
Advantages and Disadvantages of Dubai to Become a Regional Cultural Hub

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Abstract: Dubai, a small territory in Persian Gulf, has attained a good popularity during the last two Decades. A little territory with undesirable air in almost three decades managed good to reach the point that now most of the countries in the region like it's good trade and economic situations. Some, now, are speaking about Dubai's own pattern of development. Nowadays, it serves as the main hub for trade and economic swap in the region of west Asia, or at least Persian Gulf. The issue of development and Dubai's kind of development is not here my purpose. The question that this article tries to provide some answers for, is: Will Dubai be able to become the regional cultural hub? What is it's advantages and disadvantages? To verify this, I suggested a preposition and assumption: Dubai has some advantages that in such kind and domain are rarely found in the region, for example has good infrastructures in tourism, digital network and transportation, but it suffers some other factors, as a sample, it doesn't have a long history and cultural record: the disadvantageous are mainly with the cultural and political characteristic and the advantages are most in technologic infrastructure and management's field.

Keywords: Dubai, Cultural Regional Hub, Advantage, Disadvantage

1. Introduction

Dubai, since it joined in 1971 to AEU, has passed through several stages. Since 1980s, during the governance of Sheikh Rashid it began some important substructures, and his son, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, started many ambitious project and changed the position and panorama of Dubai among regional and international societies. Although, there may be some criticism to the kind of development in Dubai, it's clear that it has brought a kind of welfare and importance for it, which is not ignorable. Dubai didn't have except oil that exists in other countries of the region and outside, but now it depends about one percent of GNP to the oil and gas export, and has some important factors which others don't have. It's now a center of financial and economic transactions in the region of Persian Gulf and west Asia.

But will Dubai be able to become a regional hub for cultural transactions? What are it's advantages and disadvantages for this kind of development? This article is dealing with this important question. I didn't find some research that deals with this main questions, so it's a trying to prepare a research context for next studies in this field.

2. Theoretical Approach

There has been some controversies among the adherent of different theoretical approaches in development studies about the priority of development in economy, political system, or culture for a nation to become a developed nation-state [2, 17] But as I think and the experiences around the world has shown, different spheres of a society are interconnected and these are like interconnected test tubes, which rising and going down of a liquid in one of these tubes, affects on the level of that liquid in the others. In other words, if you begin a developmental project in one of that spheres, it will affect on the other spheres. There is an important point that it worthy to mention: if we ask the final purpose of all kinds of development, the answers may be different. We can say from a teleological view that the most important and final purpose of development, is human, and all kinds of tools and programs of development must be preparations for humanitarian development, and if we consider human as a political animal [4] or economic animal or culture-maker animal [7], it may makes some differences in our option for

starting the development from one field of a society, but when a society, has started many developmental projects during more than four decades, now on the interconnected approach (which I mentioned above), there is some exchanges among different spheres, of a society like Dubai. We can concentrate on three spheres of economy, management and culture. I didn't mentioned about political area of Dubai, because there is a kind of inherited governance, although, I have a point of view regarding this (may be revealed in another paper). Another mentionable point is that cultural development is very difficult and a society should try continuously during some generations to reach it.

3. The Regional Hub for Cultural Exchanges

The Cambridge English Dictionary writes about the definition of "Hub": "the central or main part of something where there is most activity: *The City of London is the hub of the UK's financial world* [14]. What I mean by "the hub for regional cultural exchanges", is that it can be a pole that in a region it's cultural swapping with other states and societies inside and outside of a country, from point of view of quantity, quality and diversity, confirms that there is a concentrated attention of cultural exchange.

We can discuss about the essentialities of a society, here Dubai, to become a regional hub of cultural exchange in a region, here I mean west Asia or at least Persian Gulf, in two categories: advantages and disadvantages.

4. Advantages

4.1. Humanitarian Development

Human resources is the core of any program in each sphere of a country, specially according the theoretical approach that we adopted above. A society for becoming a center of cultural exchange in a region, before all, needs to have an acceptable position in humanitarian development. There is no opportunity to deal with the theoretical views on this subject, and we can accept at least the outputs of the annual humanitarian development report of the United Nations and independent international organizations reports. The Human Resources Report of UN for 2020 says: "Covid-19 has changed the face of international cooperation around the world, testing both global solidarity in the face of public health crisis, and the ability of the multilateral systems to organize a coordinated response to contain, mitigate, and facilitate a recovery post-pandemic... The UAE ...moved with impressive speed to contain the Covid-19 virus and provide a host of measures to ease the health, economic, and social impact of the virus. These measures range from providing grants to independent artists to introducing legal reforms that facilitated mobility of expatriate workers, between employers and geographies [16]. A main sign that shows a country is willing to work with people of different

cultures is assistance them in crisis. According the above mentioned report, UAE contributed just under USS, one billion in 2019 and 2020 to support UN coordinated humanitarian operations in 17 countries around the world [16]. Also Dubai is at the top of the table for the annual per capita revenue and healthcare services [8].

A society that favors such high level of welfare, can be considered as more favorable of justice. Justice and welfare allows people of a community to show more tolerance, altruism and keep themselves out of cultural and religious phobia and terrorism. It's a good context for being a center of integration and regional cultural hub.

4.2. Transportation and Tourism

Dubai, now had a good transportation substructure. It has started big project in this field (including road, sea, airport, and urban underground and subway train). There are good airlines like Emirate Airline, and Dubai International Airport is the world's busiest airport by international passengers on the top of the table, above London Heathrow Airport with 76,043,973 passenger [15] and the busiest airport for Airbus A380 and Boeing 777 movements [3], and the airport with the highest average number of passengers per flight [6], "DUBAI Airport up 7 percent in passenger traffic, Business Traveler) and 2.65 million tones of movements [18].

This great number of passengers and tourist from across the world, when come together and reside in a society like Dubai, they see each others, talk, buy and sell, teach from each other directly and indirectly, affect others and are affected in many ways, and this can help to shape a mixed culture and lead people to be more flexible, tolerant and attain a mixed culture. This is a favorable factor that each society needs to become a cultural pole. In each empire like ancient Iran, Rome, and nowadays United States of America, we see this factor. In other words, Communication among multinational populations in a middle and long term leads to fraternity, tolerance and cultural exchanges.

4.3. The Media City of Dubai

The Dubai media city was established in 2000. It's like a free economic zone. For the past 20 years, Dubai media city has commenced it's position as the region's most credible media community that houses the largest global and local media brands. It's a community where freelancers, startups,..., and large enterprisers co-exist, contributing to Dubai being named the capital of Arab Media 2020 [9].

During the past more than two years of Covid-19 onset, in the world, many business were harmed, and destroyed, but the recent reports shows business that had digital platforms and were based on the Internet and cyber space profited that. One could believe, and some of this kind business like Amazon and Ali Bbaba, recorded at a very good level of profitability.

Mohammad bin Rashid Ale Maktoum, the Prime Minister of UAE and the governor of Dubai, announced move to put technology at the fore front of the country's post Covid-19

recovery plan (see: Arabian Business). So, Media city of Dubai, with its high technology can increase telemarketing and digital trade [5]. Besides, it can help to diverse media productions be broadcasted and issued from Dubai.

There is also an Internet city near the Media city of Dubai, and the Dubai International Academic City, are another two main facilities that can encourage cultural exchanges. This city launched in 2007, and more than 27000 students are studying in its universities there, some of them of best brands [10]. Management Field of a society is affected by all kind of these development [12]. Residence of foreign students in a city, gradually bring compatibility to other cultures and getting and taking of cultural attitudes, which can be a good factor for cultural exchange. It's clear that any technology may bring some problems in some times and societies [1].

4.4. Islamic Economy Plans

During the last five decades, the world faced with new reading of Islam, so Islamism, Islamic fundamentalism, and many sub-versions of these reading has appeared. Among this diversity and differences between Orthodox and revisionist reading of Islam, it's strange that we can find some common concerns concerning economic tasks of individual and community on the basis of Islamic jurisprudence, that regardless of different models we can name them in total "Islamic Economy". Some states, including Islamic Republic of Iran that is a religious state and others that are secular, tried to plan for this. The governor of Dubai, in 2013, according the studies that showed a middle class of nearly 1.5 billion has emerged that in individual consumer (like Halal brands) and social transactions (in financial and bank tasks and accounting system) has concerns about observing Islamic religious rules ("Shariaa"), concluded to attain the first grade and position in Islamic Economy [8].

It's clear that religion is a main factor of culture, and if in a society business for a religious person can be done according his or her religion, more people can gather in that community and this is a good opportunity to deal with cultural exchanges through that.

5. Disadvantageous

5.1. Essentials for Media Substructures

A main factor in cultural exchange is, that high digital substructure is a prerequisite, not the final and enough factor. It needs acceptance of cultural diversity and descent political views, which by now the Arab states of Persian Gulf don't have such democratic political system. There is signs of moving against the mainstream in Arab world, in issue of diplomatic relations with Israel, but a cultural and political dialogue among civilization, nations and religions, before all needs a dialogue among the nations of the same culture, like Iran, Yemen, Iraq and so on. The cities like Cairo and Beirut which was already known as the cultural centers of Arab world had a mixed or flexible culture and an established level

of criticism, although it was in Egypt not high. By now Aljazeera network is the most important media network in Arab world and also west Asia that criticizes many subjects and has a good standard of skilled work. This case shows that if a political will there is, it can be even in an undemocratic political structure. Will Dubai be able to show this political and cultural tolerance?

5.2. Cultural and Political Obstacles

Beside the obstacle that I mentioned during the last pages, there are some more factors their characteristic is cultural or political. Before I concentrate on cultural issues, it's better to mention that it's clear a democratic structure can increase cultural exchange and co-existence among adherents of different cultures in a society, although the co-existence if there is, it can facilitate to conform a democratic system.

The UAE is a confederation of seven Emirates that was established in 1970. It's not considered a country with an outstanding and long history, especially in a region that there are countries like Iran [11], India, And also Saudi Arabia [13]. Even Afghanistan and Pakistan have more clear record of history. A long history produces a sense of historic belong that makes people confident and honorable in their international relations. In a country with long history you can see many cultural and historic monuments that can attract other people to visit and enter in a cultural dialogue. In any field if one wants to enter in swapping, he or she needs to have an amount of that good, physical be or intellectual. You should have cultural personalities as poet, philosopher, writer and so on through last era of your social life to be able asking others come and associate with you in mutual cultural exchanges.

In the region of west Asia and Persian Gulf, there is many cultural divisions (see: Fuller, 1991). That is that we can say countries like Iran in the region have this cultural inheritance, but don't have good management and enough substructures to attract others, and UAE has this substructures, due good programming and management, but doesn't have that long outstanding cultural inheritance.

6. Conclusion

Dubai, in its short new era has progressed clearly in some aspects, especially in trade and commerce, tourism, building of towers and substructures like high ways, airports, ports, and shipment facilities. It has started new projects and reached at high level standard in each kind. It seems that it follows any kind of project that can bring it benefit and famousness. Dubai as a small society, went a long road in a short time in this issues, and became a center for regional economic exchanges. What is Dubai potentiality to become a regional hub of cultural swapping? It's development in commerce and trade swapping and strong and modern substructures are preparing context that can facilitate cultural exchanges, but there aren't some factors like a cultural history and a political and public culture that allows non Arabs specially Iranians and Persians to cooperate with other

ethnic and non- Sunni peoples in the region of Persian Gulf. Yet, there is differentiation in Arab countries between Arabs and non-Arabs (so-called "Ajam"). Dubai has overcome some natural and administrative obstacles in its programs of development. Will it be able to be overwhelmed on the obstacles in its way to become a regional hub in Persian Gulf?

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