

2019

## Culture and Heritage: A Foundation for Sustainable Development through Understanding and Tolerance of Cultural Differences

Melodena Stephens

*Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government*

Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan

*Alliance of Global Sustainability, Abu Dhabi, UAE*

Frederik Panz

*Karlshochschule International University*

Filareti Kotsi

*Zayed University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://zuscholars.zu.ac.ae/works>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Stephens, Melodena; Al Nahyan, Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa; Panz, Frederik; and Kotsi, Filareti, "Culture and Heritage: A Foundation for Sustainable Development through Understanding and Tolerance of Cultural Differences" (2019). *All Works*. 4528.

<https://zuscholars.zu.ac.ae/works/4528>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ZU Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Works by an authorized administrator of ZU Scholars. For more information, please contact [Yrjo.Lappalainen@zu.ac.ae](mailto:Yrjo.Lappalainen@zu.ac.ae), [nikesh.narayanan@zu.ac.ae](mailto:nikesh.narayanan@zu.ac.ae).

## UAE Public Policy Forum

### Accelerating SDGs Implementation Future Policy Roadmap

REPORT

# Culture and Heritage: A Foundation for Sustainable Development through Understanding and Tolerance of Cultural Differences





# Culture and Heritage: A Foundation for Sustainable Development through Understanding and Tolerance of Cultural Differences

## **Melodena Stephens**

Professor of Innovation Management, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, Dubai, UAE.

## **Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan**

CEO of Alliance of Global Sustainability, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

## **Frederik Panz**

Karlshochschule International University, Germany.

## **Filareti Kotsi**

Associate Professor of Tourism, College of Communication and Media Sciences, Zayed University, Dubai, UAE.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the trustees, officers and other staff of the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) and its associated entities and initiatives.



## Executive Summary

The UAE has declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance. Culture and heritage are important elements of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 11, and these two elements play a major role in creating tolerance. While tolerance is not outlined explicitly in the SDGs, there is no doubt it is much needed in today's world. Most conflicts arise from misinterpretation, misunderstanding or a biased understanding of culture and/or the heritage of the people they are associated with. This policy report looks at culture and heritage and its relationship to education, reducing inequality, the export opportunities, its role in creating peace, and hence tolerance.

## Introduction

The Middle East North Africa (MENA) region is home to a hotbed of conflicts which have escalated since 2011 (Hiltermann, 2018). A simple root cause analysis is not possible, but it is clear that many of today's conflicts are rooted in history within and between different countries. Policies developed to fight symptoms of conflict have led to more harm than good in many cases. The MENA region is rich in ancient history, having some of the most glorious older civilizations of the world based on its lands. Unfortunately, with the westernization of education (promoted through western languages), many of the inventions and achievements of the Arab world, which predate those of the West, have remained restricted to small segments of populations. Further, biases based on some minority segments are scrutinized and by the mainstream media, and further intensified through social media, as is the case with real-life events such as the Syrian migration, the notion that Al Qaeda is one entity, or the idea that Arab women are not empowered.

Culture and heritage can be considered state resources, but the two terms are often used interchangeably, which makes policy interventions complex. With the growing awareness for global citizenship behaviors, the role of national culture and global culture also need to be addressed. The move away from legal status to civic virtues is a much-needed debate for nations and the world in general (Torres, 1998).

This policy report will (1) introduce the importance of culture and heritage from a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) perspective, (2) explain the importance of this topic from the UAE's point of view, (3) delineate the terms culture and heritage, (4) provide a roadmap to manage the potential contribution of culture and heritage, and (5) highlight potential caution areas. The policy report will use existing research, facts, and some data collected from two previously conducted studies.

## Culture and Heritage: Relevance to SDGs & Tolerance

The SDGs are different from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were considered a method to address the inequalities between “rich countries” and “poorer countries.” The SDGs, by contrast are considered universal, having been developed over a two-year, inclusive, bottom-up approach (UN, 2015). The objective is to achieve the SDGs by 2030 using data-driven indicators to monitor progress (UN Stats, 2018). However, by the end of 2018, for a variety of reasons, we see that although progress has been made, a huge collected effort is still needed to achieve all the SDGs (UN, 2018). We propose that culture and heritage are resources that can be exploited to help achieve the SDGs. Culture has been argued to be the fourth pillar of sustainable development, along with social, economic and environmental dimensions (Nurse, 2006). Since culture is a system, a way of life (Williams, 1983), to achieve SDGs means a drastic change in the way of life for the citizens of the world.

Table 1: How Culture and Heritage Can Contribute to SDGs

SDG Goal	Indicator	Implications
4. Quality Education	4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development	Understanding culture, appreciation of cultural diversity may not only lead to sustainable development, but peace (SDG 16) and hence imply tolerance.
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	By exporting culture, we support SMEs and hence can contribute to gender equality (SDG 5), reduced inequalities (Goal 10), and reduce violence (SDG 16). The danger is always stereotyping.
10. Reduced Inequalities	10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	Stereotyping has led to inequalities across the world, between genders and within countries. Heritage and culture can be used as tools to change this.

11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage	Because these are resources we inherit and can be forgotten or destroyed, we need to preserve them for future generations for reflection, for lessons learnt, for a sense of identity. This may be all the more important as we explore the solar system and this becomes our “earth legacy.”
--	--	---

Source: UN SDGs, compiled by authors.

The preamble to the SDGs highlights the fact that the agenda will seek to “strengthen universal peace in larger freedom”. It further states, “Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.” Point 36 in the preamble states: “We pledge to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development.” The concepts of culture, heritage, and tolerance are intertwined and can contribute to SDGs (see Table 1). Tolerance is related to culture as it can be learnt and passed from one generation to another generation. It can exist in a spectrum from avoidance (to prevent a possible confrontation with opposing views), engagement to appreciation (or at least respect and value for the other) (Heyd, 2018; McKinnonm 2018).

### The UAE’s Perspective

The UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda strives to preserve a cohesive society, proud of its identity and sense of belonging (UAE Government Portal, 2018). In this identity and sense of belonging, the roots of the culture of tolerance are grounded. Distinctive features highlighted by the UAE are hospitality, tolerance, family cohesion and solidarity among members of the society, along with the honor and pride associated with being part of the Arab and Islamic heritage (UAE Government, 2018). The UAE was one of the first countries to create a Minister of State for Tolerance (UAE Minister of Tolerance Website, 2018). The country is unique in the fact that it is home to a population where 85% are expatriates representing 200 countries. The year 2019 was declared the Year of Tolerance, and one of the five main pillars is to solidify the UAE as the global capital for tolerance (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: National Tolerance Program



Source: UAE Minister of Tolerance Website, 2018

## The Difference between Culture and Heritage

It is clear that heritage influences culture. Heritage should be divided into man-made heritage and natural heritage (Harrison, 2010), thus discerning between humans with intangible as well as tangible culture, and nature, which only exists as tangible heritage. Heritage is transmitted from one generation to another for a minimum of three generations (Assmann, 1995). Heritage and culture are temporally aligned, and are represented in culture as the result of a selection process (Harvey, 2001). The benefits of a carefully-curated heritage are many - for example, nurturing a national identity, safeguarding political structures (Askew, 2010; Khalaf, 2000) and communal solidarity (Harvey, 2001). Although definitions of culture and heritage vary, the two terms seem to share a fluid boundary (see Table 2).

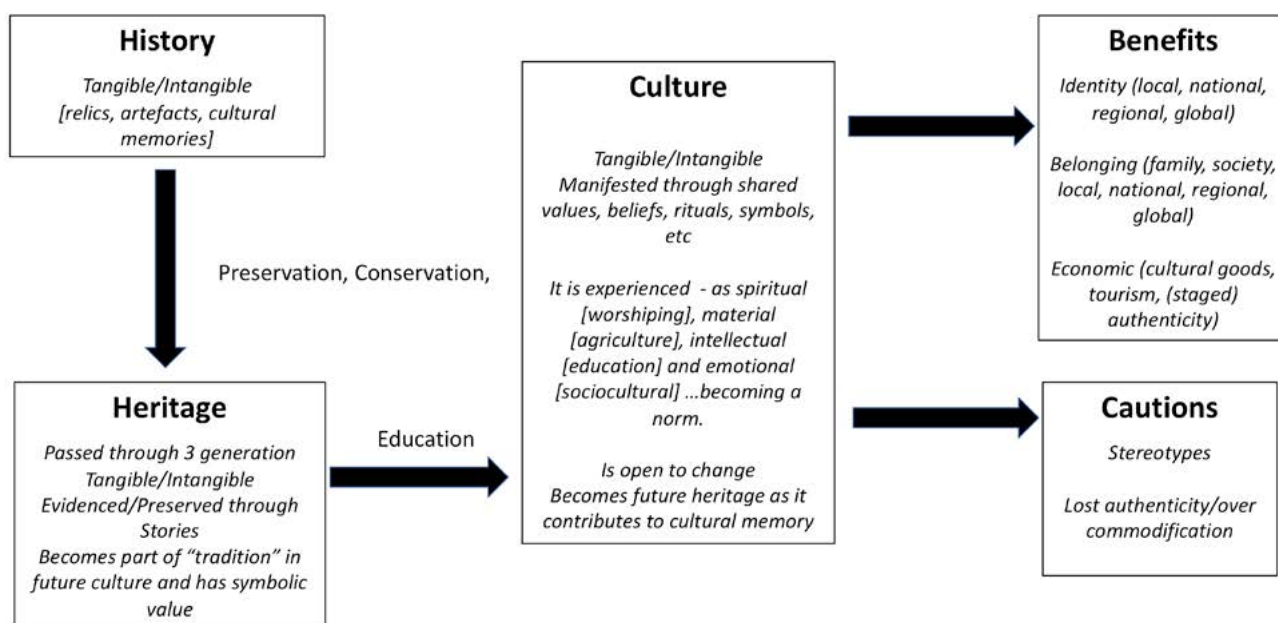
Table 2: UNESCO Definitions

Culture	Heritage
Culture: the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. (UNESCO 2001)	In 1972, UNESCO defined heritage as cultural heritage and natural heritage but then dropped the term 'heritage' in favor of property, categorizing heritage into cultural properties and natural properties from 1999 onwards. (UNESCO, 1972; 1999)

Source: Compiled by the authors

Culture is the sum of beliefs and habits accrued from sociocultural and spiritual behaviors (Iranlu & Shah, 2016), knowledge (through education), and products of consumption (for example buildings, clothes, et cetera.), which are influenced by the environment or surroundings. Culture can be tangible, for example food, costumes, and fashion (Pieterse, 2015) or intangible, for example shared beliefs or language (Leiper, 1995). Culture is useful in social interaction as a frame of reference for creating a routine and a sense of belonging (Thomas & Kinast, 2010). Since culture is based on habits and behaviors, which are variable elements, it is open to change and is, therefore dynamic (Smith, 1982). In the Arabic language, culture can be rooted in the words education (Thaqâfa) or civilization (Hadâra) (Reverso Dictionary, 2018; Bolten, 2015). Hence, we find culture can be, at one extreme, found at an individual-level, and at the collective-level can be recognized within family, tribe, ethnic groups, or other smaller pockets of society, or at a national, regional or even a global level. Figure 2 exhibits the relationship between culture and heritage and some of the benefits it engenders.

Figure 2: Heritage and Culture



Source: Authors

## Some Lessons from Previous Studies

Two key studies are referenced in this section, the first looked at the empowerment of women through the preservation of heritage in the form of endangered rural handicrafts. The female artisans were supported by The Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development, Abu Dhabi, through their Sougha initiative which was launched in 2009. Sougha's purpose at the time of formation was to support women in rural areas and thereby preserve local handicrafts. The rural population in the UAE is estimated at 1.34 million, which is 10% of the population, with 81% living in the emirate of Abu Dhabi (World Bank, 2017). Poverty or marginalization is often associated with rural populations. It is a grave concern that worldwide, that even with rapid economic development and increasing urbanization, the levels of rural poverty may not disappear quickly (Ravallion, Chen & Sangrula, 2007). A survey was administered orally by a representative of Sougha from December 2015 to May 2016, as the majority of the artisans were illiterate, the places were difficult to reach, and strangers are not easily welcomed. 40.6% of the total beneficiary population (70 out of 172 artisans) responded.

The second study aimed to understand how heritage was passed on to the culture of the second generation. During 2016-17, students from one generation approached the older generation through pictures they chose from their family albums, representing 15 out of 30 topics important from a culture and heritage point of view to them in the UAE. These topics were: family, society, women, men, trade, national day, festivals, cooking, sea, sand, home, clothes, sports, leisure, friends, animals, government, Majlis (gathering place), foreigners, travel, education, health, media/communication, business, heritage, culture, art, sustainability, and artifacts. They used the pictures to understand the way of life of the older generation, find out what has changed and what the older generation regretted that was not passing on to the next generation. A total of 115 interviews were held with the older generation (grandparents, parents, and close relatives). The sample consisted of 62 female and 53 male respondents. A total of 600 photographs were collected from their family and personal albums during a series of Friday family gatherings between September and October 2016.

### 1. Deciding which parts of history to preserve and conserve

After a formal submission in 2005, to be included in the UNESCO'S Urgent Safeguarding List of Cultural Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Al Sadu weaving was accepted in 2011 (UNESCO, 2018). It is considered a rare skill, practiced by the Al Manaseer tribe. Al Sadu is a material made from camel, sheep and goat hair that is made into beautiful geometric designs inspired by environmental elements from the surroundings and is often used on the outside of the Bedouin tent. Part of the preservation process was not just the traditional way of stitching or cutting but also the preservation of the designs, which were an intricate part of the storytelling Bedouin culture. Each pattern would have a story, which was usually the story of the tent. Within the tent, Sha'ra, a more intricate pattern was used to divide

the tent or decorate the walls. Most tribes have a logo, which they would weave onto their tents and they would also use the same logo to stamp their animals or braid the designs into the 'Hannagah' (strips of colored, braided threads). The UAE UNESCO list features 8 items besides Al Sadu from the 500 elements inscribed on UNESCO's Lists of the 2003 Convention: Arabic Coffee, Gahwa - a symbol of generosity; falconry; Al Ayyala - a traditional performing art; Al Azi - the art of poetic performance of praise, pride and fortitude; the Majlis - a cultural and social space; Al-Taghrooda, traditional Bedouin chanted poetry; and Al Rafza a traditional performing art performed by men.

It was found that the tangible elements act as anchors to which cultural values can be attached, provided that the values could be taught and passed down to the next generation, and to the people there to experience the phenomena. Several examples were given such as, the Qasr al Hosn festival which is held in a location that once served as a Sheikh's palace, but which has been repurposed as a museum and festival site. The history of the place serves as a link to the past, creating a continuity to the present where traditional Emirati dances and plays show how people lived in the past. Through this recreation, intangible aspects of culture as a way of life are preserved. Visitors can also experience this through traditional Emirati food, which is a tangible feature of nationality and identity. In one of the interviews, the respondent identified tangible elements of Emirati culture from an old photograph as the artifacts associated with drinking a cup of coffee, the Emirati flag, and the traditional tent called Khaima.

## 2. An ecosystem for heritage to survive and influence culture

In the case of Sougha, the handicrafts skill and the final products were passed from one Bedouin family to another for generations by the female members. The challenges Sougha faced were many: gaining the trust of the community, facilitating intergenerational interest in the revival of the handicrafts, deciding the level of authenticity (for example, whether should they use the traditional looms and material), and creating economic opportunities for the handicrafts and commercialization. By mid-2016, 172 artisans were skilled and ready to receive orders, although only about 70 of them were very active. Their youngest artisan was 13 years old, and the oldest was 78 years old. At an individual level, the motivation to pursue the craft came from social acceptance within the extended family. Sougha chose older women, often grandmothers in the initial years, to gain legitimacy within the groups. These women not only had the knowledge but were influencers in their own rights, as grandmothers could obtain approval from their male heads of the family (because of their age) and, since they practiced this skill in the women's 'majlis', more women were exposed to the craft, especially the younger ones. Often, more than three generations sat side by side. A cultural shift was observed when they redefined their roles, as they began earning money through the sales of heritage goods thus contributing to the household economy. While traditionally they saw themselves as daughters (87.1%), mothers (87.1%), sisters (88.6%), aunts (80%) and grandmothers (68.6%), few were beginning to see themselves in

their new roles as financial provider (45.7%), business owner (51.4%), bank account holder (50%), and influencer (5.7%).

Within the community, tolerance of these women who were working was increasing as they began with sales to a government organization (many of the men held government jobs). Another interesting finding was the influence of the younger generation on the older generation. The younger generation were more knowledgeable with regard to commercialization of the product (Phone covers, iPad covers etc.) and marketing on social media. So culture had a reverse influence from a younger generation to an older one.

Over the years, organizations such as Etihad Airways, Mubadala, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Red Crescent, etc., sought products as gifts or for sale. The interest from corporations and government bodies, increased the social value of these handcrafts which had traditionally been associated with rural Bedouin tribes. This is important for legitimizing the craft and raising its social status, which has highlighted a few challenges. Economically, weaving is not seen as a viable trade, as the costs and efforts of labour (traditionally yarn is from wool shorn from sheep or camels) are too high, and the younger generation aspired to more “prestigious” jobs. Cheaper substitutes are available in the market and, with nobody to authenticate the craft, this affected its commercial viability. This suggests the need for an ecosystem approach.

### 3. Create meaningfulness around the stories

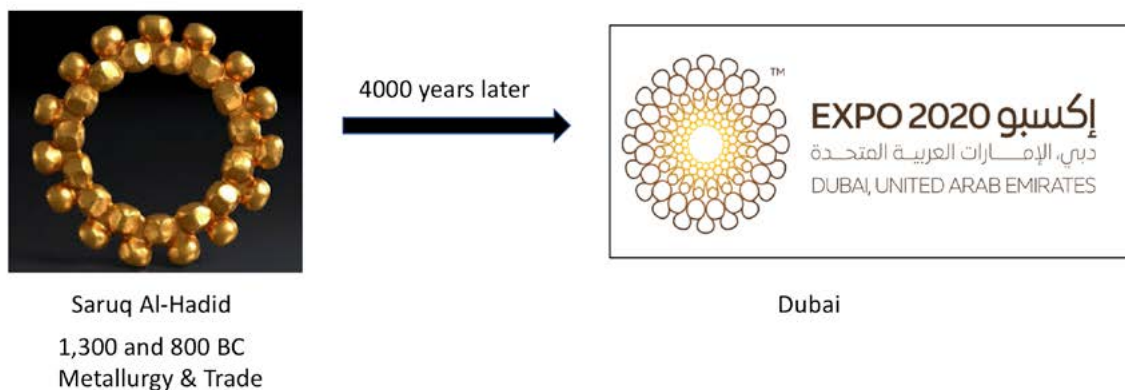
A typical comment from the older generation in the second study was regret at losing a “simpler way of life.” In an interview with a 47-year-old male on traditional clothing, he said, “I can’t let my daughter live her mother’s life and the mother can’t live as her mother lived”. He felt that their culture, environment and circumstances had changed because of exposure to other cultures, radically altering their thoughts and way of thinking. He linked the two pictures of women wearing traditional clothing (“shaila” and “abaya”) and reiterated that their heritage was reflected in the way they cover themselves, even though the style of clothes may have changed.

Sometimes cultures reinforce heritage through the sharing of past experiences, for example, as a grandmother explained “even though we have gas, electric cookers and other technology, we still cook using wood when we go to the desert”. A grandfather added that “we like the smell of fire and its taste in the rice.” A 50-year-old mother responded to pictures of family gatherings across two generations, saying “The main thing the new picture shares with the old one is the gathering of siblings in one place. However, the minute I saw the old photo it touched me, but I cannot say the same for the modern photo. The cousins are physically together but, mentally, each one is isolated.... What I really miss is ‘freej’ (neighborhood) gathering. All families in the freej knew each other very well. The ‘freej’ itself was safe, where kids of different families would play outside without fear like

today. Everyone was treated equally regardless of their family name, it was pure and no one would take advantage and search for wasta (getting benefit from someone you know).” With the handicrafts from Sougha, we often find the focus is the design and the utility (a notepad, a cosmetics case, etc) but the stories behind the design, relating to the past-experience are lost.

The reality is that heritage maybe “reconstructed”, for example, Johnson and Thomas (1995) define heritage as “virtually anything by which some kind of link, however tenuous or false, may be forged with the past”. Sometimes, elements of heritage are repurposed or redefined. For example, in another interview, a mother commented that, in the past, clothes were stored in an old clothes box, called Al Mandos, which is now being used as a decoration piece. However, the items from the past being preserved should not simply be recorded on a list designated by UNESCO or any other body, but should be celebrated by a majority of the relevant population. This means they can be reimagined (Stephens Balakrishnan, 2015). For example, the excavation of the Saruq Al-Hadid archeological site in Dubai, UAE, produced a gold ring that has now been reimagined to recognize the advanced ancient civilization and its connection with the world. This artifact has become symbolic, connecting the past to present-day Dubai by being a representative symbol of the Dubai Expo 2020, and inspiring its tagline “Connecting Minds, Creating The Future” (Expo2020 Dubai, 2016) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Dubai Expo2020



Source: Dubai Expo and Saruq Al-Hadid websites

The windtower and the Dhow boat were used to represent key hospitality properties of the Jumeirah group - Madinat Jumeirah (windtower), and the Burj Al Arab (the sail of the dhow boat). By preserving history, you give successive generations a link to the past and something to be proud of. But preserving history is not enough. It must be communicated

and passed to the next generation through education (Smith, 2006), and the next generation must want to do the same for future generations (Hewson, 1989). The exercise of relating to the past through stories has an impact on national identity and pride. Some comments from the students who completed the assignment on understanding heritage and culture from an older generations' perspective said, "The strength of my national identity has changed after this assignment. My knowledge about my culture and heritage became wider and I knew a lot of things that I did not know about, such as the meaning of some words that I did not know the meaning of before." Another commented, "Before the assignment I was proud but not that much. After the assignment, I am extremely proud about my culture and what my ancestors have been through."

#### 4. Culture and its benefits to economic development

Culture (together with heritage) is increasingly being recognized by UNESCO and national governments. It can reduce gender inequality, address socially-disadvantaged people, promote self-esteem and social awareness (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). Often, as women are transmitters of culture and cultural practices and because cultural industries are often family or small-scale businesses, it is even vital for the economy (see Table 3).

Table 3: Annual growth rate by domains, in US\$ current value, 2004-2013

Growth 2004-2013	Total cultural	A. Cultural and natural heritage	B. Performance and celebration	C. Visual arts and crafts	D. Books and press	E. Audiovisual and interactive media	F. Design and creative services
Exports	96.2%	45.4%	-17.8%	185.6%	16.3%	111.9%	-28.2%
Imports	52.0%	57.3%	-17.8%	101.0%	12.4%	111.9%	-11.3%

Source: UNESCO-UIS, 2009

At a global level, heritage has become a commodity for countries via museums, object loans, and through franchising heritage. This commoditization is quite substantial in terms of global cultural exports, which includes printed matter, literature, music, visual arts, cinema, photography, radio, television, games and sporting goods. A study conducted by UNESCO on the flow and value of cultural goods between 161 countries found that between 2004 to 2013, global trade reached US\$ 190.5 billion, with the value of exports doubling during that time (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). It is estimated that household expenditures on recreation and culture account for around 5% of GDP (Disdier, Tai, Fontagné & Mayer, 2010). For many countries, cultural diplomacy, a type of soft power associated with public diplomacy, allows the "exchange of ideas, information, art, language and other aspects of culture among

nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding,” (Cummings, 2003) which might encourage tolerance and, more importantly, bring influence in the global arena.

The culture cycle passes through four stages: the creation of culture, production, dissemination, exhibition/reception/transmission (increasingly entering into the digitalization era) and consumption/participation. Each has a potential to contribute to the economy yet are often difficult to measure and relate to culture or heritage (Cull, 2015). Even so, what we do know is that, (1) tourism is a US\$ 1.2 trillion industry (WTTC, 2018); (2) 70% of merchandise exports are manufactured goods, often reflecting “culture” and symbolizing either ancient, local, global or pop culture (WTO, 2018a); and (3) e-commerce is growing having totaled US\$ 27.7 trillion in 2016 and is easily crossing borders (WTO, 2018b). This suggests, in an interconnected world, opportunities for promotion of culture and heritage and hence contribution to the national economy are present. In fact, cultural diplomacy can take four forms: 1) a form of a cultural gift (lending artifacts for exhibitions), (2) cultural information - presenting something less popular to foreign audiences (folk art) (3) cultural dialogue, which leads to deepening mutual understanding and cooperation (exchange of students etc), and (4) cultural capacity-building - teaching cultural skills to promote understanding (language schools etc) (Cull, 2015). This could lead to more understanding of cultural differences between nations and thus to greater tolerance.

## A Roadmap for Tolerance

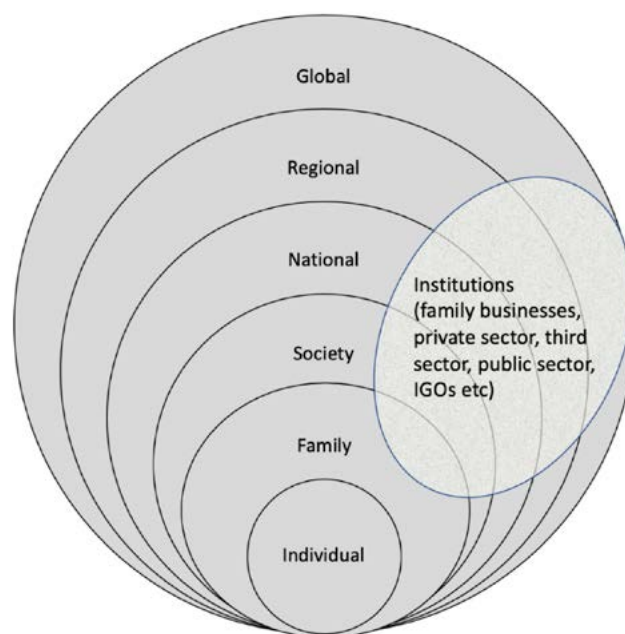
Tolerance can be promoted at multiple levels - individual, family, society, and institutional levels, both nationally and internationally. If the most formative years of a child’s development are before the age of eight, this suggests that the change must take place in schools and in a social context because of the influence of the family and its immediate and overlapping social structures (see Figure 4). A 47-year-old father stated that family bonding was being threatened. He gave an interesting example of people trying to take photos of everything without actually living the moment, and he used the word “sacrifice” because they are sacrificing their time. He said that when people see their favorite celebrity they do not live the moment through their senses but through their phones. As a result, instead of saving the moment in one’s memory, it is saved in one’s phone memory.

National heritage, often controlled by the state, in the sub-forms of ‘social, ethnic and community heritage, may differ from that of the idealized and archived collective memory of institutions, which may contrast to the memory of the ordinary people with unspoken habits of daily life (UNESCO, 1948). To bring synergy between the various levels at which heritage (and also culture) exists, becomes one complex undertaking. This is further complicated as national heritage must also absorb a more expanded concept, linking itself to transnational or global heritage (Wakefield, 2012). Because culture is open and dynamic, one of the dangers inherent with time is the morphing of tradition and its values getting lost in pop-culture or global culture, where rituals are practiced without meaning (Storey, 2018). Culture overlaps



with collective memory (Assmann, 1995) and collective programming, reinforcing the need for constant education that is relevant to the context and the generation (Hofstede, 2001). By becoming part of cultural hegemony, it may be able to exert influence (as recognized by proponents of soft power) and be commercialized (think of the product - jeans) (Fiske, 2010), leading to a possible lack of thought with regard to future consequences. The role played by national media may help in maintaining continuity, enabling reproduction of existing ideas and sustaining the ‘cultural memory’ of the population” (Witchalls, 2010). Hence, for tolerance to exist, it must be cultivated in various layers as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Layers of Tolerance



Source: Authors

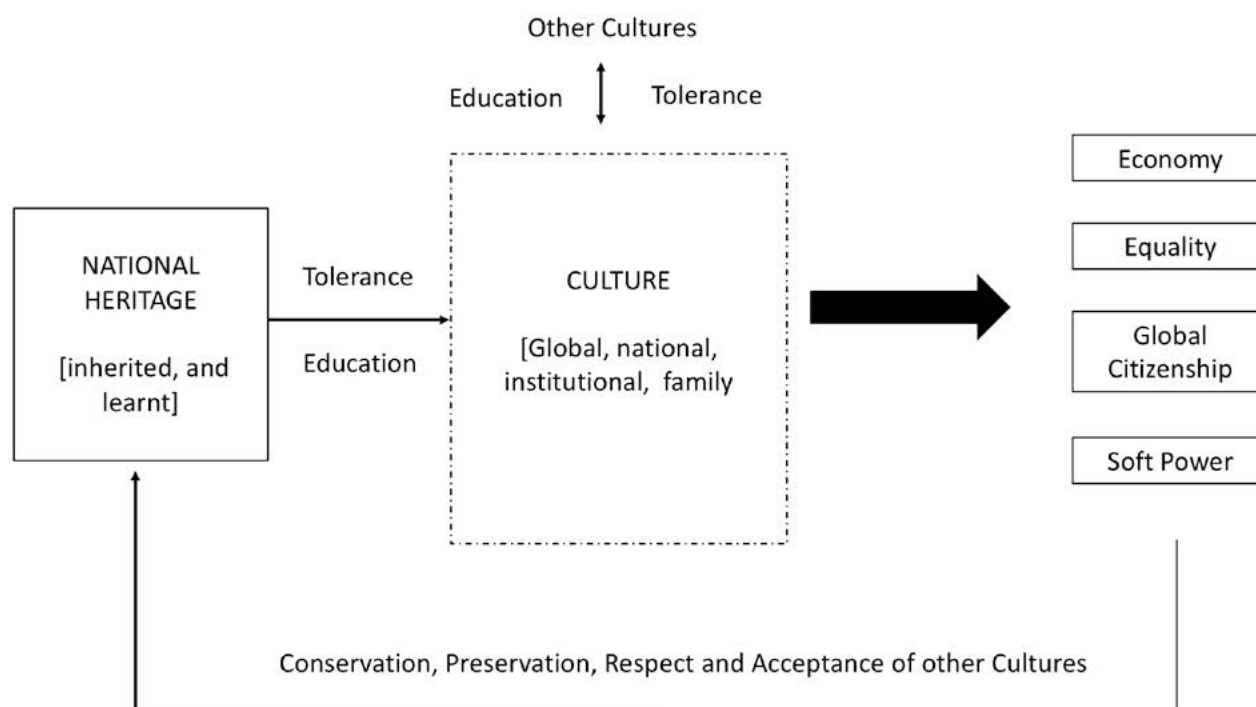
Furthermore, correlations to global economy may not really reflect heritage, which highlights the dangers of some data-driven goals. For example, Japan is a top exporter of pianos and Vietnam is the 2nd largest exporter of coffee, but pianos are not often linked with the cultural heritage of Japan (musical instrument exports are logged as cultural exports) and, traditionally, Vietnam was a tea-drinking country (Kabanda, 2016). The ‘commoditization’ of heritage or culture, can have negative implications. Take for instance the consumption of the mockumentary titled, ‘Borat! Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan’, which was first of all, mostly filmed in Rumania and not Khazakstan. The film, which was released in 2006 in USA, grossed US\$ 250 million, gained cult status, but remained controversial due to its perceived authenticity (even though it was known as a mockumentary). The shock value of the mockumentary led to a tourism increase of 6.4% but the economy was adversely affected as resources were diverted from production in export

sectors to the tourism industry which is human labour intensive (Pratt, 2015). These wrong perceptions can lead to stereotyping, which has the potential to destroy the authenticity of cultural products, which results in staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; Greenwood, 1977). Outsourcing could also impact authenticity - for example, flags made for USA are often made in China and this calls into question whether being patriotic is buying 'made in USA' (Breidenback, 2018). But, on the other hand, the balance between authenticity and ethnocentrism needs to be managed, especially with the rise of nationalism which has its own dangers.

Research on bilateral trade suggests that a common language is a facilitator and that cultural goods tend to move closer in terms of geographic distances than non-cultural goods, which perhaps highlights cultural barriers (Disdier et al., 2009). This idea is reinforced by the spread of the English language and the global influence of policies from English-speaking countries (Brzezinski, 2013; Kitsou, 2013). While language creates solidarity, it should be simplified to encourage learning (as seen with the effort taken to convert Mandarin to Simplified Chinese in 1949, which was later adopted by Singapore and Malaysia). Another development that can lead to a devaluation of physical cultural elements is digitization, making culture easily accessible electronically (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). This, could pose problems for the conservation of heritage (especially funding and copyright), making it necessary to adapt cultural policy frameworks (UNESCO-UIS, 2016).

Since we plan to colonize space (UAE plans to establish the first habitable human settlement on Mars by 2117), globally we also need to decide the heritage and culture that we should leave for future generations, and this comes back to global citizenship. Take, for example, the Pioneer plaques (which were purely pictorial), or the Voyager Golden Records (which was a time capsule of events narrated from perhaps a very USA point of view, although one of the 55 greetings is in Arabic), which were sent to outer space to represent the first contact with Planet Earth (NASA Voyager, nd). Tolerance is essential if we are to survive as a species, and this comes from first understanding each other's cultures, accepting their differences and respecting their way of life. Figure 5 depicts the way that relationships between culture, heritage, education and tolerance and the possible benefits a country can accrue from the same source.

Figure 5: Relationship of Culture, Heritage, Tolerance, Education and its Benefits



Source: Authors

## References

- Abu Dhabi e-government. (2017). Abu Dhabi Emirate: Facts and Figures. Available: <https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/abu-dhabi-emirate/abu-dhabi-emirate-facts-and-figures> [Accessed 17 March, 2017].
- Ahmad, Y. (2006). The scope and definitions of heritage. From tangible to intangible. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12(3), 292-300.
- Askew, M. (2010). UNESCO, World Heritage and the agendas of states. In: *Heritage and Globalisation*, edited by S. Labadi and C. Long. London: Routledge, pp. 19–44.
- Assmann, J. (1995). Collective memory and cultural identity. *New German Critique*, 6, 125-133.
- Bolten, J. (2015). *Einführung in die interkulturelle Wirtschaftskommunikation* (2nd ed). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Breidenback, M.D. (2018). Raising the American Flag Made in China. *The Atlantic*, dated 4 July, Available: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/07/raising-the-american-flag-made-in-china/564293/> [Accessed 1 January, 2019].

- Brzezinski, Z. (2013). *Le Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership?* New York: Basic Books, 185.
- Cull, N. (2015). Opening speech at the Conference, ‘Harmony or Discord: Exploring the Impact of Music Diplomacy?’, APDS, University of Southern California on February 13th, 2015.
- Cummings, M.C. (2003). *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*. Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 1.
- Disdier, A. C., Tai, S. H., Fontagné, L., & Mayer, T. (2010). Bilateral trade of cultural goods. *Review of World Economics*, 145(4), 575-595.
- Expo 2020 Dubai, (2016). Expo 2020 Logo - A Gift From History. Youtube dated 27 March, Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbMLYuhWa1w>. [Accessed 7 January, 2018].
- Fiske, J. (2010). *Understanding popular culture*. Routledge.
- Greenwood, D. J. (1977). Culture by the pound. An anthropological perspective on tourism as cultural commoditization. In: *Hosts and Guests. The Anthropology of Tourism*, edited by Smith, V. L. London: Blackwell, 129–38.
- Harrison, R. (2010). What is heritage? In: *Understanding the politics of heritage* (1st ed.), edited by Harrison, R. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 5-42.
- Harvey, D. C. (2001). Heritage pasts and heritage presents. Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7(4), 319-338.
- Heyd, D. (2018). Education to tolerance: Some philosophical obstacles and their resolution. In: *The culture of toleration in diverse societies*. Manchester University Press.
- Hewison, R. 1989. Heritage. An interpretation. In: *Heritage Interpretation, Volume 1.*, edited by Uzzell, D. L. London: Belhaven, 15-23.
- Hiltermann, J. (2018), *Tackling the MENA Region’s Intersecting Conflicts*. International Crisis Group. Available: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/tackling-mena-regions-intersecting-conflicts> [Accessed 24 December, 2018].
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Cultures consequences. Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Irindu, E. & Shah, P. (2016). Development of cultural heritage tourism in Kenya. A strategy for diversification of tourism products. In: *Conservation of natural and cultural heritage in Kenya, A cross-disciplinary approach*. edited by Deisser, A.-M. and Njuguna, M. (eds).

London: UCL Press, pp. 154-171.

Johnson, P. & Thomas, B. (1995). Heritage as business. In: *Heritage, tourism and society*, edited by Herbert, D. T. London: Mansell, pp. 170-190.

Kabanda, P. (2016). *The Cultural Trade Index*. World Bank, Working paper 7871.

Khalaf, S. (2000). Poetics and politics of newly invented traditions in the Gulf. Camel racing in the United Arab Emirates. *Ethnology*, 39(3), 243-261.

Kitsou, S. (2013). The Power of Culture in Diplomacy: The Case of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in France and Germany Exchange. *The Journal of Public Diplomacy*, 2 (1), 21-39.

Leiper, N. (1995). *Tourism Management*. Reprint. RMIT Publishing, 168–80.

MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity. Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589–603

McKinnon, C. (2018). *Toleration and the Character of Pluralism*. In: *The culture of toleration in diverse societies*. Manchester University Press.

NASA Voyager. (nd). *Whats on the record*. Available: <https://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/golden-record/whats-on-the-record/greetings/> [Accessed 29 December, 2018]. For Arabic greeting see <https://soundcloud.com/nasa/golden-record-arabic-greeting>

Nurse, K. (2006). Culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. *Small states: economic review and basic statistics*, 11, 28-40.

Pieterse, J. N. (2015). *Globalization and culture*. Global melange (3rd ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pratt, S. (2015). The Borat effect: Film-induced tourism gone wrong. *Tourism Economics*, 21(5): 977-993.

Ravallion, M., Chen, S., & Sangraula, P. (2007). New evidence on the urbanization of global poverty. *Population and Development Review*, 33(4), 667-701.

Reverso Dictionary, حضارة & 2018)., ثقافة. [Accessed 26 April, 2018]

Smith, M. E. (1982). The Process of Sociocultural Continuity. *Current Anthropology*, 23, 127-141.

Smith, L. J. (2006). *The Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge.

Stephens Balakrishnan. M. (2015). *Revitalizing forgotten place brands through touring*

consumption: The case of The Old London Underground Company. In: *Touring Consumption*, edited by S. Sonnenberg, and D. Wie. Germany: SpringerVS Publication, pp. 21-55.

Storey, J. (2018). *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Pearson Education: UK.

Thomas, A., & Kinast, E. U. (2010). *Handbook of intercultural communication and cooperation*. Edited by S. Schroll-Machl. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Torres, C. A. (1998). Democracy, education, and multiculturalism: Dilemmas of citizenship in a global world. *Comparative Education Review*, 42(4), 421-447.

UAE Government. 2018. About the UAE: Arab and Islamic heritage. Available: <https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/culture/arab-and-islamic-heritage> [Accessed 30 December, 2018].

UAE Government Portal. (2018). Vision 2021. Available <https://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-agenda-2021/list/identity-circle> [Accessed 24 December, 2018].

UAE Minister of Tolerance Website. (2018). Available: <http://www.tolerance.gov.ae/English/index.html> [Accessed 27 December, 2018].

UN. (2015). Have your say. Available: <http://vote.myworld2015.org> [Accessed 24 December, 2018].

UN. (2018). The Sustainable Developmental Goal Report. 2018. Available: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf> [Accessed 30 December, 2018].

UN Stats. (2018). E-handbook for SDGs Indicators. Available: <https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/SDGeHandbook/Home> [Accessed 24 December, 2018].

Williams, R. (1983). *Culture*. Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks: 11-13.

UNESCO (1972). Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. Adopted by the General Conference at its seventeenth session Paris, 16 November 1972. Available: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf> [Accessed: 29 December, 2018].

UNESCO. (1994). The Nara Document on Authenticity. Available: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1994/whc-94-conf003-inf8e.pdf> .Accessed 30 December, 2018.

UNESCO. (2001). *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2018). Al Sadu, traditional weaving skills in the United Arab Emirates. Available:

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/al-sadu-traditional-weaving-skills-in-the-united-arab-emirates-00517> [Accessed 28 December, 2018].

UNESCO-UIS. (2009). 2009 UNESCO framework for cultural statistics. Montreal: UNESCO.

UNESCO-UIS. (2016). The globalization of cultural trade. A shift in consumption. International flows of cultural goods and services 2004-2013. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Wakefield, S. (2012). Falconry as heritage in the United Arab Emirates. *World Archaeology*, 44(2), pp. 280-290.

Williams, R. (1983). *Culture*. Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks: 11-13.

Witchalls, P. J. (2010). Cultural styles in corporate communication. An analysis of difference and transformation in cultural communication styles with a focus on the four largest German and four largest U.S. American Banks' Annual Reports over the period 1997 – 2007. Hamburg: Kovač.

World Bank. (2017). Rural Population. UAE. Available: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL>. [Accessed 29 March, 2017].

WTTC. (2018). Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2018, World. Available: <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf> [Accessed 28 December, 2018].

WTO. (2018a). World Trade Statistical Review. Available: [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/wts2018\\_e/wts2018\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2018_e/wts2018_e.pdf) [Accessed 28 December, 2018].

WTO. (2018b). Statistics. Available: [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/wts2018\\_e/wts2018\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2018_e/wts2018_e.pdf) [Accessed 28 December, 2018].

## Authors and Citations

---

This Report was Authored by:

**Melodena Stephens**

Professor of Innovation Management, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government,  
Dubai, UAE.

**Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan**

CEO of Alliance of Global Sustainability, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

**Frederik Panz**

Karlshochschule International University, Germany.

**Filareti Kotsi**

Associate Professor of Tourism, College of Communication and Media Sciences, Zayed  
University, Dubai, UAE.

---

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the trustees, officers and other staff of the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) and its associated entities and initiatives.



## Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express personal appreciation to the following individuals for their input to the different stages of producing this report and for providing essential input and assistance into the report and its related materials:

Lama Zakzak

Engy Osman

Marouen Ghezal

Shuaib Kunnoth

Ghaith Yagan

---

## Copyright Information

**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License**

Readers are free to copy, re-distribute, transmit and adapt the work, on the following conditions: You must attribute ownership of the work to the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government; you must not use the work for commercial purposes; and, if you share, alter, transform or build upon the work, you must distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar conditions. These conditions may be waived if you obtain written permission from the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government. Where the work or any of its elements is in the public domain under applicable law, that status is in no way affected by the license. For further copyright information, please visit the website: [www.mbrsg.ac.ae](http://www.mbrsg.ac.ae) or contact the author.

For reprints or permissions regarding using any of the material included in the publication, please get in touch with MBRSG through: [permissions@mbrsg.ac.ae](mailto:permissions@mbrsg.ac.ae)

## Research at The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government

The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (formerly Dubai School of Government) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, MBRSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in delivering its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world. The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs, including:

- Applied research in public policy and management;
- Master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- Executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- Knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.

---

The MBRSG Research Department focuses on the following six priority policy areas:

1. Future Government and Innovation
2. Education Policy
3. Health Policy
4. Public Leadership
5. Social Policy, Wellbeing and Happiness
6. Sustainable Development Policy

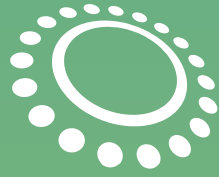


Scan the code to access MBRSG research:

For more information on research at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, please visit: <http://www.mbrsg.ae/home/research.aspx>







منتدى الإمارات للسياسات العامة  
UAE Public Policy Forum