

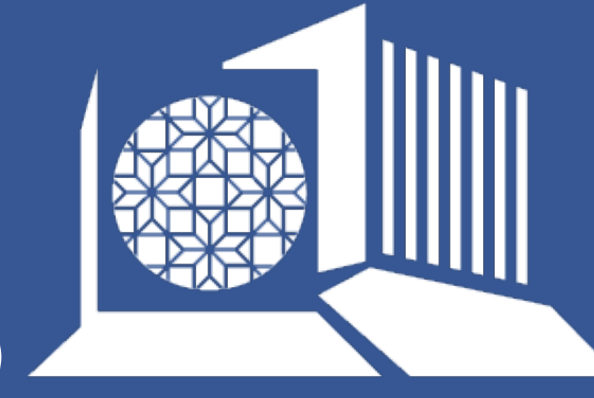
Creating a Nation through Heritage: Emiratization of the Coffee Pot

(*Dallah*)

Hamdullah Baycar

Qatar University- Gulf Studies Center (Visiting Scholar)

University of Exeter- Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (PhD Candidate)



جامعة قطر
QATAR UNIVERSITY

كلية الآداب والعلوم
College of Arts and Sciences
جامعة قطر QATAR UNIVERSITY

مركز دراسات الخليج
Gulf Studies Center

Faculty and PostDoc, Humanities and Social Sciences



Different Shapes of Dallah on Arabian Peninsula, Sharjah Heritage Museum

ABSTRACT

Coffee plays a significant role in today's Arab culture, and it has long been considered one of the main aspects of Arabic history, culture, heritage, and hospitality. It has even been recognized by UNESCO, which added Arabic coffee to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List following the application by several Gulf countries. This study explores the nation-building process of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through its heritage, with specific reference to the coffee pot (dallah). The UAE forms its national identity (the Emirati identity) by deriving it from a broader identity (that is, being Arab) and defining it to a regional identity (Khaleeji). Moving from a regional to a national identity is intended to unite the seven emirates under one standard identity, but at the same time contain common characteristic features and solidarity with Khaleej and other Arabs. Slight differences to strengthen the desired national (Emirati) identity and differentiate the UAE from the neighbors will be enough in creating national heritage.

This study examines how the UAE attempts to create its own heritage, one that is common among its seven emirates, to unite them under one identity. The coffee pot, however, has common features with other Arab and Khaleeji countries, as can be clearly seen from the map. Meanwhile, the process is still in progress, and to date, no consensus has been achieved.



United Arab Emirates 1-Dirham Coin

METHODS

Fieldwork was conducted in the UAE from October to December 2019.

- Heritage sites, heritage festivals, museums, antique shops, and coffee houses were visited.
- People from the above-mentioned places (both officials and visitors) were interviewed.
- Monuments of different emirates were photographed.
- Coins, souvenirs, postcards, and other touristic features that are presented as symbols were analyzed.
- Stories, narratives, speeches in contests, and documentaries were analyzed.

DISCUSSION

- Regardless of their shape, coffee pots are used as national symbols throughout the Gulf, from Oman to Qatar as well as within different emirates of the UAE. For a long time, the Gulf countries shared almost the same symbols without hesitation; however, recently, increased attempts have been made to differentiate (even if slightly) each country from the others. This division, however, was made through national boundaries.
- This study's findings indicate that not everyone and not every institution is aware of the process aiming to unite the whole UAE under one pot, although increased attention and attempts to popularize the national heritage exist. Furthermore, this process is not purely state-led as private institutions such as the Dubai Coffee Museum are also spearheading the effort. In addition, as is the case in every nation-state project, the elites are taking the lead in the process.



الدلة
أجزاء دلة القهوة
Al dallah
Parts of the coffee pot

Parts of Dallah: Sharjah Heritage Museum and Coffee Contest Stand

THREE-WAY OF IDENTITY

- Identity as an Arab
- Identity as a Khaleeji Arab
- Identity as an Emirati

THEORETICAL APPROACH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on modernist and semi-modernist approaches to nationalism studies, namely:

- Comparative Contingency
- Invented Tradition
- Imagined Communities
- Ethno-Symbolism
- Banal Nationalism



Abu Dhabi Dallah Monument

CONCLUSION

The UAE, like every other nation-state, is undergoing a never-ending nation-building project. The desired nation is to be a unique one that will unite all its citizens under its umbrella and exclude all other people, even those who are closest in terms of history and geography. Nation-building requires both attention and detail, and it is undertaken from the top to the bottom as well as in collaboration with the people.



Dallah from around the Peninsula, Sharjah Heritage Museum