‘Bedouin’ Hospitality in the Neo-Global City of Dubai

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Hospitality is the Arab madness…we do karam (hospitality) to excess. We waste food and spend all our wages to impress guests…and sometimes we don’t even have enough money to clothe our children and send them to good schools – (Shryock, 2004, p. 39)

Introduction

The Arab world is famed for the hospitality of its people. For generations, the Arabs have practised an almost legendary discourse on hospitality. Many different stories recant great tales of the lengths that Arabs have gone to in order to be hospitable to their guests and anecdotes, such as that of Ibn ‘naked’ Khatlan (which I shall discuss later), may not set an example for Arabs to follow in their practices of hospitality, but demonstrate the importance that hospitality has in their culture. This form of hospitality bears some similarities with aspects of Derrida and Kant’s take on hospitality but is complex enough in its own right to warrant its own discourse.

Cities such as Dubai, Doha and to a lesser extent Abu-Dhabi and Bahrain have been incredibly important for the region, for it has so far ‘had an uneven balance sheet in keeping up with an increasingly globalised world’ (Bilgin, 2001, p. 425) that these cities are seen by the Arab world as a way of making a mark, of transferring their image from one of being a nomadic, oil producing state to a ‘global city’, but in a different guise perhaps to one that prescribes so neatly to the definition laid out by Saskia Sassen.[1] That said, they are reaching out to the world and using their unique form of hospitality, they are pushing for competition. A rather relevant geographical point is the location of the cities in the middle of the desert. It is testament to the hospitality of the Arabs, that they can build these ‘concrete oases’ in such inhospitable conditions and make them so attractive to guests.

Interestingly the rise of these ‘wannabe’ global cities in the Middle East is something of a new phenomenon; a different way of viewing how cities offer hospitality to guests. What I want to look at in particular is the how the unique discourse of Arab (principally Bedouin) hospitality has responded to the urbanization of life in the Middle East, and whether that hospitality has been warped by the integration of neo-liberal practices. I intend to address how exactly Arab hospitality works within the confines of these new cities, and how it has changed from its original form as it existed pre-urbanization. How have these heavily ritualized protocols of Bedouin hospitality reacted to being ‘urbanized and commoditized’? (Sobh & Belk, 2012, p. 1)

The following chapters will examine in depth these questions and ask in conclusion whether Middle Eastern Hospitality has been changed as a result of the construction of these new cities, or has it merely shifted to accommodate a new type of guest? Furthermore, where does the power lie in the host/guest relationship and to what extent has the (predominantly foreign) guest gone to accommodate the cultural considerations of its host. In my analysis, I shall predominantly be looking at the example of Dubai, which is arguably the most ‘global’ of all cities in the Middle East.

Arab Hospitality: Blueprints for a Neo-Global City?

To understand the ethic of hospitality that is practised in Middle Eastern cities, one has to look at the epistemology of Bedouin hospitality, and then view how it is currently being applied within such Middle-Eastern cities such as Dubai,

Qatar and, to some extent, Amman. In many ways, these global cities do not differ greatly in their ambition than any of the other cities around the world with global intentions. Indeed Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York all have ambition but what interests me about the aforementioned Middle Eastern cities, is the speed at which they have urbanized, and the success that they have had in turning their fortunes around.

Dubai for one has been incredibly aggressive in its strategy, attempting to lose the traditional labels of 'dystopia' that are associated so widely with the region (Stanley, 2003). Despite the successes of the Dubai project questions have arisen regarding its sustainability after the financial crash of 2008(see Bassens, 2010). The speed in which Dubai has turned itself from a small fishing village into a truly 'cosmopolitan, regionally dominant 21st century city' has been quite alarming (Pacione, 2007).

The greatest asset they have had in their quest for a space at the global top table has been their understanding of hospitality, their passion and their ability to really make guests feel welcome. It is the term *karam* (roughly translated as "generosity" or "hospitality") that describes Arab attitude to hospitality so aptly. Also translated into phrases such as "nobility" and "refinement", *karam* and *hurma* (the "sacredness" and "inviolability" of someone safeguarding the interiority of their homes) are terms that best describe Bedouin hospitality (Shryock, 2004). To quote Shryock again, it is this *karam* that is 'both a genealogical endowment and a moral obligation akin to piety', and it is often a compliment to say of a man who neglects his prayer but then is gracious to his guests that 'hospitality is his religion' (Shryock, 2009, p. 34).

The legend of Arab hospitality is based on the high standing of these principles and Middle Eastern cities have benefited greatly from this culture as they continue to grow. However, it is ironic that in his writings on hospitality, Derrida notes how Arab Bedouins of the past flouted the natural right of hospitality, where strangers have the right not to be treated with hostility should they arrive on a native's land and adhering to certain norms, in their plundering of their neighbouring tribes throughout history (Derrida, 2000). Although performed in an obviously hostile atmosphere as would exist in the desert, it makes a pertinent point. Arab hospitality bears some significant differences to those of western discourses.

However, there are some parallels to draw between Derrida's speak of 'Mastery of the House' (Dufourmantelle & Derrida, 200) and the necessity for the host to have a certain degree of power in order to assume a role as a host—particularly if the host wishes to be a 'good' host and to be able to fulfil his duties of catering for his guest. Of course, when one immediately thinks of Arabian hospitality, one thinks of how the host goes out of their way to serve their guest, and the constraints that are placed upon him by the culture of *karam* and *hurma*. Yet, It is not quite as simple as this, as Derrida's assertion that there is a need for one to be the 'master' of their home is both strengthened and weakened by the heavy ritualization that bounds Bedouin hospitality, and consequently by the rules that would dictate whether you were a good/bad host/guest.

For instance, when a host says that 'My house is your house' (Shryock, 2012, p. S24), he does not mean that that extends to the entire house. The invitation to the guest specifically relates to the areas that are meant for guests that are separate from the living quarters of him and his family. A guest is not able to do exactly what they want, and can only go where they are led by their host, that is of course, unless they wish to be a 'bad' guest, which would impact on their own standing as well as that of their host. One could argue that this in essence would leave them as a 'prisoner in the host's' home, subject of course to them adhering to the strict rituals of Bedouin hospitality. (Shryock, 2012, p. S24) However, the guest does tend to have some interesting influence over the host through the fear that comes with being a 'bad' host.

As mentioned above, it is paramount for the host to maintain the reputation of his home; for should the host disappoint his guests, the *hurma* of his home would be at risk and consequentially he has to fear his guest. In this circumstance, and due to this desire, this need to please the guest, the 'prisoner' of the home also happens to be the host. This paradox where the 'rules' for Arab hospitality place rigorous constraints on both the host and the guest surely goes someway to relinquishing the 'mastery' of the home while concurrently enforcing it. Derrida's view of hospitality focuses on the home, where this 'mastery' must take place, which is of course important in Bedouin traditions.

However, when looking at hospitality in the context of Middle Eastern cities, one should understand that much like in other areas of the world, the idea of home is a contested concept. Derrida does not expect anyone to fully understand what hospitality is (Derrida, 2000), but while it is easy to try and apply the hospitality of the individual (in the perspective of Bedouin hospitality) in scaling this up to cities and states, the 'register of hospitality must change' (Griffin, 2012). Perhaps then, Bedouin hospitality, along with examples for such stories such as Ibn Khatlan[2], cannot be used directly to describe the type of hospitality that would occur in Middle Eastern cities as, like states, cities do not always make their citizens feel at 'home' as such. This said, Bedouin hospitality has a significant role to play in helping to describe how Middle Eastern cities have been constructed (both architecturally and socially) to welcome guests.

In this vane, the ritualization of Bedouin hospitality has both its benefits and its drawbacks. For one it enshrines a sense of hospitality amongst Arabs that is unlike anywhere else in the world. The complicated dynamic between the host and the guest is also a strength, with both having some degree of power over the other. This leads to some interesting questions as to how it is applied to cities. It is difficult to understand where power really lies and hence it is hard to differentiate exactly where the boundaries are. The target of the Neo-global cites is not other Arabs, but capital, business, labour and information from elsewhere around the world, from places that do not subscribe to the same culture of hospitality. Further difficulties may arise because the 'guest' that is being welcomed into the city has ulterior motives and is not such a 'good' guest. The next chapter will look at how Arab-Bedouin hospitality has been used to build an attempt at a global city. With reference primarily to Dubai, I shall ask whether they are 'good' or 'bad' guests or hosts according to traditional practices of Arab hospitality, and where the power really lies.

In the Shadow of the Sun: The Darker side of Hospitality in Dubai

Wherever you found people, their tents were open. Wherever you came to people, there was a mattress, and coffee, and a spike fiddle, and poetry… they would say, 'Peace be with you'. Or they would say, 'Stay for dinner', and they would all gather around you, and make a great fuss, and sweat from their effort to please you, and fight for the honour of hosting you… In the past, hospitality was like that. Today, there is no hospitality. Today, everything is business. We buy and sell everything, and there's no shame in it. – (Hajj Salih Slayman al-Uwaydi in Shryock, 2012, p. S23)

One may ask why I would classify Dubai as a neo-global city? My answer is that I find the notion of a global city to be too restrictive in its requirements to apply directly to Dubai. For one, Sassen requires that a true global city would be a command and control centre for the global economy, and a key location for finance, both of which, Dubai is not (Taylor, 2004, p. 24). Yet, in many ways Dubai is like any other Global city and was ranked 27th ahead of Rome, Amsterdam and Copenhagen in 2010 in the Global Cities Index (Abdella, 2011, p. 2). For instance many of the attributes that are attributed to London by Dan Bulley (Bulley, 2013) would also be applicable to Dubai. Hospitality is as carefully managed in Dubai as it would be in London and in any other global city. This said, I would argue Dubai is a global city in different terms and is often described as such.

If for nothing else it has become synonymous with being a playground for the rich and a business hub for the new creative class. Noted heavily for the immense excesses, improbably grand architecture and even the option to buy a gold bar out of a vending machine in your hotel lobby (BI-ME, 2011), Dubai presents a form of global city that in many ways is vastly separate from the traditional nomadic type of hospitality discussed above. Mike Davis describes quite vividly the extravagance of Dubai, citing the 'dream world' that it attempts to recreate for its guests; the Gucci bags, the driver who collects you from the airport in the Rolls-Royce, the 7-star hotel that has the atrium big enough to fit the statue of liberty inside it, the world's largest shopping mall, the fabulous Thai-cuisine and of course, the 'gorgeous Russian at the restaurant bar' (Davis, 2006). What is this strange paradise? Is it real? The city that was second only to Shanghai in 2006 for being the world's biggest building site, despite it being ten times smaller and despite the grip of the financial crisis in 2008, it has succeeded into turning itself into a huge 'circuit-board' into which the elite engineering and retail firms (amongst many others) can plug in and create 'clusters' of areas of hi-tech development. In terms of relating to Bedouin hospitality this does seem to be at odds with some core principles of the discourse; what state has this left Bedouin hospitality in?

Dubai has always been a cosmopolitan city, and throughout its recorded history it has been 'crowded with many

races' from over sixty years ago (Thesiger, 1994). This has grown significantly with the unprecedented urbanisation of the city. The tourism industry in Dubai is vital and has formed a significant portion of the emirate's economy hitting an all-time high of 31% of Dubai's GDP in 2011 (Rai, 2012). In spite of this George Katodrytis is cynical about Dubai's role as a prototype for a new 'post-global' city (or as I call it, neo-global), which 'creates appetites rather than solves problems' (Katodrytis, n.d.). According to Arab hospitality, surely this idea of a city that 'prosthetic and nomadic oasis' (Katodrytis, n.d.) provides some form of a contradiction.

One of the problems that I mentioned in the previous chapter over Arab hospitality in the city was that of the question of mastery, and the divided space of the house between the guest and the host. Dubai has practised this part of Arab hospitality extensively. It would be too far perhaps to say that the emirate was an archipelago of gated communities, but maybe to label it an 'open city-state of relatively gated communities' would be more accurate (Masad, 2008). The city is obviously separated between the various clusters of hi-tech and urban design innovation areas and areas for various classes of people. The city very obviously controls the flow of the people within it, and much like in Arab hospitality and that understood by western academics, the guest has a number of restrictions placed on him by the host. The host (as the city) wields some extraordinary sovereign power exercised (through strict employment law, and citizenship requirements) and 'governmentality' (through gated communities etc.) over the guest. Of course it would be in line with Arab hospitality for there to be separate areas for the guest and the host, but the fact this does raise some issues with the levels of social development in the city. Masad notes that most of the citizens make up no more than ten per cent of Dubai's inhabitants these are the elite Emirati community.

Interestingly, Masad talks of the 'long-term residents', the poorest of nationals who live within old Dubai (Masad, 2008). That these people are from other areas of Arabia, Persia and South Asia and predominantly came to the city generations ago, yet are separate from the wealthy expatriates who live in the new districts of 'fake urbanism' makes a pertinent point about how the city has interpreted Arabian hospitality. The hospitality I talk about in the previous chapter drifts closer to the idea of unconditional hospitality than is overtly obvious, and certainly more so than most western discourse would have. Bedouin hosts would expect to cede some power to their guests, and would rarely discriminate against them should they follow certain rules about their behaviour and remain 'good' guests. Those who live in old Dubai clearly are not offered this same deal. The city is cynical in who it really invites and who it exploits using the guise of Arabian hospitality.

Another key concept of Arab hospitality was the fact that it is offered under strict rituals, and in return, all that is required is the behaviour of the guest and indeed the *karam* is seen as a tax that is 'taken from each other and not from the government above' (Shryock, 2004). The principle that Dubai is built on seems to contradict this. The desire for extravagance, for wanting more, for over-exuberance seems to overpower the relative simplicity of *karam.* Indeed, one should ask whether or not it ceases to be *karam* under the auspices of payment from the guest. Dubai's reliance on a tourism industry that uses the Bedouin/Arab culture as a selling point works against this principle. Ali Al Saloom makes the observation that Arab hospitality and business are so intertwined due to 'hospitality [being a] way of life' (Saloom, 2012) so it may not be easy for us to analyse whether Arabian hospitality has really been 'commoditized' as such.

However the city's desire to attract those from around the world, who do not subscribe to the concepts of Arabian hospitality but may see it more as an exotic attraction has led to the exploitation of certain guests. These are the long-term residents who live in the old city. I call them guests due to the fact that they are not given the same civil rights as those from the Emirati community that have benefitted so widely from arrival of the western expatriate community. As Massey points out with the case of London, it seems to be in the nature of global cities to exploit some groups of people in order to continue to grow. (Massey, 2006) So there is nothing unusual in that sense, but it is hypocritical of a city that uses Arab hospitality as one of its largest selling points. The Asian workers, making up most of the expatriate 'guest' work force, live in squalid labour camps that are far away from other residential areas are at the bottom of the social ladder and are the most excluded from the 'cosmopolitan experience' of Dubai (Masad, 2008, p. 11).

Dubai has a much darker side to it that has enabled the cosmopolitan, urban oasis to shine so brightly on the world

stage. Davis describes the 'burgeoning black economy' that encompasses such businesses as gold and diamond souks, houses of barter, informal cash converters, money launderers and terrorist financiers that had taken advantage of the freewheeling environment in the city (Davis, 2006, p. 56). These activities are certainly not in line with the intricacies of Arab culture, or hospitality and depict a shady side that is common in other global cities. It is the scale of the exploitation that is unnerving and fact that the luxury lifestyle that is offered to certain guests in the region, is built on the backs of (predominantly) poorly paid Indians, Sri Lankans, Filipinos and Pakistanis working in café's or on the massive building projects.

In essence, this does not fit in with Arabian hospitality. Hospitality is not for any 'guest' but for the select few and despite the fact that certain people may be adhering to the rules of the city and providing a service, they are not treated equally; more akin to the hospitality that would be found in any other global city than in a Bedouin tent. However, the strict application of Bedouin hospitality is only applicable for the time that the guest can reasonably stay with the host, which in Bedouin terms would be no more than three days and a third (Shryock, 2009). Obviously even in most holidays a guest would be likely to stay longer than this, so one cannot apply this directly to the city but it should be noted that these guests have in some effect become hosts to the expatriate guests whom are welcome to the luxury side of Dubai, yet they do not have full rights as citizens within their own-city state. Kant is reluctant to draw the line so distinctly between the host and the guest in legal terms when he acknowledges:

It is not a right to be treated as a guest to which the stranger can lay claim- a special friendly compact on his behalf would be required to make him for a given time an actual inmate-but he has a right of visitation. (Kant, 1903 [1795], pp. 137-138)

Shryock believes this reluctance is due to the fact he understands the ambiguity between the host and the guest where guests are citizens of (theoretically) nominally equal states (Shryock, 2012). This happens to describe the situation in Dubai where the line between guest and host has been blurred, yet there has been no legal agreement to legitimise the stay of the workers who are 'urban nomads' (Masad, 2008, p. 11) that are constantly outsiders, to the point that they are in limbo between being a guest and a host.

Dubai Inc. – Separating the 'Good' and the 'Gad' of the Hosts and Guests

Can you do something startling, something that has never been done before? – Question by American champagne millionaire and financier George A Kessler to the manager of London's Savoy Hotel in July 1905 when he wanted an 'extraordinary' dinner party. – (Smith, 2012, p. 152)

It would not be far-fetched to expect the above quote to have been attributed to the 'CEO' of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum, when asked of what he envisaged for Dubai's future. He has always asserted his pride in his role in driving the urbanization of his emirate and indeed believes he is doing what he needs to fulfil the ambitions of his emirate. The Sheikh has often been likened to a CEO and running the emirate as a business as opposed to a city-state and liberties are derived from a 'business plan, not from a constitution' (Davis, 2006, p. 62). In this chapter, I will look at how the ritualized Bedouin hospitality may have become commoditized as part of this business plan. Predominantly looking at some of the 'Icons' symbolic of Dubai's urban rise and the hospitality industry which has been built to accommodate the selected visitors, I shall attempt to discern whether the host or the guest has been 'good' or 'bad' in their role.

In the business model of Dubai Inc., principles of Bedouin hospitality have virtually been used as a tool in order to encourage people to visit. Blended into Dubai's urban and social structures so that what was once an act of inviting a stranger in to become part of the family has been both substituted and diluted to an almost fraudulent staged situation for guests (read expatriate tourists) pay for the 'privilege' of experiencing "Bedouin Hospitality"' (Sobh & Belk, 2012, p. 2) . A situation has arisen where even those doing the hosting or performing at hotels, restaurants and other cultural demonstrations themed as Bedouin or Arabian as not even Emirati or Qatari (Sobh & Belk, 2012, p. 4) The hotels that are built are as much 'icons' to increase the symbolic power of the emirate and promote the brand of Dubai Inc. abroad via widening its appeal to potential guests (both people and businesses)abroad (Acuto, 2010). Developments like the Palm Jumeirah which house the 1,500 room Atlantis hotel can be seen as Dubai leaving no

expense spared on its way to promote itself as an exotic oasis (Smith, 2012, p. 157). However, once again you can see through the room prices (ranging from $450 to $35,000 a night) one can clearly see the types of guests that are welcome within this "paradise".

From his travels in Jordan, where a similar form of commoditization of Bedouin hospitality has occurred (though on a much smaller scale), Andrew Shryock (2004) uncovered the word *Kan Zaman* (meaning "once, long ago") which was used as the name for a restaurant on the estate of the Abu Jaber family who were famed for their *karam.* The issue here is that in marketing the *karam* it ceases to exist in its original sense. Jordanian Tourism Resorts website claims to be able to offer guests the ability to 'experience the old with the new' (Jordan Tourism Resorts Co., 2013) but surely in removing the key aspect of *karam* and the *hurma* of the house, then this is not really viable. This 'Kan Zamanization' (Shryock, 2004, p. 23) of *karam* aptly describes the situation in Dubai. The emirate offers its guests this luxurious, legendary hospitality but in essence in mass-marketing tradition in such an unnatural form it is a façade.

Acuto draws obvious comparisons with Las Vegas in the way Dubai has attempted to create a vast and outlandish set of predetermined 'experiences to be consumed' by foreign guests. (Acuto, 2010, p. 276). Davis wryly remarks that in setting out a vision for Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed seems to have 'imprinted Scott and Venturi's bible of hyper reality, *Learning From Las Vegas*, in the same way that pious Muslims memorize the Qur'an' (Davis, 2006, p. 51). Las Vegas and Dubai do indeed have some striking similarities, both are situated in the desert and present themselves as a form of ethereal oases, both have exquisite examples of the wonders of urban architecture and both could be described as archipelagos of clusters of capitalist desire. The most blatant difference is that Dubai is bigger, and by some scale. Dubai has become very practised at the act of 'staging' Bedouin hospitality to meet its own ends; however it is not without risk.

Dubai is becoming more cosmopolitan as it develops, but not everyone is enjoying the rewards due the nature of exploitation that exists. I would be inclined to argue that in aspiring to become a truly global city, Dubai has had to forfeit the true principles of Arabian/Bedouin hospitality. The city has been ruthless in achieving its goals, but also reckless. I have spent much of this essay talking of how the host has failed to adhere to the rituals of Bedouin hospitality that it advertises and pretends to follow. On face value the city has been somewhat successful in achieving its goals, but despite verging on being a 'bad' host, the visitors that it welcomes within its city walls have not exactly been shining examples of guests either. Doreen Massey said of London that it was a city 'where you could be yourself as long as you harmed no one else' (Massey, 2006, p. 1), a phrase true of describing hospitality in most global cities. Dubai has gone a long way to accommodating its guests, despite the obvious conflict between their own culture and traditional Arab values and culture, with gated communities and the 'cluster' of mini-cities being particularly open to western vices. Al-Saloom is clear that even when Arab business and hospitality is mixed, there is a need, and an expectation, for reciprocity between the guest and the host. One could argue, that the guest has given something back to the host I return for their hospitality, in helping Dubai to grow, but this is not the traditional meaning of 'reciprocity' in this context. It is expected in Bedouin hospitality that the same comforts would be offered to them should they ask of it (Saloom, 2012).

In many ways Dubai has treated the guests that it hosts with naivety. In welcoming them in, using some form of staged hospitality it has forgotten to fear its guest, and the ability that the guest has to damage its *hurma.* The guest has very little regard for reciprocity in this case. As with most global or world cities the guests move to their cities through a desire for the 'better'; desire for a better quality of life, for a better hub for their business, for easier and faster flowing capital, for more connections, for an experience of the exotic. The city uses its guests, and the guests use the city all in order to attain something bigger and better[3], which is contrary to principles of Bedouin hospitality. In this vein, both the host and the guest are 'bad' in terms of Bedouin hospitality as they do not adhere to its rituals but use it as an exotic guise to achieve their goals.

Conclusion

Before I knew better, I told Jordanians that I was studying the politics of hospitality. 'True hospitality is not political', I was instructed. 'It is not calculated'. – Remarked to Andrew Shyrock in his travels in Jordan (Shryock, 2012, p. S23)

[Dubai's] monstrous caricature of futurism is simply shrewd branding for the world market.- (Davis, 2006, p. 53)

The above statements bear some significance I think on the nature of changing hospitality in Middle Eastern cities that are embarking on epic projects of urban development in order to compete with other global cities and to diversify their economies from the traditional reliance on oil and gas. The former statement focuses on the idea of unconditional hospitality that even the traditional *karam* does not achieve but is only really talked of in the old stories such as that of Ibn Khatlan. It does however mark how far that things have changed in the 'modern' Middle East, since the desert started to urbanise.

This essay has documented how Bedouin or Arab hospitality has evolved as the Middle Eastern cities sought to find a way in the world that would allow them to compete against other cities that have existed had a longer history with a presence on the world state. There is no doubt that Bedouin hospitality in the home is on a far smaller scale to that that would exist in Middle eastern Neo-Global city such as Dubai, but 'the individual house can always be used as a metaphor for the community at large' whether it be that of the city, state, or even wider afield. (Rosello, 2001, p. 150). It has helped to show how brutal a city can be in adopting in striving for a place at the top table. Bedouin hospitality has been used as a tool to encourage visitors to Dubai, but it is hard to draw any other comparisons with the Bedouin hospitality that was practiced in the desert, or resembles (any part of) the stories passed on from generation to generation. Iconicity in the Sheikhdom has been a 'crucial pillar of the entrepreneurial narrative' (Acuto, 2010, p. 276) that showcases Dubai's presence to prospective visitors all over the world, like a massive billboard that aims to dwarf the image of New York, London and Tokyo whose adverts look weathered and outdated next to it.

Sadly, the real Bedouins all left this concrete oasis long before it became the spectacle it is today where even the definition of the term 'Bedouin' is changing too, referring nowadays to less of a 'way of life' and more of a type of 'identity'. (Cole, 2003, p. 237). It seems as this has changed, Bedouin hospitality has become diluted and misinterpreted in the modern age of globalization and urbanisation. It has left Dubai in a strange limbo where the dream world it offers to its guests is both real and imagined. This concrete oasis in the desert is not a mirage, its obsession with being 'bigger and better' and more welcoming than other global cities is very real, but the hospitality that it offers is not. It is presented as this paradise of modern-day globalisation but the "Bedouin" hospitality practiced here is a shadow of what it once was, and what it purports to be in Dubai, a shadow cast by the Burj Khalifa in the desert sun.

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[1] Despite the traditional interpretation of a global city being a centre for international trade and banking, Sassen identifies four new ways global cities function: first, as highly concentrated command points for the global economy; second, as key locations for finance and service sectors; thirdly, as sites of production and innovation in these industries; and lastly, as markets for these productions and innovations (Sassen, 2001, p. 3) [2] Ibn Khatlan, according the poems was an incredibly generous man who went to great extremes to accommodate his guests and even gave up his children in their honour. His enemies who wanted to slay him became charmed and embarrassed by his hospitality, and became his allies. The Poets to whom he had given his children as they had left his house were met by local Balga tribes such as the Bani Sakhr whom paid the weight in gold of each for each child just to be able to return them to Ibn Khatlan, because he had been so generous to them in the past. (Shryock, 2009, pp. 38-39) [3] Interestingly, a government official from the emirate said that "Dubai does not reinvent, it does *better* and *bigger*" and the means it uses (such as the architectural wonders, hotels, over-exuberant shopping malls etc.) are not 'ends in themselves' but means to increase the symbolic power of the city. (Acuto, 2010, p. 276) —
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