

**ADDRESSING THE GAP IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE INDUSTRY IN DUBAI:
PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The research question permeating this thesis is how to address effectively the gap in the Arts and Culture in Dubai, a city that has prospered so well economically and financially in recent decades. Therefore, my focus is on those activities and events relating to literature, the visual arts, music, theatre and film – all reflecting the cultural lead Dubai is rapidly assuming in these spheres. The research is the first of its kind about Dubai. In such a study, some limitations need to be established. Specifically, I want to focus on the recognized strengths and weaknesses of the current management of cultural activities and policies and also on the advantages and disadvantages and the opportunities available. Consequently, in this thesis, it is necessary to take into account aspects such as history, politics, geo-politics, climate, people, ethnicity, religion and other aspects that constitute the cultural life of the emirate.

Dubai is a rich blend of tradition and modernity, reflected in its various libraries, art galleries, theatres, and museums. It uniquely possesses the infrastructure needed to support the cultural vision of its leadership. As the emirate of Dubai increasingly assumes a greater cosmopolitan character, its emergence as the cultural hub of the region is certainly assured. However, no study has been undertaken as yet that analyses the current situation, the problems and opportunities it faces in terms of its cultural management, and ways to enhance Dubai's undoubted leadership in cultural matters. My own work over many years with the Dubai Cultural Council has convinced me that such a study is vital and it is my hope that the work presented in this thesis will contribute to the clarification of the current situation and indicate useful and appropriate directions to proceed in the future in terms of cultural management in Dubai.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In this research the thesis was broken down into different aspects such as history, politics, geopolitics, climate, people, ethnicity, religion and other aspects that constitute the cultural life of the emirate of Dubai. And then it is divided culture into different sub-areas such as Performing Arts, Theatre, Movies, Literature, Folklore, and festivals, Visual Arts, Music, Heritage, Archaeology, Media and Religion.

The current situation in the research was analysed for the following areas:

What are we best at? What are our success factors? What advantages do we have?

What are we worse at? What are the reasons of our weakness? What disadvantages we have?

What opportunities do we have locally and regionally?

What are our major threats?

The hurdles and difficulties that we face in attracting cultural activities to Dubai (social, economic, structural, and financial) were covered in the thesis and I suggested some solutions to remove them, and I have initiated some new concepts to raise the cultural profile of Dubai.

My resources include: self opinion research, library work, books, journals, press reportages, articles, different government departments resources, projects, interviews, workshops and roundtable discussions.

Since year 2000 I started doing lots of researches, studies and discussions with artists, authors and many people involved in the cultural life in Dubai, Finally and because of my practical studies, the Government of Dubai has approved my initiation to set up "Dubai Cultural Council" in 2003. Now I would like to convert my practical studies into theoretical studies.

The aim and purpose for writing the thesis is to enrich the cultural environment in Dubai by the following points:

- Improve governance of the cultural sector.
- Upgrade the regulatory framework for cultural organizations.
- Develop physical infrastructure to promote cultural activities.
- Increase awareness and interest in cultural activities.
- Identify and nurture talents.
- Focus on availability of quality cultural activities.

This research has been divided into nine chapters. The first chapter outlines the history of the United Arab Emirates and Dubai and its historical landmarks. The second chapter provides background to the intellectual formation of people in Dubai and attempts to shed light on some definitions of culture. Also it provides an introduction to culture in the United Arab Emirates and the different stages of cultural life. The third chapter presents a brief comprehensive overview of the different environmental factors influencing the culture of the UAE, which shed light on historical developments within the UAE.

The environmental conditions in the UAE and its role in forming the kinds of heritage and folklore that people engage in will be described in the fourth chapter. The fifth furnishes the reader with information on the cultural issues in the UAE and Dubai. Details and solid data base to monitor emerging trends in demographic variables at the country and local levels will be described in the sixth chapter. In the seventh chapter, and for the purposes of cultural situation analysis, the culture sub-sector has been divided into sub-areas such performing arts, fine arts, music, movies, literature, folklore, festivals, archaeology, heritage, media, and religion.

Chapter eight is an overview and clearer picture of changes after the UAE federation in 1971, and the positive and negative impacts on the cultural scene in the country. Also it is discusses how to build on the strengths and the successes achieved to push forward the cultural development of the country, and maintain its steady progress in the face of the rapid changes and possible developments on the global scale that present a challenge to the cultural identity of the UAE. And finally, *Cultural Thoughts and Cultural Tourism Development in Dubai* will be discussed in the ninth chapter, in addition to my conclusion for the entire research.

Chapter 1: A Brief History of the UAE

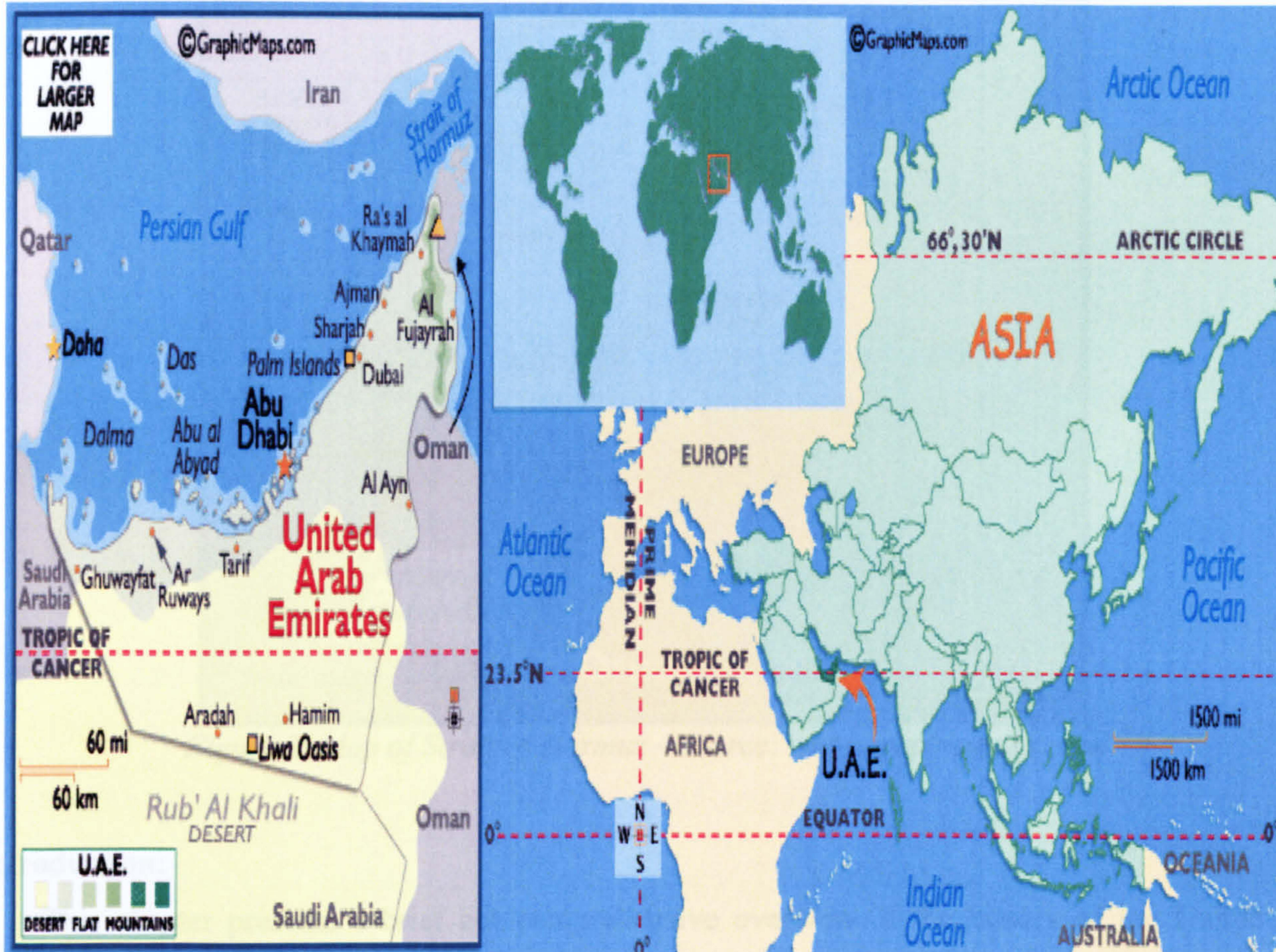


Figure 1. Map of the UAE, showing the location of the UAE in the Western Asia - source: www.graphicmaps.com

Many years ago the UAE became an important strategic location that was the junction for trade caravans by land and by sea from different countries and civilizations. It was the starting point for many different cultures, and because of this excellent location, over the years its people were provided opportunities to develop strong relationships with the rest of ancient civilization in south Asia.

The geographic location of the UAE between eastern Saudi Arabia and Oman played an important role in commerce, such as the transport of raw copper from Oman to Iraq since 3000 BC. Additionally, the availability of oases and water from the western side of the Omani mountains, flowing

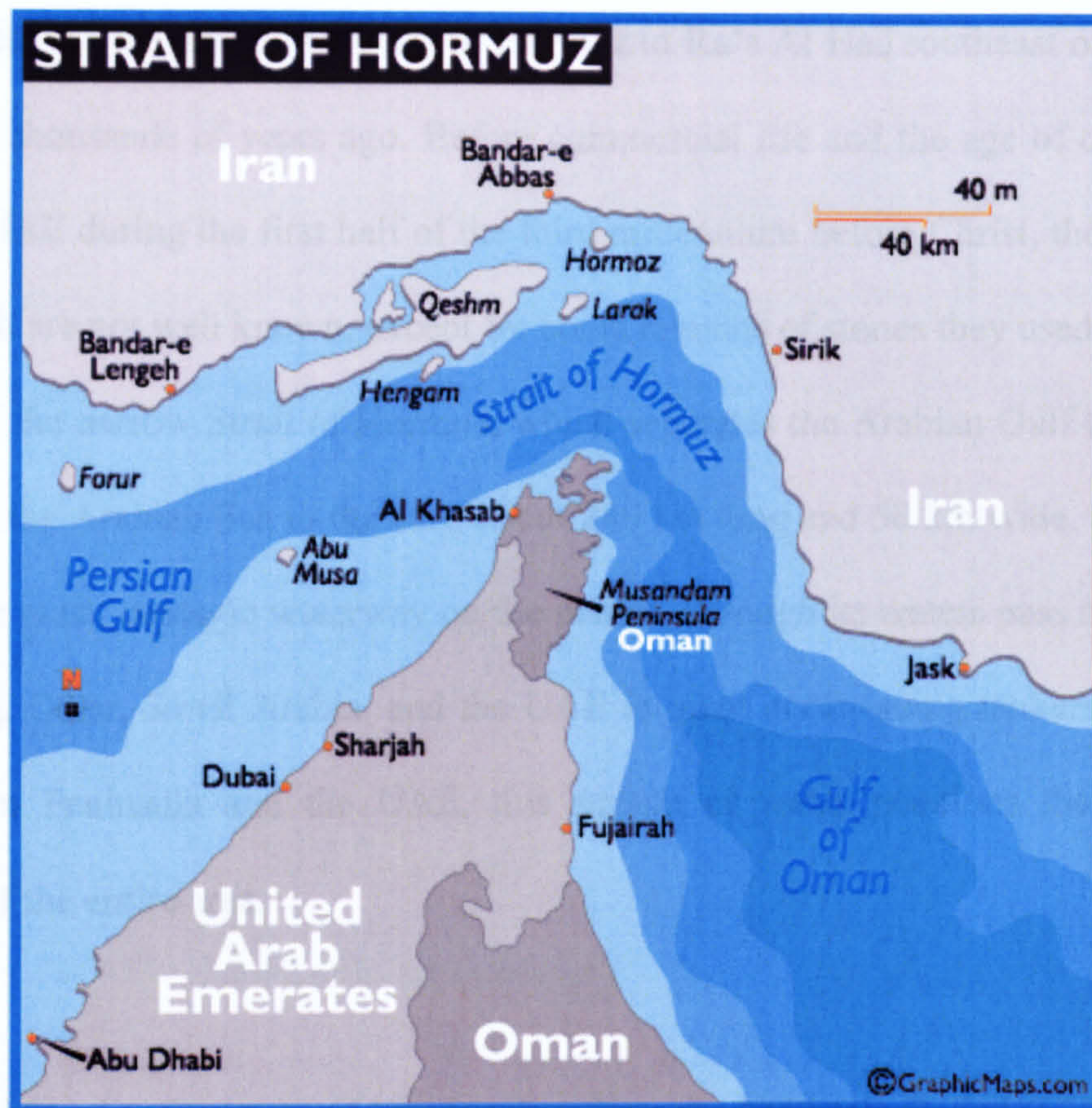


Figure 2. Map of Strait of Hormuz – source: www.graphicmaps.com

1. Introduction:

This chapter presents a brief but comprehensive overview of the history of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is intended to shed light on the history of developments in the country. Many years ago the UAE became an important strategic location that was the junction for trade convoys by land and by sea from different countries and civilizations. It was the crossing point for many different cultures, and because of this excellent location, over the years its people were provided opportunities to develop strong relationships with the centres of ancient civilization in south Asia.

The geographic location of the UAE between eastern Saudi Arabia and Oman played an important role in commerce, such as the transport of raw copper from Oman to Iraq since 3000 BC. Additionally, the availability of oases and water from the western side of the Omani mountains, flowing

from Ra's Masandam at the top of the Strait of Hormuz to Ra's Al Had southeast of Muscat city, made this area habitable thousands of years ago. Before commercial life and the age of organized settlement that began in the UAE during the first half of the third millennium before Christ, there were some small communities which are not well known, except for some remains of stones they used.

Nowadays, the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which separates the Arabian Gulf to the west from the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea to the east, about 280 km long and 50 km wide, is considered one of the most, if not the most, strategic waterway on the planet. Through its waters pass much of the oil from Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in giant ocean-going tankers. Bordered by Iran, Oman's Musandam Peninsula and the UAE, this stretch of water positions the UAE in the most important region of the entire area.

2. The Stone Age

The oldest historic relic in the UAE, dated as from the Neolithic Period (6000 BC), is located in the southeast part of Al Ain city, about 160 km east of Abu Dhabi. At the same distance southeast of Dubai, some antiques used by the people of that time are still available in the Al Ain Museum, but other antiques made of wood and leather are not available because such materials don't last long. Man was able to make stone articles such as spear heads from pegmatite stone between 5000 BC and 4000 BC. Some of these spears have been found in the western part of the UAE.

3. The Period from 4000 BC to 3000 BC

Hundreds of archaeological excavations prove that the people in the UAE during this period knew the art of making pottery. The excavation of told graveyard proves that all the graves were built by stone above the surface with a dome shape and contained pottery.

4. The Bronze Age

The organized settlement of the UAE began during the first half of the fifth millennium (4500 BC) in the eastern part of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, where water and agriculture were available as well. It was a strategic location between Sohar city on the Gulf of Oman and Umm Al Nar Island on the coast of the Arabian Gulf. The island of Umm al-Nar, adjacent to Abu Dhabi island, has given its name to one of the major periods in the history of south-eastern Arabia, the Umm al-Nar period, which lasted from around 2500 BC to 2000 BC.¹

A group of graves provides us with good information about the settlements and the customs of the people who lived at that time. The villages contained circular-shaped houses surrounded by ditches for defensive purposes. Archaeological discoveries show that during this period the society of the United Arab Emirates was engaged in trade and played an important role as an agent in the export of goods, especially copper and diorite stones, to the one of material described above. The people were professionals in making walls. In addition, they were farmers and grew palms. This flourishing civilization was affected by the same economic crises which affected the East in 2000 BC, especially in the second half of that era, but there appears to be a dearth of information about this. The decline affected many areas in the Gulf. We have few explanations for this decline, but perhaps it was a result of the political situations.

5. The Iron Age (1000 BC)

We have little information about civilization in the United Arab Emirates in the 2nd century BC, but we have found that between 1000 – 500 B.C a number of societies lived in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. The remains of these societies can still be found in the Ras Al-Khaima Emirate in the

¹ Ibrahim Al Abed, *United Arab Emirates Yearbook 2005*, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2005, p. 38.

North and Al-Ain town in the East. There are also some remains in the Arabian Gulf and on the Omani coast. The discovery of the Al-Aflaj watering system shows that during the Bronze Age (around 1000 BC) big villages and small settlements were built near oases and people lived in a different social and economic system. Al-Aflaj consists of horizontal tunnels 0.5-1 m wide, 1-1.5 m high, and a maximum of about 50 m below the land surface. The Al-Aflaj system obtained its water from shallow groundwater characterized by high water levels relatively close to the surface.

6. The Hellenistic Era

After the end of the Iron Age (about 500 BC), a new era began called the 'Hellenistic' era. The remains of this era can be found at the Al Mleiha archaeological site located 45 km southeast of the Emirate of Sharjah, and the Al-Doar archaeological site located 70 km north of the Emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain. This era continued nearly 500 years.

7. The Greco-Roman Era

The Greco-Roman era occupied a special place in ancient Gulf history because of its effect on sailing and trade, both in this district and in the world. This era coincided with the military campaign during which Alexander the Macedonian wanted to change his capital to Babylon. Historians say that Alexander the Great discovered the Gulf and its beaches when he was returning from India, and he ordered his admiral Nirachos to follow the Gulf to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq. Starting from the Indus River in India and Pakistan in 324 BC, Nirachos crossed the Gulf of Arabia until he reached Direded Dinnis village, which today is the city of Basra in Iraq. The Macedonian was trying to protect his empire from Persians attacks and reach the Arabian Peninsula to control its wealth, like incense¹.

¹ Ḥamdi Tamām, *Zayed bin Sulṭān āl Nahyān: Al Qa'd Walmasira (Zayed bin Sultan: The Journey's Leader)*, 3rd ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1986, p. 23.

Alexander's historian said that Phoenicia had a flourishing trade in the Gulf region during the fourth century BC. There were also signs of a black sticky liquid which was used in lighting lamps; this may be considered the first sign of oil.

*Trajan*¹, the Roman leader, wanted to follow in Alexander's footsteps, but he was crushed by the Persians, who were at the height of their power during that time. After that, there was a long struggle between the Greeks and Persians, which lasted three centuries until the appearance of Islam. The Islamic armies ended this struggle.²

8. The Region and the Collapse of the Ma'rib Dam³

The Ma'rib Dam was one of the major achievements of the people of Saba, now Yemen. The dam collapsed from the flood of Arim, mentioned in the Qur'an, and the Sabaean state was weakened economically and eventually collapsed (Chapter of the Saba, v.15-16). The Yemeni tribes (for example, Al-Azad) started leaving Yemen after the collapse of the Ma'arb Dam in the 6th century BC. Also, Arabian immigration to Oman and the UAE increased from the 2nd century BC, in response to the drought that affected the interior of the Arabian Peninsula.

9. Analysis and Conclusion: the Brief History of the UAE

The UAE enjoys one of the most strategic locations on earth, which has been of great advantage to it since ancient times, making it habitable and a powerful location for commerce. The UAE is located east of Saudi Arabia and Oman. The Omani mountains on its eastern side gave rise to oases, making the

¹ *Trajan*: Marcus Ulpius Traianus (born c. A.D. 53, in Spain) was chosen by the Roman emperor Nerva to be his successor in 97. Trajan ruled from 98-117.

² Ḥamdi Tamām, *Zayed bin Sulṭān āl Nahyān: Al Qa'd Walmasira (Zayed bin Sultan: The Journey's Leader)*, p. 23.

³ In 1987 the Ma'rib Dam was rebuilt to collect the waters of Yemen once again by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahayan, late President of the United Arab Emirates.

area habitable much before commerce and many ancient communities flourished. The UAE's strategic location made it an important trading centre for international traders travelling by sea or land in the ancient world. It also served as a cultural hub for interaction between many civilizations, especially those of South Asia. Even today, the Strait of Hormuz, next to the UAE, transports oil in tankers. Relics from various ages can also be found in this region, showing us the types of civilizations that occupied it and their social, cultural, and religious practices. Relics from the Stone Age (ca. 6000 BC) have been found in the eastern and southern parts of Al Ain city and are now kept at the Al Ain museum. Spearheads made of pegmatite stones between 5000 BC and 4000 BC were also found in the western part of the UAE. Archaeological excavations prove that pottery was made in the ancient UAE and pottery-containing stone graves were built above ground between 4000 and 3000 BC. During the Bronze Age (ca. 4500 BC) organised settlements in the UAE were established in the eastern part of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, as water and agriculture were available. Relics of this era were found once again in excavated graves, and it can be inferred that the UAE exported goods such as copper and diorite stones across the Gulf. Various professions flourished in this region. However, due to an economic crisis in 2000 BC, which may have been due to the political situation, this community perished. Relics of the Iron Age from 1000-500 BC can also be found in the UAE east of the Arabian Peninsula. Watering systems called Al-Aflaj, which existed from 1000 BC, were discovered, throwing light on the social and economic systems and showing that people settled around oases. Remains from the Hellenistic Era, which started around 500 BC and lasted 500 years, can be found at the Al Mleiha archaeological site. The Greco-Roman Era had a considerable influence on ancient Gulf history, as well as on sailing and trade in the ancient world. Alexander and the Roman emperor Trajan tried to conquer the Gulf but were unsuccessful. One of the relics of this era was the Ma'rib Dam, which was a major sustaining factor for the people of Saba, now called Yemen. After its collapse, the state weakened economically, leading to

the emigration of Yemeni tribes. Neighbouring UAE and Oman saw an influx of people from the interior of Arabia due to drought. Thus, through the ages climatic conditions and outside influences have played a role in determining the habitation in this region.

Like all other countries and cultures, much may be discovered about the UAE through an examination of its history and relics. Many of these important discoveries concern the country's livelihood, culture, art, and people. Most of these aspects of life in the UAE are determined by the country's location. As already mentioned, the UAE has a very important strategic location in relation to its community, its natural resources, and the countries surrounding it. The people of the UAE in the past were adept at making pottery, as evidenced by the different types of pottery that are found in the area. This pottery represents a very important source of livelihood, because, as discussed above, it is one of the products that the UAE has routinely exported to other countries. However, much of this pottery is more than just art and a source of livelihood, because, as will be discussed later, it reflects a very important part of the UAE's culture - its religion.

The first of the several benefits derived from the UAE's location is its advantage for international commerce, trade, and transportation. Throughout the various periods in the history of the world, the UAE has engaged in the trade and export of its products and resources, such as copper, diorite stones, and stone pottery. Second, the bodies of water located around and within the country have exposed it to other cultures and facilitated the development of good relationships with other countries. Being a very important route of travel for many countries, the UAE has witnessed the blending of many cultures within its territory. In fact, it has been influenced by many developments in other countries and, in some instances, has played a role in these external events and developments. Examples of these events and influences come from the Greco-Roman Era and the days following the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam. The

location of the UAE also facilitated the formation and survival of communities and civilizations within the country. Many oases and other bodies of water made survival in a dry area such as the UAE possible for settlers. The importance of water for people in the UAE is proven by the locations of community settlements in the country. As noted above, these communities often formed near oases.

10. The Ancient People of Dubai: Snake Worshipers

There have been many archaeological excavations in the UAE during the last forty years. All of them have contributed to the history of the UAE, but some are idiosyncratic, like those at a place called the '*Hill of Snakes*'¹ in Dubai, which existed in the second millennium before Christ. This settlement is of great importance not only for the UAE but also for the whole region, because it illustrates a religious culture in which snake worshiping was instituted and which promulgated numerous beliefs about snakes. Archaeologists have classified the temple discovered at this location as a place where the snakes in Dubai were worshipped; also the excavations in the Hill of Snakes revealed the cultural and social perspective of its people thousands of years ago.

The '*Hill of Snakes*' is one of the archaeological hills in Dubai discovered during the archaeological excavations in 1979 in the *Al Ghusaise*² area. It was named Hill of Snakes because of the epigraph of snakes on the pottery³. The excavations in this area changed many ideas in archaeology, not only about the UAE, but also about the archaeological settlements in the entire Arabian Gulf region;

¹ *Turath* magazine, *Tanqibāt tal alth'ābin' fi Dubai tūkd alb'd alḥḍari walthqafi lahl alamarat*, (*Archaeological Excavations in the Hill of Snakes*), Issue No. 76, Emirates Heritage Club, Abu Dhabi, UAE, March 2005, pp. 20-25.

² *Al Ghusaise* is today a suburb of Dubai, but in antiquity it was the site of an important settlement and an associated cemetery.

³ *Turath* magazine, *Tanqibāt tal alth'ābin' fi Dubai tūkd alb'd alḥḍari walthqafi lahl alamarat*, (*Archaeological Excavations in the Hill of Snakes*), Issue No. 76, p. 21.

since the third millennium BC, not a single researcher of the civilization of the Arabian Gulf addressed this important discovery of snake worship. The total area of the location is just one km by 600 m¹. During the many excavations at the Hill, the remaining residential foundations were discovered, as well as many broken pieces pottery with epigraphs of snakes.

The second collection of pottery, which was discovered around the trenches, includes specimens made of mud with figures engraved on them. The houses were built of palm leaves and leather. It is noteworthy that a stone temple was built in the centre of the settlement, which was used to worship snakes. All the objects found in the temple have epigraphs of snakes, which show how sacrosanct the snakes were. Some weapons such as spears and arrows have drawings that look like snakes. Most of the weapons were made of bronze and lead. Other objects include stocks, knives, beads, daggers, jewellery, and sticks. Also, a snake's skull was found in the temple. The skull looks alive and scary, so it was taken to the University of Cambridge in the UK for dissection. The university reported that it belongs to the species *Copra*.²

¹ Ibid., p. 22.

² Naşir Hussain Al-'abūdi, *Şafhāt min Āthar Waturath Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (Pages from the Heritage of the UAE)*, 1st ed, Zayed Center for Heritage and History, Al Ain, UAE, 2002, pp. 20-21. See also Heard-Bey, F. *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates* (Longman, London 1982/ Motivate Dubai 2004). Hellyer, P. and M. Ziolkowski (eds.) *Emirates Heritage Volume One; Proceedings of the 1st Annual Symposium on Recent Palaeontological and Archaeological Research in the Emirates* (Zayed Centre, al-Ain 2005). Potts, D., H. Nabbodah and P. Hellyer (eds.) *Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates; Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Archaeology of the UAE* (Trident Press, London, Abu Dhabi 2003).



Figure 3. Some objects from the temple shaped like snakes – source: *Turath magazine*, issue 76

The average width of the temple was 60 m and the height of the walls was about 3 m. The total number of objects found at the Hill is 620, 500 of which were in the temple¹. But questions remain: Were all the objects used for the worship of snakes, and why did the people keep most of the objects in the temple? Three thuribles 12-20 cm tall were found in the temple and look like the thuribles used nowadays in the Arabian Gulf region to burn incense.² The difference in appearance between the ancient and modern thuribles is the epigraph and drawing of snakes on the old ones, but the real difference is in their uses. The old ones were used for snake worship, whereas the new ones are used to burn incense to get the nice smell. The other objects found in the temple reveal some of the social, religious, and cultural habits of the people of that period. They left all that they had for us, so we could observe their reality three thousand years later and keep their objects in our museums with honour³.

¹ *Turath magazine*, *Tanqibāt tal alth‘ābin’ fi Dubai tūkd alb‘d alḥḍari walthqafi lahl alamarat*, (*Archaeological Excavations in the Hill of Snakes*), Issue No. 76, p. 23.

² *Ibrahim Al ‘abed*, *Dawalt Al emārat Al ‘arbiya Al mutaḥda 2000/2001 (The United Arab Emirates)*, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2000/2001, p. 45.

³ Visit to Dubai Museum on March 2005.

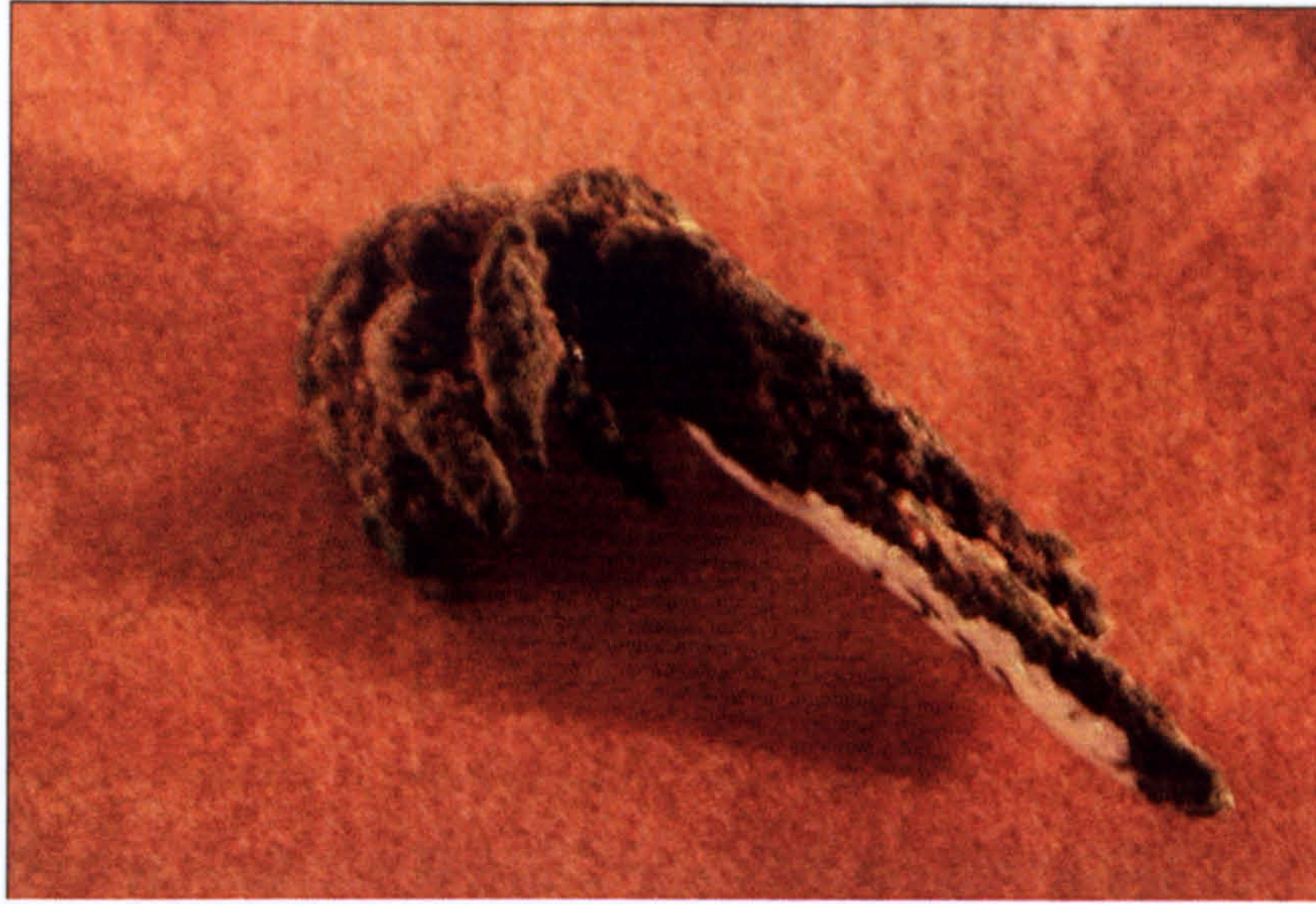


Figure 4. Object from the temple shaped like a snake – source: Turath magazine, issue 76

The rectangular Hill of Snakes settlement, which is less than one km, was populated by an advanced civilization, and the best evidence for that comes from the objects they left for us in their graveyards close to the hill. We know that they lived in tents and arbours and that they engaged in activities such as fishing and hunting, because we have found fishing sticks and spears in the hill. Additionally, the stone objects indicate that these people engaged in land and sea trade, which extended to India, China, Iraq, and the eastern coast of Africa.¹

¹ Dr. Amtithal Al-Naqib, Managing director of the Department of Museums and Heritage in *Umm al-Qaiwain* Emirate, *Turath* magazine, article on page 25, Issue # 76, Emirates Heritage Club, Abu Dhabi, UAE, March 2005.



Figure 5. piece of pottery from the temple sculptured like a snake – source: Turath magazine, issue 76

The inhabitants of the Hill were interested in culture and art, as evidenced by the epigraphs found on the artefacts. They also cherished life after death, and that is why they left the dead person's possessions with him in his tomb, so he could use them when his spirit goes back into his body. Men and women wore different kinds of jewellery, specimens of which have been found in the graveyard of the Hill. Also, there was class discrimination, because some people were buried with few possessions and others were buried with an array of possessions, including jewellery and gifts. Finally, there was a myriad of religious ideas in the Hill of Snakes. The inhabitants probably worshiped snakes because they were afraid of their poison; they probably also worshiped other kinds of frightening reptiles or animals.



Figure 6. pieces of potteries from the temple sculptured like a snake – source: page is taken from a brochure printed by the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai during the shopping festival 2007

11. Analysis and Conclusions: the Ancient People of Dubai - Snake Worshipers

The archaeological study of this settlement throws light on the religious, cultural, and social practices of the people of the region. Archaeological excavations in 1979 in the *Al Ghusaise* area point

to the existence of a location called the 'Hill of Snakes' in Dubai around 2000 BC. This location is rectangular in shape and is 1 km across. The people seem to have been very civilized, based on the artefacts found at the site. They resided in tents and arbours and their main occupation was hunting and fishing, based on the spears and fishing sticks found at the site. There also was trade with the inhabitants of India, China, Iraq and the east coast of Africa. A temple made of stone was discovered at the centre of the settlement where snakes were worshipped. The location was known as the Hill of Snakes because of the epigraphs of snakes on the pottery. Houses with broken pottery containing epigraphs were observed. Pottery made of mud and containing epigraphs of figures were also discovered around trenches. The houses were built of palm leaves and leather. Most weapons were made of bronze or lead and have snake drawings. Stocks, knives, beads, daggers, jewellery, and sticks, as well as the skull of a snake, were found in the temple. The snake is currently located at the University of Cambridge in the UK, where it was identified as belonging to the Cobra species. More than 500 objects were discovered in the temple and a total of 600 were found overall. However many questions are yet to be answered about their functions. Some objects such as thuribles are used even today; however, the function of modern thuribles seems to be entirely different from that of the thuribles found at the Hill, based on the epigraphs of snakes found on the latter. Jewellery seemed to be prevalent; as such objects were found at the site. Class differences were evident. Burial rituals were also identified. The inhabitants also believed in life after death, because they left behind various articles for the afterlife of the dead person. Hence, we see that an advanced civilization settled in Dubai around 2000 BC. They had an advanced and complicated way of life and rituals. Although their occupations were simple, they seemed to be superstitious with regard to snakes. The apparent ritual worship of snakes occupied an important place among their activities, because epigraphs of snakes were found on various artefacts ranging from spears to pots. This is one of the first kinds of evidence of ritual worship of the snake in this region. However,

it is still unclear why snakes were worshipped: was it a blind belief, a practice, or fear that motivated the snake worship and finally gave this region its name.

As in all countries and regions, religion forms a very important aspect of the UAE's culture. This religious culture was discovered through an examination of the relics left behind by the ancestors of the people of the UAE. The country's traditional religious culture is interesting because, like most traditional religion, it involves the worship of a unique and uncommon icon and unique traditions. Of all the features of the UAE's religious culture, the worship of snakes is one of the most striking. This practice of worshipping snakes has earned them the title snake worshippers. The prevalence of the belief that the snake is a deity and the importance of this belief in the lives of the people of the UAE in the past are shown by many of the artefacts found in the country. These artefacts are varied and range from common living tools to religious items. Examples are pottery, weapons such as spears and arrows, stocks, knives, beads, daggers, jewellery, and sticks. All these artefacts contain epigraphs of snakes. There was even a temple devoted to snake worship. This temple is located in the Hill of Snakes, where most of the pottery and other artefacts with epigraphs of snakes were found, and that is why it is called the Hill of Snakes. It was inferred that the temple was used for snake worship because all the objects found therein have snake epigraphs. Moreover, the skull of a snake was found inside the temple.

The fact that even the most common of the tools have snake epigraphs can lead to many different conclusions. It is to be noted that whereas all the objects in the temple contain snake epigraphs, not all the objects with snake epigraphs were found in the temple. Some were found around the hill and in the graveyard near the hill. This shows how people in the UAE in the past took their religion seriously. They may even be considered more religious than people are at present, because they integrated their religious

beliefs with everything they did by placing their icon on their everyday tools. Aside from a clue to their religion, these widely diversified artefacts give a very important clue to the people's lifestyle. Based on what was found, it may be safely concluded that their community attained a high level of civilization. They developed tools and built residences for themselves. The artefacts also show that they were engaged in occupations such as fishing and hunting, as proven by the existence of tools for such occupations.

12. The Emirates and Islamic Civilization

A new era in the region began with the introduction of Islam by Amer bin el Aass, who fought off all the invaders from the Arabian Gulf after the death of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Amr Ibn Al-Aas was one of the glorious companions of Prophet Mohammed. Before embracing Islam, he was one of the Quraish people who resisted Islam. After joining Islam, he became one of the brave leaders and fighters for it. He was also known for his great generosity. He was sent to Dibba in the UAE to convert its people to Islam in the year 630 AD. Dibba city is located in the northern UAE close to the Masandam peninsula. It was the site of the great battles between Muslim armies and a number of tribes and towns that had sworn allegiance to the Prophet but changed their opinion after his death. The victory of the Muslims at Dibba in 633 AD traditionally marks the end of the Muslim reconquest of Arabia. Today, Dibba is a quiet setting of three seaside villages - each belonging to the different rulers of Fujairah, Sharjah, and Oman.¹

In the days of Umayyad, the Gulf region became one of the most important commercial centres as well as a centre for shipbuilding. The Gulf merchants participated in spreading Islam. In the Emirates

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanzal, *M'jam Al alfaẓ Al 'amiyah fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (The Dictionary of Spoken Accent in the UAE)*, 2nd ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1998, pp. 233-234.

we found places which represent the first Islamic era, especially Dibba and Bidya village in the Emirate of Fujairah, where there is a mosque which is believed to belong to the Khulafa Rashidoun¹ era. Excavations at Al Bidya village reveal that the site has been inhabited for 4,000 years; a group of Australian excavators say its Ottoman Mosque dates back to the 16th century AD. The Al Bidya mosque is the oldest mosque in the UAE². In the Ajman Emirate people discovered archaeological remain which belong to the 10th Hegira century, while in Daberhanian at the archaeological site in Ras Al-Khaima they found copper coins, one of which came from 1507. Ibin Batuta (1304 – 1377), the famous Arabian traveller, spoke about rivers, trees, and palms in Kalba, Khorfakan, Al-Garyant, and Dibba, all of which are important settlements on the eastern coast of the UAE. Also in Dubai is an early Islamic site on the beach of the Arabian Gulf called Jumeirah. It may have originated before the appearance of Islam. The discoverers found houses, administration offices, and a market, all built from stones and mud. Some of the relics are kept in the Dubai Museum.

13. The Modern Eras

The conquest of "Constantinople" in 1453 by the Ottoman sultan Mohammed Al-Fatih (the Conqueror) caused the transfer of Constantinople's scientists and the Greek scientific tradition to Italy. For this reason, historians considered that year to be the end of the Middle Ages in Europe. The victory was followed by two tremendous losses for Muslims and Arabs; the first was in 1492, when Castile ended the kingdom of Granada in Andalusia in the southern Iberian Peninsula, after more than ten years of war started by the Papists. The second loss, which occurred at the end of the 15th century, ended the Arabian maritime control over the Arabian Gulf, the Oman Sea, and a part of the Indian Ocean. That left

¹ Khulafa Rashidoun: The four Caliphs who ruled Muslims after the death of prophet Mohammed who are Abu Baker Al Sediq, Omar ibn Al Khatib, Othman ibn Afan and Ali ibn Abi Talib.

² Naşir Hussain Al-'abūdi, *Şafhāt min Āthar Waturath Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (Pages from the Heritage of the UAE)*, pp. 87-115-118.

Europeans to spread their control over the Indian trade and the high seas. The Portuguese lost tens of their ships while searching for ways to India, before they could find successful routes in 1498. The Ottomans were cut off all the way to India.

According to the Portuguese historian Castaneda, Fernão Lopes (1500-1559), Vasco da Gama (1469 - 1524) reached the Arabian Gulf on 24 April 1498, with the help of Ahmed ibn Majid, the Arabian navigator who was also very familiar with the equipment. But Vasco da Gama and Afonso de Albuquerque, the conqueror of Goa (1453 - 1515), committed much carnage on the Arabian and Islamic coasts, which had never happened before. The Portuguese killed all the women, children, and old people after overcoming the citizens' resistance. They also set fire to the mosques, countryside, and markets after they stole everything of value in Arabia. In addition to that, they cut off old people's noses and ears and sent them to the other towns so their inhabitants would be frightened.¹

Shehab Al Din Ahmed ibn Majid was born in Ras Al-Khaima in the UAE in 1432. One of the greatest Arabian navigators throughout history, he called himself "The Lion of the Sea". Historical accounts show that Ibn Majid aided Vasco da Gama in his travels by directing him toward India in 1498. His best –known work of instruction for marines is "*The Book of Useful Facts Concerning the First Principles and Rules of Navigation*".²

¹ ‘abd Al-Rḥmān ‘abduallh Al-Shaikh, *Al sijil Al kāmel Li Affonso De Albuquerque, (The complete record of the work of Affonso De Albuquerque)*, vol. II, The Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2000, pp. 515-516.

² Faliḥ Ḥanzal, *M'jam Al alfaẓ Al 'amiyah fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (The Dictionary of Spoken Accent in the UAE)*, 2nd ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1998, pp. 54-55.

The Portuguese won the war against the citizens of the coast in spite of the heroic resistance these citizens have shown in defending their land. The Portuguese were distinguished by their ships, weapons, and military plans. Year after year there were revolutions against Portuguese occupation. One of them was the attempt by the Ottoman leader Piri Reis Ali, who returned to Muscat in 1552 and to block Strait of Hormuz, but he was forced to withdraw as strong winds struck his fleet and sank some of his ships. He attacked Muscat again but was forced to retreat. The resistance movement continued for more than 150 years, but it was weakened by outside circumstances.

Piri Reis Ali's, whose original name was Hadji Muhammad, was an Ottoman admiral born around 1465. He began as a privateer in the Ottoman Navy as a youth, and after many years of fighting against the Spanish, Genoese, and Venetian navies he rose to the rank of Reis (Admiral). In 1552 he went from Egypt to Muscat with twenty five giant ships and 1600 soldiers. On the way he attacked a Portuguese fleet and destroyed it. Then he laid siege to and strafed Muscat for 18 days until the Portuguese commander surrendered. Following his defeat in 1554 in the Red Sea at the hands of the Portuguese navy (when he was about ninety years old), the sultan ordered him beheaded¹.

When the 16th century came, the Gulf waters were free of the colonialists. Three new heroes were Nasir Bin Murshid, Sultan Bin Saif, and Saif Bin Sultan. Nasir bin Murshid was the founder of Al-Ya'ariba state in Oman. He was later recognized as Caliph by the Imma'a in 1624, after he rescued Sohar town from the Portuguese. He also succeeded in recovering Jelfar, now called Ras Al Khaima, from the

¹ Kamal Yūssif Ḥussain, *Aimbraḥuriyat Aleryaḥ Almwsimyah (Empires of the Monsoon)*, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1st ed, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1999, pp. 721-722. Richard Hall, *Empires of the Monsoon: A History of the Indian Ocean and Its Invaders*, HarperCollins Publishers; Pbk. 1st ed, London, 1996, pp. 265. Faliḥ Ḥanzal, *Al'arb Walburutghal fi Altarikh (Arabs and Portuguese in the History)*, The Cultural Foundation, 1st ed, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1997, pp. 388-389.

Persians. The accession to power of Imam Nasir bin Murshid in 1624 AD marked the beginning of the Al Ya'aruba dynasty. This was a major turning point in the country's fortunes, because Imam Nasir was able, for the first time, to unite the country under his strong leadership.¹ Sultan bin Saif al-Ya'aruba continued the war against the Portuguese, launching several attacks against them in the Indian Ocean, but the Portuguese did not completely withdraw from the area until they were expelled in 1649.² Imam Saif bin Sultan laid the foundation for the famous Omani navy, which went on to establish naval control over the whole east African coast until 1964.³ Al-Ya'ariba's regime in Oman, which included the UAE, ruled from 1624 until approximately 1744. In 1720 Al-Ya'ariba state expelled the Portuguese invaders from the Arabian Gulf.⁴ In addition, another new alliance in the UAE, called Bani Yass, played a major role in the struggle with the Portuguese. They joined Nasir bin Murshid against the Portuguese in 1624. In the early 18th century there were two great tribal organizations in the UAE. Al-Qawasim Union, "The North Section Citizens", and Bani Yass Union, "The South Section Citizens". They shared political authority with the Bani Yass tribal confederation, which consisted of the ancestors of the ruling families of modern Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The Bani Yass were originally based in Liwa, an oasis on the edge of the Empty Quarter, but moved to Abu Dhabi in 1793. The tribes are named Al Bofalah, Al Boflasi, Al Sudan, Al Qibisat, Al Murer, Al Hawamel, Al Maharba, Al Bomehair, Al Rimithat, Al Mizaria'a, Al

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanzāl, *Al'arb Walburutghal fi Altarikh (Arabs and Portuguese in the History)*, The Cultural Foundation, 1st ed, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1997, pp. 506-507.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 511-520.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 523-524.

⁴ Interview with Dr. Faliḥ Ḥanzāl, Emirates Heritage club, Abu Dhabi, UAE, on May 8, 2005.

Qamzan, and Al Sebaias¹. Al-Qawasim consists of the ruling families of the Sharjah Emirate and the Ras Al Khima Emirate, which have been part of the UAE since 1803.²

The second reason for the appearance of the tribal organization is the collapse in the UAE and Oman of Al-Yaaribah, which was affected by internal problems. A new organization called Al-Busaeed appeared in 1744 and became the dynasty that rules Oman today. In 1749 a new marine power, represented by the Al-Qawasim tribe, also appeared. The domain of the Al-Qawasim tribe extended from northern Ras Al-Khaima to southern Sharjah. Another power was the Bani Yass tribe, whose domain extended from Al-Dhafra and Liwa in the southern UAE to the coast of Abu Dhabi in the north. The main factor was the strong relationship between these tribes, who were governed by the Sheikh's council. This council, which was controlled by the higher Sheikhs, also included Sheikhs from the small tribes. All the decisions were taken by the council after discussion.

The outside circumstances surrounding Bani Yass and Al-Qawasim were conducive to their being united as the first core of the United Arab Emirates. Countries like Holland, France, and Britain were the new invaders of the Gulf region after the withdrawal of the Portuguese. In the end, Britain won the war against the people of Gelfar-Ras Al-Khaima and Khorfakan. The main resistance was from Al-Qawasim in Gelfar, Bani Yass in Abu Dhabi, and Al Bufalasa in Dubai. The resistance of the Ras Al-Khaima people was so strong that Britain decided on 13 November 1809 to send a fleet. They fired at about 60 military boats and some of the towns' houses, but they couldn't achieve their political aims. The second campaign also failed, but the third campaign in 1819 won the war against Al-Qawasim in

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanzāl, *M'jam Al alfaḥ Al 'amiyah fi Dawlat Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (The Dictionary of Spoken Accent in the UAE)*, 2nd ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1998, pp. 746.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 541.

Ras Al-Khaima on 13 December 1809.¹ As a result of the entrance of British to the Ras Al-Khaima, the whole area of the Gulf came under their control. The only resistance against the newcomers came from the Bani Yass tribe; which attacked a British military ship in 1834. After that, Britain signed a number of agreements to strengthen its control in the area, the first of which was in 1820. The Sheikhs of the tribes promised to let the area be peaceful and erected a white flag with a red line in the middle. From its side, Britain promised not to intrude in the internal affairs of the local people, but it allowed inspection of Arabian ships. In 1835 there was another agreement, in which Arab Sheikhs promised to stop military activities during pearl harvesting season, which lasted 6 months of the year. Britain also promised to maintain maritime security. The agreement was named 'The Peace Treaty'. It was also the main reason that the coast of the UAE was named 'The Trucial Coast'.²

On 8 March 1892 the Sheikhs signed a new agreement with Britain and promised not to sign agreements with anyone else. They also promised not to accept any other government's agents in their Emirates without the British government's approval. Furthermore, they promised not to relinquish any of their land to any government except the British Government, which agreed in return not to interfere in the internal affairs of each Emirate. Britain gave authority for defence and foreign relations in the Arabian Gulf to the Eastern India Company in 1873. This arrangement remained until India became independent in 1947. After that, the responsibilities were transferred to the Ministry of Foreigners in Britain, which had a resident agent in Bahrain and political agents in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar. The

¹ Ḥamdi Tamām, *Mausu'at Zayed: Al Emarat Al ensan Wal waṭan (Zayed Encyclopaedia: Emirates and the Nation)*, vol. I, 1st ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1992, pp. 30-31. See also 'abd Al-'aziz 'abd Al-Ghani, *Abu Dhabi: Tawḥid Al Emara Wa qeyam Al Eteḥad (Abu Dhabi: Unification of the Emirate and the Union)*, 1st ed, Centre for Documentation and Research, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2004, p. 49.

² Ḥamdi Tamām, *Zayed bin Sulṭān āl Nahyān: Al Qa'd Walmasira (Zayed bin Sultan: The Journey's Leader)*, p. 23.

government appointed a political agent in Sharjah, where there was an Air Force base, until independence from Britain in 1971.

Britain's government changed its policies when the liberation movements started after the 2nd World War. In 1952, Britain established a council of the Sheikhs representing the coastal areas. The aim of the council was to arrange for different relationships among the Sheikhs. It met every 4 months for 15 years. In 1965, the Emirates council established a development office to search for new income after the economic crisis caused by the collapse of the pearl trade in the region. The office succeeded in collecting some funding from Qatar and Bahrain, while the funding from the UK was very limited. The council also shared in the construction of roads and developments in the areas of health, education, and agriculture. It established experimental farms in the Emirates and paved a road between Dubai and Sharjah in 1966. We can say that, the main responsibility for these tasks fell on Abu Dhabi, where 'oil' had been discovered first.

In 1969, there were 43 schools in the Emirates, established by the State of Kuwait, in addition to the '*Sawt Al- Sahil*' radio station in Sharjah, and a TV station in Dubai, which was funded by the Kuwaiti government. Saudi Arabia also completed some projects in Ras Al-Khaima, as well as the road between Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaima in 1967. Britain recognized the council and increased its participation in the affairs of the Emirates, in order to help it succeed, be independent, and establish communications with other countries. Complete freedom from all restrictions and the ability to establish a national government followed from total independence and unification under the name United Arab Emirates on 2ed December 1971.

14. A Brief History of Dubai

The Dubai Emirate is an integral part of the United Arab Emirates. Disagreement on which cultural and artistic traditions belong to the Dubai Emirate and the other emirates respectively have been only partly resolved. The UAE's cultural history is a part of the wider Arab-Islamic cultural history. With the advent of Islam, the UAE witnessed the various stages of the progress of Islamic civilisation over 14 centuries. UAE citizens have been influenced since the 1920's by the past century and by the national Arab calls for progress and liberation. From that time, sincere calls have been made to pay attention to modern education, social modernisation, and media openness. These calls became a reality after the historic event of independence on 2ed December 1971, when the UAE was declared a modern Arab country seeking progress and prosperity for its citizens, working for the glory of the Arab nation, and serving noble Arab national issues.



Figure 7. View of Dubai Creek in 1960s - source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive

Previously, Dubai was a part of the Abu Dhabi Emirate. In September 1833 the Al-Bufalasa tribe emigrated from Abu Dhabi to Dubai and established the Sheikdom of Dubai. The previous leader of Dubai, Haza' bin Za'al, participated in the signing of a co-agreement between the Sheikdoms and the UK, and he represented Dubai as a Sheikdom independent of Abu Dhabi¹. Dubai became an independent Sheikdom in 1833, when about 800 members of the nomadic Bani Yass tribe, led by Maktoum bin Butti, settled in this coastal village. Sheikh Maktoum bin Butti Bin Suhail, the founder of Dubai, ruled Dubai from 1833 to 1852. He died in 1852 in his boat while returning from a visit to the Sultan of Oman and was buried in Shnaş in Oman. He was a great politician and for a long time was part of the Al-Maktoum ruling family in Dubai. This was a period of much turmoil in the UAE, but he was successful in his endeavours². The Maktoum family, which still rules today, have given Dubai a high standard of leadership, remarkably free from the dynastic struggles which beset many other sheikdoms.

Dubai was just a small village in the Al Shindagah district of Dubai, an extension of beach into the sea at the entrance of Dubai Creek, when a branch of the Bani Yass tribe settled it. The Al Shindagah district is located at the south entrance of Dubai Creek and was established in 1862. The importance of this area is its strategic location on the creek, where its inhabitants engaged in fishing, pearls, diving, and trading. The Bani Yass tribe originally came from the Liwa oases in the southern UAE and established a small demographic group that worked in the pearl trade and diving, with its various commercial activities under the leadership of the Al Maktoum family, which still rules the Emirate of Dubai. Moreover, since 1869 Dubai has been considered the leading port in the region, and at the

¹ Naşir Yūssif Al-Ni'aïmi, *Rashed Alkhair (The Good Rashed)*, 1st ed, The National Club for Culture and Arts, Ajman, UAE, 1991, p. 30.

² The Ruler's Court of Dubai (Government of Dubai) (2003) *Rulers of Dubai: 2003 edition report*. Dubai: The Information Office.

beginning of the last century it was the most famous market in the Gulf region. The pearl trade was also a major factor in making Dubai a leading trade centre, but the discovery of synthetic Japanese pearls in the 1930s led to the decline of this industry locally. However, the ability of Dubai's citizens to find substitutes enabled them to triumph over this crisis, and they turned Dubai into an important centre for the trading of gold and other commodities.

There are several theories about how Dubai was named. The first theory says: (Dubai word is a mix of two Persian words that mean two and a brother - referring to the two parts of Dubai Dira and Bur Dubai)¹, and this probably is not right, because the origin of the names cannot be taken from the similarity of the pronunciations. Another possibility states that the word Dubai is a diminutive word of *Diba* which was a famous market in the northern Emirates, so Dubai named with its name to liken it to *Diba's market*. In *Al Buldan* Arabic dictionary which was written by the famous Arab traveller in the Ninth Century *Yaqout Al Hamawi* when he came to the land of the UAE said that *Al Diba* is the locust before it flies and he didn't mention Dubai in the dictionary². Also, in *Al-WSiṭ* Arabic Dictionary *Al Diba* is the very small locust before it flies. Another proposition was mentioned in the Yearbook of the Ministry of Information & Culture in United Arab Emirates issued in (73 - 1974 AD) and said that the word Dubai is related to a diminutive pronunciation of the word lizard which is a kind of reptiles and designated in Arabic 'ḡb'³. This theory was discussed between the researchers in the UAE and most of

¹ Naṣir Yūssif Al-Ni'aïmi, *Rashed Alkhair (The Good Rashed)*, 1st ed, The National Club for Culture and Arts, Ajman, UAE, 1991, p. 41.

² Yaqout al-Hamwi, *M'jam al-Buldan*, 2nd ed, Beirut Publication House, Beirut, p.435.

³ *Al-Emarat Ḥaqa'q wa arqam* (1973 – 1974), The Documentation Centre, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1974, P. 237.

them refuted it because the diminution of 'db' will be 'dbib' and if we assume that we can minimize the 'db' into 'dbi' we find that we become far from the conferred pronunciation of the emirate and we would call it 'dbi' not Dubai¹. Other theory states that the name origin came from that the Arabs expression: (he comes to 'dba' Dubai - means he brought an abundant money to Dubai), and that's because it was believed that the people who were coming to Dubai brought an abundant cash as a result to the prosperity of Dubai which made it a prosperous and vibrant trade centre. It was common in the Middle East since 1950s that anybody who goes to Dubai will return home with abundant cash. And by the way there is another area in the region named Dubai located in *Al Dahna* land between *Riyadh* and *Al Dammam* in Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia. Other theories have mentioned that the name came from the creek of Dubai that splits the city into two halves, so the creek creeps like a snake. The Arabic for creep is *dbib*².

15. Important Dates³

c.5500 BC	Earliest evidence of Man in UAE, on <i>Marawah</i> Island.
5500–3000 BC	Occupation by skilled groups of herders using finely made stone tools (so-called 'Arabian bifacial tradition').
3000–2500 BC	<i>Hafit</i> period – era of earliest collective burials first noted on the lower slopes of <i>Jebel Hafit</i> in the interior of Abu Dhabi.
2500–2000 BC	<i>Umm al-Nar</i> period – era of first oasis towns (e.g. at <i>Hili</i> , <i>Tell Abra</i> , <i>Bidya</i> , <i>Kalba</i>) dominated by large, circular fortresses; burial of the dead in round communal tombs; wide-ranging trade contact with Mesopotamia, Iran, Indus Valley, <i>Baluchistan</i> , <i>Bactria</i> (Afghanistan); first intensive use of copper

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanḏal, *M'jam Al alfaḏ Al 'amiyah fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda* (*The Dictionary of Spoken Accent in the UAE*), pp. 235-236.

² Naṣir Yūssif Al-Ni'aimi, *Rashed Alkhair* (*The Good Rashed*), p. 41.

³ Ibrahim Al Abed, *United Arab Emirates Yearbook 2005*, pp. 40-41.

	resources of <i>Hajar Mountains</i> ; area referred to as <i>Maganin</i> Mesopotamian sources.
2000–1300 BC	<i>Wadi Suq</i> period and Late Bronze Age – an era which is characterised by fewer towns; change in burial customs to long, generally narrow collective tombs; close ties to <i>Dilmun</i> (Bahrain).
1300–300 BC	Iron Age – introduction of new irrigation technology in the form of <i>falaj</i> (pl. <i>aflaj</i>), subterranean galleries which led water from mountain aquifers to lower-lying oases and gardens; explosion of settlement; first use of iron; first writing, using South Arabian alphabet; contacts with Assyrian and Persian empires.
300 BC–0	<i>Mleiha</i> period (or Late Pre-Islamic A–B) – flourishing town at <i>Mleiha</i> ; beginnings of local coinage; far-flung imports from Greece (black-glazed pottery), South Arabia (alabaster unguent jars); first use of the horse.
0–250 AD	Ed-Dur period (or late Pre-Islamic C–D) – flourishing towns at ed-Dur and <i>Mleiha</i> ; extensive trade network along the Gulf linking up the Mediterranean, Syria and Mesopotamia with India; imports include Roman glass, coinage, brass; massive production of coinage by a ruler called <i>Abi'el</i> ; first use of Aramaic in inscriptions from ed-Dur and <i>Mleiha</i> .
240 AD	Rise of the Sasanian dynasty in south-western Iran, conquest of most of eastern Arabia.
6th/7th cent. AD	Introduction of Christianity via contacts with south-western Iran and southern Mesopotamia; establishment of monastery on <i>Sir Bani Yass</i> by Nestorian Christian community; Sasanian garrisons in inner Oman and evidence for contact in the UAE shown by coins and ceramics from <i>Kush</i> (Ra's al-Khaimah), Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.
630 AD	Arrival of envoys from the Prophet Muhammad; conversion of the people to Islam.
632 AD	Death of the Prophet Muhammad; outbreak of the <i>ridda</i> movement, a widespread rebellion against the teachings of Islam; dispatch of <i>Hudhayfah b. Mihsan</i> by the Caliph <i>Abu Bakr</i> to quell rebellion of <i>Laqit b. Malik Dhu</i> at-Tag at <i>Dibba</i> ; major battle at <i>Dibba</i> , collapse of the rebels.
637 AD	<i>Julfar</i> (Ras Al Khaima) used as staging post for Islamic invasion of Iran.
892 AD	<i>Julfar</i> used as staging post for Abbasid invasion of Oman.
963 AD	<i>Buyids</i> (<i>Buwayhids</i>) conquer south-eastern Arabia.
c. 1220	Geographer <i>Yaqout</i> mentions <i>Julfar</i> as a fertile town.
14th–15th cent.	Close commercial contact between Northern Emirates and kingdom of Hormuz, based on <i>Jarun</i> island in the Straits of Hormuz.
1498	Portuguese circumnavigation of Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama using Arab navigational information.
16th cent.	Portuguese–Ottoman rivalry in the Gulf.
1580	Venetian traveller Gasparo Balbi's description of coast of UAE from Qatar to Ra's al-Khaimah; mention of Portuguese fortress at Kalba; first mention of <i>Bani Yass</i> in Abu Dhabi.
1666	Description of the East Coast of the UAE by a Dutch mariner sailing in the <i>Meerkat</i> .

1720s	Growth of English trade in the Gulf; increasing Anglo–Dutch rivalry.
1764	Sharjah and most of <i>Musandam</i> and the UAE East Coast, all the way to <i>Khor Fakkan</i> , under control of Qawasim according to <i>Carsten Niebuhr</i> , German surveyor working with the King of Denmark's scientific expedition.
1800–1819	Repeated English East India Company attacks on Qawasim navy.
1820	General Treaty of Peace between British Government and sheikhs of Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
1820–1864	Survey of the Gulf resulting in the publication of the first accurate charts and maps of the area.
1930s	Collapse of the natural pearl market; first agreements signed by rulers of Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi for oil exploration.
1945–1951	Agreements for oil exploration finalised in Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman.
1962	First export of oil from Abu Dhabi.
1968	British Government announced its intention to withdraw from the Gulf region; discussions begin on formation of a federation of the emirates.
1969	First export of oil from Dubai.
10 July 1971	Agreement reached amongst rulers of the emirates to form a union.
2 Dec 1971	Formation of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

Table 1: Important dates in the UAE – source: United Arab Emirates Yearbook 2005

16. Final Analysis and Conclusion

UAE enjoys one of the most strategic locations on the planet which has been of a great advantage to it since ancient days making it habitable and commercially strong location. UAE is located towards the east of Saudi Arabia and Oman. Agriculture and commerce flourished because of the abundant Oases and water. This location also made it viable for trading and cultural exchange especially with South Asia by mean of land and sea commercial. The settlements occupying this region were quite advanced and had a sophisticated way of life. Proof of the social, cultural and religious habits of the people can be seen through various excavations and the articles recovered from these excavations testify this. Throughout the ages, the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Hellenistic era we see proofs of an advanced people. These people were mostly engaged in agriculture, fishing, and trading. They were a peaceful people and believed in an after life which was seen in their burial traditions. Throughout the

ages the climate and the political conditions and in turn their political conditions affected their location of settling and their way of life.

One of the most interesting sites that were excavated in Dubai was called the '*Hill of Snakes*' that existed since 2000 BC. They had advanced and complicated ritual practices and a way of life. Although their occupations were simple they seemed to be superstitious with regards to snakes and seemed to engage in its ritual worship and it occupied an important place in all their activities because its epigraphs were found on various artefacts from spears to pots. There was even a temple built for snakes containing almost 500 articles with snake epigraphs. This is one of the first evidences of ritual worship of the snake in this region. However it is still unclear as to why snakes were worshipped whether it was a blind belief, practice or fears that motivated it and finally gave this region its name.

Islam was introduced into the region by Amr Ibn Al-Aas one of the disciples of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) thus heralding the dawn of a new era. Much has been written about his several war exploits especially in Dibba to save the region from invaders and ultimately protect and promote Islam. During Umayyad era trade flourished and traders enabled the spreading of Islam. Excavations have found significant relics from Islamic era in various places of UAE showing that the region was inhabited for more than 4000 years. Ibin Batuta the famous Arabian traveller has also spoken about this region, its vegetation and habitation. Stone and mud seemed to be the preferred way to build houses and commercial establishments. The beginning of the modern era in the 15th century was an era of conquests notably by the Ottoman Sultan Mohammed Al-fatih of Constantinople. However towards the end of the era there were tremendous upheavals for the Arabs and the Muslims which caused them to loose control over the Arabian Gulf, Oman Sea, and a part of the Indian Ocean and consequently affected trade giving a leeway to European trade in South Asia. During this period Portuguese traders

such as Vasco Da Gama, one of his main aids was Shehab Al Din Ahmed the Arabian navigator, and also Portuguese rule spread carnage in Arabia, Emirates and other places that they explored using superior ships and weapons and although various Arabic leaders struggled against it especially the Ottoman leader Piri Reis Ali they did not lose control till the 16th century. The 16th century was a period of growth for the Gulf as leaders such as Nasir Bin Murshid, Sultan Bin Saif, and Saif Bin Sultan founded the state of Al-Ya'Ariba and also protected it against invaders especially the Portuguese. Another great leader was Imam Nasir bin Murshid, who was the founder of the Al Ya'aruba dynasty in 1624 and brought about unity and peace in the Gulf countries and defended the country against the Portuguese. Tribal organizations such as the Bani Yass and Al-Qawasim appeared which enjoyed control over various regions of the Gulf and shared a strong working relationship because of the Sheikhs council which governed and administered them. This unity ultimately proved instrumental in the formation of UAE. After the withdrawal of the Portuguese new European invaders such as Holland, France, and Britain tried to gain control over the Gulf. All plans of the invaders were resisted. In 1819 Britain gained control over the Gulf and signed various treaties to strengthen its stronghold namely the Peace treaty which helped strengthen their stronghold. In 1947 control passed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Britain and UAE gained independence finally in 1971. A council of Sheikhs was also formed in 1952 that helped develop the region especially the establishment of schools and so on. Britain encouraged this council as it saw the productive work by it .Finally UAE gained complete independence in 1971. Dubai which was previously an integral part of Abu Dhabi Emirate is currently an important part of UAE. It seems to be integral with UAE as it has very less social cultural differences with the other emirates. Arab Islamic culture is what UAE is identified with and has been moving on the path of progress and liberalisation since 1920's which even more real after UAE achieved independence on Dec 2nd 1971. Dubai was an important trading centre especially for pearls until Japanese synthetic pearls

reduced the trade. However Dubai citizens have a very fine business acumen and trade in gold and other commodities. There are various meanings and interpretations for names for Dubai from lizard to giver of good wealth. Ultimately whatever its meaning Dubai continues to enjoy its position as a prime commercial hub because of its location and people who have a strong business sense which seems inherited.

One of the main features of United Arab Emirates is its very strategic location which helps facilitate its trade and commerce. Within the country, the people are engaged in several occupations such as trading, transportation, fishing and hunting. This an important part of their civil life which, aside from certain developments, remained more or less the same occupations the people in the country are engaged with through the years. However, unlike occupation which remained relatively stable through the years, there is an important aspect of UAE's culture that underwent radical changes through time. This is in the area of religion. Such changes may be divided between UAE before Islam and UAE under Islamic religion. Even before the arrival of Islam, the people in UAE have a developed religion. It may be what people at present consider as primitive, but it is nonetheless a developed and organized religion. They have a deity in the form of a snake. A temple is built for the worship. This is a good evidence of the degree of civilization of these snake worshippers as regards their religion. They were able to create a sacred location where worship of their deity will be performed. Moreover, the existence such temple implies the existence of established rituals, customs and traditions of a religious nature that are observed by them. Temples are also usually used to communicate to the deity, thus implying some form of prayer method among the people. Aside from the temple and worship, they also have other established norms and traditions such as in burials.

This brings us to the second level of analysis, which is the examination of the status of UAE after the arrival of Islam which replaced the old snake worshipping ritual practiced by people in UAE. It was facilitated by one of the major features that have characterized UAE for a very long time, its advantages as regards trade and commerce. At that time, the Gulf, in which UAE is a part of, became one of the important commercial centres as well as the industry of the ships. This facilitated the spreading of Islam through the help of Gulf merchants. The inculcation of Muslim faith is characterized not by a peaceful integration of people to the religion. Instead, the birth of Islam in the country is facilitated by blood and loss. The road to Islam that UAE and other countries in the region had to track was paved with battles and conquests. Even from the beginning, Islam was first brought within the country by Amer bin el Aass by fighting all the invaders from the region of Arabian Gulf after the death of prophet Mohammed (PBUH). In the Gulf, this was followed by other battles, some of which are characterized by victories, the others, by losses. Examples of the victories include the victory of the Ottoman sultan, Mohammed Al-Fatih (the Conqueror) to conquest "Constantinople", while examples of the losses include the end of the kingdom of Granada in Andalusia in 1492 and end of the Arabian marine control over the Arabian Gulf, Oman Sea, and a part of the Indian Ocean during the 15th Century. Many of these battles resulted in many deaths and great losses of properties. Among the enemies against whom the need to defend arose were Portugal, Holland, France, and Britain.

The political condition after the introduction of Islam was also affected by the formation of alliances and tribal organizations that are often formed by ruling families. Moreover, the policies of government and people have changed. One important consequence of the developments in the Arab region, including UAE, is their effects on the issues people hold dear. Progress and liberation have become major calls for Arab citizens and attention was given to the desire to achieve modern education,

social modernisation and media openness. The Arab development, especially after Islam, has considerable effects on its different parts. An important discussion as regards these effects will be the development of Dubai. It is considered as the main portion of the Gulf and like UAE, has achieved a considerable position in trade due to its strategic location. It has also become a main trading in the Gulf owing partly to the success of its pearl-making business. However, as discussed above, UAE was the cross road of many cultures due to its strategic location beside bodies of water used for trade and transportation, and so have its parts. The result is the commingling of the arts and culture of its parts, including the Dubai Emirates thus losing their distinction among each other.

Chapter 2: The Concept of Culture and its Application in the Context of the UAE

1. Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, the social significance of culture has motivated many intellectuals and researchers to attempt to formulate a precise definition of the concept of culture. However, the wide spectrum of definitions and classifications that have been circulated made this rather difficult to achieve. This chapter attempts to shed light on some of these definitions, starting with the widespread notion that culture represents the beliefs and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share. This chapter also provides an introduction of culture in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the stages of cultural life.

Defining culture is a difficult task and intellectuals have constantly quibbled about their understanding of the term. Ultimately, all descriptions of culture have proved to be inadequate in way or the other. To avoid confusion and ambiguity, culture may be defined as “the beliefs and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share.” We need to take a close look at what culture means in UAE.

Ibn-Khaldoun, the renowned Arab philosopher, defined culture two hundred years before the word finally found its way into the German dictionary. To him, “culture” was what people’s behaviour, their way of life, and business consisted of. Terry Eagleton, author of *The Idea of Culture*, and professor of English at the University of Oxford, had a far different approach toward the meaning of culture. He considered the term “culture” to be among the “two or three most complex words in the English language.” Like culture, Eagleton thought, the term “nature” (often considered to be an idea contrary to culture) was also quite problematic. Unlike many others, though, he did not consider “nature” to be a result of “culture,” but rather “culture” to be, in many ways, an offshoot of “nature.” He tells us that the

word culture is etymologically linked to words deeply linked to nature. One of the very many meanings of culture, he reminds us, is “husbandry,” which is deeply linked to nurturing nature and promoting growth.

Despite its etymological linkages, the word “culture” is primarily derived from the Latin word “colere,” which signifies care and nurture. In the course of history, culture has come to be associated with the cognitive aspect of human society, whereas civilization has continued to be linked to the materialistic aspect. Most English speakers have a habit of confusing the two. Edward Tylor, an English anthropologist who was, incidentally, also the first person to provide an official definition of culture—which he made public through his book *Primitive Culture* published in 1871—considered culture to be an amalgamation of traditions and beliefs, art forms, and the societal structure of a given group or community.

Unlike Tylor, Robert Burnstein defined culture as consisting of all that we thought or did as constituents of a certain society. Yet another theorist, Malik Bin Nabi, considered culture to be the bigger picture containing everything else like customs, routines, and practices. This big picture, Nabi argues, colours the lives of every member of a particular society and sets him/her apart from the members of some other society.

The wide disparity among the various accepted definitions of culture have much to do with the large variations in the study methods employed by different researchers. No two researchers in the field of culture studies make use of the same study methods. As a result, the conclusions they reach and the definitions they formulate are very different from one another. Some researchers follow anthropological methods, and therefore deal with the cerebral and material achievements of the human society. Other researchers deal with methods concerning the various styles and values that have been invented and implemented by people over the years in order to give themselves and their society specific identities.

Unlike in the West, in Arabic countries “culture” has a strict, linear definition. In a state such as the United Arab Emirates, culture is considered to be a sort of superiority and stature, which only the educated have the means and the right to earn. A marked ability to cultivate one’s taste in literature and the arts, and the capacity to evaluate someone else’s thoughts, are considered unique to a person’s culture. Though society and culture are closely linked to one another, culture cannot hope to survive in the absence of the society. However, in the presence of society, culture performs the crucial task of moulding the members of the society. Since the culture of every society differs from that of another, no two societies are therefore exactly alike. Thus, we can safely say that society makes culture and culture makes people.

Humankind’s continued interest in culture has much to do with the hand it seems to have in the progress of society. Culture gives every human being self-definition, and is also deeply related to education. Thanks to various cultural forces, we discover and develop our various gifts and find the right kind of tools in our environment to sustain them. Contrary to popular belief, arts have a definite societal impact. They help us create an ambience and help various other related cultural institutions and foundations to grow and develop. This in turn helps cities and communities to increase community cohesion and augment people’s general aesthetic sense. It is therefore unwise to suggest that investing in cultural activities is “futile,” since economic development, unlike what most people seem to think, has in fact much to do with culture. Artists have often suggested that the returns from cultural activities, though difficult to define empirically, are quite important for the society. Development, they argue, does not concern the growth of one sector and the total stagnation of another. Rather, it is the simultaneous growth of every part of society. Such homogenous growth therefore requires the synchronized growth of both the economy and the culture of a given society.

2. Understanding Culture

Culture can be summarized as a vessel that consists of activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilization and the development of people's minds. A culture is a particular society or civilization especially considered in relation to its beliefs, way of life, or art. The culture of a particular organization or group consists of the habits of the people in it and the way they generally behave.

Despite the disagreement in academic circles regarding the exact definition of the term, all academics agree upon the close, symbiotic relationship culture seems to share with society. Eagleton, of course, also draws our attention to the fact that culture (and therefore society) is not as far removed from nature as some scholars tend to think, but instead merely one of its offshoots. This suggests that culture, unlike what many of us seem to think, is not external or unnatural to ourselves. Like civilization (which, too, has received remarkable amount of flack from the naturalists through the years), culture is also a perfectly natural phenomenon.

Of course, while speaking English, most of us tend to confuse the words "culture" and "civilization." These two words, though related, are not quite the same. To call culture the cognitive aspect of civilization alone is to keep a lot of blanks unfilled. Civilization is merely a matter of material acquisitions, allotments, creations, and the like. In many ways, civilization is a set of rules that guide us in what we do and how to do it. Compared to it, culture deals with the finer points of humanity. It means to smoothen out the rough dimensions civilization tries to create and give it a sense of aesthetic. It is therefore a mixture of almost everything we do in regular day life, but it is also in many ways to things

we do not do in everyday life. Aestheticism is technically not a regular part of life, and yet, thanks to our culture, it is.

The Arabic sense of culture appears to be far less indulgent than the Western concepts of the term, and offers far less space for individual interpretations. In addition, amongst the Arabs, culture has much to do with societal standing and even education. That is not to say that culture is not deeply related to education in the West. There, too, a sense of culture is brought about in an individual by education. Given the role culture plays in allowing a self-definition (in many ways that is also what education helps us do); it is obvious that edification has much to do with culture. However, just like the manner of edification is not the same in any two societies, similarly the culture of no two communities is quite the same. It is perhaps due to this difference that people from various groups and sects tend to be unlike one another in certain ways.

Our interest in culture is in fact our interest in our own selves and our own societies. Given the crucial role culture plays in defining our society, and in turn ourselves, it is only natural that we continue to be fascinated by it. In addition, there is something undeniably elusive about culture. This is brought out adequately by the fact that it cannot be clearly defined. It is due to its intangibility that scholars and academicians get drawn in its loop constantly, trying to grasp and feel what cannot essentially be grasped and may not technically be felt.

It is also because of its ethereal character that people looking for empirical, “economic” changes do not seem to be impressed by its calibre. Hence, investing in cultural activities such as the arts seems to them wasteful. Such behaviour just goes on to reveal the extent of people’s anxiety of the undefined. That which cannot be understood or explained in concrete terms has always frightened humankind.

3. Application of Culture in the Context of the UAE

3.1. Historic Relics

The discovery of monuments at the *Al Ghusaise* site in Dubai in 1973 stimulated the government of Dubai to establish the Dubai museum in the ancient *Al Fahidi Fort*¹ after its restoration and preparation for visitors. Due to the importance of the *Al Ghusaise* site, which dates to 2000 B.C., archaeological research was conducted in the early eighties, with cooperation between Dubai municipality and the University of Cambridge in 1968, the American university in Beirut also conducted excavations at the archaeological site of *Jumairah*, where they discovered an important Islamic site from the Ommiad period. Near the site, a museum was established to hold the findings discovered at this site. Another excavation was carried out at the same site in 1974 by an Iraqi archaeological team. The renovation of the Dubai museum took place in 1990s, during which many halls and the latest discovered findings were added.²

3.2. Cultural Heritage

"Heritage" is a national product or a group of people lives in a specific place and believes and practise and makes special matters in a special time,³ while the United Nations organization of culture and sciences, UNESCO, defined cultural heritage as the civilizations products of one hundred years back passed by different civilizations in all regions, reaching what is called today the folklore period.⁴ The word heritage is also found in the Holy Quran, when the god said: "*And you seize the heritage*

¹ Dubai's oldest building, the *Al Fahidi Fort* (built in 1787), hosts the city's museum. (see Appendix 4)

² Naşir Hussain Al-'abūdi, *Şafhāt min Āthar Waturath Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (Pages from the Heritage of the UAE)*, 1st ed, Zayed Center for Heritage and History, Al Ain, UAE, 2002, pp. 20-22.

³ Ibid., p. 147.

⁴ Ibid.

appropriately and love the money a great love” (Al Fajr Chapter, verse 19 – 20). As mentioned in the Holy Quran: “Then we heritage the book ...That is the big favour” (Faḥr Chapter, verse 32).

3.3. Folklore

The meaning of the word “folk” is “people,” while the meaning of “lore” is “the lore of a particular country or culture of its traditional stories and history.” When we combine these two words into the term “folklore,” the term can be translated as “the traditional stories, customs, and habits of a particular community or nation.” Folklore is, in general, “the traditional habits, the values, arts, crafts, skills and various popular knowledge which excelled by the society in an automatism way. And the people do abide in their behaviour and their interaction where they represent a distinguished cultural type that link the person with the group and connects the present to the past.”¹

Trends of Folklore:

- Folk literature includes: poetry, folk songs, common proverbs, folktales, folk biography, folk riddles.
- Habits and traditions include: the habits of the human life cycle like birth, marriage, death, the feasts, seasons, religious months, religious festivals, national occasions, and the agricultural seasons. The behaviour of the person in the local society like the family relationships and the habits related to how to have the meals.

¹ Aḥmed Shukkri, *Al-Turath Al-Sha'bi fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (The Traditional Heritage of the UAE)*, A winning research submitted to the Cultural and Scientific Association in Dubai in year 1993, vol. III, 1st ed., 1996, Dubai, pp. 14-15; ‘abdallh Alṭabūr, Faḥma Al-Manṣūri, ‘abdallh ‘abdarrḥman, *Madkhal Llturath Al-Sha'bi fi Alemarat (The Entrance to UAE Heritage)*, 1st Ed, Zayed Centre for Heritage and History, Al Ain, UAE, 2002, p. 22.

- Beliefs and the folk knowledge include: folk medicine, natural powers that are related to the celestial bodies, other special beliefs like the fall of the teeth and the warning of whistling at night and beliefs created by women about pregnancy and deliveries.
- Craft and the folk of arts: the manual craft like the leather products, woollen and wooden craft, earthen and fronds craft, sewing and embroidery. Examples of folklore arts are *Al ouna*, *Al rzif*, *Al Harbia* and *Al tghrouda*.¹ Also, some traditional dancing came from outside the UAE, especially from Africa, like *Al lioh*, *Al Hban* and *Al nouban*². The folk games are like *al houm al dsis*³. (more details in Chapter 5)

3.4. The stages of heritage and culture passed in the UAE

- The 1960s stage since was the UAE and Dubai live in the heritage lives with all its situations and perspective in our current day in a way closer to the reality, also in that period the public library in Dubai was opened.
- The 1970s stage where the official government bodies appeared, such as the ministries, departments, committees, and some folk societies; also, the museums of Dubai and “*Al-Ain*” were opened at this time.
- The stage of 1980s and 1990s: more official enterprises and official governmental organizations were established. Some official organizations were set to take care of the cultural affairs in some cities. The number of the folklore societies increased, as well as the

¹ These are traditional genuine and Bedouin kinds of dances which are originally from the UAE.

² Traditional kinds of dances in the UAE which originally came from East Africa and Oman.

³ Kinds of traditional games similar nowadays to games like “Hide and seek” and chess.

number of museums. In addition, some governmental organizations were in charge of restoring historical buildings, such as in the Dubai municipality.

- The stage after the year 2000: the government of Dubai decided to set up the Dubai cultural council, which will take on the responsibilities of generating the general policy for cultural work in Dubai, and create the coordination the cultural centres in the UAE to raise the level of the cultural activities.

3.5. Analyses and conclusion: culture in the UAE

History defines our present. The fact that we are here today is not enough to satisfy our hunger to learn about ourselves. Thus, to unearth our past, where we have emerged from, and what makes us what we are, is an aching desire in all human beings. It is therefore not strange that a community wishes to establish a museum to commemorate and remind us of this past. Situating the Dubai museum in the ancient Al Fahidi fort is yet another way of rekindling in the hearts of the people the images of the glorious past. Of course, such an institution needed renewing, especially after the incredible finds of various national and international excavators. This history had to be shared, this history had to be told since this belonged to the nation, to the people; it gave reason for them to be here today and to form a country, a whole.

It is also due to the same reason that the cultural heritage of a country needs to be preserved. Heritage, like history (and in many ways related to it), requires conservation. The Holy Quran, too, urges its people to “seize the heritage appropriately.” Folklore is closely entwined with heritage. In fact, in many cases (if not most) what a community receives as folklore is indeed what is its true heritage. Folklores are stories that are entwined with various essential facets of the community. This includes the various traditions, rules, and customs the community follows or used to follow. It is therefore obvious

that folklore contributes greatly to a community's unique identity and sense of culture. It is also crucially important for establishing what is called community cohesion.

Like every other country, the UAE passed through various stages of history. In the last four decades it has seen a number of ups and downs. In the 1960s the principal city of Dubai was steeped deeper in traditions. By the 1970s, when the official government bodies began to make an appearance, this changed, though systematic attempts were made to conserve UAE's glorious past. By the 1980s, the government had come to be deeply involved in taking care of the country's cultural pursuits. Interest also increased in traditional mediums such as folklore, and historical monuments were restored. By the next millennium, the authorities managed to set up the Dubai Cultural Council, which took up all the responsibilities of coordinating cultural centres in Dubai and bringing them under the general policies of the state.

4. Ethnicity in Dubai

It is difficult to separate Dubai from the UAE in any aspect because the whole emirates have the same ethnicities as any other aspects. Nowadays, the total population of the UAE is 4.041 million, with 1.204 million of them living in the Emirate of Dubai.¹ Ninety percent of the total population of the UAE consists of expatriates, while only 10 percent are UAE nationals, and this percentage may fall to around four percent by year 2020.² If we segment the ethnicities of the 10 percent of the UAE population who are nationals, they are as below:

¹ Ibrahim Al Abed, *United Arab Emirates Yearbook 2005*, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2005) p. 344-345.

² Ali Al-Ka'bi, The Minister of Labour in the UAE. The minister said that while he was being interviewed with Al-Arabiya TV channel in Dubai, April 2005.

The Bedouins: the habitants of the desert who live in the south, southeast, and southwest of the UAE, close to the desert of the Empty Quarter on the Saudi borders. These people are considered first class people in the UAE because the royal families are originally Bedouins, as well as the tribes of *Bani Yass*, who were companions of the *Al-Buflah* tribe in Abu Dhabi and the *Al-Buflasa* tribe in Dubai. The Arab Bedouins are pure Arabs and originally came from the Arabian Peninsula.

The City Dwellers: live on along the coasts of the UAE, especially the big cities like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras Al-Khaima, and Al Fujairah. The behaviours of the urbanites are almost close to behaviours of the other habitants of the Arabian Gulf coasts. The pure Arabs of them are originally Bedouins who migrated from the deserts to the coasts.

The Iranians: migrated from the south coast of Iran at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the secularist government of Iran forced women to remove scarves from their heads. Many of them decided to migrate to the opposite coast of the Arabian Gulf. These people say that they are a mixture of Arabs and Persians, and originally migrated from the Arabian Peninsula hundreds years ago for a better life; this could be true because their habits are almost like those of the Arabs, and they have not faced any problems combining with the Arab society of the UAE.

Other migrants: like the Omani, but it is difficult to consider the Omani as migrants because, since the sixteenth century, the UAE and Oman are almost the same in everything. Most of the habitants of the eastern coasts of the UAE are originally from Oman. Other Arab migrants came from the Arabian Peninsula and other Gulf States and Arab countries to settle down in the UAE. Also, lots of migrants from India came to the UAE, especially to Dubai in 1940s and 1950s, but they could not combine with the original habitants, like the Iranians, because of their habits, which were very different from the Arabian habits. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, many UAE male nationals went to India to marry young Indians girls, who are very frequently compared to the UAE women. UAE male nationalists also

married women from other Arab countries, especially from Egypt and Morocco, or even from Iran or from Europe and United States.

The "Africans Arabs": all black Africans are originally from Africa. Africans settled down as slaves in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam and the trade of slaves was common. In the UAE, the number of the African migrants increased in the eighteenth century due to the Omani occupation of the eastern coast of Africa. Oman became a rich country because of its trade in slavery, and the people of Oman and UAE used those Africans to do difficult jobs, such as diving for pearls, as it was much cheaper for the trader to own the slaves than to hire local divers.¹ Although, the slavery in the UAE was banned, the noble families in the UAE until 1960s used to own the slaves to use them as servants. Nowadays, Africans are the habitants of the UAE who successfully imitated the original locals in their habits, and we could say that they forgot their original languages and the African habits, but they did not forget African music and dances.

From the above, it is clear that, in general, Dubai and the UAE have different ethnicities in its ten percent, as nationals, in the total population, so definitely there are different kinds of arts and cultures in Dubai, some of them are originally from the UAE and the rest came along with the migrants. A report written by a British diplomatic agent in Dubai in the 1950s indicated that: *"Dubai is a small city located between the two banks of the creek; it's the Venice of the Gulf. And the different nationality it has*

¹ Faṭma Al-Şaygh, *Al Emarat Wal khaṭ Aljawī Al-Briṭānī Ela Alsharq [1929 - 1952] (The UAE and the British airline to the East)*, 1st ed, Cultural Foundation Publications, Abu Dhabi, 1995, pp. 27-72.

reflects how flourished Dubai is, where you can see different nationalities like the Indians, Pakistanis, Iranians and others, as well as, its local people.”¹

4.1. Peaceful Coexistence in Dubai

Since the past, Dubai was a homeland for all people. On its land, all religions and religious sects practice their rituals easily and peacefully. In addition, followers of other positive religion sects, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, had lived calmly in Dubai. These groups were allowed to observe their religious rites and practice their rites impartially, according to the Islamic principles based on Allah’s saying: “There is no compulsion in religion.”² Islam was the prevailing religion in Dubai and all other emirates. Mosques spread all over Dubai. The big mosque in Dubai mainland is one of the city’s landmarks. Friday prayers were performed there, and worshippers were moved by Dows with no charge. The Islamic atmosphere did not prevent the presence of non-Muslim subjects, who considered Dubai their second home.

By the early nineteenth century, Indians flocked increasingly. At the beginning, the majority were Hindus, among them some Shiite Muslims. While Dubai was developing, more Hindus came there. With the growing numbers of Hindus, special worship places and religious freedom for them were needed. Dubai realized well the contribution of those Indians in its development and in trade processes: exportation, import, and lending. Therefore, it promoted their presence and constantly encouraged the peaceful coexistence among different religious sects. Although the historical records do not say that

¹ Maḥamad Faris Al-Faris, *Al-Awḍa’ Alaqtēšadya Fi Emarat Alsaḥīl [1862 - 1965] (The Economic Situation in the Emirates of the Trucial Coast)*, 1st ed, The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, 2000, p. 246.

² The Cow [2.256] There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

there is a worship place for Indians in Dubai, the British documents defined a place where Indians observed their rites without being prevented by the authorities.¹

Since the late Sheikh Rashid ruled Dubai, he gave particular importance to the religious freedom for non-Muslims. He attended several Indian religious festivals. For example, the Indian businessman Vijay Bhatia remembered the Sheikh's visit to his house, remaking *Diwali*, and joined their traditional Indian meals. The Sheikh also instructed his cooks to make vegetarian meals for Indians when they called on his palace. Although Christians started to arrive by the end of the nineteenth century with Christianizing purposes, the Christian communities came for settlement by the early twentieth century. Upon the growth of the oil sector, and the arrival of Europeans, there was a need to build churches. In 1966, Sheikh Rashid donated a plot to the Catholic Roman Missionary in Dubai, and placed the cornerstone of today's "Saint Mary's Church". Within the continuous state care for different Christian dominations, Rashid donated another plot, four years later, to build a Protestant Church before the establishment of a third church, Holy Trinity Church.²

Tolerance and dialogue were prevalent in Dubai, and represented in Sheikh Rashid's Council. Despite the potential disputes that may arise due to religious and cultural plurality in certain regions, Dubai has been set an excellent example for peaceful coexistence among various religions, cultures, and backgrounds. By the middle of twentieth century, some communities, including the Gulf countries, faced problems and conflicts in relations of the different subjects living there. Dubai saw such incidents just like other Gulf States; however, it decisively handled them with no partiality. In this regard, Sheikh

¹ Faṭma Al-Şaygh, *Dubai Al bedayat Walatḥawlat (The Beginnings of Duabi and the Transformations)*, 1st ed, Albayan Publication, Dubai, UAE, 2006, pp. 187-188.

² Ibid.

Rashid stressed his government's eagerness to provide a secure and tolerant atmosphere for all residents in the emirate. He also was concerned to avoid foreign problems with countries of majority subjects such as India and Pakistan, and to affirm Dubai as a second home for all. After the separation of India and during Kashmir War, Indian-Pakistani relationships underwent tension. During the 1960s and 1970s, these political crises were about to affect the friendly spirit among the two countries' subjects in Dubai. Hence, Sheikh Rashid gathered their leaders and held talks with them. At all times, Sheikh Rashid asked them to forget their religious and ethical backgrounds and conflicts and to remember that Dubai is a homeland for all, and that all have the expression and worship freedom. He overtly said he would not allow the foreign political problem to influence the situation in Dubai, and urged them to set conflicts aside to enjoy a peaceful life. Sheikh Rashid's stance reminded all that Dubai is a home for all religions and that they are honoured guests as long as adhering to tolerance and the pacific coexistence. Though Rashid was broad-minded, he did not hesitate to take a strict stance towards those who intended to spoil the widespread mood of religious tolerance in Dubai.¹ Although Islam is the prevailing religion, and Dubai people are religious, Dubai locals are used to coexisting with non-Muslims, and participate in their religious and social festivals, not only for economic and social need but also for religious call. Islam urges dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and affability among religions and sects. This call was clearly demonstrated in the ancient Dubai.

Ancient Dubai was divided into three main districts: Al-Khor, Al Bastakiyah, and Al-Bahrana. Al Shindagah was located at the gateway of Al-Khor, and included homes of Bani Yass. While Dubai was progressing, the majority of Indians were Hindus who brought the features of their life, culture, and religion. Accordingly, Banyan neighbourhood and its famous market known as "Banyan Market"

¹ Ibid., p. 189.

emerged beside Dubai districts.¹ Indians enjoyed religious freedom in practicing their rituals and rites observed in their religious festivals. Since simplicity was a characteristic of the social life, it was natural to find these groups participating in religious and social occasions of each other. As Muslims respected Indians and their practices, Indians esteemed Muslim rites and shared them, especially in Ramadan.

With the development of Dubai, in the second half of the twentieth century in particular, scores of non-Muslims arrived in Dubai and found it a second home and secure shelter. The state generally secured religious freedom, so that all emirates and Dubai in particular, grew safe havens for all religions and dominations. To illustrate the tolerant and good teachings of Islam, the Dubai government helped in introducing the real face of Islam in the wake of a wave of extremism and violence that hit some parts of the Islamic world, and following September 11, 2001, when violence and terrorism were associated with Islam.² In Dubai, a centre was built to present the orthodox teachings of Islam, and to explain what is not understandable about Islam to non-Muslims. Since its establishment, it moreover played a significant role in explaining the reality of the modern Islam that refuses violence and extremism, and calls for coexistence with the other. The current spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Dubai is a good fruit of efforts of the early leaders of the Emirates who believed in the endurable teachings of Islam and in a modern vision based on peaceful coexistence among all sects and faiths. In this way, Dubai was able to escape a lot of hardships facing many countries and nations today: how to create a calm and peaceful atmosphere in a multi-race society.

¹ Ibid., p. 190.

² Ibid.

4.2. Social life in pre-oil Dubai

Social life in pre-oil Dubai was characterized by fully contradicted living patterns. The government education, introduced at the end of 1950s, provided different intellectual levels and living patterns. In addition, the increasing living standards due to the continuous growing population and arrival of Arab and foreign immigrants made guests met a lot of living contradictions. New living patterns have emerged besides other remaining ones. Gas, for instance, was used for cooking in some houses, while others use firewood. Modern air conditioners appeared when wind towers were still competitive. Although men's gatherings were held in air-conditioned rooms with silk sofas, meetings before the outer door remained a familiar scene that indicates the social connection of Dubai locals. Both the great planes "Boeing" and the olden planes "Dakota" landed in Dubai Airport which shortly turned into a symbol of modernism in Dubai.¹

The social situation in Dubai predicted lots of changes, keeping ties that connect Dubai society to the past. Despite rapid economic changes, it was evident that social alterations were much slower. Dubai society was never based on a class system; on the contrary, its economic openness did not allow such a system to exist. People lived as one social unit. Furthermore, Dubai society did not distinguish between nationals and expatriates; all are equal before the law and the social norm. The rich did not enjoy special status; moreover, until the oil discovery, there were no major indications that distinguish them from other classes. All had the basic means of living. The rich tended to have a simple living and simple housing. The governing class was a model. A journalist narrated that he had visited the late Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed in his simple office in the customs building at the end of 1950s, and then visited his relatively luxurious office in 1966. "I hate this place and I do not like to stay here. It is closed unless the

¹ Faṭma Al-Şaygh, *Dubai Al bedayat Walathḥawlat (The Beginnings of Duabi and the Transformations)*, pp. 141-142.

State has guest...I desire to remain in contact with people...and I will follow that system for ever, God willing," Rashid told the journalist.¹

Thus, Sheikh Rashid's office remained open before people either in his palace in Zabeel or his daily stay at the customs building. For him, luxury cuts the connection between the governor and the governed, and between who owns and who is deprived. Accordingly, Sheikh Rashid abandoned luxury aspects to be close to his people, keeping his office open to meet people and guests. This pattern was not limited to the Sheik and the governing class. The rich merchants and famous lords were known by modesty and simplicity. The only difference was that their vast homes were built with high brick walls and barjils, while other classes lived at the same districts in homes built either with stones and bricks or palm leaves. Simplicity and satisfaction were social features of pre-oil Dubai society, which was based on solidarity. If anyone faced any damage, all would rush to help by any means. The social system was built on solidarity, interrelation, and showing mercy to each other—Islamic and tribal values that were inherited in all Gulf societies.

By the turn of the twentieth century, and with the arrival of multi-racial subjects, Dubai looked socially different from other coastal cities. Being a port made it possible to include all races. But two major subjects in Dubai, Indians and Persians, added different flavour to its society. These groups not only brought their customs and traditions, but also their culture and living styles. It is worth mentioning that they came from societies that preceded Dubai in civilization and openness. Some women from the Persian coasts, for example, were highly educated and rich, for Persian society was more open than Dubai. As they were Muslims, they soon incorporated in the society and influenced it very rapidly.

¹ Ibid., p. 142.

Women participated in the economic life and trade along with men.¹ Dubai society received Indian immigrants. Indians were well known for being financiers of diving fleets. Over time, they economically mingled into Dubai society, but not socially, for the majority were non-Muslims, Hindus, and Banyans. No intermarriages occurred with Dubai people. In fact, the social influence of the Indian subject was less than that of the Persians. Ties remained within the mutual interest of both groups. Indian women introduced the features of their daily life—address, food, cooking, cosmetics, and jewellery—to Dubai society. These features began to be used by Arab and Persian women. It is said that the current style of Arab female veil was taken from India, where it was common among high-class women as an indication of social prestige. Despite this ethnical variety, it does not affect the social identity of Dubai; tribal norms predominate.²

Economically, women had a special status, and their economical contributions were socially accepted. Many women of the governing class were quoted as examples of politically and economically active women. Sheikha Hessah Bint Al Murr—Sheikh Saeed Bin Maktoum's wife and the mother of Sheikh Rashid—was described by a British political resident in the Gulf region as being active and influential in the decision-making in Dubai. In his book on Emirates, a British officer described her as being “mixture of the Russian Empress the Great Kathryn and the British Queen Boadicea.” The British documents, in addition, mentioned names of some commercial-class women who played a role in both trade and culture in Dubai.³

Upon oil discovery, Dubai experienced social changes related to living style and though approaches. Gradually, means of modern life introduced to Dubai made radical change in social life.

¹ Ibid., p. 143.

² Ibid., p. 144.

³ Ibid.

Supply of electricity and fresh water brought about major changes in home construction and living patterns. Modern medicine and hospitals made great improvements in child death rates and in life expectancy in general. Long before oil discovery, Dubai tried to find a place on the map. “You reporters suffer from Gulf-oil complex! You attribute any progress or development to oil, discovered or not. We do not depend on it...this entire progress is due to trade and not oil...Dubai people are merchants who know its art and techniques very well,”¹ Sheikh Rashid said to a reporter who asked whether oil is the reason behind Dubai's development.

4.3. Analyses and Conclusion: Ethnicity in Dubai

The principal city of any country tends to reflect the trends seen in the country at large. It is therefore obvious that Dubai shares UAE's general ethnic traits. Like UAE, therefore, a majority of people living in Dubai are not native to the place, but rather emigrants from other countries. A mere ten percent of the total population of UAE consists of Arab nationals; by 2020 this figure may shrink down to as low as a mere 4 percent. The present population consists of five different groups, namely: The Bedouins, the city dwellers, the Iranians, the Omanis, and the Negroes. Of these five groups, the Bedouins live in the south and are originally from the desert. They have amongst themselves the famous Royal Family, and are thus highly respected in UAE. The City Dwellers, on the other hand, live in the cities (as their name suggests), such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, and Ajman, all of which lie along the coastline. Many of the city dwellers are actually Bedouins who migrated from the deserts into the urban areas. The Iranians came to UAE following the emergence of the secularist government that tried to ease out the old Muslim rules and make way for new ones. The Iranians claim Persian and Arabic

¹ Ibid., p. 145.

ancestry, and are thus easily absorbed into the typical Arab community. The Omanis, most claim, are not exactly migrants since they have been around in the country since the early sixteenth century. The Arabs and Omanis have a lot in common and one is hardly different from the other. Aside from them, large numbers of Indians also immigrate to Dubai every year. This trend that began in the late 1940s and 1950s is still as popular today. However, despite having been in the country for so long, the Indians in the country keep to themselves and do not particularly mix with the other communities, whose customs are highly different from their own. Apart from the Indians, Negroes also form a large part of the population. Given the large number of ethnicities found in Dubai, it might be safe to call it a “multi-cultural city.”

Despite the presence of different kinds of communities, there is rarely any communal tension in Dubai. This is perhaps because Dubai provides a home to everybody, and the general community does not judge anyone differently, merely due to their origins. Apart from Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and even Christians have been living in Dubai for the longest time. Dubai allows each religion its space, and never tries to force any particular religion on its residents. Dubai understands the need of every single community present in the city; therefore, it deals with each of them with equal amounts of love and reverence. Apart from religious harmony Dubai also believes in maintaining diplomatic foreign relations. It is no surprise, then, that Dubai has never had problems with any of the countries whose citizens it has effectively provided homes to. Even during the India-Pakistan war, when Dubai was about to fall out with its friendly neighbour, a short dialogue helped settle matters once and for all. In a post-9/11 world, Dubai continued to portray a loving, kind, and humanitarian image of Islam.

Before oil was unearthed in Dubai, it was a country like any other. It had customs still prevalent in many other Islamic countries, and conducted life in a less extravagant manner. Even after the

discovery of oil, many individuals—such as Sheikh Rashid—continued living a simple life in order to stay in complete contact with the people. The pre-oil Dubai believed in simplicity and unity—this was reflected in all their customs and practices. With the emergence of immigrants, Dubai's rich culture became more varied and far more interesting. Many of these immigrants emerged from countries far steeped in history and culture than Dubai had been. Their experiences and traditions, therefore, added to Dubai's atmosphere.

Following the discovery of oil, however, certain basic changes were noticed in Dubai. Most of these were related to the living standards of the citizens. The appearance of modern amenities also helped alter the former Dubai lifestyle. Electricity, fresh water, and hospitals, for example, all brought about tremendous changes in the Dubai society.

5. The Recent History of Culture in the UAE

The coastal environment of the UAE, and the hard diving for pearls, helped in the past in creating a unique kind of song that expresses the suffering of the sailors and divers during their missions at work. Many songs came from those sailors, like *Al Msana*, *Al ahala*, and others, in addition to some light songs from the sea arts. Also the sea arts, mixed with the desert arts and that's formed an advisable lyric mixture, and that's because of the mixing between the people who live on the coast and the people who live in the desert. The lyric parties and the marriage weddings were depending on the folk songs, but at the beginnings of the twentieth century the individual singing accompanying the musical instruments started spreading in the UAE, and that was a result of the travel of the UAE people to the rest of the countries in the Arabian Peninsula. During the period from 1920 to the 1960s, a number of singers in the UAE appeared in public. From Dubai, *Mohamed Abdul Rahim* recorded a single record in the 1940s and the record has not been found until now. The singer *Mohamed Sohail* was from Ajman,

but he opened a shop in Dubai under the name of Sohail Phon. The first stringed musical band appeared in the UAE in the year 1965 in the *Al-Shu'la* Club in Dubai, and all its players were amateur young men who were creating musical parties in their club.¹ The new songs precisely started taking its way in the early seventies in Dubai with the prominence of new singers in the UAE.

Between November 1962 and January 1963, a Danish researcher—*Poul Rovsing Olsen* (1922-1982)²—came to Abu Dhabi and Sharjah to watch the traditional dances. That visit was one of many visits to the Arabian Gulf between 1958 and 1978 to study Eastern music. His visit to the UAE gave him the opportunity to compare *Al Ayalla* traditional dance in the UAE and *Al Ardah* traditional dance in Bahrain. Olsen was gravitated to Eastern music, and searched out music wherever he could—at private village weddings and performances for dignitaries, in the houses of retired pearl divers, religious singing, African influences, women’s songs, festive dances, and sessions at Radio Bahrain. After the twenty years of research in the Gulf, Olsen wrote a book entitled “Music in Bahrain; Traditional Music of the Arabian Gulf,” published in cooperation with the Bahrain Ministry of Information. Olsen said in the introduction of the book: “the person who goes to the Arabian Gulf will meet a purity kind of music...much simpler, but he will feel the pain if he records it to let the other Danish to hear it, because they will like the purity of the songs, but they wouldn’t be able to create the same purity.”

The theatre officially appeared in Dubai in 1963, when the Iraqi theatrical artist *Wathiq Al Sameraie* arrived in Dubai. He came to the UAE to teach youth the art of theatre, and to establish

¹ See (‘id Al-Faraj, ‘adel Khazam, Ḥabib Ghulūm, Maryam Jum‘a Faraj, *Alḥayah Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Life in the UAE)*, special edition, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2004) pp. 15-30.

² *Poul Rovsing Olsen*: Composer, ethno-musicologist. As member of several expeditions to Arabia and Greenland, he collected native music; since 1960 attached to the Danish Folklore-Archive. Became the sixth president of The International Council for Traditional Music in London from 1977 until his death in 1982. (The official website of (ICTM)).

theatrical activities in the UAE. He also established the first theatrical stage in the UAE.¹ He started his mission with the *Al Falah* club in 1963 in a play entitled “For my son.” After that, theatrical activity began in Dubai on 9 October 1963, with the preparation of a play entitled “Forgive me.” The play was performed on 12 December 1963, and the late sheikh of Dubai, *Rashed Bin Said Al Maktoum* (1912–1990) attended it.² The sports clubs in the UAE organized the first theatrical festival in the country at *Al Naser Club Auditorium* in the early 1970s, where twenty-four plays were performed in a theatrical event, which had never happened before in the UAE. The national Youth theatre in Dubai, considered the first theatre in the UAE, received a declaration in 1972 to perform different plays and gather youth in this kind of artistic work, under the sponsorship and supervision of the Ministry of Sport and Youth. In general, the sport clubs in Dubai created different cultural activities during the 1970s and early 1980s.³

After the theatrical experiences, the Ministry of Information and Culture encouraged the appearance of theatrical groups and cultural societies like the National Youth Theatre in 1972, the Dubai Folk theatre in 1976, Dubai *Ahli* theatre in 1981, and *Awad Al Doukhi* theatre in 1984, but it closed later on due to its poor performance.⁴ The UAE theatre movement has been influenced by the theatre movements of other Arab countries like Egypt and Kuwait. Stage shows were held during the activities of sports and youth clubs. The theatre movement has been developed because of the enthusiasm by the UAE youths for this style of art and cultural expression, and the government’s support for theatrical troupes as public welfare associations.

¹ ‘abdallh Al-Ṭabūr, *Al masraḥ Fi Al Emarat: Alnasha’a Wal taṭwir (The Theatre in the UAE: the beginnings and development)*, 1st ed, Department of Culture and Information publications, Sharjah, UAE, 1998, p. 37.

² See (‘id Al-Faraj, ‘adel Khazam, Ḥabib Ghulūm, Maryam Jum’a Faraj, *Alḥayah Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Life in the UAE)*, pp. 31-42).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

In 1950s, regular education began in the schools of the UAE and Dubai where several new academic subjects were taught for the children, and gradually new classes of fine arts and sports were added to the syllabus. Following UAE independence on December 2, 1971, the national political leadership built a strong base to compensate previous educational deprivation. Principally, concentration was on education, as numerous schools were built all over the UAE, and as several educational scholarships were made available to Arab and foreign universities. Later on, national academic institutions were inaugurated, and several television, radio, and press establishments have appeared.¹ On July 17, 1972, the first exhibition to take place in the UAE was organized in the public library in Dubai. The painting works at that exhibition were returning to the first generation of UAE artists from the High School. In the 1970s, the movement of fine art was fast and active, where the number of the artistic exhibitions increased, and the government started sending the UAE artists to participate in the international art exhibitions. In addition, several bodies are sponsoring fine arts activities. Exhibitions and galleries hold annual functions for fine arts, while artistic and cultural institutions hold a number of solos and open shows for national, expatriate, and visiting artists.² In the fine arts field, including painting, carving, and plastic arts, many young talents have developed after academic study in Arab and foreign colleges. In 1987, the UAE invented a new style of workshops to teach youth the fine arts in a simple way, called the “free studio,” where the workshop is held in an open area. In addition, some cultural centres hosted and organized many exhibitions in fine arts, as well as exhibitions for international artists during the Dubai Shopping Festival or other occasions.

¹ See (‘id Al-Faraj, ‘adel Khazam, Ḥabib Ghulūm, Maryam Jum‘a Faraj, *Alḥayah Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Life in the UAE)*, pp. 43-56).

² Ibid.

In general, the beginning of the poetic movement in Dubai and the UAE is very old, and it is difficult to describe all its landmarks; however, 1950 could be described as the beginning of the modern poetic movement in the UAE, with the appearance of creative poets who used classic Arabic. Other styles of modern literary and cultural expression, like modern poetry, story, novel, press articles, and literary criticism, appeared during the second half of the twentieth century, and witnessed a new blood following the UAE independence in 1971. “Nabati” poetry was the oldest of the UAE’s literary traditions. The Ministry of Information and Culture founded councils of the poets in each emirate and under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nuhayan—late president of the UAE—the ministry took care of those councils on all aspects. The appearance of the short story was delayed in the UAE until the year 1968, it came at the beginning as notions and essays written by a generation of young people who were still in the secondary and high schools; most of their works have been published in the newsletters issued by the sports cultural clubs in Dubai, such as *Al-Nasr Club*, *Al-Ahly Club*, *Al Shabab Club*, and *Al Wasel Club*, in addition to the magazine of Dubai news that was founded in 1965. During the period of the 1970s, the short story recorded a qualitative development and obtained its concept and its new form with keeping the privacy and the belonging to the environment.¹

5. 1. Analysis: The Recent History of Culture in the UAE

The cultural beginnings in UAE are deeply entwined with the geography of the land. UAE, as most of us know, has not just one, but two gifts of nature—the desert and the sea. As generations have proved, both of these gifts have deeply influenced poets and musicians, breaking into lyrics and music. It is therefore not odd to discover that the deep sea divers searching for pearls in UAE had come up with

¹ See (‘id Al-Faraj, ‘adel Khazam, Ḥabib Ghulūm, Maryam Jum‘a Faraj, *Alḥayah Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Life in the UAE)*, pp. 90-105).

a unique sort of music or their own. Diving is a hard job and “searching for pearls” has a fabulous symbolical significance. It is perhaps a combination of the divers fatigue and their recognition of the metaphorical value of their job that allowed their creative juices to flow. Sailors like Al Msana, Al ahala, and others, have been known to produce songs that have enthralled generations.

However, as explained, the sea was not the only overwhelming presence in the lives of the people of UAE; there was also the quite significant desert, and therefore, the corresponding desert music. A combination of the desert music and the music of the seas was what came to be known as the folk music of UAE. The marriage ceremonies and the lyric parties were all fringed with this special brand of music.

Individual singing began in the twentieth century, only after the people of UAE began travelling to other countries. A number of singers, such as Mohamed Abdul Rahim, Mohamed Sohail, and others, emerged as a result. Also, instruments, which formerly had not been featured in UAE music, appeared during this stage.

Theatre came to Dubai (and UAE) only in the early 1960s, following the appearance of Iraqi theatre performer Wathiq Al Sameraie in the country. It was also under him that the first theatrical stage emerged in UAE. Following the spread of the medium, a number of youngsters began experimenting with theatre personally. The National Youth Theatre in Dubai was an outcome of such experiments. In 1972, it achieved the much-desired declaration allowing it to gather youth and perform various kinds of plays. Since then, there has been no looking back.

By the 1950s, as regular education started for the UAE youth, extra-curricular activities, such as fine arts, dramatics, and the like, also came to be taught in the schools. The fine arts movement started in 1970. After UAE’s independence in 1971, much was done to compensate the former deficiencies in schooling. It was around this time that the first radio and television channels came to be established.

The most olden art movement in UAE is the poetic movement. The modern poetic movement is thought to have begun as early as the 1950s. The emergence of the twentieth century brought a number of other literary forms, such short stories, novels, etc. to the forefront.

6. Conclusion

Various different facets contribute to a country's personal feeling of "culture." "Culture" is important for a number of reasons, as explained previously; it allows self-definition, as well as a sense of commonality. Thus, it provides us not just a cue to what we are, but also inkling as to "what" we individually are a part of. Academicians have managed to produce a plethora of definitions for culture over the last hundreds of years, but the truth is that culture is difficult to define, not only because it is ethereal, but also because it is contextual. It is no wonder, therefore, that the definitions so warmly embraced by the Western academic circle is not of much value to UAE, which, obviously enough, has a unique and markedly different definition of the concept.

No matter what your personal opinion regarding what constitutes your culture is, however, every individual or community will make an attempt to preserve and secure everything that represents culture for them. Thus, historical sites will be conserved, and music will be safely secured into the hearts of the people who have heard it, and the poetry will be cherished and recited when the time is right. Every community has their own way of conserving what is theirs. When the community is as big as the population of UAE (which though not particularly large, has come to swell under the constant migration from other countries), the methods of conserving the culture will be varied.

Given the wide variety of people the UAE has formally taken under her wings, what she can call "her" culture is a colourful tapestry of a combination of a few of the richest traditions in the world. Be it the historical roughness of the Middle East, the exotic sites of India, the colours of Africa, or the

resilience of the Bedouins, UAE has a plethora of features to offer. These she has managed to weave into one great fabric that has become the present UAE as we know it. There is a place for everyone here, and everyone is welcome. It is this welcoming and accepting atmosphere in the UAE that has kept communal disharmony from ravaging her spirits. Despite the diversity of her people, there is unity and peace and a general feeling of homeliness.

This feeling of comfort is intrinsic to the beginning of creative activities, since it is only when you are in peace that you reach the stage where pure art can be produced. Due to the intermingling of artistic traditions from various countries, the UAE has a rich history of cultural beginnings. Of course, the natural endowments of the country, its beauty proved to be an added inspiration for artists. Art always tends to allow a culture a certain amount of distinction. UAE's art, too, has helped it carve its very own niche in the crowd of the cultures of the world.

With every turn of the wheel of time, the unique tapestry of UAE's culture will grow stronger and brighter, as thousands of more people make her their home UAE's history is bound to grow richer and more varied. Hopefully, with time, the rest of the world will take her lead and provide a harmonious site for culture to prosper, uninhibited.

Chapter 3: Demography Sub Sector Situation Analysis

1. Introduction

The population issues in the country are of major concern to formal and non-formal sectors. This concern arises from the recognition of the imbalances in the population structure. These imbalances are feared due to their potential effects on social cohesion and stability and on the national identity and culture.

There are regular general censuses conducted in the UAE. They provide a solid data base to monitor emerging trends in demographic variables at the country and local levels. The first census in UAE was conducted in the year 1968, followed by general censuses on the following years 1971, 1980, 1985, and 1995. The Dubai municipality statistical centre conducted censuses for the Emirate of Dubai on 1993 and 2000.¹ The latest general national census was concluded in 2005.

The annual population growth rate for Dubai is among the highest worldwide. Net migration is the major factor affecting the growth rate. This resulted in rapid population growth especially among expatriate sectors of the population. The National community is increasing annually through the natural increase, Birth minus Death. Accordingly the gap between National/Non-National sectors is widening. Asians represent a majority of the population. The Asian community is leading with regard to number of live birth and also net migration increases, leading to more dominance over the years to come.

Naturalization as a strategy to strengthen the national population structure is not yet fully exploited and represents a limited contribution to population growth. A new approach to manage the

¹ Statistical Year Book 2004 – Emirate of Dubai, *Dubai Municipality Statistics Centre*, (Dubai Municipality, Dubai, UAE, 2005, p. 7).

influx of immigrants is called for, catering for the economic development needs and being sensitive to the social and cultural issues. Innovative ways to attract and retain professional and skilled labour force need to be considered.

2. Demographics in the 1990s

It has been concurred that two factors play a significant role in the ability of UAE to maintain a political system for an extensive period of time: ¹ the country produces more than two million barrels of petroleum per day, generating sufficient revenue to sustain a population of two million people at a high standard of living, and ² it has nearly 100 billion barrels of recoverable reserves (more than four times that of the United States), enough to allow current population to continue for over a 100 years. This advantage has permitted the UAE, over the past quarter century, to bring in hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to supplement the national labour force in the petroleum industry, in other industries and in all of the services required for a modern economy.³

The presence of a very large number of foreigners in the UAE however has not been conducive to the creation of serious social or political problems for numerous reasons. Initially, as a result of petroleum affluence, the government provides everyone-nationals and foreigners alike with-very inexpensive social services like medical care, education, and levies no taxes. Additionally foreign

¹ Zartman, William, "A Search for Security and Governance Regimes," chapter 3 in David Gernham and Mark Tessler, eds., *Democracy and Peace in the Middle East*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995, p.48.

² Tessler, Mark and Gernham, David, "Introduction," in Gernham & Tessler, *Democracy, War and Peace*, p. ix.

³ Rugh, William A, "The United Arab Emirates: what are the sources of its stability?" *Middle East Policy* V No. III (September 1997), p.16.

workers are cognizant of the fact that they are not to become involved in politics, criticize the government or otherwise disrupt the peace or they will be sent home.¹

It is apparent that the UAE is not a “melting pot.” Many separate and distinct social and ethnic groups reside in the UAE side by side, each maintaining its own cultural identity and tolerating the others, in a live-and-let-live environment. The scholars indicate that the largest groups such as the Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Filipinos as well as smaller ones which have been in the country for a long time such as the British, have their own schools, their own clubs and their own places of worship, and they spend their leisure time with their own people. In most instances the foreigners learn just enough Arabic to survive. A numerous amount of them spend a minimal amount of their earnings, sending most the money home to relatives.

The frictions that have occurred have been minor. One British businessman in Dubai, for example, learned from experience that it wise to hire Pakistani workers or only Indian worker but not both for the same work place to minimize tension.² The literature suggests that the government does usually bother private clubs. Although in one notable case in 192 members of a theatre troupe playing in an Indian club in Dubai were tried, convicted and jailed for blasphemy because they had performed in a drama that reportedly ridiculed Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. In December 1992, when a mob of Hindus in the Indian city of *Ayodhya* destroyed the *Babri Masjid* mosque, and Muslims rioted in the protest in many places, Muslims living in the UAE (primarily Pakistanis in Dubai and al Ain) also took

¹ Ibid., p.17.

² Ibid.

to the streets and carried out violent acts against Hindus.¹ These demonstrations lasted only about two days; however, the government immediately located the several hundred suspects and deported them. The protesters were cognizant of the fact that jobs were more significant and the protests ended.

According to the researchers in 1994-1995 the government displayed a concern about the demographic imbalance when it established a ministerial-level commission to recommend ways to decrease dependence on foreign workers, it subsequently issued regulations restricting the number of domestic servants per household and prohibiting the lowest-paid workers from bringing their families with them.² However, but by the middle of 1997, the 80:20 foreign-national ration had not changed substantially.

The vast majority of foreigners are required to leave UAE upon completion of their work. The minimal exceptions include a group of Yemenis who were granted citizenship by Sheikh Zayed in the 1980s and a few expatriate Arabs who have worked for the government for more than twenty years were permitted to retire and stay-despite the fact that not all them have been naturalized.³ It has asserted that some external observers have inquired about the reasons the UAE does not adopt a policy of naturalizing selected foreign professionals who contribute significantly to the national economy and welfare, to reward them for service and give them more of a stake in the country's future. It is not surprising to learn that some Americans believe that this would be advantageous to the UAE, as it has been to the United States. Nevertheless, the UAE leadership believes naturalized citizens cannot be trusted fully, especially in a crisis.⁴ The scholars contend that this sentiment is established in the necessary tribal

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴ Ibid.

nature of UAE society, where family is primary and foreigners, although treated quite hospitably, are not made part of the family. This also exhibits a desire to maintain control of the system and maintain its affluence in the hands of those who presently have the power. Thus, as long as skilled foreign workers are willing to work without citizenship, there is minimal motivation for the government to give them more than monetary benefits.

Amazingly, throughout the thirty five year history of the UAE there have been no substantial discords caused by the presence of such large numbers of foreigners. The prevailing social climate has always been one of tolerance. UAE nationals, most of whom are devout Muslims, follow conservative social habits in their dress code, male-female relations and public behaviour. The non-nationals are not compelled to follow these rules. For an example, a myriad of UAE women are veiled and segregated from men, while Western women living in the country dress and fellow social behaviour essentially as they would in their home countries. However, protracted dependence on foreign labour has led to the development of a more subtle and less visible sort, according to the researchers. Since there are an insufficient number of UAE nationals in education or in the judiciary, the UAE government must hire judges and teachers from other countries to staff the courts and the schools, and occasionally the recruits bring with them views and attitudes which are alien to those held by the nationals. Some teachers and judges with radical Islamic ideas have been inadvertently brought to the UAE, and they have had influence, although how much it is difficult to determine. One classic example pertains to an incident in 1993: a judge Fujairah handed down amputation sentences for two convicted smugglers. While amputations are allowed by Islamic law under certain circumstances for some crimes, UAE judges have

in recent years never ordered any, so the Fujairah case caused alarm among UAE nationals.¹ It was revealed that the judge was an Egyptian who had just recently arrived and had brought radical Islamic views with him to the UAE. Obviously, he erroneously assumed that he could and should apply Islamic law strictly. His sentence was overturned by appeals tribunal composed of UAE nationals, and his subsequent judgments were more in conformity with UAE custom.² The researchers indicate that there has also been discord at UAE university between the more than 100 young UAE nationals on the teaching staff, who have PhDs, and the older, more experienced faculty members, brought in from countries such as Egypt, who hold positions as department heads and deans. The younger staff members believe that as nationals they should have more power in the management of the university because it is their country. The outsiders, on the other hand, tend to believe they know best what students need, and that the nationals are not yet ready to assume more responsibility. The literature indicates that the appointment of five nationals to top university positions in 1995 helped to reduce complaints from that group, but foreign teachers still represent a majority. Some investigators wonder if the ideas these foreign teachers impart to nine thousand UAE undergraduates at the university are the most appropriate in educating them for future leadership. These same questions are asked about lower stages in the education system where thousands of non-nationals teach, using approaches and ideas from their home countries. In a myriad of instances, these concepts differentiate from the philosophy of tolerance and cooperation which predominates in the UAE. It has been maintained by the researchers that when government officials each year hire thousands of foreign school teachers for the UAE schools, they cannot possibly screen them sufficiently for an appropriate fit with the environment.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

It has been assumed by some scholars that the presence of foreign nannies taking care of children in UAE nationals' homes is likely to have an extensive cultural and social impact on the next generations. The vast majority of the nannies are Filipinas or other non-Arab, who speak little or no Arabic and know nothing about the local culture. As with judges and teachers, the resulting long-term impact is unknown, but as suggested by some experts, it is potentially significant.

3. Population Growth & Composition

In 2003, Dubai represented 30% of the total UAE population which stood at around four million.

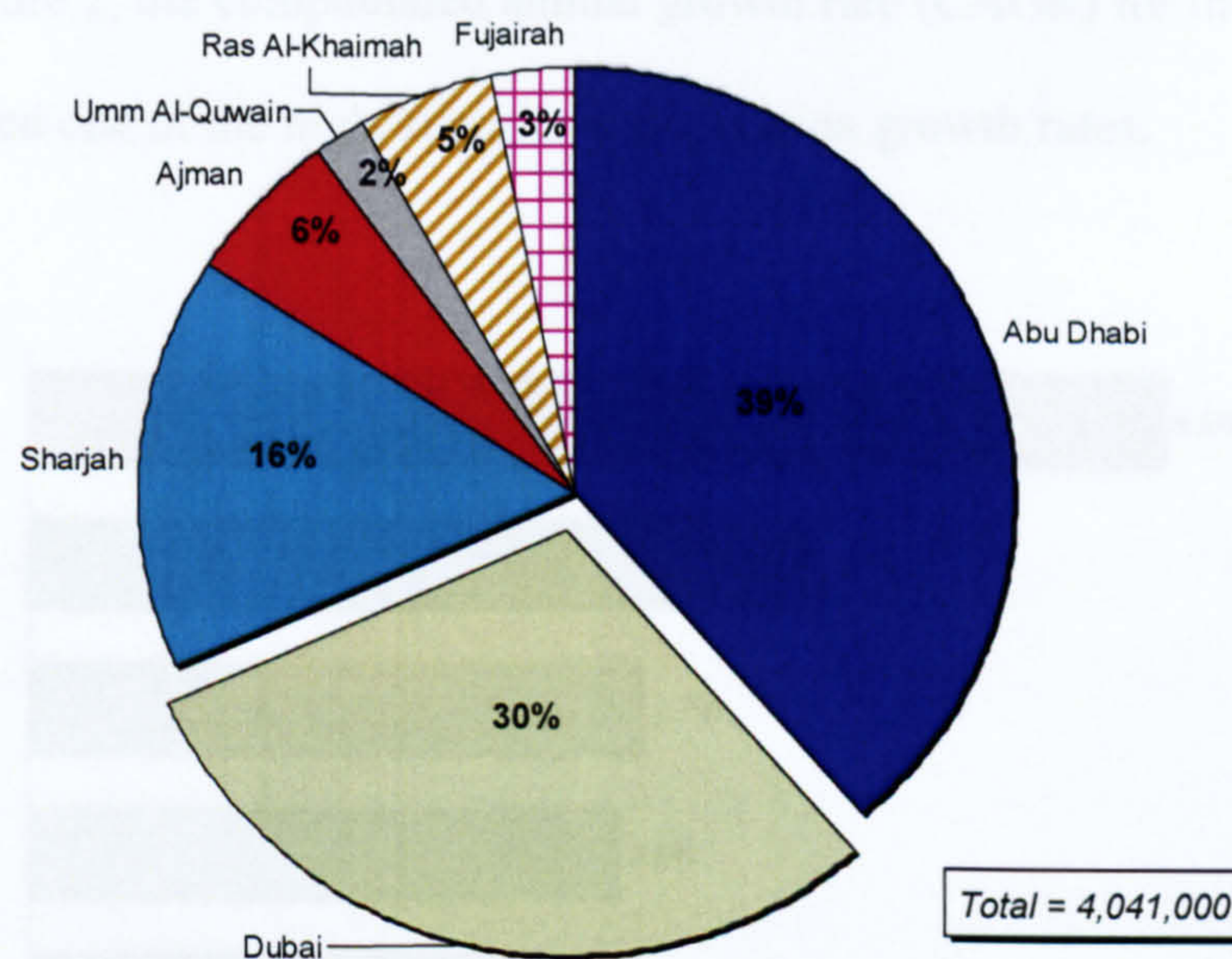


Figure 1: United Arab Emirates Population Distribution (2003) - Source: The Executive Office - Dubai¹

The population growth in Dubai, mainly driven by economic prosperity, nearly doubled between the years 1995 and 2004 where it went from 689 thousand to 1,071 thousand.

¹ The Executive Office (2006) *Demography in the UAE and Dubai: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

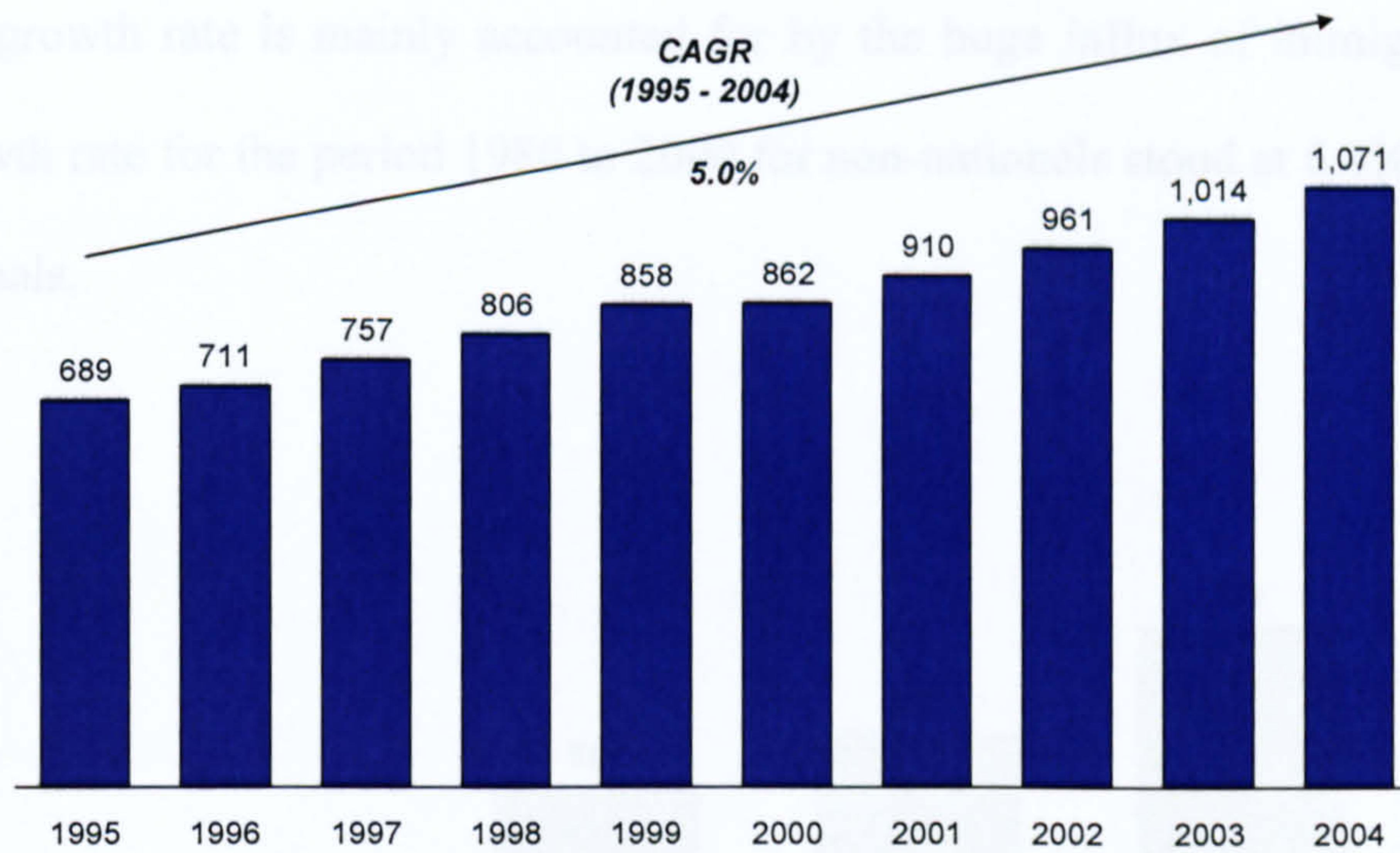


Figure 2: Dubai Population Growth (in '000, 1995 – 2004) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

As shown in Figure 2, the compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) for the same period stood at 5.0%, which is considered one of the highest regional population growth rates.

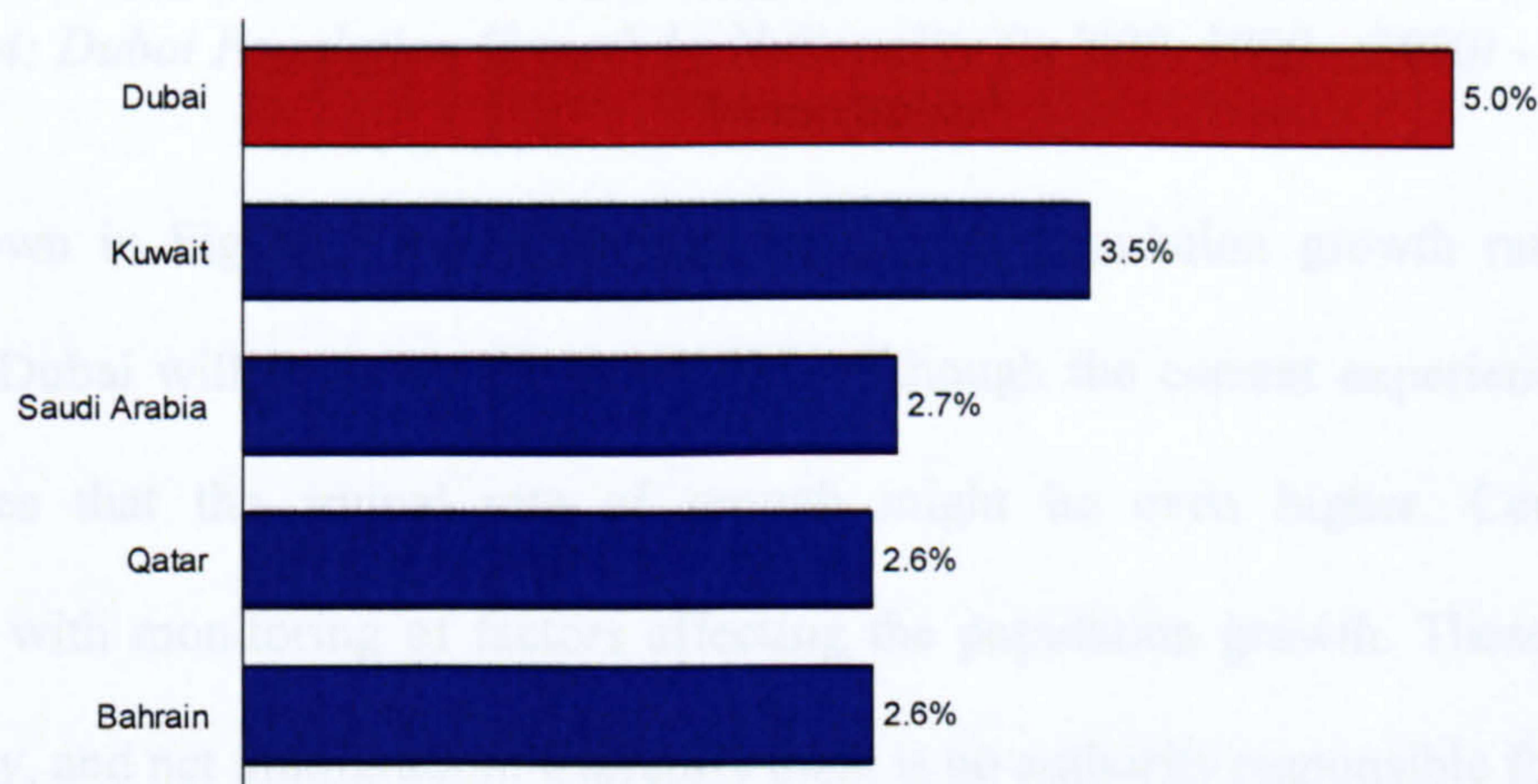


Figure 3: GCC Population Growth Benchmarks (in %, 1995 – 2004) - Source: Dubai Municipality, the Executive office - Dubai²

¹ Statistical Year Book 2004 – Emirate of Dubai, *Dubai Municipality Statistics Centre*, (Dubai Municipality, Dubai, UAE, 2005, p. 51).

² The Executive Office (2006) *Demography in the UAE and Dubai: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

The high growth rate is mainly accounted for by the huge influx of immigrants. As shown in Figure 4, the growth rate for the period 1980 to 2000 for non-nationals stood at 6.4% compared to a rate of 3.4% for nationals.

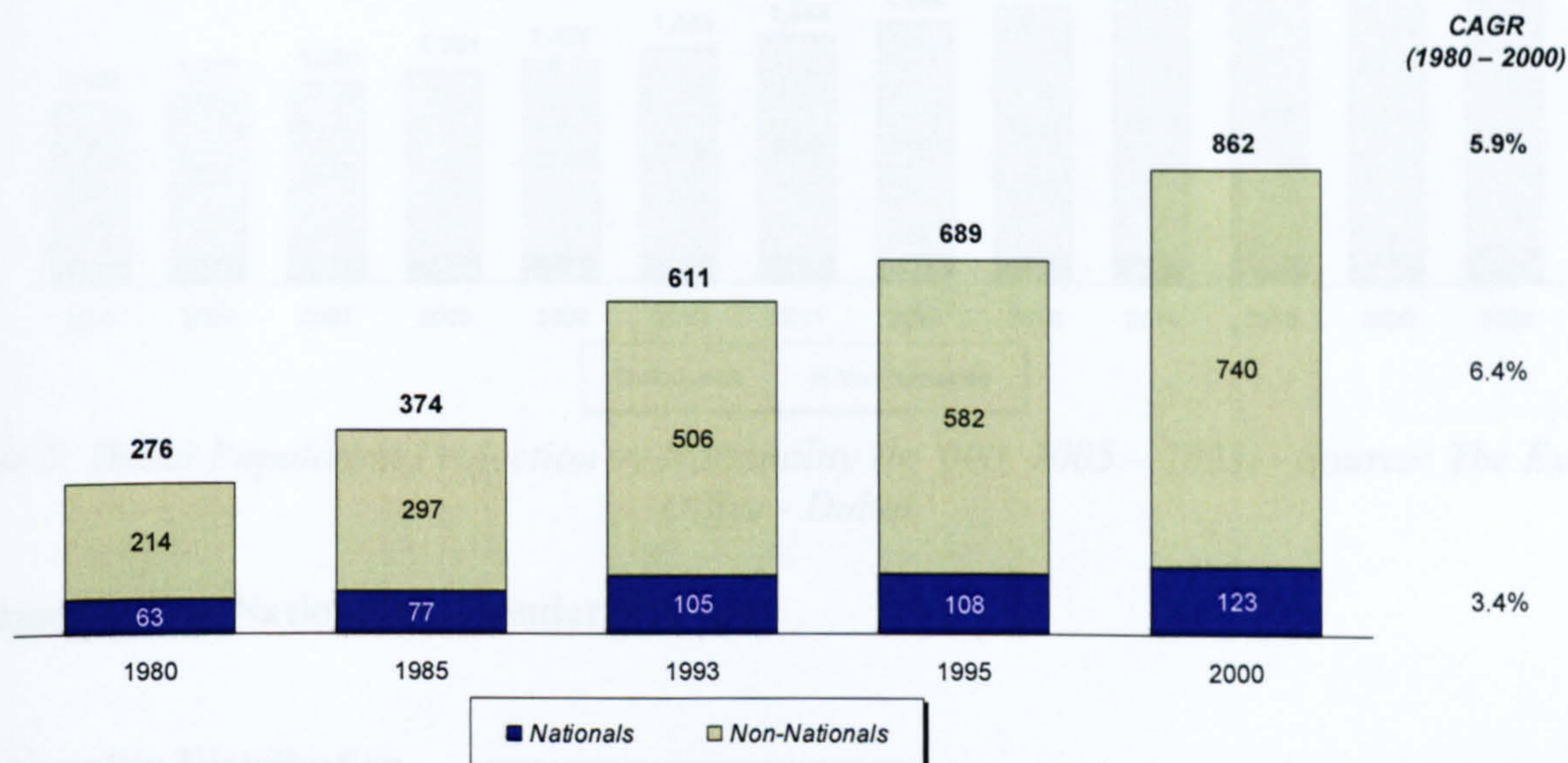


Figure 4: Dubai Population Growth by Nationality (in '000, 1980 – 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

As shown in Figure 5 below, should the current population growth rate be maintained, the population of Dubai will triple by the year 2025. Although the current experience with net migration trends indicates that the annual rate of growth might be even higher. Census data should be complimented with monitoring of factors affecting the population growth. These should include Live Birth, Mortality, and net immigration. Currently there is no authority responsible for such action.

¹ Statistical Year Book 2004 – Emirate of Dubai, *Dubai Municipality Statistics Centre*, (Dubai Municipality, Dubai, UAE, 2005, p. 45).

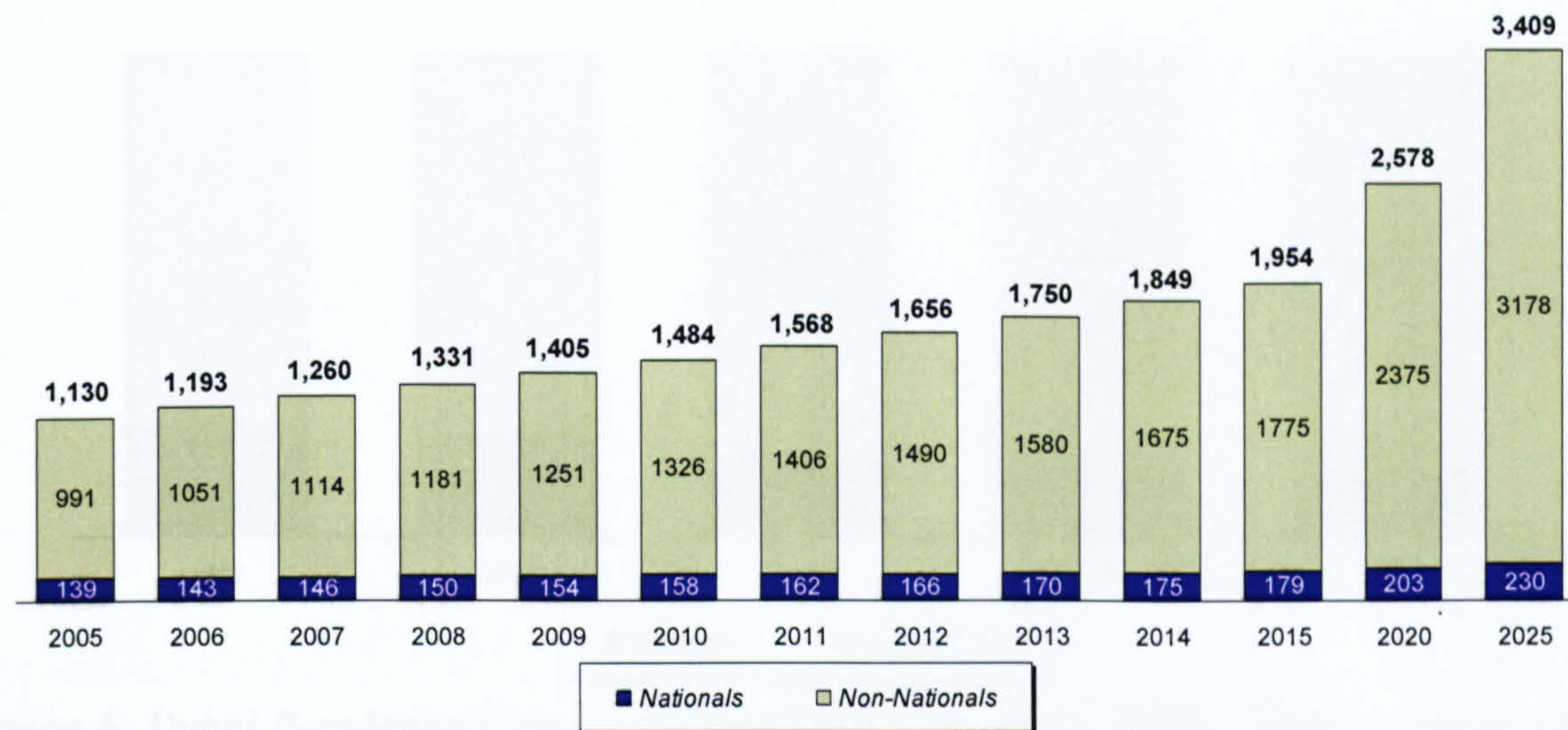


Figure 5: Dubai Population Projection by Nationality (in '000, 2005 – 2025) - Source: The Executive Office - Dubai¹

4. Composition by Nationality, Gender and Age

4.1. Nationality Distribution

The structure of Dubai population is demonstrating special trends, enforced by the high proportion of non-nationals (expatriate immigrants) in the community. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of Nationals has been declining from 23% in 1980 to around 14% in 2000. The current rates of population growth if maintained will result in an increasing gap between the national and expatriate sectors of the population. The percentage of the national population will drop from 12.7% in 2004 to 6.7% in the year 2025.

¹ The Executive Office (2006) *Demography in the UAE and Dubai: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

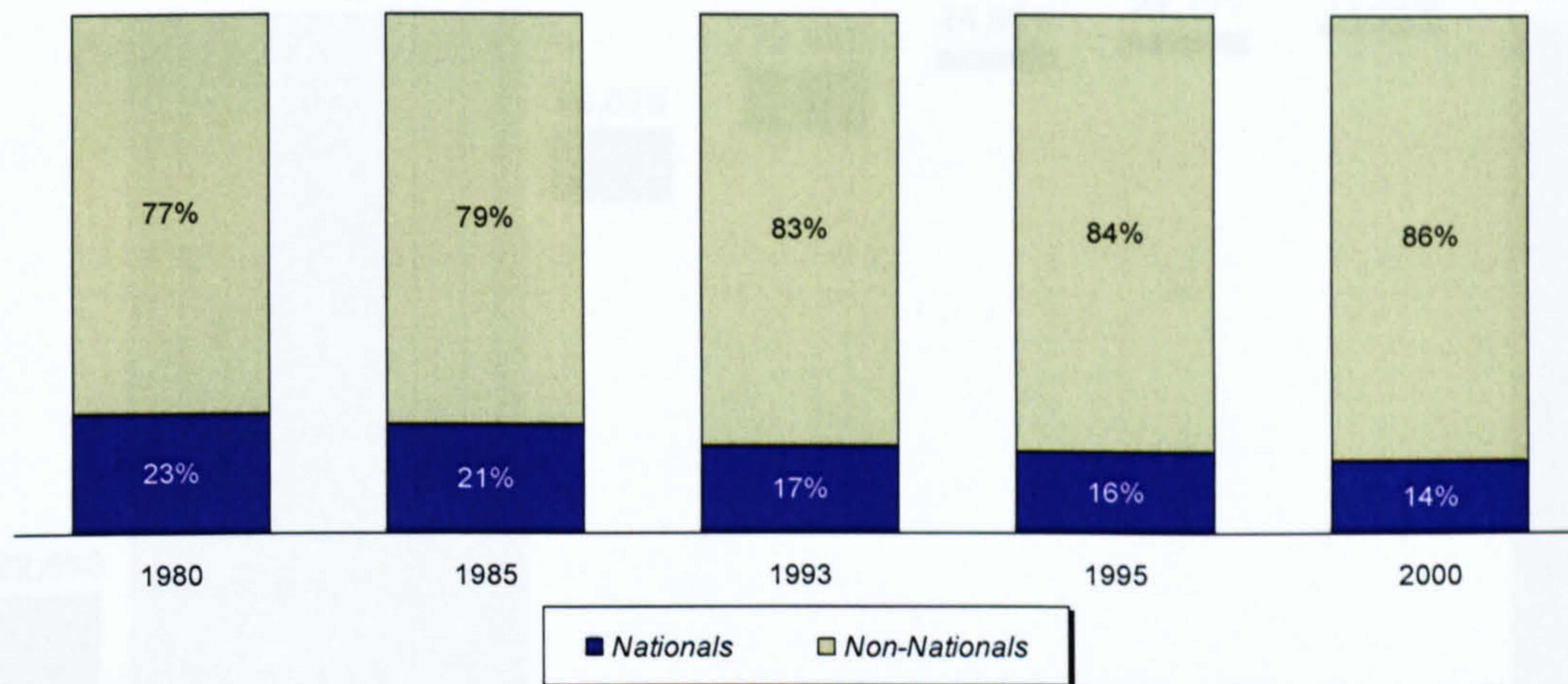


Figure 6: Dubai Population Composition by Nationality (in %, 1980 – 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

In addition, the majority of the non-national community is mainly Asian immigrants, more specifically from the Indian Sub-Continent. As shown in Figure 7, the Indian and Pakistani nationals accounted in 2000 for nearly 60% of the total population. Total Asian community represents 75% of the total population, while other Arab nationals accounted for 9%.

¹ Statistical Year Book 2004 – Emirate of Dubai, *Dubai Municipality Statistics Centre*, (Dubai Municipality, Dubai, UAE, 2005, p. 45).

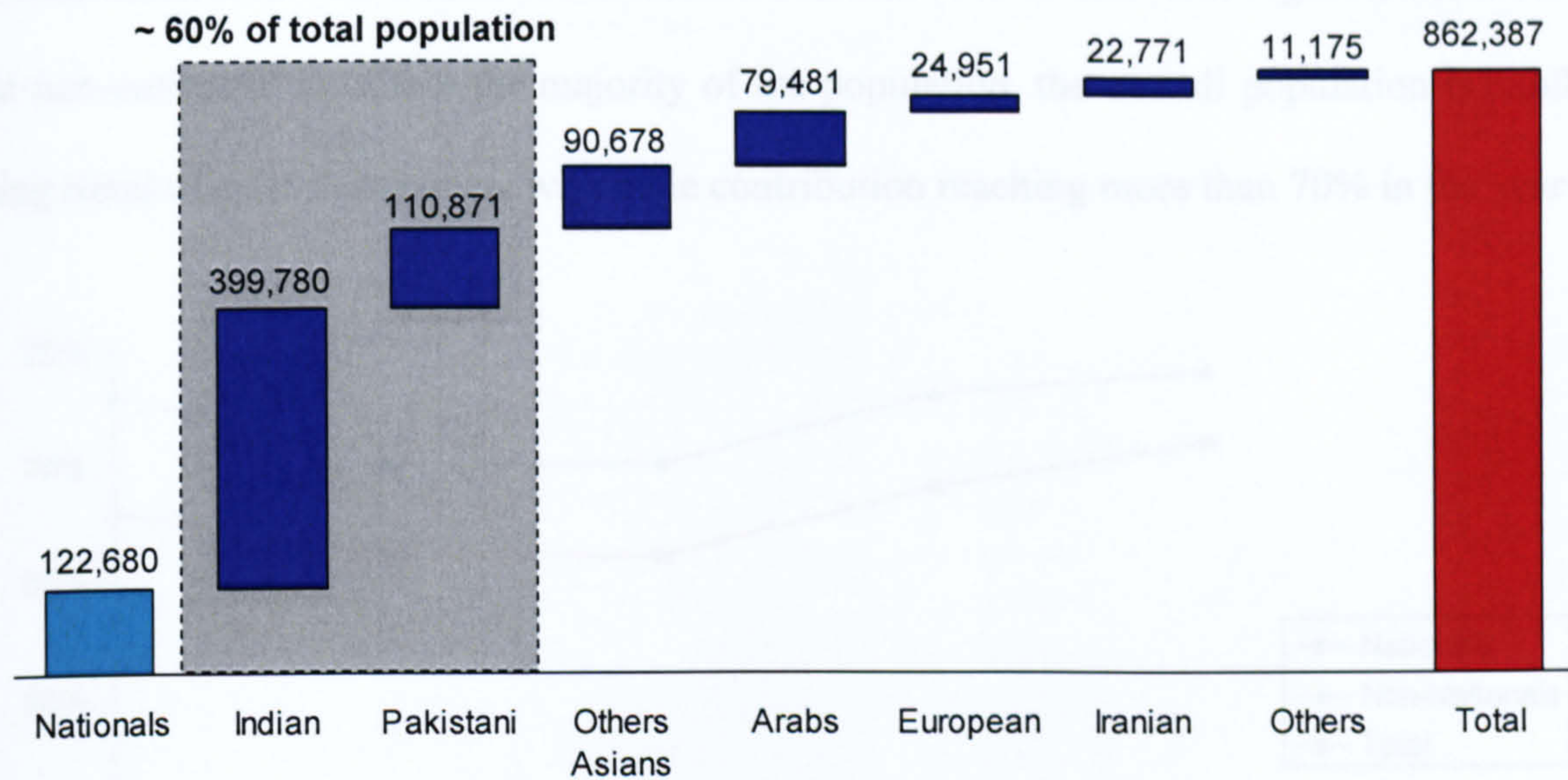


Figure 7: Characteristics of Dubai Population by Nationality (2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

The case of Dubai is very unique, even by regional norms. When compared to the UAE and other GCC states (Gulf Cooperation Council), the proportion of non-nationals in Dubai still stands out.

Country	% of Population
Dubai	86%
UAE	74%
Kuwait	58%
Jordan	40%
Singapore	34%
Oman	27%
Saudi Arabia	26%
New Zealand	23%

Table 1: Countries with the Highest Percentage of International Migrant Stock (2000) - Source: International Migration Report 2000, United Nations Population Division²

4.2. Gender Distribution

The National population exhibits a normal gender distribution whereby the male population has maintained a steady contribution of around 50%. On the other hand, the non-national population is

¹ Ibid.

² World Population Trends, United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic Social Affairs (DESA) <http://www.un.org/popin/un/trends.htm>.

mostly male dominated with a male contribution of around 75% as shown in Figure 8 below. Due to the fact that non-nationals constitute the majority of the population, the overall population is exhibiting an increasing trend of male dominance, with male contribution reaching more than 70% in the year 2000.

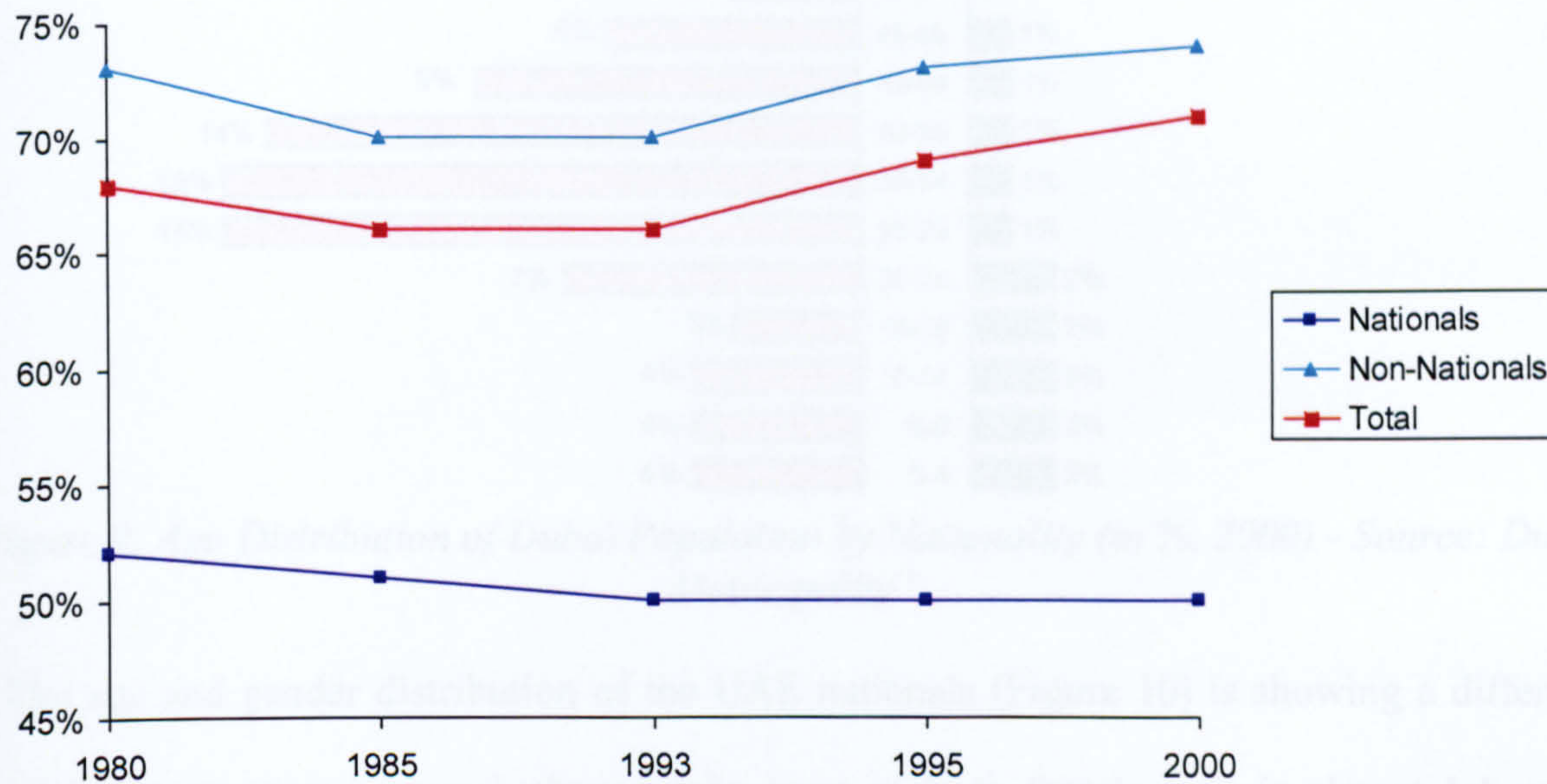


Figure 8: Male Population by Nationality (in %, 1980 – 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

The National population of Dubai is a relatively young population with more than 75% below the age of 35. The non-nationals age distribution is mainly concentrated with the median age brackets, whereby nearly 70% are within the ages of 25 and 44. It is worth noting that there few numbers of non-nationals in the retirement age brackets and relatively few children and youth below the age of nineteen.

¹ Statistical Year Book 2004 – Emirate of Dubai, *Dubai Municipality Statistics Centre*, (Dubai Municipality, Dubai, UAE, 2005, p. 22).

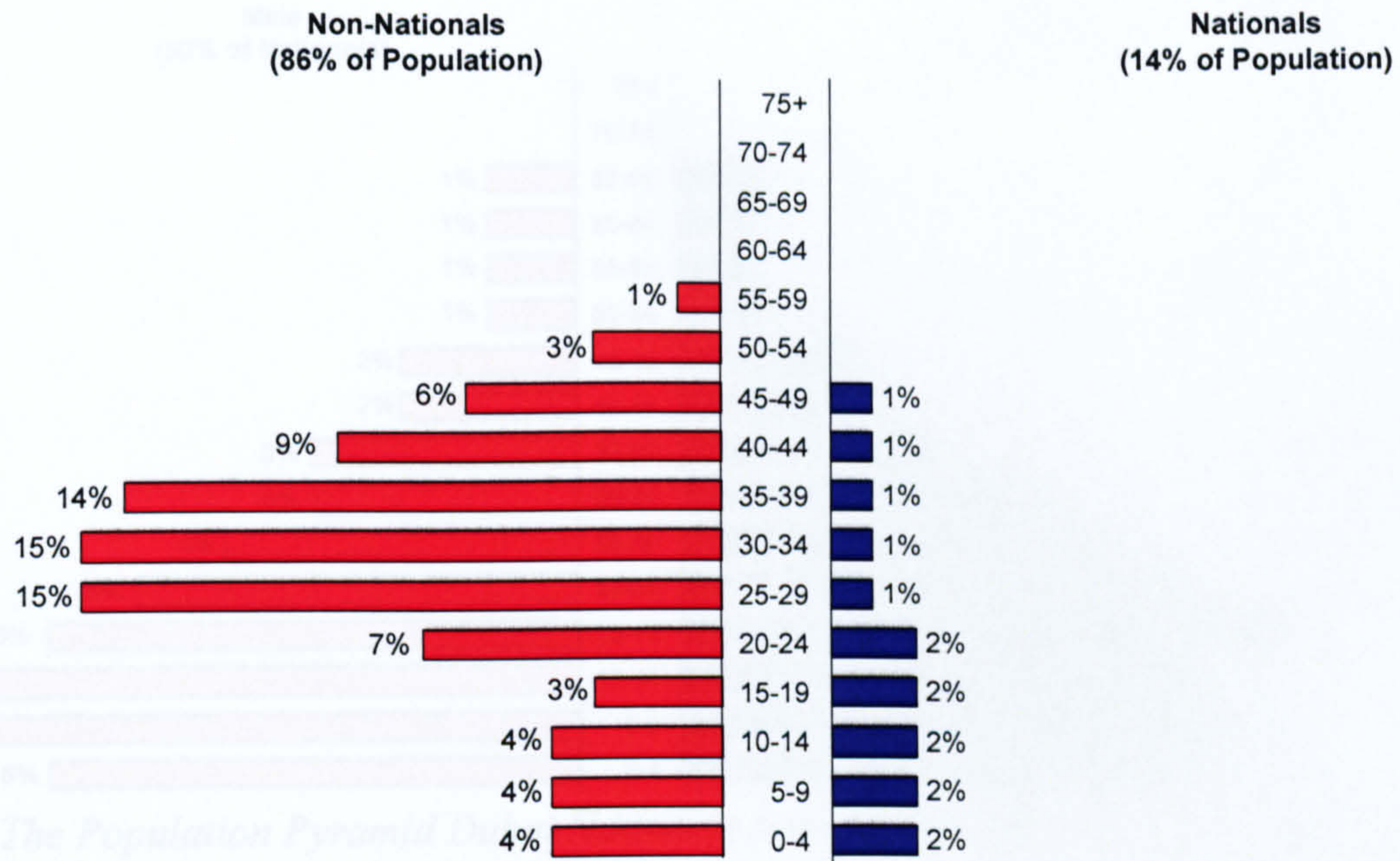


Figure 9: Age Distribution of Dubai Population by Nationality (in %, 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

The age and gender distribution of the UAE nationals (Figure 10) is showing a different trend. The trend is representing a normal phenomenon where male to female ratio is almost 1:1, with slight increase in the number of females. Population below 15 years accounts for 36.7% of the total national population. The aged sectors (60 + years) represents 4.8%.

¹ Ibid.

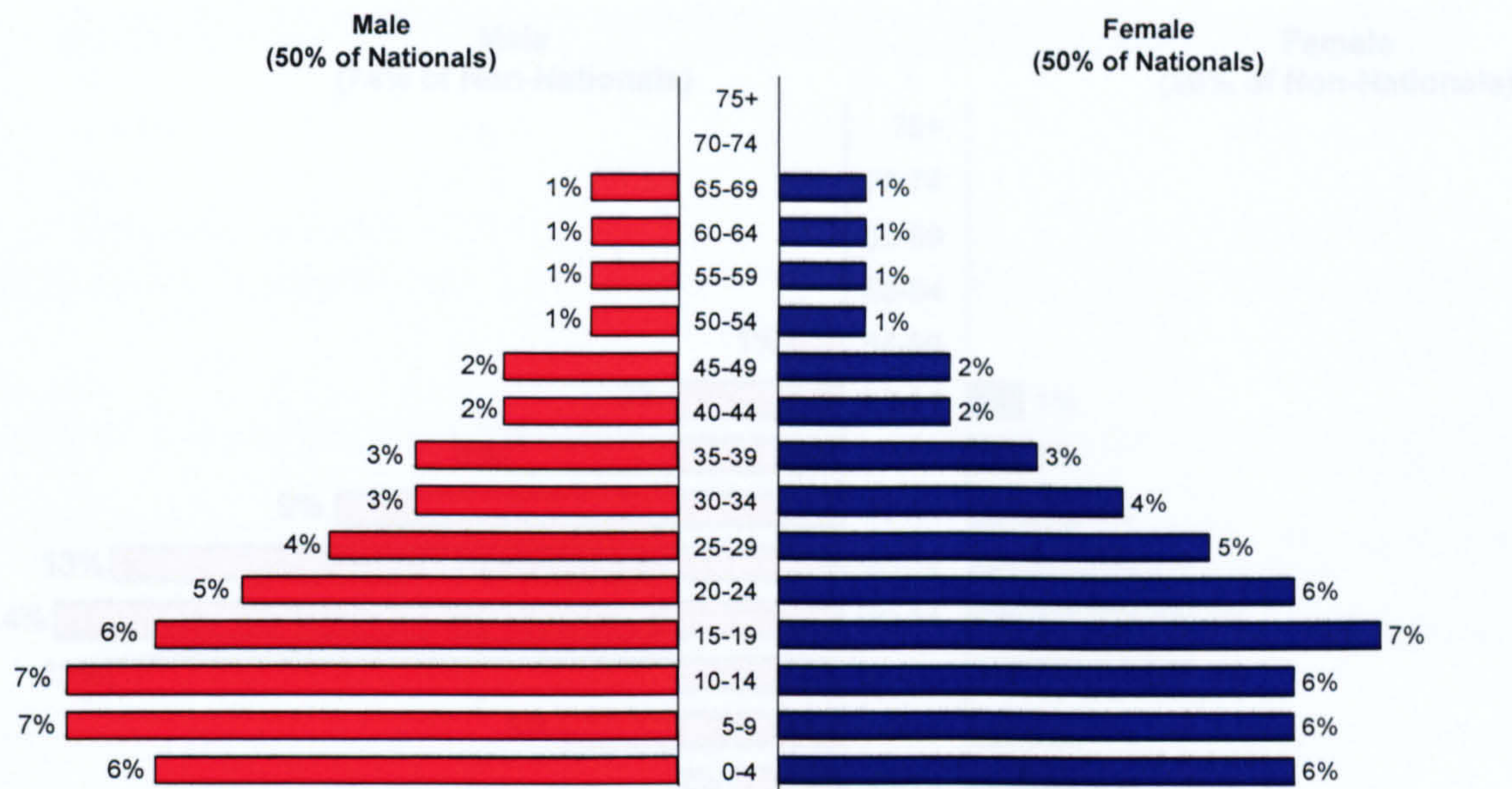


Figure 10: The Population Pyramid Dubai Nationals (in%, 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality ¹

The age and gender distribution (Figure 11) in the expatriate sectors of the community is showing majority of population in the age group 15-59 years (84.8%). Young population accounts for 14.5% of the total. While aged sectors were less than 1%.

¹ Ibid.

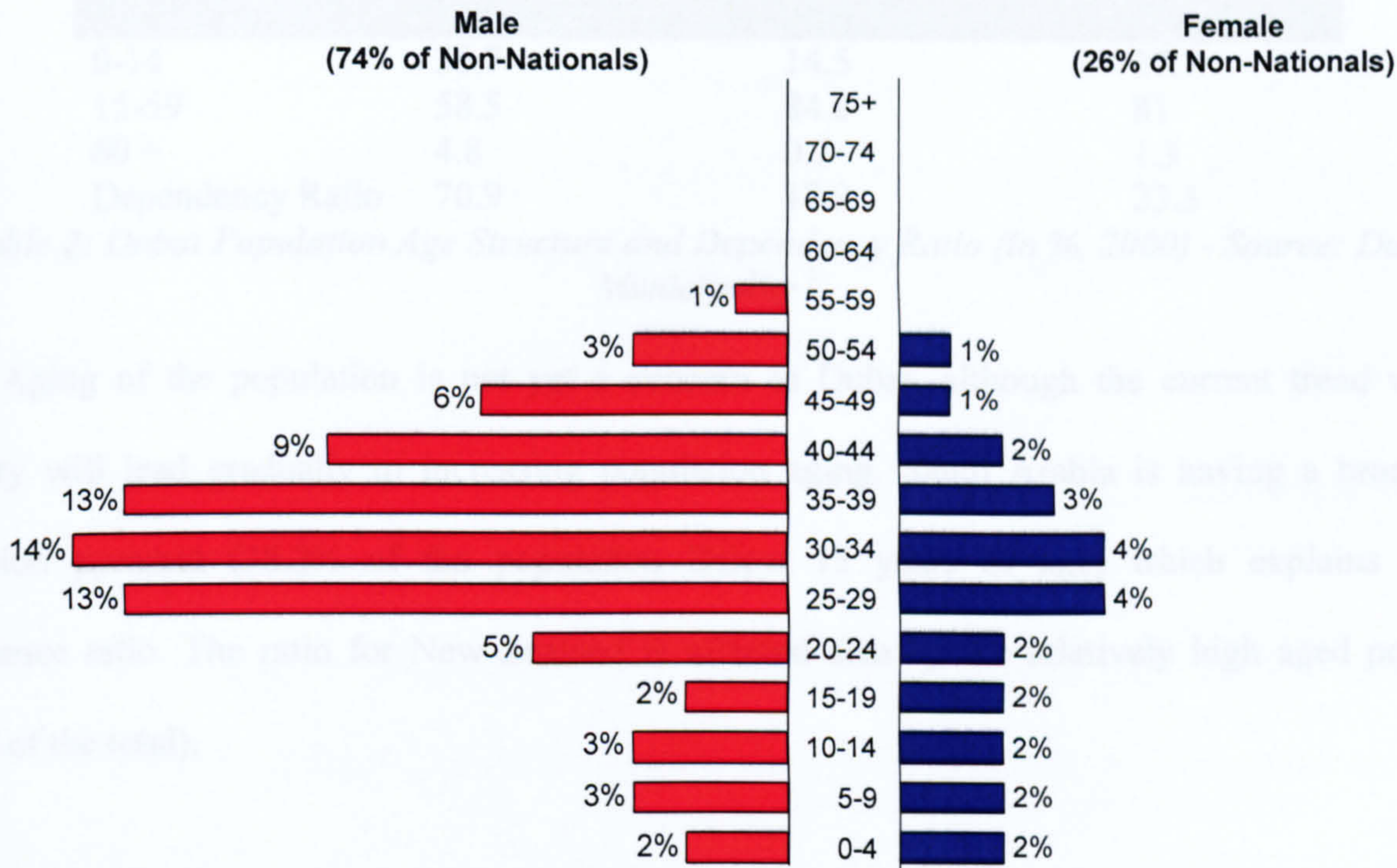


Figure 11: The Population Pyramid Dubai Non-National Community (in%, 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

The dependency Ratio as an important demographic concept describes the relation between the potentially self-supporting portion of the population (15 -59 years) and the dependant portion at the extremes of age (0-14 and 60 and above years.). The following table is summarizing the age structure of national and expatriate populations. The overall Dependency Ratio is low compared with other regional and international countries. The Ratio for Qatar is 39, compared to 71 for Saudi Arabia, New Zealand 52 and Malaysia 60. The high ratio among Nationals (70.9) is explained by the high proportion of community below 15 years of age.

¹ Ibid.

Age Groups	Nationals	Non-Nationals	Overall
0-14	36.7	14.5	17.7
15-59	58.5	84.8	81
60 +	4.8	0.7	1.3
Dependency Ratio	70.9	17.9	23.3

Table 2: Dubai Population Age Structure and Dependency Ratio (in %, 2000) - Source: Dubai Municipality¹

Aging of the population is not yet a concern in Dubai, although the current trend with low mortality will lead gradually to increasing population aging. Saudi Arabia is having a broad based population pyramid (38.2% of the population Below 15 years of age) which explains its high dependence ratio. The ratio for New Zealand is affected also by the relatively high aged population (10.4% of the total).

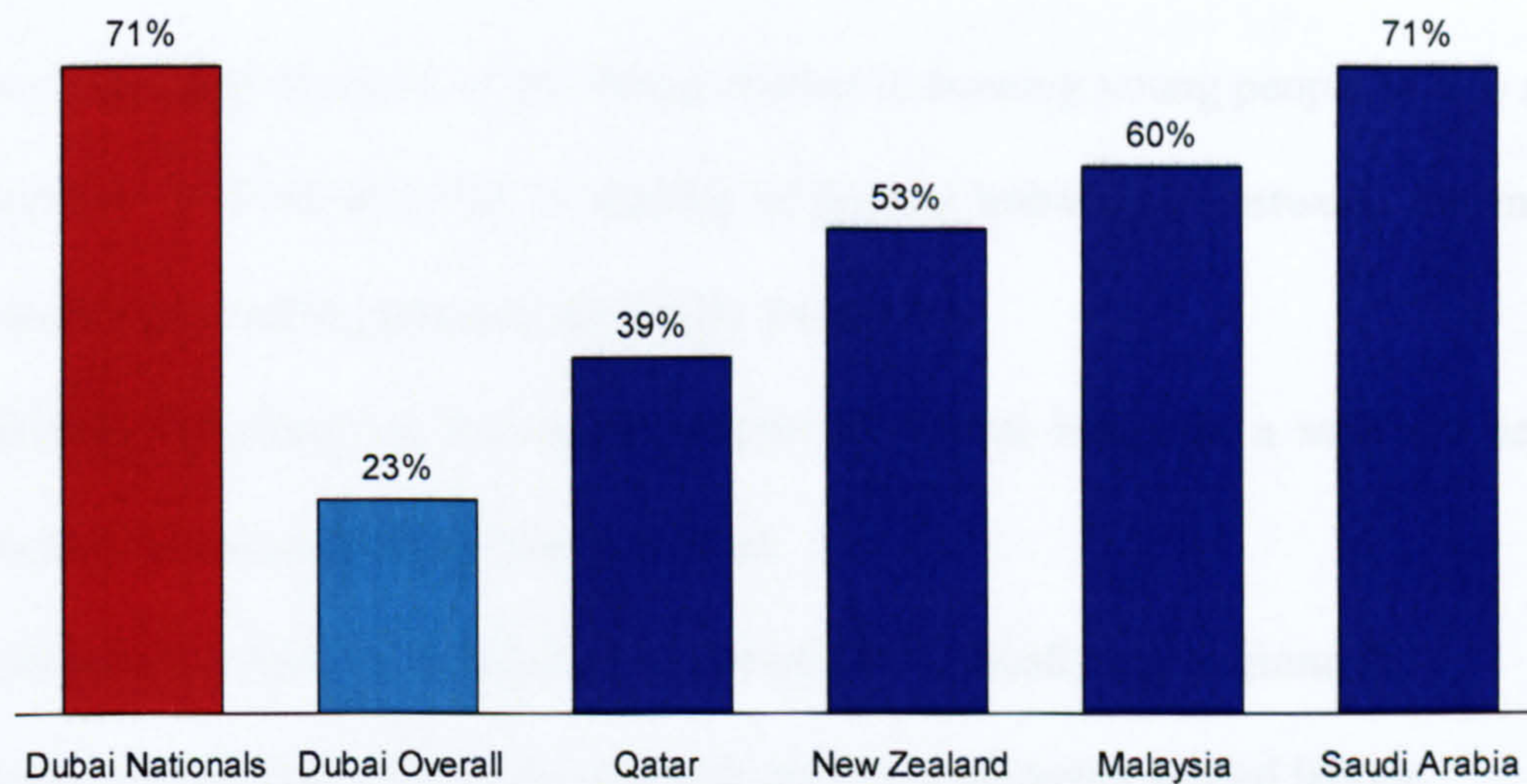


Figure 12: Dependency Ratio Benchmarks (2000) - Source: The World Health Report 2005 WHO²

¹ Ibid.

² World Health Report 2005, <http://www.who.int/whr/en/>.

5. Analysis: Dubai Population Growth and Composition¹

The vision consists of recognizing Dubai as an Arab City. Federal and local authorities are cognizant of the dangers of demographic imbalances; therefore the census is taken every five years. The statistics indicate that gender composition is balanced between males and females. The fertility rate is still increasing population growth for the National population.

The following trends have been identified to have potential impact on Dubai's population growth and composition:²

- With the falling replacement rates of developed countries, the balance between the populations of developed and developing countries is changing, as is the ethnic composition of the world.
- The internationalization of the labour market is drawing young people to live away from their countries of birth and this is leading to greater imbalances between the male and female populations, putting pressure on family formation.
- Political turbulence in the region, encourage Dubai image as a safe and secure heaven to develop businesses and to bring children.
- Continued economic prosperity and growth, both locally and regionally.
- Increased focus on growth of economic sectors employing skilled labour.
- Globalization of the labour market.
- Migration from countries with high birth rates.
- Local pressure against immigration diluting national social fabric.

¹ Two workshops and closed sessions in the summer 2006 were held to investigate the question of the identity of the city of Dubai. The initial workshop was in Arabic and focused on the United Arab Emirates Nationals only and the second one was in English focused on the expatriates who live in Dubai. The roundtable discussion included several experts. (see Appendix 7)

² Ibid.

- Increased interaction between National and Asian communities.

In addition, the presence of a relatively young population provides the necessary work force to continue promoting economic growth in Dubai. Male dominance reduction prevails through skilled labour migration with families. It is believed by some scholars that unless the trends in the population growth and imbalanced composition are address through innovative ways, Dubai could find itself in a situation where nationals comprise less than 10% of the total population in ten years or less.

6. Naturalization & Immigration

6.1. The work permits residence visas

The data presented here is work permit residence visas issued by Dubai Naturalization and Immigration Department. The data is used as an indirect indication of the annual immigration to Dubai. The difference between the new visas and cancelled visas is used to estimate the net immigration increase in the population.

The limitations of this approach to define net immigration can be summarized in the following points:

- The family escorts are not reflected.
- New residents from other GCC countries are not included as they require no visas to remain in Dubai.
- The noted trend that considerable number of those with Dubai Visas are residing in other Emirates.
- Issued work residence visas in Dubai, in the period 1999-2002 were in the average of over eighty thousands per year. The year 2003 witnessed a sudden increase in the number of

issued visas from 98,000 in 2002 to over 300,000 new visas for 2003. This new trend was maintained in 2004 and 2005. (Refer to below table.)

Year	New Visas			Cancelled Visas			Net Immigration
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1999	73,711	7,126	80,837	58,338	5,388	63,726	17,111
2000	74,714	7,748	82,462	56,037	5,671	61,708	20,754
2001	72,392	8,276	80,668	49,055	6,083	55,138	25,530
2002	88,767	9,348	98,115	61,105	7,110	68,215	29,900
2003	319,274	18,282	337,556	74,965	7,673	82,638	254,918
2004	363,045	21,707	384,752	70,395	8,205	78,600	306,152
2005	438,108	27,697	465,805	106,786	11,289	118,075	347,730

Table 3: Dubai Newly Issued and Cancelled Work Permit Residence Visas (1999 – 2005) - Source: Dubai Naturalization and Immigration Department ¹

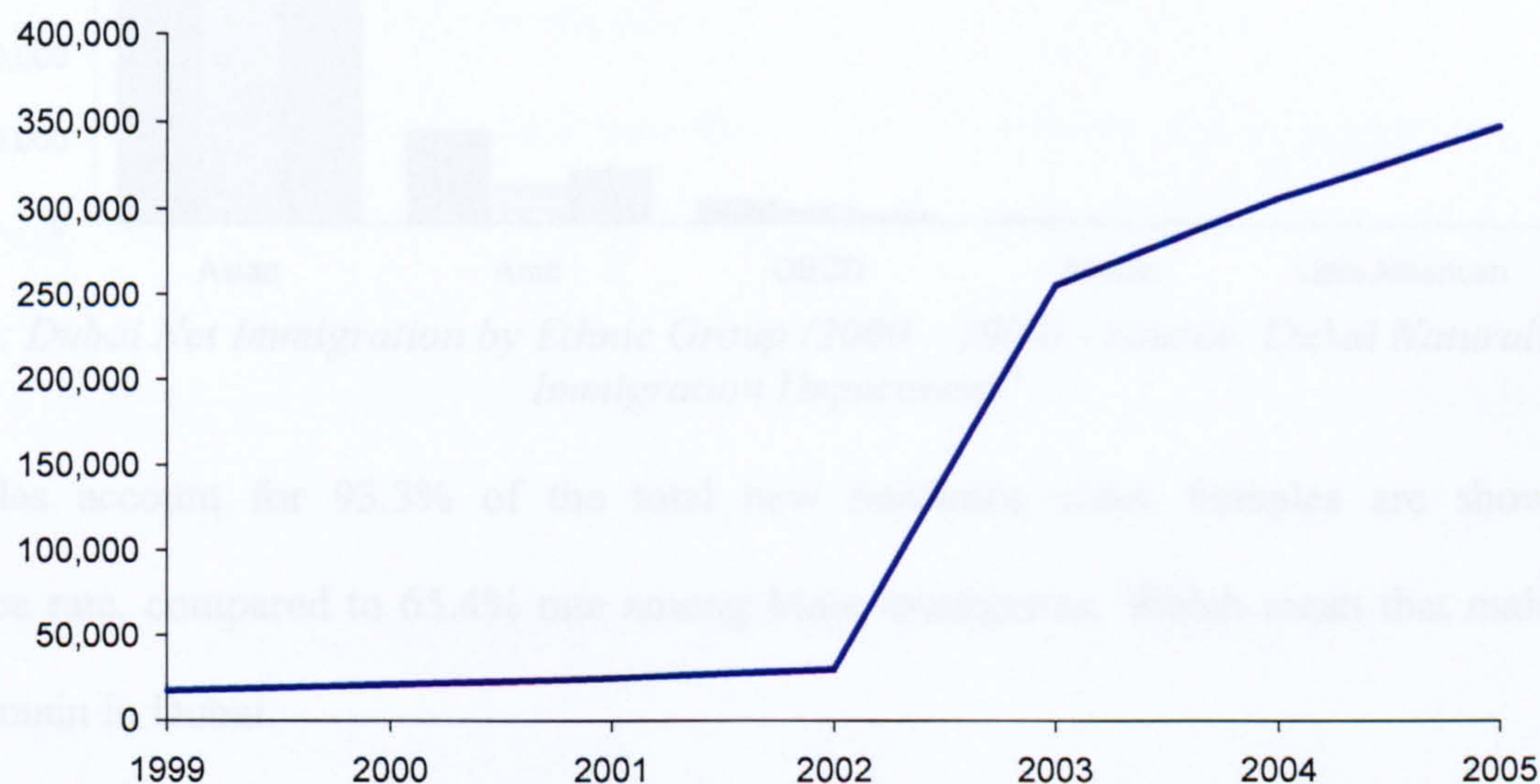


Figure 13: Dubai Net Immigration (1999 – 2005) - Source: Naturalization and immigration dept. Dubai²

The net immigration contribution to the total annual population increase is showing a steady increase over years. The current available data is showing 57% share for the year 1999, with gradual increase to 65% for 2002. The year 2003 witnessed a major increase in immigration that resulted in 93.7% share in total population increase. The same trend was maintained for the years 2004, 2005. The

¹ Dubai Naturalization and Immigration Department <http://www.dnrd.gov.ae/dnrd/default.htm>.

² Ibid.

issued work permit residence visas for the period 2000-2004 were about 987064 visas. Asians accounts for 85.6% of the total. Arab nationals accounts for 11.1%, OECD 2.6%, Africans 0.6%, and Latin Americans for 0.03%.

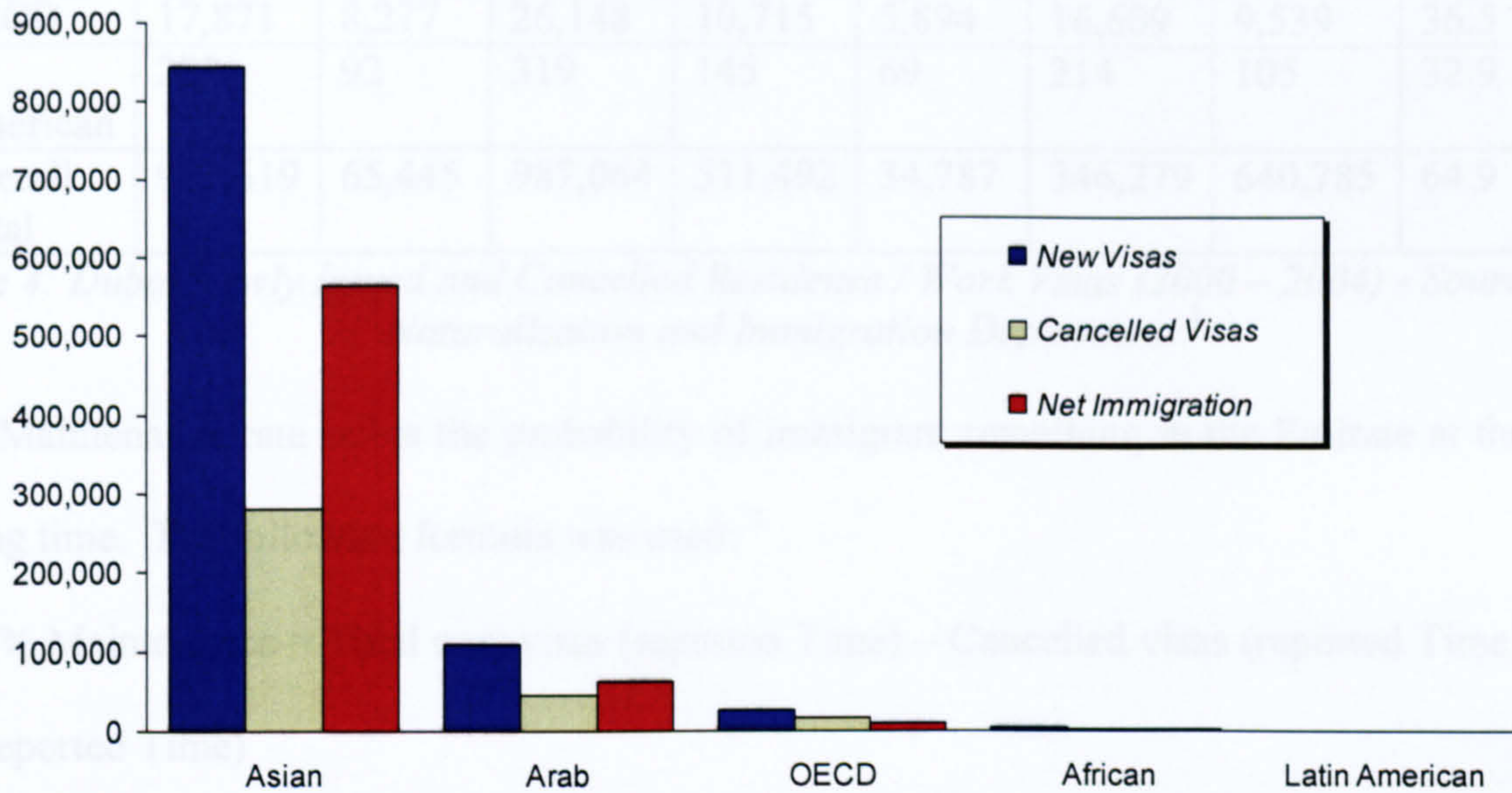


Figure 14: Dubai Net Immigration by Ethnic Group (2000 – 2004) - Source: Dubai Naturalization and Immigration Department¹

Males account for 93.3% of the total new residence visas. Females are showing 46.2% maintenance rate, compared to 65.4% rate among Male immigrants. Which mean that males are more likely to remain in Dubai.

¹ Ibid.

Visa Type	New Residence Visas			Cancelled Residence Visas			Net Increase	% Maintenance
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
African	4,105	1,962	6,067	1,765	1,010	2,775	3,292	54.3
Arab	98,605	10,843	109,448	40,554	5,506	46,060	63,388	57.9
Asian	800,811	44,271	845,082	258,313	22,308	280,621	564,461	66.8
OECD	17,871	8,277	26,148	10,715	5,894	16,609	9,539	36.5
L. American	227	92	319	145	69	214	105	32.9
Overall Total	921,619	65,445	987,064	311,492	34,787	346,279	640,785	64.9

Table 4: Dubai Newly Issued and Cancelled Residence / Work Visas (2000 – 2004) - Source: Dubai Naturalization and Immigration Department ¹

Maintenance rate refers the probability of immigrant remaining in the Emirate at the end of the reporting time. The following formula was used: ²

$$\% \text{ Maintenance} = \frac{\text{Total new visas (reported Time)} - \text{Cancelled visas (reported Time)}}{\text{Total New visas (reported Time)}}$$

Rate among Asians remain the highest at 66.8%, Arabs rate is 57.9%, and the rate for OECD citizens is the lowest at 33.9%. It is worse mentioning that Indians alone account for 57.9% of total new visas (552937 new visas). The maintenance rate for Indians was 66.8% which above the overall percentage of 64.9.

The immigration data indicate that the growth rates used to estimate the population for 2000-2004 is not realistic and the current population estimation might not reflect the actual reality. The immigration influx to Dubai is still dynamic and did not reach a plateau yet. Controlling immigration

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

without affecting economic growth will remain the major challenge to bring stability to the demographic reality.¹

6.2. Naturalization

Dubai Emirate is not issuing naturalization documents, which is a federal responsibility. But UAE passports are issued based on Ruler Decrees. This will lead eventually to UAE naturalization.

The current policy on naturalization provides eligibility to the following categories:

- A spouse of a UAE national after three years of marriage.
- Citizens of Oman, Qatar and Bahrain who are being employed and staying in Dubai for three years.
- Children of local ladies from non-national husbands. The current policy will provide the nationality spontaneously provided that they are living in Dubai.
- Non-nationals who are employed and living in the country for 30 years their cases are being studied individually.
- For the last category the criteria include, in addition to the length of stay, Integration in the society, the children and their schooling and Arab culture.
- Individual cases are employees with especial qualifications, and being needed in government posts regardless of period of stay.

For the period 1999-2005, a total of 2792 families were approved to get UAE passports, with annual average of four hundred. The size of each family is not yet provided, although the average is assumed to be five for each family.

¹ Ibid.

The nationality distribution revealed that Zanzibar accounted for the majority (33%), followed by *Bedouns*¹ and GCC (17.9% each). Iranians accounted for 11%. Total Arabs, (GCC and other Arabs) are 35.4% of the total number.

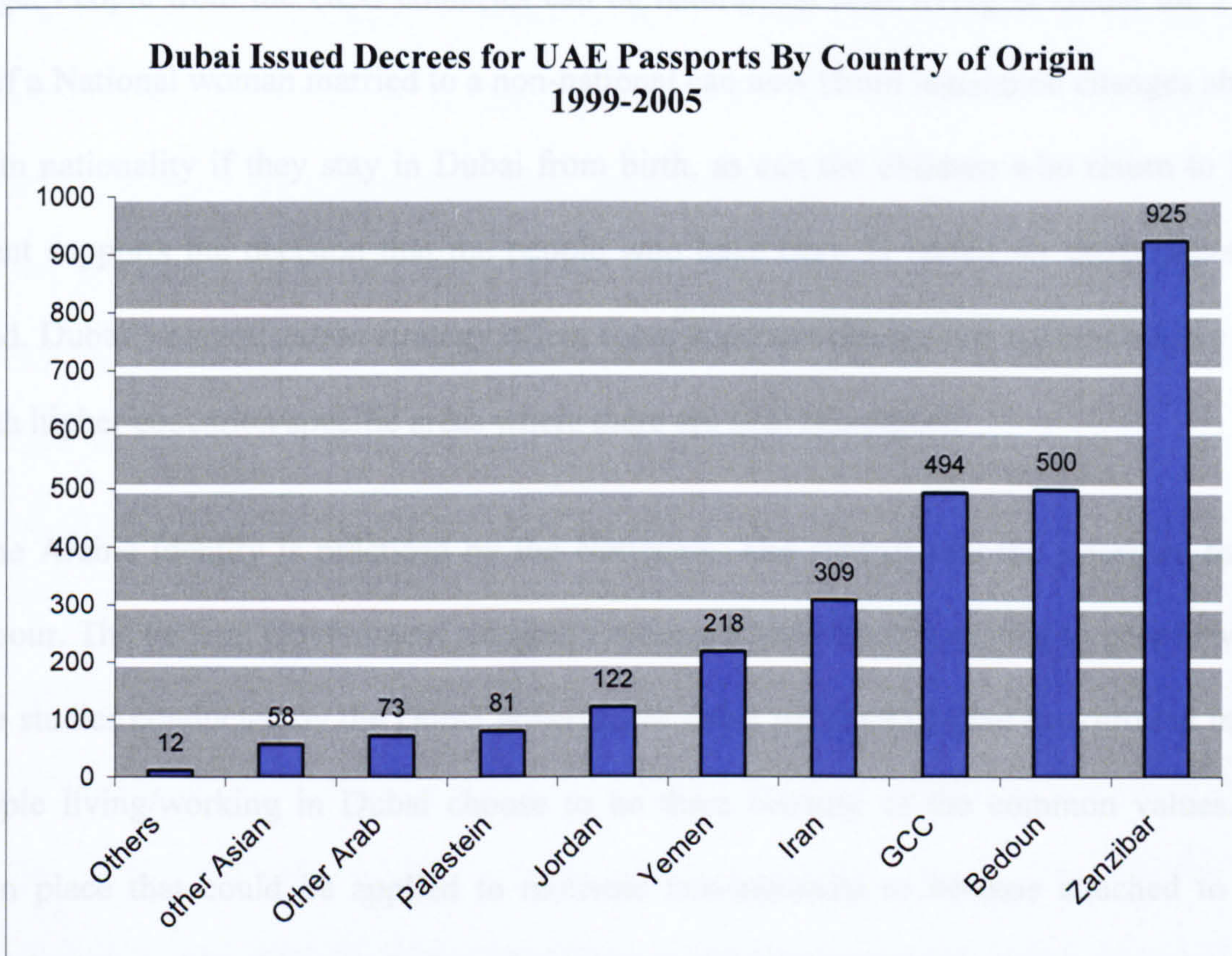


Figure 15: Dubai issued decrees for UAE passports by country of origin 1999-2005 – source: the Executive office ²

The average annual number of naturalization is too small to contribute to the demographic picture in Dubai.

¹ People who have no any official identification or document approves where are coming from originally and living in the UAE long time ago. Bedoun in English it means 'without'.

² The Executive Office (2006) *Demography in the UAE and Dubai: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

7. Analysis: Naturalization and Immigration¹

There is a Dubai naturalization strategy based on the vision of the local government achieving sustainable population growth. The (non-national) wife of a local can gain citizenship after three years of marriage. People from the GCC countries can be naturalized after living in Dubai for 3 years. The children of a National woman married to a non-national can now (from legislation changes about 3 years ago) obtain nationality if they stay in Dubai from birth, as can the children who return to Dubai. The government supports the decision that the people who have been in Dubai for thirty years should be naturalized. Dubai's naturalization strategy offers some opportunities for non-nationals to be naturalized (those with higher education/specific areas where there are skill shortages).

The Arabic identity is practiced by the Nationals. The cabinet sets the priorities for attracting skilled labour. The Federal Government requires a mixing of the cultures relating to people who come to work. The studies conducted by the Dubai government about immigrants give background immigration. Most people living/working in Dubai choose to be there because of the common values. There are systems in place that could be applied to motivate non-nationals to become attached to the labour market. Although unskilled, the majority of immigrants (legal and illegal) coming into the country are working. The visas are not requirements for many occupants (e.g. maids). The employers control the entry of immigrants who have the required skills.

The government is developing its role concerning the sponsors who bring immigrants into Dubai; it compensates for gaps in the labour market increasingly, it is dealing with the questions of population imbalance. The recent government policy has placed emphasis on the rights of land owner

¹ Workshops, roundtable discussions and meetings. (see Appendix 7)

ship to permanent residents. The presence of people of different nationalities makes Dubai an international city.

The naturalization policy is currently focusing on some very specific outcomes and is not an effective tool for population growth. Those naturalized in Dubai do not receive all the Federal benefits of Nationals. Naturalization strategy is reactive not pro-active. The property ownership will qualify owner's permanent residence (majority Indians, Pakistanis, Iranians). The Private Law which governs naturalization and immigration was issued in 1971 and last updated in 1975, needs to be updated to reflect the changing conditions. The opportunities offered by Dubai's naturalization strategy are not communicated in a manner that is conducive to the comprehension of some groups who have the opportunities to become naturalized (e.g., the *Bedouns*).

There's no mechanism to attract those people need (in the case of educated workers for example, a proactive policy is required to understand the incentives to retain people in Dubai that bring the skills and values required to support its development strategy. It has been maintained that the immigration policy may weaken national identity in Dubai. The enforcement places emphasis on management of immigrants, in lieu of the management of the labour market resource requirements. There is a lack of government's enforcement to follow up on workers who have been brought into to Dubai to work but then do not work. The immigration strategy does not recognize the unequal balance of men and women in Dubai (244 men per 100 women). The immigration influx to Dubai is still dynamic and it still has not reached its plateau. There is a lack of focus on the government's role in relation to the rapid growth in the non-national population required to work but not given access. The way in which national identity is practiced does not automatically engage new immigrants. New

immigrants who bring important skills in support of the National businesses are not joining the labour market. Single men/ filling a labour gap because of fast growth-not necessarily because they are going to ultimately be attached to the Dubai labour market. The Federal government covers immigration and the provision of work permits-there is no clear federal policies and the enforcement is weak/Dubai immigration can manage workers where it has relationships with local employers. Dubai values are not always obvious to non-nationals, and it's possible that the non-nationals come and never adopt the local values. There is no visa requirement for those not covered by labour law – (this reduces the effectiveness of controls over trafficking women and children). The major current investments such as construction work require specific nationalities (e.g. Indians). The maintenance rate among Asians exceeds other groups while the maintenance rate among Europeans is one of the lowest. This might indicate the inability to retain executives and professionals. The men constitute over 93% of the new resident visas. (Do we need to encourage family reunions of Arab residents). There is no policy to retain professionals and skilled workers. It is surprising to learn that there are no clear policies to manage immigration.

In summary: The immigration strategy has been reactive, not proactive and is responding to economic requirements while ignoring the cultural and social impact; therefore it is not supporting sustainable development in Dubai.

The following trends have been identified to have potential impact on immigration:¹

- It is becoming more difficult to attract immigrants with some of the desired technical skills.
- For many developed countries, the need to retain workers with essential skills has led to changes in the laws/ guidelines to attract them to migrate and/or to stay longer.

¹ Workshops, roundtable discussions and meetings. (see Appendix 7)

- The higher living standards experienced by recently immigrated populations can attract larger numbers from the same background to want to reside there or to stay longer than previously intended, changing the balance of nationalities permanently resident over time.
- International skilled labour is migrating to countries where skilled work receives the highest wages and this is leading to a change in the distribution of different nationalities resident in countries.

A well-designed immigration and naturalization strategy could address the demographic imbalance between nationals and non-nationals and help in sustaining economic growth. The west is no longer providing the same attraction for Arab professionals, especially after September 11: Dubai can be promoted as a satisfying alternative for skilled Arab professionals already residing in such countries. Exceedingly high net immigration rates coupled with high percentage maintenance rates of certain nationalities could lead to further imbalances in the population composition.

8. Conclusion

The study has analyzed different aspects of the demographic composition and its growth in UAE in general and in Dubai in particular. Besides, the impact of the peculiar demographic composition has also been explored. The demographic composition of UAE in general and in Dubai in particular is highly skewed in favour of foreign nationals and this ratio is rapidly changing in favour of foreign nationals. In 1980 there were 4 foreign nationals for each of nationals in Dubai and this became 6 foreigners for each national by 2000. Such a large number of foreign nationals have been caused by rapidly growing economic growth rate of Dubai and the consequent demand of skilled and unskilled professionals, which cannot be supplied locally. Though, this unfavourable ratio of foreign nationals to nationals has not led to any serious trouble so far, but the same cannot be told about the future. There are

many intangible problems that may crop up in future. Some of these have been discussed in this study. Like Indian maids raising children of nationals will certainly inculcate something from Indian culture in would be citizens of Dubai. Some very senior positions in Universities and Courts are held by foreign nations believing in radical Islam, while the Dubai boasts of tolerant culture. It is but natural that their teachings will have impressions of radical Islam and this is not good for the future of Dubai.

Besides, the population of Dubai is increasing at very rapid pace. The cumulative annual growth rate of population of Dubai is 5%, which is one of the highest in the world. This growth rate is mainly driven by influx of the migrant workers and professionals and not so much by the net birth rate of the nationals. If the present pattern of population growth continues, by 2025 there will be 15 foreign nationals for each of the nationals. Whatever be the reason, there can be no rational justification for such an extreme minority situation of nationals. This is because, the foreign workers have hardly any stake in the society and polity of the nation and accordingly artificial is their loyalty, which is of course natural.

There are some unwanted but unavoidable consequences of this high foreign national's population. These professionals come to work for smaller period of time say for one, two, three years and most of them do not bring their family, mainly on the account of economy. This leads to the male – female ratio getting skewed very heavily in the favour of males. In Dubai, the male – female ratio is ~1:1 for nationals, while it is 3:1 for foreign national and overall ratio is ~7:3. Though, this has not led to any trouble so far, this is not a healthy condition of any society, especially for an Islamic society, where male – female relationship is highly orthodox, not matter, how tolerant and metropolitan be the culture of Dubai.

Though some attempts has been made to naturalize suitable foreign nationals and integrate them in UAE's main stream. The criteria for naturalization are still not very conducive for foreign nationals and therefore, these have yielded hardly any results worth writing. But, UAE will have to think proactively on this issue as skilled professionals may not keep coming to Dubai, as they used to in past, without further incentives like permanent residence visa and things like that. This is because many developed nations are today luring talent by offering them permanent visas and even citizenship. This may result in shortage of skilled professionals required for sustainable growth of Dubai's economy.

Chapter 4: Environmental Factors Influencing the Culture of the UAE (Part One)

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a brief comprehensive overview of the different environmental factors influencing the culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which shed light on historical developments within the UAE.

Phenomenal social and economic changes have occurred in the UAE in a relatively short period of time. In fact, it has been indicated that twenty years ago the UAE was one of the least developed countries of the world.¹ Currently, it has attained an economic status similar to that of the more industrialized nations. Popular literature suggests that the UAE did not experience the hypothetical development “stages” that most developed countries seem to have experienced. The experts have concurred that the massive oil revenues have permitted the UAE to move to the stage of high mass-consumption. Furthermore, the huge oil revenue has empowered the UAE to reduce the conventionally difficult and interminable process of saving and capital accumulating capital essential for economic development.² There is no doubt that the profusion of natural resource endowments (oil and gas) has comprised resource-based industries (RBI) as a development strategy, i.e., an industrial strategy that is based on utilization of natural resources.³ According to researchers, there has been a deployment of windfall income, primarily directed at a “once-for-all” boost to the social and economic infrastructure, which capacitated the UAE to attain economic development in a brief period of time from 1973 to 1982, a period of relatively high oil prices.

¹ Al-Abed Ibrahim, Ghareeb Edmund, *Perspectives on the United Arab Emirates*, 1st ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1997, p. 290.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The heritage of a nation is the outcome of the people's civilization, knowledge, and development. This heritage is the source of culture and originality, which create the national and social awareness for the whole society. The region of the Arabian Gulf is one of those societies where its people are sharing almost the same cultural and societal components. In the UAE, the archaeological sites prove that the ancient people of the UAE were capable of challenging the toughness of the deserts and the high waves of the seas. They have experienced an immortal ideal in the epic of conquering the difficulties and breaking through the unknown world to reach what they presently are in the UAE. They had the conation to leave the desert's monotony, to sail faraway for long journeys, and to recognize the other nations, and make trades with them. They have exchanged the Arabian pearls with the Indian spices, perfumes, and fabrics. They also sailed to Africa to exchange goods like dried fish. That kind of interaction with the outer world created positive effects on the local heritage, especially in songs, rhythms, dance, and musical instruments. It also reflected on architecture, where the architectural style was created by mixing local architecture with the architecture of other civilizations.

The UAE individual did not fear facing the high waves of the seas sailed with boats made by the UAE people themselves. They also created another epic in the desert, averring that he is capable of challenging the extraordinary circumstances in the desert. From very poor resources, he resurrected the dead land, brought out the water from deep inside it, and developed diverse ways of watering, as well as developing different kinds of handcrafts. Along the seacoast and near the desert, great-grandparents built their environmentally-oriented civilization—a great ideal of human compatibility where the city dwellers appeared at the beginning to establish their modern cities nowadays like Dubai. Dubai is now the best example of religious tolerance in the Middle East; it is the most vital economical city in the

region where one can see people from different nationalities living in peace. Although Dubai is a multicultural city, its Islamic and Arabic identity was not affected.

The humanity's journey of our great-grandparents accompanying to different historical events, developments, and challenges grew different fields of humanities to them such as traditional kinds of arts and literatures expresses the faces of humanities in the UAE. There were two kinds of traditional art—the bodily and the moral—that expressed the society of two generations ago and the relationship between individuals and groups in the society and the fundamentals that ruled those relationships. Moral social traditional arts consist of the local habits and values that have been taken from the Islamic tradition and Arabic originality, besides the other cultural effects been taken from the other cultures due to the connection between the people of the UAE and the nations. Traditional habits may include: birth occasions, circumcision, social upbringing, marriage, weddings, illness, death, religious occasions, and social ceremonies, such as hospitality and farewells and other habits like subsistence practices. Nevertheless, there are social segments reflects on the society itself like: old and young people, rich and poor, male and female, individual and group, as well as relationships within the family, such as: the ranks of mother, father, and children. Also, some mythological thoughts were highly common in the society talking about different historical ages alongside with their cultural thoughts. And the most important part culture was literature with its two kinds: the written documented literature and the unwritten undocumented literature which been memorized by the old generation like poems, mythological stories, idioms, puzzles and jokes.

Music and fine arts were a large part of the lives of our great-grandparents where there was a variety of music, dance and songs, as well as, acting, imitation, tradition sports, and male and female

fashions. All these activities fall within the category of moral factors, while bodily factors were imaging their life accordingly to the economical and social circumstances which been passed by the old generation themselves while they have worked in different jobs like the marine commerce, pearls manufactures, fishing, agriculture, and different kinds of handcrafts. The diversity of manufactures and jobs was depending on the different geographical environment and the social thoughts spread all over at that time, so each zone or area has got its own craft, and until nowadays these kinds of crafts are still under practice in some parts in the UAE especially the northern parts. The older generations in the UAE also practiced folk medicine to treat all kinds of diseases that appeared during those times. Folk medicine is characterized by the use of various herbs and salves. Another kind of treatment—mythological treatment—required the use of magic and spirituals for treating mental diseases.

Regarding architecture, the older generations used to live in simple houses. The structure of the houses depended on the surrounding geographical environment, where people who lived on the mountains built their houses from rocks, while people who lived on the coasts and in urban regions built their houses from palm leaves. The Bedouins built their tents from camel's hair. Traditional architecture was also influenced by the architectural styles of other countries in the region. One example is the building of *Barjails* (wind-towers) in the UAE to combat high temperatures in the summer—an idea that was borrowed from southern Iran

2. The Desert Environment

The general climatic conditions of the UAE are similar throughout, with summer temperatures approximating 48°C, with unpredictable, localized rains primarily in the winter.¹ However, the landscape of the UAE varies considerably, and therefore, the usage of the land fluctuates according to what it can offer people. The availability of water largely determines this usage, and has played a significant role in the economic life and social structure of this country's past.

Initially, it appears that the desert has few natural resources to offer. It is difficult to imagine people living there throughout the year and finding a sufficient amount of water to drink during the summer months. Nevertheless, the largest tribe of the UAE, the *Bani Yass*, has for several centuries inhabited the vast spaces of Aeolian sands, which cover most of the country's territory and almost all of the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai.² Other tribes, such as the *Awamir*, *Manasir*, and others have shared this challenging habitat for countless generations. The sandy desert begins behind a stretch of coastal salt marsh, called *sabkha*, with little white dune ripples rising as one goes south, eventually forming large orange-red dunes.³ Within this vast desert, which stretches to beyond Abu Dhabi's southern border, some of the highest dunes in all of the Empty Quarter are found about 100 km distant from the coast.

Historians contend that, in ancient times, the ancestors of the Bedouins made this region their home; they discovered that they could find water in the dunes, which was sufficiently plentiful, and fairly sweet. In numerous hollows between the dunes, they created date gardens, and built themselves

¹ Ibid., p. 257.

² Ibid., p. 258.

³ Ibid.

houses using the branches of the date palms. They eventually formed about forty settlements,¹ some of which were inhabited all year around. A half moon arc of villages, called *Liwa*, spanning about 70 km from east to west, has been the centre for the economic and social life of the *Bani Yass* since at least the sixteenth century.² A changing number of subsections³ have acknowledged the leadership of the sheikh of one particular sub tribe—the *Al Bu Falah*—for at least ten recorded generations.

Under their leadership their undisputed grazing area, their dar, included the *Liwa*, the intervening territory between it and the coast, called *Al Dhafrah*, the area called *Khatam* stretching eastwards as far as the foreland of the Hajar mountains and, in the west, the land known as Bainunah and the Sabkha Matti and the area up to the Qatar peninsula.⁴ Other tribes' participation in the grazing was usually acceptable on the basis of mutuality.

Researchers assert that during the summer months, many tribes retreated from the sandy desert to the savannah-like outwash plains at the foot of the mountains. However, the *Bani Yass* and their associates local tribes adapted to the rigorous desert environment, making it their home. Patterns of economic exploitation fluctuated over time, but all the sub-tribes and clans were accustomed to wander great distances over long periods of time with their camels, in search of grazing, moving as entire family units, seeking the precious gifts that the desert had to offer to those who knew how to make use of them. The majority of the *Bani Yass* families returned to a home in one of the *Liwa* settlements at certain times of the year.

¹ Ibid., p. 259.

² Ibid.

³ Heard-Bey Frauke, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, 1st ed., Longman Group Limited, London, UK, 1982, p. 501. p. 507-510.

⁴ Ibid., p. 30.

It has been maintained by scholars that the thicker the sand cover, or the higher the dunes, the better chance there is of finding a good source of water. Seasonal rainfall and quite frequent heavy dew rapidly sinks into the absorbing sand, which also acts as insulation against evaporation. The trapped water frequently does not escape downwards, because there is a fairly level, impermeable rock formation below the dunes and the intervening depressions. However, water that rains down on the sand and is collected in shallow wells at the bottom of high dunes is not potable everywhere throughout the desert. Depending on the composition of the sand, the water may dissolve chemicals during its passage through the dune, and then be too brackish for human consumption. It may be unusable for animals or plants.¹ The inhabitants of the *Liwa* developed the knowledge of where best to dig for good water, and they often did not have to go down much more than three meters to find some. Out in the sands, some wells have been established for centuries, and the right to draw water from one of those has been of the greatest significance in tribal politics.

The Bedouins are one of the morphologies of the UAE people, and according to its environment, UAE has its own region, ways of living, social policies, economical policies, habits, accents and fashion. The original people of the UAE belong to different Bedouins Tribes that are original Arabs and Muslims. The wide desert and its pitilessness made its people (Bedouins) acquire the manners of bravery, munificence, and originality of habits, patience, and the unity to face enemies. The most distinct feature of the Bedouins is their travel through the deserts; travelling is their most important social habit to them. Due to their travels in the Arabian Peninsula, they have created their own states in the peninsula. For example, the headquarters of the government of Abu Dhabi and Dubai used to be in the town of *Liwa* southern the UAE until the eighteenth century, but after moving the headquarters to the

¹ Ibrahim & Edmund, *Perspectives on the United Arab Emirates*, p.259.

coast most Bedouins were encouraged to shift as well to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The reason of shifting the headquarters was to protect the territories of Abu Dhabi and Dubai from the outsiders and infiltrators from the opposite side of the Gulf.

The Bedouin like to say that God has been fair to them because he not only gave them the ideal tree for their desert, but he also exhibited his generosity by giving them the camel as well. This animal is not only superbly suited to the desert environment, like the date palm;¹ the camels have played a significant role in the travels of the Bedouins, as well as in their trade and wars. The Bedouins also used the camels in entertainment, such as the camel's race, which is considered one of the oldest sports in the UAE. The race is usually held during the days of Eids, and during other social occasions like weddings. In the early 1980s, the camel's race became much more organized by the official authorities and started to be held in October until April every year. Nowadays, each emirate in the UAE has a camel's racetrack with high modern specifications. The government offers highly valued prizes, such as luxurious cars, just to encourage people (Bedouins specifically) to participate in the camels races. The Bedouins also used camel dung, mixed with herbs, to produce a medicine used to treat different kinds of wounds. The coprolite from the animals was once considered a source of energy. Camel hair was used for sewing heavy winter clothes. In some occasions, the water reserved in the camel's stomach itself could be used to save the owner of the camel if he got lost in the desert. However, the most important role of the camel is travel. The Arabs named the camel "the Desert Boat," and they used them for travelling from the desert to the cities on the coast, like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. Journeys to buy food and clothes could take two to three days. *Ibn Khaldoun* talked about the Bedouin roughness in his *Muqaddimah* and said: "*They limit themselves to their needs only while the people who live in the cities are only*

¹ Ibid., p. 260.

concerned about opulent lifestyle. The Bedouins are much braver than others and their instinct leads them to do the good thing.”¹

The main difference between the Bedouin society and the other societies in the UAE is the ruling system that the tribal structure was used to manage and control the entire tribe. Previously, the UAE included a number of different tribes led by one leader (the sheikh). Later, tribes allied to create separate governments, like the Government of Abu Dhabi under the leadership of the *Al Bufalah* tribe, and the Government of Dubai under the leadership of the *Al Buflasah* tribe. The social links between the tribal people rest on loyalty, especially among the Bedouins, and that made for a great deal of conflict between them until the alliance. The unity of the tribe is the social foundation of the UAE, and the whole tribes are subdivided into three kinds of tribes:

- agricultural tribes: those who rely on agriculture to build an economy based on planting and stovering.
- pastoral tribes: tribes that rely on agriculture at times, and on pasturing during other times.
- diving and fishing tribes: tribes that rely on pearl diving, fishing, and trading.

One of the disadvantages of the Bedouin's environment is that the educational awareness was almost absent because the Bedouins lived in unstable environment and they were travelling from a place to another place during the year to find pasturages for their cattle. Education limits oneself to some short verses of the Holy Qur'an, which are required to be memorized for prayer. The lessons in the Koran were tutored by clerics from the coast side.

¹ Al-Azmeh Aziz. *Ibn Khaldoun*, 1st ed., Riad El-Rayyes Books Ltd., Beirut, Lebanon, 2000, pp. 125-126.

UAE in 1971, the society was still influenced by the Bedouin tribal system, so the transmission from the simple Bedouin culture into modernized culture required a strong political system. The image of the tribal leader (Sheikh) was transformed into the Ruler of the Emirate. Nowadays, the role of the old Bedouins in politics, society, and family has changed, as they are flourishing in all aspects of life in their country, primarily because the royal families of the UAE are originally Bedouins.

3. The Coastal Environment

The territory that had over time become the exclusive *dar* (area) of the Bani Yass tribes bordered by 600km of coast. As can be expected, the inhabitants of the hinterland made every possible use of the resources, which in this area includes beaches, sand banks, creeks, and inshore islands. They also colonized many more distant islands.¹ The extensive tidal shallows, which are characteristic of most of this coast, are ideal for fishing with traps. It is believed by some researchers that these were intricately constructed fences, placed to shape a letter “V,” where the fish were caught when the water receded. Another method involved stretching two nets at right angles to the tidal creek from a central pole; the use of a small dugout, as well as a working team of two or three fishermen in some locations. However, there were also methods by which one man alone could secure a good catch as, for instance, by stalking a shoal of small fish in the shallow water and casting a circular net weighted with stones.² Fish that was not consumed fresh was hung in the sun to dry, or was treated with salt, and taken to island settlements where this additional protein was very welcome. Some of the small fish was dried and used as camel fodder or fertilizer for the gardens. However, as for the fresh fish, the fishermen on the coast of Abu Dhabi were a long way from markets. There is archaeological evidence that on most of Abu Dhabi’s numerous islands, tribal people came to fish in the winter, and even brought their camels in boats. They

¹ Al Abed & Ghareeb, *Perspectives on the United Arab Emirates*, p. 261.

² *Ibid.*, p.262.

used rainwater stored in cisterns, or caught in horizontally placed sails. Nevertheless, the coast between Dubai and *Khaur al-Odaid*, at the foot of Qatar Peninsula, was not suitable for the establishment of larger, permanent settlements because of the lack of reliable supplies of drinking water.¹

This was to change dramatically after the end of the eighteenth century, when it was discovered that a dune belt at the northern end of Abu Dhabi Island yielded fresh water (which, being lighter, floats in lenses above the salt water table). The water was drawn from shallow wells, which when brackish water intruded, were abandoned and new ones were dug. Some scholars assert that in 1760, several of the Bani Yass tribal groups built themselves palm frond houses on the island near its northern shore.² By the early 1790s, the town of Abu Dhabi had already become so important as a centre of activity that the political leader of all the Bani Yass groups transferred his residence there from the Liwa.³ Historians maintain that, after 1793, *Sheikh Shakbut* constructed the fort, which still stands today near centre of the city. In a short period of time, the supply of such limited amounts of sweet water did not suffice for the rapidly growing population; additional drinking water was brought in by boat in bitumen-lined containers from Dubai, Ras Al-Khaima, or even *Delma* Island.⁴

Cities were located on the coast, and were therefore related to the economy where the fishermen, crafts men, pearl divers, and the local and expatriate traders came for trade and business. Pearl diving was the main source of livelihood in the coast, which is why this occupation developed. A ship's owner was considered a prominent businessman who dealt with the shipmaster (*Nakhudah*) before the launch of their expeditions in the sea. When the shipmasters came back to the coast, the ship's owner would call

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

to account his profit, as well as, the divers and the sailor's profit. Usually, the expedition took four months and ten days at sea, so just imagine how the total number of divers and sailors could live on the ship, which was only 250 meters in length at that time. The sailors started their day in the early morning by praying together, and having breakfast before they went to work. They ate dates, coffee, and contaminated water. Some of them would start in the morning fissuring the pearl oysters, divers would start diving for the pearl oysters, and diver's assistant would pull the ropes for the divers. They continued doing this work until sunset, and then they would have their main meal, which was rice and fish. The main problem facing the expedition was the illnesses that overcame the divers, and sometimes several of them died. Additionally, if any of the sailors pretended to be ill the shipmaster would order them to continue working, otherwise he would beat them in front of the others. If the master discovered that they were not pretending, he would order them to cauterize the patient at the place of their pain.

By the turn of the twentieth century, about 1200 boats were based in ports on the Trucial Coast, manned by some 22,000 men, mostly tribesmen, but with extra hands brought in from Baluchistan and elsewhere to augment the work force. The pearling industry had transformed the traditional economy of the tribal population. Many families moved to live permanently in one of the coastal settlements, increasing, in particular, the size and importance of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Sharjah, Ras Al-Khaima, and the intervening coastal villages were already long established as ports of the tribal Arabs and them, too, participated in this industry.¹

Social changes occurred in the UAE due to the pearling boom; towards the end of the nineteenth century, the pearling industry became increasingly the domain of individual entrepreneurs in the now flourishing ports throughout the Gulf. Some of the merchants, who were involved in the trade in pearls

¹ Ibid.

or imported consumer goods from India, accumulated enough capital to buy a boat, for which the wood had to be imported too, and to equip it with provisions for the 120 days of the diving season.

In good years, the owner of a boat made a handsome profit by selling pearls directly, or through a local merchant, to one of the Hindus, who came seasonally from Bombay chiefly to Bahrain or Dubai.¹

Other social changes that have appeared on the UAE coast was the increase of immigration of Arab merchants from the Persian coast by the 1920s and brought their families over and were given, as well, an area immediately from Sheikh Saeed bin Al Maktum to the east of *Al Fahidi Fort* in Dubai to build themselves houses. The name of that area is *Bastakiyah*, where the invention of cooling system *Barjails* (Wind-tower) was introduced by the new immigrants.

Wind towers on two-story buildings rise about fifteen meters above the ground; the upper part consists of four concave inner walls with pillars, arches, and often intricate plasterwork to continue the square shape of the tower. Wind from any direction is caught on the concave walls and funnelled down through a chimney to a room beneath, where all occupants of the house seek this breeze for relief from the heat of the summer.²

Other immigrants also came from India due to the flourishing commerce in Dubai; actually, the Indians came to Dubai before the Iranians, but the difference is that the Indians could not identify with the local culture of the UAE society, while the Iranians succeeded, but they were not allowed to participate in the political life. The increase of immigrants, especially from India, made the people of Dubai and the UAE reluctant to do the kinds of jobs that required great efforts, like leading the boats, or working on them, or either diving of pearls, and that's also because of the increase of the slaves coming

¹ Ibid., p.263.

² Heard-Bey Frauke, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, 1st ed., Longman Group Limited, London, UK, 1982, p. 246.

from Africa who were forced to dive for pearls on behalf of the UAE nationals. So, a new structure of population arrived in Dubai, making it a multicultural city, with each community bringing its own culture into Dubai. The slave trading is an old business in the UAE and the region, but the increase of that trading was due to the collapse of the pearling industry in 1930s. Most of the slaves were from Africa, and some from *Baluchistan*.¹ The UAE made a lot of profit from this business, but on the other hand, it affected the culture of the country by the increase in the slave's numbers, where they comprised one-third of the total population. Like others, the Africans brought their culture, adding it to the already diverse UAE culture. Black African slaves were doing the hard jobs, while the *Baluchi* people were, due to their good physiques, used as soldiers in the wars between the tribes.

In addition, another ethnicity has joined the UAE culture in 1923 and flourished rapidly not only in the UAE, but in the whole Arab Gulf countries after the Arabian Revolution against the Ottoman Empire, where the Arab army was raiding the Christian parts of the empire especially Armenia and kidnapping the white women to sell them in the Gulf. Some of the women have the freedom to go back home, others have preferred to stay in the Gulf.²

4. The Mountain Environment

Researchers indicate that the significant oases, such as *Masafi* or *Manamah*, are situated away from the confining *wadi* walls, where good soil on level ground lends itself to agriculture. While they are usually shared between more than one tribe, there are countless small villages and hamlets in the *wadis*, which belong most frequently to just clan or even a single family. There are falaj-like

¹ Westernmost province of Pakistan. It is bordered by Iran (west), by Afghanistan (northwest), by North-West Frontier and Punjab provinces (northeast and east), by Sindh province (southeast), and by the Arabian Sea (south).

² Maḥamad Faris Al-Faris, *Al-Awḍa' Alaqtēšadya Fi Emarat Alsaḥil [1862 - 1965] (The Economic Situation in the Emirates of the Trucial Coast)*, 1st ed., The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, 2000, p. 149.

watercourses in use, which serve these small communities tucked away in the *wadis*.¹ Some are even constructed by just one family for a terraced garden. According to scholars, the *wadi* is dammed where surface water can be expected to run at least occasionally. The literature implies that water is channelled into an open tunnel called *ghayl*, which follows the *wadi* at a gentle gradient, in places forming a gallery above the valley floor until it arrives at the terraced field or date garden. Terracing was known in these mountains since prehistoric times, and this technique of increasing the potential for agriculture played a significant role for these small tribal communities.² They constructed retaining stonewalls and levelled the ground above with topsoil, to form small fields, which could be sown before the rains, or when the *ghayl* was prolific enough.³ The owners did not necessarily live nearby, but visited several such favourable locations to see to whatever needed to be done, hoping for a reasonable crop from at least some of these terraces. Scholars contend that a home—or in times of strife, a hideout—could be constructed fairly easily with walls of *wadi* stones and a roof of palm or brushwood. Choosing which of these temporary abodes to use at one time depended largely on the additional economic activity that played a role for the tribes of the mountain regions: the herding of sheep and goats. The *wadi* beds and plains, and even the hills themselves, offer plenty of forage for these animals during the cooler part of the year.

The people who live in the mountains, valleys, and oasis belong to highbred Arabic tribes. They have good social commerce with the coastal people and Bedouins. They rely on agriculture and breeding, which are considered the main source of their subsistence. They also sell the dairies and work as farmers in the palms farms where they plough the arable lands, watering and taking care of

¹ Ibid.

² Al-Abed & Ghareeb, *Perspectives*, p. 266.

³ Ibid.

some products like wheat, barley, and corns. Some mountaineers have joined the coast and worked in the sea, others have worked for the government as watchmen in the forts located on the mountains and the borders. The mountaineers used in the past to trade with the coastal merchants to sell them their farms products especially tobaccos. The framers strike a bargain with the merchants who were paying at least one year in advance the value of the products.

Domestic animals, sheep, goats, and some cows were kept by the villagers, mostly for their milk. Donkeys were the preferred beast of burden, but camels and bulls were also kept nearby to help with drawing water. These animals did not need to be taken out for grazing, but were hand-fed with fodder grown in the gardens or, after rains had brought the vegetation to life again, with grass herbs that the women collected daily. Some of the mountain tribal people were semi-nomadic pastoralists, forming part of a village community, but wandering in the mountain region with their herds of sheep and goats. They also offered their services to transport goods on their donkeys or, more rarely, on camels through the mountains.¹

The mountaineers have the habit of sharing the responsibilities. For example, men go to their jobs, boys take care of the cattle, women bring water from the *Al-Aflaj* to their houses and collect firewood, and girls make handcraft products. Cooperation and mutual assistance are the most important characteristics of this society in this environment; they share the work to complete it as soon as possible. Their houses are made of mountain rocks, and a roof of palm fronds or brushwood, and it looks like the caves in the mountains. They have a special manner of living inheriting it from generation to another, and that's analyzing the reason of their manner's existing until now. In 1960s and 1970s, the

¹ Al-Abed & Ghareeb, *Perspectives*, p. 266.

government started building new compounds and houses for them and providing them with all kinds of facilities they needed.

5. Analyses: Environments in the UAE

The diversification of societies in the UAE definitely made its environment consummated and interchangeable to each of its societies, as they commixture of Bedouins, city dwellers, northern Arabs, and southern Arabs. The Emirates society also specialized in various characteristics, and if one characteristic is dropped, the society will lose an important element of its elements. On the other hand, the diversification of the ways of living gave people the elements of integration. The community is a tribal community, where people all belong to different tribes around the UAE, but belonging to a specific tribe doesn't necessitate to its people to do only one kind of work because people of each tribe are dispersed in the oases, coasts, maintains, and deserts, so their jobs are different and depending on where are living in like hunting, fishing, pearling, agriculture, and pasturing. Sometimes the general impression for the tribesmen is the stability on one area if water was available so they can work on agriculture, but if they were living in the desert and there was no oasis close to them they will work on pasturing, and of course the coastal people will move towards the sea to work on. So, the tribe has nothing to do with the kinds of jobs the people used to do. Because of that, social manners are diversified as a result of the kinds of jobs the people used to do: the coastal people were stabilized in the coastal cities where they worked in fishing, pearling, and trades; also there are bucolic who stabilized in the agricultural cities if the water was available especially at the oases; and they are Bedouins travelling from a place to another place in the desert just to find a good place where they can feed their sheep and camels. Although the UAE has different environments that contain many different societies, the UAE is segmented only into two main groups: the Bedouins group and the urban group.

The hot weather of the UAE influenced people towards economy, so they dove for the pearls, fished, and traded, and did other types of jobs, as mentioned previously. In 1920s and early 1930s, the natural pearl market collapsed, but the discovery of oil, resurrected the economical live again in the UAE and the entire region as well. The UAE is a small country with a small population that suddenly became a very rich country. To build a new economy, it needed to hire expatriates hands that came to the UAE who are making now almost 90% of the total population of the UAE. Expatriates have played a great role in developing the economy, but they also affected the local culture by joining the society. For example, many UAE nationals married expatriate women from different countries around the world, including women from the republics of ex-Soviet Union and East Europe. If UAE nationals keep marrying women from outside the UAE, the origin of the upcoming UAE generations will be unknown where they exactly from.

In addition to changes in social practices, such as marriage, wealth gave rise to an increase in economical activities in the UAE, and categories of contractors, craftsmen, and workers have changed. In addition, other categories of educated people have appeared, including t teachers, administrators, engineers, doctors, and nurses. Income from the oil industry had insured continuing high wages, which are also reflected in the socio-economic sphere, such as from the old kinds of tough jobs into modern commercial activities or working in the government sector like the army, police, oil companies, government departments, and ministries. Oil was the main reason for changes in social manners, including the disappearance of the tribal system and the initiation of the state, which is, in reality, a tribe that has used modern administrative methods since the Second World War

Referring to Bedouins, many Bedouin societies have been changed because of nationalization projects, although some groups maintained their traditional habits. Currently, there are few Bedouins

who still practice traditional habits, mainly because most Bedouin tribes have moved into the coastal cities and do not need to rely on animal riches as they did in the old days. The project of settling the emigrated Bedouin groups is considered as one of the most remarkable achievements of the oil age. The Bedouins have since joined the society, and most of them now have power in sensitive occupations in the UAE, especially the Armed Forces.

The social structure of the UAE during the last thirty five years is very complicated, as it evolved from simple living and poor resources into oil wealth and luxurious living that is now an integral part of the Western world capitalism system. If a comparison is made between the UAE when it was called the “Trucial Coast” and now as it called “The United Arab Emirates,” there is an obvious difference between the states. Rarely has a state in the world witnessed such a dramatic change of fortunes and rapid development in such a short span of time, over just a few decades. In the early 1950s, most cities in the UAE were small in their urban landscape; their economies depended on fishing, pearling, and limited trading with neighbouring countries in South Asia and East Africa. This narrow range of economic activities did not support a large population. Demographic concentrations were quite sparse, and modern amenities such as medical care, social services, and sophisticated cultural activities were of a limited nature. Influences on the UAE culture and art mainly came from their Islamic and Arab legacy, and the new movement of Arab nationalism and Islamic revivalism that were boiling from the early decades of the twentieth century in centres of Arabic culture in the Middle East, including Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The period of the late 1960s and early 1970s was very dramatic for the political and economic development of the UAE. These decades ushered in a new stage of political independence from British domination that had lasted for almost two centuries, as well as the emergence of modern society and economy, bolstered by large revenues from its oil industry, the cornerstone of the

international economy. In the last few decades, the UAE became a vast building site where a whole infrastructure was created, almost from nothing: schools, universities, hospitals, ports, airports, and roads. This dramatic and quick pace of change left noticeable marks on the cultural, literary, and artistic scenes. All these challenges have been further complicated by international upheavals that took place at the end of the twentieth century, and the early years of the twenty-first century, such as the end of the cold war, globalisation, and the IT revolution.

5.1. Historical Background of the Bedouins

One of the historical features of the Bedouins was servant leadership. Before the birth of Islam, the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula were categorized into two groups, the *Badw* (Bedouins)—who lived a harsh desert life enduring severe environmental conditions with herds of livestock as their primary livelihood—and the *Hadar* (Settled People), who lived in villages and towns, with trade and agriculture as their main sources of income.¹ The Bedouins lived in communal units called *Ashiras* (Clans) and *Qabilas* (Tribes) that were unified by blood relation and ancestry.² Bedouin tribes were independent, with power vested in the hands of chiefs (*Sheikhs*).³ According to historians, the son or an adult male relative of the sheikh would inherit leadership. However, the selection, as well as the ability to maintain the position, required validation by sub-tribal chiefs. Scholars maintain that the sheikh's major responsibilities included arbitration of disputes, location of adequate grazing pastures for tribe's cattle and camels, and defence of its wells and livestock against plunderers and rivals. They concurred that he was expected to be generous and to entertain followers, visitors, and guests. A reputation for

¹ Hitti, Philip, Gyrgy, Edmund & Jabaur, Grabiell, *The History of the Arabs: Beirut, Lebanon*, Lebanon, Ghandour House for Printing & Publication & Distribution, 1974, p. 235.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

wisdom and generosity brought more power and influence than the accumulation of wealth and animals.¹

Contrary to Hollywood depictions, the tribal chief was not a sex maniac or a warmonger, but the oldest, wisest, and the most courageous person in his tribe. His powers were not absolute, since he had to consult with the council of his tribe's elders on major tribal issues.² This is particularly true because desert society tends to be democratic and egalitarian, and a Bedouin tends to treat his chief as an equal rather than a ruler who had to be obeyed no matter what.³

When Islam appeared around 650 AD, it assimilated some Bedouin traditions and values, while rejecting others. For example, Islam rejected the tribal *Jahiliyyah asabiyyah* (favouring one's kings), emphasizing instead the principles of equity and justice. According to one *Hadith* (a saying of the Prophet), all Muslims are equal, just like the teeth of a comb. According to another *Hadith*, they are like the organs of body—if one of them aches, the whole body aches.⁴ On the other hand, Islam promoted the desert values of simplicity, generosity, and protection of the weak. Islam emphasizes the concept of leadership. Sovereignty belongs only to God, and Muslims are ordered to obey the Prophet and those in authority. "Oh, you faithful! Obey God and obey the apostle and those in authority among you."⁵ Following Quranic teachings, Prophet Mohammed would consult with his followers in the conduct of

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Kennedy, Hugh, *The Prophet and the Age of Caliphates*, New York, Longman, 1986, p. 250.

⁴ Surah, Al-Imran, the *Qur'an* 4.59.

⁵ Nawafleh, Mohammed, *The Personal and Leadership Characteristics of Omar Bin AlKhattab*, Amman, Jordan, Majdalawi, 2000, p. 24.

worldly matters where there was no revelation. The Quran states: “Forgive them, and pray for them and take counsel with them in all matters of public concern.”¹

Since the Prophet Mohammed did not appoint anyone to succeed him in taking charge of the young Islamic movement, the concept of *khilafa* (caliphate or succession) appeared which sparked a great deal of discussion. Guided by the Quranic verses that stress consultation, such as “their (the believers’) communal business is to be conducted through consultation among themselves,”² it was decided that selection of the caliph, his dealings, and his decision-making must be conducted by Shura. *Shura*, roughly translated as consultation, is seen by some as a development of the pre-Islamic tribal consultative council.³ It became one of the deeply rooted principles of Islam. The Shura is defined as the process of extensive discussion of an issue, from all its aspects and dimensions, selection of the best given views on that issue, and testing of those views to ascertain that the best interests of the community are realized.⁴ The Prophet Mohammed and his followers practiced shura as the mechanism, implemented at all levels, for the selection of political leadership. The first four caliphs, (Khulafa Rashidoun, or the Rightly Guided Successors), by the Islamic community through shura are Abu Bakr Al Sadeq, Omar Bin al-Khattab, Ottman bin Afan, Ali Ibn Abi Taleb.⁵

The era of the first four caliphs ended in 662 AD when Moawiyah Ibn Sufyan, from the Umayyad dynasty, took over the caliphate. Dramatic changes took place and the Islamic state was

¹ Surah, Al-Imran, *The Qur’an*, 3:59.

² *Qur’an*, 36:38.

³ Hitti, p. 237.

⁴ Abul-Faris, Ahmad, *The Political System of Islam*, Amman, Jordan, The Library of Modern Message, 1980, p. 79.

⁵ Sarayrah, Yasin Khalaf, “Servant leadership in the Bedouin-Arab Culture,” *Global Virtue Ethics Review* 6 (July 2004), p. 2.

greatly expanded.¹ While the first four caliphs were always available on demand, where anyone could see them directly, now many hurdles stood against access to the Umayyad caliph. Selection of the caliph by shura was replaced by a family hereditary rule when Moawiyah declared his son, Yazeed, as his successor. Moawiyah kept the consultation principle, but it became a formal ritual whereby supporters would bless his decisions.² By appointing his kin to key positions in the Islamic State, Moawiyah brought back *Asabiyyah Qabaliyyah*, favouring one's kin. The simple frugal life of the first caliphs was replaced by a decadent lifestyle in huge palaces, as clearly indicated in the following poem by Hind, Moawiyah's Bedouin wife:

*A tent blown over in all directions by the wind
Is much more likeable to me than your huge palace.*³

The literature indicates that the Umayyad rule ended in 750 AD, when the Abbasids defeated them and took over the Islamic state. The state expanded in all directions, as Persians, Berbers, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and Moguls embraced Islam. While the Umayyads entrusted the major positions in the state to Arabs, the Abbasids relied heavily on governors and advisors from other cultures. The distance from the original simple Bedouin/Islamic practices increased. By the twelfth century, the Islamic Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Indian subcontinent and Indonesia to the east. Although the empire achieved phenomenal advances in science, literature, and the arts, the central government in Baghdad was unable to maintain control over its fragmented and most distant reaches. Eventually, the Tartars destroyed Baghdad in 1258 AD, and the Crusader campaigns began attacking from the west. Both were defeated about 200 years later, whereupon the Mamluks took

¹ Ibid.

² Hitti et al., *The History of the Arabs*, p.224.

³ Ibid., p.225.

over, who were followed by the Ottoman Turks and British.¹ Mamluks were slave soldiers who were converted to Islam and served the Muslim Caliphs and the Ayyubid Sultans during the Middle Ages. Over time they became a powerful military caste, and on more than one occasion they seized power for themselves, for example, ruling Egypt in the Mamluk Sultanate from 1250-1517.

The scholars contend that the various cultures, traditions, and value systems brought unparalleled richness and diversity to this area. The original simple desert Arabic/Islamic norms and values were abandoned or given new meaning. For example, obedience to those in authority, which originally was meant to create a law-abiding society, was newly interpreted as complete unquestioned subservience on the part of the ruled to the rulers. It has been suggested by researchers that Shura, the consultation of followers, originally to seek advice from the ruled concerning communal matters, was formalized into flattery. During the rule of the first four caliphs, a simple Bedouin who wanted to see the caliph had only to go directly to greet him with the words "Salamu, Alaikum" (peace be upon), and then proceed to a direct face-to-face communication with the caliph. This direct and simple democracy was lost in formalities and proctor.

The scholars maintain that the irresistible flood of present day globalisation magnifies the previous trend of estrangement of citizens from their original cultural norms, values, and practices. They also imply that the indigenous culture is inundated by wave after wave of foreign influence transmitted by computers, the Internet, mobile telephones, and satellites. The historical development of the Islamic state diluted the original Arabic Islamic view of leadership.

¹ Sarayrah, "Servant Leadership," p.3.

5.2. Greenleaf's Concept of Servant Leadership

Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) was an American original, an essayist in the tradition of Emerson. Back in 1970, he wrote a small essay called *The Servant as Leader*, which introduced the term "servant-leadership." That and other writings have influenced an entire generation of management experts and institutional leaders.¹ According to Greenleaf, the servant leader is servant first.² This was initiated with natural feeling that one wants to serve, and then one's conscience aspires one to lead. The best test—as indicated in the literature—to evaluate the effectiveness of the servant leader is to inquire if those served grow as persons. Do the served become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? Further, what is the effect on the least privileged in society, and will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived.

Greenleaf's writing was summarized by one scholar into the following ten characteristics of the servant leader:³

- Listening: The servant leader seeks to identify the will of a group, and helps to clarify that will. He or she listens receptively to what is being said and unsaid. Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's inner voice.
- Empathy: The servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits.
- Healing: Healing of relationships is a powerful force for transformation and integration.
- Awareness: General awareness, especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant leader and helps him/her understand issues that involve ethics, power, and values.

¹ The Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership, <http://www.greenleaf.org/leadership/servant-leadership/Robert-K-Greenleaf-Bio.html>.

² Spears, Larry, "On Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders," *Concepts and Connections* 8 (2000), p. 2.

³ Ibid.

- **Persuasion:** The servant leader seeks to convince, rather than coerce, others. He/she is very effective in building consensus within groups.
- **Conceptualization:** The servant leader practices the skill of thinking beyond day-to-day realities. Servant leaders are called upon to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and day-to-day operational realities.
- **Foresight:** This skill helps the servant leader understand the lessons of the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of the future.
- **Stewardship:** Servant leaders like stewardship, which is holding something in trust for others, because it assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others.
- **Commitment to growth of others:** A servant leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his/her organization.
- **Building community:** The servant leader seeks to identify the means for building community among those who work within a given institution. He/she suggest that the community can be created among those who work in business organizations and other institutions.¹

The literature motivates readers to wonder how the servant leadership model described above compares to early Islamic leadership. In order to address this question, the researchers described two case studies of the leadership qualities of Bedouin leaders: Omar bin al-Khattab, an early Islamic leader, and Sheikh Hajj Ali, a tribal leader in the mid-twentieth century. The scholars discuss whether readers can identify common threads of servant leadership in both the Western and Arab/Islamic cultures, and if so, ask what the practical and theoretical implications are.

¹ Ibid.

5.3. Omar Bin al-Khattab

The scholars contend that Abu Bakr, the first specifically guided caliph, died in 634 AD. Before his death, he was intimidated by just the thought of leaving the new Islamic community without a leader who would keep it together. He consulted with his advisors about the best Muslim to lead the *Ummah* (nation) after his death, and they asked him to nominate a candidate. He nominated his deputy, Omar, and sincerely asked his advisors to freely express their views. They all confirmed his choice of Omar as his successor.¹

In presenting his leadership, Omar followed the instructions of the Qur'an and the Prophet Mohammed. As suggested by historians, Omar was compelled to give them more precise operational meanings to make them more applicable in solving daily problems. For example, he developed the Divan system for the payment of pensions to the soldiers of the Muslim armies that occupied the lands of Syria and Iraq, in lieu of distributing the occupied land among them, as proposed by many of his followers.² This creative idea had far-reaching consequences for the political future of the Islamic world.³ As a result of Omar's impressive organizational and leadership skills, which became precedents for his successors, many Muslim scholars credit Omar as the true founder and organizer of the first Islamic state. According to them, he was the engineer of the state's legislative, executive, and administrative powers, and the organizer of its record system, filing system, tax administration, and personnel system.⁴

¹ Nawafleh, *The Personal and Leadership Characteristics*, p. 30.

² Sarayrah, "Servant Leadership," p. 4.

³ Kennedy, Hugh, *The Prophet*, p. 251.

⁴ Hitti et al., *The History of the Arabs*, p. 226.

According to Arab specialists, who have written extensively on Omar, his characteristics can be categorized into two major groups—personal characteristics and leadership characteristics:¹

- Physical characteristics include physical power, courage, and endurance.
- Human characteristics such as mercy, good manners, brotherhood, equality of mankind, and freedom.
- Social characteristics such as generosity, justice, good example, honesty, responsibility, and accountability.
- Personal abstract characteristics such as practical ability, personal austerity, prestige, strength, firmness, roughness, perceptiveness, vision, and far-sightedness.
- Religious characteristics including, faithfulness, piety, respect for Almighty, sternness, incorruptibility, and monotheism.
- Ability to listen and accept criticism: in one of his speeches, Omar suggested forty dinars as an upper limit for the dowry a man pays to his bride, and said that any amount above that limit would be allotted to the state treasury. A woman from the audience stood up and recited a verse from the Qur'an that contradicted what Omar said. Omar smiled and said a quoted saying: "The woman is correct and Omar is mistaken."²
- Ability to plan, schedule, and organize: many Muslim thinkers consider Omar as the founder of the Islamic state. He organized the Divan, secretariat of the state, established the financial and tax systems, the army, the court system and external state correspondence with foreign powers.

¹ Nawafleh, *The Personal and Leadership Characteristics*, p.17.

² Ibid., p. 118.

- Ability to promote participation of others in decision making through shura. Omar was very well known for enlisting and seeking the views of Muslims on issues that concern the public interest. Thus, according to him, “a decision that has been taken without consultation is useless.”¹ When the Muslims occupied Iraq, Omar consulted with the community on whether to confiscate the occupied territory or leave with its owner, provided they paid state taxes. He listened very carefully to every point of view, and then he leaned with the majority view of leaving the land to its owners, provided they paid the required tax.
- Ability to empathize with others. The following story reflects Omar’s ability to employ this skill in order to understand others’ points of view. One day he saw an old man begging for charity. When Omar asked him why he was begging, it turned out the man was Jewish, and that he was begging in order to be able to pay his taxes and cover his other expenses. “Oh, my God!” Omar sighed, “We have taxed you when you were young and we have forgotten you when you got old.” Omar took him to his house where he fed him, and then he ordered his financial officer to pay all aged people a sufficient amount of money that would prevent them from begging.²
- Ability to effect change and overcome unforeseen problems: this was made obvious through his supervisions of crisis management situations, such as wars, famines, epidemics of communicable diseases, and similar catastrophes.
- Practicing the skill of incognito enquiry. Concerned that his governors and principals would carry to him only good news, Omar perfected the skill of conducting inspection tours in disguise, in order to find out what was truly going on in the Islamic state. Omar emphasized

¹ Nusair, Naim, *Arab Managerial Leadership Salem/Dr.Sayyid Abdul Aziz: Studies in Arab History*, vol.1 Alexandria, Egypt, The House of Knowledge, p.85.

² Nawafleh, p. 118.

the managerial principles of responsibility, accountability, and control as exemplified in the following incident. He once asked his confidants: “Assume that I appointed the best of you to govern, and that I urge you to be fair in your dealings, have I assumed my responsibilities in the right manner.” They answered, “Yes.” Omar shook his head and replied: “I disagree. I should watch their actions to make sure that they do what I have asked them to do.”¹

5.4. The Tent of Sheikh Ali, a Twentieth-Century Tribal Servant-Leader

According to historians, the Sarayrah tribe lived for countless generations in the Mauta plains of the Kerak Region of South Jordan. The literature informs us that although Jordan was repeatedly occupied by major powers of the old world—including the Romans, Byzantines, Muslim Arabs, Crusaders, the Ottomans, and the British—the outlying areas of south and east Jordan remained outside control of the conquerors. It is concurred by scholars that, following repeated failed attempts to subdue the desert Bedouin (nomad) tribes, the occupiers realized the enormous difficulty of conquering the nomads of the desert, and opted instead to tax the agrarian regions of the west and north, leaving the desert areas of the south and east to govern themselves according to their customary tribal laws and traditions. Therefore, the tribal laws and traditions of the desert Bedouin passed from generation to generation with almost no external influences.

Sheikh Hajj Ali was Sheikh (chief) of the Sarayrahs until the late 1970s when he inherited the position from his father, Hajj Yahya. Both were very well known and respected tribal judges in the area, and they were very often asked to arbitrate and settle tribal squabbles and conflicts in accordance with

¹ Ibid., p. 29.

customary tribal laws and traditions, in which they were well versed. The system of Bedouin tribal law is orally transmitted, and universally accepted and revered in desert society.¹

Hajj Ali's formal education was restricted to Kuttab schooling, which was a form of religious education conducted at the mosque, with emphasis on Arabic and Quranic readings. His major source of expertise on tribal law and procedure was his father, who kept him by his side during tribal arbitrations and all tribal gatherings and councils.² The literature indicates that there is a classic tribal proverb, "Majalisna madarisna," meaning "The wisdom of our elders is our school."

In accordance with tribal tradition, a sheikh determined his successor, preferably a promising boy, who throughout his early childhood and young adult life received extensive oral experiential training on tribal affairs. The researchers contend that believing in the proverb "tribal councils and gatherings are the best kind of schooling"—seating the candidate sheikh next to the ruling sheikh enhanced his status and acceptance by others. Once chosen, the candidate sheikh accompanied his master in a sort of apprenticeship arrangement while he learned the intricacies of tribal tradition and custom. Leadership in traditional Arab society was both hereditary and elective. Usually a ruling chief nominated a candidate, a male son or close kin, to the tribal council, which usually accepted the nomination.³

Historians inform us that during the mid-1960s, Hajj Ali was in his prime of life, still strong and powerful. However, since there was no accurate documentation of desert birth records, his exact age was unknown, but he was probably in his late sixties. His physical appearance was imposing: very tall and broad, with penetrating eyes that could perceive one's character instantly. Behind this fierce exterior,

¹ Hassan, Mohammed, Abu, *The Theory and Practice of Nomadic Judicial Traditions*, Amman, Jordan, The Department of Culture and ARTS, 1987, p. 8.

² Sarayrah, "Servant Leadership," p. 6.

³ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, p. 270.

however, the Hajj kept a very patient and gentle spirit. According to scholars, he was cognizant of the fact that it would require an extensive period of time to cultivate a wise tribal chief using the old manner, and he realized it was time to select one of the tribe's promising boys for the process to begin.

Sheikh Hajj Ali always heard positive things about Yasin, who was then a young, serious, and hard-working boy, and was always the first in his class in the village elementary school.¹ His father was the tribe's poet at a time when the tribal poet played a very significant role in tribal life and had very high tribal status.² He played the rababah, which is the traditional Bedouin musical instrument consisting of a single string chordophone player. Yasin was a storyteller and an herbal doctor. Therefore, Yasin was already socialized in tribal ways and manners. While the other boys of the tribe were fond of playing, he favoured reading, story writing and telling, raising cattle and birds, and farming.

The scholars contend that another significant consideration in naming a successor was the actual sub-tribe of a potential candidate. They maintain that the internal social system of a tribe was, and still is, divided into branches, each with its distinct lineage and reputation. Traditionally, the sheikhdom was held by the Hujouj branch (those who performed the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca), of which Yasin was a member. His father was a distant cousin of Hajji Ali. Traditionally, it was preferable to cultivate a successor from this branch, the most predominant of all the Sarayrah branches, which had specialized in governing the tribe for generations.

Cognizant of Yasin's potential as a successor, Hajj Ali showed clear preference towards him. The literature indicates that he always encouraged him to visit his large tribal tent, to next to him and briefed him on the settlement of tribal conflicts that he was conducting or had already settled. Hajj Ali

¹ Ibid., p. 7.

² Nusair & Aziz, *Studies in Arab History*, p. 100.

listened carefully to the views and sentiments that his protégé expressed, and encouraged him in discussions on critical issues.

Researchers assert that the duties of a tribal Sheikh were considerable and demanding. In fact, the vast majority of his time was spent thinking about how to care for his tribe, how to increase the tribe's influence, how to reduce internal conflicts, and to enhance their position among other tribes.¹ These duties made Hajji Ali sleepless and anxious because, contrary to the conventional perception of the role of a tribal leader, the position of a Shaykh is not an honorary position, it is a position of work, as expressed in the often cited proverb of Hajj Ali, "Shaikha taklief wa laisa tashnef,"² Meaning, "Shaikha is a duty not a classification".

The scholars suggest that the concept of servant leadership may best be captured in this tribal proverb, "Sagheer alcum khadimha, wa kabir alcum khadimha," which means "The youngest is the servant and the one who rules is likewise the servant." This phrase describes the two people most responsible for receiving guests hospitably: the young boy, who brings tea and coffee to guests, and makes them feel comfortable, and the Sheikh, who is always there to help and is accessible at all times. The Sheikh's duty is to welcome his guests and to listen graciously to their complaints and problems. His key characteristic is generosity. Visitors must be received warmly, offered food and drink, and guaranteed protection and security.

The literature indicates that a visitor has the right to stay as a guest for three days without declaring his reason for coming. As a guest, he is provided with all the comforts of home, and thus, treated royally. After three days, if he has not declared his intentions, the Sheikh can ask him about the nature of his visit. The Sheikh assures him of assistance, irrespective of the position of the petitioner.

¹ Ibid.

² Sarayran, "Servant Leadership," p. 7.

Investigators concur that being accessible and available all the time, day and night, and being ready and willing to help, is a quest. When done correctly, the tribal chief captures the respect and obedience of the tribe members. A chief's tent is always open for those who need him. "Do your best, son, and leave the rest to God," Hajj Ali used to say. Citing the Arabic proverb of "Ridha Kull ennas hajatun is tudrak," meaning, "It is impossible to please them all," Hajj Ali advised the young protégé not to worry about those who become angry and disappointed. He mentioned the names of some people whom he had tried hard to help, including personally bearing the cost of settling an issue, but who were dissatisfied no matter what the outcome. Whether a petitioner is an aggressor or the aggrieved, they enjoyed protection, respect, and full attention once they entered the tent.¹

The proverb "Onsur akhak dhalman ou mathouman" means, "You must support your kind whether he is the wrong-doer or the victim."² Therefore according to Hajj Ali, one must help wayward kin by advising them how to avoid further trouble, convincing them to admit their wrongdoing and to bear the responsibility of the act. If the seeker is the victim, assurances must be given to consult with the tribe in order to enlist support for the offended until justice can be obtained.

One of the most important skills a Sheikh must cultivate is the ability to be a rightful judge impartially without reacting or appearing judgmental. Scholars suggest that full attention must be paid to the individual petitioner so that trust can be established. The petitioner must be encouraged to reveal all, and be gently guided to recognize the optimal solution to the problem without interference. If a problem involves several parties, the procedure must include consultation with Sheikhs of other tribal branches.

It has been indicated by the historians that, sitting patiently in his dignified attire in his tent for long hours, day and night, Hajj Ali was an accomplished listener. He listened carefully to every word a

¹ Hassan, *The Theory*, p. 8.

² Nusair & Aziz, *Studies in Arab History*, p. 100.

plaintiff said, and whenever the plaintiff stopped, expecting a reaction from him, he would order more Arabic coffee to comfort him, saying “take a breath and enjoy your coffee now, everything will be find. I promise to do my best.” He would not respond to a plaintiff before that plaintiff had said everything he wanted to say.

Inter-tribal conflict resolution takes the form of jaha. A jaha is a group of notables who mediate between conflicting parties in order to settle a dispute.¹ If another tribe is offended, the aggrieved tribe expects the offender and notables of his tribe to appear within three days to offer restitution. If the offender does not appear, it is considered an insult, and the offended tribe has the right to seek revenge.²

5.5. Analysis: Tribal Servant-Leader

Scholars contend that servant leadership is profoundly established in the Arab/Islamic culture. A myriad of similarities can be found between the pre-Islamic and early Islamic leadership style and practices and those of servant leadership. It has been suggested that the review of available literature on the pre-Islamic era, interviews with Bedouin tribal leaders in the desert of Jordan, and the case studies of Omar bin al-Khattab and Sheikh Hajj Ali, indicate that the primary elements of servant leadership were present in early Arab culture. The literature concurs that Omar bin al-Khattab’s personal characteristics of power, courage, mercy, generosity, equality, and honesty earned him an honoured place in history as a great and kind leader. The researchers indicate that Sheikh Hajj Ali maintained a simple, frugal, life-style. They also assert that his personal traits of generosity, humility, modesty, humbleness, patience, and forgiveness reflect those of a servant leader. Like the servant leader, Hajj Ali was a caring and loving individual who believed in others and attempted everything he could to awaken a wrongdoer’s

¹ Hassan, *The Theory*, p. 10.

² Sarayrah, “Servant Leadership,” p. 9.

conscience.¹ The scholars contend that in his dealings with tribal issues and settlement of tribal conflicts, he adhered to a simple, spontaneous and democratic style of leadership.

The literature maintains that although the majority of the elements of the Arab-Islamic value system comply with the elements of servant leadership, some do not. These include *asabiyyah qabaliyyan*, which is the willingness and readiness of a Bedouin to die for the cause of his tribe, and *wasta*, which is intercession on behalf of somebody, and blind support of one's kin, irrespective of whether he was the aggressor or the aggrieved party. These negative values were moderated by Islam, which counsels leaders to treat all people equally regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status.²

If one tests the servant-leadership characteristics against both Omar bin al-Khattab and Haj Ali, the similarities become apparent. Both served for a cause, whether it was in the interest of an organization, or the nation. Omar made a relentless effort to organize his tribe through the societal changes, easing them into twentieth century life. In the following hadith, Prophet Mohammed urges Muslim leaders to be servant leaders: "Verily, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for the well being of his flock."³ The servant leader must have the sense of loving to lead, then to lead. The servant leader is compelled to possess the sentiment of loving to lead. Omar and Haj Ali both exemplified that kind of leader.

The researchers indicate that servant leadership puts a significant amount of emphasis on listening. The review of the literature on Omar revealed how he excelled in utilizing the skill of careful listening, in allowing his subjects express themselves in order to direct their remaining energy towards finding solutions to their problems. It was revealed that in sessions with his close friends, Omar utilized

¹ Ibid., p. 9.

² Nusair & Aziz, *Studies in Arab History*, p.90.

³ Sarayrah, "Servant Leadership," p.8.

this skill to acquire all their concepts pertaining to possible alternative solutions to the problems he confronted. The literature maintains that although he was exceedingly strict and uncompromising, Omar accepted all viewpoints, including those that differentiated from his, and he changed his mind when he was compelled to. The scholars suggest that both a servant leader and Omar used persuasion as an effective tool in decision making. Omar was successful in using shura as a tool to give others the opportunity to engage in decision-making and to obtain their concepts. One of the characteristics of Omar that might deviate from the profile of servant leader is that he was strict, stern, and unyielding, once an agreement had been reached, concerning the compliance of all parties involved.¹ It is believed that this may possibly be a consequence of the fact that he was establishing a nation on the heels of a long history of tribal conflicts.

Some scholars have asserted that original Arab leadership style and practices were weakened by foreign influences resulting from the spread of Islam throughout the world and the incorporation of other nations' practices. It is believed that this process of weakening is being increased by globalization. Presently, unpopular bureaucratic procedures and practices have alienated leadership in the Middle East, according to researchers. Consequently, elements of servant leadership practices, such as occasional caring and attention to people's needs and hospitality are not obvious. These practices are revered by the people, but only presently as a consequence of the adverse reputation of the bureaucracy.

6. The Traditional Values of the Bedouins and UAE

The popular literature of the UAE indicates that there are a myriad of opinions concerning the embedment of the traditional values of the Bedouins into the new multi-ethnic UAE. Modern nation-

¹ Lewis, Norman N. *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 223.

states and political movements have used numerous types of pressure and enticement to motivate the Bedouins to abandon “their primitive way of life” and settle down. Some Arab governments have devised settlement projects, relying on urban and foreign experts, planners, and developers—people who all have had little contact with nomads.¹ The degree of success of these settlement projects, and consequently the future of nomadism, have been the subject of constant speculation. Some have concluded that the Bedouins are threatened with extinction.² Muhammad al-Marzuqi has observed that education, roads, electricity, employment in the city, and other aspects of modern civilization in post-independence Tunisia have resulted in the disappearance of nomadic culture and “whatever remains of its traces will vanish with the disappearance of the old generation.” A 1978 study of the Jordan Bedouins concluded, somewhat sardonically, that sooner or later the Bedouin lifestyle would disappear because the camel was no match for airplanes and land rovers.³

However, the opposite conclusion was reached in the early 1980s by Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who pointed out that efforts to incorporate nomads into modern sectors of Saudi society had succeeded in only two areas: the oil fields and the Saudi National Guard. “In both cases, however, the individual Bedouin remains strongly committed to his tribe and to its nomadic life-style,” Ibrahim noted.⁴ In an earlier study, Ibrahim and Donald Cole argued that “the Bedouins are far from being incorporated into modern economic sectors,” that they “are still locked up in a subsistence-like economy,” and that “the

¹ Barakat, Halim, *The Arab World: Society, Society, Culture and State*, Los Angeles, University of California, 1993, p. 54.

² Jaber, Abu Kamal, Gharaidh, S. Khawasmeh, S. & Hill, A. *A People in Transition*. Amman, Royal Scientific Society Press, 1978, pp. 5-7.

³ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. *The New Arab Social Order: A Study of Social Impact of Oil Wealth*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1982, p. 7.

⁴ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin & Cole, Donald, *Saudi Arabian Bedouin*, Cairo Papers in Social Science, vol. 1, no. 5 (April 1978), pp. 442, 104.

youngest age groups in our samples showed less disposition toward settling than their elders.”¹ This would see, to contradict Al-Marzuqi’s assertion, which the Bedouin way of life would vanish with the older generation.

These studies suggest on balance that, although the Bedouin way of life may be threatened, they continue to resist total integration. William Lancaster concludes his study of the Rwala with the observation that: “Some (tribesmen)...feel that the end of the road has been reached and that, despite their best efforts, the tribe will break down and disappear in the face of modernization; a few feel that before this happens it would be better to defy modernity militarily and vanish in a blaze of glory; yet others feel that it is nothing to do with them and simply get on with their live. However, the most respected and influential of (them)...reckon that they are capable of further adaptation yet and are actively exploring the means of doing so.”²

The researchers have concurred that the urbanization, which set in with the accelerating pearling boom, also was conducive to the arrival of a diversity of tribes into the coastal towns, where they lived in their separate areas, forming tribally distinct quarters, as was already the custom in large oases.³ In the nineteenth century, it was palm frond houses for every family, except for the rulers’ forts. It has been indicated that during the first decades of the twentieth century’ an ever increasing number of families could afford to build houses made of coral stone, add an upper floor’ and even an ornate wind tower for comfort during the hot summer months. The relatively small number of Hindu traders and some Persian

¹ Lancaster, William, *Changing Cultures: The Rwanda Bedouin Today*, Cambridge, Cambridge, University Press, 1980, p. 131.

² Ghareeb & Al Abed, *Perspectives*, p. 270.

³ Ibid.

speakers, who visited seasonally or moved to the coastal towns during the pearling boom, remained on the fringes of society. The literature asserts that some local merchants, who made substantial profits from pearls and from the large increase in general trade, began to seek political influence on the governing of their city-states. During this era, the Bedouins in the hinterland were still considered to hold the balance of power by supplying the fighting force to the ruler of their choice. The affluence of the individual families led to an increase in social differentiation. When the profits of the pearling industry plummeted during the 1930s, due to the world economic recession and the introduction of cultured pearls in Japan, the financial difficulties struck many families so hard that they eventually decided to emigrate to seek employment in neighbouring oil-producing countries.¹

Yet, whether people lived in the coastal towns, the oases, the mountains, or in the desert, the families and groups were welded together by their tribal background, their common religious practices, and their Arabic language; they wore the same clothes if some had more than one set-they ate the same food-though some had more of it than others-and they all endured the rigours of the forbidding climate. Thus, before the advent of oil, the entire population formed one homogenous society.

In the 1990s, after three decades of immigration by foreign experts and labourers increased the population figures, the UAE's society is definitely not homogenous. Nevertheless, the nationals, the basic structure of their tribal society, have remained intact although for some families, their altered economic circumstances have dramatically revolutionized numerous aspects of their lives.² The accessibility to modern housing, education, and healthcare had significant impact on the lives of the others; however, the basic pattern of their lives has not yet changed, according to the scholars. In today's

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

local circle, it is still very important to be a member of a well-respected tribe or an influential family. Although the vast majority of the populace that surrounds the local families are expatriates, they continue to socialize almost solely among themselves. Scholars maintain that it is not surprising that the traditional local customs are still a significant part of their daily lives. The local people greet one another with the traditional nose kiss.¹ It is relatively easy to recognize them by their traditional clothes, which have remained in style although the materials are more varied and refined than in the past. It is a fact that the women in the family still have a specific position and not expected to share the routine of the men, who have congregated in the *majlis*.² The publicly accessible part of any household in the *majlis* of the sheikh, as well as of the business man or of the fisherman on the coast, matters of state and matters of general interest are discussed, while the tiny cups of unsweetened light coffee with cardamom are served.³ Scholars concur that since the days of widespread illiteracy, people have maintained the memory of legends, stories, and the beloved local poetry called *nubati*, because the spoken word has always been the superior form of the tribal people, who lacked the raw materials used elsewhere for more tangible forms of artistic expression.

The literature indicates that, for the benefit of the generations who have not grown up with them, some traditions are upheld with official backing and encouragement, such as camel racing, traditional boating, and poetry competition, while a variety of heritage villages and museums with ethnological collections are being established. Hunting the migratory bustard (*hubara*) with falcons, which were

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

caught in early winter and released after the season, was practised by many Bedouins in the past.¹ Nevertheless, this is now a sport practiced primarily by the members of the ruling families and others who can keep these rare falcons and travel abroad for the hunt. According to historians, the local tribesmen would not begrudge their continuing this sport of “kings,” as it was known in a medieval Europe, because his tribal leader’s position should be manifestly different, and be recognized as such by the outsider. The tribal population believes that an individual’s honour and pride is his selfless hospitality. Therefore, it is possible to preserve the strong tribal values of such groups as the Bedouins.

The heritage of the Bedouins is preserved through the poetry and politics of heritage revival, exhibited in the invented tradition of camel racing in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates. The camel racetrack is a large stage upon which culture is played out, reconstituted, or “invented.”² The Bedouin and other actors present highly prized thoroughbred camels to perform, and in the repetition of such performances, Bedouin cultural traditions are changed, elaborated upon, and given new institutionalized forms. These invented traditions emerging from the camel races are like theatrical events upon which collective representation and a shared memory of an “imagined community” are played out.³ Camel culture provides strong links to the historical past of the UAE, swept away by rapid modernization, but revived and celebrated in camel racing.

The celebration of invented traditions is revealed in the final camel races of the racing season, customarily attended by the president of the nation and all the ruling sheiks of the various emirates that

¹ Khalaf, Sulayman, “Poetics and Politics of Newly Invented Traditions in the Gulf: Camel Racing in the United Arab Emirates,” *Ethnology* 39 (June 2000), p.248.

² Hobsbawn, E. *Introduction: Inventing Traditions: The Invention of Tradition*, eds. E. Hobsbawn & T. Ranger, London, Cambridge, 1997, p.1.

³ Sulayman, Khalaf, *Poetics & Politics*, p. 248.

comprise the UAE. In their staging, management, and media discourses, these racing festivals embody communicative cultural rituals with aesthetic trappings.¹ According to scholars, as with the intensification, the theatre of camel racing presents multiple socioeconomic and political discourses related to the UAE as a community reinventing itself in rapidly shifting local and global contexts. Racing itself becomes a metaphor for the nation hurtling toward greater modernization.²

Camel racing poetry is also used to preserve national identity. For the Bedouins, the camel is good to think about, good to romanticize, good to poeticise, and good to essentialism. With heritage revival gaining unprecedented importance, it has been easy for the Badu and their poets to carry on the tradition of using their camels as cultural references to create new aesthetic constructs for nationalistic ideological discourse. Like the Yemen tribesmen, the Bedouins perceive that “Poetry is too precious not to use for pressing public issues and that it can have transformative effect on them as well; hence it possesses a phenomenal degree of power.”³ They believe that it is the poetic form that gives it this “power.”⁴ The Bedouins do not separate aesthetic expression from the practical realm of live, for every poem is at a heart a political and social act.

Despite the advent of modernization, the individual Bedouin continue to be fervently committed to tribe and nomadic lifestyle in most instances. Although they have accessibility to modern conveniences, the global pattern of their life has not changed. Camel riding, traditional boating, and poetry are presented to preserve their heritage.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 253.

³ Caton, S. *Peaks of Yemen/Summon: Poetry as a Cultural Practice in a North Yemen Tribe*, Berkeley, University of California of California, 1990, p. 41.

⁴ Sayegh, Fatma al, “Merchants’ Role in a Changing Society: The Case of Dubai, 1900-90,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (January 1998), p. 87.

7. The Importance of the Environmental History of Dubai

The knowledge of the history of Dubai is significant for its present and its future because Dubai is one of the largest cities in United Arab Emirates, and one of the busiest ports in the region. In studying the history of Dubai, one becomes cognizant of how merchants exercised influence over the economic and political developments in the Arab Gulf region. The merchants played a significant role in the development of Dubai as the region's trading port.¹ They continued to be influential, even during the 1930s when oil revenues contributed significantly to the state's wealth, and in the 1990s as urban planners, culture mediators, and internationalists representing the Gulf region. The literature concurs that when oil was struck in the mid-1930s, and revenue began to pour into the state's treasury, many anticipated a decline in the influence of merchants whose revenues had diminished, and who consequently lost a degree of their power. In closely examining Dubai's development, historians maintain that any decline in the merchants' influence was only temporary. They also assert that, even today, the merchants continue to play a significant role not only in economic affairs, but also in formulating the political structure of Dubai. Additionally, merchants have endeavoured the roles as service suppliers, urban planners, culture mediators, and internationalists who represent the Gulf throughout the world.

For numerous decades, Dubai was a stopover for boats heading to and from Persia, India, China, and East Africa. It was also the initial point of great caravans to the West. Some scholars concur that the archaeological findings in the area confirm the historical significance of Dubai as a regional trading centre. In fact, since the earlier twentieth century, Dubai has been known as the city of merchants.² It has

¹ Fairservice, Ian, *Dubai: Gateway to the Gulf*, UAE, Motivate Publishing, 1987, pp.,12-13.

² Sayegh, al-Fatima al, Merchants' Role," p.,88.

a fine natural harbour—its strategic location on the mouth of the Gulf, coupled with the initiative of its merchant community, contributed greatly to its rise as a thriving commercial centre. These assets have been conducive to Dubai becoming the primary business port of the Arabian Gulf.

Historians assert that Dubai's merchant community has always been cosmopolitan. Indians and Persians have traded freely on equal terms with Arab residents for centuries. This practice continues. The cosmopolitan nature of Dubai society did not permit differentiation between ethnic groups that lived and traded in the city and environs. Nevertheless, the pure tribal Arabs were considered the bourgeoisie, or the "*A'yan*" of the society.¹ Members of this upper-middle class restricted their economic activities primarily to pearl fishing and trading, both of which were considered honourable occupations. The scholars indicate that hundreds of Indian British subjects, or *Bani Yass*, settled in Dubai after 1865. They represented British Indian firms in Bombay, and formed a segment of the merchant class. Indians began banking, since Muslims, restricted by religious law, could not practice usury. Therefore, it was the *Bani Yass* who primarily financed the yearly pearling expeditions.² In addition, Indian merchants supplied the diving fleets with textiles and imported goods, taking pearls in payment for supplies.

The literature asserts that the Persians who had moved to Dubai from the other side of the Gulf, and made Dubai their new home, monopolized retail trade and comestibles. Their common religion and similar social customs signified that the Persians and Arabs blended freely and intermarried, consequently producing a third important class grouping. Historians assert that the foreign mercantile community controlled the financing sector, which functioned well during prosperous times, but later proved disastrous.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

The advanced mercantile tradition and a relentless commitment to urban planning, even in the early days, led to Dubai developing in an orderly and expeditious manner. The scholars contend that its commercial sector, based on a strong trading tradition, made it prosperous long before the Emirate became an oil produce. Dubai was governed by a liberal and sagacious ruler at the turn of the twentieth century when new commercial opportunities were arising. Sheikh Maktuom bin Hasher, who ruled from 1894 to 1906, was a paternalistic merchant prince who governed with little, if any, formal administrative structure.¹ His rule included part of the period during which the pearling industry experienced the most rapid growth. The 1900–29 era is characterized by two main developments: the growth of the pearl trade, and the emergence of Dubai in 1903 as the main port of the Trucial Coast. Both of these factors significantly affected the merchants' role and intensified their influence, making them a primary driving force behind social change. This is just a synopsis of the factors that led to the success of Dubai. The history of Dubai is very extensive; the knowledge of its history is important for its present and future because it reveals the elements that led to its success, as well as the factors that will help maintain its wealth.

Some scholars maintain that when the Al Maktoums and other members of the *Bani Yass* tribe left Liwa for Bir Dubai, it is almost as if they were cognizant of the fact that this would be their destiny. Each successive generation has built on the achievements of the last with a phenomenal amount of entrepreneurial skill, daring, and vision. It has been implied that the Arabs discovered a formula that is unique to Dubai, combined with a positive outlook and a determination to succeed. The literature also indicates that the other factor that has been conducive to the high achievements of Dubai is the presence

¹ Carter, Terry and Dunston, Lara, *Lonely Planet: Dubai*, Oakland, Lonely Planet, 2000, p. 8.

of a predominant foreign workplace that has executed the vision of Dubai leaders, whether it is in construction, education, business, or banking.

8. Final Conclusion

The UAE and its various peoples and tribes have been shaped by their unique experiences in the harsh environment of the deserts. The tribes found their survival and were differentiated by their means of livelihood depending on what they do—pasturing, pearl diving, or trading. These activities were necessitated not only by survival but also show the tribes' skills in making what is available work for them.

Largely, the UAE tribes have been nomadic people who put value to their tribes and community. Seeing that they have limited natural resources, they made full use of what they had, including the camel and the dates. The camel became a very valuable asset because of its many uses in the historic times. Even in the dawn of globalization and modernization, the people of UAE still value the camel because they recognize the integral part that it has played in the building and development of their civilization, and its role in their progress and prosperity. Until today, camel races are encouraged and are celebrated as culturally UAE.

In the same way, the influx of foreign peoples and the values that they have brought with them has not changed the tribal way. In some cases, it has diluted the norms that have been prevalent from ancient times, but the literature shows that the tribes resist total integration. The history of tribes like the Bedouins illustrates the inculcated sense of history and culture among its members. These are people who value the tribe and the community, who place importance on servant-leadership and interpersonal relations, in helping and resolving conflict peacefully, in passing on their knowledge and arts through

poetry. They have a strong sense of identity as a people, and they safeguard their culture, which was largely influenced by the available resources and the environment that they live in. Even though the UAE has modernized, in that it has become a successful, prosperous, commercial centre, with its people gaining modern education and technology, like the Internet and mobile services, it has not changed the essential culture that is Bedouin. Bedouins still wear traditional clothing, albeit with finer materials. They still value poetry as a form of art, and as a political and social statement. They still regard their camel as an important asset. They still regard leadership as not just authority but also as a responsibility to serve and listen to the people.

Perhaps the success and development of the UAE can be attributed to the strong sense of culture, and the strong sense of culture can be attributed to the shared experiences of their ancestors up to the present day generations. The harsh deserts and the high waves are still there, and it is a unique place in the world. Their shared experience of cultivating a rather unfriendly environment pulled the people and tribes closer, making them rely on each other and not act solely as individuals. The Bedouins would have had a more difficult time if they travelled and tried to survive as individuals in the harsh conditions of their setting, and that is primarily the reason why they still continue to value the tribe as a social unit, not only as a means of survival, but also as an important link to the past and a way of honouring all those who came before them.

Chapter 5: Environmental Factors Influencing the Culture of the UAE (Part Two)

1. Introduction

The unique environmental conditions in the UAE have greatly influenced the kinds of heritage and folklore that people engage in. The tribes, being the primary social unit, understandably lent their social cohesion to the formation of this heritage and tradition. The handcrafts, songs and dances, games, and other traditional habits exemplify being a member of the tribe and community. Most especially, these traditions and culture make use of what they can find in their immediate environment, whether in the deserts or in the coastal regions. The environment played a significant role in shaping the kinds of activities that the people of the UAE engaged in. For example, most of these traditional habits are practiced and celebrated outdoors, in a communal setting where everybody can participate. Also, most use objects found in the environment, like palm trees and camels. In some cases, the dawn of modernity has affected the continuity of the more traditional activities, like handcrafts, but sports, such as camel racing and falconry, are still practiced, encouraged, and revered. This shows that the people of the UAE place importance on passing on their traditions and keeping them alive.

The traditional folklore, dances, songs, handcrafts have been influenced by outside forces as well, being the UAE a trading place where various nationalities meet. However, the distinct identity is not lost, and efforts are being made to preserve the traditional habits of the ancestors. These show that the tribes and the peoples of the UAE value their history and their ancestors, and recognize where they have come from and that their present success is in part due to the efforts of those who came before them, who worked hard to tame the harsh deserts and the high waves of the UAE.

2. Heritage and Folklore

The UAE is a rich country in heritage and folk, inherited from previous generations. Even the government does its best to prevent the extinction of heritage due to the economical changes and other factors like the new ways of living and the high number of expatriates migrating to the UAE. The government established societies in different emirates to keep practicing the diverse kinds of heritage, habits, and folklore, and to document the history of heritage in the UAE. Other governmental bodies have taken part in preserving heritage, such as the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, and the Juma Al Majed Centre for Heritage and Culture. Each society has a mission or a task, and there are annual programs and strategies to follow every year in different areas, including: traditional sports, traditional games, traditional handcrafts, and folklore. The societies also host traditional exhibitions inside and outside the UAE through the year, and during the yearly Dubai Shopping Festival the UAE and other Arab countries participate in the Heritage Village, located in a historic area in Dubai. Any heritage society in the Arab World looking for publicity may participate in the activities of the Heritage Village every January. In the other emirates, the government set up other heritage villages aimed to define the heritage of the UAE to tourists and visitors; the good thing is that the different governmental ministries and departments are sponsoring the heritage activities being held in the heritage villages. The initiation of creating heritage villages in the UAE is unique, and other countries in the Arabian Gulf imitated the UAE, as they have imitated other things that the UAE has done. There is also individual support by certain people for the sake of heritage and culture. Several individuals have done heritage research, collecting historical objects and old masterpieces. One individual that is well known in this area is His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founder of the UAE, who always encouraged nationals not abandon their heritage and to keep the culture's originality and traditional habits in mind. He said: *"The person who doesn't know his past can not live in his present and future where we learnt from our*

past."¹ The interest of Sheikh Zayed in heritage and folk motivated people to keep practicing traditional heritage activities in weddings, for example, and other social celebrations.

The diversities of folklores reflect the culture of a society and ways of living and the values in every stage of their stages of live and how do they react in the different occasions and events. Folklore is a product of the reaction of people to their environment. Traditional music and dances are a part of the heritage of the UAE; songs often describe the correlation between the singer, his history, and Arabic originality. Songs are often mixed the songs and rhythms of other countries, such as Asia and Africa, due to travels there. For example, the rhythm of a song may be African and the words may be Arabic, or vice versa.

In the UAE, there are plenty of traditional arts that can be practiced in a group or by an individual, especially during local and national occasions. There are two kinds of folklore found in the UAE: the first one is related to pure Arabic art, which originally came out the Arabian Peninsula and includes the three environments: the Bedouin, coastal, and mountain. The second is migrated folklore, which came from outside the Arabian Peninsula. To analyze folklore and its beginnings, it started as a kind of magic and a hobby to express happiness in traditional occasions, including religious occasions such as the daily celebrations in the holy month of Ramadan, and the birthday of the prophet Mohammed.

¹ AL-Nahyan Zayed, *Zayed Reḥla Fi Şuwar (Zayed, Trip with Photos)*, 1st ed., Zayed Center for Heritage and History, Al-Ain, UAE, 2005, p. 12.

3. Songs and Dances

Dance meets the fundamental human need to communicate through the movement of the body, and every culture has developed its own forms and styles of dance. The Bedouins folk also have started dance as a kind of hobby; later on, that hobby was used to express their happiness and sadness in certain occasions, such as religious occasions, and to have fun in spare times. The Bedouins folk dance and song are all known in the UAE as Desert Folk Dances, with the names: Al-Wanah, Al-Rezeef, Al-Tareg, Al-Aazi, Al-Tagrodah, Al-Samri, Al-Radha'a, Harbia, Sahbah, and Al-Manaheel.

Al-Wanah: A pure Arabic art characterized by its composure and romance due to its particularity of poetic arts where most of its words are about admonition and love accompaniment with small musical instruments like small drums, small cymbals, and castanets. One of the famous poems of Al-Wanah is:

*We have play Al-Wanah...
Since last night we have played
We have play Al-Wanah
Even if I am mumbling in it
We have play Al-Wanah
What a Bedouins words
Said by the Bedouins themselves.¹*

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanzal, *M'jam Al alfaẓ Al 'amiyah fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (The Dictionary of Spoken Accent in the UAE)*, 2nd ed., Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1998, pp. 739-740.



Figure 1. Al Wanah Dance - source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

Al-Rezeef: The most important and popular dance for the Bedouins. This dance is comprised of two lines of ten men each, all wearing traditional clothing, guns, swords, and daggers. Each man has a stick to wave while he is dancing, and people between the two lines shoot their guns up into the air. The feature of this dance is that it is not accompanied by any musical instruments. One of the famous parts of Al-Rezeef is:

*He was nothing till we have met
Got afraid from his paramour
Friday to Friday walking with caution
From the daughter of hunter.¹*

¹ Faliḥ Ḥanḏal, *M'jam Alqawafi Wal alḥan fi Al khalij Al 'arabi (The Dictionary of Music in the Gulf)*, 1st ed., The UAE Union of Authors and Writers, Sharjah, UAE, 1987, p. 60.



Figure 2. Al-Rezeef dance – source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

Al-Tareg: A king of songs to describe the nature of the desert and the general events happening in it. This kind of song is characterized by very quiet music, and is used by travelers.



Figure 3. Al-Tareg dance – source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

Al-Aazi: A kind of celebration held after the Bedouin wedding to inform the invitees that the wedding has finished. All of the people at the wedding gather to form a circle, and Al-Aazi (poet) will be in the middle carrying a sword and a shield; he then starts rolling, and the other men follow him while the poet recites poems about fights and honor.



Figure 4. Al-Aazi dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive

Al-Tagrodah: When traveling through the deserts, poems are converted into songs while they are riding the camels. Sometimes it called the camel's song.

Al-Samri: A very old dance, and very common in the Arabian Peninsula. The Bedouins accompany this dance with the rebeck instrument. Twenty people participate in this dance, forming two lines and carrying tambours as they iterate what the poet says.

Al-Radha'a: A kind of traditional dance for women only, usually held after a wedding. Most of the musical instruments are used, with a high rhythm of drumming. One of the famous poems is:

*Last night after the darkness
I was awake but the others were sleeping
They don't want to know about myself
They just left me to live with my sadness
I hope if they know about my situation
I am suffering of loneliness.¹*

Harbia: This dance includes both men and women, where the men form two straight lines with the women in the middle. The men dancers dance with the women while carrying sticks, swords, and guns. They also use different types of musical instruments. This dance is commonly used at wedding parties.



Figure 5. Harbia dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive

¹ Al-Nakhil Society, *Lamaḥat 'an Turath Wafulkulūr Mujatm' Al-Emarat (Glimpses of UAE Heritage)*, 1st ed., Cultural Foundation Publications, Abu Dhabi, 1996, pp. 45-46.

Sahbah: In this dance also, the men and women dance together while the drummers beat the drums very fast. The group of men and the group of women each form a straight line, and each line challenges the opposite one.



Figure 6. Sahbah dance – source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

Al-Manaheel: Originally taken from the Arabian Peninsula; the men and women gather together in one big circle, then one man and one woman enter the circuit to dance together. After that they swap partners with another woman and man.

The coastal environment influence to culture in dance is includes different folklores dances such as: Al-Ayalla, Al-Maled, Al-Ahalla, Al-Ardah, Al-Dan, Taqsera, Hulu, Jur Al Mashuwa, Nahma, and Al-Khatefah.

Al-Ayalla: A dance that celebrates camaraderie has been part of the ageless tradition of the Gulf area. Though it is a unique Arabian folk dance, no one knows exactly when it began. Not only is it a dance but it is accompanied by group singing. These days, professional teams perform Al-Ayalla dances. The band contains several members playing the drums and *Tuwaisat* (a metallic musical instrument). Besides the drummers, there are also singers and up to fifty dancers. The singers sing according to the beat on the drums and a man called *Al-Abu* (father) heads the dancers; he taps a special drum hung around his neck. The second group between the two teams of drummers and singers twirling and tossing guns or swords as they undulate to the beat. The third group includes the dancers and singers in four rows, forming a square, and holding long sticks to wave in the air. Two rows of men facing each other and standing close together perform the dances. The drummers, who stand between those two lines, start the beat after *Al-Abu* starts the dance. The two rows start dancing and moving continuously for a long time. The gun bearers, meanwhile, move towards the opposite direction. The two lines exchange the songs; one row sings the first stanza, while the second row sings the rest until the end of the song. Al-Ayalla contains not only music and dance, but also encouragement and camaraderie. This dance form reflects the prevalence of heritage and traditions of Arab tribes who roamed the desert for ages.



Figure 7. Al-Ayalla dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive 2007

Figure 8. Al-Maled dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive 2007

Al-Maled: It is a kind of religious folk dance or invocation, where two straight lines of about forty men sitting together and each line facing the other line. One line carries drums, and the other line dances and sings using the Arabic language. Usually, this kind of dance is held at the occasion of the prophet's birth day. One of the famous poems of Al-Maled:

*God has taught us how to build our glory
My god
Your requirements can not be acquired by hope
My god
Even if you feel it is difficult
Be brave and go for it
My god.¹*

¹ Ibid., pp. 31-33.



Figure 8. Al-Maled dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive 2007

Al-Ahalla: This is the oldest of the UAE's traditional songs, usually sung by two groups of five to ten pearl divers or fishermen, from evening until early morning. It is a song that is unique to the UAE, and was especially popular in Dubai.



Figure 9. Al-Ahalla dance – source: Dubai Cultural Council's Archive 2007

Al-Ardah: A pure Arabic dance that is almost like Al-Ayalla; the only difference between the two dances is the rhythm, but they both dance the same way, with the same number of dancers and the same musical instruments.



Figure 10. Al-Ardah dance – source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

Al-Dan: This dance originally came from the coast of Oman; men and women dance together, making up two straight lines facing each other, with the musicians in the middle. A member from each line will go to the middle to dance.

Taqsera: It is a chant that the pearl divers and the fishermen usually sung while pulling the divers and fishing ropes.

Hulu: The seamen sung this song while pulling the ropes of the topsails of the boat. Example of the song:

Hulu.. Oh my prophet Mohammed

Hulu.. Ask god to forgive us

*Hulu.. In all times.*¹

¹ Ibid., p. 38.

Jur Al Mashuwa: The seamen sung this song while rowing a boat. Most of the words are religious, such as thanking god for saving their lives from the sea.

Nahma: This is a kind of hymn, usually sung by the fishermen.

Al-Khatefah: This song is also sung by the seamen while pulling the topsails of the boat, but music instruments are added.

The immigrant kinds of folklore dances appeared in the UAE as a result of trading and communication with other regions, especially East Africa, Iran, and India. These types of dances have blended with other local folklore dances and have become a part of the local tradition and heritage. Most of the musical instruments used in those dances were stringed and flute instruments. These types of instruments were unknown in the UAE, but the immigrants introduced these instruments to the UAE people. Some kinds of the folklore dances introduced to the UAE include: Liwa, Al-Haban, Al-Noban, Somal, Youlas, Al-Fajri, Makwarah, Somah, Umm Dimah, Larooh, and Anguma.

Liwa: This dance comes from East Africa—Tanzania, Somalia and Zanzibar—and is led by a long pipe flute called the Mizmar, which is played to the beat of drums —the Shindo, the Jabwah and Jasser—which turn out a very fast beat. A fourth drum, called the peeper, is used to introduce a variation in the beat. While the dancers stand in place, swaying from side to side, it is only the Mizmar player who moves freely forward and backward. This dance is popular in the Gulf States, and takes place in the evening, with group of forty dancers or more participating, and dancing for about three hours.

Al-Haban: Originally Persian, this dance is led by a pipe flute called Haban (Windbag in Persian), which made from lambskin fixed by chanter. The flutist will pump up the instrument with air and empty it using a blowpipe and drone pipe to give the sound of skirl. This instrument looks like the modern bagpipe instrument. About eight women and eight men dance together in two straight lines when they hear the skirl.

Al-Noban: This dance comes from Noba, North Sudan, and is almost like Liwa, but the difference is that women and men dance together. The dance is led by a Tanborah (a harp).

Somal: This is an African dance from Somalia, where the men and women form a circle and each dancer will go inside the circuit to dance.

Youlas: In this dance, twenty dancers will form two rows while two men fighters will fight by swords.

Al-Fajri: A coastal song, usually sung by sailors after dinner.

Makwarah: In this dance, African slaves would dance while forming a circle, and singing in their own language.

Somah: This dance comes from Kenya, Africa. Dancers form two rows and jump vertically, like Kenyans warriors before going on a hunt. The dancers also wear traditional clothing while they dance.



Figure 11. Somah dance – source: *Albayan newspaper. www.albayan.ae, 2005*

Umm Dimah: This dance was performed by pearl divers and fishermen, from late afternoon until sunset, as their dhows returned from the sea. It was especially popular in the UAE and Oman. Four drums play, with twenty or more dancers forming a circle, each dancer taking his turn to perform in the middle of the group.



Figure 12. Umm Dimah dance – source: *photo is taken by the author 2004*

Laroo: This dance comes from Baluchistan, Iran. Women dancers hold scarves with their hands and wave them, while men dancers wave their bodies very fast, forming a circle and singing in their traditional language.

Anguma: This dance originates in Africa, and it is very similar to the Umm Dimah dance.

3.1. Stages of slave trade in the UAE

Slave trade in the UAE can be divided into three stages. During the first stage, slaves were brought from Africa. Omani traders were very active in this trade in the nineteenth century, when large numbers of slaves were brought to various areas in the Gulf, including the emirates of the “Trucial Coast.” However, due to strict British procedures, by the end of the nineteenth century, the African slave trade started to vanish. The second stage involved the trade of Balochi slaves. Some traders brought slaves from Baluchistan by various methods. This lasted from the beginning of the twentieth century until the early 1940s. The third stage was the local slave trade. Some groups kidnapped women and children from various emirates of the “Trucial Coast” and sent them to other Gulf countries. This lasted from the 1930s until the mid-1950s.

3.2. African slave trade

The main source of the early African slave trade was Eastern Africa. It spread widely after Oman seized Zanzibar and the Green Island in Africa at the end of the seventeenth century. Zanzibar turned into a slave market until it became the biggest centre of slave trade in the East during the reign of Saeed bin Sultan, the most important among the sultans of Al Bu Saeed. Slaves were brought from the heart of Eastern Africa to be sold there, where they were either employed by their new masters to work on farms, especially farms of Arabs living on the island, or sold to slave traders in other Arab countries. Meanwhile, slave trading in Zanzibar was a monopoly of the Arabs of Muscat and their rulers, who gained their income from the customs taxes imposed on importing slaves.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muscat was the major distribution centre of slave trade, as they were shipped to Gulf countries, Iran, Iraq, and India. By the 1840s, slave trade became essential to Omani trade, as the profits of slave traders surpassed the profits that trade brought to the Sultan's treasury. The slave-selling rate in Muscat in the 1830s reached 400 slaves per annum. Slave traders got a 20 percent profit on slaves imported from Africa, and if the slave was exported to Al-Basra, the profit rate would go up to 50 percent. Slaves' prices were set according to age, gender, appearance, and origins. Most of the slaves imported to Oman were sold inside it, whereas the remainder were sold to traders of the "Trucial Coast," to be sold in the emirates or in the markets of Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Najd. Slaves were also transported from the ports of Muscat and Sour to the ports of Sind and Mumbai.¹

Several intellectual, political, and economic trends appeared in Europe since the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, calling for the abolition of slavery and prohibiting it. Humanists in Britain started calling for the end of slavery and urged the concerned authorities to fight it. British governments, for special reasons that may not relate to the principles of the humanist movement whatsoever, adopted the cause of the abolition of slavery, passing laws and signing agreements against it. The "Trucial Coast" emirates became concerned with the issue, and signed agreements on the abolition of slavery in 1820, 1838, 1839, and 1847. In the 1860s, slave trade started to lose its importance noticeably because of the patrols carried out by the British fleet in pursuit of slave

¹ Maḥamad Faris Al-Faris, *Al-Awḍa' Alaqtēṣadya Fi Emarat Alsaḥil [1862 - 1965] (The Economic Situation in the Emirates of the Trucial Coast)*, 1st ed., The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, 2000, p. 146.

traders. At the same time when a large number of slaves ranging from four to ten thousand reached the Arabian Gulf.¹

The number of slaves increased in the “Trucial Coast” and constituted a large proportion of the population. At the beginning of the 1880s, they constituted 25 percent of the population of Abu Dhabi and Ajman, and a third of the population of Dubai, Sharjah, and Ras Al-Khaima. Such a large proportion shows how widespread the slave trade was, how high the rate of slaves to the remainder of the population was, and how far the slaves could mingle in society. Most sources say slaves could mingle in Arabian Gulf societies, become part of the population, and fill all occupations, especially diving.

Despite the British constriction on the slave trade, it was not largely affected. Traders found many ways to go on trading, the most important of which was practicing the slave trade away from the eyes of the authorities, and sometimes with the support of its officials. For example, in 1865, the British government in Sharjah appointed a man called Yacoub to implement anti-slavery procedures; however, in reality, he was working toward his own interests. He even asked slave traders not to work in public places so that he would not have to interfere. In return for his attitude Yacoub received ample rewards from traders, which ultimately led to the growth of slave trade.²

At the end of the nineteenth century, despite the signed agreements, the slave trade increased and spread along the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula coasts, and the coasts of Iran. Dubai was a major port of slave trade, where slaves brought from various regions in Oman, especially Al Batinah, were

¹ Ibid., p. 147.

² Ibid.

distributed to the rest of the emirates. Large numbers of slaves were sold in Abu Dhabi, and some were exported to Qatar. Many slaves in Abu Dhabi were mingled into the society and were treated equally as free people; they even participated in the assemblies of sheiks and talked on various topics.¹

3.3. Slave Trade with Balochistan

By the end of the nineteenth century, the slave trade started to gradually disappear from Africa. A new slave trade market appeared in Baluchistan at the beginning of the twentieth century. It seems that the British authorities threw their weight around confining the slave trade in Africa, but they did not expect the appearance of new sources. Hence, a new problem that they could not fix appeared with the arrival of large numbers of Balochis in the ports of the emirates of the "Trucial Coast." These large numbers escaped starvation in Makran, and were either enslaved when they reached Arab ports, or continued escaping to other places. Some of them willingly became slaves. For example, when authorities in Muscat liberated them, they returned to slavery because of poverty and need. A member in the American medical missionary in 1919, noticing how widespread slave trade was in the Arabian Gulf, said the region may be the largest slave market throughout the world. Where slaves were generally treated mercifully and amicably, there were undoubtedly some people who treated them improperly. The American missionary mentioned in its report that some of the slaves who came for treatment complained of their masters' cruelty, and how their liberation papers were being stolen from them after getting them from the British authorities. Many complained of being forced back into slavery, after escaping.²

Balochi slave trade rates increased in the beginning of the 1920s, mainly due to draught, starvation, weak rulers in Makran, and the absence of British ships there. Owing to the strictness of

¹ Ibid., p. 148.

² Ibid.

Omani rulers concerning the slave trade, traders avoided bringing slaves to the Omani region of Al Batinah. Instead, they opened new markets in the villages of Dibba, Kalbaa, and Khorfakkan, along the eastern coast of the emirates and near Al Batinah. These regions became active slave markets and centres of gathering and redistributing slaves to the rest of the emirates and Al Buraimi Oasis. Therefore, the political rectifier urged the Emirati chiefs in May 1922 to work hard to fight slave trade. The chiefs externally agreed to his call, but could not confront the major slave traders who led the trade and refused to give it up. British authorities tried to interfere yet they were met by a different situation, as slaves themselves merchandised the trade. Many of them sold their children to Arabs due to bad living circumstances in their homes. In addition, many liberated slaves who returned to their homelands returned to their Arab masters, preferring to live in slavery rather than living under severe circumstances in their homelands. A new slave trade started to flourish along the coasts of the Arabian Gulf in 1923. Slave traders in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula started exporting women that had been kidnapped during the armies' raids on Christian regions inside the territories of the Ottoman Empire in Asia. Many of the women were Armenian. While some of them returned to their homelands, others refused to return, preferring their new status.¹

3.4. Analysis: Slave Trade in the UAE and its Effect on Music and Dance

It is evident from the previously discussed points that historical transformations have played a vital role in forming the "Afro-Emirati" identity, which is unknown to some people due to the fact that historians have neglected it even though people interact with it daily. In order to approach the foundations of the issue, it is important to first understand the reality of the slave trade that occurred in the Gulf region. Historians confirm that the size of the Gulf trade for both adult and children slaves

¹ Ibid., p. 149.

reached tens of thousands of people who were sold in the UAE, when it was still known as the “Trucial Coast.” However, the discussion here goes beyond that point towards the cultural heritage closely related to our identity at present and considering it as a part of the national heritage. Perhaps the purpose in approaching the issue as such is to understand the past, with all its negative and positive aspects and what that has left us with intentionally or incidentally. This analytical framework will help to understand the reasons behind this fusion, and realize the African elements and features that have melded, yet are still considered part and parcel of the society and heritage of the Arabian Gulf in general and of the UAE in particular even in the recent time. It is significant to refer to the social and societal relationships that have made the African identity melt in the Gulf water and its desert sands. Africans played a significant role in the social life of the UAE, especially in the pearl and diving industries, which resulted in their mingling in the local society. Consequently, Africans changed their names and converted their religions. Living with their masters gave them a chance to learn the local accent, hence drawing power from belonging to their masters' houses and practicing these attained powers. They were also able to influence the social formation of the UAE. Furthermore, they gained power from working as hairdressers and braiding hair. It was like hypnotism, especially to upper class women and their maids.

Zanzibar has played a role in supporting local arts, and it is frequently to see that Arab's pride in their Arab nationalism and their influence on the features and identity of Zanzibar. However, concepts change as roles are reversed. It must be realized that, despite the disparity of powers in the master-servant and ruler-ruled relationship, the minority that ruled Zanzibar had political power supported by a considerable empire, in contrast with the minority that served the Gulf families and immersed in the emirates depth in search for Pearl and misery. It can be easily observed that the Africans of Zanzibar have played a crucial role in the cultural development of the UAE. They have had an artistic influence

not just on art forms in the UAE, but regionally, and across the general Arab world as well. They used their music to express their slavery conditions, describing the paths they took towards their final settlements in various African regions and countries, and their feeling of homesickness for their homelands in Africa. Dance emerged along with “Al-ayalla,” especially drumming heads, which no others but Africans practice. Likewise was the emergence of “Al-ma’laya” art that spread after the pearl industry collapsed, as well as Al-nuban art, which originates from African Nubi art and includes playing the *tanbura*.¹ This art remained popular till the 1950s. Such an artistic production is not fortuitous, but the outcome of the arts of ship singers, Nubean players, voice players, contributors in Al Zar, contributors in Liwa ceremonies, and tanbura players.

4. Traditional Habits

Other sectors of heritage and folklore in the UAE include the traditional habits of the UAE nationals. In general, the society is conservative, and the nationals care about their own traditions, making sure those traditional practices will remain continuous from generation to generation, and that every generation will pass along the practices to the next generation. One social habit is the practice which comes in unintentional ways, and the society accepts it and practices it in unintentional ways. While tradition is a manner or way of living and the society does accept it unless it run against the Islamic religion. Habits such as the national dress, hospitality, the traditional *Majless* (gathering and meetings), weddings, and other traditional practices are all inspired by the intrinsic cultural, social, and religious beliefs. Cultural societies and clubs, which are supported by the government, exercise the traditional habits and teach the practices to the youths. The UAE society is like the other societies, where traditional habits cannot be disengaged, and the entire society will run through as per the national

¹ Tanbura is a traditional woodwind musical instrument.

habits because the majority considers the run against the national habits as a shameless thing. Although the fast flourishing happening in the UAE in all aspects including economy, social, and construction, the UAE people still hanging onto its traditional habits.

Every society has its own kinds of clothing, which is often reflective of the society's traditional thoughts and values. Clothing is also a way of expressing an association with a particular community and/or nation. In the UAE, the style of dress was affected by other communities in the region, and by the interaction between the different civilizations. The UAE society is characterized by its wearing of the national dress, and not foreign clothes. UAE nationals wear their national dress—simple white clothing for men and black clothing for women—during their duties and various cultural occasions. The advantage of the clothing code in the UAE is that one cannot identify who is rich and who is poor, as the entire society looks the same. Even the Sheikh wears the same clothing as the poor man.

Majless (gatherings and meetings); whatever new conditions and variables happening in the UAE, the society is still using Majless for their traditional gathering, and each local house has a Majless (guest's sitting room). In the old days there were two kinds of Majless: the Ruler's Majless and the Public Majless. The first Majless was used to discuss tribal affairs with the socialites, and to receive the delegates from the other tribes from the desert; also, the ruler of each emirate received the citizens in his Majless (Ruler's Court) to hear their complaints. The sheikh is until now still receiving in his Majless the guests who come to greet him in certain occasions especially the religious ones like the holy month of Ramadan and Eids. Usually the dignitaries, judges, high command, high businessmen, scientists, brass, clerics, and others meet in the Ruler's Court (Majless) to discuss and study the situation of the Sheikdom in all aspects, and the sheikh listens to them before he issues any decree.

The second type of Majless was little bit smaller than the sheikh's Majless, and the dignitaries and socialites gathered to discuss local affairs, as well as solving small problems facing the people, rather than bothering the sheikh with trivial concerns. Sometimes this Majless was used to solve problems happening between people, including personnel contentions and disagreements, and to help poor people and listen to their problems. The Majless was also used as an information desk for the visitors; for example, when someone visiting the city needs to find an address, he or she can go to the Majless to ask for help, and the Majless will provide guidance in locating the correct address or person. Later on, the number of Majlesses increased due to the expanding population. Every dignitary and cleric there has his own Majless during Ramadan; a favourite destination to go was a Majless where people can listen to the religious sermons conducted by Muslim clerics (Emam), and to get amusement and entertainment from the poets who made use of the Majless to chant poems and songs. The Majless was a free restaurant (soup kitchen) for the poor people, where the rich people offered meals to the whole public, especially during Ramadan, asking god for forgiveness and gratification. The Majless was a chapel where people read the Holy Koran, as some people preferred to stay in the Majless to continue their religious practices, instead of staying in the mosque. The Majless was a school where people were received wisdom from the wise men; the people also heard the histories of their nation from the historians, and the folk tales from the storytellers.



Figure 13. Symbols of old Majless in Albastkiya destrict in Dubai – source: photo is taken by the author2006

Traditional games are a part of the heritage of all nations, and it could be described as cultural inherited outcomes, and traditional games can be played in group or solo. The UAE heritage contains lots of traditional games that advance the mentality and physical abilities of children, and create the spirit of cooperation between groups. In the UAE, there are around two hundred to two hundred fifty traditional games in the cities, mountains, and desert. Games are played at certain times and in certain seasons. They are usually held in the afternoons or evenings, when people have some free time to play. Each game is different from another game, depending on the three environments in the UAE, all these games are products of UAE's environments; for example the sea wasn't just a source of living only, it was the inspiration for the artist, poet, and literary. The children also had a good momentousness to the coast where they played with the seashells and escallops, and they were practicing their favourite games alongside the coast like a game called "Rooster & Hen", played by boys only in the summer when about six boys forms a circuit in the sea and each player will beat the centre of the circuit and if he rebound a

huge sound, he becomes a rooster and if he rebound a little sound, he will be named as a hen. Other games are specialized to the Bedouins environment, where there are palm trees, the closest friend to the children; one of the famous Bedouin games is the “Swing,” where children tighten ropes to the palm boles. In the mountain environment, the children’s crossbow is the favourite game because they love hunting small birds.

Some games depend on acting and singing capabilities, like the game of “The Wolf & the Mother.” This game is very common in the UAE and the Gulf: one boy or girl plays the role of the wolf, and another girl plays the mother, with her children standing behind her, afraid of the wolf. The mother and wolf both with start singing the conversation:

Wolf: I am the wolf and I will eat you all

Mother: I am the mother and I will protect you all

Wolf: I am almost going to hunt one of your children

Mother: Oh my God...save my children.¹

If the wolf succeeds to hunt a girl or boy, he will take her behind him, and then he will start the conversation from the beginning until he hunts all of them. Traditional games in the UAE are an integral part of the society; there was never any reluctance for playing these kinds of games, but it relied on the desire of the boy or girl to practice the games. Also, there were no prizes for the winners, especially in group games, but the children were having fun in their spare times. These games were played in a random way, due to the simple lives of the UAE people; rules and regulations were very seldom used in

¹ Al-Shamsi Najib, *Al al'ab Wal alghaz Alsh'biya fi Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda (Games and Puzzles in the UAE)*, 1st Ed, The UAE Union of Authors and Writers, Sharjah, UAE, 1991, pp. 111-113.

the normal life, except in court cases that ruled only by the Islamic rules. The absence of rules in the games caused the people to innovate their games from very basic things like ropes, seashells, palm leaves and other things. Also there were no television channels to watch something related to games and imitate it; this approves that our grandfathers were creative compared to children of the petrol era who couldn't innovate any new game in the modern days.

Although there was no fast global communication in the UAE, the child in the past approved that he is not far away from the global cultural thoughts and mental development. The environment played an important role in forming the game; the traditional game in the desert environment was the most imitative compared to the other environments because the games depended on the palm trees and other desert elements including the animals. The coastal games were about the sea, and the boys preferred to play football in the water instead of on the land.

After the economical changes, most of the traditional games went out of existence due to the appearance of contemporary games, and electronic video games. Even the small villages in the desert and mountains do not play the traditional games. The media has taken the attention of the children, and most children prefer to watch cartoons than play traditional games; they look at traditional games as old-fashioned and something from the past. The appearance of national sport clubs in the late 1960s also attracted youths to abandon traditional games and to join the clubs to play football, volleyball, basketball, handball, and other contemporary games. Nowadays, the only remaining games being held in the UAE are camel and horse racing, but the traditional games still linger in the memory of the UAE children, and lots of them still know how to play them and how to sing their words.

Traditional handcrafts are another part of UAE heritage and folklore; in the old days, traditional handcrafts were the industry that the country depended on for its economy. People were capable of becoming skilled in different handcrafts related to the sea, which was the source of living. Also, the Bedouins were dependent on the sources of desert to live. Nowadays, the UAE is considering as the headmost country in the Gulf taking care and preserving the traditional handcrafts. According to a recent survey by the Centre of Traditional Heritage for the Gulf States, there are twenty-three traditional handcrafts in the UAE.¹ These hand crafts include: sword manufacturing, dagger manufacturing, weaving, carpentry, blacksmithing, fishing net manufacturing, frond manufacturing, sewing, traditional sweat manufacturing, pottery, and derivatives from dried dates, manufacturing brassware, manufacturing of woods, and others. After the economical changes, the government decided to resurrect the old crafts by adding some cultural activities in the Heritages Villages to attract the tourists and to preserve the old habits. Also, there are different cultural societies in the UAE in charge of resurrecting the old skills of manufacturing; these societies are supported by the government and managed by volunteers. The economical changes caused unemployment in the old skilful generation because they did not have other kinds of skills—the traditional societies of handcrafts have employed the unemployed skilful people. The skilful people from the old generation are considered to retain a thesaurus of heritage and traditional culture in the UAE; the government should take the initiation to record the knowledge of those people. Until now, most of the research been done from the date of establishing the UAE were very few and done by researchers from outside the UAE. The new generation did not live in the old generation, and did not know how the previous generations suffered. Their lives were painstaking to grade the way for

¹ Al-Nakhil Society, *Lamaḥat 'an Turath Wafulkulūr Mujatm' Al-Emarat (Glimpses of UAE Heritage)*, p. 124.

the new generation, but they left behind a heavy heritage and folklore that makes the UAE nationals proud of their heritage. This heritage needs to be recorded and preserved from vanishing.

Folklore, Traditional Arts, Traditional Habits, Traditional Thought... all of them are coming from heritage, as well as, the values and the traditional knowledges which been formed by the society during its long experience from era to another; these knowledges are expressing different cultural manners connecting the person to the group and the present to the past, and forms the identity of the society and its personality. This society created heritage and folklore, the traditional handcrafts is one of the most important components of heritage because it connects the brain together to the body, so it starts by a brain activity leads the person to a handmade creativity reflects with the environment consents to the needs of the society. Although, the new conditions have appeared in the UAE after the economical change, the society of the UAE is still persistent in its originality and culture.



Figure 14. Old antiques – source: from the Archive of Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai. Photo taken during the shopping festival 2007

4.1. Analysis: Traditional Habits

The traditional habits of the UAE cannot be assessed singularly as either living on or as vanishing completely. Some aspects of the traditional habits still live on and are held at high esteem, especially the dress code, which emphasizes equality among all citizens; following and observing the national traditional habits, rather than behaving individualistically; and preserving Heritage Villages and crafts.

In many aspects, the traditional habits reflect the social norms that have become prevalent in the way of life of the tribes. Since the Bedouins and other tribes have been forced to survive in groups in the deserts and the coastal areas, they have come to identify with the society and community and place importance to this social unit rather than narrowly focusing on one's family alone. There is a sense of solidarity and concern that extends to everybody who is part of the tribe and the community, and that is very important to them, and is something that even foreign influences cannot so easily dilute.

However, the traditional games that old generation UAE children play are almost forgotten and no longer played because of the advent of computer games and televisions. The children of the present generation do not know the traditional games of their ancestors, and a vital aspect of value-formation is lost in the society since the games were designed to teach about cooperation and other values. The children also no longer experience their environment in the ways that their ancestors did.

Another concern is the slowly disappearing skill and knowledge base in terms of handicrafts. The old skilful generations who know the crafts are unemployed, and their knowledge will disappear when they die. No attempts have been made by the government to record the ways of different craftsmanship.



5. Final Conclusion

The various traditional habits and heritage of the UAE people are important in determining their sense of history and identity, and integral in knowing their place in the scheme of things, because by knowing the past they can prepare for the future and understand the present.

The traditional habits and folklore of the UAE are in large part shaped by the environments in which the people live. The deserts and the coastal areas both provided the people with a setting within which to stage their songs and dances, their games, and their crafts. The tribes were a social unit, and this is apparent in the nature of their arts as well. The songs and dances were designed so that members of the tribe can participate. Even though the modern times have ushered in economic growth and private property, the people still value the tribe as a social unit and express adequate respect to it, dressing up properly and observing the rites and decorum that has been there and their ancestors' ways of life for years in the desert. They continue to hold camel races and falconry in the age of car racing and the Internet, to preserve their heritage. They still sing and participate in social gatherings, to show their identification with the community.

As with the songs and dances, the traditional games exude a social characteristic, in that all the children participate and there are values taught through the games, solidarity and cooperation chief among them. Children are taught to work as a group and not to be competitive each other. Unity and cooperation are more important, just as the tribe is more important than the single member, or the victory of just one person at the expense of the greater good.

Globalization provided some setbacks for the UAE people. Traditional games faced competition against video and computer games, cartoons, and other modern toys. The traditional handcrafts face

extinction, as their market and the need for their wares decreased. Concern is apparent as these skilled workers in handcrafts become older, and threat is perceived that the knowledge will disappear with them. The knowledge and skills of the handcrafts people were integral to the development of the UAE, and it is a valuable aspect of their heritage. The government and the people should be more wary of the role of games and handcrafts in their society, and seek ways to further encourage their continued presence and influence, lest they be just memories of the past.

A redeeming quality is that the people of the UAE put a great importance on their traditions, and this is evident in their desire to follow and uphold the tradition over their own. An interesting part is how, even with the dawn of modernism and globalization and the presence of foreign influences, the people still choose their own norms, like their dress codes of robes of black and white for women and men, respectively, over the current fashions.

The government has taken the initiative in preserving various heritage sites and promoting the culture and traditions of the UAE in various international activities, like the Dubai Shopping Festival, through exhibitions.

Although more can be done to preserve the culture and tradition, heritage, and folklore of the UAE and its people and its rich history, at least the people and the government are starting exhibit efforts in that area.