

# Global Urban Studies Cluster

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

## Fragmentation, polarization, and discontinuity of Doha's planning practice: the urban legacies of the 2022 World Cup

by **Dr. Simona Azzali**

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Since the 1990s, Qatar has experienced an unprecedented economic development along with rapid urban growth and motorization, which together have created new social and business opportunities for the local population but also important challenges for the local government, especially with regard to a sustainable development of the country. Doha, in particular, has almost quadrupled in terms of population size. While its population was about 450,000 people in 1995, almost 2,000,000 people inhabit the capital today. This rapid expansion has completely changed and reshaped the city, leading to a vast urban growth due to the construction of new entire neighborhoods from scratch. Urban sprawl, lack of planning strategy, absence of public transport and open spaces, and wide car-based corridors that fragment the urban tissue are some of the major traits characterizing contemporary Doha.

Within this context, the seminar aims to describe the urban planning processes and construction sector in Doha, the capital of Qatar, with particular reference to the concepts of fragmentation, discontinuity, and polarization. By looking at social and spatial fragmentation of the city, the seminar will sum up Doha's planning management, and briefly explain some links between the oil&gas and real estate sectors. Then, it will suggest that the lack of coordination among the entities involved in planning practices, the proliferation of mega projects, and, most importantly, the role of sport in the planning are some of the main traits characterizing the city's construction sector. Finally, the seminar will present the main concepts beneath the planning of the 2022 World Cup, and show how the tournament, which was intended to mitigate social polarization and physical fragmentation, is in reality increasing these phenomena.

### DETAILS OF SEMINAR

**Date: Monday, 2 October 2017**

**Time: 10.00 – 11.30am**

**Venue: Research Division Seminar Room,  
AS7-06-42, Shaw Foundation Building**

Note: Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by 26th Sept 2017.



### About the Speaker

Simona Azzali is currently a researcher in Urban Studies at the Department of Architecture, NUS. She holds a Ph.D. from Qatar University / UCL in Urban Planning and Design, and a MSc. and BSc. from Politecnico di Milano, Italy. Before joining NUS, Simona worked as a project manager, instructor, and researcher both in Milan and Doha. Her academic interests are primarily related to Gulf cities; mega-events and their impact on built environment; urban transformations and regeneration; sustainable urbanism; mobility and transportation.