



# AL-SHAJARAH

ISTAC Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization

Published by IIUM Press  
Special Issue 2024

# AL-SHAJARAH

## EDITORIAL BOARD

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

OSMAN BAKAR, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### EDITOR

AHMAD MURAD MERICAN, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

AHMAD EL-MUHAMMADY, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

NURUL AIN NORMAN, ISTAC-IIUM

### BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

WAN ALI WAN MAMAT, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### GUEST EDITOR (SPECIAL ISSUE 2024)

KHALIQ AHMAD, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### MEMBERS

SYED KHAIRUDIN ALJUNIED, NUS, Singapore

BADROL HISHAM @ FARISH AHMAD NOOR, NTU, Singapore

PETER CHANG, UM, Malaysia

MOHAMED ASLAM MOHAMED HANEEF, IIUM, Malaysia

ABDELAZIZ BERGHOUT, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

WALEED FIKRI FARES, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

TENGGU MOHD AZZMAN SHARIFFADEEN, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

## INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

AFIFI AL-AKITI (UK)

JOHN L. ESPOSITO (USA)

JOMO K. SUNDARAM (Malaysia)

YASUSHI KOSUGI (Japan)

AMIN SAIKAL (Australia)

TU WEIMING (China)

IMTIYAZ YUSUF (Vietnam)

MUHAMMED HARON (Botswana)

IBRAHIM KALIN (Turkey)

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR (USA)

MUHAMMAD SUHEYL UMAR (Pakistan)

SALLEH YAAPAR (Malaysia)

*Al-Shajarah* is a refereed international journal that publishes original scholarly articles in the area of Islamic thought, Islamic civilization, Islamic science, and Malay world issues. The journal is especially interested in studies that elaborate scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age, scholarly works that provide fresh and insightful Islamic responses to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. *Al-Shajarah* will also consider articles written on various religions, schools of thought, ideologies and subjects that can contribute towards the formulation of an Islamic philosophy of science. Critical studies of translation of major works of major writers of the past and present. Original works on the subjects of Islamic architecture and art are welcomed. Book reviews and notes are also accepted.

The journal is published twice a year, June-July and November-December. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief, *Al-Shajarah*, F4 Building, Research and Publication Unit, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), No. 24, Persiaran Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Taman Duta, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. All enquiries on publications may also be e-mailed to [alshajarah@iium.edu.my](mailto:alshajarah@iium.edu.my). For subscriptions, please address all queries to the postal or email address above.

Contributions: Submissions must be at least 5,500 words long. All submissions must be in English or Malay and be original work which has not been published elsewhere in any form (abridged or otherwise). In matters of style, *Al-Shajarah* uses the *University of Chicago Manual of Style* and follows the transliteration system shown on the inside back cover of the journal. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to return accepted manuscripts to the author for stylistic changes. Manuscripts must be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief in Microsoft Word. The font must be Times New Roman and its size 12. IIUM retains copyright to all published materials, but contributors may republish their articles elsewhere with due acknowledgement to *Al-Shajarah*.





# PROSPECTS OF REVIVING ISLAMIC CIVILISATION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES: MUSLIM CIVILITY AT THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP

*Emin Poljarevic*<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

*This essay explores how public spaces promote Muslim civility and contribute to the revival of Islamic civilisation, with a focus on the 2022 FIFA World Cup (WC22) in Qatar. The central question is, if, and how do public spaces, structured around Muslim civility, support the revival (tajdīd) of Islamic thought? Through the World Cup, Qatar created environments where diverse individuals engaged and shared experiences, fostering understanding across cultural, ethnic, class, and religious lines. These spaces go beyond mere consumption, serving as platforms for dialogue, interaction, and even civilisational exchange. Islamic public ethics—hospitality, compassion, and justice—were showcased in these cosmopolitan settings, demonstrating how such open, inclusive spaces are essential for Islamic revival. They allow Muslims to reinterpret traditional principles in addressing contemporary issues like Islamophobia and secularism. The World Cup exemplified not just a sporting event, but a microcosm of how Islamicate societies can navigate the intersection of modernity and tradition. By encouraging inter-civilisational encounters, these spaces hold the potential to showcase and make meaningful Islamic ethical principles in contemporary world by highlighting the significance of public spaces in this long durée revival process.*

**Keywords:** Muslim Civility, Islamic Revival, Public Spaces, Inter-civilisational Dialogue.

---

<sup>1</sup> Emin Poljarevic is an Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, E-mail: [emin.poljarevic@ubd.edu.bn](mailto:emin.poljarevic@ubd.edu.bn).

## Introduction

This essay argues that part of the potential of the revival of Islamic civilisation in the 21st century can be found in the facilitation of vibrant cosmopolitan and open urban spaces organised around facets of Muslim civility. The case of Qatar and its hosting of the 2022 World Cup provides one possible lens through which civilisational revival can be observed. The observation is nevertheless limited to inter-civilisational dialogue and interaction that has taken place during this brief event. The goal here is to deepen our understanding of the revival and/or renewal, and in the process of deepening that understanding, increase our capacity to think and increase knowledge of our surroundings. The main assumption that underpins the analysis is that structural aspects of revival in relation to Islamic civilisation are worth thinking about.

In this process of deliberation, it is important to challenge the dominant frames of secularism which dictate qualitatively different set of ethical values and being in the world. This analysis of open public spaces in an Islamicate society that presumably allows humans to encounter one another with their differences and prejudices. In these micro-meetings there is a great potential for exchange and growth, not only on the individual level, but far wider than that. There are a number of loaded assertions here that needs brief unpacking.

Revival or renewal are here understood broadly as synonyms, even though the finer details can be discussed *ad infinitum*. Revival in the context of this essay refers to Muslims' historical efforts of simultaneously maintaining the continuity of Islamic tradition across generations, and innovation in tackling modern challenges. These efforts have historically been about alignment of the Islamic revelation and its moral and ethical principles with available means of communal organising and intellectual discourse in the face of large-scale challenges such as colonisation, globalisation, secularism etc..<sup>2</sup>

For instance, a number of notable figures and their intellectual

---

<sup>2</sup>Ali, Jan. A. "Modernity, Its Crisis and Islamic Revivalism", *Religions*, 14, no 1, (2023): <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010015>; Haj, Samira. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. (Stanford University Press, 2009).

projects in the recent centuries can be mentioned as to demonstrate the variety of the revivalist efforts. I argue that the revivalist intellectual projects of scholars such as Shah Waliullah in India (d. 1762), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in Najd (d. 1792), Sultan Muhammad ibn Abd Allah in Morocco (d. 1790), Usman dan Fodio Sokoto Caliphate/Nigeria (d. 1817), Muhammad al-Sanusi in Cyrenaica/Libya (d. 1859), Muhammad Abduh in Egypt (d. 1905), Muhammad Iqbal in India (d. 1938), Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur in Tunisia (d. 1973), Muhammad Asad in Austria/Spain (d. 1992), Yusuf al-Qaradawi in Egypt/Qatar (d. 2022), Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in Malaysia (b. 1932) and many others demonstrate the elasticity and persistence of Islamic revivalist thought in colonial and post-colonial periods.

Revival in these and other countless examples is largely based on individual thinkers' creativity, their intellectual engagement, and the noteworthy capacity to offer intellectual solutions to a myriad of problems faced by Muslims in their respective societies. Their respective *ijtihad* methodologies were usually marked by a range of hermeneutical approaches to pivotal parts of Islamic tradition, in efforts to resolve tensions caused by colonial and postcolonial realities.<sup>3</sup> Among them, we find a wide variety of interpretations of Qur'anic concepts such as mercy, compassion, commitment, the intellect etc. showcasing Muslim intellectualising and continuous scrutinisation and contextualisation of key ethical principles.

My understanding of revival presumes that these ideal-type ethical principles are collectively remembered and intellectually expressed in a wide variety of ways throughout time and space. This also implies that the revival of such principles is a continuous stream of collective Muslim (intellectual) consciousness expressed and applied in ways that are relevant to contemporary challenges, whenever those might be. This understanding of revival is almost exclusively based on intellectual endeavours and revivalist efforts.

---

<sup>3</sup> Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Hafez, M. H. "Explaining the origins of Islamic resurgence: Islamic revivalism in Egypt and Indonesia." *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1997): 295-324.

The lesser discussed aspect of revivalism is its structural or material component.

Structure here refers to the rules and material conditions that define how an activity is conducted.<sup>4</sup> For example, in the context of Islamic revival, any interpretation of is related to the sociopolitical and economic conditions in the environment in which effort of interpretation occurs. This includes structural factors such as alternative governance systems, material circumstances, levels of individual and collective freedoms, and other socio-political constraints or opportunities within which scholars operate. These conditions impact scholarship, affecting not only scholars' access to resources and freedom of expression, but also shapes their perspectives and interpretations of the tradition.

An important assumption here is that various potentials of Islamic revival depend to great extent on the quality of Muslim intellectual work and scholarship (i.e., agents of revival). Moreover, potentials of revival depend on the way thinkers and intellectuals challenge their respective contexts and restraints dominating them. Agents of revival are therefore not passively accepting the conditions they are placed in; rather, they actively interpret and challenge these structures. The dynamic interplay between the structure and the system, is therefore mediated by the agency of the scholars, results in a continuous evolution of Islamic thought that resonates with both historical foundations and modern pressures.<sup>5</sup> Agent refers to the individuals (i.e., Muslim thinkers) who act within these systems and are influenced by the rules. They use their intellectual capacity and creativity to offer new understandings of Islamic principles such as justice, compassion, equity etc. Scholars' reinterpretative acts in response to modern challenges are most often intellectual projects' potential for revival are seldom materialised.<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that

---

<sup>4</sup> See Elder-Vass, Dave. *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*, (Cambridge University Press, 2010); Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Translated by R. Nice, (Routledge, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> Poljarevic, Emin. "The Political Theology of Malcolm X: Between Human Dignity and Returning the Gaze". *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, 96, no 1, (2020): 11-27.

<sup>6</sup> Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*,

they are meaningless. Arguably, without a concrete revivalist thought and public engagement, potentials for growth and renewal are inconsistent and perhaps even impossible.

The main argument in this essay is that revival in Islamicate societies can emerge from, among other things, the right conditions on the ground – a revival from the bottom-up, as it were. The premise is that open public spaces facilitate interaction between various individuals and collectives who, in various ways, share experiences, worldviews, and opinions. This interaction increases the potential for greater understanding between people both directly and by extension within their respective cultural contexts. In addressing the main question, the essay discusses the potential for the resurgence of Islamic civilisation through intercultural, interreligious, and hence inter-civilisational interaction in public spaces organised around Muslim civility.

The assumption here is that civilisational revival can be encouraged through structural changes where agents (social actors, including intellectuals etc.) can interact in new ways and thus produce innovative ways to (re)solve contemporary challenges. For instance, a challenge of racism and Islamophobia can be addressed by creating physical public spaces that allow a wide variety of social actors to interact, meet, and encounter their differences. Obviously, all public spaces have a purpose, design, and social function – but regardless of a variety of those parameters, diverse groups of agents encountering others, unrelated and dissimilar agents from themselves have a potential to reduce racial and Islamophobic tensions through mere proximal closeness. This assumption is further explored and illustrated through two-part consideration of Qatar's role in hosting a major international event in 2022. The first part is contextualising Qatar in the light of the WC22. The second part offers an analysis of the prospects of Islamic revival in the light of Qatar's efforts to organize public spaces during the WC22.

---

(Princeton University Press, 2005); Abderrahmane, Taha. *Su'al al-Akhlaq: Musahama fi Al-Naqd al-Akhlaqi lil-Hadatha al-Gharbiyya* (Question of Ethics: A Contribution to the Ethical Critique of Western Modernity), 5th ed., (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 2013).

## **Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup™**

The structural aspect of Islamic civilisational revival involves more than reinterpreting traditional teachings like mercy, generosity, and knowledge; it also considers how these ideas or concepts are framed by current socio-political and economic conditions. These conditions influence how Muslim scholars and laymen alike (e.g. the agents of civilisational revival) engage with, and articulate their own and others' interpretations of same events. Take for example, critiques of Qatar, their political system, labour policies, human rights record etc., expressed by European media outlets. A number of critical reports highlighted the idea of clash of Western secular values against the Islamic tradition and specifically a number of Qatar's policies.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, Qatar's extravagant efforts to host the FIFA World Cup 2022 was at the same time an opportunity to showcase Islamic tradition globally, mirror this approach, aiming to navigate several challenges both internal and in regard to the perception from the West.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that the country's leadership has structurally prepared for the event over a decade prior to it. A whole host of reforms have been introduced including labour rights legislation, abolishing exit permits for a million strong foreign labour force, introducing electronic wage payment systems, advancement in women's sports participation.<sup>9</sup> The preparations can be interpreted as

---

<sup>7</sup> Al-Malki, Amal M. "Public Policy and Identity", In *Policy-Making in a Transformative State: The Case of Qatar*, Edited by Tok, M. Evren, Lolwah RM Alkhater, and Leslie A. Pal. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 241-269; Henao, Luis A. "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam", AP News. December 18, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/religion-qatar-islam-doha-1fd7e9e6ac1b6f6bdca0b21ca271ab4>; Brannagan, Paul Michael, Danyel Reiche, and Lorraine Bedwell. "Mass Social Change and Identity Hybridization: The Case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup", *Identities* 30, no. 6 (2023): 900-918.

<sup>8</sup> Henao, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam"; Papanikos, Gregory. T. "The Global Media Coverage of the 2022 Qatar World Football Cup", *Athens Journal of Sports* 10, no 2, (2023): 119-132.

<sup>9</sup> Swart, Kamila & Hussain, Umer "FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar: Under the Gaze of Western Media", In Kobayashi, Koji, John Horne, Younghan Cho, and Jung Woo Lee, eds. *Sports Mega-Events in Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023): 199-222.

structural adjustments of socio-spatial environment in order to accommodate, host, and engage with a large number of national football teams and global audiences of spectators.

The dynamic of structural changes are not random sets of events but are crafted socio-politically to promote national and religious dimensions of Qatari influence, achievements and aspirations – sometimes described as soft power.<sup>10</sup> The examination of the intricate interplay among geopolitical dynamics, cultural tensions, and competing narratives illuminates the complexities of civilisational revival.

The WC22, just like other similar sport mega-events, highlight the nexus between globalisation, sports economics, state control, and human rights, all of which converge in a set of synergies, all depending on the beholder's perspective and interest. One part of the argument in this essay is that the synergy of the WC22 resonates with the broader meaning of an "Islamic civilisational ethos".<sup>11</sup> This ethos is arguably embedded in Qatar's efforts to enable global human interaction through football in an open public space that is organised around a spectrum of traditional ethical values.<sup>12</sup> Understood in this way, the WC22 was not just a mere mega-sporting-event and spectacle of athleticism and geopolitical maneuvering. The tournament was at the same time a conduit for inter-civilisational meetings and an instance of showcasing Muslim civility through an Islamicate country's organisational and economic dexterity.<sup>13</sup> For

---

<sup>10</sup> Swart and Hussain, "FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar."

<sup>11</sup> See Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad N. *Islam and Secularism*, (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Sassen, Saskia. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, (Princeton University Press, 2006); Elcombe, Tim, Harman, Alanna. & Hadman, Alun. "Looking back on the 2022 FIFA World Cup: A Tournament of Surprises and Controversy", *The Conversation*, December 18, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/looking-back-on-the-2022-fifa-world-cup-a-tournament-of-surprises-and-controversy-194493>; Næss, Hans E. "A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events: The Case of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™," *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 5, (2023). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2023.1142878>

<sup>13</sup> Asrar, Shakeeb. "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam", *Interfaith America*, December 19, 2022. <https://www.interfaithamerica.org/world-cup-interfaith-understanding-islam/>.

instance, this mega-sporting-event offered and opportunity for an intercultural and inter-civilisational dialogue in which the country's soft power created an opportunity for the world to directly experience an Islamicate culture and some of its values and customs.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, 'public space' represents physical, permanent or temporarily accessible environments such as parks and gardens, public squares and plazas, sports complexes and playgrounds, and not least, cultural centres and museums, including marketplaces and street fairs. Such public spaces contain potential to both create and reshape collective experiences of people who participate. Ujang and colleagues argue:

“Attachment to people and activities in place should allow for an opportunity for interactive contact if the conditions of the spaces are flexible and adequate to be used for multiple functions. Good urban public spaces are required for the social and psychological health of modern society. Providing more spaces for people to interact may enhance the role of public open spaces in the city. The underlying principle is to consider place attachment as a catalyst for an inclusive city for all walks of life. Therefore, public spaces need to be planned and designed to support human–place interaction.”<sup>15</sup>

Their work highlights the importance of understanding the social meanings of public spaces in a diverse social context. Furthermore, their main argument is the open public spaces offer structures of social interaction among diverse groups, which might assist

---

<sup>14</sup> Farzad, Kaveh A. “Building Bridges through Sport: Qatar's World Cup Vision”, Pacific Council on International Policy, March 10, 2017; Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam”;; Naess, “A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events”; al-Tamimi, N., Amin, A., & Zarrinabadi, N., “Creating Nation Brand”; Lo, Alioune A. “Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022”, *Anadolu Akademi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5, no. 1 (2023): 33-49.

<sup>15</sup> Ujang, Norsidah, Marek Kozlowski, and Suhardi Maulan. “Linking place attachment and social interaction: towards meaningful public places.” *Journal of Place Management and Development* 11, no. 1 (2018): 115-129.

designing and managing urban places that promote social sustainability and resilience. This represents an empirically grounded case that points toward the broader argument made in this essay; open public spaces enable a positive social synergy in a diverse society.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Qatar, its economic and organisational capacity including its soft power capabilities engaged during the run up to the WC22 used a wide range of open public spaces to involve a wide range of global audiences in meaningful interactions – revolving around people’s enthusiasm for football in an Islamicate majority society.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to highlight that not all of the observants of the WC22 focused on the positive synergies of open public spaces. One study shows that a number of critical media’s portrayal of Qatar, particularly in the European outlets, highlighted problematic aspects of Qatar’s bid and hosting of the WC22.<sup>18</sup> It seems nevertheless that this so called “Western media” negative branding tactics galvanised support for Qatar among the populations in the Global South. For instance, Dubinsky points out that “these [negative branding] tactics, especially when emphasising western hypocrisy, orientalism, the historic atrocities of European colonialism, or pointing out incidents of Islamophobia through stereotypical depictions of Arabs as terrorists, have been proven effective to galvanise the global south behind Qatar”.<sup>19</sup>

Another study highlights that the WC22 as an important part of the Qatari monarchy’s broader strategy to declare its statehood and

---

<sup>16</sup> Sassen, Territory, Authority, Rights; Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*, (Blackwell, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Al-Tamimi, Nawaf, Azzam Amin, and Nourollah Zarrinabadi. “Creating Nation Brand: The Model of Qatar.” In *Qatar’s Nation Branding and Soft Power: Exploring the Effects on National Identity and International Stance*. (Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023); Næss, “A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events”.

<sup>18</sup> Dubinsky, Yoav. “Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022.” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 20, no. 2 (2024): 218-231.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 223.

unique nationhood both regionally and globally.<sup>20</sup> Here Griffin convincingly suggests that Qatar manages to balance ‘Western criticism’ and its unique geopolitical and cultural position as a small Muslim majority country. Griffin calls this ‘hybridity’, wherein cultural and religious distinctions are also utilised as enablers of shared norms and values.<sup>21</sup> This can be interpreted as Qatar’s showcasing their balancing act of preserving its traditional values, including perhaps an Arab notion of Muslim civility, and at the same time hosting a mega-sporting event with unprecedented influx of foreign guests from all corners of the globe. The balancing act is also one of civilisational encounters and discontents – all of which happen in a time and place. It is therefore important to ask, what is the potential of the interplay of public space and Muslim civility in one Islamicate society in the revival of Islamic civilisation? In order to address this multilayered question, we ought to suspend, at least temporarily, a number of important geopolitical and labour concerns, and focus on the role of public open space during WC22 and however small potential of the revival of Islamic civilisation.<sup>22</sup> This preliminary analysis concentrates on two converging elements of revival; existence of tradition of Islamic revivalism and a modern case of the significance of physical spaces in facilitating a practice of civilisation revivalism. For the remainder of the analysis to make sense, it is crucial to clarify a host of interlinked concepts that will help us address the key question in this essay: What is the potential of the interplay of public space and Muslim civility in Islamicate societies in the revival (*tajdīd*) of Islamic civilisation?

---

<sup>20</sup> Griffin, Thomas R. “National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA’s First Arab World Cup”, In *Moments, Metaphors, Memories: Defining Events in the History of Soccer*, Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Souvik Naha (Eds.), (Routledge, 2012); Baabood, Abdullah, *Qatar’s Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Griffin, “National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA’s First Arab World Cup.”

<sup>22</sup> Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam;” Lo, “Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar’s FIFA World Cup 2022.”

## Civilisations as revivable phenomena

In this essay, ‘civilisation’ signifies a complex and historically compounded human depository of ethical values characterised by a unique overarching identity; a high degree of cultural, social, and technological sophistication; and a shared set of worldviews. It represents a diverse assemblage of cultural meanings, encompassing various smaller communities unified by shared values, norms, and institutions. It is helpful to imagine civilisations as dynamic and perpetually evolving phenomena with a core set of principles that are manifested in shifting patterns of collective consciousnesses of people depending on a time and place. This definition is framed in a way that it resonates well with the meanings of Arabic terms *ḥadārah*, *madaniyyah*, and *‘umrān*. These terms point to notions of presence, collective consciousness, and even collective acts of submission and worship. This particular definition is to informed by others.

For instance, anthropologist Talal Asad understands civilisation as “a narrative that seeks to represent homogeneous space and linear time.” His perspective is particularly illuminating in the context of European attempts to assert dominance over the “other,” namely, those not sharing a “European (Christian) identity”.<sup>23</sup> Philosopher Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas offers an interesting perspective the context of Islamic civilisation: “It has its own distinct ontological, cosmological, and psychological interpretations of reality”.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, he presents it as a dynamic phenomenon that induces a ‘liberation’ process that frees humanity from “magical, mythological, animistic,” and secular controls over reason and language.<sup>25</sup> This perspective outlines some arguably unique features of Islamic civilisation, among them a set of ethical values and norms that distinct features of a *tawhidic*, i.e. logocentric worldview.<sup>26</sup> This

---

<sup>23</sup> Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. (Stanford University Press, 2003), 165-171.

<sup>24</sup> Nasr, Seyyed. H., *Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, (State University of New York Press: 1993), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>26</sup> Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*: 12, 45.

framing also underscores the evolving nature of civilisations – they are not static, homogeneous entities, but layered accumulations of cultural, scientific, religious, and identity-related meanings and interactions that evolve over time.<sup>27</sup>

Another philosopher, Seyyed Hossein Nasr maintains that civilisation represents more than just a collection of organizational structures, identity narratives, economic structures, and political institutions. (CITATION) For him, civilisation is rightly an external manifestation of a people's collective, and presumably compounded, inner spiritual state, a sort of holistic vision of human life intertwined with spiritual experiences and an awareness of metaphysical meanings.<sup>28</sup>

Looking at the world through their perspective, science is not separate from moral and ethical consciousness, and of being in the world. Science, according to Nasr, becomes a way of engaging with the Divine and its creation. This understanding of civilisation transcends material and temporal dimensions, for it incorporates the shared spiritual experiences of particular groups of people (e.g., a broader category of Muslims). Take the terms *hadārah*, *madaniyyah*, and *'umrān* again, and consider its semantic complexity. This richness aligns particularly well with Nasr's suggestion that Islamic civilisation, including others, are shaped by the collective metaphysical, moral, and ethical consciousness of populations in Islamicate contexts and beyond.

This amalgam of meanings suggests the importance of collective experiences and their spiritual orientation. Unsurprisingly, it resembles Nasr's assumption that contemporary civilisations are continuously shaped by their peoples' expressions of a collective consciousness. In this way, civilisations are actually expressions of historically sedimented and evolving interactions between different groups of people holding a range of analogous ideas, who at the same

---

<sup>27</sup> Smith, Jeremy. C. A. "Civilizational Analysis as a Mode of the Intercultural, Intercivilizational Encounters, the Intercultural and Contemporary Historical Sociology." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 45, no. 2 (2024): 310-325.

<sup>28</sup> Nasr, Seyyed. H. *Science and civilization in Islam*. (Kazi Publications, 2001). 141ff, 224ff.

time share elective affinities toward (sacred) truths.<sup>29</sup> Understood in this way, we can argue that civilisations are revivable. What is more, this connection allows us to explore a civilisation's moral and ethical development, which is shaped by accumulated cultural, scientific, religious, and identity-related meanings over time. Civilisation serves as an analytical tool for understanding broad patterns in human development, including moral and ethical dimensions. However, identifying shared values across large populations is challenging due to temporal and spatial variations. Despite these complexities, civilisation remains the most comprehensive level of cultural identity.<sup>30</sup>

If we extend this argument to an even larger domain of civilisation, we can claim that numerous emanations, symbolisms, and manifestations of collective human ethical and moral experiences exist in spaces throughout time. A set of distinct civilisational features, including its intellectual and founding principles, are manifested through a range of intellectual, aesthetic, and other intersectional phenomena all premised on sets of ethical principles that are understood as civilisational guides.<sup>31</sup> Such understanding allows us to coherently speak about Greek, Roman, Chinese, or West African civilisational legacies.

### **Civilisational (dis)Contents and Civility**

One way of imagining civilisations is through the tensions between different civilisational units. Consider the Islamicate and Western (or post-Christian) internally diverse civilisations as imagined, and historical entities that have been at odds with each other since at least the 18th century. Consider also that processes of modernity have affected them in a profound and arguably irreversible way.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 66ff.

<sup>30</sup> Hodgson, Marshall. G. S. *Rethinking world history: Essays of Europe, Islam and world history.* (Cambridge University Press, 1993)

<sup>31</sup> Abderrahmane Taha. *Tajdid al-Manhaj fi Taqwim al-Turath* [Reviving the Methodology of Assessing the Tradition]. (Beirut: Markaz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> Poljarevic, Emin. "Islamic tradition and meanings of modernity." *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 3, no 1 (2015): 29–57.

Secularism is here understood as a distinct product of Western modernisation since the Enlightenment and the ideological hegemony of the post-World War II international order.<sup>33</sup> This order has reshaped understandings of religion and politics, including their ethical and moral dimensions.<sup>34</sup> Secularism as a process can be understood to involve the reorganisation of political and public spaces, where traditional religious beliefs and practices are systematically pushed out from the public sphere with intention to promote neutrality, reason, and rationality. This means that religion is managed by relegating religious people from any major role in the public space. Politics understood as a prominent public expression of morals and ethics, in such a secularism scenario is also “cleansed” from religious sentiments and its moral reasoning.<sup>35</sup>

Subsequently, in a compellingly secularised public space (e.g., France), any public display of perceivably “religious” politics and its ethical principles breaches the secular modes of conduct, and as such, it is inadmissible, or rendered extreme and inappropriate.<sup>36</sup> In such secularised political and diplomatic contexts, religiously framed discourses are typically thoroughly reformulated and expressed through ideological and culturally framed narratives to make them palatable to broader audiences.<sup>37</sup> In short, universal human rights are universal only as much as its secular Euro-American proponents

---

<sup>33</sup> Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*.

<sup>34</sup> Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. “The political authority of secularism in international relations.” *European Journal of International Relations* 10, no. 2 (2004): 235-262.

<sup>35</sup> Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Nasr, Seyed Hussein. *Islam in the modern world: Challenged by the West, threatened by fundamentalism: Keeping faith with tradition*. (HarperOne, 2010); Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

<sup>36</sup> Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Fernando, Mayanthi L. *The republic unsettled: Muslim French and the contradictions of secularism*. (Duke University Press, 2020); Scott, Joan Wallach. *The politics of the veil*. (Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Constantinou Costas M., and James Der Derian. “Sustaining global hope: sovereignty, power and the transformation of diplomacy.” In *Sustainable Diplomacies*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Dorsey, James M. “The 2022 World Cup: Qatar’s make-or-break moment.” *Modern Diplomacy*. 2022, October 20. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/10/20/the-2022-world-cup-qatars-make-or-break-moment/>.

are.<sup>38</sup> The Euro-American dominant framing of ethics and morals during the 20th century has had implications for the subjective experience of being in the world. In other words, secularist reasoning has had implications for human behaviour, emotions, identity formations, subjectivities and therefore formation of people's civility and perhaps even civilisational self-understanding.

One often overlooked component of civilisational content is civility. Civility is here linked to ideas and practices of social virtues.<sup>39</sup> These virtues are rooted in social agents' awareness of and regard for the public good and rules of engagement in social life. From this perspective, it is not surprising that civility is articulated in cooperation and mutual understanding between social groups. Civility as civilisational virtue manifested through a range of understandings of "common sense" that encourages open dialogue and understanding across different social and ideological groups, ensuring that ethical principles adapt to the evolving, diverse contexts of modern urban life. This approach can help mitigate conflicts and build harmonious, inclusive communities by reconciling the context-dependent ideals of civility with the deep-rooted moral traditions found in popular common sense. Shared understanding of what common sense means in a time and place depends upon the level of interpersonal exchange and communication – ubiquitous unspoken rules. We can reasonably assume that that if the levels of civility are highly valued in a society, the likelihood of interpersonal or social conflict is low.<sup>40</sup>

Another expressed feature of civility in such a space can be described as cosmopolitanism. Here, this usually complex term denotes the value of (cultural, religious, ideological etc.) diversity in a place where people accept particular differences.<sup>41</sup> In such places,

---

<sup>38</sup> See Casanova, Jose. *Public religions in the modern world*. (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Bilgrami, Akeel. *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

<sup>39</sup> See Forni, Pier Massimo. *Choosing civility: The twenty-five rules of considerate conduct*. (St. Martin's Press, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*.

<sup>41</sup> See Aljunied, Khairudin. "Muslim cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia: Marketplaces as sites of interaction and integration. In Arif, Nasr M., and Abbas Panakkal (eds.), *Southeast Asian Islam: Integration and Indigenisation*. (Routledge,

civility is showcased. Civility in sustainable diverse social contexts becomes a sort of social glue expressed through tangible social ethics, a kind of public *adab* (ethical conduct) that allows individuals to engage in dialogue and exchange. In an ideal situation, it expresses interpersonal respect for diverse cultural identities based on the sentiments of recognition and acceptance of human diversity – a sort of common sense where collective agency is more or less in sync with the social structures that engulf it.<sup>42</sup>

What does that all mean? Well, civility adopts a pivotal role in the context of revival of Islamicate ethical and moral ideals in the wake of hegemonising impulse of Euro-American secularism. When construed in this manner, revival of civility acts as a catalyst for cooperative endeavours and buttresses the values that underpin self-awareness and constructive engagement with the multitude of subjectivities in a time and place. Crucially, civility stimulates a socio-political milieu that is both conducive to and actively cultivates coexistence and communal understanding. Within the framework of inter-civilizational interactions, think of WC22, its role can be analogized to that of “diplomatic etiquette.” Civility functions as a vital instrument for negotiating cultural chasms, thereby encouraging shared understandings and reciprocal respect across cultures.<sup>43</sup> Civility in practice transcends mere politeness or decorum; it arguably acts as a sustainable normative force, one that shapes and is shaped by civilizational encounters.<sup>44</sup>

Today, Islamicate societies – while adopting the frameworks of modern nation-states infused with elements of secularism – have maintained strong connections to traditional religious values. This situation is represented by significant social changes, (neo-)colonial impacts, economic and structural adaptations, environmental challenges and Euro-American political and cultural hegemony. It is worthwhile to note that the historical interaction between pre-modern

---

2024).

<sup>42</sup> Elder-Vass, *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*; Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

<sup>43</sup> See Dorsey, “The 2022 World Cup: Qatar’s make-or-break moment.”

<sup>44</sup> Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*; Abderrahmane, *Su'al al-Akhlaq: Musahama fi Al-Naqd al-Akhlaqi lil-Hadatha al-Gharbiyya*.

Christian and Islamicate civilisations was indeed complicated. However, the study of cultural, scientific, and theological exchanges reveals factors that facilitated, not only antagonism and conflict, but also coexistence, tolerance, and broader material progress.

Premodern urban centres like Baghdad, Cairo, Cordoba, Granada, Jerusalem, Palermo, Samarkand, Zanzibar etc. became Islamicate cosmopolitan hubs that were dominated by Muslim civility which helped organise diverse open spaces such as courts, libraries, bazaars, madrasas, caravanserais, and hammams.<sup>45</sup> Urban centres represented therefore the epicentres of a creative surge and innovations through merging of disciplines and cultures. Historical records show that in these public spaces people interacted across different classes, intellectual traditions, ethnicities, and religions.<sup>46</sup> For instance, in the classical age, al-Andalus' political leaders promoted interfaith tolerance by aligning themselves with some Islamicate principles and enhancing political stability and legitimacy.<sup>47</sup> The principles related to tolerance allowed for the economic integration of diverse groups that, in turn, contributed to the cities' prosperity and cultural vitality – a sort of a delicate cycle of justice. Although far from total freedom from social tensions, this level of civility, cosmopolitanism, and coexistence was rarely found elsewhere at the time.<sup>48</sup> This blend of social and physical spaces accommodated and enabled both intellectual, material and even spiritual exchanges, enriching the cosmopolitan ethos of these societies.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*; Hodgson, *Rethinking world history: Essays of Europe, Islam and world history*; Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Ruggles, D. Fairchild. *Islamic gardens and landscapes*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Constable, Olivia Remie, and Damian Zurro, "Introduction." In Constable, Olivia Remie, and Damian Zurro (eds.) *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Al-Khalili, Jim. *The house of wisdom: How Arabic science saved ancient knowledge and gave us the Renaissance*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Constable *et al*, "Introduction".

<sup>48</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 17.

<sup>49</sup> Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The ornament of the world: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians created a culture of tolerance in medieval Spain*. (Back Bay Books, 2009); Triano, Antonio V. "Madinat Al-Zahra: Transformation of a Caliphal City."

The intersections of ideas, talents, intentions, and craftsmanship in Islamicate cities created unexpected synergies due to structural opportunities such as freedom of access and underlying Muslim civility. This intersectionality enabled the generation of creative solutions to existing challenges. In other words, open and diverse urban environments nurtured intellectual curiosity, creativity, and innovation. These environments attracted scholars and fostered the critical renewal and revival of Islamic thought.<sup>50</sup> The convergence of social, political, economic, and spiritual factors in these cities provided unique opportunities for developing Muslim civility and collective consciousness, which have been historically robust and ongoing.<sup>51</sup>

In contemporary contexts, the challenges of Islamic civilisational revival are often intensified by the Euro-American push for secularism and secularisation in Islamicate countries. This push can marginalise, malign, and exclude Islamicate perspectives.<sup>52</sup> Secularism, rooted in European experiences and partially adopted in parts of the Islamicate world, represents a cultural hegemony that may overlook the diverse moral and ethical experiences of different societies. Furthermore, when doctrines of secularism are combined with ethnonationalism—whether in Euro-American, Islamicate, or other civilisational contexts—it hinders intercultural communication and understanding, posing significant obstacles to inter-civilisational understanding and the prospects of revival and civility.

### **Potential for Revival**

On the surface, one might assume that Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022 does not offer much insight into the revival of Islamic civilisation. However, by focusing on the interplay between public

---

In G. D. Anderson & M. Rosser-Owen (Eds.), *Revisiting al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Ruggles, 2008; Outram, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> See Kamrava, Mehran, ed. *Innovation in Islam: Traditions and contributions*. (University of California Press, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Makdisi George. "The rise of colleges: institutions of learning in Islam and the West." (Edinburgh University Press, 1981).; Constable *et al*, "Introduction".

<sup>52</sup> Al-Attas Islam and Secularism.

space and Muslim civility, we can uncover valuable lessons for both theory and practice. Recent studies have highlighted that Qatar's political leadership has prioritised learning, cosmopolitanism, and civility within the state's discourse.<sup>53</sup>

Doha, Qatar's capital, exemplifies a modern economic powerhouse that blends traditional cultural elements with wealth derived from vast natural resources, particularly natural gas. This wealth is strategically invested in infrastructure, transportation, media, education, culture, and sports.<sup>54</sup> These advancements occur within the framework of traditional monarchical rule, extensive natural resources, and both domestic and imported ingenuity. Coupled with the ruling elite's economic and diplomatic ambitions, Qatar has adjusted its physical and social environments to host one of the world's most celebrated sports events.<sup>55</sup> In doing so, Qatar has successfully integrated Muslim civility into urban environments, promoting a cosmopolitan Islamic and Arab ethos.<sup>56</sup>

Qatar's efforts to host elite athletes from thirty-two countries and a large number of international fans have been described as transformative for the entire society.<sup>57</sup> A decade before the event in

---

<sup>53</sup> Griffin, "National Identity, Social Legacy and Qatar 2022: The Cultural Ramifications of FIFA's First Arab World Cup", 108; Dubinsky, "Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022"; Carter, Paul. *Meeting place: The human encounter and the challenge of coexistence*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Lo "Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022;" Brannagan *et al*, "Mass social change and identity hybridization: the case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup."

<sup>54</sup> Al-Kuwārī, 'Alī Khalīfa. "The visions and strategies of the GCC countries from the perspective of reforms: The case of Qatar." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2012): 86-106. Baabood, *Qatar's Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*.

<sup>55</sup> (Constantinou and Der Derian "Sustaining global hope: sovereignty, power and the transformation of diplomacy"; Dorsey, "The 2022 World Cup: Qatar's make-or-break moment"; Brannagan *et al*, "Mass social change and identity hybridization: the case of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup"; Næss, "A Figurational Approach to Soft Power and Sport Events".

<sup>56</sup> Henaou, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam"; Lo, "Leveraging Sports for Public Diplomacy Outcomes: The Case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022."

<sup>57</sup> Asrar, "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of

November 2022, Qatar became a significant arena for inter-civilizational and intercultural interactions, influenced by and influencing global athletic competition.<sup>58</sup> While this essay cannot fully explore the complex matrix of political, economic, and social ambitions that have shaped Qatar as an Islamicate state, it is essential to note that Qatar's hosting of WC22 represents an Islamicate-rooted intercultural hub. This event showcased a glimpse of inter-civilizational understanding, offering opportunities for diverse people, primarily from Euro-American backgrounds, to experience Muslim civility in public spaces and learn from and engage with Islamicate society.<sup>59</sup>

Despite these constructive efforts, mainstream European media's coverage was predominantly negative.<sup>60</sup> Various criticisms, some of which raised legitimate concerns, reinforced stereotypical and Islamophobic narratives.<sup>61</sup> This bias missed the opportunity to highlight the World Cup's potential as a space for global dialogue and cultural exchange. While every sociocultural and political space is shaped by its historical and cultural context, it is essential to move beyond broad-brush critiques and engage with the specificities of the Qatari context. Again, if secularism is understood to be an historical product of a specific cultural, philosophical, and political formation that has its roots in European history, it differs from Islamicate experiences wherein spirituality, religious traditions, and ethical systems have evolved in a parallel, yet distinct, trajectory. These trajectories are what civilizations, in many respects, represent.

Consider the following: A range of official statements and projected images give an impression that many of the socio-cultural

---

Islam?.

<sup>58</sup> See Baabood, *Qatar's Resilience Strategy and Implications for State-Society Relations*.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, "Civilizational Analysis as a Mode of the Intercultural, Intercivilizational Encounters, the Intercultural and Contemporary Historical Sociology".

<sup>60</sup> Abdulrahman al M. and Al Ansari, H. "World Cup in Qatar: Human Rights and Normalization." *Carnegie Endowment of International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/88890>, January 26.; Amnesty International, 2016. Human Rights Watch, 2021).

<sup>61</sup> Dubinsky, "Clashes of cultures at the FIFA World Cup: Reflections on soft power, nation building, and sportswashing in Qatar 2022"; Swart and Hussein 2023

statement expressed and promoted by Qatari officials are often infused with an awareness of Islamic moral and spiritual messages.<sup>62</sup> The Education city mosque, “Minaretein” has been designed by an architect couple Ali Mangera and Ada Yvars Bravo and it represents a fusion of modern and traditional architecture expressed as sacred art. The mosque is further embellished by calligraphy produced by the British Iraqi Arabic calligraphy artist, Taha Al-Hiti. The spatial dynamics of venues like Katara Cultural Village and Souq Waqif highlight how modern expressions of cultural heritage can create meaningful meeting places through displays of Muslim civility.<sup>63</sup> These spaces allow fans, players, and guest workers, including laborers, to engage with one another and with local communities, offering significant insights into the potential for coexistence and civility.<sup>64</sup> Such zones provide common areas where supporters from around the world can connect, fostering interactions that shape their religious and cultural experiences. For example, the prohibition of alcohol during the World Cup 2022 allowed people to meet in a state of sobriety and clear-headedness.<sup>65</sup> These examples demonstrate how everyday living and modes of coexistence embody and affect the lives of real people, illustrating how both imagined and real inter-civilisational differences manifest under the auspices of Muslim civility.

These spaces also allowed for the public expression of religiosity and faith without apparent restrictions, suggesting that Doha opened up a space that respects and embraces religious, cultural, and other differences. However, any historical or contemporary place is influenced by political power and its underlying intentions and sensibilities. The historical cities of Granada and Cordoba during the classical age, like modern Doha during the WC22, represent(ed) sites of cultural exchange, dialogue, and mutual respect among different religious and ethnic groups. They

---

<sup>62</sup> See Al-Malki, “Public Policy and Identity”.

<sup>63</sup> Henao, “Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam”.

<sup>64</sup> See Asrar, “How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam”.

<sup>65</sup> Church, Ben. “Soaking up the atmosphere at Qatar 2022: What it’s like at a ‘dry’ World Cup.” CNN. 2022, November 30. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/30/football/alcohol-world-cup-fans-qatar-2022-spt-intl/index.html>

also reveal the complexities and challenges of coexistence – issues of power, hierarchy, and exclusion were present, just as they are in Qatar, London, and Berlin.<sup>66</sup> Much like other capitalist environments across the globe, the notion of development employed by Qatar is merged with its historical, traditional, social and political structures. The underlying cultural and traditional sensibilities manifested in forms of Muslim civility demonstrate agency in everyday interactions, influenced by both religious teachings and local customs.

Arguably, in a number of historical and modern Islamicate examples, public spaces that have been organised around principles of Muslim civility enabled constructive encounters of diverse groups of people. Such encounters were not secular in nature and in many instances have produced tolerance and coexistence, including free thought, and creativity within debates.<sup>67</sup> It seems that Qatar's investment in global sport, culture, and education rests on a mixture of classical and modern ethical and material considerations that are organized around principles of Muslim civility.<sup>68</sup> Such investments have helped diversify its predominantly rentier economy and create global alliances but also solidifies its legitimacy both domestically and internationally.<sup>69</sup> Symbols of Islamic tradition and Arabic culture, combined with the aspirations of a nation-state, permeate many aspects of Qatar's forward momentum, articulated by its government, NGOs, and media outlets.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Mrahorović, Senad. "Spirituality and Sport: A Way towards Perfection." *Religions* 16 (2022): 18-144.

<sup>67</sup> Bulliet, Richard. W. *The case for Islamo-Christian civilization*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>68</sup> See Al-Malki, "Public Policy and Identity".

<sup>69</sup> See Asrar, "How the Qatar World Cup Offered Fans an Interfaith Understanding of Islam"; Muneer, Hana. "Combating misrepresentations; How Qatar focused on showcasing its Islamic culture during World Cup". Maktoob Media. <https://maktoobmedia.com/qatar-2022/combating-misrepresentations-how-qatar-focused-on-showcasing-islamic-culture-during-world-cup>; Henao, "Qatar Offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam".

<sup>70</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Qatar: Small state, big politics*. (Cornell University Press, 2015); Al-Malki, "Public Policy and Identity"; Knight, Sam. "At Qatar's World Cup, where politics and pleasure collide." *New Yorker*. 2022, December 12. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/12/12/at-qatars-world-cup-where-politi>

## Conclusion

This essay has demonstrated how public spaces structured around Muslim civility not only fosters social interaction but also contributes to the intellectual revival (*tajdid*) of Islamic thought by enabling the reinterpretation of key Islamic principles in contemporary settings. In the context of Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022, we have been able to observe the intersection between public spaces and Muslim civility which have a potential to revitalise Islamic civilization. This obvious stretch of the analysis, acts like a conceptual scaffolding for the claim that developing open public spaces in Islamicate contexts organised around principles of Muslim civility fosters interaction, encounters, and the convergence of diverse ideas, worldviews, and perspectives.

This analysis also offers a potential to generate constructive and productive solutions to contemporary challenges from restructuring public spaces and organising them around the principles of civility and ethics. This essay highlights the potentiality of public spaces in Islamicate contexts to serve as platforms for reviving Islamic ethical principles of justice, compassion, equity etc., all of which are adapted to contemporary settings.

To be clear, this analysis is not an evaluation of civility's success or failure within Qatar's hosting of the World Cup 2022. Instead, the essay demonstrates how Qatar navigates the delicate balance between opening up for global dialogue and maintaining control over its traditional ethical and moral commitments, as well as its political and economic interests. While Qatar faces tensions between preserving its ethical commitments and responding to global pressures, its design of public spaces reflects a conscious attempt to maintain a balance that supports civility and ethics grounded in Islamic principles.

Inadvertently, such balancing acts and tensions have also revealed the potential for the revival of Islamic civilisation. As discussed earlier, impulse and drive for coexistence, applied ethics, and civility are not spontaneous or inherent, but are carefully crafted socio-political and cultural acts. Despite inherent difficulties and

---

cs-and-pleasure-collideGulf Times, 2023; The Peninsula, 2022).

tensions, historically, these efforts represent Islamicate attempts to create an inter-civilisational environment where civility and coexistence triumph over their opposites. Agents of change – political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, architectural, etc. – have strived to maintain the continuity of Islamic tradition while facilitating innovation in the face of modern challenges.

Qatar, for example, has attempted to align important Islamic ethical principles with open public spaces. These public showcases, through Quranic recitations, art, and cultural events, actively reflected Muslim civility by promoting values like hospitality and compassion, reinforcing the ethical underpinnings of Islamic revival, and perhaps even, the spiritual ethos of an iteration of Islamic civilisation.

The WC22 served as a brief yet significant social experiment, temporarily uniting diverse audiences, ideologies, cultures, and religions. Though imperfectly, it mirrored the spatial dynamics of pre-modern Islamicate cities by becoming a nexus for inter-civilizational dialogue, fostering understanding and coexistence between Islamicate and non-Islamicate countries. It provided a unique platform for inter-civilisational encounters, bridging cultural divides and fostering opportunities for coexistence and civility beyond reductionist and myopic ideological constructs like ethnonationalism, secularism, and Islamism.

Far from being merely an athletic spectacle, this event served as a microcosm of humanity's broader quest for understanding and connection. The infrastructure developed for the World Cup, including stadiums, fan zones, and training facilities, were social spaces carefully designed to reflect aspects of Islamic heritage and Arabic culture. These public spaces became arenas for complex social interactions, requiring high levels of civility for successful engagement. Shaped by global flows of capital, labour, and ideas, they served as modern-day arenas for inter-civilizational encounters, much like other cosmopolitan and vibrant places. The event highlighted the political economic nexus where globalisation, sport economics, state control, geopolitics, and human rights, all converged in a unique inter-civilisational synergy. This synergy has the potential

to shape shared experiences, cosmopolitan ideals, and civility beyond such global events.

By fostering intercultural encounters through well-designed public spaces, Qatar demonstrated how Muslim civility in such environments can contribute to the broader process of Islamic revival. Qatar's emphasis on hospitality, inclusivity, and respect for guests highlighted key Islamic values such as compassion and mercy, adapted to a modern sports setting. This image is in sharp contrast to the imperial impulses expressed by Euro-American and Zionist forces which are consolidated around the idea of domination and exploitation and shutting down venues for open dialogue.<sup>71</sup> In the light of attempts of domination of neo-colonialism, Qatar's proactive stance in fostering intercultural dialogue and reducing tensions is even more noteworthy. This stance aligns rather well with the broader intellectual revivalist effort to reinterpret and apply Islamic principles to contemporary challenges, which adds to the civilisational revivalist puzzle. Overall, the WC22 exemplified how the interplay between public space and Muslim civility can contribute to the ongoing revival of Islamic civilisation by fostering intercultural understanding. This small effort demonstrated a range of ethical principles that had addressed at least some of the challenges of Islamophobia, ethnonationalism, moral relativism and other reductionist processes and phenomena.

It is important not to exaggerate the successes of the WC22. There are several noteworthy limitations of the above argument. The singular focus on Qatar and the World Cup 2022 restricts the generalisability of the analysis. While this essay illustrates how Qatar's approach fosters intercultural dialogue through showcasing Muslim civility in a modern sports context and through development of open public spaces, this case still represents an exception in the world of mega sport events. At the moment, the challenge here is to extrapolate these findings to other regions or events. Addressing these limitations would require a comparative analysis involving multiple cases across different contexts within the Islamicate world.

---

<sup>71</sup> Thomas, Baylis. *The Dark Side of Zionism: The Quest for Security through Dominance*. (Lexington Books, 2011); Grandin, Greg. *The end of the myth: From the frontier to the border wall in the mind of America*. (Metropolitan Books, 2019)

<b>EDITORIAL NOTES</b>	1
<i>Khaliq Ahmad</i>	
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
PROSPECTS OF REVIVING ISLAMIC CIVILISATION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES: MUSLIM CIVILITY AT THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP	11
<i>Emin Poljarevic</i>	
MODERN REFORMS IN THE ISLAMIC THOUGHT WITH REFERENCE TO SCIENCE: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT	37
<i>Zain Razzaq and Rab Nawaz</i>	
ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN WORK ETHICS: AN ANALYSIS	59
<i>Sumera Irfan, Mohammad Bin Ibrahim and Thameem Ushama</i>	
THE CONCEPT OF AL-ISTIKHLAF AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN RECLAIMING THE ATTRIBUTES OF MAN AS KHALIFAH ON EARTH	83
<i>Hidayah Wan Ismail and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
REIMAGINING ISLAMIC DISCOURSE: TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP	103
<i>Maqbool Hassan Gilani, Saima Ali and Ghulam Mohyiddeen</i>	
THE ARTISTIC COMPOSITION OF ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY IN THE <i>KISWAH</i> OF THE HOLY KAABA: A DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL STUDY	121
<i>Duaa Alashari and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
RECONCILIATION AND ISLAMISATION - A ROADMAP FOR AN ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL	141
<i>Safiyah Sabreen Syeed and Ahmad El-Muhammady</i>	
TECHNO-JAHILIYYAH: EXAMINING TRANSHUMANISM THROUGH THE ISLAMIC LENS	167
<i>Asif Adnan</i>	
IRANIAN CINEMA AND ISLAMIC REVIVALISM (1970-1990): THE ENTWINED TAPESTRY	205
<i>Saima Ali and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
IBN SINA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERNITY: INTEGRATING MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY, NEUROPHILOSOPHY, AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILISATION	225
<i>Nurul Ain Norman and Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah</i>	
EARLY IDEAS ON REFORM AND RENEWAL THROUGH JOURNALISM IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO: HAMKA'S ACCOUNTS IN <i>AYAHKU</i> (1950)	249
<i>Ahmad Murad Merican</i>	
INTER-CIVILISATIONAL ISSUES AND THE FACTORS AFFECTING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS: A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTIONS	263
<i>Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani, Ahmad Khaliq and Abdul Waheed</i>	
MASTERY-HUMILITY MODEL: FROM CONVERGENCE TO INTEGRATION	295
<i>Ruslan Hassan</i>	
THE DISCOURSE OF RENEWAL: ASSESSING FAZLUR RAHMAN'S HERMENEUTICS AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE	319
<i>Arief S. Arman</i>	
<b>ICRITC-24 REVIEW</b>	337
<i>Khaliq Ahmad</i>	

WoS-Indexed under Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Current Contents/Arts and Humanities and Scopus

ISSN 1394-6870



9 771394 687009