

# Urban qualities for sustainable urbanism in the emerging knowledge economy of Doha: An exploratory assessment

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## Background and Objectives:

This NPRP project focuses on the assessment of urban qualities needed to enhance the sustainability of urban developments with a focus on Qatar's capital Doha. Since the end of the 20th century various urban development strategies have been introduced to reduce the economic dependence on fossil fuels by attracting knowledge economies and thus to transform Doha into an international hub. Particularly, Advanced Producer Services (APS) were attracted by public investments into urban developments and the liberalization of local markets. The immediate result was a construction boom, which has caused vast immigration reshaping socio-economic realities and producing a new urban environment. The decentralization of urban governance and speculative interests have led to fragmented and inefficient urban morphologies as well as to missing diversity and identity endangering future sustainability. The long-term establishment of knowledge economies heavily relies on the proactive integration of distinct urban qualities to enhance consolidation processes and thus to foster sustainable urban growth. In order to assess the inter-weaved factors producing urban qualities an integrative framework was elaborated as basis of this research project.

## Methods:

Since urban sustainability can only be achieved if social, economic and environmental aspects are equally developed, the framework was at first elaborated on a theoretical level to establish links to the general scientific discourse. The empirical research itself is based on GIS-analyses of recent urban developments as well as a series of interviews with planning authorities in order to assess the efficiency of morphologies. Furthermore, space syntax studies on spatial integration in combination with interlocking network analyses were used to investigate the diversification process of urban structures. Thirdly, environmental observation studies and a survey questionnaire were applied to analyze the various images of urban spaces within the city.

## Results and Conclusions:

Based on these methodologies the three dimensions of sustainability - ecological balance, economic growth and social peace - are analyzed in relation to the urban qualities needed for producing them. These investigations are further utilized to clarify the challenges and limitations of sustainable urbanism in the context of the rapid urbanization process in the emerging city of Doha.