

**Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar:
The Growing Global Influence of the Persian Gulf**

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Thesis Statement: The three Emirates of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar are becoming the newest center of globalization through their efforts of economic, cultural, and political manipulation of the traditional Western global centers.

Table of Contents:

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Before Globalization | 4 |
| a. Overview of Globalization | 5 |
| b. Pre-Modern History of the Emirates | 6 |
| c. The discovery of Oil and Independence | 8 |
| 3. Global Economics and the Region | 9 |
| a. Dubai the Trendsetter | 10 |
| b. Fossil Fuel Money | 14 |
| c. The “Big Three” Middle Eastern Airlines | 15 |
| d. The Investment Authorities..... | 18 |
| 4. Cultural Convergence | 21 |
| a. Sports | 21 |
| b. Celebrity Life | 24 |
| c. Changing the Indigenous Culture | 26 |
| 5. The Politics of the Emirates | 28 |
| a. The system of governance | 28 |
| b. How the people live | 29 |
| c. International Diplomacy | 30 |
| d. Al Jazeera | 33 |
| 6. Criticisms of the System | 36 |
| a. Treatment of Foreigners | 37 |
| b. Main Economic, Cultural, and Political Points | 39 |
| c. The Environmental Impact | 42 |
| d. Effects on the Population | 44 |
| 7. Conclusions | 47 |
| 8. Bibliography | 49 |

Part 1: Introduction

The Middle East is currently the most volatile region of the world. Terrorist groups continue to instill fear in the local populace and draw the wrath of world governments. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran have never been higher due to their extreme sectarian differences. Syria remains in a state of civil war that drives refugees across the borders of Europe. Iraq still remains in shambles after the United States pulled out their combat operations. And the never-ending conflict between the Arab world and Israel continues to go on day after day.

Yet, in this land of apparent disarray, there lies some small stretches of land in the Persian Gulf region of the Middle East that know relative peace compared to the rest of their surroundings. These lands are the countries known as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The three major emirates (or sheikdoms) in that area, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar, have transformed themselves into global economic, cultural, and political powerhouses on the same level as cities like New York, London, Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tokyo.

Dubai has been seen worldwide in newscasts and movies due to the immense shopping malls they have, their constant building of skyscrapers that includes the world's tallest building, the Burj Kalifa, and luxurious housing and hotels. People have heard of the place through Emirates Airline's numerous sponsorship deals with sport organizations all over the world. The various titles bestowed on Dubai like "Manhattan on speed," "a capitalist dream on steroids," and "Part Disney, part Scheherazade" should give casual observers an idea of the place (Ali 1). The money

fueling Manchester City Football Club, one of the richest in the world, comes from the Abu Dhabi royal family's oil money. The world can thank Qatar for news that comes from the Al-Jazeera network and the 2022 FIFA World Cup, scandals and all.

Yet, most of what Westerners hear about is how these places are nightmare scenarios to live in. There's no distinct Arab culture there. The locals exploit foreign workers in a system that can be compared to modern day slavery. The intolerant Saudis influence them. They harbor terrorists in their modern cities. Considering the steps the world is trying to take to fight global warming, that these three places sit on an oil hotbed is not doing us any favors with their consumption.

But in terms of connecting new points of the world with each other, as well as fostering new political understandings, economic growth and cultural sponsorship, these three places in the Persian Gulf are the new standard of convergence of the three topics mentioned earlier in our globalized world for the foreseeable future.

The argument will be divided into the following sections. The first section will go through the lens of the globalization concept and the histories of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar before they became independent of colonial powers in 1971. It will be mainly used for background information for the future sections. The second part will look into the economic progress the emirates have made over the past few decades in order to be global powers. The topics discussed will be their tourism industry, their investment groups, and their fossil fuel industry. The third part will

discuss the cultural institutions associated with these lands. Topics include the brand awareness of these Persian Gulf Emirates through sports, their involvement in global events and popular culture, and the cultural modifications they've made to themselves. The fourth section discusses the politics of these places and the political power they wield over other regions of the world. These include diplomatic relations with various regions of the world and the political soft power they hold. The final part will examine the criticisms of the systems in place brought on from countries the Persian Gulf is wresting global influence. These will reflect back on the many points brought up in the previous sections of this thesis.

Part 2: Before Globalization:

Before going too far in depth with how these major Persian Gulf emirates affect globalization, the idea of globalization as a concept and the history surrounding these three places will be discussed. Keep in mind that in the United Arab Emirates, the name of the emirate also coincides with its major city, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi being our main examples, along with Sharjah, Fujairah, and so on. Doha, the capital of Qatar, is the center of all political, economic, and social activity in Qatar. When referring to activity happening in Qatar, it will be happening in Doha unless indicated otherwise.

A: Overview of Globalization

Globalization is known as the growing interconnectivity of the world economies and cultures (Osterhammel 5). While the idea of a globalized world only started being talked about in the 1980's, the evidence of the world's economy and cultures being tightly interconnected goes back to at least the age of European colonization. It didn't just deal with controlling land; it also dealt with concentrating the economies of many different places. European countries like France, Spain, and the United Kingdom have ruled empires that spanned the Americas, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and conquered Asian lands as well (Osterhammel 42-5).

With these lands directly or indirectly under their political control, Europe became the economic center of the world. These empires finally did end by the mid-20th century due to World War II, as Europe was drained of internal power and resources. This and the citizen's lack of support for maintaining empires led to colonies either successfully fighting for their independence, or having it granted by the European ruler (Osterhammel 118-9).

Still, the culture of the colonizers is the basis of the newly independent states. The languages of countries in the Americas and Africa are adapted from European ones, with English becoming the lingua franca of most of the world, mainly between people doing business who don't understand each other's native languages. Sports from Europe, along with other world power the United States of America, have spread across the world. Most people's thoughts of high culture are associated with institutions and individuals based in Europe. The thinkers of Greece, the artists of

the Renaissance, the world changing history of cities that only Rome, Paris, London, and Berlin can contain. The Westerners still view Europe and the United States as the center of world global systems. But as non-Western countries become as economically and politically strong as the West, the West's influence weakens considerably.

B: Pre-Modern History of the Emirates

Prior to the 19th century, the coastal settlements that make up the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, along with related areas Bahrain and Kuwait, were made up of wandering nomad tribes who would migrate to the coast at a certain point in the year to go pearl diving. Pearling was the main driver of the local economy, with a significant portion of the population involved with the various activities associated with pearling, like diving, driving the boats, and taking the pearls to market (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 6-7).

The coastal settlements became protectorates of the British Empire in the middle of the 19th century. The emirates that make up the present day United Arab Emirates (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Fuhairah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and Ras al-Khaimah) were known as the Trucial States (Krane 16), and each sheikdom under British control would have a leader in place that would make sure the British were the proper business authority, which remain to this day. The Al-Moktoums controlled Dubai since 1833 (Krane 19), the Al Nahyans ruled Abu Dhabi since 1793 (Davidson *Abu Dhabi* 5), and the Al-Thanis governed Qatar since 1868.

There were various wars fought between each Gulf settlement, along with the countries of Saudi Arabia and Oman. The British would also get involved with these conflicts in order to protect their own interests, mainly the valuable trade route from India to Europe that goes through the Middle East so to avoid any European controlled African coastline. (Fromherz 44).

In 1892, the British forced the various rulers of the Trucial States to sign a treaty where they would only do business with Great Britain unless they were granted permission to do otherwise (Davidson 24). Qatar would sign a similar treaty in 1916. This was not meant to just protect British interests, but also to protect from the Ottomans and Persians. Either way, these stretches of land were firmly placed in the British sphere of influence. Despite the continuing problem of a small population, the hot commodity of pearls allowed the Gulf Coast to gain more wealth.

The location of Qatar and the Trucial States on the Persian Gulf allowed for plenty of trade opportunities with Persia. The largest group of immigrants to Dubai by the early 20th century was Persians, which continues to this day (Krane 22). This lent them to being prime regional powers while under British rule. Dubai became a main port for shipping goods between British controlled territories, mainly India. From Bombay, Indian goods would come to the port of Dubai to be sold or carried onwards to Europe through the Arabian Peninsula, around it, or through the Suez Canal as the 20th century went on.

The main settlements around this region consisted of nothing more than villages of thatched huts with baked clay forts wherever protection would be

needed. They were only prosperous when it was pearl diving season. Dubai was used as a refueling point for airplanes and ships traveling from Britain to the colonies in Asia. But since Dubai had no electricity back then, people could not see the place at night. The only source of light in the 1950's was a 200-watt light bulb powered by a gas-run generator used for those occasions (Krane 40-1). This is how insignificant this region may have appeared back then. No permanent settlements with no major buildings in the first few decades of the 20th century meant the average person could easily overlook it.

The pearl economy of the region was subject to boom and bust cycles. Eventually, the pearl market completely went bust due to higher quality pearls emerging from competitors in Japan and the Mediterranean, along with the Great Depression (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 30). What happened next in the gulf was the region's poorest era in recent memory. That people who lived during that time who are still alive now live in air-conditioned luxury housing is something of a miracle.

C: Discovery of Oil and Independence

The first instance of Gulf Coast oil was discovered in Bahrain in 1939, with the other Gulf territories on a blitz to try and discover oil in their borders. Of these, Abu Dhabi was the main winner, with 94% of the country's oil residing in its desert and off the coast (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 69-70). Qatar would find one of the world's largest natural gas deposits offshore between itself and Iran (Fromherz 83). Dubai, while it did find oil in the 1950's, would never center their entire economy around it

the way other Middle Eastern states did. Oil wasn't exploited in the area until after World War II, the same era where British colonies were gaining their independence. The British Empire was a thing of the past as British citizens cared more about domestic matters than establishing their presence abroad. This included their withdrawal from the Persian Gulf areas, which British parliament said would be independent by 1971 (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 54). Kuwait would declare itself independent, but the Trucial States, Qatar, and Bahrain went into a panic.

With full British withdrawal scheduled to take place, Qatar, Bahrain, and the Trucial States tried to work out an agreement that would have them one unified country. After several months of disagreements, Bahrain and Qatar both decided they would be better off as independent countries of their own right. This left the seven remaining Trucial States to work together and form their own country. On December 1, 1971, the United Arab Emirates was born (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 59-60). The new federation was led by Abu Dhabi, the largest emirate by size and hosting the capital city, and Dubai, the cosmopolitan rogue that looks to do things its own way.

Part 3: Global Economics and the Region

The strong backbone of any place that wants to be known the world over is an economy that can handle any ambitions, precisely what Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar are doing to make them positively viewed by the world. What started in fossil fuels evolved into glass high rises and owning foreign companies. Since 9/11

occurred, America and its allies have been overly hostile to Arab countries, but that has not stopped the region from promoting itself not just in the West, but in major developing world marketplaces.

A: Dubai the Trendsetter

Like most of the Middle East in the 1970's, the economy of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Qatar initially centered on exporting oil and natural gas. The genesis of the post-oil economy path started in Dubai, whom only has access to about 4% of the oil in the UAE. That number still amounts to 4 billion barrels in reserves, but its supply will run out faster than Abu Dhabi's (Krane 49). This led the Al-Maktoums, mainly Sheikh Mohammed, to get creative on how to make post-oil money.

In the 1970's, Dubai embarked on its first major infrastructure project, the Port Jebel Ali project. Construction started in 1972 and opened in 1979 with 66 berths, making it one of the world's largest ports. Immediately, the demand for ship repair facilities and regional shipping allowed the docks to be filled up right away (Davidson, *Dubai* 106-8). This was the start of the Dubai Ports World Authority, one of the largest port operators in the world. Right now, it operates ports in 30 countries around the world, including major ports in Rotterdam, London, Jeddah, Vancouver, Buenos Aires, Sydney, Hong Kong, and Manila (DPWorld.com). Owning these shipping terminals was the first of Dubai making its name known outside the Middle East.

Dubai was not a major tourist hotspot right from the outset; the Al Maktoum family built it all up. They early on adapted the, “If you build it, they will come” mentality, given that the hot weather and shorelines were already in place. They just needed the right residences to attract high spenders.

The first major hotel that put Dubai on the map was the Burj Al Arab hotel, billed as the world’s first 7-star hotel. The building’s design, a sail-shaped skyscraper nearly 1,000 feet tall, is the first of many of Sheik Mohammed’s projects that created instantly recognizable icons for Dubai. When it opened in 1999, it created buzz all over the world for its extreme luxury and blend of Arab and Chinese styles. The rumored cost to build it ranges between \$650 million and \$2 billion. Even if the hotel runs at 100% occupancy for 100 years, Sheik Mohammad will never make his entire investment back. This includes the three-bedroom suites going for their maximum rate of \$21,000 per night (Krane 113-7). But that’s not what Sheikh Mohammad wanted; he wanted people to see Dubai’s capability to provide luxury. The Burj Al-Arab is the initial omen of Dubai’s growing reliance on the high-end tourism sector. You could make the case that Dubai one of the only places in the world where the hotels are tourist attractions instead of just a place to rest on vacations.

People looking at Dubai’s ever-growing skyline immediately take notice of the Burj Khalifa, the world’s tallest building. Built in perfectly ambitious Dubai fashion, it stands at 2,625 feet (829.8 meters), half a mile above the earth. It contains 156 stories, which some say is too high for the general sensibilities of most people. It

has become the most iconic Dubai building of them all, as Sheik Mohammad wanted it built so high, it would intimidate potential challengers for the title. It's so high that you can watch the sun set from ground level, then ride an elevator to the top of the Burj Khalifa to watch the sun set again (Krane 161-5).

When flying over Dubai and looking down on the Gulf coast, passengers can see man-made islands in the shape of palm trees and a map of the earth. These islands are filled with luxury apartment neighborhoods made up of nothing but beachfront property. With the earth shaped island, each country has one house on it. English soccer player David Beckham reportedly managed to get the players of the English national soccer team to buy homes on the Palm before heading off to the 2002 World Cup. It was front-page news in the British tabloids all that week (Krane 154). There are plenty of other luxury beachfront properties around the world, like in Florida, the French Riviera, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands. For people living close to the Persian Gulf, these properties are the epitome of luxury, equivalent to any other luxury living space around the world. For Westerners, most likely those who already own a luxury home in the aforementioned areas, there is some novelty in living in luxury in what is commonly thought of as an exotic land, along with expanding their own holdings.

Much like the beachfront properties built from scratch, Dubai also built up its spending economy from nothing. Large malls dot Dubai's landscape the same way skyscrapers and beach properties do. The design and layout of these malls are extravagant the same way malls in Las Vegas are. Dubai Mall, located next to the

Burj Khalifa, is the world's largest shopping mall, complete with an underwater zoo and an ice rink. Its second largest mall, the Mall of the Emirates, is famous for having an indoor ski slope, Ski Dubai. Dubai has had its own shopping festival since 1996 (Ali 22-3). Dubai is as if there was an entire country devoted to trying to be the strip mall of the American suburbs, trying to cater to everyone's needs as long as that means purchasing something.

In an effort to attract foreign businesses to set up shop in the region, Dubai is dotted with special free economic zones for foreign ownership to take place. Other major benefits for operating in these zones include freedom from certain regulations and freedom from paying certain taxes. Dubai's experimentation with this concept caused Abu Dhabi, along with other emirates and neighboring Middle Eastern countries, to start up similar projects (Rehman, 43).

Normally, companies in the UAE are subject to the 1984 Commercial Companies Law, which requires registered companies to either have a local sponsor or be at least 51% owned by a UAE national. As a way of circumventing this law as soon as it was passed, Sheikh Rashid bin Said Al-Maktoum created the free zone project, starting with the Jebel Ali Free Zone that, in 2007, had over 2,000 companies and 40,000 workers there. Of these, 45% were from Western Europe and North America, the most notable being the regional headquarters for oil company Halliburton. Other free cities that followed were Dubai Internet City, which houses the Middle Eastern headquarters of Microsoft, Dell, and Hewlett-Packard, Dubai Media City, which houses satellites of CNN, BBC, and Reuters, and the Dubai

International Financial Center, which houses the likes of Merrill Lynch and prominent Swiss financial institutions (Davison, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* 114-9). The promise of tax-free business operations is incentive enough for anyone to work where promised. Dubai presents other business opportunities for Western companies due to the untapped potential of the Arab marketplace and the strategic locations in Dubai and the Persian Gulf.

B: Fossil Fuel Economy

As mentioned before, Abu Dhabi has the most oil fields in the United Arab Emirates, containing some 98 billion barrels worth in reserves. This accounts for 94% of all oil in the UAE, and 8% of the world's total oil. These reserves, if Abu Dhabi is to pump it all out, would last the entirety of the 21st century if pumping at 3.5 million barrels a day. (Davidson 69-70). Qatar shares one of the world's largest natural gas fields with Iran, with proven reserves of 896 trillion cubic feet, 14% of the world's reserves. The natural gas reserves could last for 200 years. It is the world's third largest natural gas producer, behind Russia and Iran (Fromherz 83). The revenue coming in, combined with the smaller native population of Qatar compared to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, makes Qatar the richest country per capita in the world with each Qatari native worth \$140,649. For comparison, the next closest country, Luxembourg, has a per capita GDP of \$97,662; by comparison the United Arab Emirates' GDP per capita is \$67,674, and the United States GDP per capita is \$54,630 (Worldatlas.com).

C: The “Big Three” Middle East Airlines

The Persian Gulf is more connected to the outside world by air travel than any place on earth. The major international airports of the region are perfectly positioned on major routes between nearly everywhere. The ruling sheikhs know this and invested heavily in airlines.

This is best exemplified by Dubai’s largest airline, Emirates, which is wholly owned by the Dubai government. The airline currently serves more than 130 cities around the world, with the countries it has the most destinations being the United States, India, Pakistan, Australia, and the United Kingdom, most of the world’s major English speaking countries (Destinations, Emirates.com). While other major airlines are expanding their long-haul operations to ever-distant destinations from their bases, Emirates’ ace in the hole is its outlandishness. It has the world’s largest fleet of Airbus 380’s, the world’s only fully double-decker aircraft, with around 75 in service and another 65 on order. These include first-class suites that have a spa, showers and bartender service. Not to mention crewmembers from all over the world to emphasize how it can bring people of far-off cultures together (Emirates A380, Emirates.com).

With the success of Emirates Airline, Abu Dhabi set up its own airline, Etihad Airways (Arabic for “Unity”), and designated that as the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, as a sign of the rivalry between these two cities. Etihad is the second biggest airline in the Middle East after Emirates in many categories, such as fleet size, passengers, destinations, and profits. Unlike Emirates, Etihad does have

financial stakes in several foreign airlines. These include the Italian flag carrier Alitalia, India's Jet Airways, Germany's Airberlin, Air Serbia, and Virgin Australia (*Our Equity Partners*, Etihad.com). With these airlines losing business losing business to both cheaper airlines like Ryanair and Easyjet and to larger, long-haul specialists like British Airways, KLM, and Emirates, these airlines need better financial backing and business organization to get whatever customers they have to keep coming back.

Qatar also has its own airline, Qatar Airways, that has become the third major airline of the Persian Gulf region. While as ambitious as Emirates and Etihad, Qatar also belongs to the Oneworld Airline alliance, which includes airlines like American Airlines, British Airways, Australia's Qantas, Spain's Iberia, Malaysia Airlines, Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, and the LATAM Group of Brazil and Chile (Oneworld.com). These airlines coordinate flights with each other through their main market countries and try to draw traffic mainly through connecting flights. While it's definitely a boost to be in an alliance to keep on western airline's good side, Qatar Airways still adds a few new destinations a year like all the other Gulf carriers do. Even after exhausting the possible major metropolitan destinations, Qatar is adding smaller cities that don't get much intercontinental traffic, like Pisa, Sarajevo, and Skopje in Europe, Windhoek, Douala, and Lusaka in Africa, and Krabi and Chiang Mai in Thailand (*Airwaysnews.com*). Emirates is attempting the same strategy of flying to more exotic vacation

destinations besides the global business centers, something that the traditional major airlines have also worked into their strategies.

It should be noted that main hubs for these three airlines, Dubai International Airport, Abu Dhabi International Airport, and Hamad International Airport in Doha, are all part of a select few airports around the world that offer non-stop flights between all 6 inhabited continents. The two other airports that can boast that are George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Texas and O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa. Other major airports can say they offer destinations to all six continents, but the longer flights usually require a stop along the way. That's another selling point for these airlines: why go through the hassle of checking through multiple airports when you can transfer through just one?

In the new era of extremely fuel-efficient aircraft that can make 18-19 hour flights, there is a new bragging contest as to who can manage the world's longest flight. As of the time of writing this, Emirates currently hold the record, flying between Dubai and Auckland, New Zealand in 17 hours and 35 minutes. This beats the previous record, Qantas' service between Sydney, Australia and Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas by half an hour. For comparison, the current longest flight by any American airline is Delta Airlines' service between Atlanta, Georgia and Johannesburg, South Africa. Many other airlines are trying to one-up each other in the ultra long-haul flight sector, like Qatar's planned direct Doha to Auckland, New

Zealand service, Emirate's planned direct Dubai to Panama City service, and Singapore Airways' Singapore to New York service (Ryan, New Zealand Herald) (Hunter, CNN). For travelers who prefer convenience over whatever price these flights may be, that's another selling point to travel on these airlines.

D: The Investment Authorities

The governments of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar own and rely on investment authorities. These are just like people making investments on Wall Street, except on a much larger scale with more globally known brands involved. The goal of these authorities like this is provide abundant amounts of money for the ruling family so that their subjects can live comfortable lives, along with preparing the Persian Gulf states for a life beyond an oil-driven economy.

The various Abu Dhabi Investment groups owned by the Government of Abu Dhabi are the richest assortment of investment groups and the world, with an estimated value of a trillion dollars at their disposal. The ADIC (Abu Dhabi Investment Council) is the umbrella organization of all the investment groups. They either have stakes or outright own various companies, brands, and landmarks around the world. These include the Chrysler Building in New York City, Citi-Group, Ferrari, and Barclays bank. Other countries Abu Dhabi has investment money in range from Egypt and Saudi Arabia to Japan and Kazakhstan (Davidson *Abu Dhabi* 73-5).

The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) earns much of the country's wealth as well, with assets in the \$100 billion range. Some of the assets include stakes in a large number of London-based establishments. These include supermarket chain Sainsbury's, Barclays bank, the London stock exchange, some buildings in the Canary Wharf section, the London Olympic Village, department store Harrods', and the Shard skyscraper, the tallest building in London. The QIA is also involved with soccer team Paris Saint Germain, Volkswagen, Porsche, U.S. based jewelry store Tiffany's, French media group Legendre, and a number of Greek assets when the Greek banking system was on the verge of collapse in 2011. Other countries that Qatar owns assets in include, Tunisia, Sudan, Indonesia, Morocco, the Seychelles, Cuba, Eritrea, Oman, Sweden and Vietnam (Kamava 98-100).

Dubai has investment groups as well, but they are far more modest than Qatar's and Abu Dhabi's, at an estimated \$25 billion or so. Some of their assets include MGM-Mirage Casinos, Sony, Dreamworks, Barney's clothing store, and the Essex House hotel in Manhattan (Ali, 51). Given the sheer number of places these assets are located in, international businessmen from those countries will have to deal with Dubai, Abu Dhabi or Qatar either in relying on paychecks or in making business deals.

These emirates are not only gaining financial power over the world, they leverage their financial power against each other. During the worldwide recession of 2008-9, Dubai's housing markets went bust. The world's rich who they were trying to attract for years, stopped investing in Dubai due to the economic state of their

home countries. This resulted in a lot vacant luxury rooms. Several planned projects, including a theme park called Dubailand, were cancelled. This came at a time where Dubai found itself \$100 billion in debt and wasn't meeting payments (Krane 316-7). The financial credibility of Dubai lay in ruins.

To restore Dubai's finances, Abu Dhabi provided an initial bailout of \$8 billion (Davidson *Abu Dhabi* 173-5). However, with the two emirates still rivals, Abu Dhabi demanded some concessions for this bailout to work. The most notable concession was the Burj Dubai, then under construction, assuming its current name, the Burj Khalifa, after the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. It could have been worse. One of the rumors surrounding how Dubai would pay its debt back would be to sell Emirates Airlines to Etihad. All in all, the amount of bailout money provided by Abu Dhabi amounted to \$15 billion. The lull in building in Dubai allowed Abu Dhabi and Qatar time to assess the choices Dubai has made and how best to move forward with their own ambitious plans (Krane 318), leading them to become the proper rivals to Dubai they are today.

Dubai might have led the initial charge in the Persian Gulf towards the goal of global recognition, but Abu Dhabi and Qatar have since caught up. Together, these three emirates have created a major transportation hub where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet each other, with luxurious airlines to make travel from anywhere in the world more comfortable. They control vital parts of the oil and natural gas market. And they control a growing number of assets associated with iconic institutions and

places around the world. This shows how Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar have become major economic players to be taken seriously.

Part 4: Cultural Convergence

Much like how the governments of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar have created beachfront properties to attract wealthy tourists to a land of perpetual warmth, they brought in cultural institutions to the area. Sports teams, major American universities, nightlife, and pop culture institutions known worldwide. If there is something the region wants to import, they will do their damndest to make that a reality. Along with their efforts to brand themselves as ideal places to live and do business, these places have left their own mark on the Western countries they advertise in, as they have co-opted certain institutions for their own gain.

A: Sports

Emirates Airline, as one of the major brands of the city of Dubai, has become one of the main advertisers for the emirate and region, mostly through advertising major sport teams and events. In London, Emirates Stadium is home to Arsenal F.C., one of the most widely followed English soccer teams. Their jerseys and training equipment have the airline's slogan "Fly Emirates" on it. Occasionally, during the pre-game ceremonies, the players will be lead out on the field by Emirates' flight attendants. Other soccer teams Emirates sponsors in the same manner include the Spanish team Real Madrid, French team Paris Saint-Germain, Italian team A.C. Milan,

German team Hamburg S.V., and Portuguese team Benfica. Each of these teams has the “Fly Emirates” logo somewhere on their uniforms, practice attire, or stadium. They also sponsor various soccer competitions, like the English FA Cup, and the Asian Football Confederation, one of the 6 continental confederations of world soccer (Football, Emirates.com).

Another team they sponsor is the Los Angeles Dodgers, one of the most historic teams and popular teams of Major League Baseball (Emirates, Los Angeles Dodgers Announce New Partnership Deal, Arab News). This is the first major American team Emirates has sponsored, as well as the first baseball team. Given its location in Los Angeles, the media capital of the world, Emirates can have a firm base for its American presence. Other competitions they sponsor include the Rugby World Cup, the F1 Grand Prix, the US Open in tennis, and International Cricket Council (ICC) events (Rugby, Tennis, Formula One, Cricket, Emirates.com). The ICC even relocated from their longtime headquarters in London to Dubai (Nayar, Gulfnews.com), a smart move if they wanted to be closer to the sports main fan base (i.e. South Asians). The Dubai World Cup is the world’s richest thoroughbred horse race, with the winning purse worth \$27.25 million (Horse Racing, Emirates.com).

One member of the Abu Dhabi royal family, Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, runs City Football Group, a collection of soccer teams whose flagship property is English team Manchester City F.C. (Tatchell 235). Other teams this group owns are New York City F.C., Melbourne City F.C. of Australia, and part ownership of Yokohama F. Marinos of Japan (City Football Group Structure, City Football Group

Media Zone). Given that the English Premier League, which Manchester City plays in, is the most watched sports league in the world, a winning team can show how benevolent Abu Dhabi can be. Like Emirates sponsorships, Etihad does the same with teams owned by the City Football Group. This includes the naming rights to the Manchester City stadium, and being the shirt sponsor for Manchester City, Melbourne City, and New York City (Our Sponsorships, Etihad.com).

Qatar Airways is currently the shirt sponsor for FC Barcelona. Prior to that, the Qatar foundation, Sheik Hamad's effort to bolster education and science in the country, was the sponsor (Guardian, *Barcelona Agree 150m Euro Shirt Sponsor Deal with Qatar Foundation*). Prior to that, as well as the first shirt sponsor in Barcelona's 100-plus year history, it was UNICEF that had the honor (Laporta). FC Barcelona, as one of the most widely followed sports teams on earth, is an advertising goldmine. Any organization lucky enough to secure such a deal will have worldwide exposure during the soccer season. Luckily Qatar Airways has a deal like that on par with Emirates and Etihad.

While Dubai and Abu Dhabi have staked their claims in the sporting world, Qatar arguably outdid both of them when in 2010, they were named host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the first Arab country to do so. The fact that they went up against the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Australia in the bidding process makes it all the more remarkable, since they all have the existing infrastructure and soccer culture in place, something Qatar can not really say they have. The United

States also previously hosted in 1994 while Japan and South Korea co-hosted in 2002 (Zimbalist 30).

Sports are one of the most common ways people are brought together, and a good way for an advertiser or city to make its name known. Dubai is taking advantage of this tactic by advertising in nearly every major sport in the world. Abu Dhabi has sports teams to pump money into and serve as the area's own advertisement. And Qatar, for moment at least, can take solace in how it will host the World Cup in 2022 and show the rest of the world what the region is capable of.

B: Celebrity Life

Any good marketing campaign needs good spokesmen, and the Persian Gulf has managed to get some of the best. These public figures are not just spokespeople for the region; some own vacation residences too. Their presence alone makes the ventures of nightclubs and selling alcohol more feasible as these celebrities, along the potential Western tourists likely to follow them, need to be made at home.

Dubai is scheduled to host the World Expo 2020, the modern equivalent to the World's Fairs of the past. While these expos don't have as much social prestige in the past given that television and the internet can spread new discoveries faster than a month's long exhibition, the city that hosts the event still experiences a boost in tourism, infrastructure spending, and local pride (Judd, St. James Encyclopedia). The brand name companies based in Dubai are already sponsors and Lionel Messi,

arguably the world's greatest active soccer player, has signed on a global ambassador for the event. Dubai has another brand name in their pocket to further promote both the city and this major event (expo2020dubai.ae). World expos can be argued to cause positive social change in the host city, but Dubai will have to wait until it happens.

The film industry has taken note of the benefits of shooting in these emirates. The most recent Star Wars movie, which has broken all sorts of box office records, had the parts on the planet Jakku shot in the deserts of Abu Dhabi. The seventh Fast and Furious movie has one of its chase sequences in the streets of Abu Dhabi. The second Sex in the City movie takes place in Abu Dhabi, even though it wasn't filmed there (Morocco.com). Tom Cruise in Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol climbed up the side of the Burj Khalifa in a sequence that was central to the film's marketing material ([Goundry, thelocationguide.com](http://Goundry,thelocationguide.com)). The latest Star Trek film was filmed in Dubai, since it already looks like a city from the future. Some of the biggest Bollywood films of recent memory have been filmed in Dubai since there is a large Indian diaspora in Dubai (Fernandes, *Khaleej Times*).

Aside from movies, many celebrities have shown up in these emirates. Some musical acts have played here to celebrate the opening of a new tourist attraction or local festival. Along with the aforementioned David Beckham, celebrities that have shown up in Dubai include Tiger Woods, Madonna, and Brad Pitt (Mahdavi 43-4). Bon Jovi, Christina Aguilera, and Justin Timberlake have performed concerts at the Emirates Palace, a luxury hotel in Abu Dhabi (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 92). Jennifer

Aniston even starred in an advertisement for Emirates showcasing the airline's first-class features. The ad also makes fun of US airlines for not having amenities like an in-flight bar or showers (*New Emirates Ad*). This advertisement itself isn't directed at travellers of those airlines in particular, but aimed moreso still at Emirates' audience of the developing world who know America through movies and television. Emirates is tapping into that mindset saying "If it's good enough American movie and television star Jennifer Aniston, it's surely good enough for you." Granted, first-class on Emirates from New York to Dubai costs in the range of \$25,000 (*New Emirates Ad*), but again, it is the high-spenders Emirates is attracting here with this celebrity endorsement.

C: Changing the Indigenous Culture

In the absence of an indigenous culture that was buried under all of the new high rises being built, the Persian Gulf emirates had to import various cultural institutions. Branches of the Guggenheim, designed by Frank Gehry, and Louvre art museums are under construction in Abu Dhabi. Museums of Arab art and history are underdeveloped so that the culture before the oil money trickled in can be preserved (Davidson *Abu Dhabi* 91).

These emirates are also taking the education of its citizens more seriously. Qatar has set up Education City in Doha, one of the most comprehensive gatherings of such institutions in the Middle East. While Qatar University is certainly a part, it's mostly made up of branch campuses of American institutions. These include

Virginia Commonwealth University's design school, Cornell's Medical College, TexasA&M's engineering school, Georgetown's economics and international relations schools, Carnegie Mellon's computer science and business schools, and Northwestern's journalism and communication schools (Kamrava 82). Abu Dhabi has a branch of New York University (Davidson, *Abu Dhabi* 152). Dubai has a branch of Harvard Medical School that runs a hospital in the area called Healthcare City (Krane 132-3).

Rich white westerners are the target demographic these emirates are trying to sell to. In creating a familiar structural environment to vacation in, activities considered taboo by Islamic law, like consuming alcohol and gambling, is becoming more commonplace. Hotel bars and nightclubs serve alcohol all the time, even during the holy month of Ramadan. Dubai does allow the selling of lottery-style tickets at horseracing events and "national bonds" that work like a lottery. It also bears repeating that a Dubai investment group goes own a stake in MGM-Mirage Casinos, the operator of some of the most famous Las Vegas casinos, like the Luxor, Caesar's Palace, Monte Carlo, and Bellagio (Davidson, *Dubai* 196-7).

What has been presented in this cultural section is considered more Western than Arab. Granted there are still some distinctly Arab parts there, but they are overpowered by new Western culture. And with that knowledge, they can market Dubai or Abu Dhabi as a place that's exactly like any other major cities. That bridge can be only crossed if there's some kind of cultural similarities. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar have made their names known in the world of sports and entertainment

just like any major place on earth has, which helps with common people recognizing the areas more than politics or economics can.

Part 5: The Politics of the Emirates

When talking about the growing influence of the Persian Gulf, it is impossible to not bring up the politics of the region. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar are based in a region of conflicting interests; The United States military ever present in securing its oil interests. Terrorists are fighting established governments over what is “proper Islam.” While the Persian Gulf area isn’t immune to these problems, it has experienced more recent peace than any other part of the Middle East. That all comes down to how these sheikdoms are governed along with how they interact with their neighbors and countries around the world. And that in turn leads to these emirates becoming trusted by countries which would more often than not see each other as enemies.

A: The Structure of Government

While Dubai and Abu Dhabi are both part of the United Arab Emirates, they ruling families of each often pursue policies independent of each other. All the while the two are the leaders of the UAE Federal National Council. The Sheik of Abu Dhabi is the President of the United Arab Emirates while the Sheik of Dubai is the Vice-President and Prime Minister.

The sheik has full control over government decisions in each of the emirates, much like they did when the Bedouin tribes were nothing more than nomads. The Al-Thanis, Al-Maktoums, and Al-Nahyans of are the undisputed power brokers of their respective areas. There are elections on the local level, along with various advisory councils where other prominent families have their say, but the ruling Sheiks have the ultimate final say in governance. This system goes back to the days of wandering nomads where prominent families would be on the ruling Sheik's council (Tatchell 51). In modern times with government-owned corporations in the picture, various members of the ruling families run the individual companies, with the ruling sheikh coming up with ideas for these companies and the area they control. Oddly enough, the current system is more stable now than it ever was back in the nomad days, with considerably fewer power usurpations. They have an efficient decision making process, progress gets made, and citizens are fine for the most part how they're governed.

B: How the People Live

If the ruling families of these sheikdoms wield unchecked power, how can the native citizens abide by this other than for traditional tribal purposes? The answer is that natives of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar get to live tax-free in luxury housing. The government also pays for basic modern amenities like electricity, gasoline, health care, and education. The average citizen of the UAE has their lives subsidized by \$55,000 per year (Krane 267). Who wouldn't want to live a tax-free lifestyle? This

part of the ruling bargain also goes back to the times of Bedouin nomads, where the ruling clan would provide gifts to advisors and subjects in order to insure ruling control.

The governments pay for a portion of marriages between nationals in order to stress how they don't want mixed marriages between natives and immigrants. This is in response to both how outnumbered the native population is compared to foreigners and the number of nationals were marrying foreigners (Davidson *Abu Dhabi* 132). Considering the benefits given to natives, extremely strict guidelines are in place regarding who can be considered a native of the emirates. Naturalization is possible, but the people in charge of matter flip-flop on their stances all the time (Ali 137-8).

These methods are used to insure the dominance of the national population along with pacifying them against any problems that may arise in the country. If the large number of foreigners in the area were to get access to just some of these benefits, the governments of Qatar and the UAE would surely have a financial crisis on their hands.

C: International Diplomacy

In such a hotly contested part of the world, especially since the events of 9/11, the UAE and Qatar have done an excellent job in keeping war outside their borders, maintaining diplomatic relations with major forces of the world, and even made some new allies that weren't part of any Middle East conflicts to begin with.

Many of these allies are in the developing world, an area the Middle East may be better equipped to help bring to modernity than the West.

Both Qatar and the UAE had a limited role in the U.S. coalitions against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1991 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Fromherz, 106). Many Arab countries grew to oppose the constant U.S. presence in the Middle East over the 2000's, but the UAE and Qatar knew staying on the U.S.'s good side was for the best, due to their attempts of trying to work with Western businesses.

The outskirts of Doha are home to Al Udeid Air Base and the As Sayliha base, the centers of United States military operations in the Persian Gulf. Since Qatar has only around 12,000 soldiers in their military, most of whom have non-native backgrounds, Qatar can not hope to defend the borders on its own, so it relies on the United States to do it (Kamrava 88-9). While Qatar is without a doubt a key U.S. ally in the region, their foreign policy has been questionable by U.S. standards. An Armed Forces document released during the Wikileaks hack stated that Qatar was the "worst in the region" when it came to cooperating with the United States in their counterterrorism efforts, along with actively engaging Iran in diplomatic talks, a major U.S. enemy (Kamrava 80). The U.S. military was very uncomfortable with Qatar not actively seeking out terrorists that might threaten its existence, such as allegedly funding of Palestinian group Hamas and the Egyptian-born, Qatar-based cleric Yousef Al-Qaradawi, who has critical views of Israeli and U.S. policy in the Middle East (Kamrava 80-1).

Qatar is the most politically ambitious of any of the Persian Gulf states, situating itself as a mediator between many disputes in the Arab and developing world. In 2008, Qatar successfully prevented Lebanon's civil war from reigniting. In 2010, Qatar had talks that both curtailed the Sudanese civil war and resolved a border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. In 2011, they provided assistance to the Libyan rebels that put an end to Muammar Gaddafi's regime (Kamrava 2, 93). Qatar has ended foreign conflicts successfully where efforts by the Arab League, France, and the United Nations have failed. This has led to Qatar to becoming a reliable peace broker, given its relative neutrality. Successfully resolving international disputes has become part of the Qatar brand.

Qatar shares one of the world's largest natural gas fields with Iran, it borders the ever-controversial Saudi Arabia, and the United States still maintains Middle East military operations in its borders, so maintaining some kind of neutrality is very important. Not only does it moderate regional disputes, it takes the pragmatic approach of having positive relations with nearly every country it tries to do diplomacy with. This is troublesome given the often-conflicting regional interests these countries have, as Qatar is often caught in the middle of the tensions (Kamrava 72-4).

The United Arab Emirates has also put on their diplomatic hat in regional disputes. For example, in 2007, it positioned itself in the middle of the Iranian nuclear dispute. In the span of two days, Dubai hosted speeches from both United States Vice President Cheney, who issued a very strong warning to Iran, and Iranian

president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who would go on to criticize American policy in Iraq and Iran (Krane, 283-4). The UAE also has given economic aid to nearby Arab countries devastated by war, aiding Palestine, Lebanon, Kuwait, the African countries of Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Mozambique, Muslims caught in the Bosnian wars, and it the only Arab country to serve as part of NATO's peacekeeping mission in the Kosovo conflict on 1999 (Davidson *Dubai* 169-72). Both Qatar and the UAE know helping less developed countries is bound to result in a good working relationship.

D: Al-Jazeera

Qatar's political ambition is also reflected in the 24/7-cable news channel, Al Jazeera. The name means "The Island" in Arabic, a fitting name given Qatar's geography. The emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani funded it initially in 1996 with an initial \$137 million. The government of Qatar still owns a stake in Al Jazeera (Miles 28). In the years since it's founding, Al-Jazeera has come to be the largest news network in the Arab world, comparable to CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, and BBC on the global stage. Without it, Qatar would arguably still be unknown to most of the world.

Al Jazeera first gained worldwide recognition from its footage of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan after the events of 9/11. The Al-Jazeera news bureau in Kabul was the only news group to get live footage from the initial U.S. bombings. War footage Al Jazeera shot was in such high demand that CNN used Al Jazeera's

footage for their coverage of Afghanistan for a brief time (Miles 126-7). In the same way that World War II made *Time* and the First Gulf War made CNN, the U.S. war in Afghanistan is what made Al Jazeera a reliable source of news (Miles 135); so much so that American and British military officials weren't happy with the way Al Jazeera covered the news in a way that may seem sympathetic to the Taliban (Miles 144). This included an attack on Al Jazeera itself when the US allegedly bombed the Al Jazeera bureau in Kabul, Afghanistan (Miles 164-5).

Al Jazeera gained even wider attention throughout the world when Osama bin Laden, the head of the Al Qaeda terrorist network that executed the 9/11 attacks, reached out to Al Jazeera to share his views on the United States and what Al Qaeda has planned next. What started out with a fax message sent to Al Jazeera's main office urging the Muslims of Pakistan to push away from "the US crusader troops," turned into Al Jazeera reporters essentially getting kidnapped in places like Karachi, Pakistan over the next few years (Miles 110, 204-9).

With the U.S. invasion of Iraq occurring in 2003, Al Jazeera covered the war as objective news while also serving as the mouthpiece for various Arab views on the matter. U.S. politicians and military commanders have made themselves familiar with how Al Jazeera operated and a few appeared on various shows to make the case for U.S. invasion. Nevertheless, Al Jazeera would end its various newscasts with footage of bombings and building destruction in Baghdad, no doubt to gain sympathy from all around the Arab world. Like the incident surrounding the Kabul news bureau attacks, two Al Jazeera news reporters covering the U.S. invasion from

their Baghdad bureau were killed when a U.S. aircraft fired two missiles into the building in April, 2003 (Miles 265).

Al Jazeera has become a major voice for both Qatar's stance on various political issues and an Arab voice for the greater world that surrounds them. Compared to the Greater Middle East region, Qatar can be considered tolerant in what people can say, just as long as it doesn't criticize the ruling family. That rule, however, doesn't apply to talking about issues in other countries. Take for example the popular Al Jazeera debate show, *The Opposite Direction*. In each show, the host, Faisal al-Qassem, presents a topic, like the U.S. presence in Iraq. He will then have two authorities on the subject with extremely differing viewpoints. The two will then debate the matter, which occasionally ends up in the two bickering at each other and one of them walking off the set in anger (Miles 38-40).

That may appear to be a reproduction of what foreigners think drives American cable news channels, but it's made Al Jazeera into the information leader of the Arab world. When a guest on *The Opposite Direction* openly criticizes the government of a particular Arab country, the Qatari government will get a formal complaint from the offended party about Al Jazeera making them look bad, and requesting that they be put in line. The Qatari government then refuses, as they say it's part of the show and Al Jazeera editorial policy to present all viewpoints on an issue. This does nothing to affect the popularity of programming at all. An Arab public opinion poll done in 2010 showed that 78% of individuals in the Arab world rely on Al Jazeera as their main source of news (Kamrava 92-3).

The Middle East is quite the hotbed of political intrigue, and not all of it is genuinely harmful. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar do have their own agendas to further broaden their ambitions, but they also want to maintain peace in the region. This includes making allies with as many countries as possible to lessen any chance of a foreign takeover. While Qatar's Al Jazeera can be seen as a political tool given the free speech policy of the network, Al Jazeera, like the foreign policy of these Persian Gulf states, won't be able to please everyone, even if the foreign policies of the emirates themselves seems designed to do so.

Part 6: Criticisms of the System

When one new country set its sights on trying to become more influential in the world of global economics and politics, the already powerful places will not allow their titles to be wrested from them lightly. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar becoming more involved and influential in the developing and industrialized world is coming at the expense of places like Europe and the United States. As explained in this section, the backlash to these emirates targets the very things that make these places known worldwide. Some of their points have legitimacy, but Western nations can't fully complain considering their problematic histories and how the emirates are contributing to the global economy.

A: Treatment of Foreigners

Human rights groups like to point out the human rights record of these Persian Gulf states, mainly from organizations like Human Rights Watch. They point out how foreign workers that work in menial labor suffer a variety of abuses. These include having their passport withheld, not getting paid for weeks on end, being forced into prostitution, and dealing with open racism (Human Rights Watch). Officials from Dubai would say that these workers are making much more money in Dubai than they ever would in their home country, along with the need for foreign labor to keep building the vast cityscape.

The people that immigrate to Dubai are indicative of Persian Gulf immigrants in general, like in Abu Dhabi and Qatar. The ones brought in to do menial labor like construction, housemaids, and low-paying prostitutes, are filled up by Filipinos, South Asians, Africans are the lowest rung. People that come from Europe, America, other Arab countries, or East Asia are treated with more respect and are usually brought in to fill out high-paying executive jobs (Ali 116). This inherently racist structure carries over into the prostitution scene, where the amount men are willing to pay for services varies depending on where the prostitute is from (Ali 104).

As for the foreign workers themselves, there is also the economic structure of their home countries to consider, like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. Most of the money that these workers make is sent back home of their families. This is what makes them put up with every bad position they find

themselves in (Ali 90-1). Plus the kinds of job available either pays very little or are not in the field these ambitious youth want.

But it's hard to overlook the conditions these abused migrants live in. Take Marie from the Philippines. She moved to Dubai after dropping out of college when she found out she was pregnant, as well as to support her family. Her jobs in Dubai included a security guard, a mechanic, and in a beauty salon. Marie pays \$175 a month just for a bed in an apartment filled with strangers in Dubai's Al-Satwa district. The walls don't even go all the way up to the ceiling. In Marie's own words, "Why did I leave? Just to come and live like this again? Yes, it's similar to Manila, but it's Dubai! It's supposed to be shiny and new and nice. That's part of the reason we came!" (Madavi 101-2) Marie's story gets all the sadder when a stranger mugs her, rapes her, and stalks her afterwards in the span of a few weeks. When she tried telling the police, the only remedy they offered was to send her back to the Philippines (Madavi 104-5). Marie's case is typical of most immigrants who come to the region seeking work and only finding hardship. It's also the kind of story humanitarian groups like to use when highlighting the emirates' injustices

But as some Americans like to forget, in the 19th century, migrants to America dealt with similar living conditions and reasons for migrating. America was seen as the land of opportunity, and plenty of disadvantaged Europeans and Asians took advantage. The Irish first came to America due the potato famine of the 1840's (Ciment 55-6). The Germans came because of revolutions taking place in German lands in the 1840's (Ciment 67). The Chinese arrived due to the need for cheap labor

on the American West Coast, mainly the building of the transcontinental railroad (Ciment 77). And the migrants arriving at the turn of the 20th century from Southern and Eastern Europe came mainly to flee large urban expansion and laws that favored the elite at the expense of minorities and lower classes (Ciment 103). America bills itself as a nation of immigrants because so many seek greater economic and political freedom that wasn't available in their homelands. One cannot blame other countries for trying to co-opt those ideas in trying to attract workers.

Part B: Main Economic, Cultural, and Political Points

Qatar's successful bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup has been rife with the numerous allegations thrown about that the Qatar group bribed the bidding officials. London newspaper *The Sunday Times* leaked a series of emails in 2014 that prove Mohamed bin Hammam, a Qatari vice-president of FIFA currently serving a life banishment, bribed senior officials "to create a groundswell of support for Qatar's plan to take world football by storm" (Zimbalist 30). Other external criticisms include: it's too hot for a world cup in the summer, it's too small both geographically and population-wise, there aren't enough cities, and too many workers have died building the stadiums. The government of Qatar is spending \$4 billion on stadium work (renovations and new stadiums) and \$10 billion on a new international airport in Doha. Other estimates have the World Cup costing as much as \$200 billion (Zimbalist 2). FIFA is also planning on moving the tournament from its traditional summer timeframe to November-December in order to avoid the

scorching desert summer. This has drawn the ire of the world's major soccer leagues as their schedules would conflict with the World Cup and the best players would have to decide which competition to partake in (What is the World Cup Really Worth?).

The United Arab Emirates and Qatar may be upcoming global powerhouses economically, but they still have to worry about the domestic politics surrounding them. Both of them, along with the rest of the Arab world, support Palestine in their conflict with Israel, in stark contrast with Western countries that support Israel. While Qatar has had Israeli guests appear on Al Jazeera talk shows to speak their mind, this move is not viewed as kindly among their Middle Eastern neighbors.

Opponents of the Persian Gulf's growing influence include the major privatized airlines of Europe and the United States. Some of these include American Airlines, United Airlines, and Delta Airlines of the United States, and Lufthansa, Air France-KLM, and International Airlines Group of Europe. These airlines rely on the same business model that Emirates, Etihad, and Qatar Airways rely on: flying between two points by way of a major hub airport. The issues are brought to their respective governments, with the private airlines urging more restrictive airspace. They also argued that the Persian Gulf airlines receive billions in government subsidies, and without them, they couldn't run such expansive networks around the world. The Persian Gulf Airline's response is that they've helped the economies of the cities they fly into and that they have only received government funds when they

started. Many other flag-carriers, like those of China, are either part or wholly owned by the national government (Mouawad, New York Times).

On March 19, 2016, a Flydubai airplane, a low-cost airline with some affiliation with Emirates, crashed in Rostov-on-Don, Russia while coming in for landing, leaving all 62 people onboard dead. In the wake of the crash, more than 60 pilots from Flydubai and Emirates came forward to RT, a Russian television news network, telling the station they were being overworked to the brink of exhaustion (60 Flydubai, Emirates pilots, RT.com). One of the pilots compared the work that 7 pilots do for Emirates is the equivalent that 10-11 do for European airlines. It's not just that they were being worked to the bone; whenever someone tried to use sick days in order to rest themselves, the parent company would threaten them with extensive investigations, which aren't worth the risk. They fear mainly for their livelihood, since the threat of deportation is all too real. It's referred to as "making people disappear" (#Flydubaigate spreads, RT.com). People associate Emirates with high-class service and friendly staff. Knowing this symbol of Middle Eastern progress abuses its workers will turn off future customers.

In 2006, Dubai Ports World bought control of England-based P&O Ferries, a ferry operating company that moved people across such bodies of water like the English Channel. This includes ownership of ports in the U.S. cities of New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Miami. This deal had the support of President George W. Bush, who saw it as a transaction between two allies. However, when the deal reached Congress in order to be approved, there was

significant criticism from both Democrats and Republicans, no doubt still reeling from the memories of having two Emirati citizens among of the 9/11 hijackers along with the worries of compromising port security. Senators Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer were some of the senators spearheading the opposition, which was eventually shot down. The real reason for all the commotion was that a rival port operator, Continental, was also engaged in lobbying for port control (Simpfendorfer 57-9). Still, the move was seen as racist

One of the common criticisms with Al Jazeera is that since it is owned and run by the Al-Thani family, it can be seen as a vehicle to further their personal interests. Al Jazeera reporters are quick to report on any event that appears to make politicians in other countries look bad. Yet they do no reporting on the events going on in Qatar. Also, when Qatar is trying to give support to a fellow Arab country, Al Jazeera won't report on anything happening in that country. When the Arab spring was going on in 2011, Al Jazeera covered the event in North Africa and Mediterranean countries, but was silent on the matter when the governments of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain feared similar uprisings in their own countries (Fromherz 30). Al Jazeera again claims that they report all sides of the story, but in Western eyes, they have a while to go before Al Jazeera can be considered a free press.

Part C: The Environmental Impact

Given that a large amount of the Middle Eastern economy depends on exploiting fossil fuel resources, the area can be seen as a deterrent to

environmentalist activists. Their efforts to build modern infrastructure and supply the citizens with Western amenities come from selling oil and natural gas, two of the main pollutants of our atmosphere. One of the main points of the economics section is how Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar are diversifying its economy away from oil in the form of tourism and foreign investments. Dubai doesn't rely on its oil reserves, which weren't impressive to begin with, but Abu Dhabi and Qatar still rely on exporting oil and natural gas to sustain their power plays.

Another regional environmental concern is how people get their water. The Persian Gulf is much too salty to drink and the water that comes from oases is too much in short supply to nourish the entire population. As a result, several desalination plants are in use to get rid of salt from Persian Gulf water for human use. The problem with this system is an extreme amount of energy is needed to remove the salt. The energy is provided in the form of local fossil fuels, with the excess salt is typically dumped back into the Persian Gulf (Hirtenstein, BloombergBusiness). This is a vicious cycle, because the water coming into the desalination plants is saltier than before, which in turn required more energy to properly remove, which dumps the excess salt back into the Persian Gulf and makes the Gulf even saltier. Former Dubai government official Habiba al-Marashi stated this process consistently makes the UAE one of the worst polluters on earth, "This is a fact. We'll always be in the top ten. We have to desalinate water or we will die" (Krane 230).

The man-made Palm and Earth islands off the coast of Dubai have altered the fundamental currents of the Persian Gulf, with sand formerly drifting along the coastal currents now piling up on Dubai's beaches. The currents also take sand out of beaches while travelling along their new path around the islands. The construction of these islands harmed wildlife living in the gulf. Coral reefs were buried under giant mounds of sand. The oysters, undersea plants, and algae are dying due to the amount of silt unearth and tossed by the currents (Krane 230). In our growing environmentally conscious world,

Part D: Effects on the Population

In the midst of the rapid building taking place in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar, native Emiratis and Qataris feel that traditions are being abandoned in favor of pleasing the westerners moving in. In 2006, a former member of the UAE national council said to a U.S. daily newspaper the Dubai he lives in isn't Arab anymore. The article recounted how he disapproves of wine-tasting parties, topless sunbathing, not hearing any Arabic when he goes to the malls, and the commercialized celebration of Christmas being more important than traditional Islamic holidays. He felt the only way he and his family could be proper Arabs was to move outside the city limits (Davidson, *Dubai* 194). This is not uncommon as many other like this anonymous official relocate from a place that has abandoned them.

Human rights groups based in the United States may be quick to point out how intolerant the Arabs are being. But America has had many issues with accepting

migrants in its borders. The Irish were persecuted because they were the first major Catholic group in the country (Ciment 60-1). The Chinese were victims of race riots, racist legislation in California, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (Ciment 80-2). During the 1850's, there was a political party called the Know-Nothing party dedicated solely to issues of anti-immigration, a stance that would win the party a dozen state governor positions and a hundred congressional spots. (Ciment 72-3). The United States still struggles with immigration issues to this day, and combined with the influx of Syrian refugees heading to Europe, the West's tolerance of foreigners is truly being tested.

To many foreign workers, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar are just places to live for a few years, make a lot of money, and then move back to their home country. They don't view these places as where you can raise a family and establish roots, especially since the visa workers get usually run for only 3 years (Ali 140). Even the foreign workers that do retire here don't feel that they have become true natives. Considering, for example, that the migrant population of Dubai is 90% of its total (Ali 81), that is a shocking number of people who don't see any true value in belonging to a city like this.

The natives of these emirates, newly rich thanks to government programs, have been transformed by the newfound wealth. Just a few generations before, the Bedouin natives were amidst some of the most desperate times in the Persian Gulf. Now they live with even more affluence than some rich Westerners do. They essentially get to live their lives for free, have no real need to work, and buy fancy

cars and large SUV's. The native youths of the UAE are increasingly involved with car accidents with sports cars, which causes one in five deaths among the entire population of Abu Dhabi. Yet, they still go out to buy new sports cars to perform the same acts, as they regard injuries gained from such accidents as a badge of honor in their uneventful lives (Tatchell 54).

The governments of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have gone on various policies to try and get more natives in the white-collar workforce, alongside the imported Europeans and Americans, but those efforts have not been successful. The natives with these jobs, mostly males, have no real motivation to succeed in school and have proper jobs because of the extreme government benefits and the guarantee of some employment gained through government quotas (Krane 267-8). It's what some people fear when a "Nanny state" goes too far. The citizens not involved in government cannot be idle while foreigners keep coming and coming in; they have to do some of the work. But if the government tries to do something to motivate citizens to take responsibility, like say take away some of their benefits for being proper citizens, they can perceive that as an infringement on the ruling bargain laid out by the ruling families. It can't be avoided; somebody has to lose in this situation.

These are all valid criticisms of the Persian Gulf system of assimilating global power, but these concerns mainly come from Western countries. Since the Western countries have laid down the work on how to properly run global economic, cultural, and political interests, they do have some say in how ambitious countries

want to globalize. But Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar have shown you can be a major global power without completely following the Western blueprint. Freedom to do whatever you want doesn't necessarily equal power. There are also concerns brought up from citizens of these emirates due to the extreme influx of foreigners, but that is bound to happen when people migrate from one place to another.

Part 7: Conclusions:

In our changing world where the traditional centers of power in the West are losing their influence in the developing world, someone is going to replace that vacuum. It makes sense that the Persian Gulf region would rise to that position, considering they have been part of the developing world. It's produced three geographically tiny emirates that turned themselves into giants on the world stage. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar may not be household names in American popular consciousness yet, but they are bound to be in a few years.

News about Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar is becoming more commonplace around the world. During New Year's Eve 2016 celebrations, The Address Downtown Dubai skyscraper, located near the Burj Khalifa, caught fire. What even more remarkable is that the Burj Khalifa's fireworks display went off anyway while the adjacent skyscraper burned (Walker, *When Will Dubai Fix its Burning Skyscraper Problem?*). This incident made international news on New Years Day. We hear about local buildings burning down in our local news all the time, but when a building

burning down in Dubai, a city on the other side of the world, makes the national news, it must be somewhere that is important.

It's hard to say how long this golden age the Persian Gulf is experiencing will last, and who in turn will become the new global centers when Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar slide back into obscurity. But for now, the shores of the Persian Gulf will burn bright for the foreseeable future. A small oasis safe from warfare elsewhere in the desert is helping to determine what the next step in human civilization holds.

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