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# The impact of Dubai's architectural wonders on the daily indigenous performance in light of cultural modernity: A comparative case study between Burj Khalifa and Burj Al-Arab

Zulfat S. Al Kassim

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United Arab Emirates University

College of Engineering

Department of Architectural Engineering

THE IMPACT OF DUBAI'S ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS ON  
THE DAILY INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE IN LIGHT OF  
CULTURAL MODERNITY: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY  
BETWEEN BURJ KHALIFA AND BURJ AL-ARAB

Zulfat S. Al Kassim

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Science in Architectural Engineering

Under the Supervision of Dr. Sahera Bleibleh

April 2016

## Declaration of Original Work

I, Zulfat S. Al Kassim, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled “*The Impact of Dubai’s Architectural Wonders on the Daily Indigenous Performance in light of Cultural Modernity: A Comparative Case Study between Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab*”, hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Sahera Bleibleh, in the College of Engineering at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

In order to decrease the reliance on oil and create more economic opportunities, the UAE has witnessed a development boom over the last few decades in an effort to promote tourism. Dubai specifically has purposefully undergone dramatic architectural evolutions with the aim of transforming the city into a tourist hub and a global attraction. Over the last few years, iconic buildings including Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa have been built at different times to become prominent landmarks that promote the city's global image and combine traditional/local elements in such a way as to form completely new unrecognizable forms i.e. a new genre of design. Those architectural spectacles attract not only visitors from outside but also Emirati citizens/residents as well. However, one is bound to ask: How does the indigenous Emirati population 'receive' and 'perceive' these major architectural developments and what kind of identity implications do they pose on the Emirati on a daily basis? This research is a qualitative ethnographic comparative case study that explores the Emirati voices and feedback on Burj Al Arab. Based on the findings of Bleibleh's and Al-Saber's (2014) previous research on Burj Khalifa titled *Cultural Modernity in Urban Space: Indigenous Performance of the Everyday in Dubai's Architectural Wonders*, this research borrows the methodology, theoretical framework and explores the same research question in an attempt to compare the perception of the indigenous Emiratis of the two sites of Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa in the light of cultural modernity. Relying on the *Driving Forces of Everyday Life* as a base for comparison, the study explores the similarities, differences and patterns between the two sites. The study also examines whether the research outcome could be extended and generalized to other iconic buildings in Dubai or elsewhere.

**Keywords:** Dubai, identity, indigenous Emirati, architectural wonders, Burj Al Arab, Burj Khalifa.

## Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

### تأثير عجائب دبي المعمارية على أداء السكان الأصليين اليومي في ضوء الحداثة الثقافية: دراسة مقارنة بين برج خليفة و برج العرب

#### الملخص

من أجل تقليل الاعتماد على النفط و خلق مزيد من الفرص الإقتصادية، شهدت دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة طفرة في التنمية على مدى العقود القليلة الماضية في محاولة لتشجيع السياحة. دبي تحديداً شهدت تطورات معمارية درامية بهدف تحويل المدينة إلى مركز سياحي ومنطقة جذب عالمية. على مدى السنوات القليلة الماضية، بنيت المباني البارزة مثل برج العرب و برج خليفة في أوقات مختلفة لتعزيز الصورة العالمية للمدينة والمبنية على إدخال العناصر التقليدية / المحلية في تشكيل نماذج لا يمكن التعرف عليها تماماً، أي نوعاً جديداً من التصميم. وهكذا، تلك الأيكونات المعمارية تجذب الزوار من الخارج وكذلك المواطنين الإماراتيين /السكان من الداخل. ومع ذلك، فالواحد يتساءل: كيف يتم "تلقي" و "تصور" هذه التطورات المعمارية الكبرى من قبل السكان الأصليين الإماراتيين و أي نوع من الآثار الثقافية تشكل هذه التطورات على الإماراتيين و على نمط الحياة اليومية؟ هذا البحث هو نوعي، إثنوغرافي، و حالة مقارنة و يقوم بإستكشاف الأصوات والآراء الإماراتية بخصوص برج العرب. استناداً إلى النتائج التي توصل إليها الباحثون في بحثهم السابق على برج خليفة بعنوان *الحداثة الثقافية في الفضاء الحضري: أداء السكان الأصليين لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة يومياً حول عجائب دبي المعمارية* (بليبله و الصابر، 2014)، يستعير هذا البحث المنهجية، الإطار النظري و يستكشف نفس السؤال في محاولة للمقارنة بين مدى قابلية المواطنين الأصليين لبرج العرب و برج خليفة في ضوء الحداثة الثقافية. إعتماًداً على القوى المحركة للحياة اليومية كقاعدة للمقارنة، تستكشف الدراسة أوجه التشابه والاختلاف و أنماط بين الموقعين. وتبحث الدراسة أيضاً ما إذا كانت نتائج البحث يمكن أن تمتد و تعمم على المباني البارزة في دبي أو في أي مكان آخر.

**مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية:** دبي، هوية، الإماراتي الأصلي، عجائب الهندسة المعمارية، برج العرب، برج خليفة.



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## Dedication

*To all those who lit my path and made the journey merrier*

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Arabian Peninsula has been settled and occupied by nomads and Bedouins for several decades. The United Arab Emirates is home of the indigenous Emirati population that is originally tribal in nature. Bordered by a 600 km coast, the indigenous Emirati people made use of the natural resources that their land and sea offered. The tidal shallows rich in fish and pearl-bearing oysters enabled them to rely on fishing and pearling as major sources of food and income, respectively (Heard-Bey, 2001). Traditional boats (*dhow*) were used to fish and dive for pearls. Traditional boats and similar “maritime traditions” are an important symbol of Emirati heritage and culture as they symbolize trade to the indigenous Emirati people (Boumansour, 2013, p. 24).

The lifestyle of the indigenous Emirati people and their dependence on fishing and pearl-diving has changed drastically. Today, the indigenous Emiratis are a minority and the UAE nationals constitute 11.4% of UAE’s population (“Population Estimates 2006-2010”, 2014). Their land has undergone changes due to globalisation in the economic, political and even cultural spheres. There has also been an evident change in the architecture and urban setting of UAE’s cities; especially Dubai. Globalization and modernity strike the streets and buildings and accelerate the development process magically (Salama, 1999). Desert villages have transformed into remarkable urban conurbations and Dubai today aims at becoming a global heart of commerce and a top regional tourist destination (Davidson, 2009). This rapidly growing post-industrial city relies on a combination of commerce and tourism for its regional dominance and global image. To create this global image and attract tourists, different aesthetic and philosophical design approaches and themes

are adopted in designing Dubai's numerous landmarks and iconic towers. The change has been tremendous; to the extent that today Dubai and the UAE in general *might* appear to some to be completely deprived of the Emirati essence (Khalaf, 2002; Al-Kodmany and Ali, 2012). An emergent stream of these different approaches deals with reflecting the identity of the place and the people. Asfour (1990) calls it the 'use of history as a design criterion' where history is dealt with and used as a 'frozen' past (p. 72). Modernity prevails in the form of built forms in Dubai and that the city offers an unprecedented example of rapid urban development. However, cultural elements are sometimes integrated into those modern buildings. Jodidio, as cited in Ouiss (2011), mentions that Burj al-Arab and Burj Khalifa, for example, are two of the famous Dubai towers whose design concepts have been derived from cultural elements; the former is designed to look like the sail of a dhow (traditional boat) while the latter has been designed based on a local desert flower. Those two most iconic buildings of the Emirates are highly image-able. Both have an identity of their own and are readable from a certain context: the rising UAE. In addition they are an essential part of the everyday Dubai tourist experience. However, one might wonder about the place of these modern iconic structures in the life and hearts of the indigenous Emiratis and the meaning(s) they associate with them. This raises the question of the modern Emirati cultural identity as represented by iconic architectural design. Ouiss (2011) argues that the integration of traditional and cultural elements in design might be due to the need of the people, in this case the Emiratis, to identify themselves and project their cultural identity. Boon also, as cited in Al Naim (2006a), believes that reviving urban traditional images is a way to have an identity. Borrowing physical elements from other cultures, and especially the western world, is believed by many to be the main reason behind the lack of identity.



That is why re-using traditional images was viewed as the only reason to uphold cultural identity in built environments (Daniel, 1971 and Al Naim, 2006a). It is believed that globalization helps in enhancing cultural identities (Wang, 2007).

Keeping all this in mind, the prime focus of this study is to build on previous research at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014) and to compare the perceptions of the indigenous population at the site of Burj Khalifa to that of Burj Al Arab in light of cultural modernity. This is explained further in the following section.

### 1.1 Research Background

This research builds on, compliments and adds to the significant issue of the everyday cultural interaction of the indigenous Emirati people with architecture and presents itself as a comparative case study of an on-going research by Bleibleh and Al-Saber (2014) to study the implications of Dubai's architectural wonders on the daily indigenous performance in the light of cultural modernity. In their unpublished paper titled *Cultural Modernity in Urban Space: Indigenous Performance of the Everyday in Dubai's Architectural Wonders*, the authors focus on Dubai's iconic Burj Khalifa, shown in figure 1(i). Before moving any further, it is essential to provide a summary of previous study at Burj Khalifa.

The research on Burj Khalifa revolves around the perception of the indigenous Emirati people to the *exterior* physical structure of the iconic tower and whether or not they consider it as a cultural icon. The research participants' actual experience in the site was sought, not their cognitive experience. For this reason, the fieldwork was conducted in the area surrounding the tower where participants could clearly see the structure and be part of its urban space activities as shown in figure 1(ii). The

research was not interested in their feedback regarding the interior space, design or facilities of Burj Khalifa.



Figure 1: (i) Burj Khalifa - Exterior (ii) Location of Fieldwork at Burj Khalifa

### 1.1.1 The Significance of Burj Khalifa

Burj Khalifa, completed in 2010, stands today as a centrepiece at one of the most significant cores of Dubai at around 828 meters i.e. 2,716.5 feet (Baker, 2010). It is a technological achievement and exhibits the highest aspirations of civil engineering. Its height and image has turned it into a landmark known and recognized worldwide. It has made the world records on several occasions. It is the world's tallest building and free-standing structure (Baker and Pawlikowski, 2012; Weigand, 2013). According to Baker (2010), all the details about its structure and design, construction planning, and wind engineering are put together by pioneering minds and technologies. The mixed-use structure contains residential, hospitality, commercial, office, entertainment, shopping and even parking facilities. Burj Khalifa

reflects man's desire of going higher and higher. The burj was intentionally built in such a way so that it becomes an icon of the city Dubai.

The following is a background and summary of most important findings of the former study:

### **1.1.2 Previous Research at Burj Khalifa**

#### **i. Background:**

In March-April 2015, 28 Emirati research participants participated in a research titled *Cultural Modernity in Urban Space: Indigenous Performance of the Everyday in Dubai's Architectural Wonders* (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). The author of this paper played the role of a research assistant and helped in creating the survey, conducted the fieldwork and collected data at the site of Burj Khalifa. Emirati research participants were recognized and randomly selected to answer the 28 questions based on specific developed criteria such as Emirati dressing style, language and dialect etc. The surveys were filled by the participants whenever convenient. Otherwise, questions were asked orally to the research participants and their answers were noted down by the researcher. Research participants were requested to elaborate and explain the reasons behind making their choices.

#### **ii. Summary of Findings of Research at Burj Khalifa**

The questions on the survey were structured based on Bleibleh's (2012) 5As or the driving forces of everyday life, namely: Authenticity, Activism, Ambivalence, Adaptation, and Agency (refer to appendix A). These are discussed in in section 2.3. Generally speaking, the 5As were used as indicators to guide during the investigation and interpretation stages. The questions asked resulted in the emergence of specific themes that helped the author in the investigation of the previously laid research

questions. Referring to appendix A, note that the survey starts with general questions about the research participants' personal background and then seeks to explore each driving force i.e. indicator. Questions that give an indication of *adaptation* seek to explore Burj Khalifa's significance in the everyday Dubai experience while questions about *authenticity* explore the constituents of the 'authentic Emirati identity'. Following these are the questions that investigate the driving forces of *activism* and *ambivalence*, respectively. While the former explores the research participants' views regarding the relationship between Burj Khalifa and daily consumption, the latter emphasizes on studying the impact of Dubai's rapid development on Emirati cultural identity today. Finally, the last set of questions addresses the driving force of *agency* and investigates what cultural Emirati activities are valued by the research participants and who they believe promotes them. The survey was developed in such a way that these five driving forces are used as indicators to collect participant's responses with regard to the architecture of Burj Khalifa, Emirati culture and identity, cultural symbolism and cultural events and activities at/around Burj Khalifa; in doing so answering the research questions. This will be further explained in chapter 3 under section 3.2.

## 1.2 Research Problem Statement

This research on Burj Al Arab is based on and founded upon previously conducted research at the site of Burj Khalifa by Bleibleh and Al-Saber (2014) where interviews are conducted with the indigenous Emirati population, to know "how they think, feel, do, know, believe and expect" (Zeisel, 1984, p. 227). The driving forces of everyday life (Bleibleh, 2012) form the base for the investigation, namely: adaptation, authenticity, activism, ambivalence, and agency. The perception and

reception of the indigenous Emirati population of Burj Al Arab is explored. In addition, their feedback regarding the production of cultural activities and services at the site is sought. The results are finally compared with those at Burj Khalifa and texts are analysed and synthesized. The author looks for similarities, differences and patterns by comparing text within and across the two contexts. The research explores whether or not the results could be generalized to other iconic buildings in Dubai. The details are discussed in the following chapters.

### **1.2.1 The Significance of Burj Al Arab**

This research is set in today's modern Dubai with its architectural wonders and skyscrapers and focuses on studying a specific iconic architectural example in Dubai; namely Burj Al Arab as shown in figure 2. The significance of this structure must be highlighted before diving deep into the research. Burj Al Arab is a significant architectural structure that signalled for the commencement of the development boom in Dubai. Completed in 1999 (Ouiss, 2011), Burj Al Arab marks the start of the building-craze that Dubai has and is still undergoing. Standing on an artificial island in the sea and connected to Dubai's shoreline by a 280 meters private bridge, this building has become an icon of the new Dubai (Bagaeen, 2007). Only hotel residents and those with reservations or permissions are allowed through the security gate. The Burj Al Arab (or Tower of the Arabs) is a hotel by Dubai's waters that holds records as the world's tallest and most luxurious hotel.



Figure 2: Burj Al Arab – Exterior view (Source: Author, 2015)

It is often marketed as the first and only seven-star hotel in the world (Ouiss, 2011 and Bagaen, 2007). It has been and is still considered as an icon of Dubai that represents the tourist-oriented nature of the city. Burj Al Arab is a trendy, frequent tourist destination and that many tourists and Emiratis today at least pass-by the Burj and take a few pictures of it and with it. This might indicate the significance of this structure and how it has become an essential part of Dubai's architectural image and skyline. To establish comparison, this research too is interested in the research participants' actual experience on site and not their cognitive experience. This research is only addressing the *exterior* physical structure of the iconic tower and the indigenous Emirati perception of it as a cultural icon; it is not interested in the interior space, design or facilities of Burj Al Arab. Wherever the research mentions 'at the site of Burj Al Arab' or 'Burj Al Arab site', the author means the area in front of the security gate of Burj Al Arab and the beach as shown (shaded) in figures 3 and 4.

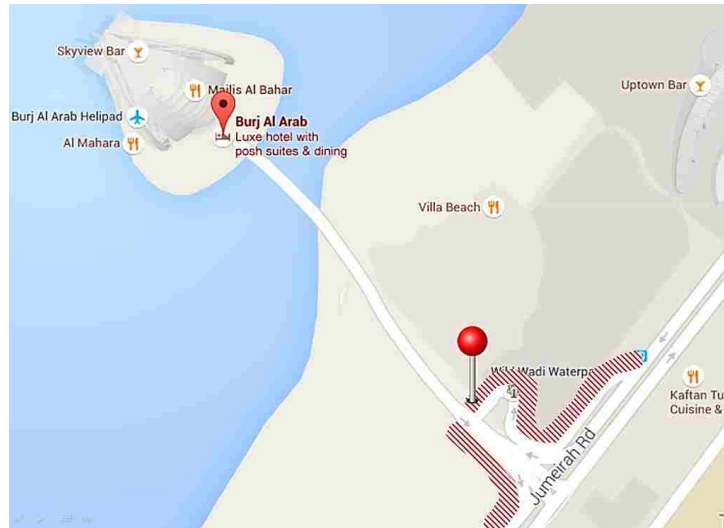


Figure 3: Location of Fieldwork around Burj Al Arab Site (1) (Google maps, 2015)

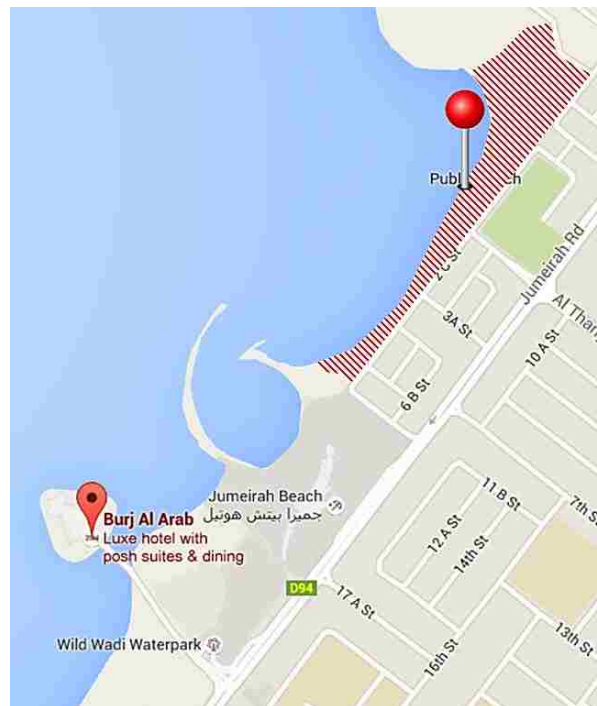


Figure 4: Location of Fieldwork around Burj Al Arab Site (2) (Google maps, 2015)

### 1.3 Research Scope and Objective

The general scope of this study is to establish a comparison between the two sites of Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab with regards to the perception of the Indigenous Emiratis in light of cultural modernism. Based on previous research at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014), this research too explores Emirati

opinions on Burj Al Arab with the sole aim of testing ways in which the two sites are similar or different and whether the research outcome could be extended and generalized to other iconic buildings in Dubai or elsewhere. The research draws on the author's experience as a research assistant when working on the research at Burj Khalifa. Bleibleh's and Al-Samer's (2014) research sparked the author's curiosity and encouraged her to borrow and apply the research model on another iconic landmark in Dubai and examine the results that are produced thereby. Therefore, this research reports a study based on and extends this previous research into the relatively neglected area of cultural identity with respect to Dubai's architectural wonders; specifically Burj Al Arab, considering that plenty of literature addresses the engineering/ scientific perspective of Dubai's most iconic structures while very limited research encompasses the cultural effect of such structures on the indigenous population.

The following paragraphs discuss the other minor objectives that branch out of the main research question of this study:

- i. The study attempts to understand what cultural identity means to the Emirati today and how do they perceive and express their cultural identity; especially in the light of Dubai's architectural wonders and modernity.
- ii. The paper aims at presenting the voice of the indigenous Emirati population and getting their feedback regarding Dubai's rapid architectural development, iconic buildings and landmarks and architectural and cultural identity; thereby revealing the impact of Dubai's architectural wonders on the Emirati cultural identity.
- iii. It explores the role these architectural wonders play in creating cultural experiences amongst the indigenous Emirati population.



- iv. It investigates the role the Emiratis believe they play in the inauguration of such structures.
- v. Besides the voice of the indigenous people, the study seeks feedback from a couple of governmental and cultural institutes to achieve a complete image of the collective feedback with regards to Dubai's cultural identity, architecture and tourism. By doing so, triangulation of data is hoped to be achieved.
- vi. Significantly, the study tackles the issue of Emirati cultural symbols, the meanings associated to them and their importance in the daily lives of the indigenous Emirati people.

Thus, in short, the study explores the interaction between the conservative Emirati culture and the rapid urban build-up of Dubai. It touches upon the issue of cultural identity of the city and investigates the perceptions of the indigenous Emiratis on this matter. The researcher here plays the role of an observer and reflective practitioner. Note that the terms *researcher* and *author* are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

#### 1.4 Research Structure

This section briefly provides a summary of the aim and contents of the following chapters of this research.

- **Chapter 2: Literature Review** - This chapter discusses the relevant literature reviewed for this study and investigation. It presents the opinions of relevant scholars that feed into three major literature bodies: Dubai's Architectural Wonders, Daily Indigenous Performance and Cultural Modernity. It finally presents the theoretical framework adopted by this study that revolves around

cultural resilience and the driving forces of everyday life; both adopted from previous study at Burj Khalifa.

- **Chapter 3: Methods** - This chapter discusses the research methods used in this study. It explains the research design and methodological approach adopted by the study while explaining the mechanism used for data analysis. In addition, it presents the criteria used for sample selection and tools used for investigation. It finally presents the research limitations and what measures the author took to tackle them.
- **Chapter 4: Data Description and Findings** - This chapter introduces the findings and data collected as a result of fieldwork. It explains what type of data was collected using each of the different research tools and the details about the fieldwork.
- **Chapter 5: Discussion and Interpretations** - This chapter provides the comparison between the two sites based on the driving forces of everyday life. It introduces the research participants' voice and opinions as well as that of the governmental and cultural institutes. It compares all data collected in an attempt to come up with similarities, differences or patterns.
- **Chapter 6: Research Impact and Conclusion** - Finally, this chapter discusses the major significant issues and themes resulting from field observation and concludes by listing implications and offering opportunities for future research.

The following chapter discusses the literature reviewed for this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section reviews relevant literature which is later used to build a relevant theoretical framework below in section 2.3. It is essential to describe the main research constructs before moving forward. Globalization and modernity are two different phenomena. Globalization is the door through which the politics, economics, and cultural aspects of one country penetrate into the others' (Tomlinson, 2003) while modernity is the process of "constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation" (Frisby, 2013, p. 21). Berman (2003), as quoted in Cunnigham and Goodbun (2004), believes that modernity embraces both modernization and modernism. He defines the former as "the general process of socio-economic and technological development" and the latter as "the various cultural and/or 'subjective' responses to this process of modernization". Modernity influences many factors of daily life and has an objective and subjective side. The former is reflected in the socioeconomic processes whereas the latter is reflected in personal 'experiences, artistic activities, or theoretical reflections' (Heynen, 1999, p. 10-11). The followings paragraphs discuss the impact of globalization and modernity on Dubai's architectural wonders.

### 2.1 Globalization and Modernity Versus Dubai's Architectural Wonders

Globalization and modernity interfere with the architecture and the urban form of a country; the UAE not being an exception to this fact. Globalization has led directly to the architectural 'mimicry' of places and times. One of the most significant urban trends that Dubai has witnessed over the last few years is neo-

traditional development, which, according to Walters and Brown in their book *Design First* (2004), marks the emergence of traditional built forms and typologies into today's post-modern cities. This urban trend emerged in order to create more attractive and efficient spaces and to attract tourists from a travel market that has become global. These themed spaces also isolate users from the outside world and create a sense of 'elsewhereness' by extracting and applying themes from 'sports, history or popular entertainment' (pg. 101-103). Kanna (2011) argues that the postmodern abstract architecture of Dubai is a product of the collaboration between the local elites and the big-name architects or "Starchitects" and an act of domination by the elites on the politics, histories, and spaces of the city. He also adds that these structures lead to the "erasure of local histories" (Kanna, 2011, p. 80). Al Naim (2006a) believes that it is expected of the people of the Gulf States to resist change, or the new imposed norms, even when it comes to architecture and the built environment due to their strong cultural and religious roots.

With the discovery of oil in the 1960s, Dubai (and the UAE in general) has undergone rapid and significant development in the social, economic, political and even urban spheres (Pacione, 2005; Bagaeen, 2007; Davidson, 2009; Ortega, 2009; Nyarko, 2010). As a result of the oil boom, Dubai has experienced rapidly accelerated modernization especially in the presence of other strategic resources such as migrant workers, foreign investments, corporate services and technological proficiencies (Khalaf, 2002; Nyarko, 2010). Today, Dubai is a relatively small and comparatively new global city that aims at attracting investors and tourists from all over the world. To attain this, the government has invested in high quality infrastructure, created expatriate-friendly environments, and eliminated personal and corporate income taxes. However, in order to survive the future end of the oil boom,

the Emirates as a whole is attempting to decrease its dependence on oil and introduce other sources of income thereby diversifying the economy (Matly and Dillion, 2007; Bagaen, 2007; Ortega, 2009; Nyarko, 2010; Ouis, 2011). Some of the adopted strategies include encouraging local economy and developing sustainable, renewable and clean energy technologies (Aswad, Al-Saleh, and Taleb, 2012; Nyarko, 2010). One of the most significant strategies is that of *tourism* (Bagaen, 2007, p. 173-175; Ouis, 2011; Nyarko, 2010).

Spaces could emerge through standardization of landscapes where the forces of convergence create sameness of locations. This standardization usually occurs due to globalization. However, in other locations forces of divergence create uniqueness and cultural distinctiveness. In the latter case, culture stands out and cultural differentiation is achieved. There is a fear that these mass-produced built forms under the divergence forces might degrade what is taken to be the 'real' authenticity of a local culture. In other words, the manufacturing of reinvented places can lead to loss of cultural identity and authenticity for the sake of financial gain (Carmona, Heath, Oc, and Tiesdell, 2003). With the commencement of the post modernism era, there was a call for many new architectural trends such as: historical revival, historic eclecticism, and historicist attitudes; all of which valued architectural symbolism. Salama (1999) believes that globalization and regionalism side-by-side influence today's architectural development philosophy. All of these trends that revive history criticized modernism as it was only able to reflect an economic, scientific, and technological image. It failed to reflect and satisfy the cultural and emotional aspects of the masses (Salama, 1999). It could be said that cities started to lose their souls and image as a result of modernism (Al Naim, 2006a; Al Naim, 2006b; Asfour, 1990; Salama, 1999). Some scholars believe that "skyscrapers of distinct culturally

inspired forms may improve city's identity and placemaking" (Al Kodmany and Ali, 2012, p. 61). Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab are examples of skyscrapers that are inspired by Emirati cultural symbols. This research adopts Cunningham and Goodbun's (2004) view that at the level of form, artistically speaking, modernity is represented alongside with tradition. They believe that *modernity* has given rise to *modernism* which is nothing but a "cultural or subjective self-consciousness about, and expression of" modernity. It is a process where all 'fixed, fast frozen relations' are in 'constant revolutionizing' (p. 175).

A current global trend in tourism is the desire to create replicas of other cultures and times with regards to architecture and urban spaces in general. Designers even build structures to revive one's own history and culture. Creating themes that can be globally recognized by visitors has been the task of many developers today, Disneyland being one of the better known examples (Alsayyad, 2001, p. 13). These built forms function as utopias and are more like fantasies that create an alternate reality in an ever-growing capitalist world (Davis, 2007). Developers in Dubai tend to focus on building themed parks, hotels resorts and malls that provide, what they claim as, 'unique' and 'authentic' experiences for their visitors. These can even be accessed virtually through media such as films, television and World Wide Web (Alsayyad, 2001).

Dubai attracts tourists from all over the world and in many cases consciously appeals to their perceived taste for tradition. The Jumeirah Mosque, Sheikh Saeed Al-Maktoum's House, Al Ahmadiya School and Heritage House, Hatta Heritage, Old Dubai, Al Bastakiya etc. are some of the many historical sites in Dubai that are marketed to tourists who wish to experience a side of the authentic Emirates ("Historical Places in Dubai", 2015). Several cultural centers and museums have

been established in order to enable the tourists as well as the nationals and residents themselves to experience the traditional indigenous Emirati lifestyle and architecture. In fact, ten museums are currently under construction all over the country and are all themed to reflect ‘the desert’; and the native habitat (Boumansour, 2013). Trilling (as cited in Wang, 1999) believes that museums are the representation of the term ‘authenticity’ when it comes to tourism (p. 350). Museums also display cultural art from neighbouring gulf countries that fall into modern and contemporary categories e.g. the Museum of Middle Eastern Modern Art (MOMEMA) in Al Jadaf. Al Bastakiya and at Nad Al Sheba also witnessed the opening of a numismatic museum and a falconry museum, respectively (Boumansour, 2013). At other times, Dubai integrates historic, vernacular and Islamic elements into its contemporary architecture. Hotels, malls, resorts, theme parks and other tourist attractions frequently take a themed-environment approach that creates historical or museum-like settings, as well as apparent ‘authenticity’ for visitors to enjoy; but with a modern twist where international or western standards are merged with local elements (Said (1978) as cited in Elsheshtawy, 2004; Al Naim, 2006a).

Collective local identity can be achieved if local culture is promoted through the decision makers and designers (Al Naim, 2006b). Some scholars believe that modernity, generally speaking, has always been merged with tradition when it comes to architecture (Al Naim, 2006a, p. 20). In today’s Arab cities, one can sense the nostalgia to the past. Architects and designers try to form a cultural identity by using history as a concept for their designs and by reviving traditional images (Al Naim, 2006a; Salama, 1999; Asfour, 1989). In this context, a building has three major characteristics: image-ability, legibility, and identity. In addition, it is participatory in nature. For a building to be image-able, it reflects and creates a strong image in the

society. This image is not confusing and is easily readable. Only when it is readable, it becomes legible. In addition, a building has an identity if it has a set of characteristics that blend well to form one recognizable whole. Finally, a building is participatory in nature when people are involved in its design and construction and when the building itself becomes a part of their daily experience (Salama, 1999, p. 7; Basson, 2006, p. 1). This phenomenon of reviving traditional images has risen in the Arab world due to the region's 'multi-layers of history' as well as its cultural richness, uniqueness and plurality. However, it could also suggest a lack of 'self-confidence' (Salama, 1999, p. 2 and 86). Other scholars suggest that the evolution of a new architectural style in Dubai is due to the large number of immigrants or 'guestworkers' who participate in designing and building the city (Ouis, 2011).

Out of the many history-inspired design approaches, Salama (1999) explains how some architects/designers opt for the approach of Regionalized where traditional and cultural values are incorporated with new modern functions or local materials are used in the construction of new forms. Asfour (1990) writes about the use of history as a design criterion. He divided the practices that designers and architects adopt into 3 main approaches: visual abstraction, conceptual abstraction and a combination of both using rational thought. Visual abstraction is when traditional and historical elements are visually abstracted and are used only at the imagery level; in a 'photographic' sense. Here, as Asfour explains, 'the process of copying can be literal, or may involve a slight transformation of the model from which it is derived' (p. 73). The second approach is when the designer uses the rules, principles and formulas of the past to create his/her own design. The end product, in this case, might reflect technological advancement only and will not have a cultural aura. The third approach is when a designer/ architect balances between the first two



approaches in such a way that only the features that are relevant to the project are chosen while the others are ignored. Here, rational thinking is used and the end-product will not look like anything historical or traditional. Asfour finally mentions a rare application of history where it is seen as a 'living process' and not as a static entity. People are engaged in the design and spaces are treated as 'autonomous entities' formed by the accretion of the 'design process'; and not a mere end-product (Asfour, 1990, p. 73 - 76).

Carmona et al. (2003) also address the issue of user response and experience in such kind of environments. They argue that the *authenticity* of a place is not important to people in general in terms of physical boundaries, reality of materials and material compositions. Users usually like or dislike a place based on the emotional experience, meaning, feelings, thoughts and associations they make with it. The way people perceive and receive architecture ultimately indicates its public success or failure (Walters and Brown, 2004).

With the architectural boom that the UAE has witnessed, there has been a notable rise in the travel and tourism demand, specifically in Dubai. An estimated 8 million tourist arrival in Dubai and international receipts of \$9.2 billion was recorded by the UNWTO Tourism in 2011. Most of the tourists arriving in Dubai are from neighbouring Middle Eastern countries and 75% of them travel for leisure. It was in the 1990s that Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum opted for tourism as an option to encourage and attract foreign investment and business development. In other words, it was then that tourism was recognized as a viable economic development strategy (Mazza, n.d.). Recently in 2011, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) recorded an increase of 9% in the percentage of international arrivals in UAE (Kovjanic, 2014).

Luxury hotels, residences, shopping malls, entertainment complexes and even office buildings have helped attract investors and consumers from all over the world thereby making the city's market more 'demand-oriented' (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990, p. 23 as quoted in Bagaee, 2007). Dubai has since then succeeded in its game and attracted buyers to many of its huge projects such as Dubai Marina, Emirates Hills, Jumeirah Islands, Jumeirah Beach Residences, the Meadows, the Springs and Arabian Ranches (Bagaee, 2007). All this has naturally led to a rapid building boom that is being advertised and campaigned for in today's media and that has projected Dubai's position on the world map. Bagaee (2007) believes that the "purpose" of Burj Al Arab was "to create an image of progress and dynamism where the fastest, biggest, most amazing structures are being built in order to attract the affluent and the talented, all essential to the consolidation of the successful Dubai brand, epitomized" by what was the tallest tower (321 metre) built at that time (p. 177). Lstiburek and Eng (2009) believe that Burj Al Arab is the "most beautiful buildings in the world" (p. 78). General information about the Burj Al Arab is displayed in table 1. Before moving any further in this research, it is essential to discuss the architecture and design of this iconic structure.

Architect(s)	Tom Wright (Ouiss, 2011; Bagaee, 2007; and Smith, 2011)
Developers	WS Atkins and Partners (Smith, 2011)
Type of Use	Hospitality (Hotel)
Design Approach Used	Regionalized Modernism

Table 1: The Burj Al Arab – General Information

The traditional Emirati yacht shown in figure 5 inspired the design of Burj Al Arab. When it comes to cultural reference/ symbolism, the design is supposed to reflect the traditional seafaring heritage of Dubai and the building was shaped after the sail of the traditional Emirati boat or yacht also known as *dhow* (Wright (2000) as cited in Ludbrook, n.d.). Therefore, the sail is the main symbolic physical elements that formed the base of the whole design.



Figure 5: Traditional Emirati Yacht (“DTCM to Stage Traditional”, 2015)

The whole building was made to blend with the surroundings and appear like a giant yacht sailing the waters of Dubai using a traditional concept and modern materials to produce a rather new look. Many architects, designers, Emiratis and non-Emiratis are awed by the architecture and design of this building. The structure of Burj Al Arab is a 305 meter tall air-conditioned tent with fabric cladding and glass sides. Steel profiles form the skeleton of the building. The front façade, however, is covered with a double skin of translucent white cloth screen that is stretched by the structure itself. What makes the design of this building fascinating is that it is located in the middle of a desert (Lstiburek and Eng, 2009). Scholars believe that Burj Al Arab has a captivating design. Lstiburek and Eng (2009) write: “I saw it first in the middle of the day. I came back that night and then again twice during the next few days. It’s

that kind of a building. Architect Tom Wright created a masterpiece. The structural engineering is equally impressive” (p. 78). Although scholars in the area of Building Science draw attention to the negative environmental effects of the air-ventilation system/ technology employed in Burj Al Arab, the tower nevertheless is an architectural spectacle. The architectural glass and curtain wall design used in this tower are proof that the design was meant to blow minds. Today, Burj Al Arab stand along with the many glass towers of Dubai that give the city the modern-vibe (Lstiburek and Eng, 2009).

Dubai’s architecture and cultural identity are topics that are often debated over in today’s scholarly discussions. Scholars argue whether or not Dubai’s iconic architecture has a cultural identity that reflects the people and place (Khalaf, 2002; Al-Kodmany and Ali, 2012). There is plenty of literature that discusses the marriage between vernacular elements and western or international standards in architecture and design (Asfour, 2007; Mahgoub, 2007; Salama, 2007). Little though do the indigenous people participate in such discussions and rarely does one find dedicated research that focuses on exploring the feedback of the common Emirati people themselves with respect to such design approaches. This study, however, concerns itself with tackling this issue specifically focusing on establishing a comparative study between Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab regarding their cultural impacts on the indigenous population; presenting itself as a comparative case study based on research at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014).

## **2.2 The Indigenous Emiratis**

### **i. Definition of Indigenous People**

It is very significant for this research to define what is meant by ‘indigenous’ people. According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the

Indigenous People are those “who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived” (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2008, p. 59). They practice unique traditions and retain their social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that differentiate them from the dominant societies/ groups in their area. Indigenous people often self-identify and accept fellow-members of their community. According to Steyaert and Hjorth (2008), indigenous people can be identified through the following points:

- The history of indigenous populations continues and extends before colonial or settler societies
- Indigenous people have strong links and access to natural territories and resources of the region
- They have distinct social, economic or political systems
- They are characterized by a distinct language (dialect), culture and beliefs
- In most cases, they form non-dominant groups of the society
- They recognize themselves as distinctive people/ communities and maintain/ reproduce their ancestral environments and systems

ii. The Indigenous Emiratis and Cultural Identity

Although the Emiratis are a minority in their own country, they share the same culture, language, and even religion with most of the neighbouring gulf and Arab countries (Kovjanic, 2014). The indigenous Emiratis have a ‘prominent presence’ amongst the swarm of South Asians, Arab and Western populations. Caesar, a renowned academician at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), describes this presence as ‘a strong sense of identity’ where ‘the Emirati people themselves that carry the history, the past, the present and the future all in the manner in which they live their lives’ (Caesar (n.d.) as cited in Al Khazraji, 2011, p. 19). She also argues

that the indigenous Emiratis have not succumbed completely to the images of commercialism and globalisation that are prevailing in the UAE today. She explains how the deep relationship of the Emiratis to their culture and religion and their abidance to the historical, traditional and tribal norms has enabled them to endure the external ‘pressures’ exerted as a result of globalization (Al Khazraji, 2011). Identity is a complex concept that cannot be applied or felt just by imposing ‘a set of regulations or borrowing images from the past’ but is indeed an ‘every day practice’ instilled by ‘encouraging some cultural experiences which have become accepted over time’ (Al Naim, 2006b, p. 141-143). Cultural identity is identity that acts like an ‘upsurging power of local culture’ that ‘offers resistance to the centrifugal force of capitalist globalization’ (Tomlinson, 2003, p.270). Al Khazraji (2009) believes that to study the people of the Emirates, one must study their traditions and historical heritage. Al Naim (2006a) adds that understanding the identity reflected in a physical environment, involves exploring the social and cultural frames of the people inhabiting the space as well as their beliefs and the devices used to communicate those beliefs (Al Naim, 2006a). Understanding people’s behaviour in a physical environment involves the consideration of their past experiences “because they always use these experiences to evaluate the present and decide about the future” (Al Naim, 2006b, p. 160).

Heard-Bey (2001) explains how the indigenous Emirati families today can all be traced back to either one of the two original ancestral Arab tribes; namely *Adnan* and *Qahtan*, through their family name. In 1904, the Government of India enlisted the Emirati tribes present at that time during a visit to Sharjah and concluded that there were a total of 44 tribes of a total population of 80,000 people. The largest and the most prominent Bedouin tribes were the Bani Qitab and the Bani Yas tribes.

Many of the tribes flowed in from Yemen through Oman, which explains the linguistic similarities between the two countries. Tribes moved in from Central and Northern Arabia too. The largest movement of tribes to this geographical region happened in the second century AD where numerous tribes moved to an area called Tuwwam; presently in the city of Al Ain. People lived in different topographical areas of the land: coastal towns, the mountains, deserts and oases (p. 98 - 114).

The UAE's culture and traditions, like almost all other Arab countries, mainly and deeply evolve from religion, tribal and familial relationships. An individual, thus, is *always* part of a group (Heard-Bey, 2001, p. 98; Al Khazraji, 2009, p. 17 - 19). Shared history, cultural experiences, as well as geographical aspects are some other influences on the Emirati culture and traditions. The indigenous Emirati people follow a set of social norms that they have inherited through ages from their great ancestors. The desert, the oases, the date palm, and the camel are some of the symbolic elements that were always part of the Emirati history and lifestyle (Heard-Bey, 2001). Béteille (1998) believes that what distinguishes the indigenous people from 'outsiders' is their habitat, language and dialect. The tribal background, the Arabic language and the religion of Islam welds the indigenous Emirati population strongly together. They dress the same and eat the same; they form 'one homogenous society' (Heard-Bey, 2001, p. 114). In fact, "Arab countries of the Middle East share a similar culture, values, language and belief. Religion shapes the culture, attitudes and values of society. Islam is the main link between the people of the region - it is not merely a religion, it is a way of life" (Kovjanic, 2014, p. 41). Scholars believe that without an understanding of Islam, many aspects of life in the Middle East remain unclear as it defines events in both private and business life (Al-Naim, 2006a,

Al Khazraji, 2011 and Kovjanic, 2014). It is safe to say that this is what binds this little pack of people into one strong mass.

Traditional physical environments in the gulf cities developed from simple homes that were clustered into a series of social systems into organized spaces and territories. It was through the *Fereej* (socially and physically grouped forms) that individuals recognized their clan. These often displayed the family name of the residents and expressed the ancestry and continuity of the generations that lived in that particular physical form. People's lifestyle, norms, culture, customs and values were reflected by these built forms through which all sorts of social interaction took place. These places projected a certain 'image' that the people were proud of (Al Naim 2006a, p. 166 - 168).

Al Khazraji (2009) argues that it is often "misdirected and misunderstood" that the UAE "has little to no history or cultural heritage perhaps due to its sudden and rapid modernization" and forces of "commercialism and globalization" (p. 16). He explains how hotels, shopping malls, and leisure facilities assist in creating this impression to outsiders and create a sense of "acculturation" or at least a "culture of commercialization (p. 16). Some scholars support the notion that the UAE is, indeed, a land of rich culture and tradition that is still lively and is evergreen. Boumansour (2013) mentions how the Emirates witnessed the birth of different kinds of arts such as weaving and falconry. He and other authors explain how Dubai has served as a lively trading post for many years and a place of cultural interaction. Its lands were rich in palm and olive trees while the seas were source of fish and pearl. Boumansour (2013) explains how the UAE as a country continues to cherish, protect and revive its cultural heritage. He adds that the Emirati people are known for their "generosity". He also acknowledges the efforts put by the "seven emirates of the federation" to



“enhance their heritage” by establishing “a major network of museums that catalogue, collect, protect, restore and display to the public the treasures of their geographical and historical past” (p. 24). Identity, culture and tradition here is not a static term but an everyday lifestyle. Museums are nothing but a means to display and preserve Emirati culture that is simultaneously practised through the daily interactions and behaviour of the Emiratis themselves. What has changed today is the architectural ‘image’ of the country along with the overall ethnic composition. People from numerous cultural backgrounds reside in Dubai today as the city’s policy itself is to target foreign tourists and entrepreneurs. Boumansour (2013) believes that the indigenous Emirati population has been very ‘open’ to other cultures. He states that the Emiratis are people of deep cultural identity and it is their knowledge about themselves and their roots that enabled them to successfully build cultural bridges with ‘outsiders’ (p. 24).

Tradition and culture are ever changing with the change of times. They are also not passively accepted or handed down by older generations and are not a fixed set of beliefs, values and practices which today’s generation readily adopts. However, tradition and culture, indeed, are an ‘everyday-politics’ where people, institutions, decision makers, developers and even the media play an active role in shaping them (Al Naim, 2006b, p. 141 - 142). Sometimes, tradition is even invented and a set of values from the past are selected and mobilized in contemporary practices. Al Naim believes that people use different communication systems, which include the built environment, to distinguish them and to express their identity. In an effort to maintain a relationship between their physiological and psychological needs, people will resist and repel any element that suppresses their identity and prevents them from expressing themselves (Morley and Robins, 1995; Al Naim, 2006a).

In addition, culture is shared and includes expectations of people's behaviours in different situations (Deal, Prince and CCL, 2007 and Wang, 2007). The cultural composition of Dubai is constituted of different cultures and communities; all of which play a vital role in creating the everyday cultural experience. Scholars propose that culture of a person is the result of micro and macro factors. Micro-factors root back to the individual and include his/her own believes/ values, perception, experience and attitudes/ feelings. On the other hand, macro-factors root back to the community or cultural group and include symbols, religion, norms/ rituals, values, language etc. (Hauser, n.d.). Culture not only includes values and beliefs that one holds deeply but also includes 'expectations about how people will behave in particular situation' (p. 7). This research investigates what the indigenous Emiratis themselves believe constitutes their cultural identity in light of the architectural boom in Dubai. The Emirati cultural identity is constituted of many 'sub-identities' as shown in figure 6. Religion, Ethnicity, Nationalism, and even the country's role in the global world all contribute to the formation of a unique Emirati Cultural Identity (Al Sumaiti, 2014).

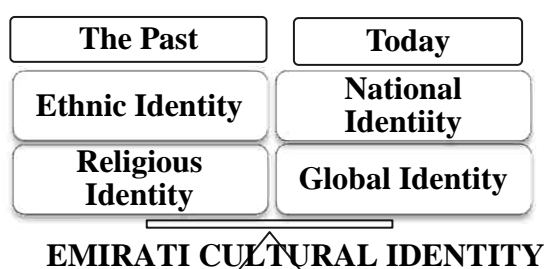


Figure 6: Emirati Cultural Identity (Al Sumaiti, 2014)

Al Khazraji concludes that decision making today is still in the hands of the same families and tribes that held and exercised power in the past using the example of the late Sheikh Zayid Al Nahyan and the ruling families of most of UAE's seven

emirates. Though the UAE has adopted a modern approach with regard to its economic and social systems, the form and content of its political dimension remains traditional until today.

Blagg (2011), as quoted by Putt (2013) in her work *Conducting Research with Indigenous People and Communities*, emphasizes that research involving the indigenous people should consider “cultural sensitivity, willingness to partner and to involve communities in both processes and outcomes, and that Indigenous people see some benefits from the research” (Putt, 2013).

Since the architectural boom in Dubai (of which Burj Al Arab is a part of) is tightly bound to tourism and place-branding, reviewing the role of cultural institutes and organizations and the extent of their interference with the everyday life in Dubai seems apt. The Central and Local Governments of the UAE put in a lot of effort to preserve and sustain the cultural heritage of the UAE as well as use it as a primary source of income. To influence the economic, public and even social aspects of the city, Dubai’s ruling party and big investors fund large corporations like Emaar, Dubai Holdings, the Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD), Dubai World etc. (Lee and Jain, 2009). It is very necessary to focus on social institutions around which the cultural identities are organized in order to apply a resilience perspective to cultural systems (Crane, 2010). The following paragraphs briefly touch upon the role and impact of governmental and cultural institutes on 1) the physical space as well as 2) people’s perception of their own cultural identity and their feedbacks regarding those cultural institutes:

- **Impact of Cultural Institutes on People’s Perception and Cultural Identity:**

The governmental and cultural institutes broadcast an image of the Emirati cultural identity to the world through the use of media and social networks.

Cultural institutes throw light on all activities and events held in Dubai all year round while significantly highlighting its iconic architectural destinations. The Official Twitter Account of DTCM tweets and updates its 85,000+ followers about all of Dubai's destination spots, cultural events and activities on a daily basis. It is a two way channel where communication between followers and the DTCM is made possible ("Dubai Tourism", 2015). Although this research does not dive deep into the particular official webpages and accounts of the DTCM, a quick search on Twitter reveals how active the DTCM is and how frequently the account is mentioned by other Twitter users.

Similarly, the official website of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority also displays cultural symbols and elements of pride with the aim of preserving the Emirati heritage, traditions and culture thereby enriching the cultural scene, enhancing cultural diversity and social cohesion ("Live Our Heritage", 2015). It also lists with frequent updates the annual events and activities to be held in Dubai with details on venues, timings and days. The leading figures of many such governmental organizations and institutes are young Emirati leaders ("Dubai Culture and Arts Authority", 2015).

In addition to attracting tourists and visitors, promoting the Emirati cultural identity is a prime goal for the government. Dubai has cultural institutes and centers that have been established only to promote Emirati cultural identity and daily broadcast plenty of cultural data on their various online media platforms. DTCM, for example, describes to the visitors of its webpage how the Emirati national dress is a symbol of 'pride' and 'dignity' ("Heritage & Culture of Dubai", 2015). Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Center for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU) is an example of a non-profit organization in Al

Fahaidi district of Dubai aims at promoting and explaining Emirati culture to tourists and visitors as well as spread awareness. It was established in 1998 after a vision of Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum with the slogan of “Open doors. Open minds”. SMCCU holds lectures, classes, shows and various cultural activities and events 5 days of every week (“About Us”, 2015). Their official website is their portal to reach out to tourists and those interested in knowing more about the Emirati culture.

- **Impact of Cultural Institutes on Physical Space:** Since Dubai has adopted tourism as a strategy and catalyst for development, the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) was established in 1989 with the aim of making Dubai the world’s number one travel destination by 2020 hence boosting the overall economy (Henderson, 2006 and Mazza, n.d.). Those governmental cultural institutes have impacted the development of physical space in the country in the several ways. Besides establishing cultural centers and museums, the government and the DTCM also supervise the development of deluxe/ first-class hotels in Dubai. However, recently, DTCM encourages investment and promotes tourist projects rather than participating actively in its development (Mazza, n.d.).

The Dubai government in general pours a lot of effort in the cultivation of culture. Housing estates are built to resemble traditional elements e.g. the Palm Island projects are man-made islands with luxurious housing equipped with parks, shopping malls, and marinas; the whole island is shaped like a date palm (Hellebrand, Fernandez, and Stive, 2004). The government also establishes

cultural institutes. These places serve as 1) cultivators and preservers of culture, as well as 2) tourist attractions (Burns and Novelli, 2008).

All these projects which include cultural production have put Dubai in the media spotlight. Dubai presents culture with a modern twist that appeals to most. Today, the city is portrayed as a developed and sophisticated destination by the DTCM; a place where the East meets West and where tolerance and cosmopolitanism are significantly stressed (Mazza, n.d.).

As mentioned in the paragraphs above, similar cultural events, museums and institutions can be noticed in all of the other emirates. Official backing and encouragement is offered to activities such as camel racing, traditional boating and poetry competitions in order to preserve these for the future Emirati generations (Heard-bey, 2001, p. 114).

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

On the basis of the author's review of the relevant literary sources, a theoretical framework is developed for this study with the purpose of connecting established theory of research variables with research questions, collected data and analysis. This framework will function as a fruitful tool when comparing results at both sites i.e. Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa, by investigating the views of the indigenous Emirati population with respect to cultural identity and architectural modernity. The discussion in this section includes presenting a theoretical background of every concept on which the investigation is based upon, namely: modernity and regionalized modernism in Dubai, cultural resilience and driving forces of everyday life. These concepts are then linked to the methodology to help answer the research questions.

### 2.3.1 Modernity and Cultural Resilience

The world's greatest cities that aspire to be the centres of finance, tourism and entertainment often adopt the skyscrapers theme in their urban setting; Dubai being a famous example (Al Kodmany and Ali, 2012). Before diving deep into the research, it is essential to understand the general symbolism behind Dubai's high-rise architectural wonders. Dubai is famous for its tall glass surfaced skyscrapers. According to Ouis (2011), skyscrapers are "perhaps one of the most important manifestations of human power over nature and a prominent sign of modernity" (p. 1410-1411). Modernity is clearly reflected by the architecture of this city. Octavio Paz, as quoted by Heynen (1999) in *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique* says that modernity has no equivalent in other civilizations and that it is an exclusively Western concept. In the age of globalization, designers and governmental institutions are the new players that impose those new norms (for economic, political gains etc.) and are partly responsible for breaking the relationship people have with their physical settings. Sasaki (2004), in his work *Globalization and National Identity in Japan*, quotes Castells' words regarding globalization and identity in which he states that: "Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity" (p. 69). Ouis (2002), as cited in *Engineering the Emirates: The Evolution of a New Environment*, believes that 'the legitimization of power is grounded in history, tradition and culture as well as in modern development strategies' (Ouis, 2011, p. 1411). The book *Spaces of Identity* mentions how different mechanisms of integration are involved in keeping human societies closely bonded. These bonds do not necessarily have to be cultural but could also be 'based on territory, or on kinship links through the economic links of exchange and the market, or through political structures' (Morley and Robins, 2002, p. 47).

As a result of globalization, Dubai is a home and a destination for residents and visitors from around the globe. It is a fact that the indigenous Emirati population is a minority in their own land. Despite the adversity, the indigenous population is able to adapt to and coexist with the rapidly changing cultural and social demographic of the country. This process of positive adaptation is what scholars' term as resilience (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008). Although resilience can occur on an individual level, scholars believe that resilience is supported by characteristics of the environment and the culture. In fact, culture is one of the most significant factors affecting resilience (Ehrensaf & Tousignant, 2006). Healy (2006) (as cited in Fleming and Ledogar, 2008, p.3) defines cultural resilience as: "the capacity of a distinct community or cultural system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness". Through cultural resilience, whole communities or entire cultural systems influence and impact the resilience of the individual. In addition, specific contexts (socioeconomic status, geography, and culture), domain, and even age influence the process of resilience (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008). This portrayal of Emirati identity allows "flexible citizens" to use their "pluralist identities and neoliberal concerns" to reconcile those traditionally perceived pressures (Kanna, 2011, p. 143).

Research about cultural resilience is very scanty and is confined to Aboriginal people (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008). This research contributes to that part of literature that concerns itself with cultural resilience in the indigenous Emirati population. In her study *Everyday life spatial oppression and resilience under the Israeli Occupation: The case of the old town of Nablus, Palestine* (Bleibleh, 2012) as well as her peer reviewed article titled *Walking Through Walls: The Invisible War*



(Bleibleh, 2015), Bleibleh proposes a relational model, as shown in figure 7 that is used here to understand the different factors and aspects involved in the phenomenon of daily Indigenous Emirati Resilience. The relational model is borrowed to present the Indigenous Emirati Resilience as a product of interaction between 3 major

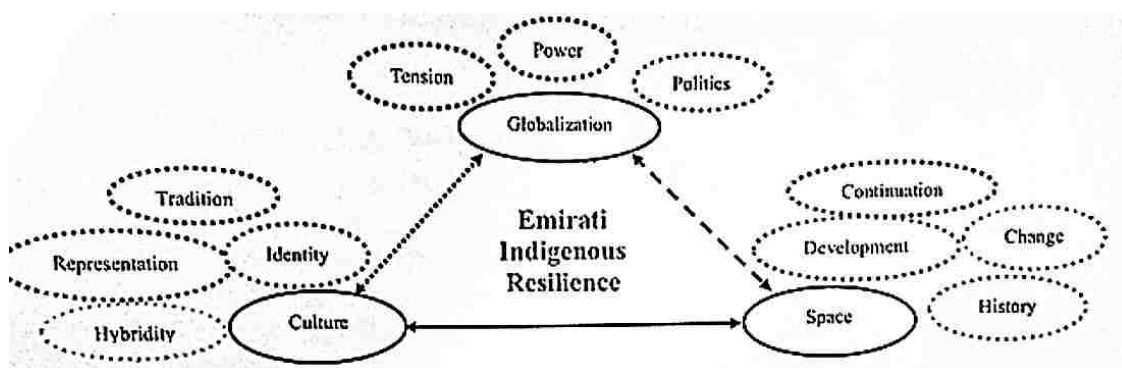


Figure 7: Research Relational Diagram Model (Bleibleh, 2012)

dimensions: Culture, Space and Globalization. Since globalization and inter-worlds-dependency are necessary for advancement and development today, influences of several other systems, namely economic, ecological, political, psychological and cultural etc. participate in shaping an individual's personal world (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008 and Richardson, 2004) and places (Bürgi, Hersperger and Schneeberger, 2004). Each of these dimensions has its own factors and dynamics. These systems or "vulnerabilities" or "risk factors" could even be in the form of fear of "historical loss". Fortunately, cultural resilience offers opportunities for supportive action (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008). The investigation in this research is based on these 3 aspects: globalisation, culture and place. *Globalization*, for instance, is influenced by socioeconomic, political, technological and cultural driving forces (Bürgi, Hersperger and Schneeberger, 2004). Also culturally speaking, The *Emirati* individual is also a result of micro and macro cultural factors (Hauser, n.d.). *Place*

too is perceived based on its cultural symbolism, physical form and activities (Najafi and Shariff, 2011). In addition, the research embraces the idea that cultural identity has two aspects: continuity and differentiation. The former is an individual's desire to convey/transmit a set of values or a particular perception within a certain community while the latter is an individual's desire to communicate a self-image to the outside world/ other groups. That makes it possible to maintain the continuity aspect of group identity (Canter, 1977).

These concepts are integrated into the research inquiry to seek answers from the research participants themselves. After exploring both the concepts of modernity and cultural resilience, the researcher believes that these two concepts have an inversely proportional relationship. Investigating the existence and impact of these two concepts in the narrations of the research participants is what the research aims at doing.

### **2.3.2 Driving Forces of Everyday Life**

Besides exploring the dimensions mentioned in the earlier section with respect to the city of Dubai, this research aims at exploring the meaning of cultural identity through the narratives and perceptions of the indigenous population itself. In order to do that, this research adopts Bleibleh's (2012) model, shown in figure 8, titled "the inseparable phenomenon of the driving forces and inter-dynamics of everyday life". In this study, everyday life translates to "everyday practices, "ways of operating" or doing things" (De Certeau, 1998, p. 12). The author explores everyday Emirati life with respect to cultural production and social interactions in the Emirati context. De Certeau (1998) believes that "these "ways of operating" constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users re-appropriate the space organized by techniques

of sociocultural production” (p. 15). Some scholars like Highmore (2002) believe that everyday life should not be reduced “to an arena for the reproduction of dominant social relations”. Instead, alongside the reproduction of cultural and social meaning, everyday life is also viewed “as a site of resistance, revolution and transformation” (p. 17). He also adds that everyday life, for the most part, “goes by unnoticed”. This is also the case even as it (everyday life) is “being revolutionized” (Highmore, 2002, p. 23). Everyday life describes the social worlds of small groups of people and can be narrated in the form of stories by the people themselves and includes their everyday activities. It therefore seems apt to adopt the everyday life model to investigate the research questions in the Emirati context. Bleibleh’s (2012) model proposes that everyday resilience impacts people’s perceptions of cultural spatiality and representation. In addition, globalization influences their narratives on their experience in global space. All this occurs in light of the five driving forces of everyday life, namely: Authenticity, Activism, Ambivalence, Adaptation, and Agency, discussed in detail in the following section and scholarly work regarding those 5 concepts is reviewed. Those everyday inter-dynamics and the driving forces occur simultaneously and are part of the bigger picture of the indigenous Emirati resilience. These driving forces served as indicators to help understand the research participant’s narratives and views in the previous study at Burj Khalifa and are adopted in this study as well.

The study establishes a comparison between the two sites i.e. Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab by exploring the Emirati voices with regards to three main bodies of literature: Dubai’s architectural wonders, cultural modernity and daily indigenous performance. These bodies of literature are explored using the five driving forces of everyday life as shown in figure 9 below. This is discussed again in chapter 3.

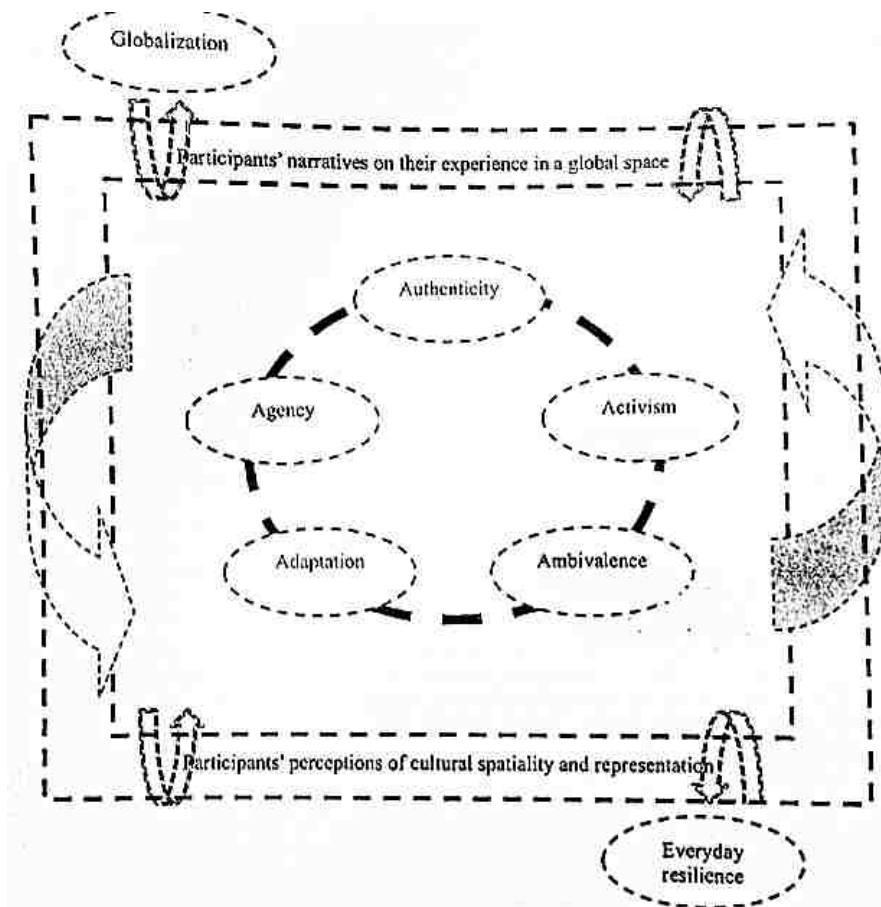


Figure 8: The Inseparable Phenomenon of the Driving Forces and Inter-dynamics of Everyday Life (Bleibleh, 2012)

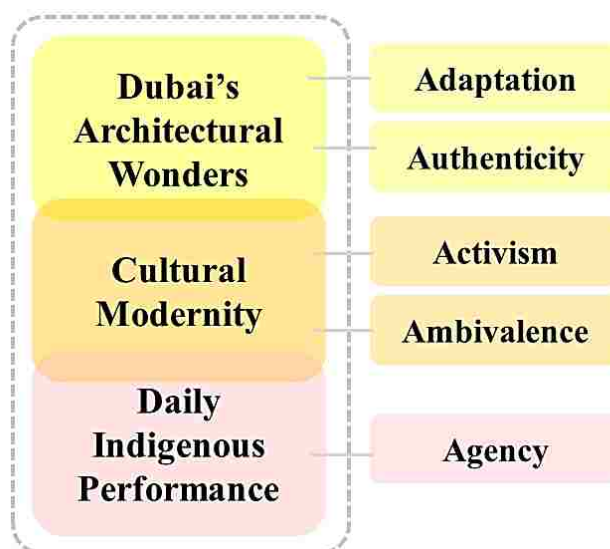


Figure 9: Driving Forces of Everyday Life Used to Explore Bodies of Literature

Scholars believe that everyday life along with its constituents i.e. activities, interests, and rules and styles of engagement etc. can be well described through ethnography (Griffin, 2000; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Lofland, 2002; Parker, 2005; Wolcott, 1999). That is why this study also adopts ethnography as a methodological approach. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

i. Adaptation:

People usually adapt to economic influences on culture and behaviour and to social micro-evolution (Goldschmidt, 1965). It is interesting to explore adaptation to changes in urban form in the light of tourism. Indeed, tourism leads to commoditization of areas (Cohen, 1988, pp. 371-372). Thomas Wright, designer of Burj Al Arab, states: “If you can draw a building with a few sweeps of the pen and everyone recognizes not only the structure but also associates it with a place on earth, you have gone a long way towards creating something iconic (Ludbrook, n.d.)”. Those iconic buildings then become national and cultural landmarks that aid in the phenomenon of tourism.

Banet-Weiser (2012) states that economic exchange formulates cultural meaning in today’s developing world. She adds that this takes place through ‘our own labor, as selves seeking to gain recognition and voice in the world’. This (economic exchange) completely reroutes a nations (or individual’s) perception of authenticity (p. 7). Those kind of cultural symbols are important since they constantly remind the indigenous population of their culture and heritage. Those *authentic* shared symbols help in creating a sense of belonging to one nation (Gilbert, 1998). Speaking from an architectural and urban perspective, Boon (1982), as quoted by Al Naim (2008), states how important it is to revive and re-use traditional urban images to ‘have an identity’. Al Naim (2006a) also quotes Al-Nowaiser (1983) words

where he explains how “a genuine sense of identity” could be formed only when “valid features of architectural heritage” are added to today’s contemporary urban forms (pg. 32). Thereby a sense of *attachment* to the place is created. This as Najafi and Shariff (2011) explain is formed when a place offers some sort of cultural symbolism, recognizable physical form as well as set of activities.

ii. Authenticity:

Cultural authenticity is a very complex issue. In fact, it can be defined in so many different ways based on individual and/ or collective sociocultural contexts. Fox and Short (2003) believe that “all have different points of view about authenticity that they each feel strongly about based on their own sociocultural experiences and philosophical views” (p. 3). In architecture and urban planning too, cultural authenticity can be viewed and understood differently. Relatively new buildings can turn into cultural symbols as well with the passage of time; this is called ‘emergent authenticity’, as proposed by Cohen (1988). This is often noticed in tourism and commoditization where those new developments do not ‘necessarily destroy the meaning of cultural products’, but may alter ‘or add new meanings to old ones’ (Cohen, 1988, pp. 371-372). The study attempts to explore the meaning Emiratis associate with regard to Burj Al Arab.

iii. Activism:

Markussen (2011) defines activism as: “representing the idea of design playing a central role in (i) promoting social change, in (ii) raising awareness about values and beliefs (climate change, sustainability, etc.) or in (iii) questioning the constraints of mass production and consumerism on people’s everyday life” (p. 1). Design activism, in this research, is discussed in the context of architecture. It involves building and designing structures that encourage positive “social,

institutional, environmental and/or economic change” (Fuad-Luke, 2009, p.27). While design activism encourages economic development, it is strictly anti-consumerist (Fuad-Luke 2009). It discourages the directly proportional relationship between design and consumption. This was called Radical design activism approach in the 1960s (Sparke (1990) as cited in Marttila (2011)) and still exists today the form of design criticism and participatory design etc. (Marttila, 2011). Thorpe (2011) states that a good design which provides “general improvements to daily life that are most often gained through private consumption, accessed according to the consumer’s ability to pay, whether the consumer is an individual, company, or other entity” does not constitute activism (p. 1). However, Lefebvre’s (1991) believes in the logic of commodity where the rhythm of capital dictates how everyday life is lived. Kanna (2011) complements by stating that citizens are demobilized “through the conflation of consumerism with progress and modernity” (p. 161-162).

It is feared that even self-identity is commoditized today for economic gains (Martilla, 2011). Even modern media has engaged people/ consumers in fake fantasies thereby aiding consumer culture on all levels (Zizek, 2002). Significantly, the emergence of new global economic centers and the accelerated the formation of urban centers has been made possible due to technological innovations and growing global interconnectivity of the past decades (Al-Sayegh, 1998). Morley and Robins (2002) explain how media too plays a great role in forming this ‘collective memory’ that is accepted by the masses as ‘identity’ (p. 47). The research adopts the notion that media plays a significant role in projecting a specific cultural image and identity on the UAE. The research seeks to explore the influence of media on the research participants’ perceptions and narratives.

Martilla (2011) encourages the promotion of design activism on urban scale by stating that: “urban design activism could be described as a distributing of urban space and time and constructing alternative ways for individuals to participate and take part in a ‘common’ public environment”. This need to change and stand for the minority, as Thorpe (2011) explains, is what constitutes activism. On the relationship between a good design and activism, Thorpe (2011) states that a good design “constitutes general improvements to daily life that are most often gained through private consumption, accessed according to the consumer’s ability to pay, whether the consumer is an individual, company, or other entity” (p. 1). It is well known that Burj Al Arab is one of the most expensive hotels in the world and is not affordable by the common Emirati. Exploring activism in this regard is what this study attempts to do.

iv. Ambivalence:

Recently buildings in the gulf, in general, ‘have lost their traditional identities and have become hybrids of exotic character in their architectural form, main concepts, arrangement of spaces, organization of elements, and building techniques employed’. There is also a fascination and attraction to ‘Western’ design and images which to many people, reflect a sense/ image of economic and technological development (Al Naim, 2008, pg. 30 - 31). Kanna (2011) believes that “flexible citizens” who “reject the nostalgia and conservatism” are the ones who agree to “balance the traditions with modernity” in favour “of modernizing and entrepreneurial missions” (p. 166). Banet-Weiser (2012) explains how people today are attracted to assemblages of contemporary capitalism where branded self-identity and branded culture are advertised to attract consumers. She calls this commercial culture and states that it’s deeply implanted in today’s urban life. Inauthentic



commerce exists in a branded society. It is born in places/ cities where rapid developments took place. In such cities, there is a struggle between maintaining cultural authenticity and branding an inauthentic culture for economic benefits. Banet-Weiser (2012) describes this as a transitional phase and terms it as ambivalence. She explains how it is the result of rapid development and that accepting this stage of confusion is the solution to get through it safely. This is evident in the case of Dubai. However, the study explores whether or not the Emiratis are aware of this phase.

v. Agency:

Agency is a cultural phenomenon where people participate in creating personal meanings, thereby making and remaking culture. Even choosing consumer products is an act of making culture. Many scholars believe that society is composed of human behaviours (Ratner, 2001) and has a very personal attribute (Valsiner, 1988). While individuals are free to accept, reject, or modify personal meanings in a society (Valsiner, 1998), meanings are not reducible to interpersonal decisions (Hacking, 1999, p. 24; cf. Mayfield and Thorne, 1992, as cited in Ratner, 2001). Members of a subculture share collective cultural meanings which are inspired and controlled by socially organized activities. Studies have shown that native language competence and cultural practices are possible resilience factors (Flick, 1998). Bhaskar (1989) (as quoted in Ratner 2001) believes that agency does not lead society; but the socially related individuals initiate agency starting from a social basis. He adds that, “the social cannot be reduced to (and is not the product of) the individual [and] society is a necessary condition for any intentional human act at all...Society is both the ever-present condition and the continually reproduced

outcome of human agency (p. 34). Micro (individual) and macro (society and cultural group) factors both play a role in culture formation (Hauser, n.d.).

Scholars believe that production of culture by Indigenous people helps in preserving tradition which in turn maintains their health and well-being. This production could be in the form of creating collective meaning, creating a perception and creating a symbolic base of their cultural community. They also add that when a community analyses culture and history, it gets mobilized to create change. This is called resilience (Rawluk, Illasiak and Parlee, 2010). All individuals are cultural agents. They all participate in delivering meaning through their expressed opinions about cultural things. Interacting and participating with other people in life activities helps in creating and broadcasting social relations through agency (Ratner, 1991 as quoted in Ratner, 2001). However, in today's capitalist society, people's agency does not control the organization of social activities but is only limited to an individual's personal everyday mundane tasks e.g. jobs, relationships etc. (Ci 1999 as quoted in Ratner, 2001). Considering these points, this study attempts to explore the Emirati views with respect to agency.

Under *Survey Design* of section 3.2 titled *Research Design*, chapter 3 explains in detail how these driving forces are used as indicators and how different themes are derived from them and used to drive the investigation.

## Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter discusses the research methods and introduces the research design and tools adopted by this comparative study to address the research question. The setting, sample selection, data collection, analysis process and limitations are also discussed.

Before diving into the methods, it is important to remember that this research study is a comparative research that uses a case study technique to investigate the narratives and feedbacks of the indigenous Emirati population with respect to the iconic Burj Al Arab in Dubai. It is based on a research by Bleibleh and Al-Saber (2014) titled *Cultural Modernity in Urban Space: Indigenous Performance of the Everyday in Dubai's Architectural Wonders* that focuses on Dubai's iconic Burj Khalifa and how it is perceived by the indigenous Emirati population in their daily interactions. The goal in this research explore the commonalities between the perception of the indigenous population to Burj Al Arab versus Burj Khalifa and whether or not the results could be generalized to other similar iconic sites in Dubai or elsewhere.

### 3.1 Research Design

This comparative research begins with the selection of methods and techniques and then moves to selection and identification of site. This is then followed by the onset of fieldwork and collection of data. Finally, a mechanism for management and analysis of data is developed.

The research specifically focuses on Burj Al Arab as a comparative case study. The methodology used in this research is replicated from previous study at Burj

Khalifa and revolves around ethnography, narration and story-telling. The method mainly consists of fieldwork (pilot followed by formal) that follows a conversational approach guided with the interview questions with (i) the indigenous people in the selected site/ case study, and (ii) governmental and cultural institutes i.e. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Center for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU) and the Architectural Heritage Department at Dubai Municipality. It also includes studying archival material and data supplied by Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM). This is explained in more detail in section 3.2.

The following is a detailed explanation of the research design:

### **3.1.1 Qualitative Ethnographic Comparative Case Study Research**

This research study adopts a qualitative ethnographic comparative case study design approach where the feedback of the indigenous Emirati population is the primary source of data.

Considered a strategy and not a method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), case study research allows a researcher to document and examine complex characteristics of small events of a unique phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Case studies are defined by their ability to focus on a particular situation, provide a detailed description of the situation to enable new meaning and add one's own understanding of the situation (Merriam, 2001). A case study approach is apt for this research especially when the interest here sprouts from the 'distinctive need' to study a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and to understand a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 1989, p. 23). Case study research allows researchers to focus only on most useful data with less focus on the methods used. However, considering the unique qualities of each study, case studies are difficult to generalize (Stake, 1994).

However, the goal here is to investigate similarities, differences and patterns between the two sites, first and foremost. The case study strategy involves ‘understanding a phenomenon within its natural setting’ (Iacono, Brown and Holtham, 2009, p. 40). Unlike an experiment, this research does not concern itself with a particular number of variables but studies the ‘contextual conditions’ that are highly related to the phenomenon under investigation (Iacono et al., 2009).

Case study research, according to Stake (1994), is of three types: 1) Intrinsic case study that helps gain better understanding of the specific case study, 2) Instrumental case study that helps add information/ formulate theory to a specific issue, and 3) Collective case study that is a series of case studies that are aimed to understand a phenomenon or population better. This research at Burj Al Arab is a combination of 2 or 3 types of case studies. This research provides a better understanding of the Emirati cultural identity at a specific site while aiming at a specific audience and comparing results with earlier conducted case study at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). Rather than defining, suggesting solutions or criticizing, the goal here is only to know how they understand the state of cultural and architectural development in Dubai through the comparative study.

Adopting methodology of previous research at Burj Khlaifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014), ethnography is employed in the investigation process. Wood (1997) (as quoted in Skinner, 2013) defines ethnography as the study and “systematic description of a single contemporary culture, often through ethnographic fieldwork” (p. 157). The art and science used to describe a group or culture and function as the voice for the voice-less is called Ethnography (Fetterman (1998) and Angrosino (2007) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). Parker (2005) believes that the ‘invention’ and ‘decomposition’ of communities can be documented by ethnography. Lofland

(2002) and Wolcott (1999) (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011) also believe that ethnography best describes any community's ideologies, behaviours and relationships; in light of the contextual factors that shape them. The activities, interests, and rules and styles of engagement of small communities can be well described by this research approach (Griffin, 2000; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Lofland, 2002; Parker, 2005; Wolcott, 1999 (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011)). In this study specifically, the research question justifies the methodology. The prime goal is to voice the Emirati people's opinion and present it accurately just the way it is (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). An ethnographical approach is suitable to use in this study considering that the Emirati community is a minority (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) and there's comparatively little research out there that speaks on their behalf. In addition, when narrowly defined questions are not easy to frame due to the little amount of knowledge available of a specific context, using this kind of technique is the most suitable (Mackey and Gass, 2005). In this qualitative research, the author is the data collection instrument while the setting and the people are the data. Context i.e. the setting, its people, their activities, their interactions, and their points of view, is very important in a qualitative research of this kind (Wolcott (2009) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). The researcher must spend time understanding the setting and context, conduct interviews with research participants as well as review documents and related literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Wolcott (2009) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnography includes 3 major modes of data collection, namely: observation, interviews and archival research (Angrosino (2007) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). These are discussed in more detail in the following sections of the Research Design (Section 3.2).

### 3.1.2 Narrative Format and Communicating through Stories

Analysing the narratives of the indigenous Emiratis could help understand their social and cultural world better. Olga Idriss Davis (2009) explains how the social world is shaped and understood by human beings by the act of communicating through stories. Hence, they are called ‘homo narrans’ because of their tendency to narrate their experiences. The concept of homo narrans is best described by Niles (2010) in his book *Homo Narrans* where he states that human beings are distinguished from all other living creatures by their need to tell stories. He believes that all forms of oral narrative, including myths, ballads, legends, folktales and even jokes, suggest that people have a past; a culture. In fact, he considers oral narratives as the very foundation of culture. Niles (2010) believes that the human world is shaped through story-telling. Perspectives on human behaviour and culture are the main pillars on which performance theories are created. Performance studies focus both on the subject of research and the method of doing research (Davis, 2009). This viewpoint is adopted and examined by this study too. The primary source of data and information in this research is derived from the indigenous people themselves and the stories they narrate. Governmental and cultural institutes are also approached. These institutes play the role of cultural resource directors.

### 3.1.3 Inductive Analysis through Cultural Studies

To understand cultural identity from the Emirati participants’ perspective, cultural performance theory is applied since it helps in understanding the everyday cultural experience. Cultural Studies can be defined as an interdisciplinary endeavour ‘concerned with the analysis of cultural forms and activities in the context of the relations of power which condition their production, circulation, deployment and, of

course, effects' (Bennett, 1998, p.60). Cultural studies concern the study of how subcultural groups emerge with their own cultural identity to resist the flow into the dominant forms of culture and identity. Dress codes, behaviour, and even political opinions are all ways by which those subcultural groups project themselves as different (Kellner, 2001). Using this approach is appropriate especially when the Emiratis today are a minority in their own country. In an effort to answer the research questions, the investigation sheds light on the Emirati cultural resilience and explores tangible and intangible aspects of cultural production such as dress-code, language, role of governmental and cultural institutes, (perception of) history inspired architecture etc.

#### **3.1.4 Pilot Study**

Pilot fieldwork was conducted in May-June, 2015 to test the survey design and lasted for 7 days. Questions were modified based on preliminary results. The author was made aware of the cultural and special limitations as a result of the fieldwork and developed ways to tackle each limitation (discussed later in 3.5). The first period of fieldwork (i.e. May-June, 2015) yielded mostly quantitative results. As a result, the author had to go back to the site and conduct semi-structured interviews later in October of that year to collect more quantitative data and feedback and to triangulate results.

### **3.2 Mechanism for Management and Analysis of Data**

In the case of this research, a case study approach enables the researcher to engage in different data-collection and analysis techniques thereby improving the quality of data and findings (Patton, 1990 and Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).



1	Form of Collected Data	<b>Audio recording in Advanced Audio Coding (.aac) format</b>
	Research Tool Used	Semi-structured Interviews
	Location ⇒ Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Burj Al Arab Site, Dubai ⇒ 10 Emirati research participants</li> <li>ii. Shaikh Mohammad Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU), Dubai ⇒ 1 representative and presenter</li> </ul>
2	Form of Collected Data	<b>Notes on Paper Journal</b>
	Research Tool Used	Semi-structured Interviews and Observation
	Location ⇒ Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Burj Al Arab Site, Dubai ⇒ 10 Emirati research participants</li> <li>ii. Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai Municipality, Dubai ⇒ 1 Interior Design Engineer</li> </ul>
3	Form of Collected Data	<b>20 Filled 3 Page Surveys on Paper</b>
	Research Tool Used	Surveys
	Location ⇒ Sample	Burj Al Arab Site, Dubai ⇒ 20 Emirati research participants
4	Form of Collected Data	<b>77 Electronic Word Documents</b>
	Research Tool Used	Archival Material
	Location ⇒ Sample	Digital Dropbox ⇒ Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM), Dubai

Table 2: Forms of Collected Data

Data obtained in this research is presented in table 2. Data collection tools will be elaborately described in section 3.4 of this chapter. Analysis of data is steered using the elements that Bleibleh and Al-Saber (2014) used in their research on Burj Khalifa, namely: agency, authenticity, activism, ambivalence and adaptation, as discussed later in this section. Data is coded into emergent themes from the discussions with the research participants and is summarized under these driving forces and inter-dynamics of everyday life. Trustworthiness and validity, in a qualitative research, are achieved through a couple of ways:

- a) **Triangulation of Data:** In this research, triangulation of data is observed (Babbie, 1989). This means that the research sought feedback from two major groups: the indigenous Emirati population and the governmental and cultural institutes. The governmental institutes include the Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai Municipality and Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, DTCM) while the cultural institute sought is the Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashed Centre for Cultural Understanding. These 3 bodies are some of the very significant in Dubai that deal with culture, heritage and tourism (and even architecture). Data is triangulated by interviewing research participants, conducting observations while simultaneously taking detailed field notes, photos, and engaging in constant, parallel comparison of the information collected from the 2 informant groups through different research tools. These Emirati voices combined help create a clearer picture of the state of cultural identity in Dubai today. A study is trustworthy when the findings of a research are very close to the descriptions and narrations of the research participants (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). All claims made by the research participants are mentioned including biases and the author listens and records views with a free-

mentality (Lincoln and Denzin, 2003). During interviews, answers are double-checked with the participants as they are reminded of the responses they shared and only then information is accurately documented. This gives research participants the chance and authority to re-consider their statements and responses which makes the research more representative of them; thus, trustworthy and valid. The author also returned to the site to gather more data through semi-structured interviews with the indigenous Emirati population to emphasize triangulation of data.

- b) **Psychological and Cultural Attributes:** The researcher's as well as the research participants' psychological and cultural attributes matter in an ethnographic study (Sobo and De Munck, 1998). The identity of the researcher and degree of access to information decides the degree of success. In addition, in an ethnographic research, the researcher is the main instrument for data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this research, the researcher plays the role of a field observer and a reflective practitioner. The researcher does not claim a privileged view (Ivanitz, 1999) or to discover culture (Wolcott, 1987). A researcher must abandon all preconceptions (Tonkiss (1998) as cited in Grullón, 2007) and rely instead on facts and the research participants' statements. The researcher is required to speak and understand the language of the participants. Only then can the research results be able "to meet the exacting canons of excellence of contemporary fieldwork" (Foster, 1969, p. 66 as cited in Grullón, 2007)). Fortunately, the author of this study is fluent in the research participants' language (i.e. Arabic) and identifies herself as a fellow citizen of the gulf countries. This not only aids in the field inquiry and ensures good results, but

also guarantees accessing the field and approaching people to engage in conversations guided with the interview questions.

- c) **Objectivity:** Kvale (2008) states that objectivity and mechanically measured reliability can be obtained through interviews. This could be ensured by the amount of agreement among independent observers. In addition, he believes that interviews can be free of bias. An interview is an ‘intersubjective interaction’ where the interviewer will condense and interpret the ‘meaning’ of what the interviewee describes and then deliver it back to the interviewee ‘until there is only one possible interpretation left or the multiple understandings of a theme by the subject are known’ (p. 102). This is done during the interview and even later during the stages of analysis and interpretation.

For this comparative research, a descriptive and interpretive methodological technique is apt to capture and explore individual perceptions of modern Emirati architectural and cultural identity at both sites. This too will be flexible enough to engulf different types of data (Creswell, 2003 as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). As mentioned earlier in this section, this research deals with the everyday life and focuses on the narratives and stories that the research participants will share as its primary source of data. Reflecting on the concepts of the theoretical framework will help understand and filter the data to make the analysis process easier. This would also help situate the participant’s feedbacks and narratives in the cycle of this daily phenomenon. Critical ethnographical observation is carried on in this research where the researcher analyses what is being observed and later interprets those experiences in a larger context (O’Reilly, 2012). Some of the aspects observed by the author include: presence of Emirati visitors to the site, type of cultural activities available on site, accessibility to Burj Al Arab, behaviour of people around the burj (posing for

pictures etc). The analysis is thus inductive as pieces of data are brought together to form the bigger picture. Data is collected in textual and/or audio formats depending on participant's preference. Data in this study is largely dependent on people's own feedbacks and experiences. It is sometimes, if not all the time, driven by emotions, feelings, sentiments, individual perspectives and even external influences like media etc. The following are the steps of data analysis followed by this research:

- Holistic Reading: Data analysis starts with a holistic reading of all available collected data.
- Coding and Using Descriptive Labels: This step is essential to reduce data to manageable size. It then involves organizing data, breaking it into more manageable parts, developing codes, and searching for possible patterns (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Roper and Shapira, 2000 (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011)). Data is grouped into activities, experiences, themes, facts etc.
- Sorting, Comparing and Identifying Patterns: Cross-case synthesis is used here where data collected from interviews, surveys and field notes is treated as separate studies. All of the responses are then compared for similarities and new emerging themes (Yin, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that words and phrases should be used to develop coding categories. This coding process is conducted traditionally where the author writes down emergent themes and codes on paper. As mentioned earlier, the main themes are explained in chapter 2 under section 2.5.2.
- Excluding Irrelevant Data: Irrelevant data is extracted and put aside for further investigation or future research.
- Linking Emergent Themes to Theory: Finally, emerging themes, mentioned in chapter 2 earlier under section 2.5.2, are then sorted, linked and narrowed down

to theoretical perspectives based on careful analysis and critical interpretation (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Theory here includes existing literature review and new needed literature to explain collected data (Roper and Shapir, 2000 (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011)). The result is the *voices of the indigenous Emirati people* answering the research questions rather than the research being influenced by an established set of codes and themes.

- Researcher's Reflection on the Result: This includes the author's own remarks and ideas on the result and opportunities for future research. This step can also help a researcher identify his/her own biases and opinions (Roper and Shapir, 2000 (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011)).

Finally, the research results are written in a *narrative* style and format. This helps in providing a detailed and comprehensive description of the findings.

All these steps help in developing a clear text which is used for establishing the comparison with text from study at Burj Khalifa. Cortazzi (2014) emphasizes that “there is an increasing recognition of the importance and usefulness of narrative analysis as an element for doing ethnography” (p. 284). Under the narrative format, this research adopts a holistic analysis approach where sections of the text are extracted, placed into categories for analysis and are later connected and expanded (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998). The driving forces of everyday life form the basis for the analysis and interpretation of collected data. Indicators and themes under each force help in coding and sorting of data. Note that these forces are inter-related and participate all *together* in creating everyday life. However, for the sake of convenience and ease of understanding, they are discussed in separate paragraphs: -

## **Themes and Indicators to Look for During Investigation**

### **i. Adaptation**

- Degree of attachment to national/ cultural landmarks (Najafi and Shariff, 2011)
- Whether or not it is an Emirati destination and part of daily experience (Salama, 1999, p. 7; Basson, 2006, p. 1)

Examples of questions to ask research participants include number/ frequency of visits to Burj Al Arab and familiarity with its physical structure.

### **ii. Authenticity**

- Meaning and symbolism behind the building
- Readable, Image-able and Identifiable (Salama, 1999)

Examples of questions to ask research participants include: constituents of the ‘authentic Emirati identity’, items/ symbols that reflect the UAE identity the most, symbolism behind Burj Al Arab, and likable features of Burj Al Arab from an architectural/ design perspective.

### **iii. Activism**

- Investigate the impact of branding and consumerism (Thorpe, 2011)
- Role of media in promoting consumerism (Zizek, 2002)

Examples of questions to ask research participants include reasons behind visiting Burj Al Arab and the global image and labels associated with it.

### **iv. Ambivalence**

- Fascination and attraction to ‘Western’ design (Al Naim, 2008, pg. 30 - 31)
- Cultural identity and pride (Al Naim, 2008)
- Transitional phase and cultural confusion (Banet-Weiser, 2012)

Examples of questions to ask research participants include their views on Burj Al Arab and Emirati identity. The degree of success of Burj Al Arab (architecturally), as well as the role of Emiratis in shaping Dubai today (architecturally)

#### **v. Agency**

- Shared social and cultural activities (Flick, 1998)
- Ability to make and remake culture (Ratner, 2001)
- Micro and Macro Factors of Cultural Identity (Hauser, n.d.)

Examples of questions to ask research participants include most valued Emirati activities at Burj Al Arab, cultural activities that support the Emirati identity, most significant promoters of the Emirati cultural identity today and finally cultural activities and western influence on development of Dubai.

### **3.3 Sample Selection**

To achieve triangulation of data as explained in section 3.2, this research is interested in 2 main sample groups. The first group is the indigenous Emirati people while the second group includes governmental and cultural institutes in Dubai. The following is a description of the considerations made while selecting the research participants and informants. Please note that the details about the research tools and fieldwork are discussed in section 3.4 of this chapter:

#### **i. The Indigenous Emirati**

There is little literature about the indigenous Emirati population. Based on available literature discussed in chapter 2, the author developed the following *criteria* to identify the indigenous Emiratis. These considerations are utilized in recruiting participants for the research:



- a) Dressing style: Heard-Bey (2001), as mentioned previously in chapter 2, considers the Emirati dress as one of the essential identity markers that distinguishes an Emirati from other cultural group. Indigenous Emiratis, in most cases, appear in public in their traditional garments. Men wear white/off-white *thoub* (dishdasha) with a thread tassel hanging at the center of the circular collar neckline while women appear in their black/dark coloured long *abayas* as shown in figure 10. The researcher has also considered the fact that not all Emiratis dress traditionally.



Figure 10: Emirati dressing style as displayed by SMCCU (Author, October 2015)

- b) Language and Dialect: All Arab countries speak Arabic and a single country could be home for various dialects and accents. As stated previously in the literature review, the Emirati language and dialect are also other characteristics that helps in identifying an Emirati (Béteille, 1998; Heard-Bey, 2001).
- c) Hometown: Since the research is concerned with the feedback of the Emiratis regarding Dubai's wonders, it is necessary to make sure that the research participants have witnessed the change in their surrounding environments over

the years i.e. launching of mega structures etc. The participants are either residents or frequent visitors of Dubai. At least, research participants should be aware of the urban changes and developments in the vicinity. Participants who have not witnessed these developments (because they live abroad, for instance) are less favourable than those who have been there for years.

- d) Traditional Events and Activities: Caesar (as cited in Al Khazraji, 2011) explains how the Emiratis have an identity of their own which is prevalent in every day interactions (p.19). This identity, as explained in section 1.3 of chapter 2, is based on religion, traditional, historic and tribal norms. Today, this is reflected through their music, dance, and sports etc. and forms the essence of the traditional events and activities held in Dubai specifically and the Emirates in general.

The research participants are chosen randomly at the site of Burj Al Arab based on the considerations mentioned above. All these considerations are tested during initial stages of interaction with the research participants and during casual conversations. The interviews are audio recorded by the author. A research participant is chosen for the study only if all the considerations are met. Each research participant is interviewed individually to avoid possible group influence(s) and interference(s). Surveys and answers from research participants who are very distant from the research topic/ context or who are not eligible to take part in this study (due to different cultural background, age-limit (less than 18 years old) etc.) are excluded. The interviewing procedure is discussed in more detail in section 3.4.

## ii. Governmental and Cultural Institutes

Several governmental and cultural institutes were contacted to participate in this research. The aim is to interview institutes that are concerned with (i) cultural production, and (ii) are located in Dubai. By cultural production, the author means all sort of tangible and intangible forms of producing culture, such as: traditional Emirati activities and events like traditional music, dance, food, or festivals and National Day celebrations, or even the use of traditional architectural elements in buildings etc. Institutes that agree to participate in this study and share data are considered. This is discussed further in the following section 3.4.

### 3.4 Research Tools and Fieldwork

The overall project period extended over two full semesters. The research began in the academic semester of Spring 2014-2015 and was completed in Fall 2015-2016. The actual fieldwork on site occurred over several time intervals as shown in table 3.

Research Tool	Date	Number of Days	
Surveys	May-June, 2015	Pilot Fieldwork	7 days
		Formal Fieldwork	14 days
Interviews	22-27 October, 2015	5 days	

Table 3: Fieldwork Timetable

Simultaneously during this time period, exploratory site visits were conducted and photographs were taken. Observations, records and field notes were made while the research participants were answering as well as after (the survey/ interview). Data for this research was collected from 3 major sources:

- i. Fieldwork data collected from surveys and interview questions with the research participants,
- ii. Data provided from interview with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU) and the Department of Architectural Heritage of Dubai Municipality, and
- iii. Archival material provided by Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM)

The goal is to ensure that data and knowledge are gathered from more than one source: contacting governmental and cultural institutes, as well as primarily surfacing the voice of the indigenous Emiratis themselves to achieve triangulation of data. The author is accompanied by an assistant to help in writing down and recording data immediately after each field visit to minimize recall problems. Whenever permitted, the author audio records the interviews. Tools used on site include paper, pens, pencils, recording device (mobile), and camera.

The following is a description of the main data collection methods used in this research:

#### **a. Semi-structured Interviews**

Directing a conversation to collect information is what an interview is all about (Angrosino (2007) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). Semi-structured interviews are “based on the use of an interview guide. A “written list of questions and topics” (Bernard, 2011, p. 158) was developed for this purpose to interview both the people and the institutes (see appendices B and E, respectively). Steinar Kvale (2008) in his book *Doing Interviews* emphasizes that when interviewing is conducted as research, interpreting meaningful relations from the interview is the main goal of the

researcher rather than collecting object data. In addition, the researcher will use those interviews to explore issues that the participants held important. Topics such as identity and culture could be sensitive. Interviews are semi-structured since this approach is suitable to explore perceptions and feedbacks in such complex cases. Critical social theory has been adopted by cultural studies to enable for a multi-perspectivist approach to surface. This approach has three main dimensions where: 1) A political economy of culture is produced; 2) A textual analysis and critique of its artifacts is done; and 3) The audience reception and their uses of media/cultural products are studied (Kellner (1997) as cited in Ritzer and Smart, 2001). This research is interested in the third dimension.

Semi-structured interviews or what the author calls guided conversations are conducted with the indigenous people to help explore and understand how the Emiratis receive and perceive those architectural wonders and investigate their feedbacks regarding Dubai's iconic architecture and the Emirati cultural identity. These interviews are also conducted with the governmental and cultural institutes to triangulate data as explained earlier in this chapter.

Researches of this nature are seldom controlled and planned. In this case, selection of governmental and cultural institutes, it was a matter of luck and chance depending on which institute is available/ willing to participate. There are a total of 13 questions that revolve around the institute's goals, the organization, frequency and type of cultural events held in Dubai, the institute's influence on architecture of Dubai (if any), the daily Emirati presence in the cultural activities, role of tourism in promotion of culture etc. (see appendix E). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the everyday driving forces act as indicators that help interpret the data collected and condense it into the main themes (discussed in detail in point 'iv' below). Ultimately,

those interviews help better understand and confirm the observations made by the researcher and collected literature. More details and findings are discussed later in chapter 4.

### **b. Surveys**

Cross-sectional surveys are specifically used in this study as they are suitable to use when targeting a specified population; in this case, the indigenous Emiratis. Specific information and characteristics can be derived (Visser, Krosnick, and Lavrakas, 2000). A pre-test and a pilot test are conducted to enable revision and validation of the survey (Straub, 1989). Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) has been obtained to allow to interview human subjects and is included in appendix C. Permission has been granted after submitting a Research Ethics Review Form and several other required documents like sample of the survey, copy of the research proposal etc. The research participants are informed verbally that they could ask questions to clarify any aspect of the survey topics in detail, in case things are not clear. As mentioned earlier, the pilot study helps in solving such cases because the researcher can edit any bit that is unclear, inappropriate, unwanted etc. before the formal fieldwork.

As explained in chapter 1, the survey used here is identical to the survey that the researcher developed (as a research assistant) for previous research at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014) (see appendices E and A, respectively). The aim here is to test and compare the results on both iconic sites; ultimately deciding whether or not the results are generalizable. Using Bleibleh's (2012) model *the inseparable phenomenon of the driving forces and inter-dynamics of everyday life* (discussed in chapter 2), the five driving forces (5As) namely: *adaptation*,

*authenticity, activism, agency and ambivalence* are used as indicators to help understand research participants' feedbacks in the light of globalization (modernity), culture and place. Considering the literature about these driving forces (as discussed in chapter 2), questions were developed for each indicator and used as tools to derive specific themes and concepts from the answers of the research participants. The indicators, tools or questions and expected emerging themes from the survey in detail. Those indicators and themes are borrowed and implemented here from previous study at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014), as mentioned in chapter 2. The survey is divided into 2 sections and consists of 28 questions (see appendix B). The first section includes personal questions like age, gender, education, hometown, nationality etc. The second section includes questions about the research participant's experience at Burj Al Arab and his/her feedback on various cultural events and organizations and the overall architectural/urban development in Dubai. Overall, 20 surveys were collected at the site of Burj Al Arab. Details regarding the findings are discussed in chapter 4.

The surveys are originally in English. However, they are transcribed to Arabic and distributed to the research participants in Arabic since Arabic is their native language. After collecting the data, the answers are once again transcribed into English for their use in the research paper. Electronic translation programs were used to translate text from English to Arabic and vice-versa. Words like *burqa* and *dishdasha* were left as they are to avoid loss of meaning and ensure credibility.

### **c. Observations**

Through observations, a general overview of the site and an exploration of the everyday Emirati life are intended. A field notebook/journal is maintained to keep

record of the physical/ architectural setting, the interviews, social interactions and comments made by the research participants. This too added to the context and background of this research. As mentioned earlier in chapter 1, this research is interested in the participants' real on-site experience and not their cognitive experience. Singleton and Straits (2005) (as cited in Sangasubana, 2011) describe the type of descriptive notes taken during fieldwork as the following:

- **Running Description:** This is simply a record of the day's observations and includes notes made on the setting, the people, individual actions and activities, group behaviors, and perspectives etc. without analyzing
- **Forgotten Episodes:** This is a record of forgotten information or previous episodes that the researcher recalls while in the field again
- **Ideas and Notes for Further Information Use:** This is a record of emergent ideas and themes related to data analysis and collection or even plans for future observations
- **Personal Impressions and Feelings:** Includes preconceptions and biases
- **Methodological Notes:** This is a record of the emergent ideas related to the methodological techniques of the research

Geertz (1973) believes that a 'thick description' must be made by a researcher while trying to understand events and activities from the point of view of the natives. This description or interpretation is only made possible through anthropological theories. Moreover, exploring the urban landscape and developing a feeling of familiarity with the site and the research participants is very crucial for the researcher (Geertz, 1973 and Iacono et al., 2009). Only then, research participants will develop trust and a feeling of comfort towards the researcher. Knowing the cultural



restrictions and privacy concerns, research participants are never photographed or video recorded.

#### **d. Documents and Archival Materials**

Official and unofficial materials stored for research, service or any other reason is analysed in ethnography to paint a clearer picture of the issue investigated (Angrosino (2007) as cited in Sangasubana, 2011). To further understand and enrich the context of cultural organizations and governmental institutes in Dubai, archival material is reviewed to achieve triangulation as discussed earlier in this chapter. Archival data shared by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) provide an overview of the overall official agenda and cultural activities in Dubai. All the information provided by the DTCM was shared in four folders titled: 1. DTCM Corporate Information, 2. Dubai Destination Offering, 3. Latest Press Releases, 4. Spokesperson Bios. Each folder has a number of documents included in appendix F. A copy of the DTCM Annual Calendar for the year 2015 was also included. DTCM's feedback is significant since it officially runs and directs Dubai's tourism. It is accountable for the licensing and classification of all tourism services. Services include *hotels*, tour operators and travel agents (Henderson, 2006). The author sought its feedback on cultural production in architecture of Dubai.

### **3.5 Research Limitations and Opportunities**

Although this study contributes to the study of culture, its transmission through architecture and its perception by the research participants, it has its own limitations. Avoiding them or finding alternatives/ solutions for similar, future research could lead to better data collection and quality. These limitations were eye-opening to the researcher because they gave her early indications to some of the results. This also

helped her to enhance and modify the research design. The most significant are listed here:

- a) Access and Communication: Accessing Burj Al Arab is quite challenging. In order to enter the tower or interact with its residents/guests, one must have a previously booked appointment at the Burj. Otherwise, one will not be allowed through the security gate. However, since the research is interested in the iconic *exterior* symbolism of the tower, accessing the interior of the building is not a goal here. This is why the research participants chosen were actually in the surrounding area around Burj Al Arab and were not residents of the hotel. They were located at the Jumeirah beach and in front of the main gate leading to the Burj where they can clearly see the exterior of the building.

A dozen of public and private organizations and institutes were contacted for the purpose of this research over the span of three months. It must be said that it was tedious and quite unfruitful since the majority of the institutes contacted either did not respond or did not share useful research information. Selection of organizations is a matter of luck and accident. For instance, Burj Al Arab responded by advertising for their hotel facilities instead of responding to the request for an interview. The primary data used in this research is supplied by the institutes that responded faster and agreed to participate in the research; namely, the DTCM, Dubai Municipality and the SMCCU. These three institutes operate to promote culture and tourism in Dubai.

- b) Cultural Limitations: There were several cultural limitations that were hard to ignore. Firstly, in a conservative society like that of the Emirates and other gulf countries, it was a little challenging for a young female researcher to approach male participants, even if it was only to ask them to fill a survey. Male

participants often looked uncomfortable when approached though they clearly stated that they were willing to participate in the study. To tackle this limitation, the author was accompanied by 1 or more companions to make the environment more comfortable for the male participants.

In addition, many of the female research participants and officials/employees at governmental and cultural institutes strictly refused to have the interview audio recorded for personal/cultural reasons. Instead they asked the researcher to take notes of their feedbacks which the author did.

- c) Nature of Site and its Activities: Since Burj Al Arab and its surrounding areas is a highly recreational and entertainment site, most of those interviewed were busy spending time with their families, friends or even just sight-seeing all by themselves. It was challenging to interrupt their private space and request them to participate and fill surveys. In addition, it was difficult to ask the research participants all the questions on the survey due to lack of time and the hot weather (during the months of April-June). For the formal fieldwork, participants were interviewed through a conversational approach guided with the interview questions and surveys were filled by the researcher herself to reduce the load off the research participants and create a more natural investigation environment.

The next chapter describes data and findings of this research at Burj Al Arab.

## Chapter 4: Data Description and Findings

This chapter describes the findings of this fieldwork as obtained through various data collection methods discussed previously in chapter 3. The following is a description of the data collected through surveys, interviews, observations and archival material:

### 4.1 Interviews

#### 1) Research Participants:

Interviews with research participants were conducted at the site of Burj Al Arab i.e. in front of the main security gate and at Jumeirah beach as shown in figures 2 and 3 in chapter 1. Interviews were audio recorded in .aac format whenever the research participant approved. Research participants were randomly selected based on the considerations and criteria developed by the author (explained in section 3.3). Research participants accompanied by family or friends were individually interviewed away from other subjects to avoid interference. Eight of the ten interviews were conducted in Arabic which was the primary language of communication. Two of those ten research participants, who are young female Emirati students enrolled in Zayed University at the time, preferred to be interviewed in English. The text was translated from Arabic to English using an electronic translation program. Arabic words that lose their meaning when translated were left as they are e.g. *abaya* and *dishdasha* to maintain credibility of text. In addition, in the 2 cases where interviews were in English, folk taxonomies and verbatim expressions were captured and are reiterated here just as they are e.g. *yeah*, *wow* etc. Such words will be displayed in italics throughout the text. 10 Emirati research participants were

interviewed around the site of Burj Al Arab in a semi-formal interview format from 22-27 October, 2015. Research participants were chosen randomly based on the criteria mentioned in chapter 3, section 3.3. All of the 10 research participants were in their 20s and 30s. The sample consisted of 7 males and 3 females. Interviewing females was very challenging as most of them refused to have their voices recorded for personal/ cultural reasons which the researcher totally respects and understands. Six participants were undergraduate students, one was a graduate student while the remaining three were employed. In the following text, participants interviewed will be numbered from 1-10 for ease of reading. Research participants' names are confidential. They are not included in this research in order to respect their privacy and personal data. Please note that participant numbers 2, 3 and 7 are females while the rest are males. Also, gender is not a consideration for sample selection, and the ratio is just a matter of chance. All research participants were born and raised in the Emirates. Not all of them though were interested in architecture. Participant numbers 1 and 10 clearly stated that they are not interested in architecture as a field. On the other side, participant numbers 2 and 3 showed big interest in topics such as architecture and culture and explained how they volunteer and participate in cultural activities at their university and in their neighbourhood. Interviews were conducted over different periods: during the months of May, June and even later in October 2015. Minimum duration of each interview was 15 minutes and the maximum was 60 minutes. Some interviews lasted for 20 minutes. The interviews were loosely guided by the questions from the survey (see appendix B). The goal here was to get an in-depth understanding and explanation of the views of Emiratis regarding Burj Al Arab and the direction Dubai is taking in its architectural development.

Out of all the institutes contacted, the Department of Architectural Heritage at Dubai Municipality, DTCM and SMCCU responded and shared data with the author. While Dubai's Municipality and SMCCU agreed to be interviewed, DTCM was not available for interview and shared data through digital dropbox in the form of electronic word documents (discussed in point '4' below). The interviews were conducted in the respective institution's building in Dubai.

#### 4.2 Surveys

Observational visits were conducted at the commencement of the fieldwork with the sole purpose of exploring the general environment around Burj Al Arab and familiarizing oneself with it. Fieldwork at the site of Burj Al Arab was conducted during the months of May-June of the year 2015. Twenty Emirati research participants participated and the sample consisted of fifteen males and five females. All Emirati participants were born, raised and currently reside in the Emirates. Research participants were randomly chosen based on the criteria discussed in chapter 3 under section 3.3. Interestingly, all approached research participants of different age groups who were dressed traditionally turned out to be Emirati. The total number of research participants who participated in this study was approximately 20-30 participants. Quality here matters over quantity. Baker and Edwards (2012) from the National Center for Research Methods explain how qualitative research need not have large number of participants by saying:

Qualitative researchers generally study many fewer people, but delve more deeply into those individuals, settings, subcultures, and scenes, hoping to generate a subjective understanding of how and why people perceive, reflect, role-take, interpret, and interact. In advising graduate students we often suggest aiming for a sample of loosely around 30. This medium size subject

pool offers the advantage of penetrating beyond a very small number of people without imposing the hardship of endless data gathering, especially when researchers are faced with time constraints. (p. 8-9)

Ample time was spent with each participant to ask more ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ rather than being concerned with gathering more participants.

Eight and seven of the participants belonged to the age group 18 – 25 years old and 26 – 35 years old, respectively. In addition, 16 of the participants were of graduate and post-graduate levels and most of them belonged to the age groups mentioned earlier. The findings are chiefly based on the views of the younger Emiratis who were more understanding/ aware of the nature of research and fieldwork, in general, and were willing to cooperate.

The interviewing process and distribution of questionnaires continued for 3 weeks at Burj Al Arab and was conducted during weekends and weekdays. They were also done during different times of the day to ensure randomness and variety. The author introduced herself to the research participants as a graduate student at the Architectural Engineering Department of United Arab Emirates University. Research participants were briefly informed about the title and summary of the research in layman’s terms and were then asked to fill the 28 questions of the survey mentioned in chapter 3. To ease the process, research participants were asked to answer the surveys verbally and the surveys were then simultaneously filled by the author with the help of an assistant. Research participants were allowed to select more than one choice in multiple choice questions. The participants were informed verbally that they could ask questions to clarify any aspect of the survey topics in detail, in case of unclear question(s). 20 - 30 minutes were spent with each research participant, approximately.

As discussed in chapter 3, some of the most important questions from the survey sought after the research participants' feedbacks regarding cultural identity, cultural representation and symbolism in architecture and everyday life and general feedback regarding the architecture of Burj Al Arab. More specifically, participants were asked to give their feedback regarding their experience in global space and their perceptions on cultural representation of Burj Al Arab specifically. They were also asked to share how they rate Dubai's role in preserving the Emirati cultural identity today and what forces they believed interfere in the development of Dubai today. Graphic representation of the results is included in the appendices (see appendix D).

Regarding governmental and cultural institutes, data acquired from SMCCU and Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai's Municipality was gathered through interviews. SMCCU, as shown in figure 11, responded to the author's request and agreed to share the organization's goals, events and perspective on the development in Dubai today. Interview with Ms. Kayed, SMCCU's main presenter and event conductor, was audio recorded.



Figure 11: Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding:  
 (i) SMCCU Building (left), (ii) The author interviewed presenter Dalia Kayed  
 at SMCCU (right) (Author, October 2015)



Eng. Al Madani, Interior Design Engineer at Dubai's Municipality, refused to get the interview audio recorded for personal reasons that are completely respected by the author. The interview was written down on paper and notes were maintained throughout. Table 4 presents the details of fieldwork conducted in this regard.

<b>1) Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding</b>	
Research Participant	Main presenter and event conductor, Ms. Dalia Kayed
Location	SMCCU, Dubai
Research Tool Used	Semi-structured interview
Duration	20 minutes
Date	25 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> October, 2015
<b>2) Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai Municipality</b>	
Research Participant	Interior Design Engineer, Eng. Ibtihal Mohammad Al Madani
Location	Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai Municipality at Al Fahaidi, Dubai
Research Tool Used	Semi-structured interview
Duration	45 minutes
Date	25 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> October, 2015

Table 4: Details about Fieldwork Concerning Institutes

### 4.3 Archival Materials

Dubai's principal authority, DTCM, responded and shared data through digital Dropbox regarding the body's vision, mission, operation and future plans. DTCM

shared its vision for a new Dubai and with a new cultural identity. Data consisted of 77 word documents that include press releases. World Wide Web governmental pages have also been explored including those of Dubai Arts and Culture Authority, Dubai Municipality, SMCCU, and Dubai Tourism.

#### **4.4 Field Observation**

Part of the tourist experience in Dubai is to get a glimpse of the old, classic city: the Arabian-Dubai, usually through Emirati cultural representations, events or activities. Art, music and even food festivals often have an Emirati aura. The author herself visited Al Shindigha and Al Fahaidi area in Dubai and witnessed how these areas are active tourist spots. Glimpses of the locations, events and observations mentioned below in this section are included in appendix G.

These observations sought to explore the activities held at the site; including cultural activities. The author also studied and made notes of social space, crowdedness, number of Emirati people at the site etc. In addition to familiarizing the author to the field, these observations helped understand the nature of the site and the engagement of people in its activities.

This is further elaborated in chapter 5 under *Author's Field Observation*.

## **.Chapter 5: Discussion and Interpretations**

The data of this study was acquired by using qualitative research methods (i.e., interviews, observations, and document review) and the results from the data are best interpreted by presenting a series of themes and thematic narratives obtained from the analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 2008). The questions address several aspects on modernity, cultural identity and perception of architectural wonders in Dubai as discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.4) and 4.

This chapter presents the main emergent themes from the fieldwork and overall investigation. This study is principally based on indigenous Emiratis' own feedbacks and views in comparison to similar research question proposed in Burj Khalifa. After seeking the feedbacks of both the Emirati people as well as the official and cultural institutes, analysis of data takes place through the identification of themes and development of coding categories of repeated concepts as discussed in chapter 3 under section 3.2. There are slight variations and huge similarities between the experiences and perceptions of the research participants. An inductive approach is taken in data analysis and data collected through all research techniques is compared side by side to come up with the emergent significant themes and achieve triangulation. The major findings are summarized as follows:

### Feedback of the Indigenous Emiratis:

#### **5.1 Adaptation**

Prior to the interview, nine out of the ten Emirati research participants have never been to Burj Al Arab but were able to describe the architecture of the iconic

structure and the interior design beyond what they could immediately see on location. Research participant #2, was interviewed in English. She has been to the burj as a child and described Burj Al Arab by saying that is “fascinating”, has “amazing architecture” and is “not anything that you could think of”. Although they knew how Burj Al Arab looks on the exterior, none of the research participants has been to Burj Al Arab yet. 12 of the 20 participants believed that Burj Al Arab’s design reflected the Emirati identity because it was made to resemble the sail of a traditional Emirati boat. Eight of the total number of the research participants believed that Burj Al Arab fits perfectly with the many skyscrapers of Dubai (Survey, May-June, 2015). One of the participants stated that it does fit into the skyline of Dubai since ‘Dubai is full of skyscrapers’ (Research participant #1., personnel communication, May, 2015).

The majority of the research participants have not visited Burj Al Arab and consider it to be a tourist destination. Although they are able to recognize its exterior architectural façade and admire its interior design, research participants clearly did not regard it as an Emirati destination but rather an Emirati landmark (Survey, May-June, 2015). It was not part of the Emirati daily experience (Salama, 1999, p. 7; Basson, 2006, p. 1). They are able to compare its shape to that of a sail of a dhow and describe how luxurious its interiors look in spite of never having experienced that physical space in person. They use words such as ‘landmark’, ‘pride’, and ‘icon’ to describe the burj (Survey, May-June, 2015). The *sense of place* for them was created from the cultural symbolism and physical form (Najafi and Shariff, 2011) rather than their own experiences at the place. A *sense of attachment* (Najafi and Shariff, 2011) is thus instilled in their visual memories and makes them consider Burj Al Arab as a national landmark. However, research participants sometimes argue that the building

is only a national landmark and not a cultural icon (Survey, May-June, 2015) (discussed in ‘5.2’ below).

Comparing results to that of the study at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al Saber, 2014), the author discovers that participants at the site of Burj Khaifa recognize the building’s architectural form and use adjectives such as ‘perfect’, ‘sleek’, ‘tall’, ‘modern’, ‘excellent’ and ‘chic’ to describe the building’s design and architecture. They comment that it fits well with the other towers of Dubai. This comment was also made about Burj Al Arab. However, in the case of Burj Khalifa, 19 of the total 28 research participants visited the structure personally and experienced the space. This is a huge sign that implies that Burj Khalifa is highly accessible and affordable by wide range of Emiratis. A sense of place and attachment is created in their visual memories based on actual experience (Najafi and Shariff, 2011).

This is where the issue of accessibility and approachability also comes into play. While Burj Khalifa has become part of the daily Emirati experience and is easily accessible, Burj Al Arab can only be accessed through appointments and is just a luxurious, iconic tourist destination. Participants believed that Burj Al Arab “is directed towards tourists and the very rich people” and is too pricey for the common Emirati (Research participant #10, personal communication, October, 2015). Contrary to Burj Khalifa, the location of Burj Al Arab away from the main land on artificial island (Bagaeen, 2007) emphasizes the unease of access to the site, thus it’s physically detached from the city’s urban form. Moreover, security guards protect and monitor gate opening to the bridge that leads to Burj Al Arab as shown in figure 12 and access is given only to customers with appointments or permissions. This adds a feeling of exclusivity, privacy and posh-ness. On the other hand, Burj Khalifa is located at the very heart of downtown Dubai, is easily accessible by walking and is

heavily surrounded by affordable entertainment facilities and activities. Thus, it is friendlier, more welcoming, engaging and part of the urban fabric of the city.

In the eyes of the Emirati participants, both burjes are iconic and are essential structures that constitute Dubai's skyline whether they have physically visited the place or not.



Figure 12: Guarded and gated bridge leading to Burj Al Arab (Author, October 2015)

The participants were asked why they thought people visited Burj Al Arab. Some explained that visitors of the hotel mostly visit to show off and brag in front of their family and friends. “It’s a landmark. *Like* before when it first started people thought they were crazy because they were building a 7-star hotel in the middle of a desert. So yeah people just go to look at it and look at this craziness”, explains research participant #2. However, this landmark is only a luxurious tourist destination for majority of the research participants and not a cultural spot. Research participant #2 adds: *Yeah* [Burj Al Arab reflects], tourism. But it’s not for people who really want to know about Emirati culture it’s for people who want luxury and

like the beach. They want to enjoy themselves (Research participant #2, personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). When asked about the site of Burj Al Arab and whether it was a destination for Emirati families, research participant #10 explains: “No I think it is directed towards tourists and the very rich people”. He added humour to the conversation by saying that he would love to visit Burj Al Arab: “But let them first lower the prices” (Research participant #10, personal communication, October 2015). Participant #2 agrees that it is not an Emirati destination and explains how she pictures that only tourists visit the building. She clarifies saying: “*Yeah* I don’t think any one of my friends who visited Burj Al Arab. So *yeah* the Emirati identity is missing from Burj Al Arab. It’s mostly aimed towards tourists” (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015).

## 5.2 Authenticity

Regarding Burj Al Arab, 11 of the research participants considered it to be a symbol of technological advancement and power while 13 regarded it as a symbol of tourism in Dubai. One added that the hotel is a symbol of wealth and luxury first and foremost (Survey, May-June, 2015). Burj Al Arab is image-able; participants create meaning behind its symbolism and recognize the embedded cultural abstraction in it (Survey, May-June, 2015). Thus from this aspect the building is successful (Salama, 1999). The term ‘emergent authenticity’ could be used here since Burj Al Arab is projected as a national cultural icon as part of tourism and commoditization of spaces (Cohen 1988). However, all research participants without exception believe that Burj Al Arab lacked those valid Emirati features of architectural heritage that made it Emirati-looking. Generally speaking, Burj Al Arab is believed to be a symbol of technological advancement, wealth and leisure by the majority of research

participants. Majority of the participants did not see the tower's design as a reflection of their cultural identity but rather a reflection of the advancement that Dubai and their country is undergoing (Survey, May-June, 2015). Thus, the approach of using regional modernism in design is not seen as *authentic* to the Emirati participants. Majority of them Burj Al Arab does reflect a cultural symbol i.e. the sail of a dhow, but it is not cultural itself. The majority explained how Burj Al Arab represents the fishing-lifestyle of old Dubai; it represents the Emiratis. Research participant #2 explains: "If you just see the shape it does reflect what we came from which is what... boats. That was our income in the old days which is sailing for pearl-diving and fishing as well". She adds that Burj Al Arab shows the "connection of the old UAE" (specifically the tradition of sailing) and advancement that a 7-star hotel represents. She adds: "I think so *yeah* they show that it has a traditional background but it is really modern" (Research participant #2, personal communication, 26th October 2015). Here comes the issue of cultural symbols as opposed to national symbols. Burj Al Arab is considered by the participants as a national achievement and not a cultural representation. The place has no cultural meaning for them as discussed by Carmona, Heath, Oc, and Tiesdell (2003). Research participants were asked what element or symbol reflects the Emirati identity the most. Answers varied between the national flag, falcons, palm trees and Emirati dress code. The majority 10 answered 'Emirati *burqa* and *ghutra*'. 11 participants believed that Dubai's identity today is reflected by Burj Al Arab: an icon that represents the advancement that the UAE is undergoing (Survey, May-June, 2015). Research participant #3 was interviewed in English too. She had a different idea regarding the Emirati cultural identity. She believes that the spirit of accepting challenges and striving for the best is what describes the Emirates the most. She explains this saying: "I would say Burj



Al Arab kind of represents the Emirati identity in a way that it just shows the perseverance of always being able to try and be our best and do the best that we can do” (Research participant #3, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

Regarding cultural activities at the hotel, research participants expressed their disappointment to the fact that Burj Al Arab is only affordable by the rich explaining that a cultural icon should be accessible by all Emiratis, rich and poor. They believe Burj Al Arab is a place only for rich tourists and not the common Emirati citizen. Majority of the voices argue that this point itself does not make Burj Al Arab qualify as a cultural icon but rather makes it a tourist destination (Survey, May-June, 2015; Interview, October, 2015).

Burj Khalifa too is regarded as the product of technological advancement, tourism and entertainment by the majority of research participants. 12 of 28 participants believe that the burj is a symbol of ‘technological advancement’ and 10 participants see it as a symbol of ‘Tourism and Entertainment’. 16 of them answered that they will introduce Burj Khalifa to a foreigner as the ‘tallest building in the world’. For some, though, Burj Khalifa did not pass for a cultural icon. Although fascinated by its design, they did not recognize the cultural symbolism behind it or the design concept used. Only 3 participants relate the burj to cultural elements (i.e. the palm tree). A research participant wrote: “For it [Burj Khalifa] in my opinion does not reflect the Emirati identity” (A., personal communication, March, 2015). 5 of 28 participants believe that the burj symbolizes Emirati Identity and Culture (Survey, March, 2015; Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). However, Burj Khalifa is always a source of pride to the research participants. “It was erected in spite of the hardships/difficulties that the nation was going through at that time” (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015), explains an Emirati woman. This was not

evident in the case of Burj Al Arab where the majority knows that it represented the sail of a dhow. The author suggests that maybe the water body surrounding Burj Al Arab makes recognizing the symbolism behind it easier. This does not mean that Burj Khalifa is not image-able. This building is still recognizable for its sleek shape and tall structure. In both cases though, research participants refused to accept them as authentic cultural icons. They are regarded as icons for wealth, power, leisure and advancement of Dubai first and foremost, rather than being cultural icons, as stated earlier in chapters 2 and 4.

### 5.3 Activism

Media and marketing go hand-in-hand in today's globalized world. Media promotes consumerism (Zizek, 2002) and attracts tourists to experience Dubai's architectural wonders. This research reveals that social media platforms and official websites play a major role in promoting this *new identity* of Dubai and markets it as tourism. This is what is called mediated globalization or media-induced globalization where the consumerist and capitalist notions of today's globalized world are completely broadcasted and promoted by media (Hauser, n.d.). Media thus creates this *collective image* of modern Dubai and broadcasts it to the Emirati population as *identity* (Morley and Robins, 2002). The perception of the Emiratis to Burj Al Arab, Burj Khalifa and all other iconic sites at Dubai is hugely influenced by those *images* that media continues to create to this date. The government and cultural institutes use social media platforms and other forms of media to promote the new identity of Dubai. In addition, media is used by such institutes to promote Dubai's image and tourism to the outside world. It is a tool used by such institutes to aid in cultural

production: either through promoting Emirati culture or advertising for Dubai's iconic architectural structures.

Majority of the research participants describe Burj Al Arab using labels and terms used in mass media today. Research participants often emphasize on the fact that Burj Al Arab is fascinating because it is the world's only 7-star hotel. 13 of the research participants see Burj Al Arab as a symbol of tourism in Dubai (Survey, May-June, 2015). Eng. Al Madani from the Architectural Heritage Department, Kayed from the SMCCU and the statements of the DTCM all explain how the country became a tourist-oriented country to support its own economy, as mentioned in chapter 4. By doing so, they all use the terminologies used in today's media to advertise this building. Similarly, earlier research at Burj Khalifa also reveals that technology and social media play a very important role in formulating the picture of Burj Khalifa in the minds of Emiratis as a national achievement and a global destination. Research participants at the site of Burj Khalifa label it using newspaper headlines and catchy media phrases such as 'world's tallest building' (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). Research participants also explain how advertisements inform them about the latest offers regarding Burj Khalifa and other tourist spots in Dubai (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). This highlights the role of media in encouraging branding and consumerism.

Both of the towers are examples of how consumerism promotes itself through self-identity (Martilla, 2011). However, comparing the results of this research to those of Burj Khalifa, the author finds that the role of consumerism is more evident in the case of the affordable Burj Khalifa. Since it is surrounded by the Dubai Mall and many other services and entertainment facilities, Burj Khalifa is easily accessible by the common Emirati consumer. In addition to the fact the 19 of the 28 participants

have personally been inside Burj Khalifa, participants enjoy spending time around the Burj. When asked why they visit Burj Khalifa, 15 of the research participants answered that they do so because they like the surrounding cafes, hotels and shops (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). When asked about her views about Burj Al Arab and its prices, research participant #3 explains: “*Wow Burj Al Arab is very expensive. But you know Burj Al Arab at the same time it just shows how far we can get in certain things*”. She highlights that the fact that it is not “accessible by probably all people” and that “it’s quite expensive” is “what makes it different”.

When it comes to cultural activities, 15 participants enjoy the New Year’s Celebration’s at Burj Khalifa. “The most thing I love is the fireworks they show on TV on New Year’s Eve or.. I think the national day”, said one participant (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). Another participant specifically mentions that he can actually watch the celebrations from home i.e. through television, rather than visiting the space physically in person (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). The majority of the participants agree that those activities help in keeping the Emirati identity alive and in surfacing the voice of the Emiratis. 8 participants agree that those activities support tourism and encourage cultural interaction, first and foremost (Survey, March, 2015). Contrastingly, in the case of the luxurious Burj Al Arab with its symbolic architecture and exaggerated services, the majority of the research participants has never been inside the Burj; they did not experience its activities and services. The fact that the landscape around Burj Al Arab does not contain other activities for visitors makes it even less targeted by the common Emirati consumers. Although some might argue that buildings like Burj Al Arab are just a luxurious destination for the rich tourists and that they have only led to consumerism and identity-loss, such

buildings have helped boost the economy of the country. When asked why they thought people visit Burj Al Arab, 14 participants believed that people visited the hotel to take pictures and share them on social media platforms above all. Out of the total number of research participants, 12 believed that tourists mainly visit Burj Al Arab because of its amazing architecture and interior design (Survey, May-June, 2015).

In the light of design activism, research participants, express their concern regarding the preservation of the Emirati culture and call for more actions to maintain an Emirati core in today's modern Dubai (Survey, May-June, 2015). They see a need to change and stand for the minority (Thorpe, 2011). Comparing this to previous research, this is evident in the case of both Burj Khalifa. With regards to consumerism, the core of modern Dubai is home to many other activities that attract tourists, residents and even the nationals alike. People visit this area of Dubai (around Burj Khalifa) not because it is culturally significant but rather because it satisfies the consuming instincts of people today. This point was stated by several research participants. When asked why they thought other people visit Burj Khalifa, the research participants' feedbacks varied. 10 of them agree that the amazing architecture of the building attracted visitors while 13 participants believe that people were interested in taking selfies with the tower and showing them to friends. Some stated that they would love to post pictures taken at specific social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. 8 of them explain that people want to experience Burj Khalifa in real life after they've seen it on TV screens (Survey, March, 2015). "Because everybody comes here so I wanted to come too", explained one of the research participants (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). Only 1 participant believes that people visit Burj Khalifa because it reflects the Emirati

culture. Many of the research participants stated that they are not interested in the tower or its architecture but are rather interested in the services and entertainment available on site. Watching fountain shows and night shows, listening to music, shopping and dining were some of the activities that the research participants consider enjoyable and were repeated often by most of them (Survey, March, 2015; Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). In addition, research participants want to believe that they as Emiratis had a role in shaping Dubai architecturally today. Research participants were asked to give their feedback regarding the Western influence on Dubai and its architecture. When asked if Western influence is the main reason behind the architecture of Dubai, 13 participants agreed that it is. 19 of the 20 participants saw that Dubai and the UAE are playing a significant role in keeping the cultural identity alive and 15 participants believed that architecture in Dubai is shaped by Emiratis though influenced by the West (Survey, May-June, 2015). They believe that Emiratis control and guide the architectural development in Dubai (Survey, May-June, 2015 and Interview, October, 2015) (discussed in point '5.5' below).

#### **5.4 Ambivalence**

The Emiratis take pride in several aspects of their culture like dressing style, dialect, tribal norms, religion, traditional activities and even architecture. The interviews with the people as well as the statements of DTCM showed that the Emiratis, indeed, are proud of their past: heritage, culture and tradition (Interview, October, 2015). The Emiratis experience and express their culture amongst themselves on a daily basis through their social interactions with one another and with visitors. Interactions with research participants revealed that there is a general

yearning for the past and a feeling of nostalgia: a reflection of the Emirati pride. 13 of the 20 research participants surveyed believe that Burj Al Arab needs more traditional Emirati elements (Survey, March, 2015). A research participant specifically explains how cultural symbols are located in older more traditional areas of the country like Ras Al Khaimah and Al Ain and not much Dubai (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015). This only proves Al Naim's (2008) statements that the people of the gulf are deeply attached to their cultural roots, their language and religion. These form the base of their cultural identity. 10 of the research participants added that they enjoy traditional architecture that reflects the culture of the place they are travelling to, irrespective of their expertise, age or nationality.

Cultural and architectural Emirati symbols are considered very significant by all research participants. Participants take pride in elements such as the national flag, dress-code, and even other geographical/ natural elements such as palm trees and falcons. The majority of the research participants chose the 'flag' when asked what cultural element they thought represented the Emirati identity the most (Interview, October, 2015). The Emirati flag is an element that could be seen on almost every street in the country. As a visitor, the researcher herself noticed the vast portrayal of the Emirati flag on streets and buildings in the form of the physical flag itself, fairy lights or even just the usage of the 4 colours of the national flag. A strong Emirati voice (from both male and female research participants) explains how the Emirati dress-code is the most visible way of *seeing* the Emirati culture (Interview, October, 2015). All research participants who were dressed traditionally are Emiratis and all Emirati officials working at governmental and cultural institutes (i.e. DTCM, SMCCU and Dubai Municipality) were dressed traditionally. Research participant #7

even comments on how proud she was because she ‘looks Emirati’, implying that she was dressed in an abaya and speaks in the local dialect (Research participant #7, personal communication, October 2015). Research participant #5 explains how the Emiratis themselves create meaning out of relatively new elements saying: “These [new elements] reflect us. We build it and we create a meaning for it” (Research participant #5, personal communication, October 2015). Overall, all research participants radiated a sense of pride and showed support to the government and its choices. “I’m Emirati. That is enough (reason to be proud)... My country is home to any and all visitors. There is no road or building that is built without a vision and a design plan. That is how my Emirates is”, explains research participant #9 (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015). Research participants even took pride in cultural activities. Research participant #2 explains how cultural activities support the Emirati identity because they help introduce and promote the cultural identity to outsiders. She emphasizes the importance of cultural activities that help in remembering the past and staying in touch with it while introducing it to others (Research participant #2, personal communication, October 2015). Yet, significantly, some believe that the essence of the Emirati identity can be felt through daily interactions and behaviour of the Emiratis themselves (Interview, October, 2015). Previous study at Burj Khalifa reveals that 27 of the 28 research participants agree that a nation’s dressing style, religion, language, culture and even geography form its cultural identity (Survey, March, 2015). These ideas are supported by a couple of scholars who believe that culture is transmitted through daily face to face interactions (Bruner, 1982 and Al Khazraji, 2011). Besides agreeing to a couple of shared cultural symbols, all research participants at both sites showed pride in their cultural heritage (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014).



This is even seen from their response with respect to the modern architecture of Burj Al Arab and Dubai in general. Although they do not feel the cultural attachment to Burj Al Arab, the majority of the participants, without exception, is proud of it as a national, technological achievement and considered it ‘perfect’. Five research participants believed that Burj Al Arab is a symbol of pride for the Emiratis. The same group also stated that what makes this tower iconic is the fact that it is a reflection of the technological advancement and development that Dubai is undergoing today (Survey, May-June, 2015). Research participants were asked to comment on the architecture of the tower. 10 of those interviewed believed that Burj Al Arab was perfect when it comes to architecture and design. 5 of the research participants were fascinated by the ‘interior’ of Burj Al Arab explaining how luxurious it was although they have never been inside in person. Some argued though that the tower only represents the modern/ technological side of Dubai and not the old traditional one. . She comments saying: “Dubai is always different and we are always different” (Research participant #3, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). She explains how fascinated she is by the design of this “7-star hotel” describing it as “beautiful”. She says that the burj is amongst the “first things that we built” and that it is a “symbol of the start of the development of Dubai”. She explains how the burj is incomparable and is “out of this world” because of its “fascinating” architecture. She goes on to add that it is “amazing” because it is the “only 7-star hotel in the world” (Research participant #3, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). For the Emirati, specifically, this yields a sense of pride as such structures become global icons and attractions and promote the country’s global image. In accordance with the governmental declarations, majority of the research participants too showed that they were willing to move forward in the path of technological

development and advancement. There was an overall satisfaction and a strong sense of pride with the new modern identity of Dubai's architecture and global image. This *pride* with respect to the Emirati culture and architecture is what is expressed and perceived by the Emirati research participants based on their narrations and answers. However, there was also a weaker yet passionate voice that called for more cultural representation in architectural facades as explained earlier in this section (Survey, May-June, 2015 and Interview, October, 2015). When asked if she thought anything was missing she exclaims: "Missing? ...I think it does give a beautiful reflection of what the UAE is". She agreed that Burj Arab is a 'masterpiece' and is 'beautiful' (Research participant #2, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). "The interior is finished with gold", explains research participant #4 (Research participant #4, personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Another participant stated that the very idea that not everyone can afford to stay at Burj Al Arab was fascinating by itself (Research participant #5, personal communication, 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015).

However, along with pride comes a feeling of confusion. Ambivalence is the right term to use here (Banet-Weiser, 2012). While they all admire the advancement and are proud of it, they do not consider it as a reflection of who they are. A research participant comments on how all of Dubai today (and Burj Al Arab specifically) is an impressive showcase of money and leisure more than just a place for Emiratis adding that "the Emirati identity is missing from Burj Al Arab. It's mostly aimed towards tourists" (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015). This quite matches what Sam Wollaston states in The Guardian where he compares Burj Al Arab to Vegas ("Burj Al Arab, The Symbol of Dubai", 2015). However, research participants sometimes argue in favour of Burj Al Arab's exclusivity and insist that its exclusive luxuriousness is what makes it stand out as an architectural icon.

Research participants explain that Burj Al Arab reflects an aura of uniqueness and a spirit of challenge and achievement that Dubai is famous for (Interview, October, 2015). Their identity stands out through *differentiation* (Canter, 1977). Previous study at Burj Khalifa also recorded participant views that support the concept of *differentiation*. A participant explained: “You will not experience this [i.e. Burj Khalifa] in any other part of the world” (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). In comparison, Bleibleh’s and Al-Saber’s (2014) research’s results reveal that Emirati research participants have mixed feelings towards Burj Khalifa. Majority of the research participants believe that Burj Khalifa is ‘perfect’ and has nothing missing (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). While they have pride in it, they do not connect to it culturally. The feeling of pride behind Burj Khalifa is explained with the fact that “the country moves forward like all other developing countries; hence it is expected that the building will look more modern and less traditional”. He then adds: “Besides, the surrounding buildings [around Burj Khalifa] are very traditional and add to the space a special flavour. I think Burj Khalifa is excellent...no nothing is missing” (Anonymous, personal communication, May, 2015).

As per the official statements of the DTCM, Dubai is witnessing the birth of a new, enhanced Emirati cultural identity (DTCM, 2015) (discussed in chapter 4 section 4.4). The idea of a new Emirati identity is accepted by all research participants irrespective of age, gender and background. Research participants state that the UAE is a place for people of all nationalities and that every Emirati citizen and resident contributes to molding the country’s cultural identity (Survey, May-June, 2015 and Interview, October, 2015). This indeed comes in agreement with DTCM’s statements on Dubai’s new cultural identity (DTCM, 2015). Kayed though

argues by saying that this ‘new’ identity has always been Dubai’s identity since the city’s early days. She states: “Dubai was never just Emiratis or just people from the UAE. Dubai has always been a mix of people from all over the world” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). 8 of the 20 research participants surveyed agree with this viewpoint. 12 of the total number of research participants consider the government of the UAE responsible of promoting the Emirati identity. Either way, all these voices prove that culture in Dubai is indeed shared (as supported by the views of Deal et al (2007) and Wang (2007)) and produced by the country itself: its government and people.

Amidst all answers and feedbacks, one could definitely sense that there was a yearning for the past: its designs and architecture. Kayed explains this by saying that the rapid development of Dubai is what led to the coincidental existence of both the old and the new (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). This is a true case of ambivalence where Dubai’s cultural identity is stuck between economic imperatives and authenticity (Banet-Weiser, 2012). This study reveals that research participants believe that western influence has impacted the urban development of the country. Kayed of the SMCCU also supports this notion. However, Emiratis interviewed agree that development in Dubai is steered by Emirati power and guidance (Survey, May-June, 2015; Interview, October, 2015). Through agency, they believe that they participate in making and remaking culture in Dubai, including its urban and architectural identity. With regards to agency, research at Burj Khalifa also reveals the same results (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014). This is further discussed in the next section.

## 5.5 Agency

Emirati research participants agree that the urban and architectural development of Dubai is a result of globalization, western influences, economic and tourism policies. However, the majority, i.e. 19 out of 20, assert that these factors are controlled by Dubai's government (Survey, May-June, 2015; Interview, October, 2015). Culture is individually and collectively defined in the Emirates. The views of the Emiratis are clearly a result of their collective identity which is constituted by their religious, ethnic, national and global identity (Al Sumaiti, 2014) and their close cultural bonds (Morley and Robins, 2002). This of course is accompanied by their individual identity which is constituted of personal values, perception, experience and attitudes. Participant numbers 2 and 9 agree that individual behaviour reflects the cultural identity of a country the most. Participant number 2 adds that dressing style, culture, religion, language, geography and even politics participate in shaping Dubai's cultural identity (Research participant #2, personal communication, October, 2015; Research participant #9, personal communication, October, 2015). Research participants interviewed are very *specific* about cultural meanings and symbolism. They explicitly choose what they regard as cultural such as the traditional dress, falcons, political leaders etc. and omit what they do not relate to. They openly state that Burj Al Arab needs more Emirati elements (Survey, May-June, 2015; Interview, October, 2015). Since culture is dynamic and not passively accepted, the Emiratis today are cultural agents who actively engage in making and remaking culture by choosing what they consider significant and creating personal meanings about them (Ratner, 2001). They intentionally yet causally intervene in the world creating their own 'culture', even when their culture might not be well represented in the built-forms around them. SMCCU describes how their main goal to present the traditional

Emirati culture to the tourists and the world thereby clearing misunderstandings and welcoming visitors. Cultural activities are conducted and Emirati volunteers are themselves invited to participate in the events and activities in the center (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). This is just one example of the many cultural organizations around Dubai and country. Emiratis actively participate in reflecting and promoting their culture on a day-to-day basis by their appearance, social interactions and participation in cultural activities. This passion, as the author likes to call it, probably stems from their religion and Bedouin roots (Al Khazraji, 2009 and Al Naim, 2006a) and ensures *continuity* (Canter, 1977). Interacting and participating with other people in life activities helps in creating and broadcasting social relations through agency (Ratner, 1991 as quoted in Ratner, 2001). This is also evident from DTCM's reports as discussed in section 4.3 of chapter 4. Other global and local organizations working in Dubai are monitored and directed by the DTCM. So allowing global contribution, in this case, is deliberate and controlled. When asked about who they think plays the most significant role in promoting the Emirati Cultural Identity today, the maximum score went for the 'The Federal Government of the UAE' (12), followed by the 'Indigenous Emirati People' (9). 8 of the total research participants chose 'Each and every citizen and resident of the UAE'. Only 2 participants answered by choosing 'Cultural Organizations'. The majority believed that the people of the Emirates form and promote the country's cultural identity (Survey, May-June, 2015).

Comparing results to those of Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al-Saber, 2014), the author discovers that 19 of the 20 Emirati research participants agree that Emirati authorities and government control the development of Dubai. Regarding western influence on the architecture in Dubai, the majority, i.e. 18 of 20 research

participants, agree that the urban and architectural development in Dubai has been influenced by western forces yet is controlled strongly by Emirati power (Survey, March, 2015). Participants were asked if they thought that globalization and western influence impacted the modern architectural development of Dubai. To that research participant #6 agreed. However, he believes that the Emiratis always put their “own twist on things” and make everything in Dubai their own (Research participant #6, personal communication, October 2015). On the other hand, research participant #7 also explains how she doesn’t think the ‘west’ influenced the development in Dubai saying that Dubai was a vision of its leaders and that it was the leader’s choice to use the revenue obtained from oil due to which the West started investing in Dubai (Research participant #7, personal communication, October 2015). Research participant #2 explains that by saying: “The people who want to build buildings... they definitely want to build something that is related to the culture” (Research participant #2, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Research participant #3 explains her opinion saying: “I would say there are a lot of Emiratis studying Architecture and so they try... they do go study abroad... they come study here in the UAE so they are trying to see or be a part of what Dubai looks like today definitely. So they have a big influence” (Research participant #3, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Participant #8 thinks that those modern buildings of Dubai are part of its new image and identity: “What reflects UAE... probably the fact that we have old and new here at the same place. I think that’s what gets everybody here... like it’s desert and buildings so this is what everybody knows Dubai for” (Research participant #8, personal communication, October 2015). However, many of the participants insist that the Emirati culture is what forms its global image and identity. Participant #2 explains: “I think our culture shows more

than any... also the dressing style like the first thing you see is really the dressing style it is the most obvious than anything else but then also our ways are really influential” (Research participant #2, personal communication, October 2015). Majority of the research participants believed that the traditional garments reflected their cultural identity. Research participant #3 believes that along with the Emirati dress, the “behavior” of Emiratis reflect their cultural identity the most. She describes her people as “friendly”, “welcoming”, and “open-minded”. She adds that politics influence cultural identity as well by saying: “So I think inclusive of dressing style, culture, religion, language and geography, I also think politics has an effect as well” (Research participant #3, personal communication, October 2015).

Research participants believe that the indigenous Emiratis and the residents all contribute to the formation of the Emirati cultural identity as mentioned in 5.4 above. Research participants were generally very welcoming to visitors and residents from other countries in their speech. Research participant #9 explained how every “newcomer” takes part in forming the Emirati cultural identity. Even a visitor is a “source of pride to us Emiratis” (Research participant #9, personal communication, 26th October, 2015). Participants also explain how they enjoy the representation of the Emirati culture through National Day and New Year’s Celebrations every year at Burj Khalifa. The results are exactly similar at both sites. Finally, participants were asked to share their favourite cultural activities around the tower. Research participants considered National Day Celebrations and New Year’s Celebrations interesting occasions that one must not miss if around Burj Al Arab (Survey, May-June, 2015).



### Feedback of Governmental and Cultural Institutes

Both institutes aim at promoting production of culture in Dubai. Eng. Al Madani shared the vision and message of the Architectural Heritage Department of Dubai Municipality as shown in figure 13. Their vision states: “To maintain our architectural heritage with a vision to look forward into an outstanding and sustainable future” while their message/ mission is “To achieve leadership and sustainability in preserving the architectural heritage and consolidate awareness of the importance of heritage”.

SMCCU’s main goal is to “clear misunderstandings about the Emirati culture” by promoting a closer idea of the “real Emirati culture” instead of relying on the image “media may show or the television”. Kayed explains that the center wishes to highlight the Emirati culture through the Bedouin lifestyle, traditional houses, religion and (social) conduct (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). The center strictly and only promotes Emirati culture essentially targeting the tourists/ foreigners.

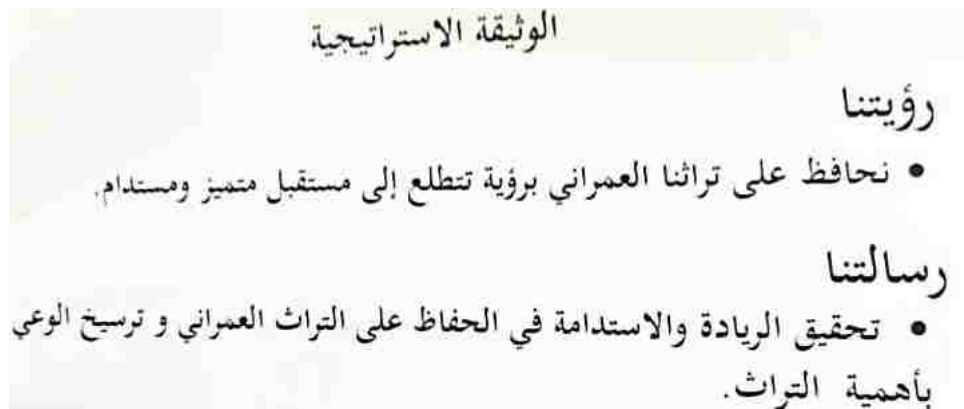


Figure 13: Vision and Message/Mission of the Architectural Heritage Department at Dubai Municipality (Dubai Municipality, 2015)

Dubai’s Municipality and SMCCU both aim at producing culture through tangible and intangible means, respectively. SMCCU is also solely directing its

efforts to promoting heritage and culture. Kayed explains how local Emirati people participate in the center's events and activities and help in presenting the culture to tourists and visitors (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Kayed states that the SMCCU conducts different cultural events, and informative lectures that introduce tourists and visitors to topics such as pearl diving in the old days, different types of houses in the UAE and the Emirati lifestyle in general (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Cultural events, however, may not be unified across all of the UAE. Each Emirate conducts its own events and activities. Kayed explains how there is a clear desire to unify events and activities across the Emirates: "I would say there is potential to be more unified projects" (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

When asked about what she thought about the architectural development of Dubai, Eng. Al Madani described her country the UAE as a 'Tourist country' where consumerism plays a major role in directing the activities, events and projects. She adds that tourism is necessary to encourage better economy (Al Madani, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Commenting on the architecture of Dubai, Eng. Al Madani explained how the Dubai Municipality is directly responsible of all architectural developments in the areas of Al Fahaidi, Souq Bur Dubai, Al Ras, Al Shindiga, and Deira. Yet the Municipality does not interfere with the development of projects in other areas of Dubai. The Municipality, however, regulates the colours of buildings, glass-type used as well as revises architectural drawings of all buildings/projects/developments in Dubai including mega projects and tourist destinations like Burj Al Arab (Al Madani, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Eng. Al Madani added that other than monitoring standard building codes and regulations, Dubai Municipality does not interfere with the design concept of mega

projects like Burj Al Arab, Burj Khlaifa and the like. Those projects are solely developed by big architectural offices and firms. Eng. Al Madani mentioned that rules differ from one municipality to another. Municipalities within each Emirate had its own customized set of laws. Most cultural exhibitions, lectures and even National Day celebrations are the prime responsibility of the Tourism Department in Dubai; not the municipality (Al Madani, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). On the other hand, SMCCU explained how they had no control over the architectural development of Dubai or even the production of cultural activities at iconic sites. They focus more on the society rather than buildings. SMCCU's prime focus is to hold cultural events for visitors and tourists (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

At SMCCU, interview lasted for 20 minutes. After the interview, the author was taken on a tour and shown the different activities at the center as well as invited to a traditional Emirati breakfast at the main courtyard of the SMCCU building. At Dubai's Municipality, the interview lasted for 20-30 minutes after which the researcher/ author was taken on tour to view the other offices and departments of the department.

Investigating SMCCU's views on the Emirati Cultural Identity, the author learns that the SMCCU believe that Dubai's identity has never changed from the old days. Kayed states that Dubai has always been "a trade spot and a place for everybody to have an opportunity to get a job and live a good life and to be protected". She explains how Dubai still has the same identity but on a much bigger scale. Kayed believes that Dubai was "never just Emiratis". She emphasizes the concept of nationalism and explains how Dubai was always constituted by people of different backgrounds. She comments in this regard saying: "We want everybody to

feel proud to be living in Dubai as well. We want everybody to be able to share the Emirati identity” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). SMCCU encourages the idea that Dubai is a place for all irrespective of ethnic background or nationality. With regards to cultural identity, Kayed supports the notion that Dubai has two sides: the old and the new, which has come together as one. She gives an example of how the Emirati people dress traditionally and drive modern cars simultaneously (Dalia Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Kayed believes that UAE’s quick development allowed for this coexistence of the old and new. She explains saying: “Dubai is a great story. You have never seen a country ever in history to grow as fast as the UAE has grown into” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

At the SMCCU, emphasis was also given to Emirati dress-code. Kayed explains how all presenters at SMCCU have to dress in traditional Emirati garments. She explains: “We do make it a must that you dress in the local dress. I mean of course you know we should to be able to represent the culture” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). The researcher/ author herself noticed that all volunteers and presenters at the center dressed traditionally, especially those who are responsible of meeting guests and tourists. SMCCU also explain how UAE will always stay attached to its past and culture to ensure the country’s future. According to Kayed, the UAE will always “want to bring back the old” inspired by Sheikh Zayed’s words that convey the message that one can progress towards the future only if one remembers where one came from. She believes that this message is reflected by the UAE’s rulers (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015).

Since Dubai is a major tourist attraction in the region, it aims at attracting people from all over the world all year round. The main leisure events arm of DTCM

is *Dubai Events*. Dubai Events, as inferred through DTCM's archival material, is responsible for organizing all-year-round world-class events in Dubai with the goal of exciting and entertaining residents and visitors. Dubai Events also works closely with other local and international event organizers establishing strong and long-standing connections with key partners. In addition, it grants permits and assists with providing licenses and site inspections. As discussed in chapter 2, websites such as [www.dubaicalendar.com] are used by DCTM (and Dubai Events) to promote and advertise its annual agenda. This website is the official portal for all of Dubai's events (DCTM, 2015).

Most importantly, the DTCM shared its vision for a new Dubai and with a new cultural identity. DTCM's approach is based on treating visitors and citizens alike and giving them equal attention. It launched #MyDubai in an attempt to advertise the city on an everyday basis through twitter. In an article/ document titled *What is MyDubai – Backgrounder*, DTCM explains how #MyDubai today has its own account twitter with over 27.6k followers stating that it aims to present a biography of the lives of Dubai's residents and visitors ("What is MyDubai – Backgrounder", 2015; "twitter.com/MyDubai", 2015). By this, the DTCM aims at showing the world that a 'thriving, exciting and diverse city that 2.1 million people call home' lies beneath the landmarks, headlines and superlatives (DCTM, 2015, p. 1). Though Dubai is welcoming to people of all backgrounds and is a home for cultural diversity, DTCM and other governmental institutes reinforce the fact that the very heart of Dubai is Arabian. The DCTM states in *Culture and Heritage*: "Yet, despite being a uniquely tolerant and multi-cultured society, Dubai prides itself on its Arabian roots. At its core, Dubai will always be a city where the mystique of Arabia ultimately prevail" (DCTM, 2015, p. 1). The department, in the same document, uses the

examples of the prayer call and aroma of exotic spices to describe the traditional Emirati environment. It also explains how the Emirati skyline contains an assortment of ‘twisting and billowing towers’ and ‘domes and minarets of majestic mosques’. Finally it adds that the Emiratis, who not long ago lived in the ‘glorious desert’ by the Creek, ‘are justifiably proud of their heritage’ (DCTM, 2015, p. 1).

Even the activities conducted at Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab like National Day Celebration, New Year’s Celebration etc. are overseen and approved by DCTM first and foremost. The main long-term goal of DCTM is to make Dubai the most visited city in the world and achieving Dubai’s Tourism Vision for 2020 of welcoming 20 million visitors per year (by 2020). In so doing, it is hoped that the economic contribution of tourism in the UAE will be tripled by 2020 (DTCM, 2015).

The DTCM has launched several projects to reinforce this authentic Emirati identity and culture. These projects are achieved in phases and aim at enabling the visitors of Dubai to experience the rich history and culture of the area. Districts such as Deira, Bur Dubai, Al Fahidi, Al Shindagha and even the area around Dubai Creek are of prime importance in this context. In addition, Dubai’s classic traditional activities are revived by the department in the form of cultural events held for tourists mainly. These are based on five significant pillars: tradition, heritage, trade, community and place-making (DTCM, 2015). These events are published on websites and advertised for in almost all social media platforms. Upgrading textile, spice and gold souqs and the installation of abra (traditional wooden boat) stops are a few examples of how activities and experiences are created for the visitors. According to DTCM, 60 projects are expected to be completed which all aim at promoting Dubai’s authentic culture and include Al Shindagha Museum that exhibit numerous cultural and historical artifacts. The DTCM considers Al Fahidi district

with its shops, galleries, cafés and even the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding are a few of the successful projects that attract tourists and speak authenticity. The largest open-air historic district is also planned to be formed in this area by the DTCM in the near future covering an area of 1.5 sq. km. As HH Sheikh Mohammed pictured, this area will include Al Fahidi fort and Al Sabkhah. The events held there will focus on Dubai's classic traditional activities in an attempt to help preserve and revive the indigenous Emirati flavour. As explained in table 5 below, the events are based on 5 significant pillars: tradition, heritage, trade, community and place-making (DCTM, 2015).

<b>Tradition</b>	Draw light on Emirati Culture and stories of the area
<b>Heritage</b>	Preserve and protect historical buildings and sites
<b>Trade</b>	Preserve traditional souqs/ markets as well as celebrate and revive traditional trade
<b>Community</b>	Promote performance arts and allow residents to share cultural experiences through gathering at traditional squares
<b>Place Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve original Fabric</li> <li>• Allow visitors to navigate easily through historic areas.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Five Main Pillars for Development of Historic Sites (DCTM, 2015)

Cultural and governmental institutes are keen on displaying various elements of the Emirati past. At the SMCCU, for instance, aspects of Emirati culture like architecture, costume, food and even informative leaflets and booklets are displayed for the visitors of the center. In addition, visitors and tourists get to live an actual Emirati experience by walking around in the old traditional house/ neighbourhood

and having an Emirati meal. The whole setting is representative of the Emirati cultural values as it is set in the ancient Al Fahaidi district.

### **Author's Field Observations**

Several cultural events are held in Dubai or Abu Dhabi at different times of the year. What is evident in all events is the strong persistent presence of the Emirati identity, whether through music, food, costumes or art. For instance, the Abu Dhabi Food Festival held in February 2015 witnessed a lively presence of a huge Emirati population and the festival even had an 'Emirati tent' where traditional Emirati food and coffee (gahwa) was served. In addition, it is almost impossible to not see a painting, model or some sort of representation of an Emirati cultural element, political leader or iconic architectural structure. At Dubai Mall in Dubai or even Bawadi Mall or Al Ain Mall in Al Ain, representations of Burj Khalifa, Burj Al Arab, and Atlantis Hotel are often spotted all year round. Even gift shops at Dubai mall and airports in the UAE are packed with souvenirs that all contain images, models or representations of Burj Al Arab (see appendix G for field pictures).

### **5.6 Summary of Comparison**

The comparison is based on the Driving Forces of Everyday Life; namely: Adaptation, authenticity, activism, ambivalence, agency, the perception and reception by indigenous population to those architectural wonders and the production of cultural activities and services at those sites. Comparing results, the author discovers the following findings:

- i. The findings regarding the forces of agency and ambivalence are mostly similar in both studies. At the sites of Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa, research participants shared the similar *confused* views on the Emirati cultural identity



while simultaneously displaying a strong sense of pride. The majority at both sites too had similar feedbacks regarding the shared Emirati cultural activities and agreed that the Emiratis make and remake their culture. The reason behind the similarity in the results of these two driving forces is mainly because these two indicators revolve around the research participants' views on general topics like the Emirati cultural identity, traditional and cultural activities, role of government and external forces and Emirati participation in the everyday life. Therefore, they had nothing to do with the architecture of the two towers or their sites or activities.

- ii. Findings regarding the other three forces of authenticity, adaptation and activism are different in the case of Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa since they are specifically oriented towards each tower's specifics. Research participants at both sites had some sense of place and showed a degree of attachment to both towers, therefore agreeing that Burj Khalifa and Al Arab are an essential part of the daily modern Emirati experience.
- iii. Both structures are highly image-able and identifiable by all research participants. However, research participants at Burj Al Arab considered it to be less of a cultural icon simply because of its restricted accessibility and unaffordable prices.
- iv. Although the abstract symbolism of Burj Al Arab's architecture was easier to read by the common Emirati unlike that of Burj Khalifa, the latter proved to be more of an Emirati destination considering the large amount of accessible and affordable activities surrounding the tower.

- v. References to affordability and accessibility of the towers are used only to express the difference in the perception of the research participants of the two towers and are based on their own statements/ answers.
- vi. In both cases, the role of media in promoting consumerism is highly sensed through the people's narratives as well as the general investigation. Media is one of the tools used by the government and other cultural institutes to propagate their agenda that revolves around preserving the Emirati cultural identity and promoting tourism.

The following chapter concludes and restates the major findings.

## Chapter 6: Research Impact and Conclusion

This chapter restates the objective of the study, presents a summary of main results and discusses the research implications. In addition, it discusses the research's contribution and includes emerging questions for future research.

The prime goal of this research is to establish a comparison between the two sites of Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab by surfacing the voice of the indigenous Emirati regarding the issue of cultural modernity. It tackles the issue of cultural identity in today's Dubai. Both the indigenous Emirati people as well as the governmental and cultural institutes play the role of the informants and their feedback on this matter is sought through interviews, surveys and archival materials. In addition, Burj Al Arab is this research's object of interest and the results at this site are compared to previous research at Burj Khalifa (Bleibleh and Al Saber, 2014) to check for generalizability. The following is a discussion of major managerial and theoretical implications of this research: -

### 6.1 Managerial Implications

Based on the Emirati views in this study and the review of literature, the research concludes that the architecture of modern Dubai is mostly a reflection of the nation's technological advancement and economic agenda and imperatives to attract more tourists and increase income by 2020 (Al Kodmany and Ali, 2012; Ouis, 2011). The increase in number of tourists arriving at Dubai annually (Kovjanic, 2014) is an indication to the success of the tourism plan. However, although a success economically and globally, Dubai is not appealing to the cultural taste of the Emiratis themselves. It is also safe to say that amongst the Emirati people, there is some sort of confusion regarding where their cultural identity and authenticity lies: whether in

the past, the present or the future. While a group of the research participants believe that their cultural identity lies in their rich traditional past, others believe that it evolves and enhances into one that counterparts today's modern developing world. With Burj Al Arab, participant #2 explained how: "they [people behind Burj Al Arab] show that it has a traditional background but it is really modern". She adds: "So really with the outside the way that it looks reflecting the old and then the inside reflecting the new" (Research participant #2, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Thus, clearly the participant shows that she considers the Emirati identity to be constituted of two parts: the old and the new. Research participant #9: "It's a symbol of Dubai" "It's a landmark... but it doesn't reflect the UAE. An [architectural] icon is not necessarily [a reflection] of culture. You can find cultural symbols along the borders of Ras Al Khaimah or Al Ain... this gives you [a sense of] the Emirati culture civilization. As a building, [Burj Al Arab] is [only] a landmark" (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015). As mentioned in chapter 4, many believed in this ideology. 12 of the total number of participants argued though that the tower only represents the modern/ technological side of Dubai and not the old traditional one (Survey, May-June, 2015). This was also evident in the case of Burj Khalifa where a research participant stated that: "[Burj Khalifa] in my opinion does not reflect the Emirati identity" (A., personal communication, March, 2015).

On the other hand, other voices opposed this idea saying: "I would say Burj Al Arab kind of represents the Emirati identity in a way that it just shows the perseverance of always being able to try and be our best and do the best that we can do" (Research participant #3, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). Previous investigation at the site of Burj Khalifa revealed similar ideologies. A research

participant explained saying: “Yes I think it [Burj Khalifa] does [reflect the UAE]. We move forward... like all other countries” (Anonymous, personal communication, March, 2015). Some voices admired the spirit of accepting challenges and achieving the impossible. This view was also communicated by the DTCM (DTCM, 2015). After noticing this clear conflict in opinions, the research concludes by supporting Banet-Weiser’s (2012) description of such an occurrence and considers this a transitional phase as a result of rapid development as explained in chapter 5.

Dubai’s landmarks definitely play an important role in creating an image and a new cultural identity. However, this study reveals that cultural identity is not tied to physical spaces alone. It is defined by the social experiences and values attributed to the place by the individuals themselves; in this case the indigenous Emiratis. These values and experiences also decide the degree of attachment to the place. The results of this study support the views of scholars like Najafi and Shariff (2011), as discussed in previous chapters. The study reveals that the indigenous Emirati participants consider their cultural identity to be a blend of two aspects: the past and the present. Supporting this idea, a research participant explains saying: “I actually think that Dubai is the perfect place to see how the old and new came together as one. Because here, for instance, you see Emiratis wearing the cultural dress but at the same time we have (you know) modern cars... we have a smart government, we have so many things that are (let’s say) modernized as well” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). They take pride in the past and emphasize on its *continuity* through cultural symbols and activities as well as symbolism in architecture as revealed in the paragraphs above. “I’m Emirati” explains participant #9, “That is enough (reason to be proud)... Every [Emirati] person even if he’s wearing a suit and tie, you will feel him radiating the [Emirati] pride just when he

talks... We all have that feeling of belonging” (Research participant #9, personal communication, October 2015). Kayed also comments on the close attachment to the past saying: “So every aspect of Dubai whenever there’s an event opening [etc.] we always want to bring back the old... Sheikh Zayed said one time when he was talking about that if you want to be able to progress in the future you have to remember where you came from” (Kayed, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015). She believes that the leaders of the country help preserve the Emirati culture. Research participants who participated in the survey expressed the same opinion by agreeing that the government and leaders reflect and promote the Emirati cultural identity through conducting cultural activities and/or supervising architectural development in Dubai. They believe that in order to move forward, they must remember and preserve the past.

The two towers Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab are not recognized as cultural symbols but rather as national achievements and landmarks. The Emirati participants draw a clear line to separate the traditional past and the modern present. However, they *differentiate* themselves from the rest of the world by emphasizing that their Dubai combines elements of both the past and the present. This, according to them, makes Dubai stand out globally and culturally. Canter’s (1977) concepts of *continuity* and *differentiation* define how the Emirati participants describe their cultural identity today. Participants believe that culture is a daily production of the people themselves and is evident mostly through their social interactions as supported by literature (Al Naim, 2006b; Al Khazraji, 2009) and as discussed in chapter 4.

At both sites, the researcher noted the sense of pride reflected by all Emirati research participants, whether they were ordinary people, government representatives

or volunteers at cultural centers. This *pride* (Al Naim, 2006b) is accompanied by trust and confidence in the policies that drive Dubai's development today. The participants support the government's decisions regarding tourism in Dubai. They welcome visitors and foreigners to experience their culture and tradition, especially when this is accompanied by economic benefits. This observation reflects the idea that culture is shared (Deal, Prince and CCL, 2007 and Wang, 2007) especially in a multi-cultural city like Dubai.

The views and feedbacks of the indigenous Emirati participants regarding the Emirati cultural identity and the perception of space are undoubtedly influenced by the picture painted by media today. Their feedbacks are torn between individual values, social influences and believes and the image broadcasted by media. Participants are blinded by the terms 'tallest, 'most luxurious' and 'first' to a point that the author believes this to be one of the reasons behind the pride they took in the architecture of Dubai. All 30 research participants without exception knew that the design of Burj Al Arab was inspired form the sails of a traditional Emirati *dhow*. They first rely on media descriptions to comment on the towers while their own personal opinions comes second. It felt as though they were visiting the place to see for themselves if the place was as exciting as it is advertised. Social media platforms play a major role in promoting tourism and consumerism (Zizek, 2002) and most importantly: Dubai's new identity (Morley and Robins, 2002). This is evident through the course of the investigation. It is interesting to note that all research participants had general information about the tower's design and facilities though the majority have not been inside it yet. This, in most cases, can be due to the power of media in introducing and advertising this building to the world or/and the people's curiosity to explore such iconic sites. Media here is one of the tools used by

governmental and cultural institutes to promote the new Emirati cultural identity. This has been discussed earlier in chapter 2. This research reveals that consumerism and place branding indeed play a crucial role in the perception and views of the research participants.

In an effort to throw light on this phenomenon of creative destruction and to support development that does not silence the voice of the indigenous people, this research presents the very opinion of the indigenous people themselves to help understand the state of cultural identity based on their own interpretations. Such research could be used in future by policy makers and decision makers to build cities that empower the indigenous Emirati population.

Comparing the case of Burj Al Arab to that of Burj Khalifa reveals that even the two most iconic buildings in Dubai can be perceived differently by the Emirati audience. While Burj Al Arab is seen as a more luxurious, tourist oriented destination, Burj Khalifa is considered to be a more practical, affordable and welcoming destination to the common Emirati. Therefore, this research confirms that, to some extent, applying a similar model of investigation (of cultural resilience and the driving forces of everyday life) on Dubai's wondrous skyscrapers would lead to the this conclusion: Dubai and the Emirati individual today are in a state of ambivalence that is impacting both their architectural forms and cultural lives. In the midst of all this phenomenon of cultural modernity, it will be easier to understand the complex life in such a branded society if one resists the temptation of rationality and embraces ambivalence (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

## **6.2 Theoretical Implications**

This research presents a comparison of two iconic architectural wonders in Dubai in the light of globalization and modernity. Through the lens of resilience and



after analysing the case studies of Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa as discussed in chapter 4 and 5, it is apparent that Dubai is effectively managing and coping with the strong and steady forces of globalization. By this the author means that Dubai is not only boosting its economic profits and global image, but it is also managing to do so without succumbing to the extent that culture, heritage, and tradition are compromised. This can be deduced through the statements and activities of the governmental and cultural institutes.

This research proposes an in-depth analysis of the model for the indigenous Emirati resilience based on the research participants' feedback and input at the very site of Burj Al Arab. Using Bleibleh's (2012) model of Indigenous Emirati Resilience as a base and guide to lead this investigation, data collected in the form of reviewed literature, responses of indigenous Emirati research participants as well as the responses of the DTCM, SMCCU and Dubai Municipality have all helped feed into this model and create a more detailed picture as shown in figure 14.

The author proposes that globalization, the indigenous Emirati person and the architectural space are the key players in the story of Dubai. Each of those is constituted of and/or influenced by several other aspects. The author believes that in today's Dubai, the overlapping of and interaction between these research constructs leads to the everyday occurrence of visible phenomena, namely: enhancement and formation of a new Emirati cultural identity, usage of history-inspired design approaches in architecture and urban development and growth of a sense of pride, place and attachment, as shown in table 6. All these outcomes or *reactions* constitute the Indigenous Emirati Resilience. Generally speaking and excluding context, in each of these *reactions*, there are two or three options: (i) supportive and enhancing, (ii) outright de-legitimizing, or (iii) micro changes. The author believes, based on the

findings of this research, that the Emirati cultural identity, national pride, and sense of place are enhanced under the effect of globalization in the Emirati context.

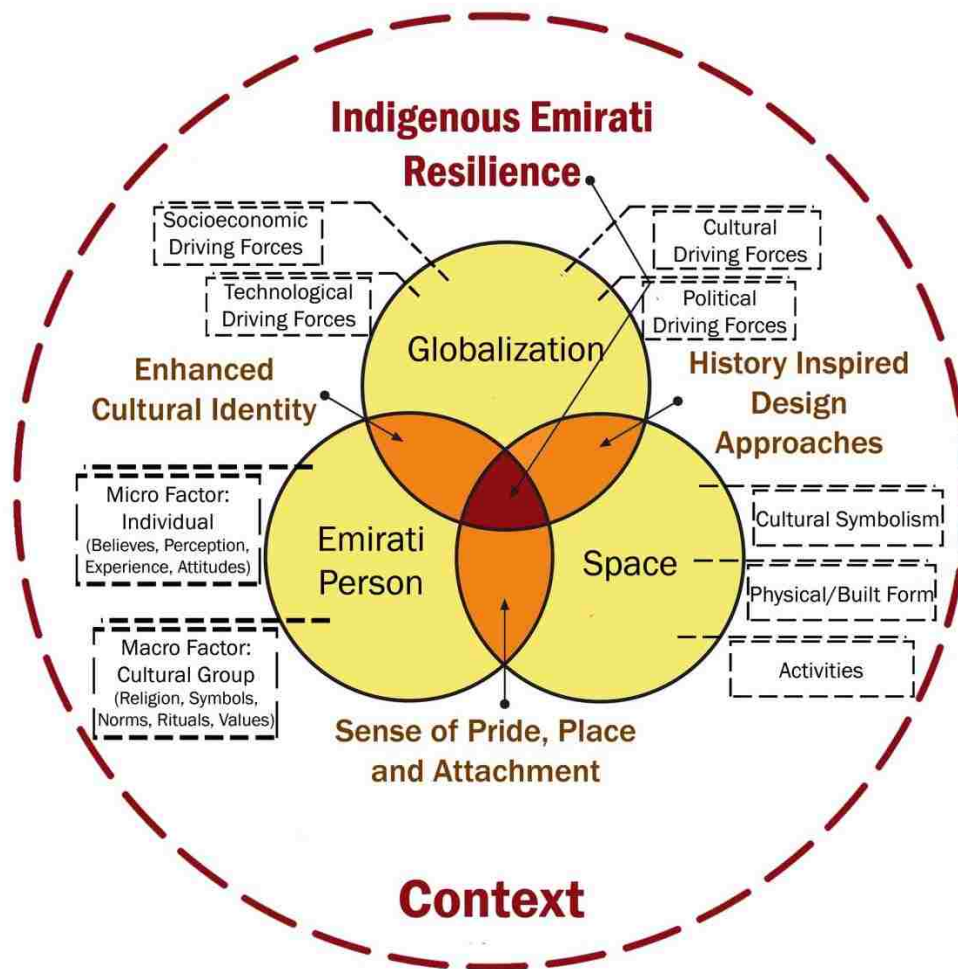


Figure 14: Relational Diagram Model 2 (Bleibleh, 2012)

Globalization	+	Emirati Person	=	Enhanced Cultural Identity
Globalization	+	Space	=	History-inspired Design Approaches
Emirati Person	+	Space	=	National Pride, Sense of Place and Attachment

Table 6: Research Relational Details

The Emirati person is a summation of both his/her individual self and his/her cultural group. These micro and macro factors of cultural identity (Hauser, n.d.), as proposed earlier in the literature, define the reaction and resilience displayed in light

of globalization. The author believes that the Emirati cultural identity today is not lost. It has indeed evolved to a new enhanced identity that appeals to the global audience and supports the country's economic strategy while still holding on to the essence of the Emirati spirit. The author believes that the indigenous Emirati people are no where close to losing their cultural identity. Their culture, which is based on religion and tribal values, is reflected strongly in their cultural interactions and appearance. On a daily basis, an example of how the Emirati culture is expressed physically is the Emirati traditional dress i.e. the abaya and thoub, which are an essential everyday sighting in public areas. In addition, the Emirati people observe their culture through their behaviour too whether its through allocation of different male and female spaces for privacy, use of Arabic and Islamic greetings, call for prayers in malls and other public places, abiding by public discipline during month of Ramadan etc. As mentioned in chapter 4, research participant #3 comments in this regard saying: "I think Emirati identity does have to do with clothing but I think also it's in the fact of just how you behave is probably the most about your cultural identity" (Research participant #3, personal communication, October 2015). Based on all these Emirati voices and views, the author believes that in the Emirati context, global influences and rapid development only strenghten the Emirati resilience and enhance the cultural identity. However, further research is needed to reveal whether or not the development in Dubai strengthens the cultural identity or leads to its loss.

Spaces in this research are defined by and explored through three characteristics: their actual physical form, cultural symbolism and the activities and services they provide. Under the effect of globalization, spaces too resist change to preserve their cultural identity. As discussed earlier in the literature review, due to nostalgia and yearning to the past, an architectural-cultural resistance is expected to

boom. This is translated at the level of space into physical forms that are inspired by history. This is evident in the case of Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa where regionalized modernism is prevalent as a design approach. Regardless of the success of the design or the reason behind it, the presence of such history-inspired design approaches confirms the place of heritage, past and culture in the lives of the Emiratis and the urban image of the city.

It has been discussed earlier under the literature review that globalization introduces many types of changes on the socioeconomic, cultural, technological and even political level, to name a few. Under globalization, place branding and consumerism affect the Emirati's interaction with and perception of space. Spaces are advertised as utopias and ultimate destinations even by governmental and cultural institutes. This is sometimes done through the use of media. Thus, the government, cultural institutes and media are linked and synchronize cultural production. This not only lures the Emiratis to engage into these sites as consumers but also creates in them a feeling of national pride; especially when their city is rising in rank as a global centre and tourist destination. Of course, this research studies the relationship between the Emirati and space through the lenses of cultural identity and consumerism. Future research can explore the degree of success of such places in more detail.

The proposed model is, of course, capable of being enhanced and developed further especially when one considers that all of its dimensions, namely: globalization, the Emirati (and culture) and place, are bound to change and growth.

### 6.3 Emergent Questions

A couple of themes and questions have emerged during the course of this investigation that will require future exploration. The following is a list of the main emergent questions:

- i. The effect of culture on individual resilience can be explored in future research by studying and comparing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Future research can investigate the adverse logic in consumption culture on the Emirati population.
- ii. Future research opportunities include, but are not confined to, exploring the cultural use of Burj Al Arab, the symbolism in design, the interior design and its relationship with the exterior and cultural sustainability.
- iii. The effect of place-making on the reputation of the city and the relationship/balance between those skyscrapers and traditional/heritage sites needs to be explored.
- iv. Finally, efforts could be poured into seeking feedbacks of other governmental and non-governmental institutes; specifically those concerned with architecture of Dubai. This would clarify many issues, complete and touch upon other aspects of this research.
- v. Last but not least, the impact of the on-going architectural development marathon on indigenous identity is another area that is available for future research.

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### Appendix A: Survey – Burj Khalifa

Answer questions as they relate to you. For most answers, check the box(es) most applicable to you or fill in the blanks:

1	Name		Contact info: (optional)
2	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 or less <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66-75 <input type="checkbox"/> 76 or more
3	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
4	Nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Emirati	<input type="checkbox"/> Other; Specify: _____
5	Hometown		
6	Where do you currently live?	<input type="checkbox"/> Abu Dhabi <input type="checkbox"/> Ajman <input type="checkbox"/> Dubai <input type="checkbox"/> Fujairah	<input type="checkbox"/> Ras al-Khaimah <input type="checkbox"/> Sharjah <input type="checkbox"/> Umm al-Quwain <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
7	Your Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Academia <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Office Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
8	Education	<input type="checkbox"/> High-school Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	
9) While travelling to other places, does the architecture fascinate you?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, especially the modern buildings! <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! I love traditional architecture that represents the culture of a place <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! I love buildings with a mix of modern and traditional design motifs <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy looking at building but I don't pay much attention to details <input type="checkbox"/> I am honestly not interested in architecture			

About Burj Khalifa - ADAPTATION	
10) How often do you visit Burj Khalifa ?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Never visited it before <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first time! <input type="checkbox"/> This is my second time <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 times <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 times! Why:	
11) How long do you stay each time you visit?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than an hour <input type="checkbox"/> A few hours <input type="checkbox"/> A couple of days <input type="checkbox"/> I live close-by, so I'm literally always here! Why:	

12) When is the best day to visit Burj Khalifa?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Noon (Duhr) <input type="checkbox"/> Early Evening (Asr and Magrib) <input type="checkbox"/> Late Night (Isha and after)	
Because:	
<b>About Burj Khalifa - AUTHENTICITY</b>	
13) What do you like most about Burj Khalifa?	
<input type="checkbox"/> The sleek shape <input type="checkbox"/> The glass façade <input type="checkbox"/> The height <input type="checkbox"/> The interior <input type="checkbox"/> The activities held inside and around it <input type="checkbox"/> The water bodies around it	
Other: _____ ;Why: _____	
14) What reflects the UAE identity the most?	
<input type="checkbox"/> The flag <input type="checkbox"/> Palm tree <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional boats <input type="checkbox"/> Camels <input type="checkbox"/> Falcons <input type="checkbox"/> The Emirati burqa and ghutra (Dress-code) <input type="checkbox"/> The Royal Family	
Other: _____	
15) In your opinion, Burj Khalifa in Dubai is a symbol of...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Technological Advancement <input type="checkbox"/> Design and Aesthetics <input type="checkbox"/> Power <input type="checkbox"/> Emirati Identity and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism and Entertainment	
Other: _____	

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	Burj Khalifa represents the Emirati Cultural Identity					
To what extent and how?						
17	Dressing style, religion, language, culture and even geography form cultural identity					

<b>ACTIVISM</b>	
18) Why do you visit Burj Khalifa?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Because it is the tallest building! <input type="checkbox"/> The idea, structure and design	

<input type="checkbox"/> I actually like the surrounding cafes, hotels and shops <input type="checkbox"/> I was just passing by... not actually visiting Other:
19) How do you describe Burj Khalifa in one sentence to a foreign visitor?
<input type="checkbox"/> It is the tallest building in the world! <input type="checkbox"/> It is a symbol of pride for the Emiratis <input type="checkbox"/> It is an imitation of Western-style buildings <input type="checkbox"/> It is a good place to relax and spend the weekend <input type="checkbox"/> It is an interesting representation of the UAE's modern identity <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
20) In your opinion why do you think people visit Burj Khalifa?
<input type="checkbox"/> They see it on TV, so they want to see it in real life too <input type="checkbox"/> To take selfies with the tower and show friends <input type="checkbox"/> Because it reflects the Emirates <input type="checkbox"/> Because it has amazing architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

#### AMBIVALENCE

21) In your opinion, does Burj Khalifa reflect the Emirati identity?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it resembles a native desert flower <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it looks like a palm tree <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the building and the vicinity remind me of an oasis <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it resembles the vernacular architecture of the region <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it fits well with the other towers of Dubai <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it represents the advancement the UAE is undergoing <input type="checkbox"/> No, it looks like the buildings of the west <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat, I don't have a lot of information about this
22) What is missing in Burj Khalifa?
<input type="checkbox"/> It is perfect! Nothing's missing <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to be higher <input type="checkbox"/> It needs to reflect the UAE more <input type="checkbox"/> More greenery <input type="checkbox"/> It needs traditional architectural elements <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
23	Emiratis play a big role in shaping Dubai architecturally today					
How?						

#### AGENCY

24) What is the number one activity you make sure not to miss in Burj Khalifa?
<input type="checkbox"/> New Year's Celebration <input type="checkbox"/> National Day Celebration

<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping Festivals <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Shows <input type="checkbox"/> Concerts <input type="checkbox"/> Art Exhibitions <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ ; Why: _____
25) How do you think the cultural activities support the Emirati identity?
<input type="checkbox"/> They keep the Emirati identity alive <input type="checkbox"/> They keep the Emirati identity dominant <input type="checkbox"/> They attract tourists and encourage cultural interaction <input type="checkbox"/> They help create a good global image of the country <input type="checkbox"/> They give Emiratis a chance to voice their identity <input type="checkbox"/> They are very scarce. More activities should be conducted to support the Emirati identity. Other: _____ ; Explain: _____
26) Who plays the most significant role in promoting the Emirati Cultural Identity today?
<input type="checkbox"/> The Federal Government of the UAE <input type="checkbox"/> The Indigenous Emirati People <input type="checkbox"/> Each and every citizen and resident of the UAE <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign businesses and bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ ; How: _____

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
27	Western influence is the main reason behind the architecture of Dubai					
Explain:						
38	Dubai and the UAE play a marvelous role in keeping the cultural identity alive					
Explain:						

### Appendix B: Survey – Burj Al Arab

Answer questions as they relate to you. For most answers, check the box(es) most applicable to you or fill in the blanks:

1	Name		Contact info: (optional)
2	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 or less <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66-75 <input type="checkbox"/> 76 or more
3	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
4	Nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Emirati	<input type="checkbox"/> Other; Specify: _____
5	Hometown		
6	Where do you currently live?	<input type="checkbox"/> Abu Dhabi <input type="checkbox"/> Ajman <input type="checkbox"/> Dubai <input type="checkbox"/> Fujairah	<input type="checkbox"/> Ras al-Khaimah <input type="checkbox"/> Sharjah <input type="checkbox"/> Umm al-Quwain <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
7	Your Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Academia <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Office Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
8	Education	<input type="checkbox"/> High-school Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	
9) While travelling to other places, does the architecture fascinate you?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, especially the modern buildings! <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! I love traditional architecture that represents the culture of a place <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! I love buildings with a mix of modern and traditional design motifs <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy looking at building but I don't pay much attention to details <input type="checkbox"/> I am honestly not interested in architecture			

About Burj Al Arab - ADAPTATION	
10) How often do you visit Burj Al Arab ?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Never visited it before <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first time! <input type="checkbox"/> This is my second time <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 times <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 times! Why:	
11) How long do you stay each time you visit?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than an hour <input type="checkbox"/> A few hours <input type="checkbox"/> A couple of days <input type="checkbox"/> I live close-by, so I'm literally always here!	

Why:
12) When is the best day to visit Burj Al Arab?
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Noon (Duhr) <input type="checkbox"/> Early Evening (Asr and Magrib) <input type="checkbox"/> Late Night (Isha and after)
Because:
<b>About Burj Al Arab - AUTHENTICITY</b>
13) What do you like most about Burj Al Arab?
<input type="checkbox"/> The shape <input type="checkbox"/> The interior <input type="checkbox"/> The services and activities inside <input type="checkbox"/> The water body around it
Other: _____ ; Why:
14) What reflects the UAE identity the most?
<input type="checkbox"/> The flag <input type="checkbox"/> Palm tree <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional boats <input type="checkbox"/> Camels <input type="checkbox"/> Falcons <input type="checkbox"/> The Emirati burqa and ghutra (Dress-code) <input type="checkbox"/> The Royal Family
Other:
15) In your opinion, Burj Al Arab is a symbol of...
<input type="checkbox"/> Technological Advancement <input type="checkbox"/> Design and Aesthetics <input type="checkbox"/> Power <input type="checkbox"/> Emirati Identity and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism and Entertainment
Other:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	Burj Al Arab represents the Emirati Cultural Identity					
To what extent and how?						
17	Dressing style, religion, language, culture and even geography form cultural identity					

<b>ACTIVISM</b>
18) Why do you visit Burj Al Arab?
<input type="checkbox"/> Because it is one of the tallest hotels in the world <input type="checkbox"/> The idea, structure and design

<input type="checkbox"/> I actually like the hotels and shops inside <input type="checkbox"/> I was just passing by... not actually visiting Other:
19) How do you describe Burj Al Arab in one sentence to a foreign visitor?
<input type="checkbox"/> It is one of the tallest hotels in the world <input type="checkbox"/> It is a symbol of pride for the Emiratis <input type="checkbox"/> It is an imitation of Western-style buildings <input type="checkbox"/> It is a good place to relax and spend the weekend <input type="checkbox"/> It is an interesting representation of the UAE's modern identity <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
20) In your opinion why do you think people visit Burj Al Arab?
<input type="checkbox"/> They see it on TV, so they want to see it in real life too <input type="checkbox"/> To take selfies with the tower and show friends <input type="checkbox"/> Because it reflects the Emirates <input type="checkbox"/> Because it has amazing architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

#### AMBIVALENCE

21) In your opinion, does Burj Al Arab reflect the Emirati identity?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it resembles the sails of a boat <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it looks like the letter D <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the building and the vicinity remind me of an oasis <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it resembles the vernacular architecture of the region <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it fits well with the other towers of Dubai <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it represents the advancement the UAE is undergoing <input type="checkbox"/> No, it looks like the buildings of the west <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat, I don't have a lot of information about this
22) What is missing in Burj Al Arab?
<input type="checkbox"/> It is perfect! Nothing's missing <input type="checkbox"/> It needs to reflect the UAE more <input type="checkbox"/> More greenery <input type="checkbox"/> It needs traditional architectural elements <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
23	Emiratis play a big role in shaping Dubai architecturally today					
How?						

#### AGENCY

24) How do you think the cultural activities support the Emirati identity?
<input type="checkbox"/> They keep the Emirati identity alive <input type="checkbox"/> They keep the Emirati identity dominant <input type="checkbox"/> They attract tourists and encourage cultural interaction

<input type="checkbox"/> They help create a good global image of the country <input type="checkbox"/> They give Emiratis a chance to voice their identity <input type="checkbox"/> They are very scarce. More activities should be conducted to support the Emirati identity. Other: _____ ; Explain: _____
25) Who plays the most significant role in promoting the Emirati Cultural Identity today?
<input type="checkbox"/> The Federal Government of the UAE <input type="checkbox"/> The Indigenous Emirati People <input type="checkbox"/> Each and every citizen and resident of the UAE <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign businesses and bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ ; How: _____

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
27	Western influence is the main reason behind the architecture of Dubai					
Explain:						
38	Dubai and the UAE play a marvelous role in keeping the cultural identity alive					
Explain:						



## Appendix C: Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee - Approval

### Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee -Approval-

Proposal number: 55

Title of Project: The Impact of Dubai's Architectural Wonders on the Daily Indigenous Performance in the light of Cultural Modernity and Urban Space

PI: Zulfat Salahudeen K. Al Kassim

Co-PI: \_\_\_\_\_

The above proposal has been reviewed by:

- all the five members of the *Social Sciences REC*
- three members of the *Social Sciences REC* (Proportionate Review)
- Two members of the *Social Sciences REC* (Proportionate Review)

And the decision is:

- Favourable
- Favourable with Additional Conditions
- Provisional Opinion
- Unfavourable Opinion
- No Opinion (Proportionate Review\* only)

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Osiris Jorge Parcero

(Chair or designee): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature



May 22, 2015

Date

**The decisions available to the Committee are defined as follows:**

**"Favourable with standard conditions"** means that the study has ethical approval to proceed, as long as local management approval is in place prior to the study starting.

**"Favourable with Additional Conditions"** means that the study has ethical approval in principle but there are certain issues which need to be addressed prior to the study starting such as a minor change to participant documentation. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that additional conditions are met.

**"Provisional Opinion"** means that there are more substantial changes which need to be made before the study starts. These changes would require further ethical review on the basis of which a favourable or unfavourable opinion would be given by the Ethics Committee.

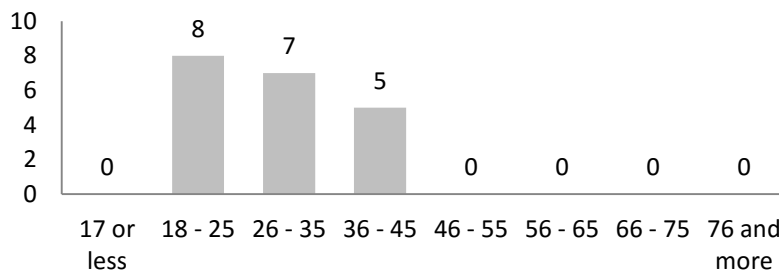
**Unfavourable Opinion** means that the study does not have ethical approval to proceed and a further application would need to be submitted should the applicant choose to proceed with the study. Advice and guidance will be provided by the Committee setting out the reasons for their decision and suggesting changes which would mean that a favourable opinion on resubmission would be more likely. For applications processed through the Proportionate Review\* Service an unfavourable opinion is only given where the application is of such poor quality that it is probable that an unfavourable opinion would be given if it were to be reviewed at a full meeting.

**No Opinion (Proportionate Review\* only)**, means that the Proportionate Review sub-committee (3 members) have deemed that the proposed study does have material ethical issues and will therefore need to be reviewed by a full committee.

*\*The aim of proportionate review is for studies which present minimal risk or burden for participants to be reviewed by a proportionate review sub-committee within 14 days of receipt of a valid application.*

**Appendix D: Graphic Representation of Results at Burj Al Arab**

2. Age

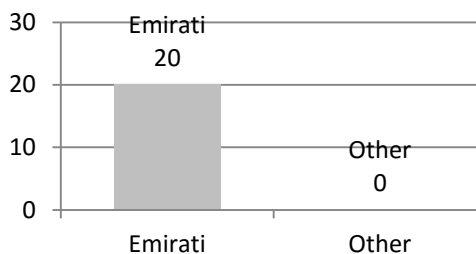


3. Gender



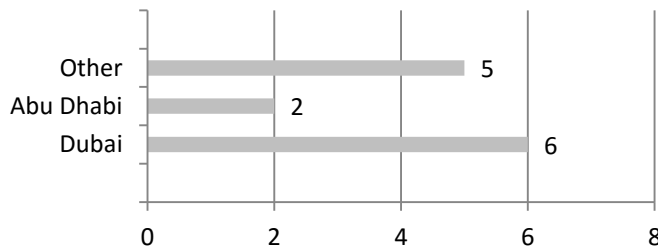
Total = 20 Research Participants

4. Nationality:

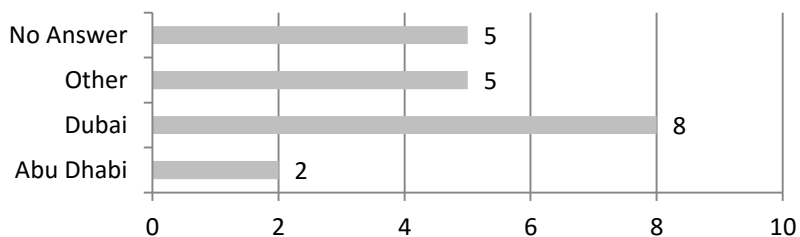


*Note: Surveys filled by participants of other nationalities have been excluded*

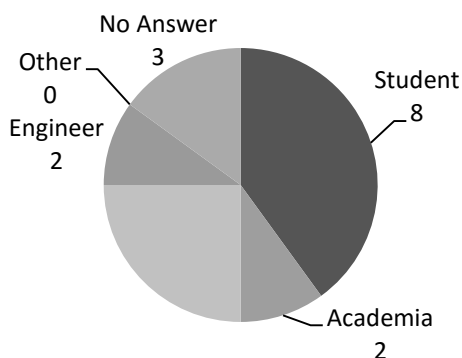
5. Hometown



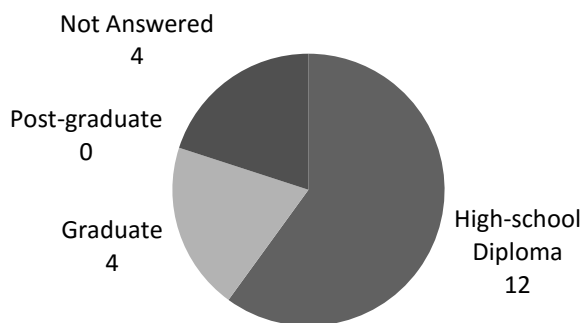
6. Where do you currently live?



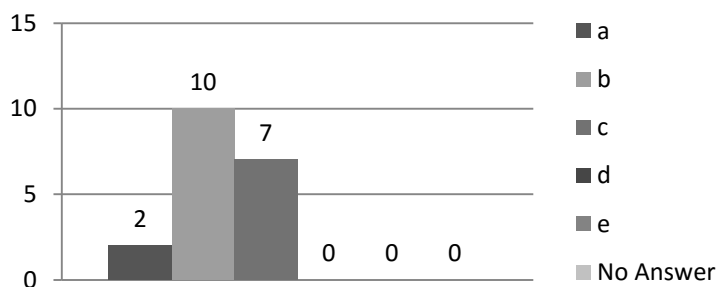
7. Your Job



8. Your Education

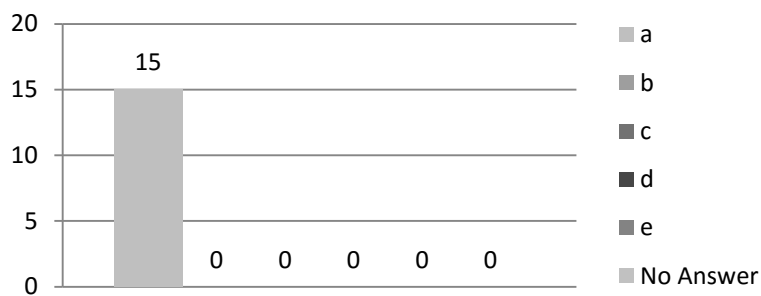


9. While travelling to other places, does the architecture fascinate you?



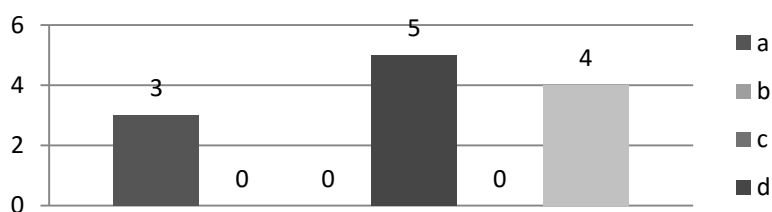
- a) Yes, especially the modern buildings!
- b) Yes! I love traditional architecture that represents the culture of a place
- c) Yes! I love buildings with a mix of modern and traditional design motifs
- d) I enjoy looking at building but I don't pay much attention to details
- e) I am honestly not interested in architecture

10. How often do you visit Burj Al Arab ?



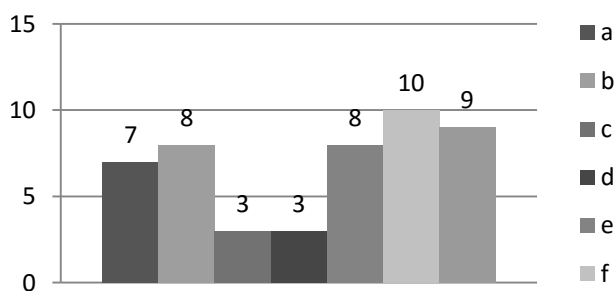
- a) Never visited it before
- b) This is my first time!
- c) This is my second time
- d) More than 3 times
- e) More than 10 times!

11. What do you like most about Burj Al Arab?



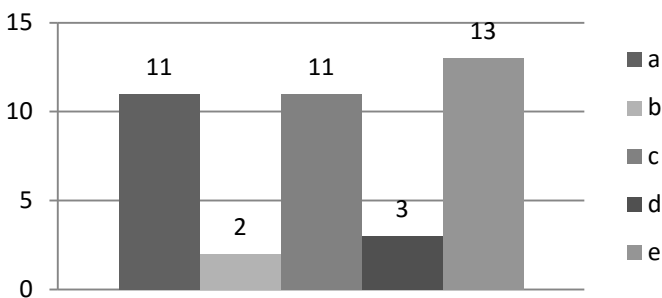
- a. The architecture and shape
- b. The glass façade
- c. The height
- d. The interior
- e. The activities held inside and around it
- f. The water bodies around it

12. What reflects the UAE identity the most?



- a. The flag
- b. Palm tree
- c. Traditional boats
- d. Camels
- e. Falcons
- f. The Emirati burqa and ghutra (Dress-code)
- g. The Royal Family

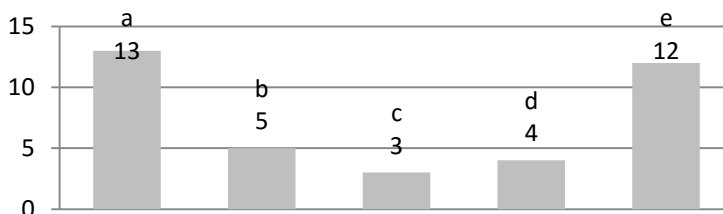
13. In your opinion, Burj Al Arab in Dubai is a symbol of...



- a. Technological Advancement
- b. Design and Aesthetics
- c. Power
- d. Emirati Identity and Culture
- e. Tourism and Entertainment

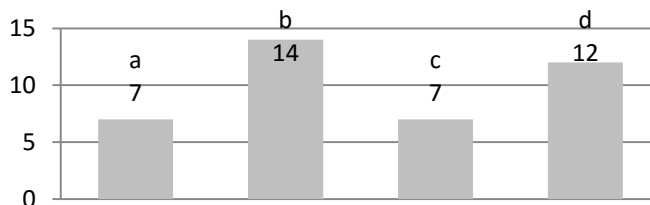
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14.	Burj Al Arab represents the Emirati Cultural Identity	2	6	1	4	2
15.	Dressing style, religion, language, culture and even geography form cultural identity	0	0	1	2	17

16. How do you describe Burj Al Arab in one sentence to a foreign visitor?



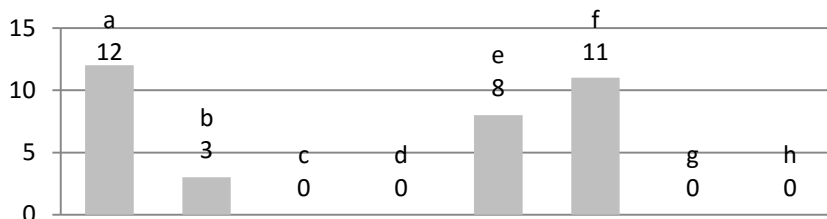
- a. It is a 7 star hotel
- b. It is a symbol of pride for the Emiratis
- c. It is an imitation of Western-style buildings
- d. It is a good place to relax and spend the weekend
- e. It is an interesting representation of the UAE's modern identity

17. In your opinion why do you think people visit Burj Al Arab?



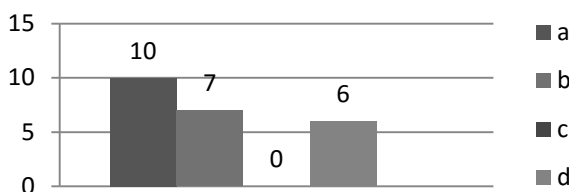
- a. They see it on TV, so they want to see it in real life too
- b. To take selfies with the tower and show friends
- c. Because it reflects the Emirates
- d. Because it has amazing architecture

18. In your opinion, does Burj Al Arab reflect the Emirati identity?



- a. Yes, it resembles the sails of traditional boats
- b. Yes, it looks like the letter D
- c. Yes, the building and the vicinity remind me of an oasis
- d. Yes, it resembles the vernacular architecture of the region
- e. Yes, it fits well with the other towers of Dubai
- f. Yes, it represents the advancement the UAE is undergoing
- g. No, it looks like the buildings of the west
- h. Somewhat, I don't have a lot of information about this

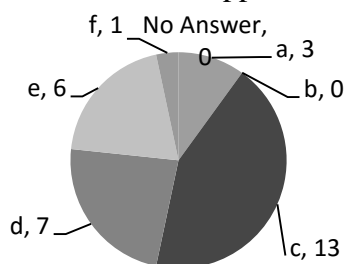
19. What is missing in Burj Al Arab?



- a. It is perfect! Nothing's missing
- b. It needs to reflect the UAE more
- c. More greenery
- d. It needs traditional architectural elements

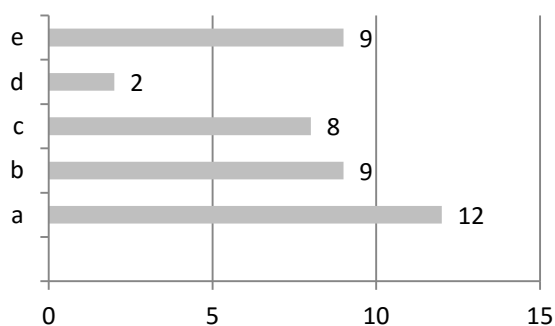
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer
20.	Emiratis play a big role in shaping Dubai architecturally today	0	4	1	6	5	4

21. How do you think the cultural activities support the Emirati identity?



- a. They keep the Emirati identity alive
- b. They keep the Emirati identity dominant
- c. They attract tourists and encourage cultural interaction
- d. They help create a good global image of the country
- e. They give Emiratis a chance to voice their identity
- f. They are very scarce. More activities should be conducted to support the Emirati identity.

26. Who plays the most significant role in promoting the Emirati Cultural Identity today?



- a. The Federal Government of the UAE
- b. The Indigenous Emirati People
- c. Each and every citizen and resident of the UAE
- d. Cultural Organizations
- e. Foreign businesses and bodies

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer
27.	Western influence is the main reason behind the architecture of Dubai	0	2	0	5	7	6
28.	Dubai and the UAE play a marvellous role in keeping the cultural identity alive	0	0	1	12	2	5



### Appendix E: Semi-structured Interview Questions - SMCCU

1. Could you please state your main goal briefly?
2. What aspects of culture do you wish to highlight and reflect?
3. Do other organizations participate in conducting cultural events? If yes, are there any incentives?
4. Are the cultural events unified across the UAE? Is there some sort of communication between the other Emirates with respect to cultural events and activities?
5. Are organizations and bodies conducting cultural activities and events in Dubai interlinked like a chain. Is yes, where is your location in this chain?
6. How do you define Dubai's cultural identity today?
7. Are you aiming at multiplying the efforts to promote the Emirati cultural identity? How do you see the progress so far in this respect?
8. Please enlighten us on the role of global and local forces in influencing the process of cultural production at your organization.
9. Do you play a role in directing/ organizing the cultural events held at different iconic venues at Dubai like Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab? Or is this solely the responsibility of the venue owners/ authority?
10. Does the department play a role in employing cultural symbolism in the design of Dubai's architectural icons today? If yes, to what extent?
11. How do you create a balance between the 'old traditional UAE' and the 'new advanced UAE' in the presentation of your cultural events and activities? In your opinion, does one identity stand out more than the other?
12. In a survey I conducted, the majority of the Emiratis (research participants) believed that the national flag and the dress code reflect their identity the most. In your opinion, how can an individual native Emirati participate in promoting his/ her cultural identity to the outside world?
13. Tourism is a good way to promote the Emirati identity to the outside world; it is where entertainment and heritage meet. Do you agree? What kind of feedback do you get from the natives on one hand and the tourists on the other in this respect?

### Appendix F: List of Archival Material Supplied by DTCM

1. DTCM Corporate Information	1. DTCM - Backgrounder - English - 1410
	2. Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing - Backgrounder - English - 1410
	3. DFRE - Backgrounder - English - 1410
	4. Dubai Events and Convention Bureau and its two divisions - Backgrounder - English - 1410
	5. Dubai Cruise Tourism - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	6. Dubai Brand - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	7. What is MyDubai - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	8. Smart Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
	9. E-Ticketing and E-Permit Platform - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	10. Holiday Homes - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	11. Environmental Responsibility in the Tourism Industry - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	12. Incentives to grow mid-market hotel segment - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	13. Medical Tourism - Backgrounder - English - 0715
	14. New Hotel Classification - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	15. Training Solutions - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	16. Tourism Dirham - Backgrounder - English - 1404
	17. Dubai Historical District - Backgrounder - English- 0415
	18. Ramadan - Backgrounder - English - 0715
2. Dubai Destination Offering	1. Destination Dubai Overview - Backgrounder - English - 0715

2. Beach and Marine in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 141026
3. Culture and Heritage in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
4. Culture and The Arts in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
5. Family Entertainment in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
6. Nightlife and Gastronomy in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
7. Shopping in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
8. Sports and Adrenaline in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
9. Hotels and Spas in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 141026
10. Events in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715
11. Events & Festivals - English - 2015
12. Dubai Motor Festival - English - 2014
13. Dubai the Business Destination - Backgrounder - English - 0715
14. History of Dubai Backgrounder - English - 0715
15. 2014-15 Attractions, projects, developments - 0715
16. 2014-15 Hotel Openings - 0715
17. Five Day Dubai Itinerary
18. MyDubai Trip Five-Day Itinerary
19. Dubai in 2014- Backgrounder - 0715
20. Future Projects - Backgrounder - 0715
21. Summer in Dubai - Backgrounder - English - 0715

	22. Dubai in 2014 Review - 0215
	23. Dubai in 2014 Timeline - 2015
	24. Dubai Parks factsheet
3. Latest Press Releases	Press Release - 130504 - HH Sheikh Mohammed approves Dubai's New Tourism Vision for 2020 - English
	Press Release - 130929 - Hotel industry to be incentivised to broaden Dubais four and three star offering - English
	Press Release - 131208 - His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Issues Decree to Regulate Holiday Homes Market - English
	Press Release - 140106 - DTCM joins HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammeds MyDubai Initiative - English
	Press Release - 140120 - Mohammed bin Rashid streamlines hotel investment and development in Dubai - English
	Press Release - 140203 - Hamdan bin Mohammed Issues Resolution to Introduce Tourism Dirham - English
	Press Release - 140305 - New UAE federal ruling on EU visa requirements - English
	Press Release - 140813 - UAE federal ruling on multiple entry visa requirements - English
	Press Release - 141016 - Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee Updates BIE
	Press Release - 141016 - Image Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee Updates BIE
	Press Release - 141119 - DCTCM announces its new Asia Pacific Hub -English
	Press Release - 142212- DTCM briefs tourism industry on key activities in the upcoming quarter - English
	Press Release - 150104 - One year of stories MyDubai - English
	Press Release - 150104- One year of stories MyDubai- Infographic

	Press Release - 150203 - DTCM Announces 2014 Hotel Establishment Guest Figures - English
	Press Release - 150203 - Infographic -DTCM Announces 2014 Hotel Establishment Guest Figures - English Infographics
	Press Release - 150224 - Cruise January 2015 round up - English
	Press Release - 150315 - Dubai Brand Guidelines and Expedia Award - English
	Press Release - 150315- DTCM and partners enjoy successful ITB 2015 - English
	Press Release - 150428 - DTCM launches I am Dubai - English
	Press Release - 150502 - ATM 2015 Dubai showcases a multitude of different ways to experience the emirate - English
	Press Release - 150503 - Press Release - Dubai Launches Annual Visitor Report - English
	Press Release - 150506 - DGTA press release - English
	Press Release - 150506 - Mid-Market Hotels Gain Momentum in Dubai - English
	Press Release - 150610 - Dubai HomeAway Partnership - English
	Press Release - 150628 - German Mega Fam Trip - Inspiring Summer in Dubai - English
	Press Release - 150714 - MyDubai Ramadan 2015 - English
	Press Release - 150723 - Dubai Tourism Australia & New Zealand award - English
4. Spokesperson Bios	1. Helal Saeed Almarri - Director General DTCM - BIO - English 130715
	2. Issam AbdulRahim Kazim - CEO Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing - BIO - English 1404

	3. Laila Mohd Suhail - CEO, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE) - BIO - English 1410
	4. Hamad bin Mejren - Senior Vice President of Business Tourism DTCM - BIO - English 1410
	5. Marc Bennett Senior Vice President, International Operations Marketing - BIO - English 1409
	6. Yousuf Lootah MBA - Executive Director Tourism Development Investments - BIO - English 1404
	7. Jamal Al Falasi - Director, Cruise Tourism - BIO - English 1404

**Appendix G: Pictures from Fieldwork (Author, 2015)**

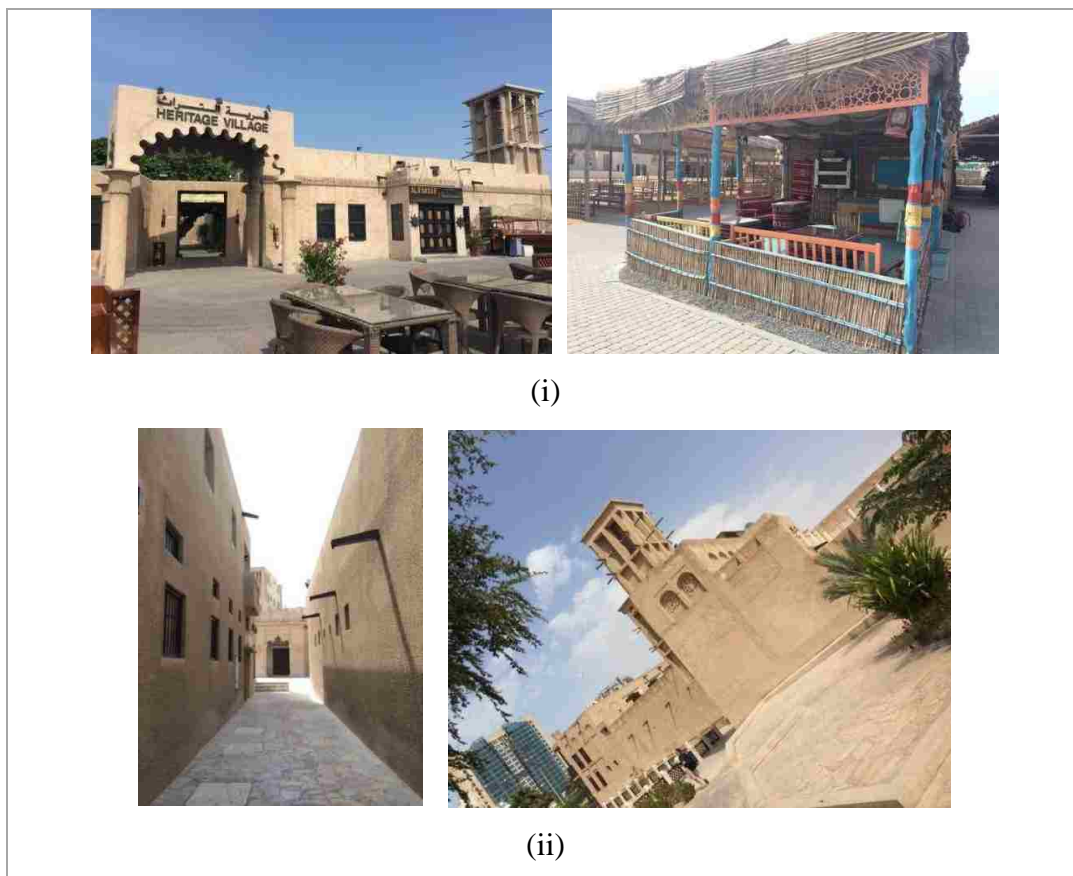


Figure (a): Revival of Historic Sites to Encourage Tourism - (i) Al Shindigha, and (ii) Al Fahaidi.



Figure (b): SMCCU and Aspects of Emirati Culture – (i) SMCCU displays and sells camel milk chocolate, and (ii) booklets/leaflets about Emirati culture. (iii) Visitors also get to experience Emirati home environment.



Figure (c): Representations of Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab –

- (i) Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab souvenirs at a famous gift shop in Al Ain Mall,
- (ii) Burj Khalifa model at Dubai Mall,
- (iii) Burj Khalifa Photography exhibition at Al Bawadi Mall, Al Ain,
- (iv) Burj Al Arab souvenirs at gift shop in the Dubai Mall,
- (v) Mug with depiction of Burj Al Arab saying: “Dubai was so expensive I could only afford half a mug”, The Dubai Mall,
- (vi) Glass model of Burj Al Arab. DXB, Dubai.



Figure (d): Emirati corner (tent) at the Abu Dhabi Food Festival held in Al Ain in February 2015