs.
- 30% of the respondents mentioned heritage conservation and building restoration as the most important target point for future designs.
- 15% of the respondents mentioned aspects of urban cohesion and orientation as the most important target point for future designs.
- 5% of the respondents mentioned scale as the most important element to consider in future designs.
- **100% of the respondents (all) agreed on the importance of cultural design in the professional process.**

While following a similar process as in Section 3.9 of prioritizing the different results in terms of importance and hierarchy of quantitative responses, below follows a list where the response with the least weight forms the beginning of the list, progressing towards the response with the greatest weight.

- Scale is the most important element to consider in future designs (5%).
- Aspects of urban cohesion and orientation are the most important target points for future designs (15%).
- Calligraphy and geometry form aspects of cultural identification within the local architecture (20%).
- Heritage conservation and building restoration are the most important target points for future designs (30%).
- Public spaces form strong reference points for cultural identification (45%).
- GCC cities are meaningful and structurally coherent (60%).
- Public open spaces and environmental consideration are the most important target points for future designs (60%).
- Religious principles should be implemented into culturally oriented urban design (75%).

- Restoration projects, architecture of symbolization, public spaces and characteristics of scale, are prime examples of cultural heritage (75%).
- There are no serious navigation problems in the GCC cities (75%).
- Identity and culture are strongly correlated (85%).
- Importance of cultural design in the professional process (100%)

Refer to Appendix 3 for a listing of all the summarized responses. Conclusions on the outcomes of the responses and the Thematic Analysis are further being covered thoroughly in Chapter Five (Discussions) that follows.

CHAPTER FIVE

(Discussion)

5.0. Introduction

This is the final and concluding chapter of this thesis, which presents the new methodology that aims towards the reclamation of cultural context for designing during the conceptual phase. Using the discussion that has emerged from the literature review of chapters two and three, and more importantly as a result of the primary research which has identified the missing elements of cultural identification within the urban spaces of the GCC cities, the context of this chapter is to demonstrate also diagrammatically the logic of the Circuit of Culture.

This section in fact serves as an information graph that selects the symbolic shape of the star in order to represent the solution of the process in an explanatory and illustrative way: It studies the operational levels for cultural definition and also the appropriateness of the GCC cities regarding the design process suggested. Prior to this presentation, the author creates an evaluation of the work done through the discussion of levels of satisfaction, and the missing aspects of the design process.

5.1. Satisfaction Levels

The present section covers the first objective of the research, which is it to measure the inhabitants' satisfaction towards the presence of their cultural images in their public spaces, therefore answering the first question of the research's aims: "Are the local communities in GCC cities culturally fulfilled?"

The conclusions of this section also study how different groups from different backgrounds experience and define a particular design, in order to judge their satisfaction levels and how that space appears to them.

This also relates in a similar way to the pure expression of cultural identity, though any means, within the places and the understanding of the urban design. It has been indeed proven that there is low degree of understanding with regards to the philosophical and conceptual procedures of new buildings and the lived spaces in between. With the parallel findings that cultural understanding and design procedure acknowledgement are all important aspects for the citizens' appreciation towards their urban spaces, it is inevitably being concluded that there are low satisfaction levels with regards to the existing urban spatial evolutions. Consequently, local communities in the GCC cities are not generally culturally fulfilled.

From some of the primary questions regarding the satisfaction levels of the citizens with regards to the cultural context of the GCC cities' public spaces, emerge indications that the lack of religious identification causes levels of dissatisfaction within the inhabitants. This is deduced from data that suggested that there was a positive correlation between the importance of identity expression and the cultural definition of places, and acknowledging the lack of such elements within the globalized GCC states, causes a decrease of satisfaction.

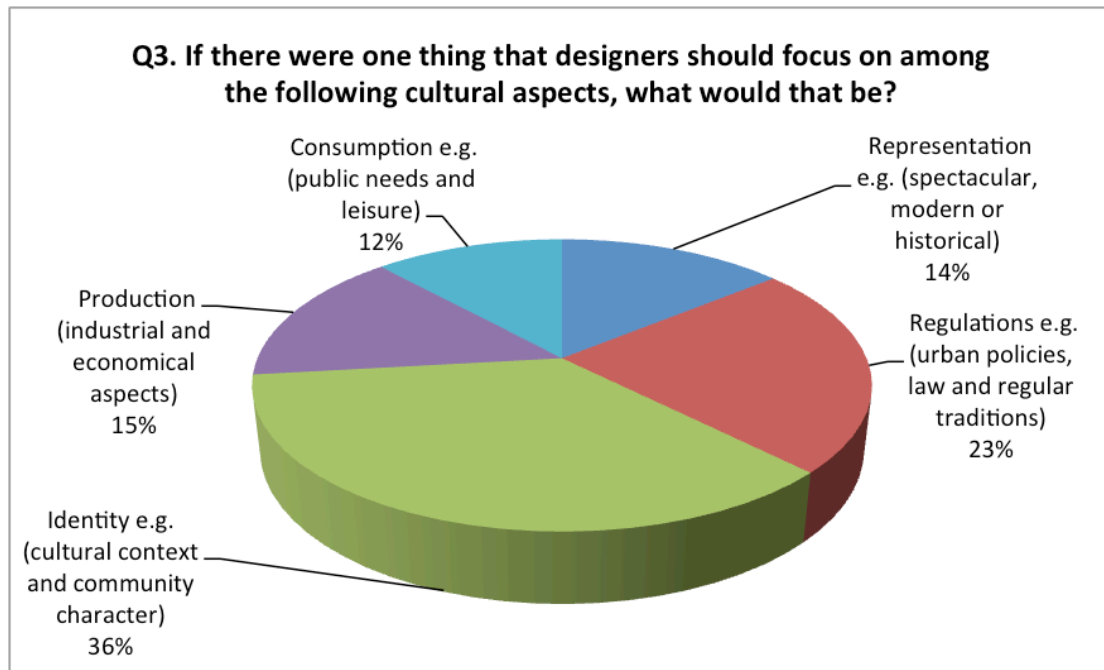


Figure 5.1: *Samples preferences among the cultural aspects*

The above results have been confirmed also by the semi-structured interviews, in which it has been demonstrated that although urban design professionals are aware of the cultural depth of GCC cities' urban backgrounds, there is a considerable lack of cultural implementation into the designing of the cities. It is important to note that these urban planning professionals acknowledge the existence and conservation of cultural and religious elements that are in the forms of mosques, palaces, forts, and tombs, as well as the historical centres, which are partly preserved. There is also some satisfaction considering the way in which preservation and conservation laws have changed, therefore reinforcing and supporting the need for cultural awareness and architectural reconsideration. However on the most part, GCC cities lack a cultural satisfaction also from the point of view of urban professionals.

The questionnaire responses are the factors that determine this satisfaction level, as also stated in the methodological section of this dissertation. The people

find few religious principles carried out in the design of their cities and the restoration of cultural longevity; they find little visual or metaphysical comprehension of any conceptual message that is trying to be passed through their cities except for rare cases that are not considerable to prove otherwise; and there is little clear understanding of a cultural expression within the urban architecture and planning. A positive outcome has been the acknowledgement of being able to navigate easily around their cities, which shows signs of functional infrastructure and/or the presence of numerous important landmarks which aid towards good navigation and the formation of clearly perceptible and discernible urban landscapes.

More specifically on satisfaction levels on the importance of each theme that is brought up in terms of cultural elements, physical experience, and design process, the following results were obtained:

On the weight of the main theme on cultural elements regarding religious principles and contextual characteristics, among all 48 different types of response patterns, 30 agree on the importance of the theme, only 3 disagree, while 15 remain neutral. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of religious principles and contextual characteristics, religious principles and evolution, specific examples of religious principles and religious principles and professional practice.

On the weight of the main theme on cultural influences and visual responses, among all 40 different types of response patterns, 38 response patterns agree on the importance of the theme, 0 disagree, while only 2 remain neutral. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of situations of cultural influence and visual response, specific characteristics of cultural influence and visual response, suggestions on elements of cultural influence and visual response, and specific examples expressing these thematic patterns.

On the weight of the main theme on cultural elements and recent experiences of cultural identity, among all 50 different types of response patterns, 44 agree on the importance of the theme, only 3 disagree, while only 3 remain neutral. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of general considerations of recent experiences expressing cultural identity, specific characteristics, specific examples expressing these thematic patterns, and suggestions in order to emphasize them further.

On the weight of the main theme on physical experience and meaning and conceptual coherency of the overall design, among all 38 different types of response patterns, 23 agree on the importance of the theme, 10 disagree, while only 5 remain neutral. The 23 responses which express disagreement justify their point of view on a good style difference, coherency, clarity, conceptual unity, heritage consideration, a strong and good distinction and a nice contrast. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of general opinion on meaning and conceptual coherency, specific justification on the theme, specific

examples expressing these thematic patterns, and specific suggestions in order to emphasize them further.

On the weight of the main theme on physical experience and navigation problems related to the city, among all 37 different types of response patterns, 11 agree on the existence of navigation problems within GCC cities, 24 disagree, while only 2 remain neutral. Those who disagree, support that navigation is supported by specific reference points within the city. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of general justification on navigation problems and specific reference points involving these thematic patterns.

On the weight of main theme on design process and factors that are important in public space projects, among all 24 different types of response patterns, all 23 response patterns agree on the importance of the theme. These satisfaction levels involve the secondary themes of general opinion on public space factors, specific interventions on public space factors and specific strategies in order to emphasize them further.

On the weight of the main theme on design process and the importance of cultural concern and design process, among all 36 different types of response patterns, all 36 response patterns agree on the importance of the theme. These satisfaction levels involve the general speculation on cultural concern and design process, specific speculation on cultural concern and design process, and suggestions in order to emphasize them further.

On the weight of the main theme on design process and enhancing the conceptuality of public spaces, among all 38 different types of response patterns, all 38 response patterns agree on the importance of the theme. These satisfaction levels involve the general speculation of conceptual enhancement, specific examples that express these thematic patterns, and suggestions in order to emphasize the patterns further.

5.2. Missing Aspects of Design Process

The present section covers the second objective of the research, which is to illustrate the missing aspects of design process between urban planners and public space users. Considering that urban planners help shape the discovery stage during the Double Diamond Design model, forming and constructing cultural elements within the city, they are highly influential on the public space users, who perceive and experience all aspects of the delivery stage of the design process. Therefore, the question answered here is one of the research's aims: "What is the gap between designers' intention and public perception?"

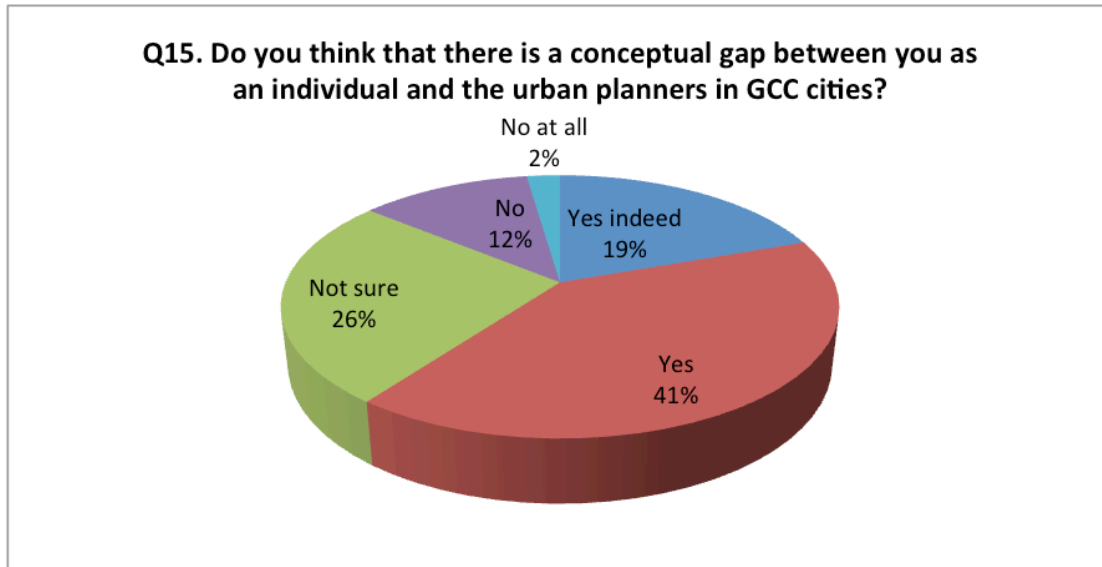


Figure 5.2: *Samples perception of urban planner's cultural misconception*

The outcome of the responses demonstrates a shift of public urban perception and urban emotional comfort that has been affected by the contemporary state of urban globalization.

The outcome of globalization has created cities that lack clear religious or cultural aspects of design, especially within the GCC cities, which are highly affected by new constructions that aim to attract the international audience.

Furthermore, as a result of the studies of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, it has been noted that there is a strong gap between citizens' understanding of the design principles of the GCC cities, particularly when it comes to matters of experiencing cultural identity and other cultural aspects of design.

More specifically, some gaps of the design process include specific cultural elements that relate to religious practices and the everyday lifestyle of the locals, which in essence is what defines a particular city, expressed through its history and socio-cultural affiliations. Such design aspects, fully acknowledged by urban planning professionals, should be primarily considered in urban design practices. A suggestion might be that the culture represented through storytelling principles could potentially interconnect different districts of GCC cities with one another, offering conceptual coherence that not only responds to demands of technological advancement and globalization, but also to the perceptual realities of the cities' layers through time (Sonnenburg, 2013). When such aspects of conservation and historical awareness are present prior to the actual designing of any project, then the process would follow an outline that would become the backbone of any further design execution; whether purely architectural, or urban.

More specifically and a result of the semi-structured interview responses, some gaps in cultural comprehension relate to the following areas:

- A lack of urban coherency as a result of globalization and lack of conceptual themes. This conclusion is being supported by a number of quotes by the urban planning professionals, such as: “Globalization has been a major problem in the overall feel of the city, making it non-conceptually coherent” (Dubai Respondent), “The city lacks conceptual coherence, because each structure that is being built strives for ideals that usually have nothing to with heritage and history” (Dubai Respondent 4), “Surely there is a lack of conceptual themes that carry out throughout the city of Jeddah” (Jeddah Respondent 3), “[...] one could say that there are two different concepts, where one holds strong the aspects of heritage, and the other is lost into the partial outcomes of globalization” (Muscat Respondent 1), “The concept is becoming lost, with the moving of the high rises towards the centres of the historic areas, occupying empty lots” (Doha Respondent 5);
- a presence of abstract forms which have no conceptual reference to the totality of the corresponding city;
- the situation of each mega-structure built having its own concept;
- the concentration on ideals may be far away from local ideologies;
- the isolation of historical cores from surrounding works, heterogeneity and lack of easy accessibility;
- the demolitions of historical walls;
- the poor referencing of effective master plans;
- a surge of developments and city expansion;
- the immediate occupation of empty lots with high-rises and new developments that may have little to do with the surrounding context.

The tables that result from the Thematic Analysis of the semi-structured interviews on Design Process (Appendix 8) show a good collection of keywords and considerations that express missing aspects of the relevant thematic patterns. Some of the most popular considerations include: urban and cultural appreciation, preservation, matters of scale, cultural stimuli, the exterior and surrounding environment, heritage issues, conservation, restoration, urban planning consultation, urban cohesion, cultural elements, cultural affiliation, cultural concern, cultural needs, cultural identification, cultural preservation, prioritization, professional responsibility and awareness, urban planning issues,

considerations of daily life and daily activities, the historic and urban background of a city, matters of scale and augmentation, traditional design, knowledge on customs and historic background, local conception, contemporary context, prioritization, shifting, cultural identity, specific character, materiality, local techniques, deep tradition and architecture, urban roots and historicity, architectural features, strategies, urban planning considerations, professional study, master plan implementation, specific architectural elements, matters of heritage and urban conservation, traditional architecture, cultural needs and coherence. Less popular responses include: factors of the surrounding environment, public spaces, mobility, traditional building means, traditional architecture, a city's historic centre, fragmentation, diversity, urban connection, scale considerations (large-scale designs and interventions), cultural places, cultural identity, cultural implementation, traditional and unique characteristics, modern building techniques, reality issues, rapid development, privacy, cultural wealth, local values and local pride, suggestions revolving around United Emirati architecture, Omani architecture, design planning and urban planning, the consideration of scale (immense buildings, megalopolis, small-scale), urban patterns, density patterns, consumption, shopping mobility, pedestrian circulation and outdoor dwellings, reconsideration of scale, local communities, societal studies, residential needs, mixed-use needs, density patterns, urban patterns, retail needs, shopping mobility, public space establishment, public courtyards, traditional gardens and materiality issues.

From the previous findings of the primary research, it is starting to show that both the public and professionals of the urban design field find a strong kinship between religious principles and the cultural aspect of design. Religion, as a cultural construct, has been proven to be important in the minds of GCC inhabitants and playing a significant factor for the creation of places of identity in the planning process. Meanwhile, the public sees no clear expression of religious and cultural principles, leading to the conclusion that this missing gap of communication is the expression of cultural and religious characteristics that identify the traditions and history of the local people. These lost elements would be the means within the design process that would offer a lot of the mnemonic devices, semiotic elements and physical realities that would connect all pieces of the urban fabric together. They are the acknowledged gaps that evidently need to be considered within the design of the GCC cities in order to preserve the proper evolution of urban comprehension and significant traditional expression through time. However when these religious references take the form of 'iconic' representations, this may create exclusion and unrest as in the case of areas within, as for example Israel. Therefore, religion may be represented through more abstract forms of cultural expression, and perhaps more discrete ornamentation.

Finally, as stated by most respondents in the questionnaire section of the primary research, this filling of the gaps is the responsibility of the urban

planners and relevant professionals and in the field, as it was proven that one important aspect of public space design in GCC cities is how well people and professionals are willing to offer their services, which is an outcome of proper facility provision and relevant amenities in the places.

5.3. Operational Levels for Cultural Definition

The present section covers the third objective of the research, which is to determine a defined culture, therefore answering the third question of the research's aims: "What are the most effective processes that define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities?"

The operational levels for cultural definition are mostly considered through the literature review contemplations. Cultural context may be the perceptual understanding of relationships of elements within spaces, which offer information of story-telling nature, incorporating aspects of fantasy and cinematographic understanding. The space should be able to be investigated from a variety of perspectives, understood by groups of people who share common beliefs and preferences. Other tools are those of imagination, innovation and cultural abstraction. Such impressions fill the gaps of cultural identities through the level of understanding of the viewers; whether or not the city's syntax and structural patterns are being understood.

Lefebvre's three aspects of socially produced space are effective processes that define the cultural context of public spaces in GCC cities; the physical, the mental and the social, while one overlaps with another. In fact, measuring the comprehension and perception of these three effective processes within the GCC cities has been the basis of the primary research investigation, judging the degrees of effectiveness within the design processes of cultural context taking place within them. The physical processes mostly involve the experiences of people, which is otherwise called the 'perceived space'; the mental processes involve the comprehension of the surrounding urban environment, which is otherwise called the 'conceived space'; and the social processes mostly involve the interactional means of urban space habitation, which is otherwise called the 'lived space', or the 'metaphysical space'.

In the data gathered for this thesis it can be seen that a relationship exists between public spaces and cultures of democracy, leading one to go back to processes that took place in ancient Greece through levels of participation and human rights. Although this aspect of urban planning was not touched upon by any of the respondents of the semi-structured interview and therefore not considered in this thesis, it is not invalid to consider the social level and social freedom differences between the two sexes, and how that affects the cultural interpretation of corresponding cities. This would be an interesting topic for further research, needing its own particular attention and research.

Other effective processes that have been highlighted through the research are those that define the cultural context of public spaces in the GCC cities and include:

- spatial distribution of social groups;
- relationship between social and spatial forms. This observation shows that there is a high tendency of public and social gathering within and around spaces of cultural and iconic significance. This demonstrates people's preference towards such spaces of representational importance, while attracting public activities, public circulation and public events in those areas. Such social interactions seem to find place within spatial forms of a human scale that is more affiliated to cultural history and the more traditional forms of built and spatial perception;
- understanding of the private preferences of local residents, or otherwise called the 'aesthetic consent';
- consideration of all elements that constitute the lived experience;
- consideration of the landscape that surrounds a city and using it as a mnemonic system for the retention of ideas and concepts;
- consideration of a physical reality of a common culture;
- use of globalization as a narrative of eviction;
- finding comfort patterns that relate to psychological security within the cities of globalization. These may be results of repetitions of habitual societal behaviour and patterns that demonstrate perceptual evolution;
- implementation of means of communicating social diversity and planning of urban spaces for residents;
- expression of culture not only through the representation of its past, but also through the expression of all that is represented through means of the media sciences, cultural studies, management, sociology and other fields in the arts including humanities and social sciences. This will provide tools for an aesthetic richness of what makes up the urban fabric of GCC cities;
- crafting spaces that express a variety of purposes: the circuit of culture (CoC). These concepts are expressed through levels of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. The way by which these concepts interact, is the expressional demonstration of culture,

impacting how products and spaces are consumed and reproduced in the cities;

- consideration of the notion of scale that ultimately defines the cultural characteristics of a city, as it takes a theoretical dimension of urban comprehension;
- balancing of the tensions between local culture and global forces;
- existence of commerce, tourism and various other systems that are well thought-out in order to lead to organized political and social modalities;
- social usage of space according to hierarchical modalities, priorities and ideals;
- creation and expression of correlations between the physical world, the optical world and the appearance of the world in our experience;
- integration of physical structures of buildings and human use and interaction with urban spaces and places;
- the creation of a sense of “*placenessness*”; mitigating cultural, social and personal effects;
- expression of local preferences;
- designing of new localized and hybridized urban environments that find stitching purposes among fragmented realities of contemporary urban situations;
- implementation of participatory planning.

The tables that result from the Thematic Analysis of the semi-structured interviews on Cultural Elements (Appendix 6) show a good collection of keywords and considerations that express missing aspects of the relevant thematic patterns. Some of the most popular considerations include: monumental designs, mosques, religious culture, Islamic architecture, cultural awareness, Islamic culture, tourism and vacation resorts, Omani beliefs, scale, buildings’ grandeur, and the critical consideration of smaller cities, taller buildings, and high rises, the mentioning of religious buildings in the GCC cities, followed by the concept of internationalization, cultural values, cultural awareness, cultural identity, consideration of scale (building height, mega-projects, high rises and skyscrapers), visual stimuli, matters of globalization, building preservation, attaining visual perfection, materiality and scale (multi-storey buildings), the historic aspects of designs and their cultural, architectural background, the Old City and the Old Wall, aspects of restoration and environmental adaptation, cultural identity, rehabilitation, revitalization, public

open spaces and festival squares, traditional residences and public spaces. Less popular responses include: landmarks, destination points and the pilgrimage towards Mecca, geographical studies, the consideration of adjacent sea banks and the Red Sea, food culture, elements of historic reference, urban planning values, landscape, environmental considerations, visual relationships, referencing points, contemporary situations of market demands, emotional response, national pride and sentimentality, local traditional architecture, restoration, preservation, memory and scale (building height limitations), elements of scale (height restriction) and consideration of historic background, corner oasis, small parks, landscaping, street renovations, boulevards, aspects of rehabilitation and the Msheireb project and the Shishas.

5.4. GCC Appropriateness for Design Process

The present section covers the fourth objective of the research, which is to explore the most appropriate design process that fits GCC cities characteristics, therefore answering the fourth question of the research's aims: "What design process model/method do GCC cities' urban planners mostly use?"

Evidently from the primary research results of Chapter Four, one of the design characteristics that showed a positive correlation with the citizens' urban understanding deals with their ability to navigate easily within their cities by using their preferred method guide. This in fact shows that good orientation and perhaps the use of monuments and urban landmarks is one of the process models and design methods that GCC urban planners mostly use. This is a good basis for the further definition of cultural identity place-making, as the initial stage of navigation already seems in many cases, to have been resolved. Through the enhancement of the landmarks and orienting instruments, cultural punctuations may improve the cultural reference points of the cities.

Therefore, while it was concluded through the questionnaire quantitative research, that navigation means were quite efficient, the qualitative research of the semi-structured interview in section 4.10 of Chapter Four helped towards identifying the reasoning behind the ease of navigation in the GCC cities.

Summarizing from the interview investigations that were made for all four cities of Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat and Doha, the main urban design principles that facilitate towards good navigation in the cities include:

- the use of large monuments which serve as orienting devices;
- the presence and taking advantage of a strong topographical configuration of the city, such as when the city runs along the sea;
- the presence of tall buildings as evident landmarks in the skyline;

- comprehensive street numbering systems (which were only evident in Dubai);
- orthogonal street designs (mostly evident in the city of Jeddah);
- the identification of different districts, which help wanderers understand their whereabouts;
- intra-city transportation systems;
- the collaborative concerns of the Geographical Information Systems that tries to solve navigation problems within cities (the Oman case);
- the relationship of the landmarks with the surrounding landscape;
- the radial configuration of a city (evident in the city of Muscat);
- the presence of easily-identifiable main streets within the cities;
- the presence of historical centres.

The tables that result from the Thematic Analysis of the semi-structured interviews on Physical Experiences (Appendix 7) relates to this section of GCC appropriateness for the design process, and show a good collection of keywords and considerations that express missing aspects of the relevant thematic patterns. Some of the most popular considerations include aspects of: coherency, conceptual clarity, holistic urban understanding, globalization, localization, apparent districts, historic districts, segregation, matters of scale (mega-buildings, mega-structure and high-rises), character, cultural identity, heritage, traditional construction techniques, out-of-context situations, spontaneity, a lack of direction in design, the consideration of a deeper meaning, the implementation of global themes, scenery, landscape, architectural characteristics and concept, residential character, residential heritage considerations, monuments, landmarks, infrastructural considerations (boulevards, street configurations, intersections), familiarization, orientating landmarks, aspects of visual re-direction, reference points, topography (sea and landscape relationships), street naming, urban connection, urban distribution, urban division and intra-city networks. Less popular results include: a modernist style, socioeconomic factors, planning coherency, urban unity, the use of a solid master plan, the consideration of corresponding buildings, contextual thought, internationalization, lack of ownership, urban and cultural expansion, the mentioning of the Old City, districts, street differentiation, street identification, street numbering system and expats.

There are some very promising recent actions aimed towards the preservation and conservation of historical centres, public places, and solitary buildings

within GCC cities, which are starting to acknowledge the importance of cultural heritage. Such examples were noted primarily in the process of the semi-structured interview qualitative research.

More specifically, urban planners in Dubai expressed their views on several matters: on maintaining the scale of the traditional architecture where nothing should be built taller than a tree; on their appreciation towards the contextual information of the Dubai Heritage Village which gives ideas of what Dubai should look like with its shishas, barns, and traditional restaurants and the acknowledgement towards the Historical Buildings Restoration Section established in 1991, aimed to restore the city's identification and cultural heritage; the touristic attempts to make the historical city of Dubai more recognizable through walking tours in the historic centre of Al Bastakiya and within the Dubai Museum; and the cultural restoration of the historical area of Bastakiya, including cafes, art galleries and other traditional architecture.

Urban planners in Jeddah also expressed some effective design process models, including the symbolization efforts in projects like the Entrance to Makkah, known as the Quran Gate; the extensive restoration and maintenance work undergone with the Al-Shafe'j Mosque in Harat Al-Mathloun in the Al-Jame'I market; the evolution of Jeddah as an open-air art gallery featuring many artworks in public urban spaces, many of which have become symbols of local culture; the conservation and improvement of public spaces; the city's collaboration with Space Syntax in 2006, striving to improve the overall strategy for the city through land use accounts and movements. However these examples are mostly large scale and for the purposes of this thesis, small scale places 'between' fall between large developments and private, enclosed spaces, and are largely ignored by developers.

Urban planners in Muscat expressed their satisfaction through their city's design processes in works involving: the conversion of the House of Al Zubair into a private museum, exhibiting exemplary architecture and Oman's rich heritage and culture; the project called Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM), aiming to improve the conditions of public open excursions in the city with new fountains and other urban furniture; the restriction on Muscat's building height; and several revitalization projects including the construction of boulevards, the Seeb Seafront Plaza, a few Markets, and other projects that will enhance the appearance of the city.

Finally, urban planners in Doha expressed effective design process models in their city through works involving: the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif, aiming to bring back the authenticity of the area; the Msheireb project involving the sustainable redevelopment at the city centre and the revitalization of the old commercial district; and the preservation of the Fareej Al Asmakh district.

In addition to the above major design characteristics of GCC cities, some other characteristics of design processes that GCC urban planners primarily use and are important to consider, found in the literature review, are the following:

- The incorporation of an Islamic ideology and the lack of separation of religion and politics is a predominant characteristic of the ideology. However, it is noted primarily through the qualitative section of the primary research (through the semi-structured interviews), that a great number of buildings and urban compositional schemes in the recent decades have followed a purely secular character, influenced by the wave of globalization.
- The principle of grassroots and communitarian engagement. This principle evidently shows that the urban design processes are driven by local communities' politics. Of course this creates a number of limitations with regards to the participatory context of urban planning and the contextual quality of the works undertaken, as they are primarily localized and consequently fragmented.
- The existence of a class-based structure of society, with either elites or minorities taking precedence over the majority of the citizenry. This situation also creates problems of participatory planning and understanding the needs of people who are actually living in the places under concern.
- The situation of the urban planning profession stressed by neoliberal pressures, aggressive urbanization caused by the oil surge and a vision of place and space that has not included citizens' views and perception.
- A tendency of '*exoticization*' noted by Arab scholars on urbanization, causing the lack of local character and identity.

5.5. Methodology for GCC City Enhancement

The present section covers the fifth objective of the research, which is to generate a cultural based model that will enhance the process of spatial design in GCC cities, therefore answering the fifth question of the research's aims: "What kind of method/ model/ process can be suggested to minimize the gaps between urban planners' visions and inhabitants' perception?" Furthermore, this section goes a step further into investigating urban design potentialities through answering, based on the existing and present research, also the question of "What are the implications of merging the Circuit of Culture, the Double Diamond Process and the three aspects of public response in an integrated process development? And would the outcomes possibly enable a new scope for urban design studies?" The above questions are all covered in the section below.

It has been shown through the research results and analysis of the primary research investigations, that urban citizens of the different GCC cities have high expectations regarding the role of urban planners in the cultural embellishment and definition of their cities, for the definition of locally engaging urban spaces. This has also been the result of the literature review contemplations, however at this stage (as also shown in section 4.7), it is important to draw conclusions on urban enhancement based on the opinions of the city dwellers themselves. In fact, it has been stated in section 4.8 of the finding's analysis that for the formation of good public urban spaces, design professionals and other governing and decision-making bodies are expected to serve the people towards the creation of identifiable and culturally significant places. This is also evident through the positive correlation towards the public's opinion regarding urban design, and the importance of public space projects in GCC cities. Surely, design professionals, architects, urban planners and governing bodies acknowledge this relationship as well, therefore stressing the importance of an information graph that will contribute towards the enhancement of GCC cities.

From the results of the primary research, it is shown that one of the most missing and acknowledged elements of cultural definition within the public spaces in GCC cities, is that of religious identification and cultural expression. The intention of the GCC urban planners, also acknowledged through the literature review, should be that of effective and meaningful place-making, that would head away from the technocratic-minded. However this should not be 'overt' and cause a sense of 'exclusion' for any member of the local communities. The aim, as is the aim of this thesis, should be to suggest frameworks of comprehensive and cultural syntax that strive away from the administrative, economic and social pressures.

As shown through the thesis, the design process should scan the cultural landscape for sources of meaning that may be incorporated in the public spaces, in order to better understand the culture, its social inequalities and its deep cultural heritage. Therefore, the primary design processes that are considered in pursuit of creating a model to minimize the gaps between the urban planners' visions and the inhabitants' perceptions include:

- Scanning the cultural landscape in order to find elements of identification.
- Accounting for a richer account of lives lived in the moments of struggle when humans have to constitute themselves politically.
- Integrating all principles of cultural life and those of urban planners
- Integrating urban planning principles that emphasize on cultural characteristics of the GCC cities, which relate to all aspects of land use and mobility, economic and demographic growth, housing provision, urban character and design, heritage management, a provision of integrated facilities, civil harmony and sustainable strategic solutions.

In Pursuit of generating a cultural based model that takes the form of an information graph, the research has considered the importance of cultural theory models and the role of urban planners, taking the incentive of merging the Circuit of Culture, the Double Diamond Process, and the three aspects of public response in an integrated process development. This new merging allocates a new scope for urban design studies.

Consequently, according to the location of urban planning intervention, urban planners should consider three aspects of contemplating analysis: Cultural Elements, Physical Experiences and Design Processes. The following outline illustrates the different aspects to be considered for the consideration of each elemental procedure. It is evident, that one overlaps with another, if considering those keywords and descriptions that are included in each.

CULTURAL ELEMENTS:

Representation: language, illustration, psychology, narrative, perception, emotion

Identity: way of belonging, creative process, structure, meaning, imageability, phenomenology of place, legibility, visibility, memory, heritage

Production: products, services, ideas, experiences, virtual, diversity, freedom

Consumption: space interpretation, preferences, purchase, re-use, material/non-material, branded entities, needs, pure perception

Regulation: discipline, fortitude, devotion to duty, private/public boundaries, fixed correlations, breathing spaces, mental construct

SPATIALEXPERIENCES:

'perceived space' (physical):

- the relationship between social and spatial forms;
- the creation and expression of correlations between the physical world, the optical world and the appearance of the world in our experience;
- the finding of comfort patterns that relate to psychological security within the cities of globalization. These may be results of repetitions of habitual societal behaviour and patterns that demonstrate perceptual evolution;
- the consideration of the notion of scale that ultimately defines the cultural characteristics of a city, as it takes a theoretical dimension of urban comprehension;

- the integration of physical structures of buildings and human use and interaction with urban spaces and places;
- the designing of new localized and hybridized urban environments that find stitching purposes among fragmented realities of contemporary urban situations.

'conceived space' (mental):

- the understanding of the private tastes of local residents, or otherwise called the 'aesthetic consent';
- the expression of local preferences;
- the use of globalization as a narrative of eviction
- the implementation of means of communicating social diversity and planning of urban spaces for residents;
- the expression of media sciences, cultural studies, management, sociology and other fields in the arts including humanities and social sciences;
- the crafting of spaces that express a variety of purposes;
- the existence of commerce, tourism and various other systems that are well thought-out in order to lead to organized political and social modalities.

'lived (metaphysical) space' (social):

- the spatial distribution of social groups;
- the consideration of all elements that constitute the lived experience;
- the consideration of the landscape that surrounds a city and using it as a mnemonic system for the retention of ideas and concepts;
- the consideration of a physical reality of a common culture;
- the balancing of the tensions between local culture and global forces;
- the social usage of space according to hierarchical modalities, priorities and ideals;

- the creation of a sense of “placenessness”; mitigating cultural, social and personal effects;
- the implementation of participatory planning.

DESIGN PROCESS:

- Use of aesthetic, social usage and place-making phases of urban design.
- Expression of Vitality through functions, biological requirements, and humans’ capabilities.
- Expression of Sense through visible places that are identifiable by the users.
- Expression of Fit through appropriateness of places for intended behaviours.
- Consideration of livability, identity and control, access to opportunities, imagination and joy, authenticity and meaning, community and public life, urban self-reliance, an environment for all.
- Consideration of the notion of ancientness through evaluating the concept of local culture.
- Contemplation of pre-existing codes.
- Understanding the between places.

Conclusively, the above information presents a guideline model for finding inhabitants’ satisfaction towards the presence of their cultural image in their public spaces. It has been the result of extensive literature review contemplations, the questioning of the public and the interviewing of urban professionals. The thesis seeks to illustrate the missing aspects of design processes between urban planners and the public space users. Therefore, it has been the product of the Double Diamond research outline of discovering and delivering; a process that involves the contemplation and implementation of deep heritage elements and cultural considerations. The research has consequently succeeded in finding the most appropriate operational elements that define culture, and more specifically, the most appropriate design processes which fit GCC cities’ characteristics. The ultimate outcome is evident in the final section of this concluding chapter, generating a cultural-based model that may potentially enhance the process of spatial design in the GCC cities.

Circuit of Culture:

In summary, the *Circuit of Culture* is defined by five interlinked processes: Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and Regulation.

Culture is often defined as a way of life or, the production and circulation of “meanings”. These meanings are woven into everyday life through the use of rituals, language, beliefs, images, signs & symbols in objects, the built and the natural environment. Thus, culture enables us to “make sense” of things around us. It is however important to note that objects and spaces on their own have no meanings, but it is we who through the process of using words and images pull together our experiences and analogies to give meanings & form concepts in our heads that help “refer” to objects/ spaces in the physical world.

Each of these processes is interlinked in an on-going process of cultural encoding & distribution of *meaning*. For example, the way culture is *represented* affects how it is *identified, produced, consumed* and finally *regulated*. This rule holds for all the other four processes as well, where a different element of the circuit of culture becomes the primary purpose of design. Further, this model is of particular relevance to the creative domains as it demarcates the links between the “five” interlinked processes as being populated by 'cultural intermediaries'; meaning professionals in the advertising, marketing and design industry and their impact on the derived “meaning” of products and spaces. This relates to all urban planners and decision makers. Furthermore, elaborations of all relevant stakeholders have been made in section 2.1.

CHAPTER SIX

(Conclusions)

6.0. Introduction

There is a wealth of knowledge about the interrelationships between designing and cultural expression, but it is fragmented and distributed across different types of professionals, who work at different stages in the lifecycle of buildings and urban areas. These could be cultural historians, building preservers, conceptual designers, contractors, archaeologists, and professional stakeholders. When dealing with the design process of new buildings and spaces or that of existing renovated ones, the thesis has gathered good amount of knowledge in the early, conceptual phase.

6.1. Contribution to Knowledge

- The research has determined a set of principles for design process that focused on design priorities and means of putting cultural knowledge into practice.
- The thesis determined gaps in the knowledge and awareness of the area of cultural application in design practice of the GCC states.
- The literature review and the research findings demonstrated that the five aspects of circuit of culture (identity, regulation, representation, production, consumption) are the key elements for defining meanings and culture within public spaces in GCC cities.
- The author has developed a series of protocols/ guidelines how urban planners perceive and plan (or do not) public spaces and what is their first intention in design process.
- The research highlighted the inhabitant's primary needs in terms of representation of their cultural values in GCC cities, this was identified through a significant number of inhabitants discussing their cultural priorities and how they want it to be represented.

- Through the semi-structured interviews the professionals have shown an interest in cultural values, however, they did not focus on identity and cultural values as much as consumption and production.
- On the other hand, the conducted questionnaire showed that GCC cities inhabitants consider identity as the most important aspect.
- The preceding facts have demonstrated the gap between designer's intentions and public requirements to fulfil their need for an expression of their culture within their public spaces.
- The thesis identified the key requirements of some of the applications which would enhance the practice of urban planners/ professional stakeholders to enable the cultural framework in the conceptual phase of design process.
- The study has measured the inhabitant's satisfaction towards the representation or presence of their culture within urban public spaces, as it has been addressed in chapter five, which shows that inhabitants are not culturally fulfilled in their 'lived spaces'.
- This research looked to strengthen and understand what is already known and what is not known on the relationships between representation, production, identity, regulation and consumption, in the design process methods.
- The thesis has discussed examples of good and bad practice of existing design methodologies and evaluated their degrees of consideration towards integration of cultural elements in GCC cities.
- The research established cultural sustainability through appropriate planning protocols/ methodologies of guidelines and policies for understanding local/ resident's needs.
- The research has identified a methodology using identity, regulation, representation, production, and consumption in order to promote the designing of culturally-based urban spaces.
- The author has evolved a framework for the filling in of missing aspects of the design process, while creating dialogue between urban planners "discovering stage" and public space users "delivery stage" of the design process (6.2 Future work).

6.2. Future work

Knowledge within built environment disciplines may be highly related to behavioral theory and behavioral science to the policy-making process. Therefore, a refined understanding of behavior in relation to cultural attributes may help achieve a better design outcome for GCC countries, either alongside existing policy tools, or in order to inform more innovative interventions that are in any case tied to culture.

6.2.1. Suggested Cultural Based Design Methodology (CBDM) for GCC Cities.

The author has generated a cultural-based model that through its application, will aim to enhance the process of spatial design in the GCC cities. The following attributes are to be elaborated with further research:

- The suggested design methodology shall influence and assist all design process theories and models, planning strategies, and urban design policies' development and practice within a cultural context.
- The CBDM will assist in narrowing the gap between public perception and urban planners' intention.
- Different approaches merge through the available data, generated into one formula. The components of this formula are: Aspects of the Circuit of Culture, Double Diamond Design Process, and Lefebvre's "lived space theory". The first three figures demonstrate the initial possibilities of evolving the preceding three components/ approaches (Figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3).
- The Double Diamond Design Process has been divided into two phases; the conceptual phase and the implementation phase, where the emphasis is being put on the early conceptual stage that concentrates on the Discover and Define stage of the creative process (Figures 6.7, 6.8).
- More consideration has been made on the Discover stage in order to synchronise it within the interlinked circuit of culture pentagon (Figure 6.5). This should generate a coherent **definition** of the design concept, aim, and process in the right side of the conceptual phase diamond (Figure 6.9, 6.10).

- The urban planners will be able to choose one of the aspects according to the inhabitant's response/ preferences based on their first intention (Figure 6.8).
- CBDM configuration is a geometrical composition mainly based on the shape of the Star, which has been signified as a common symbol for many nations and cultures. It also designates an inner pentagon shape that employs the circuit of culture's five interlinked processes (Figures 6.10, 6.11, 6.13).
- The new methodology is proposing a looped dialogue between the urban planners' "discovering stage" star and the public space users' "delivery stage" star of the design process. It also shows the urban planners' demonstration of first intention, along with the direction of the inhabitants' and the public's first perception and desire (Figure 6.12).
- In Figure 6.13, the author reflects an interpretation of an extended process that demonstrates an optional cultural preference. The extended CBDM locates the designers' part of the process as the "Designer's Star", and the users' part of the process as "Space and Users Stars", concerning major concerns revolving around the use of the public spaces (Figure 6.13).
- Each Star that is linked with the central Urban Planners' Star can be referred to an area, a particular design project, a particular space, a particular city or a group of people etc. (Figure 6.13).
- The suggested CBDM shall go through future assessment involving both inhabitants and urban planners to approve its coherency, which requires long term work and research.

6.2.2. Development of Models/ Processes:

Figure 6.1 below illustrates the merging of the Circuit of Culture with the Design Process (the Double Diamond Design) aiming to combine with the Metaphysical state, where the outcome will meet all social and physical prerequisites and desired outcomes, satisfying Lefebvre's "lived space theory". Therefore each component and each approach of available data is being evolved and generated into one compositional formula involving the aspects of the Circuit of Culture, the Double Diamond Design process, and Lefebvre's triad of social, physical and metaphysical lived space. The merging of theories is also evident within the merging of the different shapes that express each approach. The outcome is the

hybrid form of the star (from the Circuit of Culture) and the diamonds (from the Double Diamond), which middle point of merging expresses the metaphysical state.

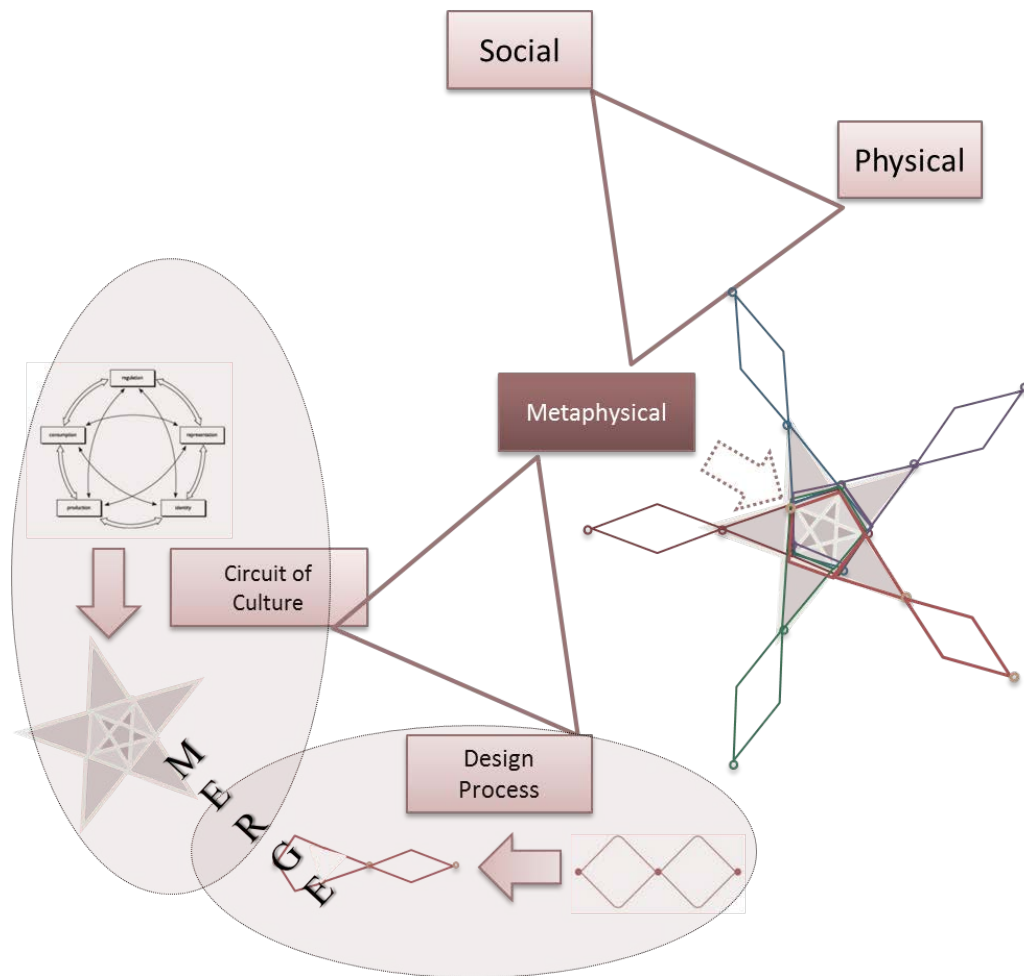


Figure 6.1: An early brainstorm formation (sketch) combines Lefebvre's (lived space) theory, the double diamond design process and the circuit of culture

The two diagrams of Figure 6.2, similarly to the figure above, illustrate two different geometrical possibilities of the merging of all different components of aspects of the Circuit of Culture, the Double Diamond Design Process, and Lefebvre's three aspects of socially produced space. Interestingly, the diagram on the left side uses the shape of the diamond to show in a two-dimensional image, the multi-dimensionality of the solution, where the outcome leads towards the metaphysical, through a constant interconnection: the social consideration of the Circuit of Culture, and the physical consideration of the Design Process (therefore the working together of the Circuit of Culture with the Double Design model). The diagram on the right, illustrates the same concept but through an image that takes another angle of the multi-dimensionality: The first triangle of

direct connectivity includes the Circuit of Culture, the Design Process and the Metaphysical aim, whereas the second triangle of direct connectivity includes Lefebvre’s three aspects of socially produced space (the social, the physical and the metaphysical). When these two triangles are merged together into a hexagon, the metaphysical elements of the two different triangles remain opposite each other, demonstrating the ultimate aim of a metaphysical solution that considers all levels of cultural importance. At the same time, the diagram retains its effectiveness as all elements are connected with each other through the means of the star outcome.

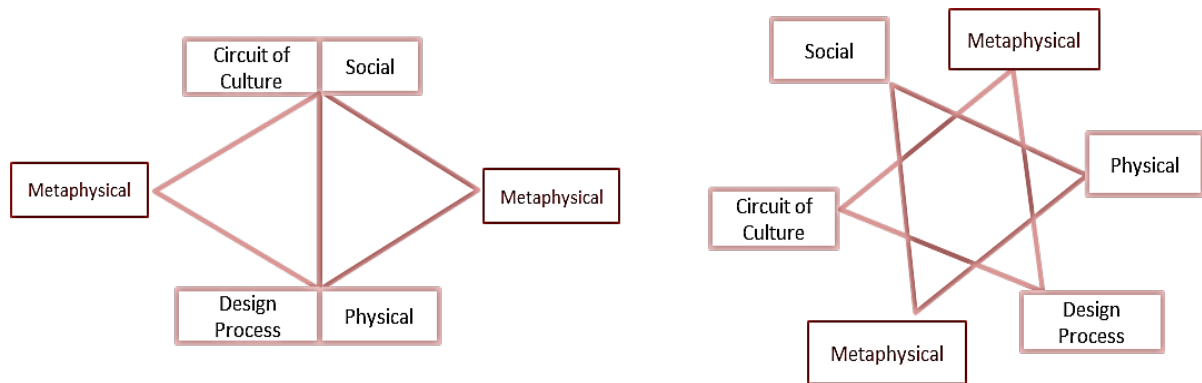


Figure 6.2: Geometrical possibilities based on Lefebvre’s (lived space) theory combined with the Double Diamond Design process and the Circuit of Culture

Figure 6.3 below shows one more diagrammatic representation of the generated data into one formula, through a framework that allies the progress of the New Configuration with Lefebvre’s (lived space) theory. The diagram shows once more the parallel consideration of social space and physical space in an overlapping process, in order to produce the metaphysical response of the lived space. At the same time, it is illustrated that social space holds the same value as the aspects of the Circuit of Culture, whereas the physical space holds the same value as the Design Process. Through the effort of merging together the two processes of the Circuit of Culture and the Double Diamond Design Process, a New Configuration of an info-graph and methodology emerges, introducing every space according to its cultural aspect progress. This New Configuration consequently holds the same value as the desired metaphysical response of Lefebvre’s lived space.

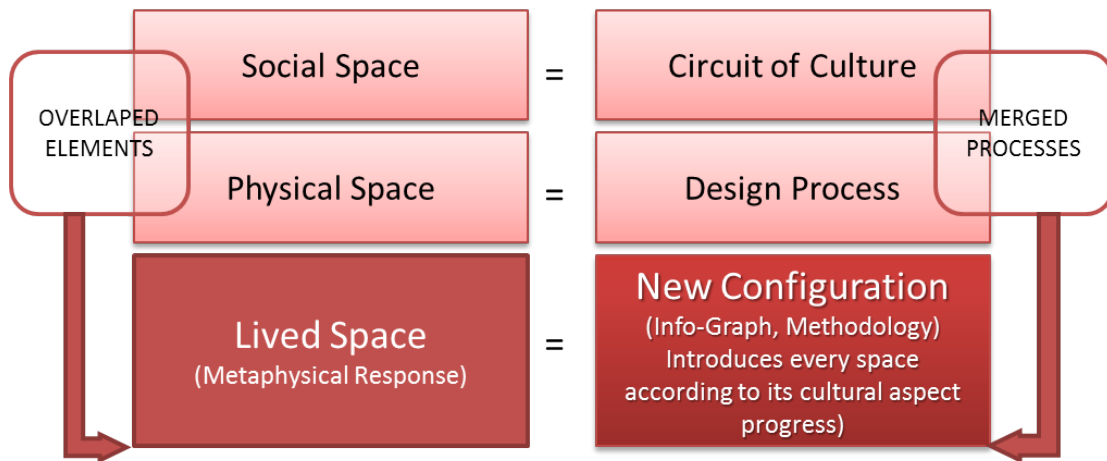


Figure 6.3: A framework allies the progress of the new configuration (CBDM) with Lefebvre's (lived space) theory

Figure 6.4 below reminds us of the interconnectivity of the five elements of the Circuit of Culture, working together and sequentially. The illustration expresses the multi-dimensionality of relationships among Regulation, Representation, Consumption, Production, and Identity. This diagram was also seen in the body of the thesis while explaining the stages and diagrammatic expression of the Circuit of Culture, in an effort to show the interlinked processes that take place in an effort to preserve cultural characteristics. In an effort to show the diagrammatic merging of the Circuit of Culture with the other elements of methodological procedures, this diagram renews the memory of the content of the Circuit of Culture, in order to deepen the understanding of the overall methodology proposed.

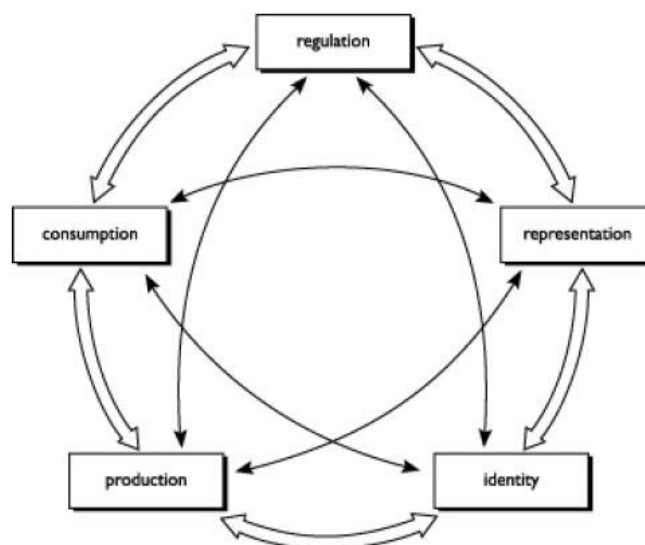


Figure 6.4: The Circuit of Culture (from du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997)

As mentioned earlier in section 6.2.1, more consideration has been made on the Discover stage of the Double Diamond Design process, in order to synchronise it within the interlinked circuit of culture pentagon. This synchronicity is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 6.5 below, showing one example where a project, aiming to put its emphasis on the consumption aspect of cultural design (shown as the merging point and expressed as a node), also considers the other aspects of regulation, representation, identity and production during the Discover and Define stage. This is an image that shows how all elements of the Circuit of Culture become equally important during the conceptual phase of the design project, regardless of a project's initial intention.

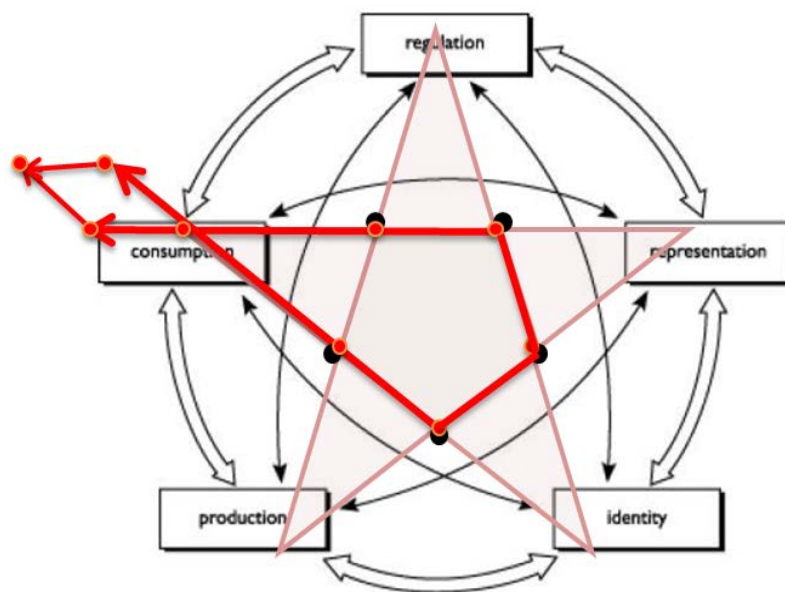


Figure 6.5: *The Double Diamond development (synchronised) in the Circuit of Culture*

Figure 6.6 is another illustration of the Double Diamond Design process diagram, which has been more extensively elaborated in section 2.5 of the literature review (Figure 2.15), on the Design Process in Spatial Design Projects. Demonstrating it here once more aims towards the full comprehension of all referenced compositional images that propose the new methodology of cultural consideration in pursuit of a lived space. Most diagrams in this conclusive section of the thesis emphasize the weight put on the left half of the double diamond during the design process, which involves the process of discovering and defining strong concepts of cultural affiliation.

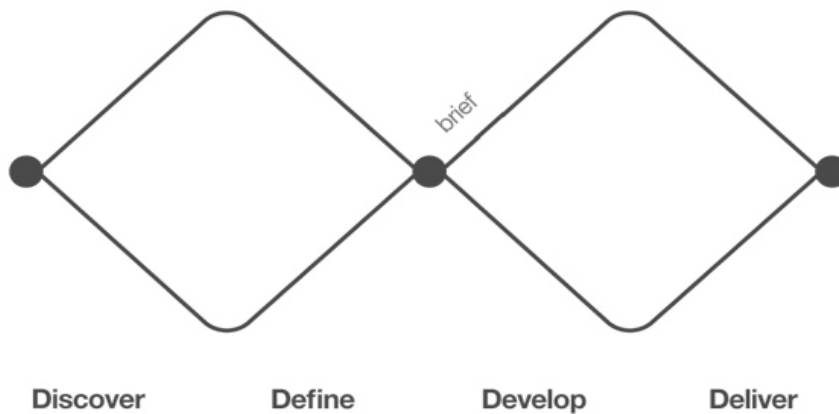


Figure 6.6: *The Double Diamond Design process*

The prementioned emphasis of the left half of the Double Diamond mentioned in the previous image, concentrating on discovery and definition, is illustrated in Figure 6.7 below. The Conceptual Stage of the process represents these Discover and Define stages, and is shown of a greater weight in relation to the Implementation Stage, which represents the Develop and Deliver stages. Furthermore, within the Conceptual Stage itself, more weight is put on the Discover stage, leading towards a more concentrated and targeted Define stage. The main reference point is the Design's First Intention, represented as a node that occurs prior to the Conceptual Stage, and follows a natural creative process of evolution and development. The essence of the form shown here is found also in Figure 6.5, where the weight of the conceptual stage falls within the heart of the synchronized image that works together with the Circuit of Culture, and considers all five elements of cultural consideration. It also occurs in all of the figures illustrated below.

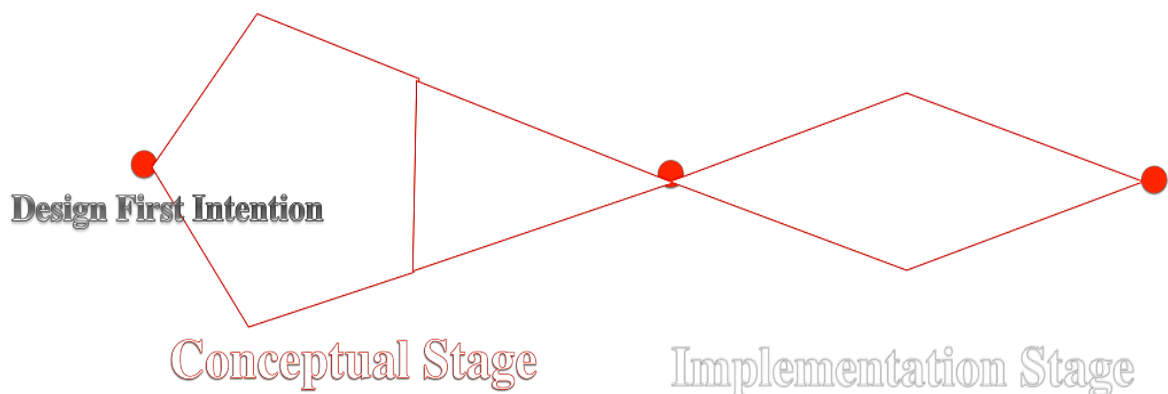


Figure 6.7: *The Conceptual and Implementation Stages of the Design Process, emphasizing the Conceptual phase and Design's First Intention*

Figure 6.8 below is another version of Figure 6.5, breaking down the illustrative design process into the five different possibilities of the designer's first intention, according to the inhabitants' local responses and preferences. This image shows how the five elements of the Circuit of Culture fall within the stage of the initial discovery stage, further defining the direction of the creative process prior to the secondary Implementation Stage highlighted in grey.

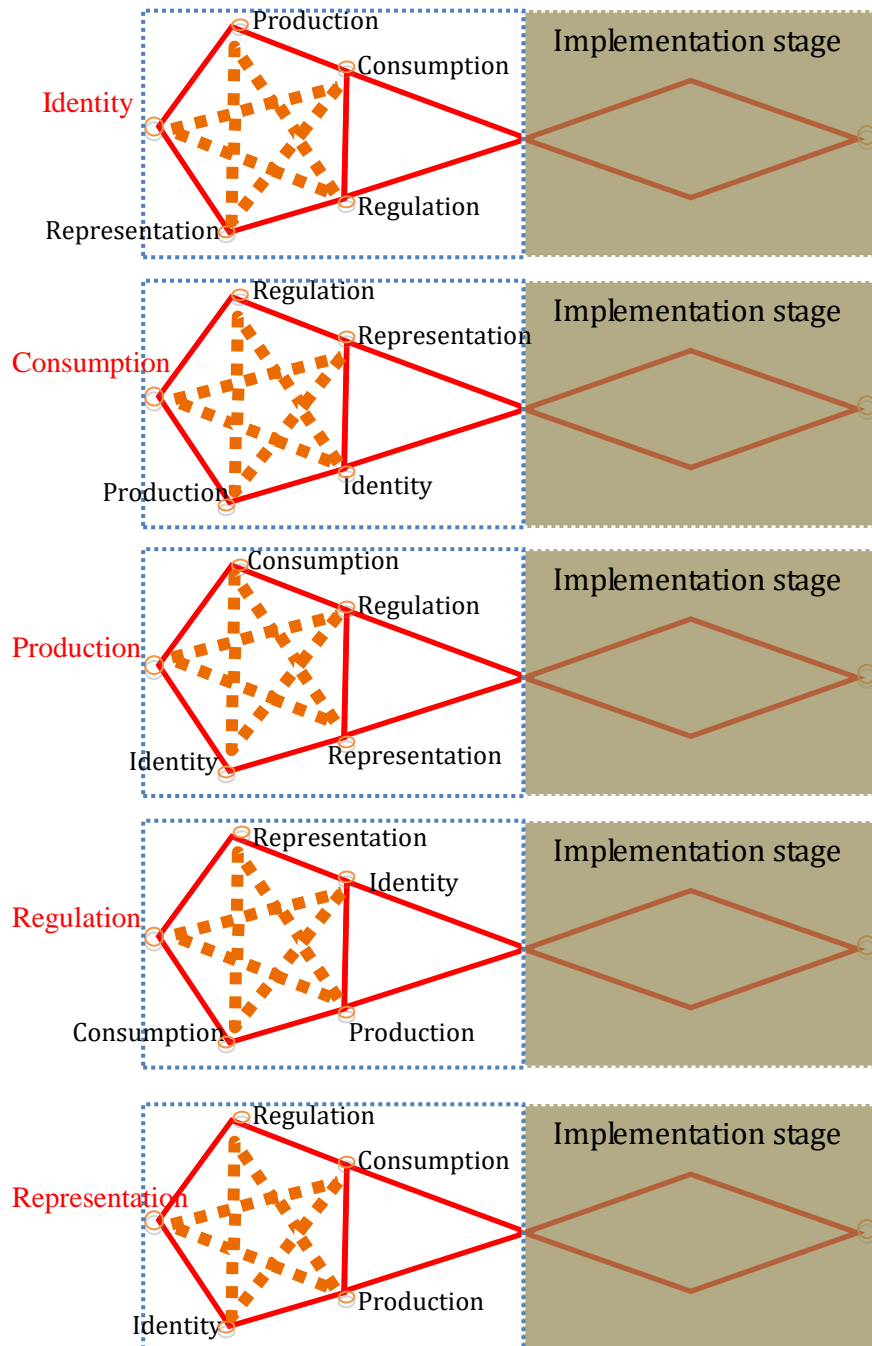


Figure 6.8: *The Conceptual Phase based on an Optional First Intention of Designs*

Figure 6.9 below shows how the above contemplations should generate a coherent definition of the design concept, aim, and process in the right side of the conceptual phase diamond.

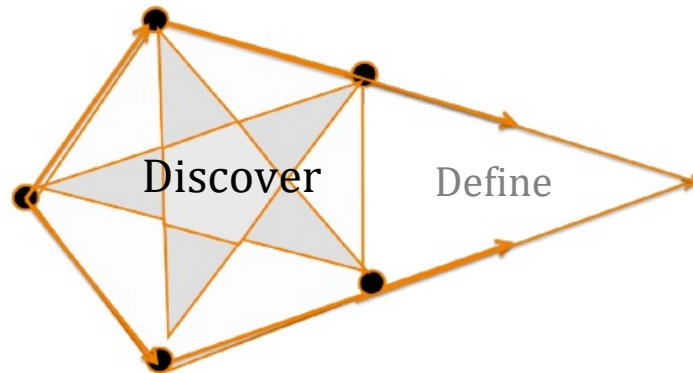


Figure 6.9: *The conceptual stage that concentrates on Discovering the cultural aspects of the Pentagon in order to produce a coherent Definition*

CBDM configuration is a geometrical composition mainly based on the shape of the Star, which has been signified as a common symbol for many nations and cultures. It also designates an inner pentagon shape that employs the circuit of culture's five interlinked processes.

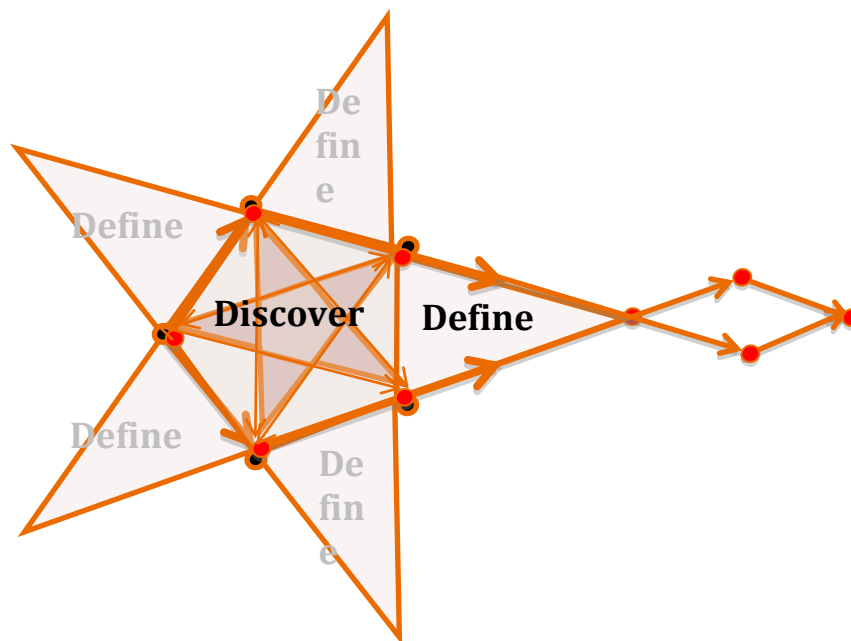


Figure 6.10: *The conceptual phase can be discovered and defined in five different directions*

The Cultural Based Design Methodology (CBCM) configuration is summarized in Figure 6.11 below, illustrating a geometrical composition mainly based on the shape of the Star, employing the Circuit of Culture's interlinked processes. The formation of the star has been observed step-by-step through the above figures, now taking place as part of a complete compositional symbol that could represent many nations and cultures, similarly to how the star does the same worldwide.

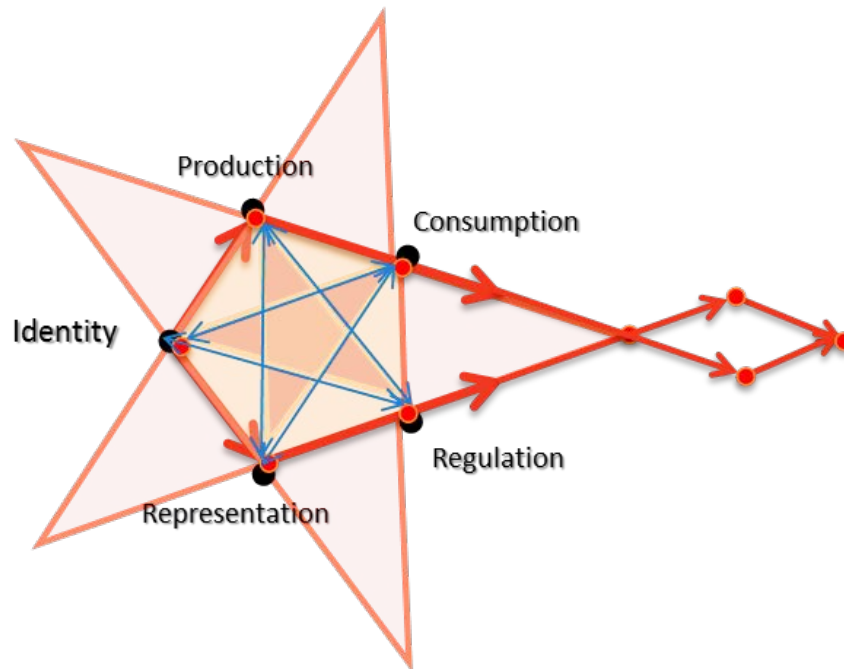


Figure 6.11: The complete *Cultural Based Design Methodology (CBDM)*

Figure 6.12 below illustrates the looped dialogue between the urban planners' discovering stage and the public space users' delivering stage in a way that one mirrors the other during the design process. The first intention falls within the outer right or left node of reach star, where the inhabitants'/public's first perception and desire is as equally important as the urban planners' first intention of design. In order for the two stars to meet, all five aspects of the Circuit of Culture must be met, for the ultimate meeting point of the delivery and development stages.

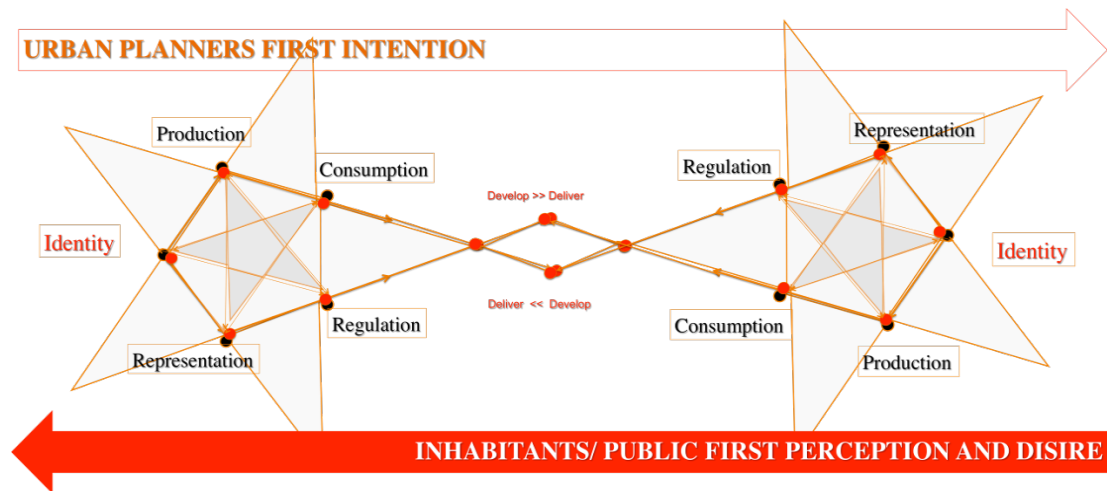


Figure 6.12: *Inhabitants' and Public's First Perception and Desire Vs. Urban Planners First Intention*

Figure 6.13 illustrates all the different possibilities of a design's first intention, creating the CBDM configuration of a star assembly, relating to many nations and cultures. Due to the multi-dimensionality of possibilities that the star creates, the model may represent a variety of combinations between an urban planner's vision and that of the users who are occupying public spaces on a daily basis. This is important, especially when a foreign urban planner tries to intervene within a point of strong cultural importance, which may be better understood and appreciated by the locals. Inversely, the locals may feed from the knowledge of the international circuit by catching up on latest materials, technological innovations and new breaths of creative design. Consequently, the CBDM configuration integrates a variety of concerns revolving around the use of the public spaces, referring to a particular design project, a particular space, a particular city, a group of people, or other considerations that may directly or indirectly related to the theme of culture and local evolution.

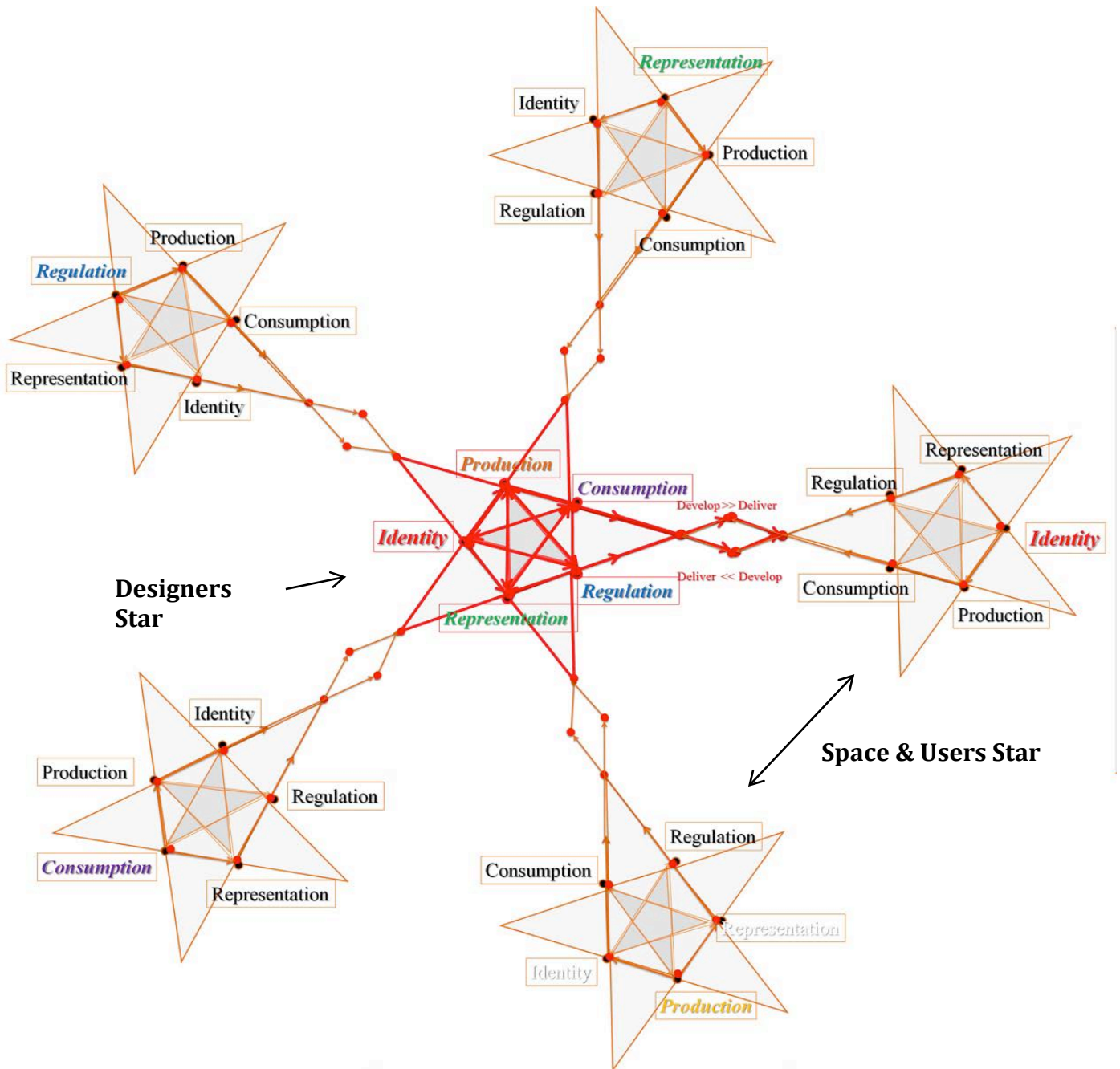


Figure 6.13: Integration of Designer's Star, and Space and Users' Stars

6.3. Evaluation of final deliverable through structured interviews

The present section covers the responses from the three practitioners that were interviewed, acquiring their professional opinion on the results gathered by the greater part of the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews:

Question 1: Our present study considers the possibility of implementing a methodological framework of cultural consideration into the design process of architects and designers. The goal is to aid towards the implementation of cultural elements into the GCC cities. What would be your initial reaction to such an idea?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: Dubai is facing many challenges of losing a cultural identity, and many of the projects that we are dealing with involve very large complexes and tall buildings that have nothing to offer in terms of local historical identity and cultural consideration. I find the idea brilliant, and I think professionals would refer to it, if not on a wholesome approach, at least on the level of design consultation.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: Architectural design professionals are already looking for unique concepts to make their designs capture some deeper meaning. I think that the opportunity of using a conceptual framework that revolves around the theme of culture, already acquires a profound purpose. In fact this is a study that should be made known to a variety of professionals, at least for purposes of informative knowledge and important consideration.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: I think it is very effective creating analogies between careful scientific research that is based on data and users' impressions, and design methodologies. Many times architects and urban planners are in a different wavelength of thought compared to the inhabitants of a city, either because they come from abroad and are not aware of the locals' inherent desires to live in a country that retains memories of their forefathers, or because they have not been properly educated. Studies of this sort should rise up to general awareness.

Question 2: During your practice, have you come across similar methodologies? In what ways were they similar or different, and what were the results?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: I have come across management frameworks that guide an architectural design towards a successful design methodology of architectural research. Now that I think about it a bit more, inspired by this

research, I believe that if proper research management was indeed implemented, the results would be a better understanding of a city's cultural roots. Therefore there are similarities in this approach, from this point of view. I recently came across a book on constructing virtual communities through the use of concepts, methodologies and various other tools available. This research was made when our office was undertaking work on a larger scale project, involving the implementation of various residential, commercial and business districts in the vicinity. In some ways, the book offered ideas that helped towards our establishment of a framework of design. However the referencing was done on the virtual level, meaning that "hidden" concepts could be hardly identified by the mere user. In other words, it was more helpful for us, rather than for a public understanding. I think culture needs to be recognized and that it should stand out.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: Well, through my professional practice I have come across a number of frameworks that guide a design but in a technical aspect. For example there are design methodologies that deal with the safety of patients in health-care centers. As our office is designing something similar and much research was done on the topic, I came across an interesting article, where the pure idea of patient safety and care was defined as a "culture" and system of patient safety. The process offered conceptual solutions and ideas for making the designs works in favor of the main users, which is a design culture in itself. Therefore the "looks" of the building come into second place. Another interesting research methodology that I came across recently, was the architectural design methodology for tall office buildings based on ecology. This is one more example where scientific results are being combined with architectural prioritization. The elements considered involved population growth, energy use, approaching a fundamental concept, and establishing a design factor based on an ecological concept. By the way, this was a published paper through the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat. There is a type of prioritizing. I imagine that a solution such as the one you are mentioning could work in a similar fashion, prioritizing cultural concern over monumentality and superficial grandeur.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: Many times, an architectural competition itself promotes some framework of cultural concern, however the field becomes wide open in terms of prioritizing the different elements being asked for. In fact, it is often not clear what those elements are, in order to help the designers identify culture. Another means of providing guidelines towards cultural concern in architectural design of course applies to buildings and areas that are listed as areas of conservation. Of course this is something different, as the starting point is an existing building or an existing site, where this proposed methodology has a completely different starting point. It should be very interesting.

Question 3: After distributing a series of questionnaires to habitants of different cities of the GCC cities, we were able to form a list of elements that were thought to be important in relation to the cultural state of the user's corresponding city. The lowest correlation seemed to be between the overall understanding of the city and experiences and cultural identity. Do you find this to be reflective based on your practical experience?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: This seems like a valid point, especially for a city like Dubai, where the largest percentage of buildings are iconic monuments of the latest technological features, promoting some complicated and fancy design. Of course by looking at such buildings everywhere around the city, creates a very small correlation with cultural identity.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: The result seems very realistic, considering all the new types of buildings that have been erected in the past few decades, not only in Doha, but in other GCC cities as well. Look at Dubai for example... Cultural identity is only found in certain locations of a city, and even those are influences by the surrounding situation of high rises and skyscrapers. One needs to look hard to understanding the city's cultural identity, amidst all the fancy architecture that is taking place nowadays.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: I understand how this may be true for other GCC states, however perhaps Muscat is an exception in this case, as the city has been able to withhold its cultural identity through a variety of different ways. Buildings have remained low, a lot of areas are being conserved in a respectable manner, and the overall city has a very unique feeling of locality and historicity. Muscat is proud to retain its identity. Of course this is not true in cities like Dubai, Jeddah, Qatar... Those cities have certainly lost the correlation.

Question 4: Following the previous question, the highest correlation seemed to be between the concern of the urban planners with regards to culture, and the conceptual gap that exists within GCC cities. What is your personal response to this?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: It is interesting that you mention this, because our office works with a few professionals who have Italian roots, and often travel to European conferences that very strongly state this concern. Recently one of our co-workers participated in an international conference on sustainability in architectural cultural heritage, involving planning practices on contemporary architecture. The conference welcomed a number of practitioners, academics, researchers, post-graduates, and policy makers, who all were very passionate about improving the conceptual gap of cultural concern. In fact there were a few presentations and discussions on the situation of the middle-eastern cities that

would relate to this study. Furthermore, there was a conference here in Dubai last February, “Conservation Conference and Exhibition 2016”, on sustainable heritage. We had a representative there as well, who brought us back much interesting feedback, brochures, and pictures of local experiences shown there. The attendance was good, showing that professional concern indeed exists.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: As years move forward, and as research becomes deeper and easier to access, professionals are indeed beginning to become concerned about conceptual gaps within the cities. These concerns may be recognized when attending professional conferences, which tackle issues of *contemporaneity* versus historicity, building according to a *topos*’ geomorphological surroundings, and implementing the idea of “memory” in a building’s overall composition, while referring to a variety of surrounding symbols. Look at the research done on semiology in relation to architectural design... Even though the topic emerged from linguistics and other disciplines, now architects are researching into finding ways of creating relationships between the building themselves and the surrounding entities, for creating semiotic codes of an urban dialogue. Such consideration fills in the cultural gap that is present today, showing that professionals are indeed concerned by it.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: Being myself concerned with this topic and being involved with research that brings forwards the cultural integration of a city into its design, I can assure you that there is indeed a professional concern that is being well stated within the fields of architectural research. A number of studies are trying to discuss this conceptual gap, however most are on a theoretical base. One recent interesting study that I came across is the extraction of a city’s historical maps and their superimposition with one another in pursuit of developing a contemporary urban planning scheme.

Question 5: During a series of semi-structured interviews, 100% of the respondents agreed on the importance of cultural design in the professional process. Do you also agree with this point of view?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: Perhaps this could not have been true a few decades ago, because this problem was not yet evident within the city. Thirty years ago, I am sure that a public’s response would have been the pursuit of technology, innovation, imagination, creativity, and economic growth. However as these design aspects went completely out of hand, I can surely agree with the stated result. It has become very evident that cultural exposition should once again become important, if not a priority.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: Yes of course I agree, and I imagine that once asked, people will say that it is important. The question is what we are doing to express its importance.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: I agree 100%.

Question 6: With regards to the most important elements to consider in future design, the element of scale had the lowest percent (5%), followed by urban cohesion and orientation (15%), followed by heritage conservation and building restoration (30%), followed by the consideration of the environment and public open spaces (60%). How much do these percentages reflect your own personal philosophy and point of view?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: Well concerning Dubai, I think that scale should be higher up the list, as the projects are completely losing a sense of scale, as one is competing with the other. However I understand how scale is a quantitative problem, and not so much a qualitative one. Environmental consideration should surely be up the list however I am not so sure about public open spaces, due to the extreme heat that we are facing, and people are indoors for most of the time. However there may be ways to create user-friendly outdoor environments, and create a city that considers the outdoor interaction of people more, rather than the luxurious experience of being inside of a fancy- built building. Therefore I think that the results of the study are fairly realistic.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: I think that the results are fairly understandable. Of course it depends on the respondents' location, and what is missing from their urban environments. Our office is dealing with both local and international projects therefore I would say that our design philosophy shifts according to where we are building, and what the design incentives are for each project. For most part, the major concern is the consideration of the surrounding environment and the good use of public open spaces, so I completely agree with that percentage.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: Our city is already taking care of scale, and it has been something on the top of our list, which local planners and designers have been dealing with through their practices. I personally think that all factors are equally important, but I can understand how respondents react to different things based on their stimuli and personal experiences. Muscat tries to give a great weight on environmental consideration and the use of public open spaces, and it has retained a very down-to-earth and user-friendly character. Therefore 60% of environmental and public space consideration reflects our office's own personal philosophy and point of view.

Question 7: The new proposed methodology of cultural design implementation strives to take the public's and professionals' strongest interest point as the design's primary incentive, and then continue with a design sequence that targets all elements of cultural identification. These, according to the Circuit of Culture theory, are known to be Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption and Regulation. This method would allow for multiple entry points for the planners, while ensuring the covering all different aspects during the process. Would such a methodology be interesting for professionals and would it have a good public response?

Respondent 1 working in Dubai: I see that this framework involves the primary incentives coming from two different directions: The vision of the urban planners or architectural designers, and the desire of the public. This covers all aspects of what a design should satisfy. It is also useful, because each architectural firm has a different vision and design philosophy, but no matter what the concept is, it will never cease to neglect the needs of the public. Meanwhile, all elements of cultural consideration are being tackled – if not tackled, at least considered and thought of. I think that the flexibility of the methodology is the strength of it, while its purpose can make it durable through time.

Respondent 2 working in Doha: By looking at the different images that you have shown to me expressing this methodology, I find it to be very flexible, and it could indeed become a great reference point. As I stated earlier, our office is involved with a variety of projects here in Doha, and also abroad, therefore the primary design incentives that we face are various. Cultural concern should be a priority for every project, and we as professionals are becoming more and more convinced by this idea. Therefore this would be a great framework.

Respondent 3 working in Muscat: The strength of this methodology is that it covers a variety of aspects which all compose established theoretical elements of cultural representation. Therefore if a professional tries to tackle everything in this methodology, the result becomes multivalent and hopefully, conceptually coherent. I think that it is more useful for projects that have very complex programs, and that are situated in contexts that are surrounded by buildings with a complete lack of cultural affiliation therefore no valid reference point exists for the creation of design continuity. The most interesting for me part of the methodology is the point of view of the public users' primary incentives, which is in most cases overlooked by the design professionals, especially in large-scale projects where a lot of money is involved, and priorities become of a

different nature. Overall, I think it is a very respectful methodology, and it could surely trigger the interest of sensible practitioners.

6.4. Evaluation of final deliverable through user community

This section summarizes the results gathered from the thirty questionnaires distributed to the user community after a brief ten-minute consultation with each, during which the thesis' final deliverable was explained as simply as possible. The images and diagrams of this chapter were also shown and explained as thoroughly as possible, considering the short time frame devoted with each respondent.

Here are the results:

Question 1: This study comes up with a design framework through which an urban planner or an architect is encouraged to use cultural considerations into his/ her design. Do you find this useful?

20/30 respondents replied "I find it extremely useful"

8/30 respondents replied "I find it somewhat useful"

2/30 respondents replied "I find it of little use"

0/30 respondents replied "I find it pointless"

Question 2: Do you think that culture should be of prior concern for urban planning and architectural professionals?

22/30 respondents replied "I think it should be of prior concern"

5/30 respondents replied "I think it should be a concern, but not a primary one"

3/30 respondents replied "I think it should be of little concern"

0/30 respondents replied "I think that culture has no relevance into urban planning and architectural design"

Question 3: Do you think that GCC cities face a problem of cultural coherency and cultural expression through their architecture?

15/30 respondents replied "I think that they have a great problem in this aspect"

10/30 respondents replied "I think that there is a some problem, but not a major one"

5/30 respondents replied "I think that there is a very small problem in this aspect"

0/30 respondents replied "I don't see a problem at all"

Question 4: Do you find this methodology unique and interesting?

21/30 respondents replied "I find it extremely unique and interesting"

8/30 respondents replied "I find it somewhat unique and interesting"

1/30 respondent replied "I find no uniqueness or interest in this methodology"

Question 5: Do you think that there is awareness of cultural identity when navigating your city?

10/30 respondents replied "I am strongly aware of a cultural context when walking in my city"

12/30 respondents replied "I am somewhat aware of a cultural context when walking in my city"

18/30 respondents replied "I see no cultural context when walking in my city"

Question 6: Are you concerned about new urban planning and architectural projects that should perhaps close a conceptual gap that might exist in the GCC cities?

16/30 respondents replied "I am greatly concerned"

12/30 respondents replied "I am somewhat concerned"

2/30 respondents replied "I am not concerned at all"

Question 7: What do you think should be the most important element to consider in future architectural and urban designs?

12/30 respondents replied "environmental and public open spaces"

7/30 respondents replied "urban cohesion and orientation"

5/30 respondents replied "heritage conservation and restoration"

6/30 respondents replied "the scale of the project"

Question 7: What do you think should be the least important element to consider in future architectural and urban designs?

9/30 respondents replied "the scale of the project"

8/30 respondents replied "urban cohesion and orientation"

8/30 respondents replied "heritage conservation and restoration"

5/30 respondents replied "environmental and public open spaces"

Question 8: Do you agree with taking the public and professionals' strongest interest point as the design's primary incentive, and then continuing with a design sequence?

25/30 respondents replied "I highly agree and think it would be effective"

5/30 respondents replied "I somewhat agree I find it would be somewhat effective"

0/30 respondents replied "I see many problems with this approach"

Question 9: Do you agree that elements of cultural consideration include all five elements of Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption and Regulation?

18/30 respondents replied "I highly agree"

11/30 respondents replied "I somewhat agree"

1/30 respondent replied "I don't agree at all"

Conclusively, responses gathered from the questionnaire distributed to the user community were very positive, supporting the general opinion of the professionals' responses seen in section 6.2, and supporting the overall methodology of this thesis, since a good majority of respondents gave a positive feedback.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STORY

The origin of this thesis began to emerge during the design process and conceptualization of the Algareeqa Memorial project proposal, realized during the author's master's thesis project of arts, design and public space, suggesting to the local municipality the erection of a public art work that would preserve the memory of victims of an important historical event of the year 1959. During that year, Central Salalah (currently called Old Salalah) in south of Oman was the heart of the Dhofar region, and a community where all residents had very strong connections to one another. Those inhabitants were mostly Shaikhs of tribes, Omani government representatives and also the leaders of the Dhofar rebellion (1962-1976). Ruled by a totalitarian regime which produced poverty and hardship, inhabitants were looking for ways to escape, organizing a sail-off mission in which some of the most prestigious, important, passionate and powerful members of each tribe were selected on board. Five of them were the author's uncles.

On the day of the escape, there was a cyclone hitting Salalah. While the government was aware of the escape, the British RAF meteorological station that was based there has been proven to have known about the big natural disaster that was approaching, as they sent a daily meteorological report to the palace and the Sultan let the boat sail off. On the 24rd of May in 1959, two hundred people died in the Arabian Sea. That was a great loss for the small town of Salalah as all residents were well connected with one another and the event has been so important to the locals that it has been used as a calendar landmark for reference. However there is no solid mark of memory for such historical event that marks several cultural values that cannot be seen but only passed on verbally.

During the search to gain governmental approval for the erection of the Algareeqa Memorial, all governing bodies, representatives and officials were touched. Also, several companies were keen to fund the memorial project. However, faced with many obstacles due to religious, political, regulatory, and inter-relational communication, the task of finding an approval was more complicated than it should, receiving a final rejection from the government. There did not seem to be any motivation behind the understanding of space and culture and how it should be related, as the primary intentions in officials' minds for urban construction, were different.

This discrepancy in construction motives also shows in another strong situation of buildings in the South East of central Salalah, built from mud bricks through very simple construction methods that make it uninhabitable nowadays. Deprived individuals who are unable to afford living in new developments occupy these erections. Consequently, these areas are considered today as slums due to the lack of safety and security that withholds them. Urban planners and discussion makers in Oman decided in 2004 to demolish an old district called Al Hafah and turn it into touristic amusement parks and resorts. This has not been implemented yet, due to the progress of negotiations between the government and the property owners, which eventually led to an agreement of a generous amount of money in addition to reallocation in a strategic place in North Salalah. Once the old constructions were demolished a few months ago, people who originated from Al Hafah felt like they were losing a part of their heritage, so they started to request renaming the new location to their old area name "Al Hafah". However there was no attention given to the inhabitants' heritage or to the cultural value of their place, causing the construction of a meaningless place, at least to them. This has further motivated the author to conduct research that covers the aspects of urban planning processes and the cultural gap that characterizes the contemporary situation in major cities of the GCC, in which what prevails is planners' enthusiasm to achieve economical trends and the increase of countries' touristic income.

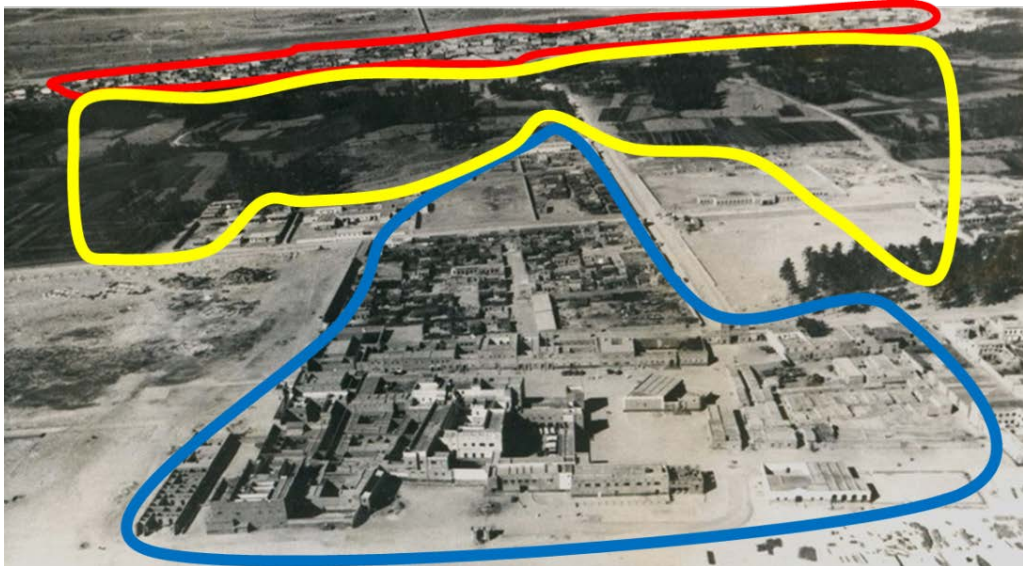


Figure 0.1: *Central Salalah and Al Huson (1972)*

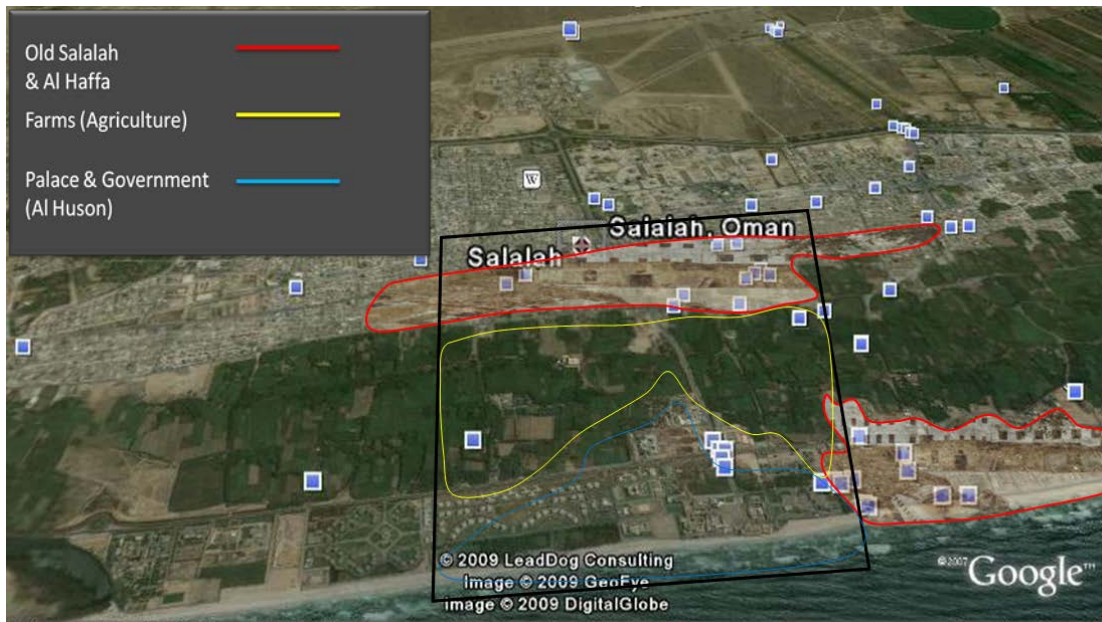


Figure 0.2: *Extended sky view for Salah locates slum areas in the Red outlined zones (Google Earth, 2013)*



Figure 0.3: *Photography of Slum Areas in Central Salah and Al Haffah (taken by Author, 2013)*

Walking through different streets of various large cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council cities, one often wonders what the first intention of design processes is, and how much cultural concern affects the overall design and basic conceptualization of each construction, especially when considering spaces that fall in-between large construction zones. What has occurred in the last years with the surge of oil and an effort to invest in glamorous and westernized constructions has seemed to extremely affect the true nature of these cities' identities and historical affiliation, when dealing with the smaller scale open spaces, in which people spend their daily moments. For anyone associated with the GCC culture and the deep traditions of history, cannot help but question the urban design direction of these places and the future of their image, as each individual construction contributes towards the overall annihilation of historical referencing.

Despite the existing issue of political influence that always affects urban design decisions and the direction of a project's concentration, contemporary planning interventions of high investment, often lead towards a neglect of public spaces' conceptual focus, lacking true cultural consideration. There is a need to demonstrate and justify the problem, and promote the value of using a cultural-based system of design process in order to bring back the roots, history and traditions of *vacuum spaces* of the GCC cities. Investigated frameworks, methods and tools are needed in order to foster and promote this type of awareness. A point to consider is the understanding spaces' roles towards promoting the identity of the city and the desired motivation behind the designing of urban environments. Consequently, cultural preservation could be more easily established through visual awareness.

The city of Salalah is only a small case that is not enough to convince for what is going on in the wider Gulf region. Gulf cities and inhabitants seem to be suffering from this same condition of cultural loss in the construction process (Taylor et al., 2012), which is originating from the very beginning of the conceptual phase of the design process. Further work should be undertaken to study the problem in larger cities in order to discover the size of the problem and the overall condition that is hindering the historical and cultural preservation of strong tradition and deep roots. Although it is accepted that many cases of cultural neglect within the construction process of public spaces is often a result of political influence and control, (Du Gay, 1998) this thesis does not intend to touch upon matters of political investigation within the planning process of cities.

There is a wealth of knowledge dealing with the interrelationships between conceptual designing and cultural expression, however it is found to be

fragmented and distributed across a variety of professionals who concentrated on different states in the lifecycle of buildings and urban design (Rampley, 2005). Through the study of space, cultural context and urbanism in relation to the cities mentioned above, the inspiration is to find a methodological framework aimed towards a conceptual design frame that would enhance their cultural context in areas that have been neglected and under-considered..This thesis will concentrate on specific findings of certain cities, the intention is to target this methodology towards the wider area of the GCC cities that are suffering from this growing problem of fragmented cultural identity. With this knowledge, projects like the Algareeqa Memorial could be understood, whereas reconstructions such as the Al Hafah district ones could be approached and processed on a base of cultural context.

A strong reference for emulation towards conceptual integration of cultural value within the smaller scale spatial issues, is a case such as the Canary Wharf of East London: This business district, characterized by some of the tallest and most contemporary and global buildings of the city, still remains a high value of culturally affiliated small scale spatial developments. This serves as a prime example of cultural integration and multi-national influence within a context of financial growth and rapidly evolving urban developments. Such interventions often take the form of temporary constructions, as the Sukkah shown in figure 0.1, designed for use during the one-week long Jewish festival, commemorating the temporary huts used by the Israelites during their Egypt exodus (Kohn Pedersen Fox, 2015). With this temporary installment of cultural expression within the financial district, a small-scale public space immediately gathers some representational attention, expressive to a local culture. This is the nature of intent for similar in-between spaces that lack attention within the GCC cities.



Figure 0.4: *Sukkah at Canary Wharf* (KPF, 2015)

With the locally artistic and cultural integration that takes place within the strong example of the Canary Wharf district, the thesis borrows inspiration for cultural deciphering, molded into meaningful urban spaces of transition and transient identity. The intention becomes that of expressing cultural affiliation within the global context of the building environments that brings out a sense of history.

However also the context of historically significant urban development is meant to be considered, in which a number of vacuum spaces are being left untreated. This often becomes the case of properties that belong to a number of inheritors, therefore leading to a situation of spatial abandonment or massive misuse. Additionally, there are also those cases of historically significant spatial environments that are being altered in favor of contemporary urban planning benefits, while disrespecting the local character of the neighborhood. Such actions are often the result of political and economic intentions that cannot be realistically overlooked but that instead of improving the cultural wealth of the topos, deteriorate its value. The author posits that in such cases an overall planning framework of culturally targeted involvement could motivate the creation of surrounding spatial improvements that would benefit the image of the structures themselves, therefore motivating the renewed integration of the property into the urban fabric.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Meaningful Spaces: Reclaiming Public Spaces for its Residents in GCC Cities.

1st December 2013

Dear participants,

I am a PhD student in the school of Engineering and Design at Brunel University, UK. My research title is: Meaningful Spaces: Reclaiming Public Spaces for its Residents.

This questionnaire is about measuring the public satisfaction with regards to public spaces (spatial designs) over the last twenty years. This aim will be assessed by measuring your view towards the volume of designers' attention that has been paid within this period of time to three main elements. These elements composing the public perception and they are:

Section one: Cultural elements (Emotional experience) e.g. sense of belonging and cultural habits.

Section two: Physical experience; e.g. functioning and accessibility.

Section three: Design process (Methodology) e.g. models, structure, and policies.

Section four: Personal Information

Therefore, I will be very much grateful if you kindly fill in the attached questionnaire with this letter. Please carefully state your opinion about each statement and return the full questionnaire as soon as possible after putting it in the enclosed envelope. I would like to assure you that obtained information will be kept confidential and will be used only for academic purposes only. If there are any further questions pertaining to any aspect of the questionnaire, please feel free to contact me either on: [+96899899996 / +447711711777] or E-mail address: [abdul.al-ghareebi@brunel.ac.uk]. Please note that your right to withdraw is reserved at any time. Finally, as your honest and accurate response to this questionnaire is very essential to my study, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for taking part in this project.

Yours sincerely

Abdul Azeez Al Ghareebi

PhD Candidate – School of Engineering and Design

Questionnaire starts here

Section one: Cultural elements

Q1. Within the last twenty years, I believe that urban planners in GCC cities have considered religious principles in most of the designs produced.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Strongly agree | (b) Agree | (c) Neutral | (d) Disagree | (e) Strongly Disagree |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|

Q2. Do you feel that your cultural influence is related to your visual response in your city?

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|

Q3. If there were one thing that designers should focus on among the following cultural aspects, what would that be?

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| (a) Representation e.g. (spectacular, modern or historical) | (b) Regulations e.g. (urban policies, law and regular tradition) | (c) Identity e.g. (cultural context and community character) | (d) Production (industrial and economical aspects) | (e) Consumption e.g. (public needs and leisure) |
|---|--|--|--|---|

Q4. Do you find that your current experiences of your city represent your cultural identity?

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) I | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |
|----------------|-------|--------------|--------|----------------|

Q5. Do you find your experience of public space designs where you live or work (such as: architecture, interiors, retails, information, plazas, and walking spaces) is meaningful to you?

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|

Section two: Physical experience

Q6. In your last visit to a shopping mall in GCC cities, do you find the overall designs to be understandable?

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |
|----------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|

Q7. In your last visit to a shopping mall in GCC cities, do you have any problems

| | | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| navigating the site and finding your location? | | | | |
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Q8. What is your preferred method of guide for the mall fties? | | | | |
| (a) Touch screens | (b) InformalIn desks | (c) Flyers and printed maps | (d) Ask random people | (e) Internet/ Smart phone Apps. |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| Q9. In your last visit to a shopping mall in GCC cities, did you find people keen to help you when you seek help? | | | | |
| (a) Yes indeed (Move to Q.11) | (b) Yes (Ie to Q.11) | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |

| | | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| Q10. <i>Dismiss this question if you answered (a) or (b) to Q9.</i> Do you think that the accessibility of facility guides in the mall stop individuals from helping you? | | | | |
| (a) Yes defilly | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |

Section three: Design process

| | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| Q11. Have you ever been asked about your opinion regarding any urban design project in your area? | | | | |
| (a)ever | (b) Once | (c) Twice | (d) Often | |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| Q12. <i>Dismiss this question if you answered (a) or (b) to Q11.</i> In which way you have been asked for your opinion? | | | | |
| (a) libitions | (b) Website | (c) Surveys | (d) Interviews | (e) Other |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Q13. What do you think is important in public space projects in GCC cities? | | | | |
| The practical use e.g.(facilities, walkways) | How it benefits the local council e.g.(taxes and city representation) | How it represents people and culture e.g.(identity and culture values) | How it will affect you e.g.(parking, transportation, access) | Actual environment e.g.(green spaces, healthy atmosphere) |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Q14. Do you feel that urban planners in GCC countries are concerned about your culture? | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| I Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |
|--------------|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|

| | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------|--------|----------------|
| Q15. Do you think that there is a conceptual gap between you as an individual and the urban planners in GCC cities? | | | | |
| (a) Yes indeed | (b) Yes | (c) Not sure | (d) No | (e) Not at all |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Q16. Do you have any ideas about what could enhance the conceptuality of public space projects in GCC cities? | | | | |
| | | | | |

Section 4: Personal Information

Finally we would like to know some general information about you:

- Name (optional):
- Position (optional):
- Organization (optional):

Please place a check (√) beside the most appropriate choice to each of the following variables.

1. Age:

Below 25years ()

From 25 to 35 years ()

From 36 to 45 years ()

From 46 years to 59 years ()

60 and above ()

2. Gender: Male () Female ()

3. Place living:

Muscat ()

Dubai ()

Doha ()

Jeddah ()

4. Last Educational Qualification:

Below high school certificate ()

High school certificate ()

Intermediate college diploma ()

Bachelor degree ()

Masters degree ()

PhD ()

End of the questionnaire!

Thank you for your valuable participation and kind patience.

APPENDIX 3: CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Regarding the questions on CULTURAL ELEMENTS;

“Do you find religious principles being considered in the designs of your cities?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: Religion is indeed very important for the people in Dubai, and of course especially for the locals. It is the basis of culture, and this is evident in how the mosque is the central monumental figure within different parts of the city.

Dubai Respondent 2: Religion is being considered as much as it should, in the designing of Dubai. It is becoming apparent that a lot of the contextual characteristics of new buildings in Dubai go against religious principles, which is very unfortunate for the character of the city.

Dubai Respondent 3: Religious principles were mostly evident in older times. As the city is becoming more international, the emphasis of urban development and architectural character has a secular side.

Dubai Respondent 4: Religious principles are being considered less and less within Dubai designs. Islamic architecture has four major types of architectural construction: the Tomb, the Mosque, the Fort and the Palace. However, these are being overlooked and there is nowadays a tendency for a lot of high rises and tall buildings being constructed around us, with international elements that are far away from the traditional decorative elements that we should be seeing more often. Other than calligraphy, we should be seeing more geometry, floral patterns, and the implementation of water into the designs.

Dubai Respondent 5: Local professionals are more aware of the importance of religion, and try to implement those characteristics more in their designs. However Dubai is becoming full of developments that are undertaken by international firms, and religion is of secondary importance when it comes to their spontaneous interpretation of urban problems.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: Jeddah is a very religious city, due to its geographical location being near Mecca; the destination point of religious pilgrimages. People are aware of the religious culture here in Jeddah, and religious landmarks play a great role for this knowledge. For example there is the historical area of Jeddah, which is a World Heritage Site, which includes many mosques. Some are particularly important: Al-Shafe’j Mosque is the oldest mosque in Jeddah for example, with very unique architectural characteristics.

Jeddah Respondent 2: The existence of numerous mosques around the city of Jeddah stimulates the memory or cultural awareness of professional during their designing phase. It is in fact difficult to overlook the grandeur of these religious artefacts; the Al-Basha Mosque, the King Saud Mosque, the Akkash Mosque, the Uthman bin Affan Mosque. And these are only a few of the many examples. Urban designers in general, being educated people of the profession, try to implement aspects of traditional architecture in their design, which is mostly apparent in smaller scale projects such as villas and residential complexes. However, it is difficult and unpractical to do so with the religious principles of our culture, because there is a secular demand as a result of globalization, and the most important design firms are of an international stature.

Jeddah Respondent 3: Religious principles are not very apparent, considering that Jeddah is one of the most “open” cities of Saudi Arabia in terms of international standards for principles and beliefs. It is not a closed community that would try to gently reinforce religious principles in architectural and urban design principles; in fact, it is even a vacation resort, so it is viewed more as a ‘get-away’ place, with its proximity to the Red Sea, and its predominance of fishing and food. Food culture is much more dominant than religious culture. Tourists seem to enjoy it.

Jeddah Respondent 4: Jeddah is becoming more secular. Not multi-religious, as only Islamic worshipping structures may be raised, but secular in the sense that it has become much globalized, especially after the oil boom of the 1960s and 1970s. However, some modern works depicted in public spaces try to give religious hints. One example is the sculpture by the Lebanese painter Aref Rayess, with his abstract sculpture named “Allah”, situated in the Palestine Square in Jeddah. The work is more semiotic, rather than traditional.

Jeddah Respondent 5: They are present in religious buildings however not in other types of buildings. At least it is not often seen, nowadays.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: It is important that the most important landmarks in Muscat are mosques, including the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the Zawawi Mosque, the Saeed bin Taimoor and the Ruwi Mosque. So there is still the external stimulation of religious importance within the city, and at different parts, especially considering the socially-involved habits of the local Muslims which involve the prayer at five times per day. Religion plays a strong part in the culture of Oman, and perhaps it is more evident in smaller cities and villages surrounding Muscat, and not Muscat itself, where one experiences the strength of religious influence to a lesser degree.

Muscat Respondent 2: A large population is practicing Islam in Muscat therefore there is surely the influence of religion when designing a piece of architecture. For us professionals, when trying to conceptualize a building of a Muslim owner, one of the first things that come into mind is the expression of the culture, and religion is surely a primary characteristic. Furthermore, Islam is the Sultanate's only recognized religion, and the one that may be expressed publicly. Public expression goes hand in hand with urban design therefore religious principles are expressed in architecture.

Muscat Respondent 3: There is a law of freedom of religious expression in Muscat, so perhaps putting Muslim religious elements in a city where so many expats live, would not be so relevant. This is how the lack of religious elements in the context of urban places is being justified.

Muscat Respondent 4: If you navigate in the historic town and along the bank of the sea, you see a lot of building of heritage importance, which hold also religious elements. This is not strange, as Oman culture is strongly tied to its religious beliefs.

Muscat Respondent 5: The culture of religion is becoming lost in the expression of buildings, as it was once the case. This is unfortunate, considering what a large part it plays in locals' lives.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: Up until a certain point, Doha was being developed in a very thoughtful way, respecting religious principles. The real problem is that there has been no law concerned with the preservation of cultural heritage until 1980. And religion is certainly a prime aspect of cultural heritage.

Doha Respondent 2: There are a number of religious landmarks in Doha that remind of the importance of religion in the identity of cultural heritage. Such examples are right in the centre of Jeddah with its historical mosques, including the Uthman bin Affan Mosque, the Al-Basha Mosque, the Akkash Mosque, the Al-Mi'maar Mosque, the King Saud Mosque, the Hasan Anani Mosque and the Jiffali Mosque. However, these are only seen nowadays as historical landmarks of a traditional past. Religion plays a very important part in GCC culture and should be considered in more buildings that are of monumental character. Western building prototypes have nothing to say about Islamic religious and culture.

Doha Respondent 3: Because Doha attracts many visitors from around the world in order to meet and understand the culture, it would be more appropriate to express more religious architecture within the context of the city.

Doha Respondent 4: Religious stimuli are not enough, in analogy to the importance that religion plays in the Muslim culture and the city of Doha in particular.

Doha Respondent 5: The historical mosques are a prime example of religious demonstration through architecture, and they are the pride of the city.

“How is your cultural influence related to your visual response in your city, as a professional, and how do you respond to that as a designer/planner?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: There is great awareness among the professionals of the urban planning industry of the strong cultural values within the United Arab Emirates. Especially for the older professionals, it is disheartening to see the kind of developments which are going on today, however perhaps this is also a part of our cultural path.

Dubai Respondent 2: There is strong effort to incorporate cultural features in the architectural and urban designs at least at a decorative level, remembering the aspects of geometry, calligraphy, and religious references when dealing with religious architecture, although we see less of that in the contemporary developments.

Dubai Respondent 3: Cultural background helps professionals understand the city in a better way, socially, economically, and most importantly, culturally.

Dubai Respondent 4: The city has acquired a more secular character, and this affects the designers consciously and unconsciously. The demands are different. Designers should try to shift the demands, in order to influence the visual experiences of the people.

Dubai Respondent 5: Certain aspects of Dubai should be seen in the wider area of Dubai. For example, the historic aspect of United Arab Architecture is mostly seen only in Bur Dubai. Planning designers, who know about history, seek urban visual stimuli to remind them of their culture in every side of the city of Dubai, and not only on the western side of the Dubai Creek.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: Urban planners of Jeddah are proud of the city's local traditional architecture that takes place primarily in the Old City however those buildings are being overshadowed by the tall modern ones. However there is great potential for the marriage between the contemporary reality and the cultural past of the buildings. For example, the traditional buildings of Jeddah in the Old City are characterized by their multi-storey levels that are either residential or merchant houses that are not so extremely far away from the scale of the new buildings.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Designers who usually have to deal with existing traditional buildings generally try to preserve the image of the traditional visual effects and be as less invasive as possible.

Jeddah Respondent 3: Building preservation of cultural stimuli is important in the profession for the maintenance of culture and the attraction of more tourists who will come to appreciate our history.

Jeddah Respondent 4: For professionals who are knowledgeable on the architectural culture of Jeddah in its profundity, it is saddening to see the visual transformation of the high rises and skyscrapers, coming in contrast with the traditional architecture. The overcoming of the problem comes through the quality of thought-out designs.

Jeddah Respondent 5: There is a need to deal with the reality of globalization and the market demands. However, whenever there is a chance to incorporate local architectural traditions, the challenge is appreciated.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: Muscat demonstrates its cultural affiliation through characteristic architecture of its low-lying buildings, which span along most of Muscat's landscape. Therefore, there are visual stimuli that remind us professionals of our roots and of the history of the city. Urban designers try to respect that when creating their own proposals, in an effort to remain consistent with the urban planning scheme.

Muscat Respondent 2: Cultural responses are a bit complicated, especially in the city of Muscat, which is the most westernized city of Oman. In fact, one third of the population is comprised by expats, coming mostly from the United States, Australia, New Britain, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

Muscat Respondent 3: It is difficult to remain purely devoted to the needs of the local culture, because there is so much diversity around, and needs of expats also need to be satisfied. The geographical culture will always remain that of Muscat tradition, and it is important to try to implement local characteristics in the urban architecture and planning philosophies.

Muscat Respondent 4: There is an effort to implement local cultural characteristics in the religious buildings as much as possible, in order to maintain the visual beauty of our tradition as a nation. Muscat does very well compared to other GCC states in matters of visual consistency and cultural maintenance. One reason is the law on building height limitation.

Muscat Respondent 5: Muscat is visually pleasant, particularly due to the lack of skyscrapers, compared to other GCC states. Therefore, for those of cultural awareness, this is a solace, and a great step that reaches cultural awareness and respect towards the surrounding landscape and environment.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: There are a number of historical districts in the centre of Doha that stimulate the visual experience and create relationships with cultural identity. These images help us as urban planners and design professionals, in order to remember our past and respect our current mission of development. These districts are spread within the centre and include Msheireb West, Asmakh, Najada, Abdul Azeez, Al Ghanem and Al Ghanem South, Salata, Al Hitmi, Jadeeda, Umm Ghuwailina and Najma.

Muscat Respondent 2: There are still traces of cultural identity within the city, that impact our awareness of our cultural identity. For example, there are traces of the old wall which was built in 1888. There are also the buildings that are worth conserving which were built using traditional methods of coral stones and Chandal wood, prior to the importation of the modern building material techniques including the wide-applied cement, which is seen everywhere now.

Muscat Respondent 3: Designers' role is to bring back and promote the traditional means of built construction. Buildings were built in the traditional way for a reason.

Muscat Respondent 4: There is a general awareness of the cultural past, and seeing a vast amount of mega-projects going on in the city of Doha, especially after the globalization boom of the 1990s, is saddening me. GCC cities are becoming not much different from one another, although each state holds a very different and unique cultural identity. However, there is still hope, as there are construction remnants that are good candidates for restoration and preservation. Knowledge on the past, and professionals' power to create change, certainly offers hope against the surge of globalization and the bringing back of local identity.

Muscat Respondent 5: There are very important and historical monumental landmarks in the city of Jeddah that fill a designer and architect with national pride, and a sentimental will towards emulation. Such examples are surely the Nasif and Sharbatly mansions, which are extremely beautiful with their traditional decorations and unique style. Designers have several visual stimuli of the greatness of local architecture, and emotional responses create a will to at least try towards achieving visual perfections. Of course, the task is difficult and perhaps impossible nowadays, but at least the reference points are there for strong reminders.

“What recent experiences within your professional experience have been prime examples of cultural identity?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: Emirati architecture is truly interesting as it expresses the more traditional everyday life of people, along with their customs. Emirati architecture could be a prime example of architecture of cultural identity, as it uses simple building materials that are well-adapted by the environment and

local climatic conditions of Dubai. Emirati architecture should not build anything taller than a tree!

Dubai Respondent 2: Some would say that the Dubai Heritage Village could be a good example of steps towards reaching our cultural identity... However this has been an act that is more targeted as a museum of a variety of cultural architectural characteristics, rather than an urban reality within the city. The whole of Dubai should be a Heritage place, with shishas, barns, traditional restaurants and residential districts.

Dubai Respondent 3: One important step towards the identification and conservation of Dubai's cultural heritage has been the Historical Buildings Restoration Section, established in 1991 by the Municipality of Dubai. It is very promising how many buildings have been restored up until recently. One statistical account notes that by 2006 about 100 buildings had been restored, and by 2010, another 320.

Dubai Respondent 4: Dubai has a strong historical background, that is being overshadowed by the mega-structures that are seen everywhere. The cultural identity is being revealed through the restorations and preservations of old historical buildings, and the touristic attempts to make that side of Dubai recognizable; for example, there is awareness for the organization of walking tours that take place in the historic centre of Al Bastakiya, at the east of Al Fahidi Fort where the Dubai Museum is. That area is filled with residential houses of traditional architecture, with courtyards, and wind towers for purposes of ventilation. When these characteristics are exposed, people learn about the cultural identities and want more of what is identifiable.

Dubai Respondent 5: One good example of cultural restoration has been the restored historical area of Bastakiya, including cafes, art galleries, and other traditional architecture that may be experienced while walking around.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: There has been some effort of symbolization with regards to our culture, in projects like the Entrance to Makkah, known as the Quran Gate. The location of this design project is at the birthplace of Muhammad, and it symbolizes the boundary of the haram area of Makkah city. Perhaps it forms a cultural-clique, as only Muslims may be allowed to enter, and therefore this partly loses the significance of global appreciation of a cultural landmark, as it may only be experienced by a particular group.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Some conservation projects that are becoming more frequent during the recent years are very satisfying, particularly of the extensive restoration and maintenance work that was undergone with the Al-Shafe'j Mosque in Harat Al-Mathloun in the Al-Jame'I market. This is a mosque located in the Old City, so it has been a very essential contribution to our religious culture. At the same time, it is still open for prayer, so there is a direct and ongoing linkage between the present and the past.

Jeddah Respondent 3: One can say that Jeddah has created its own cultural identity of a modern era. For example, it has been proclaimed as one of the largest open-air art galleries in the world, with works in many public urban spaces that have become cultural landmarks. For example, the Bicycle Roundabout is a very famous one, affiliated to the culture of Jeddah of the modern era. A lot of these relate to traditional items as well; for example the depiction of Saudi items such as pots, palm trees, etc.

Jeddah Respondent 4: All efforts towards public space conservation and improvement have been great examples of quality projects.

Jeddah Respondent 5: One interesting project of Jeddah that relates to the improvement of public spaces has been the municipality's collaboration with Space Syntax, in 2006, striving to improve the overall strategy for the city through land use accounts and movements. There have been promising physical transformations ever since.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: One very pleasant demonstration of cultural heritage exhibition has been the conversion of the House of Al Zubair into a private museum. I believe that it opened in 1998. It is built in the historical part of the Old City therefore it creates a great combination of traditional architecture which embodies exhibitions of Oman's rich heritage and culture. Now it has expanded into a cultural complex that includes modern methods of demonstration, and keeps international standards with full respect towards cultural wealth. It is one of the country's architectural icons.

Muscat Respondent 2: There has been an extremely interesting and needed project recently, called Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM), undertaken by Gehl Architects of Denmark, striving to ameliorate the conditions of public open urban wandering. In essence, the city of Muscat will be redesigned, based on works being done since 2010. Public space interventions are going to include new and conserved fountains, corner oasis, festival squares, small parks and

landscaping projects, re-worked streets and boulevards, and other outdoor refurbishments that will renew the whole city.

Muscat Respondent 3: One prime example of Muscat's concern towards cultural maintenance is its restriction on the height of buildings, which is an approach very different than what is found in Dubai for example.

Muscat Respondent 4: The Municipality of Muscat is undergoing several projects for the revitalization of Muscat which are noteworthy, including the construction of boulevards, the Seeb Seafront Plaza, a few Markets, and others. They will all enhance the appearance and quality of the city.

Muscat Respondent 5: The Seeb Seafront Plaza combines public places with beautiful traditional buildings. The finalization is still conceptual, and includes improved living and working conditions along the sea, not to mention the new public spaces that will raise the bar of urban habitation.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: There have been efforts to preserve and express the cultural identity that is already present in our city, as for example the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif; a project which started in 2004 and was completed in 2008. There is also a major project that is taking place at the moment, concerning the Msheireb project and which is due to be completed in 2017. This is a very important project that we are all proud of in the urban planning community, involving the sustainable redevelopment at the city centre, reviving the old commercial district while emphasizing cultural elements.

Doha Respondent 2: The Msheireb project is surely an attempt towards reaching back to our cultural roots, as it revitalizes the historic centre. It is a mixed-use development project that meets green building standards and recreates a contemporary project of urban life that is rooted to the Qatari culture.

Doha Respondent 3: One example is the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif, which tried to bring back the authenticity of the area. This took place in 2004, and it was a great initiation for pursuit of conservation of cultural identity. While it was an area of great decay, it now attracts many locals and tourists, both during the day and during the night.

Doha Respondent 4: There has been the reconstruction of Msheireb historic area, aiming to revitalize the heart of Doha. This project followed the Souk Waqif project and was initiated in 2008, due to be completed in 2017.

Doha Respondent 5: An important project is the preservation of the Fareej Al Asmakh district.

APPENDIX 4: PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

Regarding the questions on PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE:

“Do you find the overall design of your city meaningful and conceptually coherent?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: Globalization has been a major problem in the overall feel of the city, making it non-conceptually coherent. A lot of the local cultural characteristics have been lost. Buildings are of modernistic abstract forms, they are mega-buildings with no true meaning, and the public spaces between them lack true character.

Dubai Respondent 2: Each mega-structure that is being built has its own concept that relates more to global themes, than local culture and identity. This is not conceptually coherent.

Dubai Respondent 3: Dubai is acquiring a conceptual coherence of mega-structures and grandiose buildings. Perhaps it is the new cultural reality of the city. Nevertheless, the historical parts of the city and the traditional architecture found offer a nice contrast to the overall scene.

Dubai Respondent 4: The city lacks conceptual coherence, because each structure that is being built strives for ideals that have nothing to do with heritage and history. Each public space revolves mostly around the corresponding buildings, and not to the city as a whole. There is much work to be done on that aspect.

Dubai Respondent 5: Dubai has acquired a new meaning since the surge of the oil, and it seems that people are embracing this, internationally.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: The foundations of organization of Jeddah hold a conceptual meaning. For example, within the walls, the city of Jeddah was divided into districts that are still apparent, which gained their names from major events that took place there. The names of these are Harat Al Madhloom, Harat Al Sham, Harat Al Yemen, Harat Al Bahr, Harat Al Karnateena and Harat Al MilyonTif. There is much conceptual coherence within these neighbourhoods, and the rest of Jeddah could take examples of these districts.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Jeddah has problems of conceptual coherency and segregation, which result in socioeconomic problems, social segregation, a lack of sense of ownership and poor infrastructure. The core is isolated from the surroundings, both in terms of heterogeneity and in terms of accessibility.

Jeddah Respondent 3: Surely there is lack of conceptual themes that carry out throughout the city of Jeddah. The Old City of Jeddah used to have a strong conceptual theme however this has been affected by the modern construction, which takes place rather spontaneously and thoughtlessly. The quality of cultural heritage that takes place in the Old City of Jeddah should be carried out throughout all Jeddah districts for better definitions of identity and belonging.

Jeddah Respondent 4: There was much coherency to the city planning of Jeddah until the demolition of the wall, which created a physical boundary and sense of safety for the inhabitants. This wall was evident by 1947, and then, the city began to expand. In a way, the end of the wall was the end of urban conceptual coherency, because then Jeddah started to expand in a way that was more targeted towards economic development, rather than cultural expansion.

Jeddah Respondent 5: The plan of Jeddah has good potentials, considering the Master Plan for Jeddah in 1973. Nowadays, there are efforts being made in order to draw references to this plan, in pursuit of a better conceptual understanding of the city, which lost its direction following the oil boom.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: There is a strong distinction between the tradition city centre of Muscat, which is surrounded by mountains, and the rest of Muscat which is more modernized with some western architectural influences. Therefore, one could say that there are two different concepts, where one holds strong the aspects of heritage, and the other is lost into the partial outcomes of globalization.

Muscat Respondent 2: The city of Muscat is kind of divided, both through means of architectural characteristics, and also through means of sociological and economic status, that by default influences the overall concept and the quality of the urban architecture. For example, there is the greater metropolitan area of Muscat, known as the “Capital Area”, and then there are denser districts of residential or commercial character, intermingled with undeveloped land. The major districts of modern development are generally divided into three parts: West Muscat, Central Muscat, and East Muscat (which also includes Old Muscat). Even though the districts differ according to social statures, the architectural conceptualization usually holds a consistent appearance throughout the city, with low buildings that are no taller than five stories, and that are white in colour.

Muscat Respondent 3: Buildings of Muscat are conceptually coherent, in that they hold elements of heritage considerations whether they are of residential, governmental, commercial, or of other use. Each region has a slightly different style, and it is an extremely pleasant city to navigate around, with all its local peculiarities.

Muscat Respondent 4: Muscat has a beautiful coherency and conceptual clarity that is perhaps maintained better than in other GCC states. There is a promontory that separates the sea from the lagoon with a beautiful cluster of white houses, a mosque with a blue dome, series of colonnades and traditional buildings. The image of the round tower is very distinct. Overall, the city embraces the sea, and vice versa.

Muscat Respondent 5: The concept of Muscat’s urban planning system is similar to that of any city that runs along the seaside, with a port, buildings that are near the sea, and then the more industrial complexes taking place further away from the water. However, there could be better solutions that connect the different districts together, for a more unifying urban result.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: After the surge of developmental progress in Doha, the concept has been lost.

Doha Respondent 2: The city tried to catch up with the surrounding level in development that took place in cities like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and the designs began to have no true meaning, like the meaning that we were used to.

Doha Respondent 3: Doha is conceptually coherent in the sense that it has a very distinct layout configuration of the traditional city centre.

Doha Respondent 4: There is a conceptual coherency in Doha with regards to the differentiation between the central historic districts and the new modern developments that generally lack some holistic understanding of the city. In the historic districts, the more central parts are denser and more residential, with narrow pathways between the buildings and a very pedestrian feeling of circulation.

Doha Respondent 5: The concept is becoming lost, with the moving of the high rises towards the centres of the historic areas, occupying empty lots. The conceptual character used to be that of residential character and privacy, with small streets and traditional construction. Now, the concept has become much globalized; a situation that began spreading in the 1990s; once all urban professionals recognize that, there may be conceptual shifts.

“Do you think that there are navigation problems related to your city?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: Because there are many large monuments that are used as orientating landmarks, it is usually hard to get lost in Dubai.

Dubai Respondent 2: Dubai is built along the Persian Gulf sea and similarly to any city with such topographical configuration, it is difficult to get lost. Of course, there are also a number of very tall monumental buildings. One glimpse at one of them helps one gain re-direction. There is also the large boulevard that runs parallel to the sea. Generally, the streets have an orthogonal configuration and it is easy to navigate.

Dubai Respondent 3: There is a pretty comprehensive numbering system in Dubai, which helps differentiate some major streets, therefore helping one's location. For example, there are the E-routes, which are highways which connect Dubai to other emirates. 'E-routes' derives from "Emirate-routes", and there are six of them. D-routes connect places within the city itself, providing an intra-city network. These streets have a number, and also a specific name, which are more familiar to the locals. Navigation is not too difficult.

Dubai Respondent 4: Navigating is easy in Dubai, because of so many different landmarks that help one find their way around.

Dubai Respondent 5: Dubai has been adjusted to meet to the standards of so many expats who are there to work, therefore has created a comprehensive street numbering system. It also has important buildings which take the role of landmarks, for finding or giving directions.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: There are indeed some navigation problems, as the street names have changed over the years, and a lot of them are not on the existing maps. Taxi drivers, for instance, reach destinations by designating a landmark to them.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Jeddah is fairly easy to navigate around, due to the perpendicularity of street designs and their relationship to the sea. However, it is a very large city and one must know important landmarks in order to orient one's self and not become lost.

Jeddah Respondent 3: It is not difficult to navigate in Jeddah, although because the major streets are most often clogged, alternative streets must be often taken, and that could cause navigation problems when that part of the city holds no specific identity.

Jeddah Respondent 4: Some important monumental structures that help for orienting purposes are the Jeddah City Hall Tower, the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Pakistan International School of Jeddah, of course the city's port, which is always very busy, the Entry Gate of Makkah, King Fahd's Fountain, of course the Kingdom Tower, which will be the tallest structure in the world by 2019. Other important nodes that are useful for orientation are perhaps the Mall of Arabia, and the Al-Andalus Mall, the Bicycle Roundabout, the Jeddah TV Tower in Al-Balad and the Stadium of King Abdullah.

Jeddah Respondent 5: There are many districts in Jeddah and there are navigation problems if one is not familiar with the city well, which is of great size; the second largest in Saudi Arabia. Metropolitan Jeddah comprises of 137 districts, so you must understand, that non-locals heavily rely on maps and touristic guides. However, these navigation guides are readily available, as the city attracts many travellers especially involved with the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: If you know the distribution of the city, it is not so difficult to navigate. The city is divided into three parts; the East, the Centre and the West, and there is decent transportation throughout with buses and taxis, however there is no metro. By many, Muscat is considered a maze, so it is not difficult to get lost.

Muscat Respondent 2: For non-locals, it is perhaps confusing to navigate through the city, as names of streets and of small areas have similar names with one another. The Geographical Information Systems has recently been aware of the navigation problems of Oman's roads in general, and try to make streets and neighbourhoods more recognizable, admitting that there have been no standardized names for a lot of certain places.

Muscat Respondent 3: It is not uncommon for expatriates to complain of difficulties in navigation. There are no defined street names and no defined names for neighbourhoods, therefore if one needs to describe where they live, they have to do it through narrating the progression of landmarks, and the sequence of street intersections. It can become rather confusing. A lot of GCC state cities hold the same problem, causing urban confusion for both tourists and residents. Especially considering that there are many expats who arrive here for work and for extended periods of years still complaining, we understand that there is a problem.

Muscat Respondent 4: As with any city, important factors for navigation are the landmarks of the city, and its relationship with the surrounding landscape. For example, the old city is surrounded by mountainous terrain, so one knows which direction to go by looking around for the earthy volumes. Then there is the sea, which runs along the metropolis of Muscat and serves as a navigational reference point. Of course the architectural landmarks are equally important, and express the specific characteristics of the culture through the way that they are designed. Such landmarks include all the large mosques, the Museum of Omani Heritage, and the National Museum of Oman.

Muscat Respondent 5: Muscat is not so difficult to navigate around, because there are always some types of important landmarks that serve as reference points for locating one's place within the city.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: Doha is friendly in terms of navigation, as it runs near the Persian Gulf and it has a radial configuration. Perhaps within the smaller streets it may become confusing, but there are important landmarks to orient one's self: important museums such as the Qatar National Museum and the Museum of Islamic Art, the Al Watan Centre, the Emiri Diwan, the Clock Tower, the Grand Mosque, the Al Rawnaq Trading Centre, the Barwa Bank, the Bone & Joint Centre...

Doha Respondent 2: The main streets that are easily located, find it easy to navigate through Doha. Al Corniche Street which runs along the Persian Gulf bank is characteristic, and so is Majilis Al Taawon Street, which runs parallel to Al Corniche. Other important navigating streets are the ones that form the 'rings' in the radial plan of Doha: Al Diwan Street, Al Khaleej Street, the B Ring Road, and the C Ring Road. There is also the D Ring Road. The E, and the F. Ras Abu Abboud Street cuts through the historic city.

Doha Respondent 3: There could be stronger links connecting the historical districts, especially those of Souk Waqif and Msheireb. At the present moment they are divided by strong infrastructure, therefore it is difficult to navigate from one district to the other. Good navigation comes from the ability to be pedestrian within a city, and Doha lost this ability after the period of globalization.

Doha Respondent 4: Doha has a number of important streets that are either radial or run parallel to the sea or transversally along the city, so it is not so difficult to understand one's tangents. The sea also helps a lot, which is the reference point of orientation for most.

Doha Respondent 5: All the different landmarks in Doha, and also the strong contrast between the modern buildings and the traditional districts, help for orientation purposes.

APPENDIX 5: DESIGN PROCESS

Regarding the questions on DESIGN PROCESS:

“What do you think is important in public space projects in your city, or GCC cities in general?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: It is important at this point to concentrate on small-scale buildings: Residences and small scale developments that express the timeless value of Emirati architecture.

Dubai Respondent 2: Building should surround open courtyards and have a sense of privacy. It is also important to affiliate with the exterior environment.

Dubai Respondent 3: The design process should concentrate more on the embodiment with the surroundings, rather than the marketability of the inside.

Dubai Respondent 4: Making the city into a more pedestrian-friendly public space is more important, as the development towards building volumes has been over-executed. Walkways, public gathering spaces of a friendly scale, and good mobility, are all important issues.

Dubai Respondent 5: Heritage issues should be managed collaboratively among many organizations and professionals, including museums, the consultancy of urban planners, the Qatar Society of Engineers, the Ministry of Urban Planning and Municipalities, the Ministry of Arts, Heritage and Culture, the Authority of Tourism, and perhaps some University for research support.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: What is mostly important is to design at a large-scale basis first, in order to find urban cohesion.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Because Jeddah is a megalopolis, it faces dangers of uncontrollable expansion and loss of district identity. Jeddah therefore needs a better plan of interconnections among the many districts that it encompasses. After these patterns will be established, then more large-scale interventions of meaningful and culturally fulfilled public spaces may be considered.

Jeddah Respondent 3: The most important aspect of city development is the creation of public open spaces where people may be able to interact and appreciate the grandeur, wealth, diversity and culture of the city.

Jeddah Respondent 4: GCC cities in general should now aim towards bringing out cultural identity. We have done much to demonstrate economic wealth, and we have caught up with modern countries around the world. Now there is danger is losing wealth of the past, so the focus should be on conservation, restoration and implementation of strong cultural elements. It should even be a prerequisite for new construction.

Jeddah Respondent 5: One problem of Jeddah is the rubbish, and public places will never look as good if the rubbish is not taken care of through intervention of the municipality.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: For public place projects, it is important to have stimuli that remind of the culture of Muscat and of the wider region of Oman, so that there is local urban character throughout. Very often, this aspect is missing.

Muscat Respondent 2: Public open urban spaces in Muscat should implement materials and methods of construction that will motivate people to stay outside and tolerate the warm weather. There should be a re-consideration of traditional means of building, when environmental affiliations were stronger.

Muscat Respondent 3: Muscat should conserve the public spaces that already exist, make them safer and cleaner, and create new ones that connect different fragmented places in a better way.

Muscat Respondent 4: Public spaces should strive to eliminate infrastructural barriers, and create a more friendly-looking and walkable city. They should reinforce cultural mingling and traditional exposure.

Muscat Respondent 5: Public spaces of Muscat could be improved in many ways, including the adjustment of materials and small constructions for shading purposes, and the better connection with the surrounding spatial structure, which will give better conceptual comprehension of the urban fabric.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: Cultural preservation should be a priority. There is a strong historic centre, and it is being overlooked in pursuit of creating marketable designs and extremely tall buildings.

Doha Respondent 2: People should become acquainted and familiarized with our past, which in terms of architecture alone, is very rich and offers stimuli of identity and local belonging.

Doha Respondent 3: Nowadays, there is a great priority in urban designing that revolves around the matter of sustainability. However, it is important to understand that sustainability involves the environment and not the people directly. What affects the people directly is the socio-cultural reality that takes place in the urban environment.

Doha Respondent 4: The most important implementation in public space designs is to express cultural identity and traditional architecture.

Doha Respondent 5: There is much urban space diversity in Doha, and public spaces could help towards connecting these differentiations in strategic ways. It is an excellent opportunity for creative solutions that will punctuate cultural diversity.

“How does cultural concern affect your design process, and is it at all important?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: The concern for culture comes in contrast with the local market needs. For example, there is a tendency to make everything large... Dubai has the world’s tallest building, the world’s largest mall, the world’s largest fountain, and the world’s tallest hotel. On the contrary, there is good awareness that traditional Emirati architecture is humble and small-scale, and should be in unison with the environment. This creates a problem among the knowledgeable professionals.

Dubai Respondent 2: The effort is to embody at least some of the culturally traditional design aspects of United Arab Emirati architecture into our design planning.

Dubai Respondent 3: It is important to maintain the traditional of unique architectural characteristics. For example, ventilation is one primary characteristics of cultural design, with the implementation of interior courtyards within buildings and particularly residences.

Dubai Respondent 4: Even with the contemporary context of modern building techniques and futuristic designs, the effort is towards embodying cultural elements to express cultural affiliation. Privacy also plays an important role, so priority is given over that. Overall, it is a matter of priorities, rather than a matter of whole-hearted choices.

Dubai Respondent 5: Implementing local design tricks is a primary concern for this. For example, the wind-catcher is present in many of the designs.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: Cultural concern is extremely important. Jeddah is considered the city of art and culture, so conceptually this should already give motivation to all of us designers and urban planners to bring out these important characteristics that mark our people.

Jeddah Respondent 2: People of Jeddah have great local pride and are very proud of their culture, which they try to bring out through food, customs, and other daily activities. Perhaps they have somewhere lost it in the architecture, and this is the responsibility of people of my profession and a consequence of politics and national economy.

Jeddah Respondent 3: In cities of the GCC states and in Jeddah in particular, with its strong and evident traditions, urban designing may be closely related to the specific culture. For example, there are considerations regarding the different areas of men and women when hanging out in public places, or the concept of privacy in everyday life. A good planner or designer of a GCC city should be knowledgeable about the certain traditions and customs, in order to create effective urban environments.

Jeddah Respondent 4: Although the city is becoming much diverse in terms of national, religious and cultural backgrounds, the city of Jeddah should hold its own unique characteristics in terms of architecture and urban planning expression.

Jeddah Respondent 5: Cultural concern is very important, especially regarding the fact that culture surrounds the daily lives of the majority of people. If one considers that a Muslim prays five times per day, then it is enough information to be reminded constantly of the specific needs and specific activities that identify the culture. When designing, the most important aspect to consider is the use of the building, and then making correlations with the activities and levels of local conceptions that are associated with the typological building. Inevitably, culture is of primary concern, and that way it should be.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: Cultural concern certainly affects the design process, and this is caused primarily through seeing an effort of conceptual coherency in the city of Muscat.

Muscat Respondent 2: The consistency of low-rise buildings, which is unlike other economically developed GCC states which are bombarded by skyscrapers and modern architectural styles, creates awareness for design professionals.

Muscat Respondent 3: Cultural expression should be a priority for any designer, when working in a city with historical background.

Muscat Respondent 4: Vernacular architecture of Oman should be developed and evolved in any way possible, and I am well aware of that as a professional. So when faced with a design problem that holds no cultural or religious characteristics, it is my job to create and sell a design that holds characteristics of locality and distinct traditional identification, even in a slightly modern way, to fit the contemporary context.

Muscat Respondent 5: In my opinion, culture should be a priority in any practice, when tradition and background are so strong.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: As urban designers in the city of Doha, we are surrounded by history but at the same time by the concept of consumerism, contemporary advertisement, and a constant will of becoming rich. Values have shifted. However there are still a few people left in the profession that see cultural values as a priority while designing and practicing architecture and urban planning, and it is the way that it should be. The historical centre of our city still plays a great value for the people and the overall community, and it is the true wealth that we

withhold. We try to consider it as a priority. However, the reality is often not in such way.

Doha Respondent 2: Cultural preservation is the backbone to the city, and it should hold a primary importance. Since the discovery of oil and the start of the exportation market that began in 1949, priorities have shifted, and this is a problem. For the educated people and those who are aware of our cultural wealth, culture still remains extremely importance, and we are proud of it.

Doha Respondent 3: Urban problems started to become apparent during the 1960s and 1970s, which was the period during which the results of the economic and political shifts started to create effects and consequences, and there was more concern about rapid development, rather than qualitative urban progression. There was no time for cultural preservation. Of course, it is our job to consider it.

Doha Respondent 4: Cultural importance is extremely vital in practice urban governance, and should be a priority, in order to bring back old values and motivations for local identification and urban cohesion.

Doha Respondent 5: Cultural concern is a priority in urban planning and architecture, which should be an expression of the history and locality of a city. Doha is no exception.

“Do you have any ideas about what would enhance the conceptuality of public space projects in GCC cities?”

Professionals in Dubai:

Dubai Respondent 1: There are plenty of cultural characteristics of architecture of the United Arab Emirates that are being overlooked, therefore annihilating the cultural identity of the emirates. For examples, one characteristics of Emirati architecture are the portable tents during the winter season, which provide shelter for the tribal wanderings. Once, they were seen quite often around the city. However it was more usual to see short buildings made out of stone guss and roofed with palm tree leaves, local materials including even seashells that were plastered with water and chalk paste.

Dubai Respondent 2: One major component for the shifting of identity would be the re-consideration of scale.

Dubai Respondent 3: There is very good opportunity in the conceptual enhancement of the city of Dubai in understanding local communities better. When the context is being studied in a more professional and societal way, then there is less concern for the economy and for politics.

Dubai Respondent 4: GCC cities are different with one another, and each one holds different characters. Specifically for Dubai, the conceptuality is that of a combination of deep tradition and futuristic reality. Perhaps this combination should be made distinct through the implementation of projects that show a better balance and co-existence of the two.

Dubai Respondent 5: GCC states should find a better expression of embodying the present within the past. This will raise respect towards the past and appreciation towards the present. One major characteristic of traditional architecture that could enhance the identity of the city is the bringing back of the concept of privacy to the buildings. Nowadays, there is too much glamour and targeting towards consumption and production, whereas the true aspects of identity and quiet living are being lost. As a sequence, public spaces falling among such buildings would acquire a different character of cultural identity and differentiation. Less of the chaotic and noisy scenery would be seen, framed by immense and glamorous buildings.

Professionals in Jeddah:

Jeddah Respondent 1: Initially, there should be studies made in order to understand the patterns of density that take place in the many districts of Jeddah, because consequently, public spaces should be designed based on such speculations. Then different strategies of public place execution may be applied according to the needs of each location. These needs could be social, cultural, residential, mixed-use, retail, etc.

Jeddah Respondent 2: Jeddah is missing a strong overall strategic plan regarding public amenities, and everything is rather happening spontaneously. In some ways, this situation is lately improving.

Jeddah Respondent 3: For a megalopolis such as Jeddah, it is important to identify urban patterns; patterns of shopping mobility, patterns of outdoor social gatherings, patterns of private residency, and patterns of circulation. Once these patterns are located, then the correct decisions may be made regarding the degrees and locations of heritage conservation, the establishment of new public

places, perhaps the demolition of some unwanted structures that cause major problems, etc.

Jeddah Respondent 4: It is important, though this investigation of patterns, to keep in mind some primary plan; the Master Plan of Jeddah, of 1973 is a very good reference point for cohesion standards.

Jeddah Respondent 5: Jeddah is losing cultural coherence due to its expansive properties, and this needs to be controlled through a better and more concise urban plan.

Professionals in Muscat:

Muscat Respondent 1: Public spaces of Muscat should borrow elements of traditional architecture of Oman. They can be expressed with arches, towers, colonnades, or even public courtyards, in a way that reminds people of the history and continuity of tradition. There is strong regional identity to be continued.

Muscat Respondent 2: Public spaces could be enhanced with the design of traditional gardens, for public use, which are expressed in the form of dwellings, and constructed from palm fronds. There is a traditional way to create ventilated screens for outdoor spaces through the sowing together of palm frond stems. Imagine the creation of outdoor dwellings that protect passer-by's from the heat during hot climate. Then people would not remain indoors so much during the hot periods, and enjoy the city more. This concept could apply for all GCC states, which hold characteristics of similar climate. These palm frond stems may also be used as structural beams for any type of public open urban space construction, and the effect could be truly pleasant, both visually and functionally.

Muscat Respondent 3: Surely, Muscat is in need for more green and recreational public spaces for the residents and for the visitors of the city. There are project plans that are being considered for such purposes, and they would greatly enhance the public urban experience of the city.

Muscat Respondent 4: There are a few great public spaces that should be maintained and conserved in order to keep high standards of public space usage. For example, a number of people are dissatisfied with Municipality Square and its current status with regards to maintenance and cleanliness, the conditions of

the fountains, the lighting, and the surrounding uncared for landscape. The Muttrah Plaza could also benefit from works on cleanness.

Muscat Respondent 5: Public spaces should take good consideration of the warm climatic conditions and use the proper materials and shading techniques in order to provide comfortable situations for the urban dwellers.

Professionals in Doha:

Doha Respondent 1: There are in fact many considerations for extending the urban identity of Doha, through the reviving of particular districts whose identity has been lost. Such examples include the Fareej Al Asmakh and a few other districts, which call for urban conservation. Strategies for such urban conservation implementation are very realistic and can enhance the cultural concept of Doha. I think that such opportunities are present in most GCC states, and if strategies start focusing on the existing richness that lies within the urban history, then surprising results will take place.

Doha Respondent 2: Urban planners and architectural designers of Doha need to reference back to the city's roots, and try to create a harmony between the strong history, the present condition, and the anticipated future. The Fareej district is already available to us as a prime example of cultural heritage and a model of Qatari architecture. However, it should be conserved, and other districts should follow its example.

Doha Respondent 3: There have already been suggestions for the cultural enhancement of Doha, circulating in professional circuits. The primary idea is to stop the demolitions of buildings in historical districts, such as Al Asmakh, while documenting and surveying the remaining houses of the historical districts so that they may be better preserved and restored. Once restorations take place, then the original owners should be brought back, or else spaces should be made available for rent to promote the residential character of the districts. The areas should be left pedestrian, and the small scale of the streets should also be preserved. Finally, activities available within the historical districts should in part be mixed-use, in order to diminish the need for large-development constructions that create high rises and mega-structures. Activities should include all academic, administrative, cultural and business spaces, intermixed in small portions within the residential existing buildings.

Doha Respondent 4: With regards to the urban planning of Doha, there should be a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach when dealing with decisions on

the historical districts. This would solve many problems and promote the cultural identity, which would be based on people's needs and not on governmental needs.

Doha Respondent 5: The cultural identity of the city of Doha could be implemented into the people's visual experiences by creating stronger connections with the past. Connecting the districts more efficiently would be a solution, as for example creating physical links through bridges or tunnels as for example between Souk Waqif and Msheireb. Right now, things are dispersed, and the city has no conceptual apprehension, as noted earlier in your questions.

APPENDIX 6: THEMATIC ANALYSIS – CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Religious principles within urban designs

| Religious principles and contextual characteristics: | Religious principles and evolution: | Religious principles – specific examples: | Religious principles and professional practice: |
|---|---|--|---|
| Mosque (20) Monumental (24) Calligraphy Geometry Floral patterns Water / sea (2) Geography/ sea bank/ Red Sea (4) Destination point / pilgrimage/ Mecca (4) Religious culture/ Islamic culture (11) Landmarks (4) World Heritage Site Memory Cultural awareness / Islamic culture/ Omani beliefs (5) Community / Local Muslims (2) Reinforcement Tourism/ vacation resort (4) Fishing Food culture (3) Semiotic Heritage Identity Western prototypes Urban pride Historic area (2) | History (2) Internationalization (4) Secular orientation (2) Principles Decorative tradition Spontaneity (2) Open-mindedness Beliefs Globalization Oil boom Religious buildings (9) External stimulation Social involvement Prayer Scale/ smaller cities/ high rises/ taller buildings (5) Villages Culture (2) Locals Respect Cultural heritage preservation Landmarks Traditional past Tourism Cultural understanding Architectural character / building expression (2) | Al-Shafe’j Mosque Al-Basha Mosque (2) King Saud Mosque (2) Akkash Mosque (2) Uthman bin Affan Mosque (2) Aref Rayess’ “Allah” Palestine Square Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque Zawawi Mosque Saeed bin Taimoor Ruwi Mosque Al-Mi’maar Mosque Hasan Anani Mosque Jiffali Mosque | Traditional architecture Scale (3) Villas Residential complex Secular demand Globalization Internationalization (5) Religious influence (6) Cultural expression (6) Islam Public expression Religious freedom Conceptualization Expats (2) |

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|--|--|--|--|
| Architectural characteristics (2) Design phase Religious artefacts Urban design principles Scale/ grandeur (2) | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

| CULTURAL ELEMENTS - Religious principles within urban designs | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Monumental designs (24) Mosque (20) Religious culture/ Islamic culture (11) Tourism/ vacation resort (7) Cultural awareness / Islamic culture/ Omani beliefs (5) Scale/ grandeur/ smaller cities/ high rises/ taller buildings (5) | Landmarks (4) Destination point / pilgrimage/ Mecca (4) Geography/ sea bank/ Red Sea (4) Food culture (3) | Historic area (2) Architectural characteristics (2) Community / Local Muslims (2) | Agree (17/22) Disagree (2/22) Neutral (3/22) |
| Religious principles and evolution | Religious buildings (9) | Internationalization (4) | History (2) Secular orientation (2) Spontaneity (2) Culture (2) Architectural | Agree (7/18) Disagree (1/18) Neutral (10/18) |

| | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | character / building expression (2) Scale (2) | |
| Religious principles – specific examples | | | Al-Basha Mosque (2) King Saud Mosque (2) Akkash Mosque (2) Uthman bin Affan Mosque (2) | Agree (1/2) Disagree (0/2) Neutral (1/2) |
| Religious principles and professional practice | Religious influence (6) Cultural expression (6) Internationalization (5) | Traditional architecture Scale (3) | Expats (2) | Agree (5/6) Disagree (0/6) Neutral (1/6) |

Regarding religious principles within urban designs in the GCC cities, the qualitative analysis shows that there are four different approaches that concern the urban planning and architectural professionals: The contextual characteristics of religious applications, the evolution of these applications, specific examples that come to mind regarding religious principles, and how professional practice responds to the religious principles that are in the background of design professionals' knowledge.

The table above shows that regarding religious principles and contextual characteristics, the most popular considerations include: monumental designs, mosques, religious culture, Islamic architecture, cultural awareness, Islamic culture, tourism and vacation resorts, Omani beliefs, scale, buildings' grandeur, and the critical consideration of smaller cities, taller buildings, and high rises. Also quite popular are contextual characteristics that involve: landmarks, destination points and the pilgrimage towards Mecca, geographical studies, the consideration of adjacent sea banks and the Red Sea, and food culture. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned contextual characteristics that involve historical areas, specific architectural characteristics, the general community and the specific community of local Muslims.

Regarding the evolution of religious principles, the most popular responses included the mentioning of religious buildings in the GCC cities, followed by the concept of internationalization. A maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned contextual characteristics that involve the

history of a city, the consideration of a secular orientation, cultural aspects of a place, the architectural character and building expression, and the notion of scale.

Specific examples of religious principles were not repeatedly apparent among the questioned urban planning and architectural professionals however the following examples appeared twice among all responses: the Al-Basha Mosque, the King Saud Mosque, the Akkash Mosque, and the Uthman bin Affan Mosque.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 48 different types of responses, 30 agree on the importance of the theme of implementing religious principles within urban designs; 3 disagree; and 15 remain neutral.

Cultural influence and visual response

| Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Cultural influence and visual response – specific examples |
|--|--|--|---|
| Urban planning values (3) Cultural values / awareness / identity (14) Contemporary situation & market demands (3) Secular character Conscious effect Unconscious effect Visual stimuli (5) Historic reference (3) Visual preservation Invasion Building preservation & visual perfection (4) Preservation (5) Tourism (2) Appreciation (2) Architectural culture (2) | Cultural features (2) Decorations (2) Geometry Calligraphy Religious references Contemporary developments Urban planning schemes Local traditional architecture (3) Overshadowing Scale/ multi-storey (4) Residential Merchant houses Landscape Low-lying buildings Architectural culture Market demands Globalization Expats | Cultural & architectural background (5) Social understanding Economic understanding Demand shifting Visual experiences (2) Historic aspects & remnants (9) Design process (2) Local traditions (2) Urban planning scheme (2) Consistency Respect (2) Geographical culture (2) Local planning philosophy Cultural maintenance Scale/ building | Bur Dubai (2) Whole Dubai Old City (3) Msheireb West Asmakh Najada Al Ghanem Al Ghanem South Salata Al Hitmi Jadeeda Ghuwailina Najima Old Wall (3) Nasif Sharbatly mansions |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Visual transformation Traditional architecture (2) Globalization (4) Scale/ building height/ mega-projects / high rises/ skyscrapers (10) Invasion Westernization Diversity Expats Limitation Landscape & environment (3) Visual relationships & reference points (3) Uniqueness Past-knowledge Emotional response / sentimentality (2) | United States Australia New Britain New Zealand South Africa Canada Districts Traces Awareness Conservation Traditional methods Coral stones Chandal wood Modern materials Cement Materiality (5) Landmarks Emotional response/ national pride & sentimentality (3) Unique style | height limitation (3) Purpose Restoration/ preservation/ memory (3) | |
|--|--|---|--|

| CULTURAL ELEMENTS – Cultural influence and visual response | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Cultural values / awareness / identity (14) Scale/ building height/ mega-projects / high rises/ skyscrapers (10) Visual stimuli (5) Globalization (4) Building | Historic reference (3) Urban planning values (3) Landscape & environment (3) Visual relationships & reference points (3) Contemporary situation & | Tourism (2) Appreciation (2) Architectural culture (2) Visual transformation (2) Traditional architecture (2) | Agree (17/18) Disagree (0/18) Neutral (1/18) |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | preservation & visual perfection (4) | market demands (3) Emotional response/ national pride & sentimentality (3) | | |
| Cultural influence and visual response - specific characteristics | Materiality (5) Scale/ multi-storey (4) | Local traditional architecture (3) | Cultural features (2) Decorations (2) | Agree (7/8) Disagree (0/8) Neutral (1/8) |
| Cultural influence and visual response - suggestions | Historic aspects (9) Cultural & architectural background (5) | Restoration/ preservation/ memory (3) Scale/ building height limitation (3) | Cultural background (2) Visual experiences (2) Design process (2) Local traditions (2) Urban planning scheme (2) Consistency (2) Respect (2) Geographical culture (2) Restoration & preservation (2) | Agree (6) Disagree (0/6) Neutral (0/6) |
| Cultural influence and visual response - specific examples | | Old City (3) Old Wall (3) | Bur Dubai (2) Whole Dubai (2) | Agree (8/8) Disagree (0/8) Neutral (0/8) |

Regarding cultural influence and visual response in the GCC cities, the qualitative analysis shows that there are three different approaches that concern the urban planning and architectural professionals: The existing situation regarding the theme, specific characteristics regarding the theme, suggestions to improve the theme, and specific examples that represent a good practice of cultural influence and visual response.

The table above shows that regarding the existing situation of cultural influence and visual response, the most popular considerations include: cultural values, cultural awareness, cultural identity, consideration of scale (building height, mega-projects, high rises and skyscrapers), visual stimuli, matters of globalization, building preservation and attaining visual perfection. Also quite popular were: elements of historic reference, urban planning values, landscape, environmental considerations, visual relationships, referencing points, contemporary situations of market demands, emotional response, national pride and sentimentality. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned situations of cultural influence and visual response in the GCC cities that involve: tourism, local appreciation, architectural culture, visual transformation and traditional architecture.

Regarding specific characteristics that represent cultural influence and visual response, most popular considerations include materiality and scale (multi-storey buildings). Also quite popular is the mentioning of local traditional architecture. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned specific characteristics of cultural features and decorations.

Regarding suggestions in order to improve the theme of cultural influence and visual response, the main considerations include: the historic aspects of designs and their cultural and architectural background. Also quite popular are matters of: restoration, preservation, memory and scale (building height limitations). Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals suggested elements of cultural influence and visual response that consider elements of: cultural background, visual experiences, design process, local traditions, urban planning scheme, consistency, contextual respect, geographical culture, and actions of restoration and preservation.

Regarding specific examples of good practice of cultural influence and visual response, the most popular replies mentioned the Old City and the Old Wall, while less popular but mentioned more than once were: Bur Dubai and Whole Dubai.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 40 different types of responses, 38 agree on the importance of the theme of implementing religious principles within urban designs; 0 disagree; and 2 remain neutral.

Recent experiences of cultural identity

| Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific characteristics | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – suggestions |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Simple building materials Materiality Environmental adaptation (4) Local climatic conditions Scale / height restriction (3) Restoration (5) Historical background (3) Mega-structures Preservation Tourism (2) Symbolization Muhhamad Muslim culture Cultural landmark Prayer Historic linkage (2) Public spaces (2) Urban strategy Land use accounts Mobility / movement (2) Physical transformation Conceptualization Improved living</p> | <p>Cultural identity (10) Museums (2) Traditional residences (4) Walking tours (2) Courtyards Wind tower Ventilation Cultural clique Public open spaces / festival squares (6) Cultural landmarks Modern-era culture Traditional items Soudi items Conservation / Rehabilitation / revitalization(7) Omani heritage Heritage exhibition Internationalization Cultural wealth Monumentality Public wandering New and conserved fountains Corner oasis /small parks / landscaping (3) Street renovation / boulevards (3) Outdoor refurbishments Sustainability / Green building standards (2) Commercial</p> | <p>Dubai Heritage Village Shishas Historical Buildings Restoration Section Al Bastakiya (2) Dubai Museum Entrance to Mekka (Quran Gate) Al-Shafe’j Mosque Old City (2) Bicycle Roundabout Space Syntax House of Al Zubair Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM) Seeb Seafront Plaza Souk Waqif rehabilitation (3) Msheireb project (3) Fareej Al Asmakh district preservation Open air art gallery</p> | <p>Shishas (3) Barns Traditional restaurants Residential districts (2) Public open spaces (8)</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | districts (2) Cultural routes Historic centre Mixed-use Qatari culture | | |
|--|--|--|--|

| CULTURAL ELEMENTS – Recent experiences of cultural identity in GCC cities | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Restoration (5) Environmental adaptation (4) | Scale / height restriction (3) Historical background (3) | Tourism (2) Historic linkage (2) Public spaces (2) Mobility / movement (2) | Agree (10/11) Disagree (1/11) Neutral (0/11) |
| Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific characteristics | Cultural identity (10) Rehabilitation / revitalization(7) Public open spaces / festival squares (6) Traditional residences (4) | Corner oasis /small parks / landscaping (3) Street renovation / boulevards (3) | Museums (2) Walking tours (2) Green building standards (2) Commercial districts (2) | Agree (4/8) Disagree (2/8) Neutral (2/8) |
| Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | | rehabilitation (3) Msheireb project (3) | Al Bastakiya (2) Old City (2) | Agree (15/16) Disagree (0/16) Neutral (1/16) |
| Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – suggestions | Public open spaces (8) | Shishas (3) | Residential districts (2) | Agree (15/15) Disagree (0/15) Neutral (0/15) |

Regarding recent experiences of cultural identity in the GCC cities, the qualitative analysis shows that there are three different approaches that concern the urban planning and architectural professionals: General considerations regarding the theme, specific characteristics regarding the theme, and suggestions to improve the theme of potential experiences that bring out a strong cultural identity.

The table above shows that regarding general considerations of cultural identity in the GCC cities, the most popular responses included aspects of restoration and environmental adaptation. Also quite popular responses were elements of scale (height restriction) and consideration of historic background. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals suggested elements of general considerations of this theme that dealt aspects of: tourism, historic linkage, public spaces, and public movement and mobility.

Regarding specific characteristics of cultural identity in GCC cities, the qualitative analysis showed that the most popular responses included aspects of: cultural identity, rehabilitation, revitalization, public open spaces and festival squares, and traditional residences. Also quite popular responses were considerations on: corner oasis, small parks, landscaping, street renovations and boulevards. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals suggested specific characteristics of cultural identity regarding museums, walking tours, green building standards, and commercial districts.

Regarding specific examples of cultural identity in GCC cities, the quite popular responses included aspects of rehabilitation and the Msheireb project, while a minimum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned Al Bastakiya and the Old City.

Regarding suggestions of recent experiences expressing cultural identity in GCC cities, the most popular responses were on public spaces. Quite popular were the Shishas, while a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals mentioned residential districts.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 50 different types of responses, 44 agree on the importance of the theme of implementing religious principles within urban designs; 3 disagree; and 3 remain neutral.

APPENDIX 7: THEMATIC ANALYSIS – PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

Meaning and Conceptual coherency of overall design

| Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific examples | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific suggestion |
|---|--|---|--|
| Globalization (4) Cultural characteristics Lack of themes Style Regionalism Navigation Localization (4) Coherency / conceptual clarity / holistic urban understanding (5) Maintenance Developmental progress/ modern developments(2) Layout configuration Traditional city centre Differentiation Historic districts Holistic urban understanding | Modernist style (4) Abstraction Scale: Mega-buildings / mega-structure / high-rises (6) Meaning / global themes (5) Character / Cultural identity / heritage / traditional construction (6) Contrast to tradition (2) Scenery / landscape (5) Ideals Out-of-context / Spontaneity / Lost direction (6) Public space / pedestrian circulation (2) Corresponding buildings / context (3) Oil surge (2) Internationalization (3) City walls (2) Apparent districts / historic districts / Segregation (10) Socioeconomic factors (4) Social segregation (2) Lack of ownership (3) Poor infrastructure Isolated / inaccessible core (2) | Harat Al Madhloom Harat Al Sham Harat Al Yemen Harat Al Bahr Harat Al Karnateena Harat Al Milyon Tif Old City (3) Capital Area West Muscat Central Muscat East Muscat / Old Muscat Saudi Arabia Kuwait | Districts Identity / Belonging (2) References Urban understanding / Realization (2) Conceptual shift |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>Heterogeneous core Planning coherency / urban unity / Master plan (4) Physical boundary Safety Urban / cultural expansion (3) Economic development/ status (2) Mountain surroundings Western influence Architectural characteristics / architectural concept (5) Building colour Sociological status Urban density (2) Residential character / residential heritage (5) Commercial character / commercial heritage (2) Underdeveloped land Governmental heritage Promonoty House cluster Mosque Colonnades Round tower Sea Port Industrial complex Narrow paths / small streets (2) Empty lots</p> | | |
|--|---|--|--|

| PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE – Meaning and Conceptual coherency of overall design | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Coherency / conceptual clarity / holistic urban understanding (5) Globalization (4) Localization (4) | | Developmental progress/modern developments(2) | Agree (7/11) Disagree (2/11) Neutral (2/11) Agree: problematic Disagree: style difference, coherence & clarity |
| Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Apparent districts / historic districts / Segregation (10) Scale: Mega-buildings / mega-structure / high-rises (6) Character / Cultural identity / heritage / traditional construction (6) Out-of-context / Spontaneity / Lost direction (6) | Modernist style (4) Socioeconomic factors (4) Planning coherency / urban unity / Master plan (4) Corresponding buildings / context (3) Internationalization (3) Lack of ownership (3) Urban / cultural expansion (3) | Contrast to tradition (2) Public space / pedestrian circulation (2) Oil surge (2) City walls (2) Social segregation (2) Isolated / inaccessible core (2) Economic development/status (2) Urban density (2) Commercial character / commercial heritage (2) Narrow paths / small streets | Agree (11/20) Disagree (6/20) Neutral (3/20) Agree: problematic Disagree: conceptual unity, heritage consideration, strong distinction, good distinction, coherence, nice contrast |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--------------|---|---|
| | Meaning / global themes (5) Scenery / landscape (5) Architectural characteristics / architectural concept (5) Residential character / residential heritage (5) | | (2) | |
| Meaning and conceptual coherency - specific examples | | Old City (3) | | Agree (2/4) Disagree (2/4) Neutral (0/4) Agree: problematic Disagree: coherence, strong distinction |
| Meaning and conceptual coherency - specific suggestion | | | Identity / Belonging (2) Realization (2) | Agree (3/3) Disagree (0/3) Neutral (0/3) |

Regarding meaning and conceptual coherency of the overall design in GCC cities, the qualitative analysis shows that there are four different approaches that concern the urban planning and architectural professionals: a general opinion on the matter, specific justifications that support an opinion, specific examples on meaning and conceptual coherency and specific suggestions for the improvement of the meaning and conceptual coherency.

The table above shows that regarding general opinion on the meaning and conceptual coherency of the overall design in GCC cities, the most popular responses included aspects of: coherency, conceptual clarity, holistic urban understanding, globalization and localization. At the same time, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals suggested elements of developmental progress and modern developments.

Regarding specific justifications on the matter, there were a number of responses frequently found among the responses of urban planners and architects. These included: apparent districts, historic districts, segregation, matters of scale (mega-buildings, mega-structure and high-rises), character, cultural identity, heritage, traditional construction techniques, out-of-context situations, spontaneity, a lack of direction in design, the consideration of a deeper meaning, the implementation of global themes, scenery, landscape, architectural characteristics and concept, residential character and residential heritage considerations. Less popular responses but also quite frequent, included the mentioning of: a modernist style, socioeconomic factors, planning coherency, urban unity, the use of a solid master plan, the consideration of corresponding buildings, contextual thought, internationalization, lack of ownership, and urban and cultural expansion. Finally, a maximum of two urban planning and architectural professionals brought up specific justifications of: contrast to tradition, public spaces, pedestrian circulation, the oil surge, city walls, social segregation, and isolated and inaccessible core, economic development and economic status, urban density, commercial character, commercial heritage, narrow paths and small streets.

Regarding specific examples on meaning and conceptual coherency, quite popular responses were the mentioning of the Old City, while no other examples showed up more than once. However all mentioned examples would be interesting to consider with regards to their deeper meaning and conceptual coherency.

Finally, regarding specific suggestions on the matter, there were again not many responses that appeared frequently however a few that appeared more than once involved the consideration of the concepts of identity, belonging and realization.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 38 different types of responses, 23 agree that meaning and conceptual coherency within GCC is indeed problematic; 10 disagree saying that there is a style difference, a coherence and clarity, a conceptual unity, an existence of heritage consideration, a strong distinction among different concepts and a good contrast of meanings; while 5 remain neutral.

Navigation problems related to the city

| Navigation problems – general justification | Navigation problems – specific reference points |
|---|---|
| Monuments / Landmarks (14) | Persian Gulf Sea (3) |
| Orientating landmark / visual re-direction / reference point (5) | E-routes (Emirate-routes) |
| Topography / sea / landscape relationship (5) | D-routes |
| Tall monumental buildings / scale (2) | Jeddah City Hall Tower |
| Infrastructure / boulevard / street configuration / intersections (10) | Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry |
| Large boulevard | Pakistan International School of Jeddah |
| Orthogonal street configuration | City port |
| Numbering system | Entry Gate of Makkah |
| Street differentiation / identification (3) | King Fahd's Fountain |
| Street numbering system (3) | Kingdom Tower |
| Street naming (5) | Mall of Arabia |
| Urban connection / urban distribution / urban division / intra-city network (5) | Al-Andalus Mall |
| Expats (3) | Bicycle Roundabout |
| Taxi-drivers (2) | Jeddah TV Tower in Al-Balad |
| Familiarization (7) | Stadium of King Abdullah |
| Alternative streets | Old City |
| Traffic | Museum of Omani Heritage |
| Lack of identity | National Museum of Oman |
| Districts (4) | Qatar National Museum |
| Maps | Museum of Islamic Art |
| Tourist guides (2) | Al Watan Centre |
| Travellers | Emiri Diwan |
| Mecca pilgrimage | Clock Tower |
| Transportation | Grand Mosque |
| Buses | Al Rawnaq Trading Centre |
| Maze impression | Barwa Bank |
| Geographical Information System | Bone & Joint Centre |
| Standardized naming | Al Corniche Street |
| Urban confusion | Majilis Al Taawon Street |
| Residents | Al Diwan Street |
| Metropolis | Al Khaleej Street |
| Reference point | B-F Ring Roads |
| Large mosques | Ras Abu Abboud Street |
| Radial configuration (2) | Historic city |
| Main streets | Souk Waqif |
| Pedestrian | Msheireb |
| Globalization | |
| Tangents | |

| PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE – Navigation problems related to the city | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Existence of navigation problems |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Navigation problems – general justification | Monuments / Landmarks (14) Infrastructure / boulevard / street configuration / intersections (10) Familiarization (7) Orientating landmark / visual re-direction / reference point (5) Topography / sea / landscape relationship (5) Street naming (5) Urban connection / urban distribution / urban division / intra-city network (5) | Districts (4) Street differentiation / identification (3) Street numbering system (3) Expats (3) | Tall monumental buildings / scale (2) Taxi-drivers (2) Tourist guides (2) Radial configuration (2) | Agree (10/28) Disagree (16/28) Neutral (2/28) |
| Navigation problems – specific reference points | | Persian Gulf Sea (3) | | Agree (1/9) Disagree (8/9) Neutral (0/9) |

Regarding navigation problems relating to GCC cities, the qualitative analysis shows that there are two different approaches of responses: a general justification of the condition and specific reference points that relate to the theme.

The table above shows that regarding a general justification of the condition, a number of most popular responses appeared, including: monuments, landmarks, infrastructural considerations (boulevards, street configurations, intersections), familiarization, orientating landmarks, aspects of visual re-direction, reference points, topography (sea and landscape relationships), street naming, urban connection, urban distribution, urban division and intra-city networks. Less popular responses included the mentioning of: districts, street differentiation, street identification, street numbering system and expats. Responses that appeared a maximum of two times, included: matters of scale (tall monumental buildings), taxi-drivers, tourist guides and radial configuration of urban planning and infrastructure.

Regarding specific reference points concerning navigation tools, the only response that appeared a few times among urban planning and architectural professionals was that concerning the Persian Gulf Sea.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 37 different types of responses, 11 agree on the existence of navigation problems within GCC cities; 24 disagree; and 2 remain neutral.

APPENDIX 8: DESIGN PROCESS

Factors which are important in public space projects

| Public space factors – general opinion | Public space factors – specific interventions | Public space factors – specific strategies |
|--|--|---|
| Scale (5) Small-scale buildings Residences Small-scale developments Timelessness (2) Emirati architecture / local urban character (2) Surrounding environment (3) Marketability (oppose) (2) Pedestrian-friendly (2) Walkways Public spaces (3) Public gathering / interaction (2) Mobility (3) Urban / cultural appreciation / preservation (10) Wealth (2) Diversity Modernization Cultural stimuli (4) Omani culture Traditional building means / architecture(3) Historic centre (3) Local belonging Sustainability / environmental consideration (2) Socio-cultural reality Cultural identity | Open courtyards Privacy Exterior / surrounding environment (4) Rubbish removal / cleanliness (2) Municipality interventions Materiality (2) Construction methods Warm weather toleration / shading (2) Conservation / traditional exposure (2) Safety Fragmentation / diversity connection (3) Infrastructural barriers (elimination) Pedestrian movement Cultural mingling / diversity (2) Scale / small constructions Conceptual comprehension Strategic connections | Heritage issues / conservation / restoration (5) Collaborative approach Museums Urban planning consultation / urban cohesion (4) Qatar Society of Engineers Ministry of Urban Planning Municipalities (2) Ministry of Arts Heritage and Culture Authority of Tourism University research Large-scale design / interventions (3) Scale consideration (3) Megalopolis Expansion / urban sprawl Inter-connective plan / district connection (2) Patterns Meaningful places Cultural places / cultural identity / cultural implementation (3) Construction prerequisites |

| DESIGN PROCESS - Factors that are important in public space projects | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Public space factors – general opinion | Urban / cultural appreciation / preservation (10) Scale (5) Cultural stimuli (4) | Surrounding environment (3) Public spaces (3) Mobility (3) Traditional building means / architecture(3) Historic centre (3) | Timelessness (2) Emirati architecture / local urban character (2) Marketability (oppose) (2) Pedestrian-friendly (2) Public gathering / interaction (2) Wealth (2) Sustainability / environmental consideration (2) | Agree (12/12) Disagree (0/12) Neutral (0/12) |
| Public space factors – specific interventions | Exterior / surrounding environment (4) | Fragmentation / diversity connection (3) | Rubbish removal / cleanliness (2) Municipality interventions Materiality (2) Construction methods (2) Warm weather toleration / shading (2) Conservation / traditional exposure (2) Cultural mingling / diversity (2) | Agree (7/7) Disagree (0/7) Neutral (0/7) |
| Public space factors – specific | Heritage issues / conservation / restoration | Large-scale design / interventions | Municipalities (2) Inter- | Agree (5/5) Disagree (0/5) |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| strategies | (5) Urban planning consultation / urban cohesion (4) | (3) Scale consideration (3) Cultural places / cultural identity / cultural implementatio n (3) | connective plan / district connection (2) | Neutral (0/5) |
|-------------------|---|---|---|------------------|

Regarding factors that are important in public space projects in the GCC cities, the qualitative research shows that there are three different approaches of responses: a general opinion on the matter, specific interventions that describe the important public space factors and specific strategies that enhance the public space projects through the professional experience of the respondents.

The table above shows that regarding the general opinion of the matter, the most popular responses included factors of: urban and cultural appreciation, preservation, matters of scale and cultural stimuli. Less popular responses included factors of the surrounding environment, public spaces, mobility, traditional building means, traditional architecture and a city's historic centre. Responses that appear for a maximum of two times among the professional respondents include: timelessness, Emirati architecture, local urban architecture, an opposition on marketability, a pedestrian-friendly approach, public gathering and public interaction, matters of national and local wealth, sustainability and environmental considerations.

Regarding specific interventions that describe important factors of public space projects, the most popular responses include the exterior and surrounding environment, while less popular responses involve issues of fragmentation, diversity and urban connection. Responses that appeared for a maximum of two times are: rubbish removal and cleanliness, municipality interventions, materiality, construction methods, techniques of warm weather toleration and shading, conservation, traditional exposure, cultural mingling and local diversity.

Regarding specific strategies that improve public space projects, most popular responses among urban planning and architectural professionals included: heritage issues, conservation, restoration, urban planning consultation and urban cohesion. Less popular responses included the mentioning of: scale considerations (large-scale designs and interventions), cultural places, cultural identity and cultural implementation. Responses that appeared for a maximum of two times among professionals were: municipalities, inter-connective plans and district connections.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 24 different types of responses, 24 agree on the importance of the theme; 0 disagree; and 0 remain neutral.

Importance of cultural concern and design process

| Cultural concern and design process - general speculation | Cultural concern and design process - specific speculation | Cultural concern and design process - suggestions |
|--|--|--|
| Emirati architecture Humbleness Scale (4) Environmental & urban unison & cohesion (2) Traditional & unique characteristics (3) Modern building techniques / reality/ rapid development (3) Futuristic designing Cultural elements/ affiliation/ concern/ needs /identification/ preservation (12) Customs & arts (2) Privacy (3) Prioritization (8) Design expression / Professional responsibility/ awareness/ urban planning (6) Gender distinctions Diversity National background Religious background / Muslim prayer (2) Cultural background Daily life/ daily activities (4) Conceptual coherency Low-rise buildings Skyscraper opposition Modernism opposition Historic & urban background (4) Consumerism | Local market (contrast) Scale / augmentation (6) World's tallest building World's largest mall World's largest fountain World's tallest hotel Ventilation / wind-catcher (3) Interior courtyards (2) Residential designing Local design tricks Local pride (2) Food culture | Traditional design / customs knowledge/ background (7) United Arab Emirati architecture / Omani architecture (3) Design planning / urban planning (3) Building use / typology (2) Activities Local conception/ contemporary context (4) Prioritization & shifting (4) Vernacular architecture Cultural preservation Historic expression (2) |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Contemporary advertisement Wealth/ cultural wealth(3) Local values & pride (3) Urban backbone Urban problems Economic shifts Consequences Urban governance Motivations | | |
|--|--|--|

| DESIGN PROCESS - Importance of cultural concern and design process | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Cultural concern and design process - general speculation | Cultural elements/ affiliation/ concern/ needs /identification/ preservation (12) Prioritization (8) Professional responsibility/ awareness/ urban planning (6) Daily life/ daily activities (4) Historic & urban background (4) | Traditional & unique characteristics (3) Modern building techniques / reality/ rapid development (3) Privacy (3) Wealth/ cultural wealth (3) Local values & pride (3) | Environmental & urban unison & cohesion (2) Customs & arts (2) Religious background / Muslim prayer (2) | Agree (21/21) Disagree (0/21) Neutral (0/21) |
| Cultural concern and design process - specific | Scale / augmentation (6) | Ventilation / wind-catcher (3) | Interior courtyards (2) Local pride (2) | Agree (5/5) Disagree (0/5) Neutral (0/5) |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| speculation | | | | |
| Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Traditional design / customs knowledge/ background (7) Local conception/ contemporary context (4) Prioritization & shifting (4) | United Arab Emirati architecture / Omani architecture (3) Design planning / urban planning (3) | Building use / typology (2) Historic expression (2) | Agree (10/10) Disagree (0/10) Neutral (0/10) |

Regarding the importance of cultural concern and design process in the GCC cities, the qualitative research showed that there are three different approaches of responses: general speculation of degrees of importance, specific speculation of certain factors that affect the cultural concern and design process, and suggestions regarding their implementation.

The table above shows that regarding the general speculation on the matter, the most popular responses included: cultural elements, cultural affiliation, cultural concern, cultural needs, cultural identification, cultural preservation, prioritization, professional responsibility and awareness, urban planning issues, considerations of daily life and daily activities and the historic and urban background of a city. Less popular responses included: traditional and unique characteristics, modern building techniques, reality issues, rapid development, privacy, cultural wealth, local values and local pride. Responses that appeared a maximum of two times among respondents included: environmental and urban unison and cohesion, customs and arts, religious background and Muslim prayer.

Regarding specific speculation of certain factors that affect the cultural concern and design process of GCC cities' projects, most popularly found responses involved: matters of scale and augmentation, while less popular responses appeared regarding the use of ventilation techniques such as wind-catchers. Responses that appeared for a maximum of two times included elements of interior courtyards and matters of local pride.

Regarding suggestions on the implementation of cultural characteristics within the design process, most frequently found responses included the mentioning of: traditional design, knowledge on customs and historic background, local conception, contemporary context, prioritization and shifting. Less popular responses included suggestions revolving around United Emirati architecture, Omani architecture, design planning and urban planning. Responses that appeared twice among respondents included: building use, building typology and matters of historic expression.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 36 different types of responses, 36 agree on the importance of the theme; 0 disagree; and 0 remain neutral.

Enhancing the conceptuality of public spaces

| Conceptual enhancement – general speculation | Conceptual enhancement – specific examples | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions |
|---|--|--|
| Cultural identity/ character (7) Overlooking Materiality/ local techniques (5) Deep tradition & architecture/ urban roots/ historicity (5) Futuristic reality Privacy (2) Glamour Consumption & shopping mobility (3) Production Quiet living (2) Differentiation Chaotic scenery (oppose) Noisy scenery (oppose) Scale/ immense buildings/ megalopolis/ small scale (4) Public amenities & social gathering (2) Spontaneous (oppose) Urban & density patterns (4) Mobility & pedestrian circulation (3) Green public spaces & recreation (2) Tourism Cleanliness Lighting Landscape Identity reconfiguration Documentation | Portable tents Tribal shelter Stone guss Palm tree leaves Seashells Jeddah master plan Municipality Square Maintenance (2) Architectural features (6) Fountains Muttrah Plaza District revival Fareej Al Asmakh (3) Qatari model architecture Demolitions (oppose) Souk Waqif (2) Masheireb | Scale re-consideration (4) Local communities/ societal study (4) Present and past Respect & appreciation (2) Density & urban patterns (3) Strategies/ urban planning/ professional study/ Master Plan (7) Cultural needs & coherence (5) Residential needs (4) Mixed-use needs (4) Retail needs & shopping mobility (3) Heritage & urban conservation/ traditional architecture (6) Public space establishment/ public courtyards/ traditional gardens (3) Structural demolition Urban expansion/ sprawl Specific architectural elements (7) Arches Towers Colonnades Continuity & connections (2) Regional & cultural identity (2) Outdoor dwellings (3) Palm fronds (2) Ventilated screens (2) |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Preservation Surveying Restoration Residential character | | Climatic conditions (2) Materiality (3) Structural beams Shading techniques Existing richness Urban history & districts(3) Academic spaces Administrative spaces Business spaces Bottom-up vs. top-down Visual experiences Bridges (2) Tunnels (2) |
|---|--|--|

| DESIGN PROCESS - Enhancing the conceptuality of public spaces | Most popular considerations | Secondly most popular considerations | Thirdly most popular considerations | Importance of theme |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Conceptual enhancement - general speculation | Cultural identity/ character (7) Materiality/ local techniques (5) Deep tradition & architecture/ urban roots/ historicity (5) | Scale/ immense buildings/ megalopolis/ small scale (4) Urban & density patterns (4) Consumption & shopping mobility (3) Mobility & pedestrian circulation (3) Outdoor dwellings (3) | Privacy (2) Quiet living (2) Public amenities & social gathering (2) Green public spaces & recreation (2) | Agree (14/14) Disagree (0/14) Neutral (0/14) |
| Conceptual enhancement - specific examples | Architectural features (6) | Fareej Al Asmakh (3) | Maintenance (2) Souk Waqif (2) | Agree (7/7) Disagree (0/7) Neutral (0/7) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Strategies/ urban planning/ professional study/ Master Plan (7) Specific architectural elements (7) Heritage & urban conservation/ traditional architecture (6) Cultural needs & coherence (5) | Scale re-consideration (4) Local communities/ societal study (4) Residential needs (4) Mixed-use needs (4) Density & urban patterns (3) Retail needs & shopping mobility (3) Public space establishment/ public courtyards/ traditional gardens (3) Materiality (3) | Continuity & connections (2) Regional & cultural identity (2) Palm fronds (2) Ventilated screens (2) Climatic conditions (2) Bridges (2) Tunnels (2) | Agree (17/17) Disagree (0/17) Neutral (0/17) |
|---|---|--|--|--|

Regarding the enhancing of the conceptuality of public spaces, the qualitative research showed that there are three different approaches of responses: general speculation on the matter, specific examples that express the issue and suggestions that approach the problem.

The table above shows that regarding the general speculation on the matter, the most popular responses included the mentioning of: cultural identity, specific character, materiality, local techniques, deep tradition and architecture, urban roots and historicity. Less popular responses involved the consideration of scale (immense buildings, megalopolis, small-scale), urban patterns, density patterns, consumption, shopping mobility, pedestrian circulation and outdoor dwellings. Responses that appeared twice among recipients included: privacy, the notion of quiet living, public amenities, social gathering, green public spaces and recreation.

Regarding specific examples that express the issue of enhancing the conceptuality of public spaces, the most popular responses among urban planning and architectural design professionals included architectural features, while a less popular response was the mentioning of Fareej Al Asmakh. Two responses that appeared twice among the professionals were those of maintenance and the Souk Waqif case study.

Regarding suggestions that approach the problem of conceptual enhancing of public spaces in the GCC cities, the most popular responses involved: strategies, urban planning considerations, professional study, master plan implementation, specific architectural elements, matters of heritage and urban conservation, traditional architecture, cultural needs and coherence. Less popular responses involved: reconsideration of scale, local communities, societal studies, residential needs, mixed-use needs, density patterns, urban patterns, retail needs, shopping mobility, public space establishment, public courtyards, traditional gardens and materiality issues. Responses that appear twice among the respondents of professionals involved: design continuity, connections, regional identity, cultural identity, palm fronds, ventilated screens, climatic conditions, bridges and tunnels.

Conclusively in summarizing the importance of the theme, among all 38 different types of responses, 38 agree on the importance of the theme; 0 disagree; and 0 remain neutral.

APPENDIX 9: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PATTERN FORMATION

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

| Participants' quotes | Key words | Concept (sub-theme) | Agree/disagree w/ importance of theme |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Religious principles within urban designs in GCC cities | | | |
| <i>Religion is the basis of culture, and this is evident in how the mosque is the central monumental figure within different parts of the city.</i> | cultural context mosque monumental | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...]a lot of the contextual characteristics of new buildings in Dubai go against religious principles</i> | context religious principles | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Religious principles were mostly evident in older times</i> | history | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>As the city is becoming more international, the emphasis of urban development and architectural character has a secular side</i> | Internationalization urban development secular orientation architectural character | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>Religious principles are being considered less and less within Dubai designs</i> | religious buildings | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>[...] there is nowadays a tendency for a lot of high rises and tall buildings being constructed around us, with international elements that are far away from the traditional decorative elements that we should be seeing more often</i> | international elements decorative tradition high rises (oppose) tall buildings (oppose) | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>Other than calligraphy, we should be seeing more geometry, floral patterns, and the implementation of</i> | calligraphy geometry floral patterns water | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---------|
| <i>water into the designs</i> | | | |
| <i>Local professionals are more aware of the importance of religion, and try to implement those characteristics more in their designs</i> | religious implementation | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>Dubai is becoming full of developments that are undertaken by international firms and religion is of secondary importance when it comes to their spontaneous interpretation of urban problems.</i> | spontaneity internationalization religious implementation spontaneity | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>Jeddah is a very religious city, due to its geographical location being near Mecca; the destination point of religious pilgrimages</i> | geography destination point religious pilgrimage Mecca | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>People are aware of the religious culture here in Jeddah, and religious landmarks play a great role for this knowledge.</i> | religious culture landmarks | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] there is the historical area of Jeddah, which is a World Heritage Site, which includes many mosques.</i> | World Heritage Site mosques historic area | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Some [historical areas] are particularly important: Al-Shafe'j Mosque is the oldest mosque in Jeddah for example, with very unique architectural characteristics.</i> | Al-Shafe'j Mosque historic area architectural characteristics | Religious principles – specific examples – contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>The existence of numerous mosques around the city of Jeddah stimulates the memory or cultural awareness of professional during their designing phase.</i> | mosques memory cultural awareness design phase | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>It is [...] difficult to overlook the grandeur of these religious artefacts;</i> | grandeur religious artefacts monumental | Religious principles and contextual characteristics – | Agree |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|----------|
| <i>the Al-Basha Mosque, the King Saud Mosque, the Akkash Mosque, the Uthman bin Affan Mosque</i> | Al-Basha Mosque King Saud Mosque Akkash Mosque Uthman bin Affan Mosque | specific examples | |
| <i>Urban designers [...] try to implement aspects of traditional architecture in their design, which is mostly apparent in smaller scale projects such as villas and residential complexes.</i> | traditional architecture scale villas residential complex | Religious principles and professional practice | Neutral |
| <i>[...] there is a secular demand as a result of globalization, and the most important design firms are of an international stature.</i> | secular demand globalization internationalization | Religious principles and professional practice | Neutral |
| <i>Religious principles are not very apparent, considering that Jeddah is one of the most "open" cities of Saudi Arabia in terms of international standards for principles and beliefs.</i> | open-mindedness internationalization beliefs | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>[Jeddah] is not a closed community that would try to gently reinforce religious principles in architectural and urban design principles;</i> | community reinforcement urban design principles | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Disagree |
| <i>[Jeddah] is [...] a vacation resort, so it is viewed more as a 'get-away' place, with its proximity to the Red Sea, and its predominance of fishing and food.</i> | vacation resort tourism Red Sea fishing food | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Neutral |
| <i>Food culture is much more dominant than religious culture.</i> | food culture religious culture | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Neutral |
| <i>Tourists seem to enjoy [the food culture].</i> | tourism food culture | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Disagree |
| <i>Jeddah is becoming more secular</i> | secular | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>[...] it has become much globalized, especially after the oil boom of the 1960s and 1970s.</i> | globalized oil boom | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---------|
| <i>[...] the sculpture by the Lebanese painter Aref Rayess, with his abstract sculpture named "Allah", situated in the Palestine Square in Jeddah. The work is more semiotic, rather than traditional.</i> | Aref Rayess' "Allah" Palestine Square semiotic versus traditional | Religious principles and contextual characteristics – specific examples | Neutral |
| <i>[religious principles] are present in religious buildings however not in other types of buildings.</i> | religious buildings | Religious principles and evolution | Neutral |
| <i>[...] the most important landmarks in Muscat are mosques, including the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the Zawawi Mosque, the Saeed bin Taimoor and the Ruwi Mosque.</i> | landmarks mosques Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque Zawawi Mosque Saeed bin Taimoor Ruwi Mosque | Religious principles and contextual characteristics – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>[...] external stimulation of religious importance within the city, and at different parts, especially considering the socially-involved habits of the local Muslims which involve the prayer at five times per day.</i> | external stimulation social involvement local Muslims prayer | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>Religion plays a strong part in the culture of Oman, and [...] is more evident in smaller cities and villages surrounding Muscat, and not Muscat itself, where one experiences the strength of religious influence to a lesser degree.</i> | smaller cities villages religious architecture | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>[...] there is [...] the influence of religion when designing a piece of architecture [...]</i> | religious influence | Religious principles and professional practice | Agree |
| <i>[...] when trying to conceptualize a building of a Muslim owner, one of the first things that comes into mind is the expression of</i> | cultural expression conceptualization | Religious principles and professional practice | Agree |

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| <i>the culture, and religion is surely a primary characteristic.</i> | | | |
| <i>Islam is the Sultanate's only recognized religion and the one that may be expressed publicly.</i> | Islam Religious expression | Religious principles and professional practice | Agree |
| <i>Public expression goes hand in hand with urban design therefore religious principles are expressed in architecture.</i> | public expression religious expression | Religious principles and professional practice | Agree |
| <i>There is a law of freedom of religious expression in Muscat, so [...] putting Muslim religious elements in a city where so many expats live, would not be so relevant.</i> | religious freedom expats | Religious principles and evolution | Disagree |
| <i>[...] along the bank of the sea, you see a lot of buildings of heritage importance, which hold also religious elements. [...] Oman culture is strongly tied to its religious beliefs.</i> | sea bank heritage Oman beliefs | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>The culture of religion is becoming lost in the expression of buildings, as it was once the case. This is unfortunate, considering what a large part it plays in locals' lives.</i> | culture building expression locals | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>Up until a certain point, Doha was being developed in a very thoughtful way, respecting religious principles.</i> | respect | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>[...] there has been no law concerned with the preservation of cultural heritage until 1980.</i> | preservation of cultural heritage | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>[...] religion is certainly a prime aspect of cultural heritage</i> | cultural heritage religious expression | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>There are a number of religious landmarks in Doha that remind of the</i> | landmarks identity cultural heritage | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |

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| <i>importance of religion in the identity of cultural heritage.</i> | | | |
| <i>Such [religious landmarks] are right in the centre of Jeddah with its historical mosques, including the Uthman bin Affan Mosque, the Al-Basha Mosque, the Akkash Mosque, the Al-Mi'maar Mosque, the King Saud Mosque, the Hasan Anani Mosque and the Jiffali Mosque. However, these are only seen nowadays as historical landmarks of a traditional past.</i> | Uthman bin Affan Mosque Al-Basha Mosque Akkash Mosque Al-Mi'maar Mosque King Saud Mosque Hasan Anani Mosque Jiffali Mosque historical landmarks traditional past | Religious principles and evolution – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>Religion plays a very important part in GCC culture and should be considered in more buildings that are of monumental character.</i> | monumental | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Western building prototypes have nothing to say about Islamic religious and culture.</i> | Western prototypes Islamic culture | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Because Doha attracts many visitors from around the world in order to meet and understand the culture, it would be more appropriate to express more religious architecture within the context of the city.</i> | tourism cultural understanding religious architecture | Religious principles and evolution | Agree |
| <i>Religious stimuli are not enough, in analogy to the importance that religion plays in the Muslim culture and the city of Doha in particular.</i> | religious stimuli Muslim culture | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |
| <i>The historical mosques are a prime example of religious demonstration through architecture, and they are the pride of the</i> | mosques urban pride | Religious principles and contextual characteristics | Agree |

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| <i>city.</i> | | | |
| Cultural influence and visual response in GCC cities | | | |
| <i>There is great awareness among the professionals of the urban planning industry of the strong cultural values within the United Arab Emirates.</i> | urban planning industry cultural values | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>[...] for the older professionals, it is disheartening to see the kind of developments which are going on today, however [...] this is also a part of our cultural path.</i> | contemporary developments cultural paths | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>There is strong effort to incorporate cultural features in the architectural and urban designs at least at a decorative level, remembering the aspects of geometry, calligraphy, and religious references when dealing with religious architecture, although we see less of that in the contemporary developments.</i> | cultural features decorations geometry calligraphy religious references | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Cultural background helps professionals understand the city in a better way, socially, economically, and most importantly, culturally.</i> | cultural background social understanding economic understanding cultural understanding | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>The city has acquired a more secular character, and this affects the designers consciously and unconsciously.</i> | secular character conscious effect unconscious effect | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>The demands are different.</i> | demands | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>Designers should try to</i> | demands | Cultural influence | Agree |

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| <i>shift the demands, in order to influence the visual experiences of the people.</i> | shifting visual experiences | and visual response – suggestions | |
| <i>Certain aspects of Dubai should be seen in the wider area of Dubai. [...] the historic aspect of United Arab Architecture is mostly seen only in Bur Dubai.</i> | historic aspects Bur Dubai | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>Planning designers, [...] seek urban visual stimuli to remind them of their culture in every side of the city of Dubai, and not only on the western side of the Dubai Creek.</i> | urban planning scheme cultural awareness urban visual stimuli whole Dubai | Cultural influence and visual response – situation – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>Urban planners of Jeddah are proud of the city's local traditional architecture that takes place primarily in the Old City however those buildings are being overshadowed by the tall modern ones.</i> | urban planning schemes local traditional architecture Old City overshadowing | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>[...] there is great potential for the marriage between the contemporary reality and the cultural past of the buildings.</i> | historic marriage | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>[...] the traditional buildings of Jeddah in the Old City are characterized by their multi-storey levels that are either residential or merchant houses that are not so extremely far away from the scale of the new buildings.</i> | multi-storey residential merchant houses scale | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Designers who usually have to deal with existing traditional buildings generally try to preserve the image of the traditional visual effects and be as less invasive as possible.</i> | visual preservation invasion | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>Building preservation of cultural stimuli is</i> | building preservation cultural stimuli | Cultural influence and visual | Agree |

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| <i>important in the profession for the maintenance of culture and the attraction of more tourists who will come to appreciate our history.</i> | cultural maintenance tourism appreciation | response – suggestions | |
| <i>For professionals who are knowledgeable on the architectural culture of Jeddah in its profundity, it is saddening to see the visual transformation of the high rises and skyscrapers, coming in contrast with the traditional architecture.</i> | architectural culture visual transformation high rises skyscrapers traditional architecture | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>The overcoming of the problem comes through the quality of thought-out designs.</i> | design process | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>There is a need to deal with the reality of globalization and the market demands.</i> | globalization market demands | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>[...] whenever there is a chance to incorporate local architectural traditions, the challenge is appreciated.</i> | local traditions architectural culture | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Muscat demonstrates its cultural affiliation through characteristic architecture of its low-lying buildings, which span along most of Muscat's landscape.</i> | low-lying buildings landscape | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] there are visual stimuli that remind us professionals of our roots and of the history of the city. Urban designers try to respect that when creating their own proposals, in an effort to remain consistent with the urban planning scheme.</i> | historical roots respect consistency urban planning scheme | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Cultural responses are a bit complicated, especially in the city of Muscat, which</i> | Westernization | Cultural influence and visual | Neutral |

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| <i>is the most westernized city of Oman.</i> | | response – situation | |
| <i>[...] one third of the population is comprised by expats, coming mostly from the United States, Australia, New Britain, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.</i> | expats United States Australia New Britain New Zealand South Africa Canada | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Neutral |
| <i>It is difficult to remain purely devoted to the needs of the local culture, because there is so much diversity around, and needs of expats also need to be satisfied.</i> | diversity expats' satisfaction | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Neutral |
| <i>The geographical culture will always remain that of Muscat tradition, and it is important to try to implement local characteristics in the urban architecture and planning philosophies.</i> | geographical culture local planning philosophy | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>There is an effort to implement local cultural characteristics in the religious buildings as much as possible, in order to maintain the visual beauty of our tradition as a nation.</i> | local cultural characteristics visual beauty | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Muscat does very well compared to other GCC states in matters of visual consistency and cultural maintenance. One reason is the law on building height limitation.</i> | visual consistency cultural maintenance building height limitation | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Muscat is visually pleasant, particularly due to the lack of skyscrapers, compared to other GCC states. [...] for those of cultural awareness, this is a [...] great step that reaches cultural awareness and respect towards the</i> | skyscrapers cultural awareness landscape environment | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |

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| <i>surrounding landscape and environment.</i> | | | |
| <i>There are a number of historical districts in the centre of Doha that stimulate the visual experience and create relationships with cultural identity.</i> | historic districts visual experience visual relationships cultural identity | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>[...] images help us [...] remember our past and respect our current mission of development.</i> | memory respect | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>districts [that] are spread within the centre and include Msheireb West, Asmakh, Najada, Abdul Azeez, Al Ghanem and Al Ghanem South, Salata, Al Hitmi, Jadeeda, Umm Ghuwailina and Najma.</i> | districts Msheireb West Asmakh Najada Abdul Azeez Al Ghanem and Al Ghanem South, Salata Al Hitmi Jadeeda Umm Ghuwailina Najma | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>There are still traces of cultural identity within the city, that impact our awareness of our cultural identity. [...] traces of the old wall which was built in 1888.</i> | traces cultural identity awareness cultural identity | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] buildings [...] worth conserving [...] built using traditional methods of coral stones and Chandal wood, prior to the importation of the modern building material techniques including the wide-applied cement, [...]</i> | conservation traditional methods coral stones Chandal wood modern materials cement | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>Designers' role is to bring back and promote the traditional means of built construction. Buildings were built in the traditional way for a reason.</i> | tradition purpose | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |

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| <i>There is a general awareness of the cultural past, and seeing a vast amount of mega-projects going on in the city of Doha, especially after the globalization boom of the 1990s, is saddening me.</i> | cultural awareness mega-projects globalization | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>GCC cities are becoming not much different from one another, although each state holds a very different and unique cultural identity.</i> | uniqueness cultural identity | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>[...] there are construction remnants that are good candidates for restoration and preservation.</i> | remnants restoration preservation | Cultural influence and visual response – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Knowledge on the past, and professionals' power to create change, certainly offers hope against the surge of globalization and the bringing back of local identity.</i> | past knowledge globalization local identity | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |
| <i>There are very important and historical monumental landmarks in the city of Jeddah that fill a designer and architect with national pride, and a sentimental will towards emulation. Such examples are [...] the Nasif and Sharbatly mansions, [...] with their traditional decorations and unique style.</i> | landmarks national pride sentimentality Nasif Sharbatly mansions traditional decorations unique style | Cultural influence and visual response – specific characteristics – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>[...] visual stimuli of the greatness of local architecture, and emotional responses create a will to [...] try towards achieving visual perfections. [...] the reference points are there [...]</i> | visual stimuli local architecture emotional response visual perfection reference points | Cultural influence and visual response – situation | Agree |

| Recent experiences of cultural identity in GCC cities | | | |
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| <i>Emirati architecture could be a prime example of architecture of cultural identity, as it uses simple building materials that are well-adapted by the environment and local climatic conditions of Dubai.</i> | simple building materials environmental adaptation local climatic conditions | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>Emirati architecture should not build anything taller than a tree!</i> | scale | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>[...] the Dubai Heritage Village could be a good example of steps towards reaching our cultural identity... [...] an act [...] targeted as a museum of a variety of cultural architectural characteristics, rather than an urban reality within the city.</i> | Dubai Heritage Village cultural identity museum | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Neutral / Agree |
| <i>The whole of Dubai should be a Heritage place, with shishas, barns, traditional restaurants and residential districts.</i> | Shishas barns traditional restaurants residential districts | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>[...] the Historical Buildings Restoration Section, established in 1991 by the Municipality of Dubai.</i> | Historical Buildings Restoration Section | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>[...] many buildings have been restored up until recently. [...] by 2006 about 100 buildings had been restored, and by 2010, another 320.</i> | restoration | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>Dubai has a strong historical background, [...] overshadowed by the mega-structures [...]</i> | historical background mega-structures | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>[...] restorations and</i> | restoration | Recent experiences | Agree |

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| <p><i>preservations of old historical buildings, and the touristic attempts to make that side of Dubai recognizable; [...] there is awareness for the organization of walking tours that take place in the historic centre of Al Bastakiya, at the east of Al Fahidi Fort where the Dubai Museum is. That area is filled with residential houses of traditional architecture, with courtyards, and wind towers for purposes of ventilation.</i></p> | <p>preservation tourism walking tours Al Bastakiya Dubai Museum traditional residences courtyards wind tower ventilation</p> | <p>expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics – general considerations</p> | |
| <p><i>[...] the restored historical area of Bastakiya</i></p> | <p>restoration Al Bastakiya</p> | <p>Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – general considerations</p> | <p>Agree</p> |
| <p><i>[...] effort of symbolization [...] in projects like the Entrance to Makkah, known as the Quran Gate. [...] the birthplace of Muhammad and it symbolizes the boundary of the haram area of Makkah city. [...] it forms a cultural-clique, as only Muslims [are] allowed to enter [...] this partly loses the significance of global appreciation of a cultural landmark, as it may only be experienced by a particular group.</i></p> | <p>symbolization entrance to Makkah (Quran Gate) Muhammad Haram area cultural-clique Muslims cultural landmark</p> | <p>Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – general considerations</p> | <p>Disagree</p> |
| <p><i>[...] the extensive restoration and maintenance work that was undergone with the Al-Shafe’j Mosque in Harat Al-Mathloun in the Al-Jame’l market. This is a mosque located in the Old</i></p> | <p>restoration AL- Shafe’j Mosque Old City prayer historic linkage</p> | <p>Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – general considerations</p> | <p>Agree</p> |

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| <i>City [...] it is still open for prayer [...] linkage between the present and the past.</i> | | | |
| <i>[...] Jeddah has created its own cultural identity of a modern era. [...]one of the largest open-air art galleries in the world, with works in many public urban spaces that have become cultural landmarks.</i> | open-air art gallery public urban spaces cultural landmarks | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] the Bicycle Roundabout [...] affiliated to the culture of Jeddah of the modern era.</i> | Bicycle Roundabout modern-era culture | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>A lot of [the public works] relate to traditional items as well; [...] depiction of Saudi items such as pots, palm trees, etc.</i> | traditional items Saudi items | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>All efforts towards public space conservation and improvement have been great examples of quality projects.</i> | public space conservation | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>[...] the municipality's collaboration with Space Syntax, in 2006, striving to improve the overall strategy for the city through land use accounts and movements. There have been promising physical transformations ever since.</i> | Space Syntax urban strategy land use accounts movements physical transformations | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>[...] the conversion of the House of Al Zubair into a private museum. [...] It is built in the historical part of the Old City therefore it creates a great combination of traditional architecture which embodies exhibitions of Oman's rich heritage and culture. [...] expanded into a cultural complex that</i> | conservation House of Al Zubair private museum Old City Omani heritage heritage exhibition international standards cultural wealth architectural icon | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Agree |

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| <i>includes modern methods of demonstration, and keeps international standards with full respect towards cultural wealth. It is one of the country's architectural icons.</i> | | | |
| <i>[...] Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM), undertaken by Gehl Architects of Denmark, striving to ameliorate the conditions of public open urban wandering. [...] the city of Muscat will be redesigned, based on works being done since 2010. Public space interventions are going to include new and conserved fountains, corner oasis, festival squares, small parks and landscaping projects, re-worked streets and boulevards, and other outdoor refurbishments that will renew the whole city.</i> | Public Spaces for Muscat (PSM) public wandering new and conserved fountains corner oasis festival squares small parks landscaping street renovation boulevards outdoor refurbishments | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] restriction on the height of buildings, which is an approach very different than what is found in Dubai [...]</i> | height restriction | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>[...] the construction of boulevards, the Seeb Seafront Plaza, a few Markets, and others.</i> | boulevards Seeb Seafront Plaza markets | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>The Seeb Seafront Plaza combines public places with beautiful traditional buildings. The finalization is still conceptual, and includes improved living and working conditions along the sea, not to mention the new public spaces that will raise the bar of urban habitation.</i> | Seeb Seafront Plaza traditional buildings conceptual improved living public spaces | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – general considerations – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] efforts to preserve and</i> | cultural identity | Recent experiences | Agree |

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| <i>express the cultural identity that is already present in our city, as for example the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif</i> | Souk Waqif rehabilitation | expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | |
| <i>[...] the Msheireb project [...] the sustainable redevelopment at the city centre, reviving the old commercial district while emphasizing cultural elements.</i> | Msheireb project sustainability commercial district | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>The Msheireb project is [...] an attempt towards reaching back to our cultural roots, as it revitalizes the historic centre. [...] a mixed-use development project that meets green building standards and recreates a contemporary project of urban life that is rooted to the Qatari culture.</i> | Msheireb project cultural roots historic centre mixed-use green building standards Qatari culture | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif, which tried to bring back the authenticity of the area. [...] initiation for pursuit of conservation of cultural identity. [...] it now attracts many locals and tourists, both during the day and during the night.</i> | Souk Waqif rehabilitation cultural identity conservation tourism | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics – general considerations | Agree |
| <i>[...] the reconstruction of Msheireb historic area, aiming to revitalize the heart of Doha. This project followed the Souk Waqif project [...]</i> | Msheireb historic area revitalization Souk Waqif project | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples – specific characteristics | Agree |
| <i>[...] the preservation of the Fareej Al Asmakh district.</i> | Fareej Al Asmakh district preservation | Recent experiences expressing cultural identity – specific examples | Agree |

PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

| Participants' quotes | Key words | Concept (sub-theme) | Agree/disagree w/ importance of theme |
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| Meaning and Conceptual coherency of overall design | | | |
| <i>Globalization has been a major problem in the overall feel of the city, making it non-conceptually coherent. A lot of the local cultural characteristics have been lost.</i> | globalization cultural characteristics | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>Buildings are of modernistic abstract forms, they are mega-buildings with no true meaning, and the public spaces between them lack true character.</i> | modernistic abstraction mega-buildings meaning character | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>Each mega-structure that is being built has its own concept that relates more to global themes, than local culture and identity. This is not conceptually coherent.</i> | mega-structure global themes cultural identity | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>Dubai is acquiring a conceptual coherence of mega-structures and grandiose buildings. Perhaps it is the new cultural reality of the city. Nevertheless, the historical parts of the city and the traditional architecture found offer a nice contrast to the overall scene.</i> | mega-structures grandiose buildings new cultural reality contrast to tradition scenery | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Disagree (nice contrast) |
| <i>The city lacks conceptual coherence [...] each structure that is being built strives for ideals that have nothing to do with heritage and history.</i> | ideals out-of-context | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>Each public space revolves mostly around the</i> | public space corresponding | Meaning and conceptual | Agree (problematic) |

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| <i>corresponding buildings, and not to the city as a whole. There is much work to be done on that aspect.</i> | buildings | coherency – specific justification | |
| <i>Dubai has acquired a new meaning since the surge of the oil and it seems that people are embracing this, internationally.</i> | new meaning oil surge international embrace | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Neutral |
| <i>The foundations of organization of Jeddah hold a conceptual meaning. [...] within the walls, the city of Jeddah was divided into districts that are still apparent, which gained their names from major events that took place there. [...] Harat Al Madhloom, Harat Al Sham, Harat Al Yemen, Harat Al Bahr, Harat Al Karnateena and Harat Al Milyon Tif. There is much conceptual coherence within these neighbourhoods, and the rest of Jeddah could take examples of these districts.</i> | city walls apparent districts Harat Al Madhloom Harat Al Sham Harat Al Yemen Harat Al Bahr Harat Al Karnateena Harat Al Milyon Tif | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – specific examples | Disagree (coherence) |
| <i>Jeddah has problems of conceptual coherency and segregation, which result in socioeconomic problems, social segregation, a lack of sense of ownership and poor infrastructure. The core is isolated from the surroundings, both in terms of heterogeneity and in terms of accessibility.</i> | segregation socioeconomic social segregation lack of ownership poor infrastructure isolated core heterogeneous core inaccessible core | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>Surely there is lack of conceptual themes that carry out throughout the city of Jeddah.</i> | lack of themes | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>The Old City of Jeddah used to have a strong conceptual theme however</i> | Old City modern construction | Meaning and conceptual coherency – | Agree (problematic) |

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| <i>this has been affected by the modern construction, which takes place rather spontaneously and thoughtlessly.</i> | spontaneity thoughtlessness | specific justification – specific examples | |
| <i>The quality of cultural heritage that takes place in the Old City of Jeddah should be carried out throughout all Jeddah districts for better definitions of identity and belonging.</i> | Old City districts identity belonging | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion – specific suggestion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>There was much coherency to the city planning of Jeddah until the demolition of the wall, which created a physical boundary and sense of safety for the inhabitants. This wall was evident by 1947, and then, the city began to expand. [...] the end of the wall was the end of urban conceptual coherency, because then Jeddah started to expand in a way that was more targeted towards economic development, rather than cultural expansion.</i> | planning coherency physical boundary safety urban expansion wall economic development cultural expansion | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>The plan of Jeddah has good potentials, considering the Master Plan for Jeddah in 1973. Nowadays, there are efforts being made in order to draw references to this plan, in pursuit of a better conceptual understanding of the city, which lost its direction following the oil boom.</i> | Master Plan references urban understanding lost direction oil boom | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – specific suggestion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>There is a strong distinction between the tradition city centre of Muscat, which is surrounded by mountains,</i> | traditional distinction mountain surroundings modernized | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification | Disagree (good distinction) |

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| <i>and the rest of Muscat which is more modernized with some western architectural influences. [...] there are two different concepts, where one holds strong the aspects of heritage, and the other is lost into the partial outcomes of globalization.</i> | landscape western influence heritage concept globalization concept | – | |
| <i>The city of Muscat is kind of divided, both through means of architectural characteristics, and also through means of sociological and economic status, that by default influences the overall concept and the quality of the urban architecture.</i> | architectural characteristics sociological status economical status | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>[...] there is the greater metropolitan area of Muscat, known as the “Capital Area”, and then there are denser districts of residential or commercial character, intermingled with undeveloped land.</i> | Capital Area urban density residential character commercial character underdeveloped land | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – specific examples | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>The major districts of modern development are generally divided into three parts: West Muscat, Central Muscat, and East Muscat (which also includes Old Muscat). Even though the districts differ according to social statures, the architectural conceptualization usually holds a consistent appearance throughout the city, with low buildings that are no taller than five stories, and that are white in colour.</i> | West Muscat Central Muscat East Muscat / Old Muscat social stature architectural concept building height building colour | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – specific examples | Disagree (strong distinction) |
| <i>Buildings of Muscat [...] hold elements of heritage</i> | residential heritage governmental | Meaning and conceptual | Disagree (heritage) |

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| <i>considerations whether they are of residential, governmental, commercial, or of other use.</i> | heritage commercial heritage | coherency – specific justification – | considerations) |
| <i>Each region has a slightly different style, and it is an extremely pleasant city to navigate around, with all its local peculiarities.</i> | style diversity region pleasant navigation local peculiarities | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Disagree (style difference) |
| <i>Muscat has a beautiful coherency and conceptual clarity that is perhaps maintained better than in other GCC states.</i> | coherency conceptual clarity maintenance | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Disagree (coherence and clarity) |
| <i>There is a promontory that separates the sea from the lagoon with a beautiful cluster of white houses, a mosque with a blue dome, series of colonnades and traditional buildings. The image of the round tower is very distinct. Overall, the city embraces the sea, and vice versa.</i> | promontory house cluster mosque colonnades round tower sea | Meaning and conceptual coherency – specific justification – | Disagree (conceptual unity) |
| <i>The concept of Muscat's urban planning system is similar to that of any city that runs along the seaside, with a port, buildings that are near the sea, and then the more industrial complexes taking place further away from the water. However, there could be better solutions that connect the different districts together, for a more unifying urban result.</i> | seaside port buildings near the sea industrial complex districts urban unity | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion – specific justification | Neutral |
| <i>After the surge of developmental progress in Doha, the concept has been lost.</i> | developmental progress | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>The city tried to catch up with the surrounding level in development that took</i> | developmental progress Saudi Arabia | Meaning and conceptual coherency – | Agree (problematic) |

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| <i>place in cities like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and the designs began to have no true meaning, like the meaning that we were used to.</i> | Kuwait | general opinion | |
| <i>[...] it has a very distinct layout configuration of the traditional city centre.</i> | layout configuration traditional city centre | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Neutral |
| <i>There is a conceptual coherency in Doha with regards to the differentiation between the central historic districts and the new modern developments that generally lack some holistic understanding of the city.</i> | differentiation historic districts modern developments holistic urban understanding | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>In the historic districts, the more central parts are denser and more residential, with narrow pathways between the buildings and a very pedestrian feeling of circulation.</i> | historic districts density residential narrow paths pedestrian circulation | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion – specific justification | Neutral |
| <i>The concept is becoming lost, with the moving of the high rises towards the centres of the historic areas, occupying empty lots.</i> | high rises historic areas empty lots | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion – specific justification | Agree (problematic) |
| <i>The conceptual character used to be that of residential character and privacy, with small streets and traditional construction. Now, the concept has become much globalized; a situation that began spreading in the 1990s; once all urban professionals recognize that, there may be</i> | residential small streets traditional construction globalization realization conceptual shift | Meaning and conceptual coherency – general opinion – specific justification – specific suggestion – general opinion | Agree (problematic) |

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| <i>conceptual shifts.</i> | | | |
| Navigation problems related to the city | | | |
| <i>Because there are many large monuments that are used as orientating landmarks, it is usually hard to get lost in Dubai.</i> | monuments orientating landmark | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>Dubai is built along the Persian Gulf sea and similarly to any city with such topographical configuration, it is difficult to get lost.</i> | Persian Gulf sea topography | Navigation problems – general justification – specific reference points | Disagree |
| <i>[...] there are also a number of very tall monumental buildings. One glimpse at one of them helps one gain re-direction. There is also the large boulevard that runs parallel to the sea.</i> | tall monumental buildings visual re-direction large boulevard sea | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>Generally, the streets have an orthogonal configuration and it is easy to navigate.</i> | orthogonal street configuration | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>There is a pretty comprehensive numbering system in Dubai, which helps differentiate some major streets, therefore helping one's location. [...] the E-routes, [...] are highways which connect Dubai to other emirates. 'E-routes' derives from "Emirate-routes", and there are six of them. D-routes connect places within the city itself, providing an intra-city network. These streets have a number, and also a specific name, which are more familiar to the locals. Navigation is not too difficult.</i> | numbering system street differentiation E-routes (Emirate-routes) D-routes urban connection intra-city network street numbering street naming | Navigation problems – general justification – specific reference points | Disagree |
| <i>Navigating is easy in</i> | landmarks | Navigation | Disagree |

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| <i>Dubai, because of so many different landmarks that help one find their way around.</i> | | problems – general justification | |
| <i>Dubai has been adjusted to meet to the standards of so many expats [...] therefore has created a comprehensive street numbering system. It also has important buildings which take the role of landmarks, for finding or giving directions.</i> | expats street numbering system building landmarks | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>There are [...] some navigation problems, as the street names have changed over the years, and a lot of them are not on the existing maps. Taxi drivers [...] reach destinations by designating a landmark to them.</i> | street names taxi drivers landmarks familiarization | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>Jeddah is fairly easy to navigate around, due to the perpendicularity of street designs and their relationship to the sea.</i> | orthogonal street configuration sea relationship | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>[Jeddah] is a very large city and one must know important landmarks in order to orient one's self and not become lost.</i> | landmarks familiarization | Navigation problems – general justification | Neutral |
| <i>It is not difficult to navigate in Jeddah, although because the major streets are most often clogged, alternative streets must be often taken, and that could cause navigation problems when that part of the city holds no specific identity.</i> | street identification alternative streets traffic lack of identity | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>Some important monumental structures that help for orienting purposes are the Jeddah</i> | monumental structures / landmarks Jeddah City Hall | Navigation problems – specific reference points | Disagree |

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| <i>City Hall Tower, the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Pakistan International School of Jeddah, of course the city's port, which is always very busy, the Entry Gate of Makkah, King Fahd's Fountain, of course the Kingdom Tower, which will be the tallest structure in the world by 2019.</i> | Tower Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pakistan International School of Jeddah city port Entry Gate of Makkah King Fahd's Fountain Kingdom Tower | | |
| <i>Other important nodes that are useful for orientation are perhaps the Mall of Arabia, and the Al-Andalus Mall, the Bicycle Roundabout, the Jeddah TV Tower in Al-Balad and the Stadium of King Abdullah.</i> | nodes / landmarks Mall of Arabia Al-Andalus Mall Bicycle Roundabout Jeddah TV Tower in Al-Balad Stadium of King Abdullah | Navigation problems – specific reference points – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>There are many districts in Jeddah and there are navigation problems if one is not familiar with the city [...].</i> | districts familiarization | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>Metropolitan Jeddah comprises of 137 districts, so [...] non-locals heavily rely on maps and touristic guides. [...] these navigation guides are readily available, as the city attracts many travellers especially involved with the pilgrimage to Mecca.</i> | districts familiarization maps tourist guides travellers Mecca pilgrimage | Navigation problems – general justification | Neutral |
| <i>If you know the distribution of the city, it is not so difficult to navigate. The city is divided into three parts; the East, the Centre and the West, and there is decent transportation throughout with buses and taxis, however there is no metro. By many, Muscat is</i> | Familiarization districts urban distribution urban division transportation buses taxis maze impression | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |

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| <i>considered a maze, so it is not difficult to get lost.</i> | | | |
| <i>For non-locals, it is perhaps confusing to navigate through the city, as names of streets and of small areas have similar names with one another.</i> | familiarization street naming | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>The Geographical Information Systems has recently been aware of the navigation problems of Oman's roads in general, and try to make streets and neighbourhoods more recognizable, admitting that there have been no standardized names for a lot of certain places.</i> | Geographical Information Systems standardized names street naming | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>It is not uncommon for expatriates to complain of difficulties in navigation. There are no defined street names and no defined names for neighbourhoods, therefore if one needs to describe where they live, they have to do it through narrating the progression of landmarks, and the sequence of street intersections. It can become rather confusing.</i> | expats familiarization street naming landmarks street intersections urban confusion | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>A lot of GCC state cities [involve] urban confusion for both tourists and residents. [...] there are many expats who arrive here for work and for extended periods of years still complaining, [so] we understand that there is a problem.</i> | urban confusion tourists residents expats | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>[...] important factors for navigation are the landmarks of the city, and its relationship with the surrounding landscape.</i> | urban landmarks landscape relationship Old City mountainous terrain | Navigation problems – general justification – specific | Disagree |

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| <i>For example, the old city is surrounded by mountainous terrain, so one knows which direction to go by looking around for the earthy volumes.</i> | | reference points | |
| <i>[...] the sea, which runs along the metropolis of Muscat and serves as a navigational reference point.</i> | sea metropolis reference point | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>[...] the architectural landmarks are equally important, and express the specific characteristics of the culture through the way that they are designed. Such landmarks include all the large mosques, the Museum of Omani Heritage, and the National Museum of Oman.</i> | architectural landmarks large mosques Museum of Omani Heritage National Museum of Oman | Navigation problems – general justification – specific reference points | Disagree |
| <i>Muscat is not so difficult to navigate around, because there are always some types of important landmarks that serve as reference points for locating one's place within the city.</i> | landmarks reference points | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>Doha is friendly in terms of navigation, as it runs near the Persian Gulf and it has a radial configuration. Perhaps within the smaller streets it may become confusing, but there are important landmarks to orient one's self: important museums such as the Qatar National Museum and the Museum of Islamic Art, the Al Watan Centre, the Emiri Diwan, the Clock Tower, the Grand Mosque, the Al Rawnaq Trading Centre, the Barwa Bank, the Bone & Joint Centre...</i> | Persian Gulf radial configuration landmarks Qatar National Museum Museum of Islamic Art Al Watan Centre Emiri Diwan Clock Tower Grand Mosque Al Rawnaq Trading Centre Barwa Bank Bone & Joint Centre | Navigation problems – specific reference points | Disagree |

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| <i>The main streets that are easily located, find it easy to navigate through Doha. Al Corniche Street which runs along the Persian Gulf bank is characteristic, and so is Majilis Al Taawon Street, which runs parallel to Al Corniche. Other important navigating streets are the ones that form the 'rings' in the radial plan of Doha: Al Diwan Street, Al Khaleej Street, the B Ring Road, and the C Ring Road. There is also the D Ring Road. The E, and the F. Ras Abu Abboud Street cuts through the historic city.</i> | Main streets Al Corniche Street Persian Gulf Majilis Al Taawon Street Al Diwan Street Al Khaleej Street B-F Ring Roads Ras Abu Abboud Street Historic city | Navigation problems – specific reference points – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>There could be stronger links connecting the historical districts, especially those of Souk Waqif and Msheireb. At the present moment they are divided by strong infrastructure, therefore it is difficult to navigate from one district to the other.</i> | historical districts Souk Waqif Msheireb strong infrastructure | Navigation problems – general justification – specific reference points | Agree |
| <i>Good navigation comes from the ability to be pedestrian within a city, and Doha lost this ability after the period of globalization.</i> | pedestrian globalization | Navigation problems – general justification | Agree |
| <i>Doha has a number of important streets that are either radial or run parallel to the sea or transversally along the city, so it is not so difficult to understand one's tangents. The sea also helps a lot, which is the reference point of orientation for most.</i> | radial streets sea reference tangents reference point | Navigation problems – general justification | Disagree |
| <i>All the different landmarks</i> | landmarks | Navigation | Disagree |

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| <i>in Doha, and also the strong contrast between the modern buildings and the traditional districts, help for orientation purposes.</i> | modern buildings traditional districts | problems – general justification | |
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DESIGN PROCESS

| Participants' quotes | Key words | Concept (sub-theme) | Agree/disagree w/ importance of theme |
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| Factors that are important in public space projects in GCC cities | | | |
| <i>It is important at this point to concentrate on small-scale buildings: Residences and small scale developments that express the timeless value of Emirati architecture.</i> | small-scale buildings residences small-scale developments timelessness Emirati architecture | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Building should surround open courtyards and have a sense of privacy. It is also important to affiliate with the exterior environment.</i> | open courtyards privacy exterior environment | Public space factors – specific interventions | Agree |
| <i>The design process should concentrate more on the embodiment with the surroundings, rather than the marketability of the inside.</i> | surrounding environment marketability (oppose) | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Making the city into a more pedestrian-friendly public space is more important, as the development towards building volumes has been over-executed.</i> | pedestrian-friendly | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Walkways, public gathering spaces of a friendly scale, and good mobility, are all important issues.</i> | walkways public gathering friendly scale good mobility | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Heritage issues should be managed collaboratively</i> | heritage issues collaborative | Public space factors – | Agree |

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| <i>among many organizations and professionals, including museums, the consultancy of urban planners, the Qatar Society of Engineers, the Ministry of Urban Planning and Municipalities, the Ministry of Arts, Heritage and Culture, the Authority of Tourism, and perhaps some University for research support.</i> | <p>approach</p> <p>museums</p> <p>urban planner</p> <p>consultation</p> <p>Qatar Society of Engineers</p> <p>Ministry of Urban Planning</p> <p>Municipalities</p> <p>Ministry of Arts Heritage and Culture</p> <p>Authority of Tourism</p> <p>University research</p> | specific strategies | |
| <i>What is mostly important is to design at a large-scale basis first, in order to find urban cohesion.</i> | <p>Large-scale design</p> <p>Urban cohesion</p> | Public space factors – specific strategies | Agree |
| <i>Because Jeddah is a megalopolis, it faces dangers of uncontrollable expansion and loss of district identity. Jeddah therefore needs a better plan of interconnections among the many districts that it encompasses. After these patterns will be established, then more large-scale interventions of meaningful and culturally fulfilled public spaces may be considered.</i> | <p>megalopolis</p> <p>uncontrollable expansion</p> <p>urban sprawl</p> <p>inter-connective plan</p> <p>district connection patterns</p> <p>large-scale interventions</p> <p>meaningful places</p> <p>cultural places</p> | Public space factors – specific strategies | Agree |
| <i>The most important aspect of city development is the creation of public open spaces where people may be able to interact and appreciate the grandeur, wealth, diversity and culture of the city.</i> | <p>public interaction</p> <p>urban appreciation</p> <p>grandeur</p> <p>wealth</p> <p>diversity</p> <p>cultural appreciation</p> | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>GCC cities in general</i> | cultural identity | Public space | Agree |

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| <i>should now aim towards bringing out cultural identity. We have done much to demonstrate economic wealth, and we have caught up with modern countries around the world. Now there is danger is losing wealth of the past, so the focus should be on conservation, restoration and implementation of strong cultural elements. It should even be a prerequisite for new construction.</i> | economic wealth (overly done) modernization (overly done) conservation restoration cultural implementation construction prerequisites | factors – general opinion – specific strategies | |
| <i>One problem of Jeddah is the rubbish, and public places will never look as good if the rubbish is not taken care of through intervention of the municipality.</i> | rubbish (problem) municipality interventions | Public space factors – specific interventions | Agree |
| <i>[...] it is important to have stimuli that remind of the culture of Muscat and of the wider region of Oman, so that there is local urban character throughout. [...] this aspect is missing.</i> | cultural stimuli Omani culture local urban character | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Public open urban spaces in Muscat should implement materials and methods of construction that will motivate people to stay outside and tolerate the warm weather.</i> | materiality construction methods outdoor motivation warm weather toleration | Public space factors – specific interventions | Agree |
| <i>There should be a re-consideration of traditional means of building, when environmental affiliations were stronger.</i> | traditional building means environmental affiliations | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Muscat should conserve</i> | conservation | Public space | Agree |

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| <i>the public spaces that already exist, make them safer and cleaner, and create new ones that connect different fragmented places in a better way.</i> | safety cleanliness fragmentation connection | factors – specific interventions | |
| <i>Public spaces should strive to eliminate infrastructural barriers, and create a more friendly-looking and walkable city. They should reinforce cultural mingling and traditional exposure.</i> | infrastructural barriers (elimination) pedestrian movement cultural mingling traditional exposure | Public space factors – specific interventions | Agree |
| <i>[...] adjustment of materials and small constructions for shading purposes, and the better connection with the surrounding spatial structure, which will give better conceptual comprehension of the urban fabric.</i> | materiality small constructions shading surrounding environment conceptual comprehension | Public space factors – specific interventions | Agree |
| <i>Cultural preservation should be a priority. There is a strong historic centre, and it is being overlooked in pursuit of creating marketable designs and extremely tall buildings.</i> | cultural preservation historic centre marketability (oppose) tall buildings (oppose) | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>People should become acquainted and familiarized with our past, which in terms of architecture alone, is very rich and offers stimuli of identity and local belonging.</i> | historic consideration local belonging historic stimuli | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>Nowadays, there is a great priority in urban designing that revolves around the matter of sustainability.</i> | sustainability | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>[...] that sustainability</i> | environmental | Public space | Agree |

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| <i>involves the environment and not the people directly.</i> | consideration | factors – specific interventions | |
| <i>What affects the people directly is the socio-cultural reality that takes place in the urban environment.</i> | socio-cultural reality | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>[...] express cultural identity and traditional architecture.</i> | cultural identity traditional architecture | Public space factors – general opinion | Agree |
| <i>There is much urban space diversity in Doha, and public spaces could help towards connecting these differentiations in strategic ways. It is an excellent opportunity for creative solutions that will punctuate cultural diversity.</i> | connection of diversity strategic connections cultural diversity | Public space factors – general opinion – specific strategies | Agree |
| Importance of cultural concern and design process in GCC cities | | | |
| <i>The concern for culture comes in contrast with the local market needs. For example, there is a tendency to make everything large... Dubai has the world's tallest building, the world's largest mall, the world's largest fountain, and the world's tallest hotel.</i> | local market (contrast) augmentation world's tallest building world's largest mall world's largest fountain world's tallest hotel | Cultural concern and design process – specific speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] there is good awareness that traditional Emirati architecture is humble and small-scale, and should be in unison with the environment. This creates a problem among the knowledgeable professionals.</i> | Emirati architecture humble small-scale environmental unison | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>The effort is to embody at least some of the culturally traditional</i> | traditional design United Arab Emirati architecture | Cultural concern and design | Agree |

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| <i>design aspects of United Arab Emirati architecture into our design planning.</i> | design planning | process – suggestions | |
| <i>It is important to maintain the traditional of unique architectural characteristics. For example, ventilation is one primary characteristics of cultural design, with the implementation of interior courtyards within buildings and particularly residences.</i> | traditional characteristics ventilation interior courtyards residential design | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation - specific speculation | Agree |
| <i>Even with the contemporary context of modern building techniques and futuristic designs, the effort is towards embodying cultural elements to express cultural affiliation.</i> | modern building techniques futuristic designs cultural elements cultural affiliation | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Privacy also plays an important role, so priority is given over that.</i> | privacy priority | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] it is a matter of priorities, rather than a matter of whole-hearted choices.</i> | priority | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Implementing local design tricks is a primary concern for this. For example, the wind-catcher is present in many of the designs.</i> | local design tricks priority wind-catcher | Cultural concern and design process – specific speculation – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Cultural concern is extremely important. Jeddah is considered the</i> | cultural concern art and culture design expression | Cultural concern and design | Agree |

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| <i>city of art and culture, so conceptually this should already give motivation to all of us designers and urban planners to bring out these important characteristics that mark our people.</i> | | process – general speculation – suggestions | |
| <i>People of Jeddah have great local pride and are very proud of their culture, which they try to bring out through food, customs, and other daily activities.</i> | local pride food culture customs daily activities | Cultural concern and design process – specific speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] they have somewhere lost it in the architecture, and this is the responsibility of people of my profession and a consequence of politics and national economy.</i> | professional responsibility politics national economy | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>In cities of the GCC states and in Jeddah in particular, with its strong and evident traditions, urban designing may be closely related to the specific culture. For example, there are considerations regarding the different areas of men and women when hanging out in public places, or the concept of privacy in everyday life.</i> | traditions specific culture gender distinctions privacy daily life | Cultural concern and design process – specific speculation – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>A good planner or designer of a GCC city should be knowledgeable about the certain traditions and customs, in order to create effective urban environments.</i> | traditions knowledge customs knowledge | Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Although the city is becoming much diverse in terms of national,</i> | diversity national background | Cultural concern and design | Agree |

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| <i>religious and cultural backgrounds, the city of Jeddah should hold its own unique characteristics in terms of architecture and urban planning expression.</i> | religious background cultural background unique character urban planning expression | process – general speculation | |
| <i>Cultural concern is very important, especially regarding the fact that culture surrounds the daily lives of the majority of people. If one considers that a Muslim prays five times per day, then it is enough information to be reminded constantly of the specific needs and specific activities that identify the culture.</i> | daily life Muslim prayer cultural needs cultural activities cultural identification | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation – specific speculation | Agree |
| <i>When designing, the most important aspect to consider is the use of the building, and then making correlations with the activities and levels of local conceptions that are associated with the typological building. Inevitably, culture is of primary concern, and that way it should be.</i> | building use activities local conceptions building typology priority | Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Cultural concern certainly affects the design process, [there is] an effort of conceptual coherency in the city of Muscat.</i> | conceptual coherency | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>The consistency of low-rise buildings, which is unlike other economically developed GCC states which are bombarded by skyscrapers and modern architectural styles,</i> | low-rise buildings professional awareness skyscraper opposition modern opposition | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |

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| <i>creates awareness for design professionals.</i> | | | |
| <i>Cultural expression should be a priority for any designer, when working in a city with historical background.</i> | cultural expression priority historical background | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Vernacular architecture of Oman should be developed and evolved in any way possible, and I am well aware of that as a professional.</i> | vernacular architecture Omani architecture | Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>[...] when faced with a design problem that holds no cultural or religious characteristics, it is my job to create and sell a design that holds characteristics of locality and distinct traditional identification, even in a slightly modern way, to fit the contemporary context.</i> | locality distinct traditional identification contemporary context | Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>[...] culture should be a priority in any practice, when tradition and background are so strong.</i> | priority tradition background | Cultural concern and design process – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>As urban designers in the city of Doha, we are surrounded by history but at the same time by the concept of consumerism, contemporary advertisement, and a constant will of becoming rich. Values have shifted.</i> | history consumerism contemporary advertisement wealth | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] there are still a few people left in the profession that see cultural values as a priority while designing and practicing</i> | priority | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation – | Agree |

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| <i>architecture and urban planning, and it is the way that it should be.</i> | | suggestions | |
| <i>The historical centre of our city still plays a great value for the people and the overall community, and it is the true wealth that we withhold. We try to consider it as a priority. However, the reality is often not in such way.</i> | historical centre values true wealth priority reality | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Cultural preservation is the backbone to the city, and it should hold a primary importance. Since the discovery of oil and the start of the exportation market that began in 1949, priorities have shifted, and this is a problem.</i> | cultural preservation urban backbone priority shifting | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>For the educated people and those who are aware of our cultural wealth, culture still remains extremely importance, and we are proud of it.</i> | cultural wealth pride | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Urban problems started to become apparent during the 1960s and 1970s, which was the period during which the results of the economic and political shifts started to create effects and consequences, and there was more concern about rapid development, rather than qualitative urban progression. There was no time for cultural preservation. Of course, it is our job to consider it.</i> | urban problems economic shifts political shifts consequences rapid development qualitative urban progression cultural preservation | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Cultural importance is extremely vital in</i> | urban governance priority | Cultural concern and | Agree |

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| <i>practice urban governance, and should be a priority, in order to bring back old values and motivations for local identification and urban cohesion.</i> | old values motivations local identification urban cohesion | design process – general speculation | |
| <i>Cultural concern is a priority in urban planning and architecture, which should be an expression of the history and locality of a city. Doha is no exception.</i> | historic expression local expression | Cultural concern and design process – general speculation – suggestions | Agree |
| Enhancing the conceptuality of public spaces in GCC cities | | | |
| <i>There are plenty of cultural characteristics of architecture of the United Arab Emirates that are being overlooked, therefore annihilating the cultural identity of the emirates.</i> | cultural identity overlooking | Conceptual enhancement – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] one characteristics of Emirati architecture are the portable tents during the winter season, which provide shelter for the tribal wanderings. [...] it was more usual to see short buildings made out of stone guss and roofed with palm tree leaves, local materials including even seashells that were plastered with water and chalk paste.</i> | portable tents tribal shelter stone guss palm tree leaves local materials seashells | Conceptual enhancement – specific examples – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>One major component for the shifting of identity would be the re-consideration of scale.</i> | scale re- consideration | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>[...] understanding local communities better. When the context is being studied in a more professional and societal</i> | local communities professional study societal study | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |

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| <i>way, then there is less concern for the economy and for politics.</i> | | | |
| <i>GCC cities are different with one another and each one holds different characters. Specifically for Dubai, the conceptuality is that of a combination of deep tradition and futuristic reality.</i> | character deep tradition futuristic reality | Conceptual enhancement- general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[deep tradition and futuristic reality] should be made distinct through the implementation of projects that show a better balance and co-existence of the two.</i> | balance co-existence | Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Agree |
| <i>GCC states should find a better expression of embodying the present within the past. This will raise respect towards the past and appreciation towards the present.</i> | present and past respect appreciation | Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Agree |
| <i>One major characteristic of traditional architecture that could enhance the identity of the city is the bringing back of the concept of privacy to the buildings.</i> | traditional architecture urban identity privacy | Conceptual enhancement- general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Nowadays, there is too much glamour and targeting towards consumption and production, whereas the true aspects of identity and quiet living are being lost.</i> | glamour consumption production identity quiet living | Conceptual enhancement- general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] public spaces [should...] acquire a different character of cultural identity and differentiation. Less of the chaotic and noisy scenery would be seen,</i> | cultural identity differentiation chaotic scenery (oppose) noisy scenery (oppose) immense buildings | Conceptual enhancement- general speculation | Agree |

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| <i>framed by immense and glamorous buildings.</i> | (oppose) glamorous buildings (oppose) | | |
| <i>Initially, there should be studies made in order to understand the patterns of density that take place in the many districts of Jeddah, because consequently, public spaces should be designed based on such speculations. Then different strategies of public place execution may be applied according to the needs of each location. These needs could be social, cultural, residential, mixed-use, retail, etc.</i> | density patterns strategies local needs social needs cultural needs residential needs mixed-use needs retail needs | Conceptual enhancement– general speculation – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Jeddah is missing a strong overall strategic plan regarding public amenities and everything is rather happening spontaneously. [...] this situation is [...] improving.</i> | public amenities spontaneous (oppose) | Conceptual enhancement– general speculation | Agree |
| <i>For a megalopolis such as Jeddah, it is important to identify urban patterns; patterns of shopping mobility, patterns of outdoor social gatherings, patterns of private residency, and patterns of circulation. Once these patterns are located, then the correct decisions may be made regarding the degrees and locations of heritage conservation, the establishment of new public places, perhaps the demolition of some</i> | megalopolis urban patterns shopping mobility social gathering patterns private residency patterns circulation patterns heritage conservation public space establishment structural demolition | Conceptual enhancement– general speculation – suggestions | Agree |

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| <i>unwanted structures that cause major problems, etc.</i> | | | |
| <i>It is important, though this investigation of patterns, to keep in mind some primary plan; the Master Plan of Jeddah, of 1973 is a very good reference point for cohesion standards.</i> | pattern investigation primary plan master plan of Jeddah reference point cohesion standards | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions – specific examples | Agree |
| <i>Jeddah is losing cultural coherence due to its expansive properties, and this needs to be controlled through a better and more concise urban plan.</i> | cultural coherence urban expansion concise urban plan | Conceptual enhancement– general speculation – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Public spaces of Muscat should borrow elements of traditional architecture of Oman. They can be expressed with arches, towers, colonnades, or even public courtyards, in a way that reminds people of the history and continuity of tradition. There is strong regional identity to be continued.</i> | traditional architecture arches towers colonnades public courtyards historic tradition continuity regional identity | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>Public spaces could be enhanced with the design of traditional gardens, for public use, which are expressed in the form of dwellings, and constructed from palm fronds.</i> | traditional gardens dwellings palm fronds | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>There is a traditional way to create ventilated screens for outdoor spaces through the sowing together of palm frond stems. Imagine the creation of outdoor dwellings that protect passer-by's from the heat</i> | ventilated screens palm frond stems outdoor dwellings hot climate hot periods structural beams | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |

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| <i>during hot climate. Then people would not remain indoors so much during the hot periods, and enjoy the city more. [...] These palm frond stems may also be used as structural beams for any type of public open urban space construction [...].</i> | | | |
| <i>Muscat is in need for more green and recreational public spaces for the residents and for the visitors of the city. There are project plans that are being considered for such purposes, and they would greatly enhance the public urban experience of the city.</i> | green public spaces recreational spaces tourism | Conceptual enhancement – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>[...] a number of people are dissatisfied with Municipality Square and its current status with regards to maintenance and cleanliness, the conditions of the fountains, the lighting, and the surrounding uncared for landscape. The Muttrah Plaza could also benefit from works on cleanness.</i> | Municipality Square maintenance cleanliness fountains lighting landscape Muttrah Plaza | Conceptual enhancement – specific examples – general speculation | Agree |
| <i>Public spaces should take good consideration of the warm climatic conditions and use the proper materials and shading techniques in order to provide comfortable situations for the urban dwellers.</i> | warm climate materiality shading techniques comfortable dwellings | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |
| <i>There are in fact many considerations for extending the urban</i> | district revival identity reconfiguration | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions | Agree |

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| <p><i>identity of Doha, through the reviving of particular districts whose identity has been lost. Such examples include the Fareej Al Asmakh and a few other districts, which call for urban conservation. Strategies for such urban conservation implementation [...] can enhance the cultural concept of Doha. [...] if strategies start focusing on the existing richness that lies within the urban history, then surprising results will take place.</i></p> | <p>Fareej Al Asmakh urban conservation cultural concept strategies existing richness urban history</p> | <p>– specific examples – general speculation – suggestions</p> | |
| <p><i>Urban planners and architectural designers of Doha need to reference back to the city's roots, and try to create a harmony between the strong history, the present condition, and the anticipated future. The Fareej district is already available to us as a prime example of cultural heritage and a model of Qatari architecture. However, it should be conserved, and other districts should follow its example.</i></p> | <p>urban roots historic harmony Fareej district cultural heritage Qatari model architecture conservation</p> | <p>Conceptual enhancement – suggestions – specific examples – general speculation - suggestions</p> | <p>Agree</p> |
| <p><i>The primary idea is to stop the demolitions of buildings in historical districts, such as Al Asmakh, while documenting and surveying the remaining houses of the historical districts so that they may be better preserved and</i></p> | <p>demolitions (oppose) Al Asmakh district documentation surveying preservation restoration residential character pedestrian</p> | <p>Conceptual enhancement – suggestions – specific examples</p> | <p>Agree</p> |

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| <i>restored. Once restorations take place, then the original owners should be brought back, or else spaces should be made available for rent to promote the residential character of the districts. The areas should be left pedestrian, and the small scale of the streets should also be preserved.</i> | small scale | | |
| <i>[...] activities available within the historical districts should in part be mixed-use, in order to diminish the need for large-development constructions that create high rises and mega-structures. Activities should include all academic, administrative, cultural and business spaces, intermixed in small portions within the residential existing buildings.</i> | mixed-use activities large-development (oppose) high rises (oppose) mega-structures (oppose) academic spaces administrational spaces cultural spaces business spaces intermixing residential | Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Agree |
| <i>With regards to the urban planning of Doha, there should be a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach when dealing with decisions on the historical districts. This would solve many problems and promote the cultural identity, which would be based on people's needs and not on governmental needs.</i> | bottom-up versus top-down historic districts cultural identity people's needs versus governmental needs | Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Agree |
| <i>The cultural identity of the city of Doha could be implemented into the people's visual</i> | cultural identity visual experiences historic connections | Conceptual enhancement - suggestions | Agree |

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| <i>experiences by creating stronger connections with the past.</i> | | | |
| <i>Connecting the districts more efficiently would be a solution, as for example creating physical links through bridges or tunnels as for example between Souk Waqif and Msheireb. Right now, things are dispersed, and the city has no conceptual apprehension, as noted earlier in your questions.</i> | physical links bridges tunnels Souk Waqif and Masheireb connection | Conceptual enhancement – suggestions – specific examples | Agree |

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***“Meaningful Space is not what you PERCEIVE,
It is what you CONCEIVE”***

Abdul Azeez Al Ghareebi