Cultivating Social Cohesion in Abu Dhabi: Balancing Diversity, Innovation, and Cultural Identity for Sustainable Development

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Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the topic by presenting social cohesion as a vital aspect of governance. Thereafter, it delves into the research background by contextualizing the topic to Abu Dhabi, which is renowned global innovation and business hub. The capital of UAE in that respect attracts a diverse local and foreign workforce, as well as a multitude of investors. The government spearheads efforts to improve social cohesion through national policies. However, ensuring that these policies do not deviate from the Emirati cultural identity requires a consistent re-evaluation of the policies. The chapter accordingly premises its problem statement on the previous statement, whereupon the aim, study objectives, research questions, and study significance are intelligible formulated.

Social Cohesion is a critical governance aspect that facilitates harmony within a society by ensuring that diversity and social exclusion are integral facets of efforts to sustain the unity of the nation. Social cohesion in the UAE context is a representation of cultural ethos that are deeply enshrined in the fabric of the nation. The Emirati leadership has accordingly and consistently endeavoured to place social cohesion among the items at the apex of the national agenda, which is an outcome of a growing recognition that stability, prosperity and overall development rely on it. The Emirates has a multifaceted approach for enhancing social cohesion – they include various strategies and initiatives that aim to enhance inclusivity, tolerance, and a sense of belonging in a diverse population. The *We the UAE 2031 Vision* presents an advanced model for social empowerment premised on tolerance, harmony and generosity to cultivate a society that works in one accord and in favor of UAE's advancement (U.ae, 2021). Over and above that, the UAE Centennial Plan 2071 stresses values like respect, tolerance, and loyalty, thereby consolidating the commitment of the Emirates to social cohesion. The governments efforts to foster cohesion have largely bee successful as evidence by its impressive rankings in the Human Development Report (HDR), being listed 1st in the Arab region and 26th globally (U.ae, 2021). The global rank conferred to UAE in HDR highlights opportunities for improvement to make the rise of the nation as a model of tolerance and harmony in the region more robust.

Research Background

UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi, is recognized for several reasons that have consolidated its position in the global map. It has cultural institutions, such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi that showcases art and artifacts from across the globe as a reflection of UAE's international perspectives and fidelity to cultural exchange. It was inaugurated in 2017 following a partnership between France and the UAE, leading to the development of the pioneering universal museum within the Arab World (Le Louver, 2017). Furthermore, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque puts Abu Dhabi on the global map. It occurs as the largest mosque within the Emirates and functions as a symbol of religious diversity and cultural tolerance. The design of the mosque is an architectural marvel that integrates unique elements from various Muslim civilizations, positioning it as the quintessence of modern Muslim Architecture (Lee, 2023). Cultural integration is therefore a vital part of factors that justify Abu Dhabi being UAE's capital.

As a result of cultural integration, Abu Dhabi has grown into an international business hub because of the government's strategic emphasis on innovation. To this end, the government actively supports developments in innovation domains such as blockchain and artificial intelligence. The National Innovation Strategy of UAE outlines innovation as a cornerstone of economic and social development with an aim to strategically position the Emirati among the most innovative jurisdictions. The Ministry of Economy and the Department of Economic Development in Abu Dhabi complement UAE's National Innovation Strategy by supporting Emirati inventors and encouraging innovation in the SME sector (Abu Dhabi Chamber, 2019). The digital transformation in Abu Dhabi is instantiated via initiatives like the coding school 42 of Abu Dhabi that provides peer-to-peer and tuition free learning, as well as Hub71 which incubates start-ups in fintech, AI and cybersecurity (Media Office, 2022). These endeavors are part and parcel of an umbrella vision to establish a competitive economy that is highly productive, knowledge-based, and business-driven within a friendly environment. The rise of the Emirati as a business hub is an outcome of the government's innovative policies and investments that create a favorable environment for entrepreneurship and technology, thereby positioning Abu Dhabi as global business innovation hub (Al-Jenaibi & Mansoori, 2022). For example, the Abu Dhabi government has an ADIO innovation program that is supported by AED2 billion worth of investment for research and development. It can be deduced that cultural integration is an essential contributor to UAE's growth as a business hub.

Research Problem

Achieving social cohesion without losing cultural identity is not a walk in the park. Cultural identity, depending on how it is expressed in different contexts, can promote strong community bonds, or cause further fragmentation based on how the integration of cultural aspects into society occurs (Plikynas et al., 2022). Social cohesion has strong correlations with culture, unity, collaboration, business growth, diversity and inclusion. Taking the context of Abu Dhabi, this relationship is firmly established in the strategy for governance and economic development. The capital of UAE promotes social cohesion via a culture of collaboration and unity that is observable in the leadership's activities that support inclusivity and diversity values in society (Al-Jenaibi, 2017). On that account, collaboration throughout different sectors and communities is espoused to enhance innovation and the growth of entrepreneurship. The government of Abu Dhabi partakes in endeavours geared toward uniting individuals from all unique backgrounds to collaborate in projects that contribute to economic development. For instance, the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 sets out the pathway for economic diversification with emphasis on industries that are knowledge-centered, operating under the mantra of high collaboration and innovation (Minhas & Sindakis, 2021). Diversity and inclusion have vital contributions to the business landscape of Abu Dhabi.

The Emirati cultural identity plays a critical role in the leadership's drives to boost social cohesion. Open economic policies have attracted a diverse workforce to drive UAE's economic growth, markedly through the leadership's support for entrepreneurship and different-sized firms. However, there are opportunities for enhancing the integration between the diverse workforce and the local economy, which can improve innovation and ensure equitable sharing of the fruits of economic growth across all segments in society. Cultural identity has a multifaceted and complex influence on social cohesion, which requires circumspect management to ensure that it has positive contributions to society's fabric. UNESCO (2023) advances culture as a source of social cohesion and sustainable development by stressing cultural sites, expressions and practices contribute to social inclusion. Even though Abu Dhabi's commitment to diversity and inclusion is strong and evident, the current challenge is how to ensure that the values of social cohesion are deeply ingrained in the culture so that they can be leveraged for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic prosperity.

This research aims to examine how the Abu Dhabi government fosters and nurtures social cohesion to achieve economic sustainability.

The following objectives steer this disquisition.
  I. To examine the relationship between social cohesion and Abu Dhabi's sustainable development.
 II. To investigate social cohesion initiatives and activities that are enshrined in the policies of Abu Dhabi and the Emirati in general, considering that UAE's cultural identity affects the drives of the leadership to favour social cohesion values and practices.
III. To investigate gaps and opportunities in current social cohesion values and activities.
IV. To appraise the recommendations to improve the implementation of the values of social cohesion and activities within the Abu Dhabi entrepreneurial space.

Research Questions
  I. How does social cohesion contribute to the economic development of Abu Dhabi?
 II. How does the cultural identity of UAE and Abu Dhabi reflect in the social cohesion policies, norms and values?
III. What are some of the gaps in balancing Abu Dhabi's support for social cohesion and a retention of UAE's social identity?
IV. How can the implementation of UAE's national policies that foster social cohesion be implemented in tandem with the cultural identity?

Hypotheses

H1: The UAE government, through policy, is making pertinent efforts toward economic diversification by creating a favorable business environment for investors and foreign workforce.

H2: The Abu Dhabi entrepreneurial space across the sectors of innovation, tourism, business, and relevant policies constitute the foundation of economic diversification in Abu Dhabi.

H3: Being the Capital, Abu Dhabi's social cohesion policies and initiatives that are enshrined in policies reflect the UAE's prowess in offering inclusive and diverse business environment that is ripe for investment and in demand of labour (foreign and local), which can be achieved without losing cultural identity.

H4: The cultural identity of UAE influences the drives of the leadership in favour of diversity and inclusion.

Significance

Contributes to Existing Body of Knowledge

The existing body of knowledge in scholarly literature acknowledges social cohesion as a key contributor to innovation and economic growth because it allows collaboration and a peaceful environment where business can occur. The social cohesion policies of UAE and Abu Dhabi reflect the unique cultural identity of the federation, which affects representation of cultural sites, expressions and practices as suggested by UNESCO (2023). To this end, investigating how the government of Abu Dhabi (the capital) fosters and nurtures social cohesion can provide a rubric for enhanced understanding of how social cohesion can be strategically leveraged to attract labour and investment without compromising the cultural identity.

Provides Empirical Evidence in Tandem with UAE's Vision of a Knowledge-Centric Economy
The UAE's Vision 2031 seeks to double the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and stress the importance of a knowledge-based economy (Department of Municipalities and Transport/DMT, 2023). Empirical evidence from this study shows that social cohesion improves economic performance through the establishment of a friendly business environment that attracts the required talent and investment for a knowledge-based economy. The data in this study is qualitative, and therefore provides critical insights into the attitudes and perceptions of the participants, and which has been collected using ethical considerations that improve validity and credibility in favour of the vision.

Offers Insights that the Leadership can Consult for Policy Development
Social cohesion policies in UAE and Abu Dhabi are dependent on the decisions that are made by the government or leadership. These policies are usually developed proactively, rather than reactively. Consequently, the jurisdiction achieved inspiring rankings in the Human Development Report (HDR), occupying 1st in Gulf and 26th internationally (U.ae, 2021). The policies of Abu Dhabi promote the adoption of sustainable and inclusive economic strategies that facilitate the development of a cohesive society in thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. Consolidating these policies requires evidence-based insights from scientific research, which this disquisition offers.

The significance of social cohesion as a governance aspect cannot be overstated. This is because it ensures harmony and unity in UAE's diverse society. The leadership has accordingly positioned social cohesion at the core of the national agenda, attesting to the government's recognition of how it contributes to innovation, sustainability, stability, and development. Abu Dhabi, the Emirati Capital, has global recognition as an innovation and a business hub. As such, it attracts investors and workforce from diverse cultural backgrounds. Keeping in mind that the policies of social cohesion in UAE are consistent with the national identity, these policies, though evolving, should not lose the cultural identity. This study examines how the Abu Dhabi government promotes and nurtures social cohesion without losing cultural identity. The significance of the research is a consequence of its contribution to existing body of knowledge, showing how social cohesion can be achieved without losing cultural identity; provision of empirical evidence in alignment with UAE's vision of a knowledge-based economy; and the insights it offers for policy development.

Literature Review
This chapter identifies three theoretical frameworks that guide the literature review. The relationship between social cohesion and Abu Dhabi's economic development is explored based on the city's pillars of economic development with undertones of national values. Thereafter, the UAE's cultural identity is investigated and juxtaposed with Abu Dhabi's initiatives to maintain it. To this end, several challenges are identified despite the success of existing frameworks. The proposed solution to maintain the balance between promoting social cohesion and protecting cultural identity is proposed at the end.

A theoretical framework enshrines a combination of interlinked theories, assumptions, concepts and ideas that direct the research procedure. Its relevance, as articulated by Kritika (2024) has applications in this research, occurring in the form of building the researcher's understanding of the research problem by articulating relationships across variables, gaps in current knowledge, as well as guiding the development (not formulation, as here it implies explanation) of research questions and hypotheses. A theoretical framework also informs the methods deployed in a study. The framework can also provide a structured pathway of conducting the literature review to avoid deviation from the topic. One main theoretical framework in this study facilitates the maintenance of focus and clarity, whereas the two additional frameworks are included to provide contrasting viewpoints, or address various dimensions of the research problem, which is fostering and nurturing social identity in Abu Dhabi without losing cultural identity.

Cultural Identity Theory
The cultural identity theory has evolved over time with an objective to explain the processes that individuals use to form and maintain their cultural identity within a group or society. The theory suggests that cultural identity is dynamic, evolving, and developed via social structures, cultural patterns, and interplay of communication. Despite evolution, the theory is traced to the work of scholars like Stuart Hall and Myron Lusting. Andrew Norton and Arjan de Haan discussed the theory in the context of jobs and social cohesion in the World Development Report 2013 (Open Knowledge Repository, 2024). Plikynas et al. (2022) applied an agent-modeling approach to investigate the cultural impact on social cohesion. The theory offers a comprehensive approach of exploring identity as a dynamic and evolving concept. It also explains the importance of communication and social interaction in shaping cultural identities. The Cultural Identity Theory can explain how Abu Dhabi negotiates its cultural identity in the wake of globalization and social cohesion, while maintaining a cohesive society without compromising its cultural heritage. Potential determinism is a major limitation of this theory, suggesting limited personal agency (Urrieta, 2018). The other limitation is based on its narrow scope of application because of emphasis on communication and social comparison.

2.2.2 Intercultural Communication Theories
Intercultural communication theories like the Negotiation Theory and Intergroup Communication Accommodation Theory shed light on the interdependencies across dynamics surrounding sociocultural memberships and communication styles (Botoni, 2018). These frameworks can show how communication styles and language maintain cultural identity and promote social cohesion. William B. Swann Jr. (1987) developed the Identity Negotiation Theory. It is used to explore self-concept in the context of social interactions. The Identity Negotiation Theory posits individuals negotiating their identities variably in different social contexts. The theory contributes to enhanced understanding of how Abu Dhabi maintains its cultural identity in the wake of globalization. However, the theory might not fully account for the impacts of non-communicative factors on

identity. Howard Giles developed the Intergroup Communication Accommodation Theory (ICAT) in the 1970s. ICAT improves understanding on how individuals communicate in various contexts, postulating that people refine their styles of communication to align with others or set themselves apart. The strength of the theory lies in its capacity to explain how communication can bridge or accentuate social differences. ICAT can show how Abu Dhabi uses communication to promote social cohesion, while maintaining cultural identity. The gap in ICAT is a possibility of oversimplifying cultural nuances and complex social interactions.

Social Cohesion Radar

Bertelsmann Stiftung collaborated with scientists from Jacobs University in Bremen to develop the Social Cohesion Radar Theory, which was first introduced in 2013. The radar has been leveraged to assess social cohesion in several countries over a 25-year period from 1989-2012 (Dragolov et al., n.d). The theory suggests that resilient social relationships, positive emotional interconnectedness among community members and a focus on the common good are the main characteristics of a highly cohesive society. To this end, social cohesion is broken down into three domains comprising social relations, connectedness and common good, each with three measurable dimensions (Stiftung, 2023). The theory's strengths include empirical foundations and international comparability. Furthermore, the radar has a multidimensional measuring instrument that integrates various aspects of cohesion. The social cohesion radar facilitates an assessment of the quality of social cooperation and a sense of togetherness in Abu Dhabi while considering its cultural diversity and cultural identity. Regardless, the theory may not capture the unique cultural nuances of specific regions because of a universal focus.

Relationship Between Social Cohesion and Abu Dhabi's Economic Development

The relationship between social cohesion and the economic development of Abu Dhabi can be examined through the lens of economic diversification, sustainable urban development, family and community well-being, as well as the population and social development. The Oxford Business Group (2020) observes that expatriates overwhelmingly constitute Abu Dhabi's pupation at 81%. These dimensions are essential components of the current policies and initiatives that support social cohesion and sustainable economic development in the UAE.

Economic Diversification

Abu Dhabi's Economic Vision 2030 stresses the relevance of a diversified economy, stressing that a cohesive society allows collaboration between diverse groups to enhance their contribution to economic growth. economic diversification refers to the strategic expansion of its economy above traditional dependence on revenues from oil exports. The strategy seeks to create an economic landscape that is resilient and sustainable economy, which is an outcome of enhanced capacity to withstand international market fluctuations of oil prices. Shamsi (2020) used the Wheel of Diversification of Development to explain 9 factors necessary for economic diversification: natural resources and financial funding, human development, policy, institutions and governance, infrastructure, export orientation, innovation, entrepreneurship, private sector and state-owned enterprises. Accordingly, Abu Dhabi's Economic Vision 2030 states that the Government wishes to see the creation of higher-value employment opportunities for nationals, and maximizing the participation of women in the workforce, as well as attract foreign and local investment.

In doing so, the vision encourages inclusivity and collaboration across various cultural groups thus becomes necessary. An all-inclusive growth, as per the social cohesion radar, improves social bond and mutual understanding, which are crucial social cohesion elements (Al-Jenaibi & AlKandari, 2021). A diversified economy in the same context offers more stability and security to citizens – the impact is increased trust and solidarity in the community. The government of Abu Dhabi invests in non-oil economic sectors like tourism, technology, finance, and renewable energy are at the core of Abu Dhabi's economic diversification strategy. For instance, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and Le Louvre Abu Dhabi are landmark tourist attraction sites that the government has developed (Lee, 2023). Through economic diversification, Abu Dhabi has gained international recognition as an innovation, business and tourism hub that offers many opportunities that its diverse population can tap into. The strong link between Abu Dhabi's economic diversification and social cohesion is because economic diversification requires an inclusive workforce with a diverse set of skills and backgrounds.

Sustainable Urban Development

Social cohesion is a vital element of Abu Dhabi's sustainable urban development because it creates inclusivity. Ezzeddine and Kashwani (2019) examine the role of public squares within the Emirates through the lens of sustainable urbanism, arguing that public squares enhance social life by offering opportunities for social interactions between diverse city populations. Social spaces foster community interaction and create a sense of belonging. Abu Dhabi's *Listen First* programme, launched by the Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi on June 26, 2021, consolidates cohesion among community members and improves their quality of life as a result (United Nations, 2021). In the same vein, the Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT) within Abu Dhabi has the *Plan Capital* initiative that seeks to enhance the development of the city via a holistic urban evolution programme. Plan Capital lays the groundworks for developing an urban community that is socially cohesive and economically sustainable but preserves the cultural heritage of the UAE (Department of Public Transport and Municipalities, 2024 & Al-Jenaibi, 2020). The policies and initiatives of sustainable urban development in Abu Dhabi reflect social cohesion considerations.

Productive Workforce

The Department of Community Development (2021) in Abu Dhabi underscores the relevance of social cohesion in establishing cohesive families and communities that contribute to a stable and productive workforce, which is necessary for economic prosperity. The integration between economic and social prosperity places the concept of human well-being as a

foundation for social cohesion. Lima de Miranda & Snower (2020) evaluate well-being the solidarity, agency, material gain and environmental sustainability (SAGE) indices. The solidarity index explains humans as social creatures who desire societies that enhance their sense of belonging. The agency dimension in SAGE explains the inherent drive of individuals to influence their fate based on their own efforts. For Abu Dhabi, this means retaining its cultural identity. The material gain (G) index is measured by GDP per capita. The environmental index examines how the natural and built environment collectively contribute to well-being, for example through aesthetics. For Abu Dhabi, the built environment (houses, museums, mosques) should reflect the cultural identity of UAE.

Population and Social Development
UAE's capital emphasizes population and social development because of their direct impact on social cohesion and relevant economic activities for sustainable development. In the main, a cohesive society has a higher likelihood to engage in economic activities that benefit the nation. Abu Dhabi strategically leverages its population's social development to achieve economic prosperity. The leadership, via the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, has operationalized several economic diversification programs to spearhead economic growth hand in hand with initiatives that support cultural development. Additionally, emphasis on education, healthcare and social services in urban areas attracts a highly skilled workforce due to increased investment opportunities in non-oil financial sectors like finance, tourism, and renewable energy. Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi (SCAD) shows expatriates, mainly foreign workers, comprised 81% of Abu Dhabi's population as of 2020 (Oxford Business Group, 2020). Thus, the nationals, being a minority, still desire to retain their national and cultural identity despite an influx of foreigners.

How UAE's Cultural Identity Reflect in Abu Dhabi's Social Cohesion Policies and Initiatives
UAE's Cultural Identity
The traditional Arab and Islamic values, significantly influences by the environment and terrain, are the pillars of the Emirati cultural identity (U.ae-The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2021). Additional influences from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa add to the admixture of the federation's cultural identity. The architecture, music, cuisine, attire and lifestyle derive influence from Islam. Concerning social life, Emiratis are social individuals who like meeting people and regularly hold gatherings at homes or social venues (U.ae-The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2021). They are warm hosts who treat their guests with honor. While economic factors affect the social lifestyle, Islamic values have a strong hold on the Emirati culture.
An organisation of distinct features of UAE's heritage as per the Official Portal of the UAE Government, U.ae (2021) shows emphasis on hospitality, tolerance, family cohesion and solidarity among society members. Native UAE populations derive a sense of honour and pride that are associated with being part of this cultural heritage. Government entities in the UAE take measures to preserve the heritage and create awareness (U.ae-The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2021). Examples of the strategies include holding festivals and events, forming clubs such as the Emirates Heritage Club, establishing heritage villages, establishing, and maintaining museums, as well as constructing and maintaining mosques. The official language in UAE is Arabic, but economic globalization makes English a widely spoken language. However, the presence of expatriates from other regions makes other languages like Bengali, Urdu, Farsi, Hindi and Mandarin not strange to hear.

Abu Dhabi's Social Cohesion Policies and Initiatives
Abu Dhabi's Heritage Village
Situated on the Marina Mall Island near the city centre, it is a family-friendly spot where visitors can experience the traditional way of life in the desert. It provides an immersive time capsule based on old world *souk*, or market, a camp and a mosque that are modelled on life during pre-modern UAE (Visitabudhabi.ae, 2024). Visitors can also shop and discover artifacts, as well as watch artisans make pottery, weave fabric on a loom and blow glass. Abu Dhabi's Heritage Village also hosts workshops for traditional crafts that are organized for craftsmen to demonstrate traditional skills like spinning yard, weaving, pottery and metal work. Additionally, Abu Dhabi is part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which is an opportunity that is leveraged to consolidate its recognition and culturally diverse global city that integrates culture and creativity with sustainable urban development.

One Community Campaign
The Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi launched the One Community campaign to promote social cohesion as social and personal responsibility. This campaign was launched in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC), Emirates Foundation, and the Authority of Social Contribution (Ma'an). The One Community initiative, through its stakeholders, offers a plethora of opportunities to celebrate and encourage a diversified and inclusive community (Al-Jenaibi, 2014). The campaign comes in five languages comprising Arabic, English, Persian, Urdu and Tagalog "Filipino" to reach all segments of society in UAE. The campaign seeks to activate the role of third and private sectors via a package of initiatives that foster social responsibility (Department of Community Development, 2022). The private sector is encouraged to work with the civil society to organize special events that unite local community members and enhance a sense of belonging. The campaign underscores that motivating community members of diverse nationalities and ages to take part in community sports and events to offer opportunities to learn from various cultures and improve communication across different domains of the society.

Abu Dhabi Inspires

Abu Dhabi inspires enshrines a series of initiatives that were launched by the Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Office, HH Sheikh Khaled Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in 2020 to spearhead innovative responses to existing realities and capture nascent opportunities to jump into new trends. The pillars of the programme are virtual experiences, constant innovation and community solidarity (Government of Abu Dhabi, 2020). Digital learning for all is an example of an initiative under this programme. It was launched by the Abu Dhabi School of Government to offer every UAE citizen access to over 4, 000 online courses from 190 of internationally leading academic institutions.

Challenges and Gaps in Balancing Support for Social Cohesion and UAE's Cultural Identity
The challenges faced by Abu Dhabi in maintaining a balance between supporting social cohesion and supporting cultural identity are, by and large, an outcome of demographic imbalance. This umbrella challenge (demographic imbalance) has nuanced elements comprising a larger youth population, and non-national population. The other challenge considered an economic challenge is the economic shift.

Youth and Expatriate Population
The large youth population in Abu Dhabi is both an opportunity and a challenge to sustaining social cohesion and the cultural identity of UAE. The youth are quick to embrace modernity, which widens the gaps between traditional values and modern global influences. Haque (2021) observes that modernization alters lifestyle and behavioural patterns of nationals, which influences cultural identity. The impact is more pronounced in youth because individuals tend to be very impressionable at a young age. This aspect of demographic imbalance is aggravated by the resoundingly higher proportion of expatriates, at 81% compared to the locals in Abu Dhabi who comprise 19% as per the 2020 figures provided by SCAD. The large expatriate population complicate the preservation of minority privileges, rights, and identities. Given the importance of cultural identity in the self-esteem and life-satisfaction of the ethnic minority adolescents, promoting cohesion should combat discrimination and negative stereotyping.

Cultural Integration
Respectful cultural integration in UAE's capital is not rooted in assimilation. Rather it is premised on the creation of a shared space where all cultures and valued and contribute to the social fabric. Such is the way the Emirati cultural identity would thrive alongside a cosmopolitan population. However, the city's rapid economic growth continues to make it lucrative for an international workforce that makes Abu Dhabi a hodge podge of cultures. Even though diversity enriches the city, it harbors the risk of diluting the traditional Emirati culture if nit managed with sensitivity and respect.

Infrastructural and Built-Environment Modernization
The modernization of infrastructure and the built environment can compromise the preservation of cultural identity and social cohesion by causing tension between embracing modernity and maintaining the traditional values of the Emirati people. An expedited rate of urbanization can cause the loss of historical sites and buildings that serve as local identity references (Reus et al., 2020) The Arab identity and modernization are heavily imprinted in Abu Dhabi's architecture. Modernist and contemporary buildings are part of the nascent heritage. It is therefore crucial to integrate historical references of Arab and Islamic architecture in contemporary city architecture.

The Effectiveness of Current Policies and Initiatives and Recommendations to Enhance Social Cohesion in Abu Dhabi without Losing Cultural Identity
Existing Policies and Initiatives are Effective.
The existing strategies are commendable for their alignment with cultural values of the UAE people and undergo evaluation and monitoring to measure their performance. Abu Dhabi has made remarkable progress in establishing and maintaining social cohesion. For example, the Department of Community Development (DCD) in Abu Dhabi executes the Social Cohesion survey to measure the level of cohesion in families and the community at large (Department of Community Development, 2023). Additionally, the DCD has launched campaigns that espouse social cohesion as a personal responsibility with an objective of creating an inclusive society that honors diversity. On top of that, the Public Policy Development Guide for the Social Sector within Abu Dhabi offer a policy framework that policymakers can consult to ensure consistency in the values that are communicates throughout social cohesion policies and initiatives, and alignment with the national vision of safeguarding the cultural identity.

Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation can Enhance the Balance
As identified in the preceding sub-section 2.5, integrating the massive expatriate population while preserving the UAE's cultural identity is one of the major challenges. The minority native youthful population risks suffering discrimination and negative stereotyping, which goes against the national and Abu Dhabi's values of respect, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, rapid modernization threatens heritage sites and structures. However, continuous adaptation is needed to ensure that they retain their effectiveness in the face of changing social dynamics to bridge arising gaps.
The cultural identity theory, intercultural communication theories and the social cohesion radar provide crucial variables regarding the concept of cohesion and cultural identity to guide responses to the primary and secondary research questions. The relationship between social cohesion and Abu Dhabi's economic development is explored based on the pillars of economic development in Abu Dhabi, including economic diversification, productive workforce, sustainable urban development, and population and social development. Being UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi reflects its cultural identity, and specific examples are provided. However, cultural interaction, modernization, and large non-national populations, though

effectively managed, keep changing and can affect the balance between fostering social cohesion and protecting cultural identity. While policies remain effective, they need to be consistently updated to meet the evolving needs of the populations.

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines and describes the research methods guiding data collection, analysis, and presentation. The exploratory nature of the study justifies a qualitative research method. The section provides an overview if the research approach, taking into account the one that is best-suited to answer the research questions. After establishing a research approach, a corresponding method that had maximum relevance to the study in terms of associated data collection and analysis procedures is explained. The purposive sampling technique, as explained by Campbell et al. (2020) is chosen for data collection to guarantee that the sample can provide information about the topic of inquiry. The strategies for enhancing validity and reliability are explained, in addition to adherence to ethical considerations.

Research Approach

This study adopts the inductive research approach, which begins with specific observations before triangulating them to broader theories and generalizations. It is a bottom-up approach that includes data collection, the identification of patterns and themes, as well hypotheses testing based on the collected and analyzed data (Streefkerk, 2019). Inductive research is appropriate when there is a paucity of existing literature on a topic. It allows new theories to emerge from data rather than testing existing hypotheses. Research on fostering and nurturing social cohesion in Abu Dhabi without losing the cultural identity of UAE is scarce. The available sources of evidence are primarily from the government and its organs. The scarcity of research in this topic area reinforces the originality of the study. Indictive reasoning is premised on experiential learning. An observation of patterns and regularities occurs to draw conclusions and generate theories. The benefit of indictive research situates itself in the capacity to create new understanding and theories. However, its conclusions cannot be fully proven, but gain support from evidence accumulation.

Research Method

The inductive research approach is usually associated with qualitative methods because it creates an opportunity for flexible design during the research. A phenomenological research approach steers this disquisition because it stresses the need to understand the lived experiences of individuals, as well as the meanings that they ascribe to these experiences. The philosophical traditions pioneered by Edmund Hursel and developments that Martin Heidegger added underpin phenomenological research. Essentially, Edmund Husserl is considered the father of phenomenology, postulating it as a study of the structures of consciousness that enable it to refer to structures outside itself (Britannica, 2024). Phenomenology involves the analysis of intentional structures of mental acts (seeing, remembering, desiring, hating). These acts can be linguistic (thinking or talking), pictorial (viewing representations of an object) or perceptual (direct encounter with an object). Phenomenological research therefore suits the investigation of how Abu Dhabi nurtures and fosters social cohesion without losing UAE's cultural identity by examining the perceptions of relevant population concerning social cohesion and cultural identity.

Population and Sample

Population

This study covers the main segments of population in Abu Dhabi. The city's population is approximately 1, 593, 284 (Al Hameli & Arnuco, 2023). A multi-faceted demographic that has vital impacts on the cultural identity and social cohesion of the city constitutes this population. The Abu Dhabi population is essential for this research because of an overwhelming non-national population that make it ripe for analysing how the Emirati government promotes social cohesion without compromising the cultural identity of its people, which gives them a sense of national pride. The population for this study is constituted by Abu Dhabi residents (nationals and non-nationals over 18 years, who are employed, or run businesses). The population provides vital information about the success of the government's efforts to promote social cohesion, while maintaining the cultural identity of the Emirati people.

Sample

The choice of the sampling technique in phenomenological research is of paramount importance because it determines the extent to which the richness and depth of collected data goes. To this end, purposive sampling method is appropriate for this qualitative study (having adopted a phenomenological approach) because it involves intentional selection of people who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. The method has merit among qualitative researchers, it is has consistently proven to be an effective method of gathering data/information from participants with relevant and meaningful contributions to the study (Campbell et al., 2020). It is significantly important for phenomenological research because of its ability to ensure that the participants have direct connection to the research question and can provide detailed-firsthand accounts about their lived experiences.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

A comprehensive data collection method using online administered, or face-to-face semi-structured interviews to 201 individuals of different demographic groups that are highlighted in findings. These interviews were administered to local and non-national Abu Dhabi residents over a month period between January and April 2023. The preference for semi-structured interviews was a result of their ability to capture the participants' nuanced perspectives concerning how the policies of the

UAE government support social cohesion and cultural preservation. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are renowned for their effectiveness in collecting rich qualitative data that reveal the attitudes, feelings, experiences, and views of participants.

Data Analysis
The collected data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The method is suitable for the identification, analysis and reporting of trends/patterns and themes within a given data set. Therefore, researchers can leverage it to comprehensively interpret different dimensions of the topic through attention to detail. The choice of a thematic data analysis is an upshot of the nature of the data. Squires (2023) underscores that thematic analysis is deployed for the analysis of qualitative data, particularly a set of texts for example an interview or transcripts. The researcher then proceeds to examine repetitive themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning.
Thematic data analysis has various approaches. However, Caulfield (2019) argues that the most common form follows a six-step process of familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and writing up. This step is espoused as it allows the researcher to avoid confirmation bias in the formulation of the analysis. The researcher was able to avoid the risk of missing nuances in data, because of the subjective nature of analysis that relies of the researcher's judgement, by following the six-step analysis process. As thematic analysis is not restricted by pre-established theoretical frameworks, it represents an exploratory approach that can lead to the generation of new insights, which is important in a multi-dimensional and dynamic context, like Abu Dhabi, where the experiences of the population get influenced by rapid social and economic changes.

Validity and Reliability
Research validity and reliability are unique, but interdependent constructs. Validity in qualitative research implies the extent to which the results of the analyzed data (collected from the participants of the study), are consistent with the real-world experiences of individuals outside the population (Karantzoulis et al., 2024). To ensure validity, the researchers selected appropriate measurement methods and sampling methods, with the aim of making the results generalizable. Reliability, on the other hand, primarily constitutes how accurately a method, technique, or instrument measure the variables in a study, particularly social cohesion and cultural identity. Thus, a study is reliable if the same results persist when the same study occurs under similar circumstances. As highlighted by Middleton (2019), the standardization of the semi-structured interviews that were analyzed using the six-step thematic analysis enhances reliability by reducing information bias and omitted variable bias, because the questions were framed the same way each time they were administered.
Ethical considerations are crucial for conducting respectful and responsible research, particularly when the focus of the study is on sensitive topics like social cohesion and cultural identity. Adhering to ethical considerations ensured that the rights and dignity of the participants were protected, thus enhancing the quality and credibility of the research findings (Bhandari, 2021). The research obtained ethical approval from an institutional ethical committee and got greenlight for meeting the following ethical criteria that are relevant for the study. Informed consent was ensured by giving participants clear and comprehensive information about the purpose of the research, benefits, procedures, and risks (if any), as well as the right to withdraws from the study at any given moment without penalty (Bhandari, 2021). Cultural sensitivity was one of the primary ethical considerations, and the researcher approached the study with respect for the diverse beliefs and practices of the Abu Dhabi society. Anonymity and confidentiality were promoted by protecting the participants' identities. Personal identifiers are accordingly not revealed in reports or publications. Transparency and accountability are evident in the research because details of data collection and analysis methods throughout the study are provided.
The study used a phenomenological research approach that is grounded in the works of Edmund Husserl. The exploratory nature of the study creates a necessity for understanding the lived experiences, opinions and attitudes of Abu Dhabi residents concerning the effectiveness of government policies to nurture and foster social cohesion without losing the cultural identity of UAE as an Arab and Islamic country. The population of the study comprises Abu Dhabu residents because, being the capital, the city adequately tells of the government's successful efforts despite an overwhelmingly large foreign population. Semi-structured interviews were administered online or face-to-face with 206 participants from January to April 2023. The participants were identified via the purposive sampling technique to ensure access to a pool of individuals who experience policies and initiatives affecting social cohesion and cultural identity in Abu Dhabi. A six-step thematic analysis process espoused by Caulfield (2019) directed the data analysis process. Ethical considerations for this study are informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, cultural sensitivity, and transparency.

Findings
This section highlights the analysis of data that the researcher collected using semi-structured interviews with 201 participants living in Abu Dhabi. The interviews captured the experiences, opinions and perceptions of Abu Dhabi inhabitants concerning the efforts of the government to foster social cohesion and preserve the Emirati cultural identity. A thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed 8 themes that are crucial to comprehending social cohesion and cultural identity dynamics in Abu Dhabi.

Demographics
The demographic features of the study's participants provide a useful context for understanding the findings concerning social cohesion and cultural identity in Abu Dhabi.

Gender
There was a balanced distribution of interview participants, with 104 females (51.7%) and 97 males (48.35). This equilibrium ensured that the findings are representative of the perspectives from both genders, which created a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

4.2.2 Age Group
Regarding age groups, the participants fit into four distinct categories. The largest groups comprised individuals between 30-44 years old, with 92 individuals who represented 45.8% of the participants. The 18-29 years age demographic constituted 62 participants, or 30.8% of the participants. There were 31 participants in the 45-59 years age demographic, making up 15.4% of the sample, while only 16 participants were over 60 years, representing 6% of the participants.

Income Level
The income level of the participants ranged from less than 10, 000 AED to over 50, 000 AED monthly. The largest group with 76 participants, or 37.8% of the sample were earners of 21, 000-30, 000 AED monthly. The second group, having 48 participants (23.9% of the respondents) earned 31, 000-40, 000 AED monthly. Individuals with earnings of 41, 000-50, 000 AED monthly were 32 in number, standing for 15.9% of the respondents. 11.9% of respondents/24 participants reported earnings of below 10, 000 AED monthly. Only 21 individuals (10.4% of the participants earned over 50, 000 AED per month.

Education
The participants had varied educational levels, with the majority being bachelor's degree holders at 50.2%, or 101 individuals. 68 people had a master's degree, comprising 33.8% of the participants. 10% of the participants acknowledge having a high school diploma (20 participants), whereas only 6% of the participants (12 individuals) had a doctoral degree of higher.

Nationality
Both Emirati nationals and expatriates from multiple countries comprised the participants. Most of the participants were Emirati nationals comprising 60.7% of the sample (122 participants), whereas the rest were 60.7%. 79 participants (39.3%) of the participants were expatriates India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri lanka and other nationalities.

Workplace
The participants come from diverse workplaces with representations from the government sector, the private sector and those who are self-employed. 92 participants are employed by the government, which is the largest group at 45.8%, followed by the private sectors with 76 individuals, or 37.8% of the participants. Lastly, self-employed individuals comprise 16.4% of the sample, or 33 participants.

Themes
The themes that the researcher identified after a comprehensive analysis of the interview transcripts are community belonging and participation, social values and norms, freedom of expression, economic opportunities and solidarity, cultural diversity, safety, and peacefulness, and lastly, issues and suggestions concerning social cohesion and cultural identity.

Community Belonging and Participation
A sense of community belonging, and participation emerged among the resounding themes, as many participants expressed a strong sense of belonging to Abu Dhabi and its neighborhoods. Participant #195, aged 35 years and working for the government, stated "*Abu Dhabi is my home and I feel a deep sense of belonging. The friendly faces, familiar streets, and high level of kindness in the community make me feel like I truly belong here.*" Participant #25, a female of 29 years who works in the private sector, and coming from Pakistan, states "*Abu Dhabi has really surprised me with its level of cultural integration. I was pleasantly astonished to encounter artefacts from my country in multiple museums that I visited across the city. They made me feel at home away from home.*"
To this end, the efforts of the government to include cultural representations of countries that expatriates come from seem to nurture and foster a sense of belonging. This is consolidated by the views of participant # 87 who asserts, "*Visiting the Louvre Abu Dhabi allowed me to encounter other art enthusiasts from diverse nationalities including the local one. I was pleased to find people who had similar knowledge concerning Vincent Van-Gogh's 1887 self-portrait, and other highlights like Claude Monet's The Saint-Lazare Station.*" Participation in community activities was a prevalent theme in the participant's responses. Participant #100 (female, self-employed, Indian, 33 years) explained "*The Abu Dhabi government organizes festivals like the Diwali light show at Yas Marina, which make me feel that my culture is respected and honored in this country.*" The intentional inclusion of elements from diverse cultures in public spaces and events increases the sense of belonging among expatriates without compromising their unique cultural identities. Participant #75 (40 years, male, government employed, Emirati from Ajman) says the following, "*The Arabic calligraphy is streets and workshops within the cultural district attest to the efforts of the government to embrace and integrates our common language.*"
Social Values and Norms

Shared values, goals and moral principles
Participant # 123 (Female, 38 years old, self-employed artist, and from UK) reflected, "*A shared commitment to environmental protection and sustainability aligns with my values. I appreciate the initiatives of the government such as the Abu Dhabi Sustainability week 2023 (January 16-19, 2023) that enhance my active contribution to these common goals.*" This response echoes an alignment between personal and societal values, which creates a sense of unity of purpose among the residents.

Codes of behavior and obligations

The response by participant 001#, a 50-year-old female educator from Egypt ("*The emphasis of Abu Dhabi on educational excellence and lifelong/ continuous learning are similar to my highly esteemed professional ethos. The Abu Dhabi has proven its commitment to supporting educators through workshops and conferences that enhance my capacity to provide good teaching services to my student*") shows a strong correlation between an individual sense of duty the government's societal expectations.

Respect for neighbors, relatives, and different groups

Participant #65, who is a male nurse of 33 years from the Philippines expressed, "*Abu Dhabi shows inspiring respect and care for healthcare workers. The pandemic pronounced the commitment of the government to the welfare of nurses by prioritizing them for vaccinations because of their high-risk rank as frontline workers. During interactions with the populations, we were treated with respect. Healthcare drives by the government, online and face-to-face, prove the hospitality of Abu Dhabi residents*" This answer is a microcosm of Abu Dhabi's deep-rooted respect for diversity and the contributions of diverse professions and groups to the community.

The congruence between societal and individual values in Abu Dhabi enhances the emotional and personal attachment of the residents to the city, which advances social cohesion. A clear articulation of behavioral expectations of Abu Dhabi residents by the government fosters a sense of commitment and responsibility among residents. Additionally, Abu Dhabi's culture of mutual respect despite varying nationalities and professions is essential for the maintenance of a harmonious relationship that increases inclusivity in the community.

Freedom of Expression

Participant #005 (female, 22 years, fashion-model who is self-employed, American) acknowledges, "There is no official dress code in Abu Dhabi, but we are encouraged to dress modestly and respect the local culture." Participant #63 (female, 27 years, private-sector employee, French) opines, "T*he ability to express oneself freely in dressing is moderated by community standards of decencies, as wearing revealing clothing like mini-skirts and tank tops is frowned upon by the national culture, guided by principles of Islam.*" Participant #007 (Male, 45 years, private-sector worker, Bangladeshi, suggests, "*It is essential to adopt to the local norms when residing in a foreign country to ensure maximum respect for relevant cultural codes of behavior. Even though the adjustment may take time, it is an indicator of respect for the host country.*"

Participant #128 (female, 31 years, public sector worker, Sri Lanka national) states, "*Abu Dhabi has transparent policies that emphasize high government responsiveness to public needs. Consequently, my confidence that the political system has one of the best public services continues to grow.*" Participant #10 (male, 39 years, private-sector worker, Sri Lanka national) consolidates the views of participant #128 by praising the government as one that, "*listens and acts.*" There is high trust in the government, engendered by a perception that it is accountable and responsive. Participant #90 (male, 36 years, private sector worker, Indian national) says, "*the support level and efficiency of public health institutions have consolidated my trust in Abu Dhabi institutions.*" Public institutions create trust by being competent and reliable.

Abu Dhabi encourages freedom of expression, but within the context of its national identity that is enshrined in the local culture. The perceived transparency and efficacy of the political system in Abu Dhabi is vital for a stable relationship between the public and the government, which is built on trust. Public institutions in Abu Dhabi demonstrate a high level of proficiency and support, which builds the confidence of the residents in their operations.

4.3.4 Economic Opportunities and Solidarity

Regarding employment opportunities, participant #34 who is a government sector worker of 33 years, and an Emirati national says, "*The government's career advancement programs have created multiple opportunities for professional growth, irrespective of an individual's background.*" The sentiments of participant #059, a 30-year-old female Emirati national working in the private sector, echoes the views of participant #34 by mentioning, "*Abu Dhabi has a dynamic and inclusive job market that offers equal employment opportunities for locals and expatriates.*" In addition, "*The government's support for entrepreneurial activities has allowed my business to grow and successfully contribute to Abu Dhabi's economic diversification*" (Participant #67; 42 years, male, self-employed, Pakistani national)

In addition to the sub-theme of employment opportunities, the concept of economic benefits and wealth distribution also emerged. Participant #80 who is a Filipino 36-year-old male working in the private-sector lauds the financial policies of Abu Dhabi because they "*are designed to benefit the whole society, as opposed to only a few individuals.*" In the same context, participant #119 – a female Emirati 38-year-old government employee observes, "*the social welfare programs in Abu Dhabi are representations of the government's dedication to an equitable distribution of wealth, which enhances the residents' living standards.*" The verbatim statement of participant #166 (Sri Lankan 29-year-old self-employed female), "*The government's investment and support for small businesses signifies a strong push for economic diversification, which attracts local and foreign investors,*" highlights a favorable distribution of wealth and economic gains. In effect, the Abu Dhabi government's approach of distributing wealth and economic benefits enhances social equity, which improves cohesion in communities.

Solidarity and support within the community is another concept of cohesion and national identity in Abu Dhabi. Participant #120 (Emirati 40-year-old public sector male employee) reflects that, "*There is a palpable sense of solidarity in Abu Dhabi as a result of an array of community measures that enhance strong bonds between residents.*" Participant #007 (A Lebanese 35-year-old self-employed female) observes, "*Frequent community sports events and international expos in the city enhance cohesion by bringing multi-cultural individuals to a common area, mostly public spaces, where they can interact.*" Abu Dhabi offers diverse employment opportunities that consolidate economic diversification and the residents' social integration.

Cultural Diversity

Participant #009 (an Emirati 28-year-old government sector worker) states, "*The cultural diversity here is not only tolerated, but also celebrated. For example, the Sheikh Zayed Festival provides Abu Dhabi, and UAE residents in general an opportunity to learn about the Emirati culture and heritage.*" Participant #73 (Indian, male, 33 years, and a private sector employee) reflects, "*The government's inclusion policies allow me to enjoy my cultural practices so long as I respect those of others.*" The views of participant #91 (a 36-year-old self-employed British National) include the same idea, but explained as follows; "*A mosaic of cultures in Abu Dhabi is prevalent everywhere, evident in the festivals we celebrate, food we eat and clothes we wear.*"

Participant #003 (29 years, self-employed, male and Filipino) observes, "*The diversity of the workforce within Abu Dhabi has expanded my professional experience because I can learn from colleagues coming different parts of the world.*" Consistent with this finding, Participant

#151 who is a 36-year-old Egyptian make that works in the private sector reflects *"The economic policies of Abu Dhabi are consistent with the principle of fair trade and fair economy. These principles consolidate the city's position as a global marketplace."* To consolidate their point, Participant #151 added, *"Nonetheless, respect for local traditions is highly emphasized in this country."*

Abu Dhabi's cultural diversity approaches goes beyond co-existence by actively fostering economic inclusivity, intercultural dialogue, and respect for national identity. The city's economic and social growth is strongly tied to the belief that cultural diversity is a vital facet of social cohesion. The participants' responses underscore cultural diversity as an asset that facilitates the exchange of ideas, and interactions that create awareness about different cultures.

Safety and Peacefulness

Participant #23, representing a 37-year-old Jordanian self-employed male, shares *"The vigilant and cautious presence of police in my neighborhood enhances my feelings of safety, which can be felt throughout the community".* Participant 29-echoes this sentiment; the 29-year-old Filipino working in the public sector says, *"24/7 security services and adequately lit streets make me safely at every hour. Since I moved to Abu Dhabi, I have never heard a case of mugging or robbery in my neighborhood."*

Participant #94 (male, 55 years, self-employed, British) marvels, *"The highly successful community policy initiatives and responsive emergency services ensure swift reactions to the residents' concerns."* Participant #004 (32-year-old Indian female private-sector employee) articulates, *"Regular police-initiated community outreach programs enhance trust and camaraderie between police and residents, thus building trust."* Participant #105 (an Emirate 45-year-old male government-sector employee) states, *"The strategic development and placement of public surveillance systems and an emphasis of neighborhood watch programs successfully deters crimes and promotes peace."*

Abu Dhabi's approaches to maintaining safety and peacefulness within neighborhoods. The integration of security infrastructure, community engagement, and responsive law enforcement has created an environment that ensures peace is maintained to preserve the safety if residents. In general, the experiences of the participants reflect Abu Dhabi's reputation of being a peaceful and safe place.

Issues and Suggestions

Participant #82 (a 30-year-old Jordanian private-sector employee) says*, "I have not encountered any pressing issues, but I am convinced that the proactive stance of the Abu Dhabi government by regularly updating policies contributes to their effectiveness."* Participant #17 (A 27-year-old South African government sector worker) lauds Abu Dhabi for its *"exemplary governance and regularly updating policies to address the needs of a growing population."*

Participant #109 (a self-employed 42-year-old Lebanese male) observes, *"The city thrives because of its preparedness for change. Continuous policy updates ensures that Abu Dhabi remains at the forefront of social and economic development."* Participant #64 (38-year-old Sri-Lankan private-sector employee states, *"The policies of this country are premised on the development needs of the populations, regardless of differentiating factors. The government serves all residents equitably and equally in its institutions."*

Even though the participants are satisfied with current policies, they understand the relevance of continuously updating them to sustain the growth and sustainability of the city. The evolution of policies in Abu Dhabi is essential for the city's status as a global business, innovation, talent, and cultural hub. Proactive governance based on the anticipation of the needs of the society and timely updating of policies can result to higher cohesion and protection of the Emirati cultural Identity.

Summary

These subheadings cover the key themes that emerged from the interview regarding the sense of community, shared norms, economic factors, cultural attitudes, safety concerns, and potential issues or areas for improvement related to social cohesion in Abu Dhabi. The findings can be organized and presented as follows. The participants have diverse demographics, but they appear relatively balanced. Most of the participants were between 30-44 years at the time of data collection and held bachelor's degrees. The emerging themes are community belonging and participation, social values and norms, freedom of expression, economic opportunities and solidarity, and safety and peacefulness. The participants are largely content with the status quo of social cohesion and cultural identity but recommend continuous updates on policies in alignment with the Abu Dhabi's proactive governance principle.

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