Reclaiming the Lost Cultural Identity via Heritagization : The Gulf States

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of oil discovery in the Gulf states since 1930s has led to rapid modernization, transforming once-historic districts into global commercial hubs. This transformation prompted significant construction and reconstruction of historic urban areas in capital cities, highlighting the profound impacts of swift modernization on cultural identity. In response to these changes, a process known as "Heritagization" has gained popularity in the Gulf states. This approach combines efforts for cultural enrichment with leisure activities while preserving the cultural identity. Although heritagization does bring economic and tourism benefits, concerns such as over-commercialization, cultural commodification, and heritage degradation warrant critical consideration. This heritagization in the Gulf states often leads the urban regeneration projects to develop in such a manner that contradicts and challenges the previously existing cultural heritage and thus the continuity of the cultural identity is somehow marginalized and overshadowed.

This research aims to investigate the emergence of heritagization as a transformative and innovative strategy in the Gulf region and its impact on the cultural identity of the historic districts. It also examines how the urban regeneration of these historic districts plays a central role in promoting this brand and shaping new cultural identities.

This phenomenon of heritagization in the Gulf region will further be critically examined through the case study of Historic Al Diriyah in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The transformation of the historic site after its designation as a World Heritage Site represents a seamless fusion of tradition and modernity within the framework of a

large-scale urban regeneration project. Beyond its function as a newly established cultural tourism destination, Al Diriyah serves as a cultural museum within a contemporary environment. However, this approach raises critical questions regarding the role of heritage, which may be reduced to mere visual aesthetics, thereby presenting a constructed cultural identity. It also raises concerns about commercializing and branding the heritage for tourism promotion showcasing the new historicized past.

ÖZ

Körfez ülkelerinde 1930'lardan itibaren petrolün keşfedilmeye başlanması hızlı bir modernleşmeye yol açmış ve bir zamanların tarihi bölgelerini küresel ticaret merkezlerine dönüştürmüştür. Bu dönüşüm, başkentlerdeki tarihi kentsel alanların önemli ölçüde inşa edilmesine ve yeniden yapılandırılmasına yol açarak hızlı modernleşmenin kültürel kimlik üzerindeki derin etkilerinin altını çizmiştir. Bu değişimlere yanıt olarak Körfez ülkelerinde "Miraslaştırma" olarak bilinen bir süreç popülerlik kazanmıştır. Bu yaklaşım, kültürel kimliği korurken kültürel zenginleştirme çabalarını serbest zaman aktiviteleriyle birleştirmektedir. Miraslaştırma ekonomik ve turizm açısından faydalar sağlasa da aşırı ticarileşme, kültürel metalaşma ve mirasın bozulması gibi endişelerin de dikkate alınması gerekmektedir. Körfez ülkelerindeki bu miraslaştırma, kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin genellikle daha önce var olan kültürel mirasla çelişecek ve ona meydan okuyacak şekilde gelişmesine yol açmakta ve böylece kültürel kimliğin sürekliliği bir şekilde marjinalleşmekte ve gölgelenmektedir.

Bu araştırma, Körfez bölgesinde dönüştürücü ve yenilikçi bir strateji olarak miraslaştırmanın ortaya çıkışını ve tarihi bölgelerin kültürel kimliği üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu tarihi bölgelerin kentsel dönüşümünün, bu markanın tanıtılmasında ve yeni kültürel kimliklerin şekillendirilmesinde nasıl merkezi bir rol oynadığını incelemektedir.

Körfez bölgesindeki bu miraslaştırma olgusu, Suudi Arabistan'ın Riyad kentindeki Tarihi Al Diriyah örneği üzerinden eleştirel bir şekilde incelenecektir. Tarihi alanın Dünya Miras Alanı olarak belirlenmesinin ardından geçirdiği dönüşüm, büyük ölçekli

bir kentsel dönüşüm projesi çerçevesinde gelenek ve modernitenin kusursuz bir birleşimini temsil etmektedir. Al Diriyah, yeni kurulan bir kültür turizmi merkezi olarak işlevinin ötesinde, çağdaş bir çevre içinde kültürel bir müze olarak hizmet vermektedir. Ancak bu yaklaşım, sadece görsel estetiğe indirgenebilecek ve böylece inşa edilmiş bir kültürel kimlik sunacak olan mirasın rolüne ilişkin eleştirel soruları gündeme getirmektedir. Ayrıca, yeni tarihselleştirilmiş geçmişi sergileyen turizm tanıtımı için mirasın ticarileştirilmesi ve markalaştırılmasıyla ilgili endişeleri de gündeme getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel Dönüşüm, , Kültürel Kimlik, Miras Kazandirma/ Heritagization, Körfez Ülkeleri ,Al Diriyah.

DEDICATION

"Dedicated to those whose tireless efforts protect our cultural heritage from the sands of time."

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Since the discovery of oil, Gulf states witnessed major changes in the political, economic, and sociocultural spheres, particularly in architecture and urbanism, breaking regional and international records in urban development and built infrastructure expansion. Mass clearance for the sake of modernization and enhanced urban developments is a significant factor in the Gulf's cultural heritage being eroded and destroyed. Hence, the conflicts between the objectives of conservation and modern development, and between change and consistency, underscore the need for better-resolved solutions (Boussaa, D. 2014). This contrast between the traditional ways of life that prevailed in the region up to the 1960s and the modern, urbanized Gulf culture is especially jarring (Ricca, S. 2018). There is an ongoing debate surrounding the effects of rapid urbanization and ongoing developments, which have resulted in a general loss of cultural identity in the Gulf region, and the desire to regain and requalify cultural identity as a priceless tool via urban regeneration of previously neglected urban historic districts (Mazzetto, S. and Vanini, F 2023). Key elements in the strategy for contextualizing and creating cultural identity in a way that respects organic qualities are required by the authorities of Gulf countries and their planning measures, administration of documenting the cultural assets, and recording procedures. A framework is required that may be used to promote and preserve the intrinsic identity of cultural places and the larger communities that surround them (AlSulaiti, F. 2013).

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Resources related to cultural heritage, such as historic districts are frequently viewed as strong social and economic tools, a way to promote cultural identity (Timothy, D.J. 2011). Most historic districts in the Gulf have experienced a cultural identity shift, where these areas have become populated by expatriates and immigrants. This demographic shift has occurred as the former native population moved to modern residential areas on the outskirts. Yet the neglect and deterioration of these historic centers are directly proportional to post-oil era modern constructions. In numerous Gulf cities, historic urban areas have been facing neglect, inadequate upkeep, and decay. There is a need for an instantaneous regeneration approach because the remaining historic neighborhoods are already on the brink of being extinct or simply vanishing from the urban context entirely if appropriate strategies are not implemented. The surviving remnants of urban cultural heritage that somehow survived the wave of modernization are mostly residential areas with a few public spaces like souks, mosques, and forts. This exemplifies a need for the innovative approach of adopting a contemporary method to revive the old historic town, preserving its cultural and authentic identity (Gornall, J. & Alhamawi, L. 2021). The significance of revitalizing these historical districts through urban regeneration is paramount in today's globalized world (Boussaa, D. 2018).

However, authentic or previously existing cultural identity is often marginalized and obscured as a result of the Gulf's approach to urban regeneration, which frequently causes historic districts to rebuild and flourish in ways that tend to oppose and contradict the preexisting urban cultural heritage. The objective of urban regeneration often encounters challenges from efforts to rebuild and replicate rather than simply preserve the original structures (Hadjri, K. & Boussaa, D. 2007). To highlight the importance of addressing these development and conservation challenges, more

research is therefore required to examine the function of regeneration and regaining of the lost cultural identity of the historical districts in the Gulf region. A critical question arises: How can the disappearing cultural identity be restored without hindering the growth of these cities? This poses a significant challenge for Gulf cities, where oil revenues continue to enable the swift execution of massive redevelopment projects within a short period (Boussaa, D. 2018). Another emerging concern lately is to preserve the cultural identity while regenerating the historic districts for cultural tourism (Boussaa, D. 2014 a, Boussaa, D. 2014b, Boussaa, D. 2018 & Boussaa, D. 2020). Consequently, urban regeneration projects frequently overlook certain aspects that are crucial to the development of cultural identity, such as authenticity, historical continuity, and the organic evolution of spaces alongside rapid economic development. By neglecting these factors, regeneration efforts risk undermining the cultural significance and intrinsic value of the areas they aim to revitalize.

The idea of reclaiming the lost cultural identity in these historic districts calls for in-depth inquiry and investigation of its guiding ideas rather than slavishly mimicking the past. However, identity cannot be reduced to a collection of fashions; rather, it must be viewed as a dynamic process, much like life. It is extremely difficult to create a new cultural identity in Gulf cities that witnessed such rapid transformations. Finding the best approaches to revitalize the past as a catalyst for sustaining cultural identity within the evolving global contexts in the Gulf and around the world requires more critical and innovative approaches (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Hence, the research seeks to investigate the reclamation of cultural identity through the "Heritagization" process that is being widely adopted by the Gulf states. Over the past years, Gulf countries have actively employed the heritagization of historic districts

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and this process involves significant urban transformations. Therefore, the notion of heritagization, which reframes heritage as a process rather than a fixed entity, has introduced fresh complexities that are both captivating and challenging. The research first aims to conduct a thorough assessment of how post-oil modernization impacted the cultural identity of Gulf states. It seeks to offer an initial categorization of key factors that influence this dynamic, aiming to guide decision-makers in future urban regeneration projects in the Gulf region where the goal is to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between embracing modern progress and safeguarding the longstanding cultural identity of the region. The investigation underscores the importance of addressing regeneration issues within the context of heritagization as a tool for the revival of lost cultural identity in the Gulf region, with a specific focus on the cultural rebirth of the Historic Al Diriyah.

The focused case study of Al Diriyah, which is the largest urban regeneration project of the Gulf region illustrates how these historic districts contribute to shaping and marketing the transformed cultural identity by integrating heritagization. This contributes to assessing the influence of the novel branding approach on the urban environment, economic dynamics, and the community's cultural characterization. Al Diriyah, located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia is a recently regenerated and reconstructed urban regeneration project that deftly combines modern and traditional aspects, blending cultural identity with contemporary characteristics. It fulfills a cultural purpose in a modern setting, aside from its commercial role. At its core lies the mud-brick city of At-Turaif, established in the 15th century and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2010. The giga-project aims to establish a mixed-use urban community, showcasing the traditional architectural style of Al Diriyah and other historic Saudi settlements. Upon completion, it is projected to accommodate 100,000

residents, in addition to workers, students, and visitors. The development will feature cultural, entertainment, retail, hospitality, educational, office, and residential areas, boasting 38 hotels, museums, and over 100 dining establishments. As one of the pioneering cultural identity projects, Diriyah serves as a catalyst for Vision 2030, aligning with the commitment to enhance tourism's role in the country's economy. The project is expected to have a substantial impact on cultural tourism, as it adopts a holistic approach to revitalizing and regenerating the historic community. Al Diriyah alone aims to attract 27 million visitors annually, contributing to this target, while also generating 55,000 job opportunities through its development efforts (Diriyah Gate Development Authority).

1.2 Problem Statement

The discovery of oil in the Gulf states led towards the rapid modernization the region. As a result, the Gulf region underwent an extraordinary transformation from traditional historic districts to International commercial centers. This transformation through modernization poses a significant problem for the region from a cultural heritage perspective, as it threatens the continuity of the cultural identity of historic districts.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The main aim of this thesis is to study the impact of heritagization on cultural heritage. The focus of this study is to discover how urban regeneration projects in the Gulf States after being a victim of modernization, are trying to regain and requalify their affected cultural identity of the historic districts through the process of heritagization and whether the newly emerged cultural identity is most authentic and promising for the future of the region.

The main objectives are as follows:

- To explore heritagization, its definitions, and emergence.

- To explore the effects of heritagization on cultural heritage and cultural identity.

- To understand the heritagization process in different countries and contexts.

- To evaluate the effects of heritagization within the context of urban regeneration on the cultural identity in the Gulf region.

- To gauge the awareness of cultural identity and its loss due to rapid post-modernization in the Gulf region

- To analyze how heritagization is being utilized to recover the lost cultural identity of the Gulf states, which underwent rapid modernization that negatively impacted the region's cultural heritage.

- To inform the decision-makers regarding heritagization processes aiming to balance modern progress and cultural identity preservation in future urban regeneration initiatives in the Gulf countries.

1.4 Main Research Questions

The main research question of this study can be defined as follows:

What is the impact of heritagization on cultural identity?

The Subresearch Questions of this study are :

1. How does heritagization affect the cultural identity of historic regions?

2. How has the emergence of heritagization as a novel urban branding strategy in the Gulf region impacted the loss of cultural identity?

3. What role does the urban regeneration of historic districts play in promoting brands and shaping new cultural identities, as exemplified by the case of Historic Al Diriyah in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia?

1.5 Research Methodology

The research will adopt mixed methodology with the qualitative data focusing on the literature review and quantitative data focusing on the survey and interviews, further employing iterative analytical techniques, including coding and comparison, which are particularly suited for exploring multifaceted phenomena such as heritagization within the realm of cultural heritage studies. Hence, this research design aims to employ a rigorous mixed-methods approach, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data, to provide a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of heritagization and its implications for cultural identity in the Gulf states.

The quantitative component will center on the administration of structured questionnaires and interviews, targeting a diverse group of stakeholders, academics, and local communities of the historic districts in the Gulf states. This will facilitate the collection of data pertaining to perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to cultural identity and the awareness of heritagization in the region. Conversely, the qualitative dimension of the study will focus on an in-depth examination of the term "heritagization", its adoption in various contexts, the components of cultural identity, and the urban regeneration efforts being directly proportional to the loss of cultural identity prevalent in the Gulf region. This will involve a comprehensive review of relevant literature, encompassing seminal works and successful case studies that elucidate the multifaceted aspects of heritagization in the Gulf region. These aspects encompass culturally-driven urban regeneration initiatives, city branding strategies, and cultural tourism promotion as part of the Gulf region's strategic focus on diversifying its oil-dependent economy, and a concerted effort to transition towards the development of culturally rich and innovative cities.

Meanwhile, exploratory case study methodology was employed to deeply investigate the subject through interviews and observations, which facilitated a nuanced understanding of social phenomena not easily captured by quantitative methods. Al Al Diriyah is a historic district in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, renowned for its cultural significance as the original home of the Saudi royal family. It was the first capital of the Saudi state and is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, symbolizing the cultural heritage and identity of the region. Historic Al Diriyah was chosen as the case study for the following reasons:

1. **Significance:** Al Diriyah is a historically significant district in the Gulf region that experienced continuous decline, ultimately leading to its abandonment despite having an important heritage site. Since many other historic districts in the region that are still inhabited by low-income residents and immigrants, face the risk of a similar decline without the benefit of such recognition. This makes Al Diriyah a critical case for studying the historic district that went under extensive urban transformation.

2. **World Heritage Status:** In 2010, the At-Turaif District of Al Diriyah was designated as a World Heritage Site due to its exemplary Najdi architecture and historic significance (Criteria iv, v, vi).

3. **Urban Regeneration Scale:** Al Diriyah has undergone the largest urban regeneration project in the Gulf, aimed specifically at reviving its cultural identity.

4. **Heritagization of the Site:** The blending of modern amenities with the historic district has led to the transformation of spaces into cultural tourism hubs, driving the heritagization process on an unprecedented scale in the region.

These reasons collectively justify the selection of Al Diriyah as a case study, as it offers a unique lens through which to explore the intersection of heritagization and urban regeneration in the Gulf region.

1.6 Limitations

The study provides valuable insights into the determinants of heritagization in the Gulf region and its impact on cultural identity. However, it acknowledges several limitations. Heritagization, which refers to the transformation of objects, places, and practices into cultural heritage as values are attached to them, essentially describes heritage as a process. Given its potential to impact people, places, and practices, "people" pertains to population dynamics, social interactions, and group culture; "places" involve ecological dynamics, institutional influences, and contextual culture; and "practices" encompass participatory dynamics, community involvement, and culture in action (Causadias, J, 2020). This study is limited to the heritagization of historic districts and its transformational impact on cultural identity.

Secondly, the survey sample was confined to the residents living in the historic districts or the urban peripheries around it, including those who previously resided there. These residents are not necessarily the natives but also include immigrants and expats, who considerably form a large percentage of the Gulf's population, especially in the historic districts. This limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider context of the cultural identity of the Gulf region.

Another limitation of the research is the challenge of accessing higher-level stakeholders or key decision-makers involved in the urban regeneration process in the Gulf region which eventually leads to heritagization initiatives. Due to the top-down

nature of such initiatives, identifying and reaching these influential individuals can be difficult. As a result, the research is primarily oriented toward academic perspectives and observations derived from the literature review, participants' responses, and the research it encompasses.

1.7 Research Structure
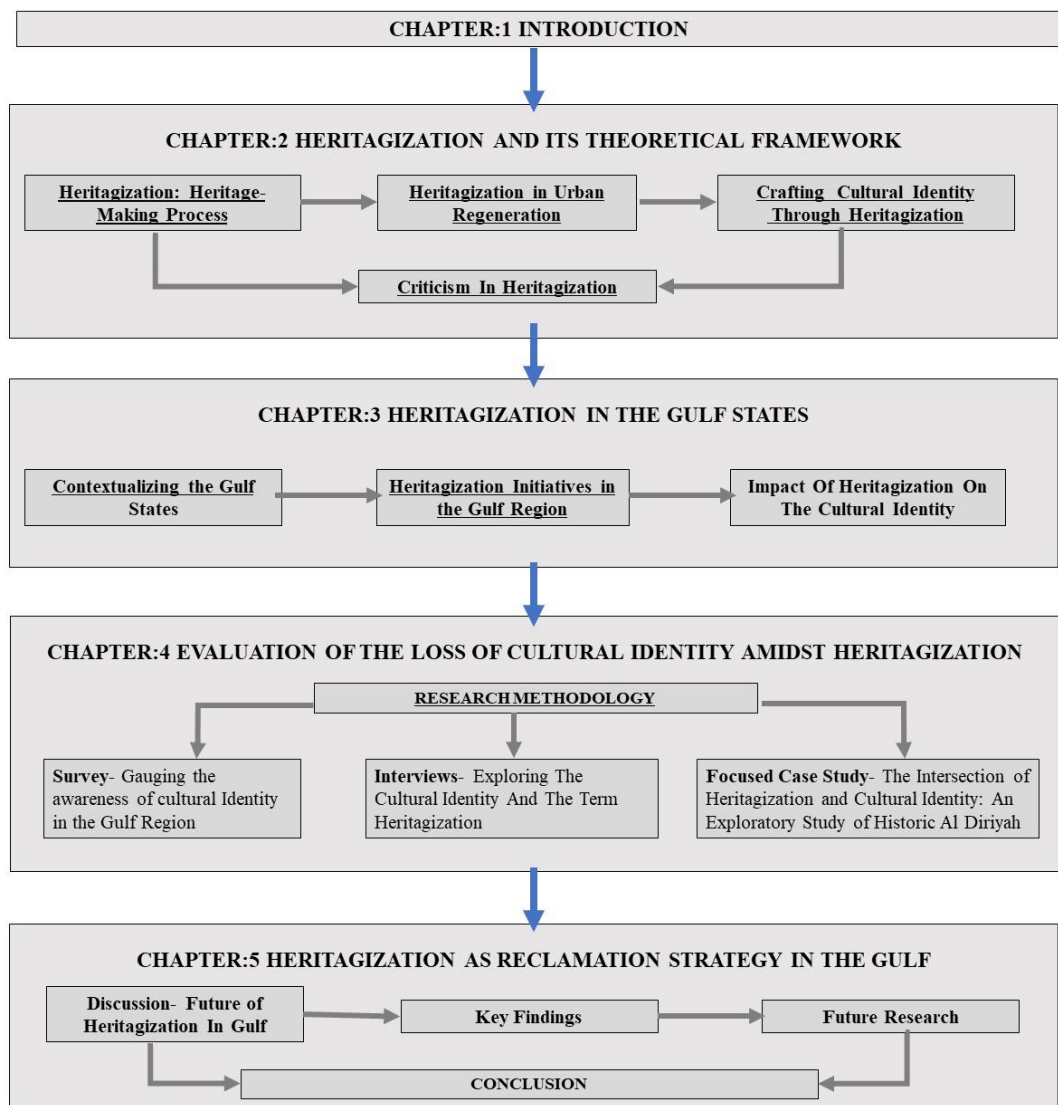
Figure 1: Research Structure Graphical Illustration. Source- Author

Chapter 2

HERITAGIZATION AND ITS THEORETICAL

FRAMEWORK

2.1 Heritagization: Heritage-Making Process

Heritagization refers to the transformation of objects, places and practices into cultural heritage as values are attached to them, essentially describing heritage as a process. Walsh expressed apprehension regarding the transformation of spaces into heritage sites, highlighting it as a process that converts authentic locations into tourist attractions. This is achieved by selectively referencing diverse historical images, often resulting in the deterioration or loss of the genuine places themselves (Walsh, K. 1992:4). In Walsh's interpretation, the process of *"heritagization"* also refers to how the ruling class colonized and imagined the past in order to profit from it under the guise of the "heritage industry" (Preucel, R.W., 1993). Harrison, building on Walsh's ideas, described heritagization as the transformation of objects and places from practical 'things' into items meant for display and exhibition (Harrison 2013b:69), thereby pointing to official heritage. Harrison concentrated on how redundant objects and places are collected or cataloged, becoming neglected, redeveloped into heritage sites, or assigned new functions through regeneration (Harrison, R., 2013b). In his theoretical concerns about heritagization and scales, Harvey, explains how scale, region, and boundedness affect the creation of cultural heritage and the connection between local people and heritage-making has been the subject of various research in the past few years (Harvey, D. 2015). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,for instance, challenges

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the idea that locals are being manufactured through the process of "heritagization," turning them from owners of cultural assets into cultural ambassadors or entertainers. Thus the concept of "heritagization," or the re-theorization of heritage as a process rather than an object, has created new dynamics that are both intriguing and difficult. First of all, as a process, it begs the question of how the formal and informal methods are employed in the process. Furthermore, it indicates that the process of heritagization is quite selective (Mai Le, Q. 2021).

Heritagization, according to Di Giovine, is a process that is also intricately entwined with the creation of heritage tourism worldwide and is predicted to clear the path for future peace (Di Giovine, M.A., 2009). According to Di Givione's theory, heritagization is a continuous international process with two interconnected facets and three distinct phases (isolation, idealization, and valorization). It is discovered that the community participates in the two subsequently. However, the roles of the community only become more the subject in the last valorization phase (Mai Le, Q. 2021). Heritagization can lead to cultural properties especially intangibles, undergoing heredity processes that disregard their agency in favor of freezing them for preservation and protection purposes (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B., 2006). According to Breidenbach and Nyíri (2007), the relationship between community and heritagization is extremely complicated, dynamic, and co-evolving, and it can only be observed in unique circumstances. Bendix (2009) explores the process of heritagization and questions whether or not it has negative political, community, and economic effects.

Over the past few decades, there has been a significant increase in what is recognized as heritagization within the realm of cultural heritage (e.g., Walsh,K. 1992, Smith, L. 2006, Harrison 2013b). Harrison referred to this period as a "heritage boom"

characterized by an abundance of heritage. He concluded that while various traces and memories of different pasts accumulate, we rarely consider the mechanisms through which heritage items, locations, or traditions might be delisted, removed from museum collections, or allowed to deteriorate (Harrison, 2013b:166). He also observed that there's a common belief that once items, locations, or customs are officially recognized and categorized as 'heritage,' they seldom undergo a change or transformation into something further (Harrison, 2013a:4; Sjöholm, J. 2016). Heritagization is then the process through which heritage is socially and culturally constructed, assigning cultural meanings and values to practices. (Park, J.-K., Tae, H.-S., Ok, G. and Kwon, S.-Y. 2018). For certain groups, "heritagization" represents a newfound value, utilized for various purposes. New museums and heritage sites act as ethnic media, functioning as community hubs, serving educational purposes, promoting citizenship, and facilitating the strategic affirmation of heritage in the public domain (Ashley, S.L. 2014). For sites, objects, and practices to be recognized as heritage, they must be imagined, conceptualized, and narrated. Heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, needs to be enacted and materialized, particularly within the framework of heritagization. This process involves transforming abstract concepts into tangible representations that can be preserved, celebrated, and transmitted to future generations (Salemink, O. 2021). Exploring the orchestration of Heritage-making processes involves collecting, selecting, exhibiting, serializing, and materializing the past across various localities, alongside the evolution of items into heritage with altered statuses and meanings **(**Daher, R. 2007**;** Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Alonso Gonzalez (2014) contends that the heritagization process also involves creating built material replicas that add layers to the original cultural heritage assets over time. This process is facilitated to the extent that consumers internalize the inauthentic

appearance and ambiance of these replicas. Consequently, undoing the process of heritagization proves challenging, particularly if the current state of the image has been marketed as authentic to both the local community and tourists. (AlShaikh, A. 2017).

The term "heritagization" can apply to several different aspects, including the designation of new heritage, the affirmation of recognized heritage, a reinterpretation of declared heritage, and the recreation of previously designated heritage. The emerging "heritagization" theoretical framework also refers to the process of an object, place, or activity becoming part of heritage. These are elevated from just functional objects when they are accompanied by significance and/or cultural significance (Harrison, R 2013). Yet this transformed heritage must be acknowledged in the public sphere for an item to receive official heritage status (Nilson, T. & Thorell, K. 2018). This calls for widespread acceptance and agreement among all parties, as well as support from the local community, inclusion in the urban planning process, and legal protection (Sjöholm, J. 2016).

Heritagization, as further described by Skounti(2010), is a complex process involving the normative and institutional elevation of cultural and historical elements to the status of heritage, worthy of preservation, enhancement, and transmission. It entails both devaluation, through selection and delimitation, and revaluation, involving changes and redefinition to meet present needs rather than past configurations. This is how heritagization is entangled in socio-economic and ideological issues and is marked by heavy state control and limited citizen involvement, particularly evident (Mentec, K.L & Zhang, Q. 2017). By viewing heritage as a cultural process (Howard 2003) or as an 'intangible event' (Smith, L. 2015), the focus in heritage discourse transitions from defining what heritage is to understanding its function. This

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perspective highlights the process of heritage creation, encompassing collection, institutionalization, commodification, and protection, and prompts an examination of how contemporary societies engage with the past—what they choose to forget, remember, commemorate, fabricate, and who they recognize as the heirs (Harvey, D. 2001, 2008; Howard,P. 2003; Graham,B. Ashworth, G. and Tunbridge, J. 2005; Smith ,L.2006; Thouki, A. 2022).

Hewison strongly condemns this creation of a cultural heritage process, which he argues compromises historical truth and accuracy in favor of commercial values and popularization. He specifically critiques the proliferation of museums and related activities, asserting that instead of creating genuine heritage, society is manufacturing a commodified version that lacks a clear definition but is eagerly marketed for profit (Hewison, R. 1987). This perspective highlights the prioritization of commercial interests over authentic historical practice, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of heritage and its preservation in contemporary society (Mai Le, Q. 2021). This heritage-making process is usually influenced by the larger political, cultural, social, and economic dynamics of modern society. It involves recognizing, preserving, and promoting cultural assets to maintain and celebrate a community's history, identity, and traditions. Zhu and Su (2016), Song, and Sigley (2019) illustrated that heritagization occurs within a structured top-down management framework. In this system, authorities determine which elements of local 'authentic culture' are to be conserved and highlighted (Thouki, A. 2022).

In the last decade, Governments actively employed the heritagization process for increased tourism and cultural consumption. The heritagization of specific historic urban centers triggers significant alterations in the urban landscape, such as the

demolition of traditional architecture and the displacement of original inhabitants. While some criticize these processes, others cooperate in anticipation of engaging in the heritage tourism industry and the benefits it brings. Previous research has, however, consistently highlighted the inadequately conceptualized and imprecise understanding of the dynamic and multi-layered notion of heritagization. More thorough research is needed to understand the heritagization in the context of modern society, according to the rapidly changing relationship between the cultural heritage and today's time. Thus, more in-depth research is required in order to clarify the heritagization within the framework of contemporary society. (Mai Le, Q. 2021). Heritagization being a complex phenomenon, has long evaded the understanding of the researchers and since it is not quite possible to summarize the heritagization effect as a whole, more in-depth research is needed to understand the heritagization in the context of not just modern society but also the different regions applying it adequately to enhance their notion of cultural heritage knowingly or unknowingly.

Research on heritagization is also imperative due to its intricate nature and manifold implications. Heritagization can encompass various activities, from the preservation of historic sites to the revitalization of cultural practices, and it plays a vital role in shaping urban regeneration, cultural tourism, and cultural identity. Understanding this complex process is crucial for preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainable development, engaging communities, informing policy decisions, and addressing critiques. By exploring heritagization's global and local contexts, researchers can identify best practices, empower communities, and mitigate negative impacts such as displacement and commodification. Ultimately, research in this area contributes to the effective management and utilization of cultural heritage, ensuring its continued relevance and significance in contemporary society.

2.1.1 Heritagization: Reflection of the Past

Sánchez-Carretero (2013) highlights that "heritagization" is a term originating from French and European contexts (known as patrimonialisation), and is not commonly used in English, except in a derogatory sense as introduced by Kevin Walsh, who associated it with "the reduction of real places to tourist space" (Walsh, K. 1992: 4). Heritagization involves marking certain things or practices from the past as significant. The process's nature is influenced by who is doing the evaluation, their motivations, the intended audience, and the observers. By emphasizing heritage as an ongoing process rather than focusing solely on material objects, debates about what constitutes heritage become less relevant. The key question then becomes how and why any cultural aspect is deemed a "valued inheritance." Debates about the "realness" and authenticity of places also diminish, as the notion of inherent value is questioned. Assumptions regarding "The Heritage" – a concept that Stuart Hall (2005) criticized for attributing universality to white English heritage – are then reconsidered as just one of the various heritagization processes. What becomes particularly intriguing is how heritagization influences the historical and cultural contexts. It entails negotiation and sharing of heritage with others, where individual, local, or national perceptions of the past's value merge into collective expressions. The heritagization process holds emotional significance, reflecting underlying values that sustain social order, foster collective relationships, and instill a sense of the past (Ashley, S.L. 2014).

Heritage is often understood as a reflection of the past in the present. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995) defines heritage as "a mode of cultural production in the present that draws from the past." Similarly, heritagization is the contemporary process of constructing various pasts to address current needs, challenges, or situations. As the active process of cultural heritage, heritagization facilitates discussions and

perspectives on the legacy of heritage historically as heritage emerges from collective decisions on what is considered 'heritagizable,' involving debates, selections, conflicts, and compromises. Therefore, heritagization can be seen as a process of value establishment, assigning significance to places, individuals, objects, practices, histories, or ideas as legacies from the past. (Park, J.-K., Tae, H.-S., Ok, G. and Kwon, S.-Y. 2018).

Poria also links the term "heritagization" used in Anglo-Saxon studies to "patrimonialisation," referring to a similar "*past phenomenon*". It conjures up images of a process where heritage is utilized as a historic resource to accomplish specific social goals (Poria, Y. 2010; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). The phrase "patrimonialiSation," which was first used in Francophone studies, describes historically grounded initiatives and processes that turn locations, people, customs, and artifacts into a legacy that needs to be preserved, showcased, and conserved. The idea originated in the early 1990s with the work of geographers, historians, and anthropologists (Babelon, J, and Chastel, A. 1994; Davallon, J. 2002, 2006; Jeudy, H.P. 1994, 2001; Poulot, D. 1998; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Academics also link the process of patrimonialisation to the philosophy of the evolving past, pointing out that it is predicated on a linear, western, and open understanding of time that is commonly associated with European modernity. Similarly, they highlight the challenge of applying these ideas to non-Western nations, linking the globalization and processes of patrimonialisation to imperialism or neo-colonialism (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). There are several "patrimonialisation" actors, including academics, governmental institutions, civil officials, and members of civil society (Rautenberg, M. 2003; Tornatore, J.L. 2006; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013).

Harvey (2001), states that heritage is now viewed as a "verb" rather than a "noun," and this "patrimonialisation" is a cultural process. When comparing the processes of heritagization across different periods—before, during, and after colonization—considering the diverse geographical, cultural, sociopolitical, and economic contexts under European rule, both colonial and postcolonial settings emerge as compelling areas for investigation. Heritagization in this context also contributes to the creation, redefinition, or reinforcement of past territories that once existed (Veschambre, V. 2007; Di Méo, 2008; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Heritagization, hence is a legacy shaped by specific contexts and influenced by power-charged narratives and competing interests (Thouki, A. 2022).

The concept of heritagization, interpreted as the process of constructing or reflecting the past legacy, aligns with UNESCO's definition of cultural heritage transmission. According to UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural heritage is continuously recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, interactions with nature, and historical experiences. This heritage fosters a sense of identity and continuity, encouraging respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. This understanding of intangible cultural heritage has been globally recognized and disseminated since the adoption of the 2003 UNESCO Convention (Park, J.-K., Tae, H.-S., Ok, G., and Kwon, S.-Y. 2018).

2.1.2 Heritagization: Eastern and Western Context

As the term 'heritagization' surfaced in the late 20th century, describing a dynamic and context-dependent process wherein historical artifacts and sites are transformed into items for presentation and exhibition, this impacted the contemporary context globally (Harvey, D. 2008; Harrison, R. 2013; Thouki, A. 2022). By examining heritagization

as a cultural process of valuation utilized by different cities of different countries in the context of Eastern and Western ideology, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the functions and dynamics involved in these processes. Instead of viewing heritagization merely as an act of designating the heritage, it could be understood as a communicative and relationship-building practice that showcases the transformation of not just the urban district in question but also the factors revolving in the process, encompassing multiple objectives and subjectivities in the creation of heritage.

In her study "Restoring the Glory of Serampore: Colonial Heritage, Popular History, and Identity During Rapid Urban Development in West Bengal," Bente Wolff investigates how the heritagization process influences local Bengali inhabitants and officials to adopt and adapt perspectives, experiences, and practices concerning the Danish colonial heritage in Serampore, a town near Kolkata. Drawing from her participation in conservation efforts, Wolff notes the residents' strong sense of ownership and connection to these Danish colonial edifices. However, the delineation between 'us' and 'them' shifts according to spatial, temporal, and social factors, with various local groups perceiving entities such as British colonials, urban developers, Kolkata cosmopolitans, and Delhi authorities as 'heritage of others.'

Similarly, in her article "Walking in the Historic Neighborhoods of Beijing: Walking as an Emplaced Encounter with Heritage," Marina Svensson examines walking as a practice that facilitates heritage-making in a hutong neighborhood in Beijing. Concentrating on the Nanluoguxiang area in central Beijing, Svensson investigates its rapid transformation through heritagization, touristification, commercialization, and gentrification. She offers a theoretical, methodological, and practical examination of

how walking engages individuals with the evolving heritage landscape of these historic districts.

Astrid Møller-Olsen, in her work "The City is a Journey: Heritage and Memory in Zhu Tianxin's Novella The Old Capital," explores the concept of heritagization through literary analysis. Møller-Olsen examines themes of nostalgia, selective memory, and mnemonic erasure within the urban context and heritage practices in Taipei. The novella illustrates the protagonist's growing disconnection from the past due to forgetting, loss, and material erasure. Møller-Olsen interprets the protagonist's narrative as a nostalgic effort to reconstruct a vanished city, creating a fictional city through fragmented heritagization. Similarly, Kelvin E.Y. Low investigates how everyday heritage in Singapore is understood through sensory and memory-embodied experiences. Beyond the preservation of buildings and landmarks, certain routes are designated as heritage trails. These buildings and trails acquire symbolic significance through heritagization processes that package and present heritage initiatives.

While many colonized nations in Asia use heritagization to evoke positive nostalgic sentiments, South Korea's approach to its Japanese colonial heritage in Gunsan has aimed to stimulate counter-nostalgia. Instead of drawing on personal memories or straightforward romanticization, Gunsan's heritagization has inadvertently fostered a sense of "*imagined nostalgia*". This is not rooted in an authentic representation of colonial Gunsan but rather in a recreated version. For tourists unfamiliar with the city's colonial history, Gunsan presents an entryway to a fantasized or reconstructed past that appears exotic. The city's economy suffered a significant setback with the failure of the Saemangeum Seawall Project, a land reclamation initiative intended for urban regeneration (Yi, C. and Ryu,J. 2015). Faced with economic decline and a shrinking

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population, the Gunsan Municipal Government opted to rebrand the city as a modern urban center through colonial heritagization (Lee, H. 2021). Gunsan revitalized its colonial architecture, turning empty spaces into guesthouses and cafes in Japanese colonial style, promoting its gastro-venture course (Song, C. et al 2019). With the slogan "Time travel back to the 1930s," tourist numbers soared from 220,000 in 2013 to 1 million in 2016, marking it as a successful urban rebranding in South Korea. Blurring the lines between "colonial" history and "modern" lifestyles, visitors in Gunsan often feel they are in a "foreign country" observing different customs from the past (Hartley, L.P. 1953, Lowenthal, D. 1985). In Gunsan, Heritagization relies on nostalgia, defined as a 'yearning for what is absent in a transformed present,' possesses both the power to rejuvenate our connection with the past and a critical capacity to challenge the intentions of those who deploy it (Angé and Berliner 2015, 1–5; Thouki, A. 2022). Here, visitors enjoy a form of imagined nostalgia, deriving pleasure from a past they haven't personally experienced (anemoia). The term *"imagined nostalgia,"* as highlighted in art and psychology, accurately describes this indirect nostalgic feeling evoked through imagination (Brigard 2018; Cronberg 2009). Heritagization aspects of Gunsan's colonial period can mislead visitors due to fabricated narratives, risking the distortion of its genuine history through over-commercialization. This creates an imagined nostalgia for an exotic past, unrelated to its actual Japanese colonial history (Lee, Hyun. 2021).

Another State-led heritagization initiative was undertaken in Beichuan and Wenchuan Counties, regions predominantly inhabited by the Qiang ethnic minority, following the devastating 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in China. These initiatives included preserving certain destroyed landscapes as earthquake relic sites and heritagizing the former Beichuan County seat entirely for the memorial, economic, and patriotic

education purposes. However, this approach caused emotional conflict among locals still grappling with loss and trauma. Additionally, Qiang cultural practices were hastily designated as national and international intangible cultural heritage, and reconstructed Qiang villages were transformed into heritage tourism destinations. The intertwining of promoting Qiang's intangible cultural heritage and designating disaster ruins as heritage sites reflects both implemented projects and the experiences of local residents. Despite these efforts, Beichuan County's economic recovery, which relied on disaster heritagization, did not appear to foster sustainable economic and socio-psychological recovery (Mentec, K.L & Zhang, Q. 2017). The urgent rescue, preservation, and heritagization of Qiang culture post-earthquake were primarily driven by top-down, state- and scholar-led heritagization initiatives. This resulted in the swift inclusion of several Qiang cultural practices in both the Chinese and UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. However, these heritagization efforts failed to address the preservation and revival of the Qiang language, which many villagers deem unnecessary due to its limited contemporary usage. This underscores the selective nature of heritagization, wherein certain aspects are prioritized over others. The reliance on authoritative reshaping and interpretation of cultural practices in heritagization initiatives poses challenges in authentically 'recovering' a culture. While state-led and UNESCO programs aimed to recognize the value of Qiang heritage, they overlooked the significance of cultural practices and the accumulated knowledge and skills, instead reducing them to commodified tourism attractions and symbols of state power (Mentec, K.L & Zhang, Q. 2017).

In the West, heritagization measures were adopted in different contexts. For instance, during the communist regime from 1945 to 1989, efforts were made to adapt Poland's cultural heritage to form compatible with communist ideology rather than depriving

the population of it. The regime allowed churches to operate as long as they aligned with party policies. However, the regime's geopolitical shift westward prompted a revisionist approach to history, resulting in the "1000 Years of History" project. This initiative aimed to portray Poland as an ancient entity with a continuous history, necessitating the selective deletion, highlighting, and reinterpretation of historical events to foster heritagization (Lukowski and Zawadski 2001; Snyder 2004; Zamoyski 2005; Johnsson 2017). Similarly, a historical village in Portugal "Castelo Rodrigo", had heritagization process, which was significantly influenced by both the state and residents, with the primary initiative originating from the Portuguese government. This top-down approach, supported by funding from the European Union, was implemented between 1994 and 2006 to revitalize the social and economic structure of the villages through cultural tourism, aiming to leverage the economic potential of heritage (Graham, B. et al., 2000, pp. 17, 20-22). However, the heritagization process led to tensions between historic conservationists and residents due to differing perspectives on time and approaches to intervention in the space. The urban plan aimed to establish an aesthetically harmonious historic tourist destination devoid of architectural inconsistencies and contemporary elements. The objective was to safeguard the village from the encroachment of modernity and preserve the esteemed architectural heritage of the past. Consequently, within the heritagization efforts, initiatives focused on the restoration and uniformity of facades and roofs of the village houses, along with the removal of any perceived modern alterations. This approach led to a cessation of the historical evolution of private architecture, as historic conservationists favored a static and selective portrayal of the past (Silva, L.2011).

The scenario can be aptly elucidated through Herzfeld's (1991) examination of historic conservation in Rethemnos, Greece. Herzfeld posits that historic conservationists

adhere to a "monumental" conception of time, characterized by technical and bureaucratic considerations that overlook individuals' lived experiences, emotions, and attachments to spaces. Conversely, residents hold a "social" conception of time, wherein spatial elements are intertwined with their daily routines, memories, and identities. As Herzfeld (1991) and Fabre (2010) suggest, processes of monumentalization redefine the social dynamics within and around the monument by subjecting it to new legal and administrative frameworks and introducing novel forms of intervention in the space. The global trend of heritagization extends beyond Castelo Rodrigo, with similar efforts to enhance folk traditional architecture evident in other regions both within the country and abroad (Silva, L. 2011).

In Canada, Matt James (2013) critiques the heritagization efforts endorsed by Canadian Heritage, characterizing them as neoliberal strategies aimed at regulating and disciplining citizens and their diverse cultures. He argues that the nation-building and social cohesion components of heritage are essentially hegemonic processes. Heritagization is depicted as a policy and practice that converts the inequalities of difference into a more palatable and powerless cultural representation of diversity. This inclination to manipulate heritage into a superficial feel-good narrative within authorized institutional discourses has been critically examined in academic circles (Smith, L. 2006). Furthermore, Bains characterizes the recounting of the past as a project of "recovered history," focusing on the colonized subjectivities that had been overlooked and remained "untold, unheard, or unseen" in the dominant Canadian narrative (Bains, 2013: 174). The evolving process of heritagization at the site of the first Sikh temple in Canada is not merely about the established practices of government heritage designation and protection, nor is it solely about a local community's efforts to reclaim and revalue their history. In its latest form, heritagization is extending its

reach into immigrant-led heritage sites through external governmental processes. These processes employ a new approach characterized by affective and emotional rhetoric to promote a specifically authorized heritage discourse, a concept defined by Smith (2006), which could be termed "expedient remembrance." In this context, the politics of recognition within Canada's multicultural society has gained an additional layer of complexity and risk. This exemplifies a recurring issue in heritagization when employed by dominant entities to achieve a social objective: the process serves to "*historicize*" and "*culturalized*" contentious areas, relegating them to the distant past and thereby bypassing unresolved contemporary issues (Ashley, S.L. 2014).

The heritagization process in Istanbul is explored by Ipek Tureli, particularly in the historic districts. It involves the development of expert visions for conserving the city's wooden vernacular architecture, signifying the Ottoman cultural milieu. Initial efforts by French planners in the 1930s and 1940s, such as Henri Prost's proposal for an archaeology park, were not implemented due to diplomatic and funding challenges. Later, international organizations like UNESCO and the European Council, along with local experts, proposed various preservation initiatives from the 1970s onwards, focusing on areas like Sultanahmet and Topkapı. These efforts included restoring neighborhoods to their nineteenth-century state and repurposing historic districts for tourism. Despite modernization and urban renewal projects led by the government, often criticized for gentrification and loss of authenticity, these initiatives reflect a complex interplay between preserving cultural heritage and modern development. The heritagization efforts, influenced by such standards and local dynamics, aim to integrate heritage conservation with socio-economic development, albeit with varying degrees of success and criticism (Türeli, I. 2014).

Similarly, Van de Kamp, Linda (2019) elaborates how the heritagization of post-industrial Amsterdam North involves attaching cultural value to former industrial sites, facilitated by various agents including urban planners and politicians. This process revitalizes derelict industrial areas, presenting them as urban heritage, while simultaneously acknowledging both tangible and intangible values associated with the industrial past. Despite its potential for positive community-building, such heritagization can also exacerbate social inequalities and tensions, especially when focusing on specific groups like the white working class and neglecting the diverse migrant population. The discourse of heritage can be manipulated by different stakeholders for varying objectives, leading to a complex interplay of community inclusion and exclusion in the urban regeneration of Amsterdam North (Van de Kamp, L. 2019).

Jennie Sjöholm elaborates on the phenomenon of heritagization through a case study of Kiruna's urban transformation, focusing on built heritage. In the 1980s, a heritagization process in Kiruna designated significant parts of the central town's built environments as culturally important heritage, ascribing meaning, and heritage values to previously unrecognized environments. Historical buildings and environments were then officially recognized as heritage. During the urban planning process, re-heritagization occurred through reaffirmation, validating the town's already designated heritage as culturally significant. However, there were few indications of Re-heritagization through reinterpretation or heritagization through addition. De-heritagization also occurred, notably influenced by a 2011 agreement between the local authority and the mining company Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag (LKAB), which determined which buildings' relocations would be financed. Differing roles and priorities among key stakeholders in the urban planning process significantly impacted

heritagization. (Sjöholm, J. 2016) This case study exemplifies the Western context of heritagization, illustrating how built environments are reinterpreted, reaffirmed, or de-heritagized based on evolving cultural values and stakeholder priorities.

Similarly, Mai Le Quyen illustrates heritagization as a creation of heritage in Vietnam, focusing on the complex interactions among actors at global, national, and local levels. Her study aims to analyze the community's role within the heritagization process, characterizing it as an ongoing transnational phenomenon with three intertwining phases and two co-evolved facets. These phases, based on Di Giovine's (2009) framework, are isolation, idealization, and valorization. Isolation involves the de-contextualization of selected properties, elevating these localized items to the global sphere and imbuing them with new values according to global standards. Idealization refers to the national state's effort to incorporate these values into national narratives, thereby assigning new functions to the heritage. Finally, valorization reintegrates the World Heritage designation into the broader societal context, aiming to secure acceptance from both domestic and international audiences. This phased approach highlights the dynamic and multi-layered nature of heritagization in Vietnam. (Mai le, 2021).

The table below illustrates the research previously done on heritagization specifically and the various cities and countries it was conducted in. The table categorizes them by the eastern and western regions.

Table 1: Research on Heritagization Categorized by Regions in Yearly Order

No	Research Title	Author	Case study	Region	Date	Research
1	The 'Heritagization' of Konso Cultural Landscape	Awoke Amzaye Assoma	Konso cultural landscape Ethiopia.	Africa	2010	Masters Thesis
2	Folk architecture heritagization in rural Portugal	Luís Silva	Castelo Rodrigo, Portugal	Europe	2011	Article
3	"Heritage-scape" or "Heritage-scapes"?Critical Considerations on a Concept« Paysage patrimonial » ou « paysages patrimoniaux » ?Réflexion sur l'usage d'un concept	Laurence Gillot, Irène Maffi and Anne-Christine Trémon	-	European context	2014	Article
4	Re-telling, Re-cognition, Re-stitution: Sikh Heritagization in Canada	Susan LT Ashley	The Abbotsford Gurdwara, Canada	Canada/ The America	2014	Article
5	Heritagisation of the 'Ottoman/Turkish House' in the 1970s: Istanbul-based Actors, Associations and their Networks.	Türeli, I.	Istanbul, Turkey	Europe/ Asia	2014	
6	Heritagisation, Re-Heritagisation and	Jennie Sjöholm	Kiruna, Sweden	Europe	2016	PhD Thesis

	De-Heritagisation of Built Environments The Urban Transformation of Kiruna, Sweden					
7	Described, Inscribed, Written Off: Heritagisation as (Dis)connection	Salemink, O	Vietnam	Asia	2016	Book: Chapter 9- Connected and Disconnected in Vietnam:
8	Heritagization of disaster ruins and ethnic culture in China: Recovery plans after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake	Katiana Le Mentec, Qiaoyun Zhang	Beichuan and Wenchuan, China	East Asia	2017	Article
9	The value of Authenticity in Heritagization: An exploratory case study on Dubai's Historic District	AlNood Bin AlShaikh	Dubai, UAE	The Gulf Region	2017	Masters Research
10	Concrete Memories and Sensory Pasts: Everyday Heritage and the Politics of Nationhood. Pacific Affairs. 90. 275-295.	Low, KelvinE.Y	Singapore	Asia	2017	Article

	10.5509/201790227 5.					
11	Impact of Cultural Heritage on Tourists. The Heritagization Process	Per Åke Nilsson*	Transylva nia in Romania, Western Pomerania in Poland and the Sweden.	Europe	2018	Article
12	The heritagization of post-industrial re-development and social inclusion in Amsterdam	Linda van de Kamp	Amsterda m, Netherlan ds	Europe	2019	Article
13	Mechanisms, actors, and impacts of the touristification of a tourism periphery: the Saint-Ouen flea market, Paris	Gravari- Barbas, M. and Ja cquot, S.	Paris, France	Europe	2019	Article
14	Restoring the glory of Serampore. Colonial heritage, popular history, and identity during rapid urban development in West Bengal	Bente Wolff	Kolkata, India	South East, Asia	2020	Article
15	The City is a Journey: heritage and Memory in Zhu Tianxin's	Astrid Møller- Olsen	historical city of Taipei, Taiwan	East, Asia	2020	Article

	novella The Old Capital					
16	Walking in the historic neighborhoods of Beijing: walking as an embodied encounter with heritage and urban developments	Marina Svensson	Beijing, China	South East, Asia	2020	Article
17	Tales of Heritagization.	Mai Le, Q.	Vietnam	East, Asia	2021	PhD Thesis
18	Heritagization of religious sites: in search of visitor agency and the dialectics underlying heritage planning assemblages	Alexis Thouki	Religious sites in general		2022	Article
19	Loss in Translation. The Heritagization of Catholic Monasteries	Wouter Kock	De Heilige Driehoek, Netherlands	,Europe	2023	Book
20	Heritagization of Cooch Behar Town from a Critical Perspective	Partha Das, Roshan Mahato, Sourav Adhikary	Cooch Behar,India	South Asia	2024	Chapter

2.1.3 Heritagization as City Branding

In recent decades, the beautification of cities has evolved into a distinct industry. With the traditional economic foundations of many cities weakening, tourism and cultural consumption have been embraced as means to revitalize and prevent economic decline. Consequently, cities are transformed into attractive destinations through revamped waterfronts, major events, and impressive cultural venues. A key approach in this urban management strategy is heritagization, which not only generates revenue but also connects the city to broader, often globalized, symbolic economic networks. (David, P. 2016). As Lynch (1960) states, urban continuity serves to uphold the entire notion of relations in addition to promoting urban images with "recognizable, stable, and pleasant meaning" (pp. 42–43). The discontinuity with heritage has caused a great deal of social, economic, physical, and environmental concerns, as well as an identity crisis, disorientation, and dehumanization of cities. These effects are aptly described by Hahn & Simonis (1991): Cities are now seen as both a cause and a symbol of the negligent handling of fragile and frightening environmental products. The conversion of raw resources into waste and pollutants has become an independent process, and key aspects of human behavior are ignored in urban design, leading to serious socio-psychological issues. As a result, cities have come to represent the loss of their heritage and the disregard for organic, cultural identity. Respect for local customs, heritage and characteristics, however, is crucial for the establishment of a symbiotic interaction between humans and their environment. As distinctive qualities are different so it should be with cities, with urban planning strategies (Boussaa, D. 2000).

According to Turok (Citation2004, p. 1), in order to encourage "resurgence," policymakers have been incorporating the potential of such distinguishing features—such as urban branding or city branding—into their regeneration plans. In order to

"communicate essential features of a product, such as quality, reliability and utility," he continues, "city branding has become a business strategy" (p. 12). The ways in which globalization, postmodernism, and modernism have impacted the urban environment in a number of emerging and developed countries, and cities are crucial to understanding current urban and cultural heritage trends in planning. (Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). There has been a growing readiness to create plans to deal with the quick issues of urban growth while maintaining these cities' heritage and aesthetics.

Theoretically, branding a city connects urban visuals with aspects of its historical and cultural character, much like branding a product does. Cities are branded as the "urban imaginary" of a certain location is shaped by a variety of emotions and views regarding the cityscape, image, and urban life. City branding pertains to enhancing the perception or image of the urban fabric by promoting the places' images through representations, communication, and marketing to the rest of the urban context on measurable and tangible assets like physical infrastructure, location, public services, and heritage (Helmy, M 2008). A growing number of cities are implementing comprehensive urban redevelopment strategies and city enhancement initiatives. The primary objective of these programs is to city branding, creating a new image to promote and market these cities effectively (Zaidan, E. 2016). With respect to selling and characterizing a city, imagery of the heritage underscores the perceptions of the city to outsiders and, at the same time, to its inhabitants, with regard to their tangible and intangible cultural heritage traits, which are central to the foundation of city's or district's planning (Stephenson, ML.2013; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). As a result, most cities have a range of cultural assets that are being used as branding elements. To design a

strategy to promote the city, additional cultural assets are taken into consideration in addition to heritage structures and history (Riza, M. 2015).

While extensive analysis has been conducted on the top-down, often corporate-driven strategies that transform cities into centers for the consumption of cultural heritage, it is only in recent years that anthropologists have begun to closely examine how urban spaces engage in heritagization processes through practices that extend beyond mere consumption (Picard & Leite, 2016). Hence, Heritagization has emerged as a city branding strategy that emphasizes these traits, which correspond to the symbols illustrated in the tangible and intangible aspects of the city, such as monuments, buildings, roads, habits, institutions, and stereotypes related to the attitudes of residents, among other factors (Hague and Jenkins, 2004). These factors must be distinctly highlighted to attract prospective investors, tourists, and local residents (Stephenson, ML. 2013; Zaidan, E & Abulibdeh, A. 2020). For instance, Oii (2007) demonstrates the intentional curation of Denmark's image to highlight attractions that align with Copenhagen's branding, such as the Little Mermaid, Zoo, and Tivoli, thus promoting the country's overall image (Fig 2). Similarly, museums and heritage sites in Croatia serve to solidify the nation's illustrious history following its separation from Turkey (Massey et al., 2003). In South Korea, festivals, streets, and museums serve as symbolic tools for reconstructing and conveying heritage images (Park, H.Y. 2010). These examples provided illustrate how heritagization is increasingly utilized as a strategic tool to promote and preserve the image of historic regions or cities (Fig 3). In recent years, there has been a notable trend towards recognizing the importance of cultural heritage in fostering a sense of belonging, attracting tourism, and stimulating economic development for the cities seeking progress. Thus, cities have embarked on heritagization initiatives by not just restoring and revitalizing historical sites,

monuments, and traditions but also by creating opportunities for cultural promotion and cultural tourism. Heritagization as a branding strategy also involves the celebration of cultural festivals, events, and rituals that highlight the heritage for the residents and the visitors and thus ensure that it is portrayed as best as possible for the city's tourism policies in alignment with the city branding.

Figure 2: Tivoli Gardens Copenhagen. Source- Nordic Experience

Figure 3: Gyeongamdong Railroad Town is a Decommissioned Railroad and Today It is One of the Most Popular Sights in Gunsan City, South Korea. Source- Koreatravelpost

2.1.4 Heritagization as Cultural Tourism

The prominence of heritage in regional studies has led to the establishment of a distinct scholarly discipline known as heritage geography (Graham, B. Ashworth, J. & Curnbridge, G. 2000). According to this field, cultural heritage assets should be integrated into the market (Hornyák, E. 2001). Cultural economics represents another significant research area that examines the economic functions and opportunities related to culture (Towse, R. 1997). However, the relationship between culture and economics is a complex system (Danielzyk, R. & Wood, G.2001). In a broader context, factors such as geography, economy, and marketing opportunities contribute to the development of culture-based tourism. In 1999, Pine and Gilmore introduced their concept of "The Experience Economy," proposing that we have transitioned from an era focused on raw materials, goods, and services to one centered around experiences (Molnár, E. & Sáriné, C. 2010). They argue that contemporary consumers are not just

seeking new products, but more importantly, novel emotions and sensations. Consumption has become personalized, extending beyond fulfilling basic needs to encompass considerations of ethics, environment, and culture (Bujdosó, Z. et al., 2015).

Cultural tourism seeks to balance economic benefits with the preservation of cultural heritage. It offers a distinct tourism experience aimed at fostering appreciation for preserving historical values and enhancing identity through cultural heritage and respect for the natural and built environment (Rácz, J. 1998). "Cultural tourism" spans a spectrum of meanings, from broader definitions emphasizing uniqueness and effective marketing to narrower ones centered on cultural exploration. Broadly, it involves tourism that satisfies intellectual interests, such as experiencing authentic local products. Conversely, a narrower view sees it as travel motivated by cultural exploration and participation in cultural activities (Michalkó, 2004). Boyd (2002) contends that the growing trend of cultural consumption by tourists, coupled with a tendency to blur the distinction between tourists and other visitors, poses challenges in defining cultural tourism or culturally-motivated tourism. Boyd emphasizes that in tourism, the term "culture" has expanded to encompass not only cultural assets passed down through generations but also those that can be presented as tourism products for marketing purposes. This includes depicting the ways of life in various geographic areas, the narratives of the people, their traditions and crafts, beliefs, and other elements that have contributed to shaping their lifestyle (Boyd, 2002; AlShaikh, A. 2017). Hence, nowadays's significant portion of global travel involves experiences related to cultural heritage, with millions of people worldwide visiting cultural sites, heritage events, and historic locations annually (Timothy , D.J. 2011).

The World Tourism Organization defines such cultural tourism as "the travel of individuals to cultural sites outside their usual place of residence, aiming to acquire fresh knowledge and experiences to fulfill their cultural interests" (WTO, 1985). Subsequently, tourism was viewed as a component of a global economic development initiative, effectively commodifying heritage to varying extents (Cohen, E. 1988, Ritzer, G. and Liska, A. 1997). Cultural tourism integrates economic gains with heritage preservation, fostering appreciation for historical values and bolstering cultural identity. It encompasses a spectrum of interpretations, ranging from increased visitor count to effective marketing of cultural assets. Cultural tourism is praised for its role in preserving culture and promoting cultural identity. Furthermore, it promotes the generation of novel cultural experiences, enhancing the cultural repertoire and leisure possibilities within the area, ultimately contributing to the phenomenon of heritagization.

Heritagization, as a concept, involves adjusting the utilization of cultural heritage to project favorable images for political governance or tourism opportunities. The deliberate influence is central to the concept of heritagization, wherein authorities, often aided by their own tourism sectors, determine the presentation and interpretation of cultural heritage to reinforce a specific tourist agenda (Nilsson, P.Å. 2018). This interpretation, suggesting that it is subjective and depends on the viewer's perception, provides tourism stakeholders and administrators with opportunities to leverage cultural tourism in order to advance the concept of heritagization. In this context, heritagization is positioned in a way that elicits concerns. There are fears that it will lose its intrinsic values and transform into mere commodities, serving the economy of organized leisure for tourism purposes (Hayes, D. and Macleod, N. 2007). Similarly, Bernbeck (2013) questions the concept of heritagization as an inadequate trend in the

conceptualization of heritage. He argues that heritagization is often perceived as a form of tourism production, which overlooks its broader implications and reduces heritage management to a mere strategy for tourism development (AlShaikh, A. 2017).

The primary focus has largely centered on how heritage provides individual tourists with a sense of existential authenticity to contemplate (Cohen, E. 1988; Atkinson, A. 1991). This representation of the authentic past, perceived and consumed in the present, leads to certain complexities as achieving a truly accurate perception of the past through cultural heritage is unattainable (Weaver, D. 2011). Inadequate or selective knowledge of history, coupled with ignorance, can result in an incomplete and biased tourism experience (Wang, N. 1999; Cole, S. 2007). This can be strategically employed to present tourists with a desired image, often portraying a destination as unique, special, or even atypical (Walsh, K. 1992; Majkut, P. 2008). The decreased concern among tourists regarding authenticity increases the probability that the interpretation of heritagization will be shaped by fabricated textual representations of replicated authenticity (McGregor, A. 2000; Nilsson, P.Å. 2018). The assumption is that tourists seek encounters with the unfamiliar, such as authenticity, irrespective of its actual presence. There's a notion that tourists may not always prioritize authenticity. If they don't, there's a higher chance they'll be swayed by simulated authenticity falling victim to heritagization (Nilsson, P.Å. 2018).

 In this context of incomplete and selective historical understanding, heritagization is often shaped by a deliberate effort to portray objects in a favorable light for the enhancement of cultural tourism. In response to this post-modern perspective, there is a growing assertion that the distinction between what is real or false, original or replicated, reality or symbol becomes irrelevant to the tourism industry and thus puts

the credibility of heritagization in question, specifically when it is implemented on a wider scale, such as the historic districts as part of the urban regeneration process.

2.1.5 Summary of Heritagization

Heritagization is a process that involves transforming objects, places, and practices into cultural heritage, assigning them evolving values. While it enhances tourism and offers economic benefits, it also risks over-commercialization and cultural commodification. Scholars like Walsh and Harrison have highlighted concerns that this process may prioritize creating tourist attractions over preserving authentic heritage. They argue that heritagization often turns practical entities into items for display, which can lead to the degradation of the original heritage.

This process is influenced by socio-economic and ideological factors, often involving state control with limited citizen participation. Critics argue that heritagization compromises historical truth for commercial gain, leading to a commodified version of heritage. The process is usually top-down, where authorities decide which aspects of local culture are preserved and emphasized, potentially sidelining authentic cultural practices in favor of those deemed profitable or marketable.

Heritagization strategically utilizes cultural heritage to enhance the historical legacy or branding of cities and sites, often driven by authorities and tourism sectors to serve specific agendas. While this process can revive neglected cultural heritage and create a nostalgic appeal, it also risks reducing heritage management to a mere tourism strategy. The focus on aesthetics and romanticized histories may increase tourism and cultural value but might compromise the deeper cultural significance, turning heritage into a commercialized product for leisure activities.

2.2 Heritagization in Urban Regeneration

2.2.1 Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration is a comprehensive process aimed at revitalizing urban areas by enhancing economic opportunities, infrastructure, housing, and community well-being. It involves various stakeholders, including government bodies, private developers, and local communities, working collaboratively to transform and renew urban spaces. Defining 'urban regeneration' and the interventions and policies it encompasses is complex. Broadly, it refers to significant efforts aimed at improving deteriorated urban areas, often interchangeably termed as 'urban renewal,' 'urban revitalization,' or 'urban renaissance,' although nuanced differences exist between them. In British English, 'urban regeneration' has become the commonly adopted term for similar interventions referred to by various expressions in other European languages, such as stedelijke vernieuwing, renouvellement/renovation/regeneration urbaine, stadterneuerung, renovación urbana, etc (De Magalhaes, C. 2015). Since its inception as a separate policy domain in the 1990s up to the present day, urban regeneration has evolved to represent a realm of public policy focused on revitalizing localities where economic activity has declined, social functions or inclusion has deteriorated, and environmental quality has been compromised (Couch, C, Fraser, C. and Percey, S. 2003).

Therefore, the process of reviving and enhancing urban areas that have deteriorated or fallen into disrepair is referred to as urban regeneration.The term 'Regeneration' is often associated primarily with economic development, overlooking the local circumstances that necessitate renewal. However, urban regeneration, also referred to urban renewal or urban redevelopment, poses significant challenges for both

academics and practitioners in the fields of urban planning and design (Shubbar, F & Boussaa, D. 2022). It encompasses a range of complex issues requiring a comprehensive theoretical understanding and practical action to address social, economic, physical, and environmental problems in dynamic city environments (Lak, A., Gheitasi, M. & Timothy, D.J. 2019). Urban regeneration strategies often involve the rehabilitation of heritage areas and historic buildings, which play a crucial role in revitalizing urban spaces by emphasizing cultural identity, creating a sense of place, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging among residents (Shubbar, F & Boussaa, D. 2022). Historic urban quarters, notable for both their cultural heritage and unique urban patterns, are at risk of losing their traditional character and identity unless appropriate measures are implemented to ensure their preservation and continuity (Doratli, N., Hoşkara, S. Ö., Vehbi, B. O., & Fasli, M. (2007). To preserve our historic districts and make them more habitable, urban regeneration is crucial. It entails preserving green areas, historic structures, and other natural elements to safeguard heritage.

People are generally becoming more accepting of regeneration, and they acknowledge that the preserved environment is the tangible embodiment of the significance of the past. Culture plays a crucial role in urban regeneration, fostering a sense of place and belonging among residents. As cities evolve, urban regeneration along with the preservation of heritage and historic sites also preserves the citizen' sense of identity and promotes continuity (Boussaa, D 2000). Hence, urban regeneration efforts are essential for creating vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive urban environments for preserving the cultural heritage for the past, present, and future generations.

2.2.2 Culture-Led Urban Regeneration

With the growing significance of cultural and knowledge-based activities in the urban economies of developed nations, "culture-led" regeneration emerged as a popular strategy. This approach was influenced by the success stories of interventions in cities like Bilbao and Barcelona, as well as landmark projects such as the Tate Modern in London, along with similar endeavors elsewhere (Evans, G. 2005) (Fig 4 & 5). Many of these initiatives centered on the development of flagship cultural assets aimed at altering the perception of a location at both national and international levels. The anticipated regenerative impacts included increased levels of tourism, and a larger resident population drawn to the new cultural amenities. In the face of increasing urban homogenization driven by globalization, the distinguishing factor for cities lies in the preservation of their regional customs and cultural heritage (Jones, G.A and Varley, A. 1999). Evans stressed the benefits of regeneration efforts in historic urban centers while urging various governments to implement culture-led urban policies (Evans, G,2005).

Figure 4: Bilbao Was An Industrial Town Before Urban Regeneration. Source- Euskadi.Eus

Figure 5: Bilbao Transformation After Urban Regeneration Revived the Declined City. Source-Cunard

Cultural-led urban regeneration emphasizes leveraging a city's cultural assets and heritage to drive economic, social, and physical renewal. This approach involves preserving historic landmarks, supporting local artists and cultural entrepreneurs, establishing cultural districts, organizing events, investing in cultural institutions, and integrating public art into urban design. By prioritizing culture, cities aim to create vibrant, inclusive communities that help them transform their neglected and deteriorating historic districts. Cultural-led aspects foster urban regeneration to better harness the power of culture to revitalize urban spaces and create engaging public environments.

2.2.3 Urban Regeneration and the Dynamics of Heritagization

In order to better understand the term urban regeneration within the context of heritagization, first we need to explore the "space or place" in the context of the term urban. Tuan (1977) proposed that places are fundamentally "centers of meaning" shaped by human experiences, gaining significance over time in people's lives. However, there is growing evidence that urban regeneration efforts in heritage settings

have diminished the meaningfulness of transformed or newly constructed places. Arefi (1999) suggests that alongside the commodification of place, globalization (Aleya, A.H. 2012) has fostered standardized and inauthentic urban environments, contributing to a sense of placelessness. This disconnect between physical landscapes and the meaningful contexts they once held spans across broader physical, cultural, and emotional dimensions. Relph (1976) characterizes placelessness as an environment lacking significant places and a corresponding disregard for their importance. This trend poses a threat to the quality of public spaces within cities (Oktay, D. 2012). Given the impact on the identities of numerous local urban areas, there is a pressing need to approach places in their specific contexts and comprehend the intricate factors that contribute to regeneration (Ujang, N. and Zakariya, K. 2015).

As an integral factor of urban regeneration involves recognizing that the decline, whether it be physical, social, or cultural, is systemic and will not naturally reverse itself through the normal processes of urban evolution and adaptation. In such cases, intentional action by the government through policy and direct intervention is necessary, as market forces alone are inadequate to initiate and guarantee adaptation or transformation (De Magalhaes, C. 2015). While heritage and urban regeneration are undeniably intertwined, simplistic assumptions about their relationship may obscure the diverse aspirations of various stakeholders. According to Timothy (2011) and Amen & Nia (2020), heritage refers to elements from the past that are repurposed or utilized in present-day contexts to serve various objectives and public policy goals.

Thus, urban regeneration serves as a mechanism for improving and mobilizing both tangible and intangible aspects of heritage (Shubbar, F & Boussaa, D. 2022). Urban regeneration focuses on more than just restoring physical structures; it aims to enhance

the quality of life for people living in historic areas. Economic prosperity, driven by factors such as trade, job opportunities, and overall growth, often prompts people to seek better living conditions, moving away from neglected or impractical buildings to more comfortable surroundings. Beyond its economic benefits, urban regeneration plays a crucial role in promoting social and aesthetical image (Boussaa, D 2015). Such regeneration serves as a compelling example of an action that manufactures a historic image in the historic district (Hadjri, K. & Boussaa, D. 2007). The aesthetic representation of historic districts is often altered to such an extent that it results in the commodification of these areas, ultimately falling victim to the heritagization process.

The concept of heritagization driving regeneration is now pervasive throughout the world. Cities that value their cultural history equip themselves with the tools they need to better prepare for the future and to recreate an idealized past. Therefore, urban regeneration can revitalize the area economically while contributing in enhancing the it's representation (Boussaa, D. 2018). Economic revival through such aesthetical representations and Tourism infrastructure upgrades the place and provide opportunities for the government as well as the local inhibiting community. Thus the implementation of heritagization within the proper context can be vital element in ensuring the successful dynamics of urban regeneration.

2.2.4 Obstacles in the Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration issues are often categorized as "wicked issues" in literature due to their complexity and persistence. These problems defy simple solutions and involve multiple dimensions that cross the jurisdictions of various government agencies. They cannot be addressed solely by a single powerful governmental actor and require the involvement of diverse stakeholders beyond the government (De Magalhaes, C. 2015). The multifaceted nature of the issues addressed by urban regeneration interventions

underscores the complexity of the objectives these interventions aim to accomplish. These objectives are characterized by tensions, not only between differing perspectives on what constitutes a better city or urban area, but also between varying perceptions of the significance of different dimensions in achieving the desired outcomes (Turok, I. 1992, Swyngedouw, E. et al 2002). The nature of knowledge required for effective urban regeneration is also a critical issue. Due to the intricate and multifaceted nature of the challenges urban regeneration faces, no single entity is likely to possess all the necessary knowledge or capability to solve these problems independently. Urban regeneration theory and practice emphasize the importance of partnerships involving various stakeholders, including local authorities, the private sector, voluntary organizations, and communities. Participation, collaboration, and co-production of policy outcomes are recognized as essential for both efficiency and equity across urban regeneration literature (Harding, A.1998; Ball, M. and Maginn, P. 2005).

However, these different stakeholders vary in their capacity to articulate and integrate knowledge into a cohesive set of objectives. Additionally, conflicting objectives among stakeholders are common, as they may anticipate different benefits from an urban regeneration intervention (De Magalhaes, C. 2015). These objectives can include economic constraints, lack of funding, community opposition, environmental concerns, infrastructural deficiencies, and social issues such as gentrification and displacement. Overcoming these obstacles requires careful planning, collaboration between stakeholders, innovative strategies, and often significant financial investment. Addressing these challenges effectively is essential for achieving successful urban regeneration projects.

Furthermore, groups with disparate sociocultural backgrounds hold diverse and evolving perspectives on geography and historical identity. When these shifting meanings conflict with immutable physical forms, it can lead to significant issues. Regeneration should serve as a crucial mechanism for preserving both individual and collective identities amid growing cultural globalization and the imposition of cultural identities on distinct locations (Hubbard, P. 1996). Recognizable artifacts that reflect common cultural values contribute more significantly to the formation of a sense of place than unfamiliar or foreign objects. Therefore, urban regeneration must be viewed as a major driver for preserving and reviving sociocultural identity. Hence, after tackling all such obstacles, then only urban regeneration projects can contribute to more vibrant, inclusive, and enhanced urban quarters or cities. By addressing the multifaceted challenges of urban decay and neglect, regeneration efforts can help create vibrant and inclusive places for future generations without compromising on their cultural identity.

2.3 Crafting Cultural Identity Through Heritagization

Cicero introduced "culture animi" in 45 B.C., equating to "cultivation of the soul," while modern definitions of cultural identity may vary widely. In the 21st century, culture spans from broad to narrow interpretations, with a narrower focus on the arts. However, culture encompasses all distinctive traits within nations and ethnic groups, including tangible and intangible aspects. Cultural anthropology defines culture as the collective knowledge within a society, crucial for its unity and resilience (Bujdosó, Z. et al., 2015). The significance of culture and heritage is increasingly evident, particularly in regional contexts and development. Cultural elements play a crucial role as they directly influence economic performance, development, and consequently, the competitiveness of a region (Dziembowska, K. Kowalska, J. & Funck, R.H. 2000).

This illustrates the significance of cultural identity and how vital it is for the proper portrayal of cultural heritage. Timothy (2014) suggests that when cultural identity is under threat, there is a strong inclination towards heritagization as a means to inherently attribute value to heritage (AlShaikh, A. 2017).

Heritagization, as crafting the cultural Identity has the capability to both utilize cultural heritage as a mindset and manipulate it to advance a particular agenda (Chabra, D. et al., 2003; Connerton, P. 2009; Borevi, K. 2011). References to cultural heritage may range from broad and inclusive to selective and deliberate, often emphasizing ideological interpretations rather than tangible artifacts (Tunbridge, J. and Ashworth, G. 1996; Wight, AC. and Lennon, JJ. 2007; Nilsson, P.Å. 2017). The transformation of locales, individuals, artifacts, customs, histories, or concepts into various forms of "heritage" presents a captivating area for analyzing identity. Central to this process is how heritagization contributes to the identity of a community or group within a region, entailing the negotiation and sharing of this identity with others. Personal, local, or national viewpoints on which elements of the past are valuable can merge into collective expressions. The heritagization process evokes emotional ties to core values that uphold social order, collective relationships, and a sense of belonging. By fostering unity within a group, individual members experience a sense of well-being, and even happiness, while building self-confidence and mutual trust. This solidarity facilitates the smooth functioning of the social group, but it also carries an ideological and disciplinary dimension (Ashley, S.L. 2014). Heritagization endeavors to instill a sense of identity among local residents that specific cultural heritage holds greater relevance for them compared to outsiders. (Walsh, 1992) By repurposing antiquated concepts and rendering them pertinent once more, it initiates a process of reclaiming the past in a manner that reinforces the current cultural legacy. Also showcasing

selected cultural heritage with this legacy to tourists provides a platform to rejuvenate and juxtapose outdated phenomena with daily routines or practices (Backhaus, 2008).

2.3.1 Cultural Identity: Understanding the Components

According to Hall (Citation 1989; cited in Fearon, Citation 1999, p. 5), identity is both a relationship of the other to oneself and a process that is "not a fixed point." (Fearon, J. 1999) This denotes the reflexive nature of identity; hence, the "concept of reflection" can be used to express and comprehend the meaning of identity (Williams, C.J.F. 1989). According to Wendt, identity extends beyond an individual's self-perception; it encompasses the meanings an individual associates with themselves when considering others' perspectives. It involves viewing oneself as a social entity, positioned within a framework of shared beliefs and anticipations within a social role structure. (Wendt, A., 1994) As a result, it can help one to preserve the connection between "mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other" Katzenstein, P.J., 1996). This socially constructed quality also aids in defining one's outlook. Identity, then, is a quality as well as a characteristic that describes a person in the context of their interactions. (Cheshmehzangi, A. 2015).

Cultural identity represents an integral aspect of an individual's self-perception and affiliation with a particular cultural group. It encompasses the beliefs, customs, behaviors, and principles endorsed by a specific community. This personal identity component develops through the absorption, interpretation, and acceptance or rejection of societal norms and values encountered in our lives. Given the dynamic nature of culture, our cultural identity evolves in response to the changing signals and influences from our surroundings, as we strive to establish a sense of belonging within our community (Wilson, V. 2021). To create a unique and distinctive city, people and events that are both "changing" and "constant" must coexist in harmony, which is why

having an identity is crucial (Lynch, K. 1960). According to Haapla, Identity can be defined as a combination of things that go beyond the general features and structures of an urban environment. It is a mix of experience, activities, and cultural and psychological aspects (Haapala, A. 2003; Boussaa, D., Alattar, D. and Nafi, S. 2021).

Moreover, it is indisputable that the cultural component of identity encompasses an extensive range. The phrase "cultural identity" refers to the identity of a specific culture, group, or class and can be exhibited through exterior characteristics. Numerous topics, including history, location, geography, race, country, language, gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and aesthetics are all influenced by cultural identity (Pratt, A. Citation2005, pp. 69–86). Pratt adds that, from a historical perspective, culture plays a crucial role in defining identity; identity is described as the idea of "distinctiveness," which includes "place identity," "placeness," "character of a place," "image of a place," "sense of place," and "spirituality of the place."

Discussions about cultural heritage frequently lead to the idea of cultural identity. The expression of cultural identity as a collective identity is frequently achieved by the utilization of local building materials and construction processes, combined with the application of architectural style, ornamentation, and historic distinctive urban shape. With their structures, historic environments have offered a distinctive visual representation of the city before its incorporation into a global fabric. Cultural identity thus, is a crucial element in the context of urban cultural heritage. The employment of a historically distinctive urban form, architectural style, design solutions, and ornamentation, along with the use of regional building materials and construction methods, are frequent ways that urban cultural identity is expressed. This is how the

historic urban settings offered a distinctive visual representation of the city before it was absorbed into a sea of international environs (Boussaa, D. 2018).

2.3.2 Significance of Cultural Identity

"A deep human need exists for associations with significant places," Relph [1976.] (p. 147) asserted, highlighting the importance of place identification in relation to cultural identity. The future can only have a setting where locations are merely irrelevant if we decide to reject that necessity and let the forces of placelessness grow unchecked. The creation of an environment where places are for humans, reflecting and strengthening the diversity of human experience, is possible, however, if we decide to address that need and go beyond placelessness. Therefore, given the current state of cities and the increasing patterns of globalization, it can be inferred that cultural identity has become a critical necessity. It may or may not be challenging to come to a consensus on one concept of cultural identity due to the diverse viewpoints and opinions. However, there appears to be agreement on five factors—continuity, distinctiveness, significance, compatibility, and cohesiveness—that can significantly contribute to strengthening the significance of it (Kim, J. 2000).

As defined by Meiss (1991), identity is also related to being a part of the group that exchanges values, such as a family, political party, club, etc., defines one's (public) identity. * (And private) identity as a distinctive individual who preserves personal accountability and a margin of liberty, separate from the group and from everyone else. Both individual and social meanings can be attached to the urban fabric, which can have significant ramifications because it implies that the built environment can be crucial in maintaining group identities. Therefore, by fostering a feeling of place, the preservation of symbolic artifacts can provide civilizations with a sense of historical understanding and belonging. As Stokols and Jakobi contend, (Stokols, D. and Jacobi,

M., 1984) "this relationship between place and identity need not be established through conscious processes: "The traditional referents of the built environment carry important meanings that can be assessed by group members as needed, instead of promoting a constant awareness of historical links." Members of the group use the physical representations of the tradition as a storehouse of implicit meanings to reinforce connections With Past And Present" In the past, people were able to preserve a strong sense of self in their urban surroundings since everything was shaped, produced, and controlled locally. This is not the case in the modern world, where the unrestricted movement of people, ideas, and money together with global trade, media, and economic ties have made the world seem like a tiny village. Although the townscape's historical integrity may not matter, its symbolism and references to bygone eras and lifestyles are crucial for preserving cultural identities. This also elaborates that cultural Identity is not a problem that should be limited to the stylistic transposition of tradition. Nonetheless, it ought to be thoroughly integrated into the core mechanisms that determine how cities are planned, run, and funded (Boussaa,D 2000).

2.3.3 Loss of Cultural Identity

A distinctive place, according to Alexander et al. [31], depends on continuity with earlier locations and the past of the immediate physical environment. This implies that the more urban historic districts are conserved the more likely a stronger continuity with the past is achieved and vice versa. The experience of an urban environment is crucial in such matters and varies from one place to another or one city to another (Boussaa, D. Alattar, D. & Nafi, S. 2021). The identity within an urban setting is shaped to varying extents by the elements of the environment and the activities or events occurring within it and the continuation of them (Cheshmehzangi, A. and

Heath, T. 2012; Zakariya, K. and Harun, N.Z. 2013). The loss of significance and emotional connection to places can stem from various factors, such as the destruction of objects during natural disasters (Hull, B.R. et al., 1994). Changes and transformations in buildings and spaces, shifts in their functions, or relocation to new housing and communities can also lead to a loss of identity and weaken attachment to a place. Scholars argue that the modernist approach often fails to address contemporary issues, including the decay of historical cities (Salama, A. 2009).

When these disruptions occur, individual or group identities may disintegrate, further exacerbating the loss of cultural identity. Hence, communities can feel alienated and individuals as strangers in their own environment because they are unable to identify themselves or be recognized in the context of their culture (Boussaa, D. 2000). The absence of distinctive physical features and identity within a location can impact how individuals perceive and connect with that place. When such issues arise, there is a risk of disintegrating individual or group identity due to the loss of cultural heritage. Revitalizing locations without taking into account their cultural dimensions may also lead to the creation of non-places, devoid of cultural identity. (Ujang, N. and Zakariya, K. 2015).

Thus, researchers suggest that to comprehensively understand the significant loss of cultural identity, it's essential to consider not only its physical setting and activities within a defined area but also the overall sense of place (Agnew, J and Duncan,J 1989 cited in Gustafson, P. 2001). In this context, it is important to consider human experiences and behaviors that are shaped by a network of memories and identities associated with the environment) as a valuable point of reference in cultural heritage (Cheshmehzangi, A. and Heath, T 2012). In 2001, Harvey suggested that heritage

should be considered as a verb which deals with actions, agency, and dynamics of identities (Harvey, D. 2001). Consequently, addressing the loss of cultural identity requires comprehensive approaches that prioritize the preservation of cultural heritage and its integration into urban planning and development strategies. By recognizing the importance of cultural continuity and distinctiveness, cities can strive to maintain their unique identities in the face of rapid urban transformations.

2.3.4 Need for Cultural Identity's Revival

Reviving the meanings and identities of urban elements and landmarks (including objects, structures, and images) is crucial as they contribute to self-identity, community cohesion, and the sense of place (Hull, B.R. et al., 1994). Therefore, it is essential for any regeneration endeavor to thoroughly understand the depth and nature of attachment and meanings associated with places in order to unveil their significance. (Ujang, N. and Zakariya, K. 2015). The evolving context and the impact of globalized culture and built environments highlight the necessity of incorporating the need for the continuity of cultural identity when revitalizing cities. This presents a challenge for architects, urban planners, and landscape architects in their planning, design, and redevelopment efforts, as places undergo ongoing cultural, social, and spatial changes (Sandercock, L. 1998). As people strive to adjust to new meanings that may have become detached from their culture and identity, places remain dynamic and continue to regenerate (Ujang, N. and Zakariya, K. 2015). The idea underlying this integrated approach is that historic districts having significant cultural heritage dimensions cannot be conserved in isolation, but should be an integral part of the living, everyday life. The function of regeneration for society should be to restore a sense of cultural identity (Boussaa, D. 2014).

The question of the revival of cultural identity within urban settings becomes a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors when the aim is urban regeneration. Modernist approaches to urban regeneration often overlook the needs and challenges faced by historical cities, leading to the further deterioration of cultural identity. Regenerated urban spaces lacking distinctive features may struggle to evoke a sense of belonging among their residents, contributing to feelings of alienation and detachment. The influence of globalization and rapid urbanization further exacerbates this issue, leading to the homogenization of urban environments and the erasure of unique cultural characteristics. Revitalization efforts that neglect cultural dimensions in urban regeneration projects can inadvertently contribute to the loss of cultural identity further instead of its revival, as they fail to preserve and integrate cultural heritage into the fabric of the city.

Hence, reviving the cultural identity calls for in-depth inquiry and investigation of its guiding ideas rather than slavishly mimicking the past. However, identity cannot be reduced to a collection of fashions; rather, it must be viewed as a dynamic process, much like life. It is extremely difficult to create a new cultural identity in urban settings that witnessed such rapid transformations. Finding the best approaches to revitalize the past as a catalyst for sustaining urban cultural identity within the evolving global contexts around the world and thus requires more critical investigation (Boussaa, D. 2018). In similar vein, the distinct relationship between the previous cultural identity and the newly established one that emerges as a result of the regeneration of these urban projects should be separately categorized. The evolution of urban regeneration strategies can profoundly impact cultural identity, necessitating a distinction between the original and emergent identities. This differentiation allows for a nuanced understanding of how transformations affect community cohesion and the heritage-

making process. By categorizing these factors separately, urban planners and policymakers can better address the complexities of cultural change within communities, ensuring that both the continuity of cultural identity and the adaptability to modern developments appropriately intervene in urban regeneration efforts.

2.4 Criticism In Heritagization

This critique first emerged in the late 1980s when Wright (1985), Hewison (1987), and Walsh (1992) argued that heritagization represents historical continuity and cultural homogenization. This process beautifies acceptable national themes, transforming real spaces into tourist spaces. Other areas of critical examination include 'dark heritage', denoting sites imbued with tragic events that have subsequently become places of commemoration (Mentec, K.L. and Zhang, Q 2017; Becker, A. 2019), as well as the heritagization of pilgrimage routes (Mu, Y. Nepal, S.K. and Lai, P.H. 2019; Øian , H. 2019; Thouki, A. 2022).

The contemporary concept of heritagization establishes a direct relationship between specific spatial contexts and historical and identity-based temporal connections. This relationship often intersects with class, ethnicity, and/or gender attributes, particularly when neighborhoods are perceived as historically belonging to specific socio-cultural groups (Sze, L. 2010). While some communities successfully assert their rights to their neighborhoods amidst urban transformations (Herzfeld, M. 1991, 2016; Arkarapraseretkul, N. 2016), heritagization frequently leads to gentrification (Herzfeld, M. 2006, 2009, 2010), resulting in the displacement of the original inhabitants and the transformation of these areas into sites of ethnic consumption (Comaroff, J.L and Comaroff, J. 2009).   Heritagization often purges these neighborhoods of their previous reputations as impoverished and unsafe,

simultaneously displacing much of the original population through gentrification. This phenomenon is increasingly prevalent in Asian cities (Shin, H.B. 2018), although there is debate over whether 'gentrification' accurately describes the processes occurring in Asia. This area of study frequently seeks to explore the dissonance, or competing narratives, encountered in heritage resource management (Tunbridge, J. and Ashworth, G. 1996). This includes tensions between 'experts' and marginalized groups, conflicting motivations among stakeholders, and the advantages (economic and social regeneration) and disadvantages (over-management, commodification, and gentrification) of heritagization (Smith, L. 2006; Hall, C.M. 2006; Leask, A. 2006; Ashworth, G. 2008; Silva, L. 2011; Rajapakse, A. 2018). Studies on heritagization and gentrification often frame these processes as driven by external forces, subjecting designated heritage sites and neighborhoods to authorized heritage discourses and political management regimes (Smith, L. 2006; Geismar, H. 2015).

In recent years, research on 'the politics of heritagization' has also seen a notable increase. Through this perspective, social scientists are prompted to cultivate a more sophisticated comprehension of the politics of heritage, or the politics of recognition, which revolve around the rights to manage policies, access, and sovereignty (Smith, L.2006, 2007). These Conversations about heritagization are driven by a critique of the institutionalization and reappropriation of historical narratives (Howard, P. 2003; Thouki, A. 2022). A contentious, if not violent, arena where various actor types vie to impose their identities and/or rights is a commonly known political factor in herititagization (Abu el-Haj, N. 2001; Herzfeld, M. 2002; Maffi, I. 2009; Meskell, L. 1989). Thus, heritagization processes result in an intensive production of political territory that transcends the national level (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013).

Since, heritage is also experienced, imagined, and enacted by both residents and outsiders (Herzfeld, M. 2016). Many studies have documented the nostalgia felt by residents due to the loss of familiar neighborhoods and experiences (Connerton 2009; Herzfeld 2016). In 'The Modalities of Nostalgia', Pickering and Keightley (2006) link the emergence of nostalgia to the rapid changes of late modernity, highlighting both its regressive and potentially progressive or utopian aspects of heritagization. Amidst this, heritagization can be the subject of this nostalgia for those who have never lived in the area, a phenomenon termed 'exo-nostalgia' by Berliner (2012). Hence, in the heritagization process, scholars constantly highlighted the emerging role of nostalgia, termed "productive nostalgia" (Smith, L. & Campbell, G. 2017). Cronberg (2009) associates this notion with an "*imagined, aestheticized, and romanticized past*"—a meticulously crafted simulation that allows us to experience the illusion of pastness. This "imagined" past can deceive people into feeling that the time and place seem to have existed before. This form of nostalgia can guide individuals in understanding their present and future, aligning with personal, social, cultural, and political objectives. Researchers aim to redefine nostalgia as an active emotional and cognitive process, exploring its beneficial impact on shaping collective identity and fostering meaningful communication within communities (Blunt, A. 2003; Brown, A.D. and Humphreys, M. 2002; Orr, R. 2017; Lee, H. 2021).

This phenomenon is also envisioned, desired, or practiced by non-experts and laypeople (Muzaini, H. and Minca, C. 2018), a process described by Macdonald (2013, 17) as 'past-presencing'. These approaches, which connect deliberate acts of memorialization with practical acts and material sites and objects, can be understood as manifestations of 'the materialization of memorialization' (Salemink, O. 2021, 417). Even though it has roots in the real world, heritagization is usually linked as a creation

of the imagination, unlike the mediascape, which offers "repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes" and produces landscapes where the boundaries between reality and fiction are blurred (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Heritagization thus, while aimed at preserving cultural heritage, has faced criticism for various aspects such as its association with touristification, gentrification, imagined past, and the political involvement in the recognition of the heritage. It often imposes an authorized heritage discourse, marginalizing alternative histories and commodifying culture for tourism and marketing purposes. The romanticization and nostalgia associated with heritagization can result in an idealized and inaccurate representation of the past which often contradicts the authenticity. Additionally, the focus on material aspects may overshadow intangible cultural practices and oral histories. Addressing these criticisms is crucial to ensure an inclusive, sustainable, and respectful heritagization process of the cultural heritage.

Chapter 3

HERITAGIZATION IN THE GULF STATES

3.1 Contextualizing the Gulf States

The Arab Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, share numerous commonalities and historical connections owing to their geographical proximity on the peninsula. Their intertwined history is characterized by extensive interactions with peoples and nations beyond the region (Fig 6). Given the Gulf's historical role as a crucial water passage since ancient times, its coastal inhabitants have had early encounters with various civilizations (AlSulaiti, F. 2013).
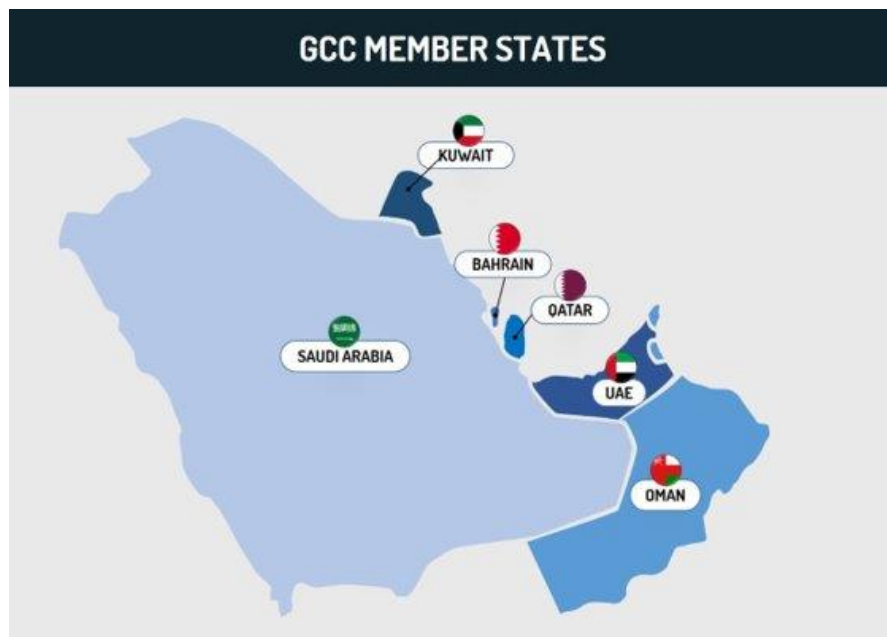
Figure 6: The Gulf Region. Source- Zawiya

During the latter half of the 20th century, urban areas in the Arabian Gulf countries underwent substantial changes, progressing from small settlements to becoming prominent global cities. This profound transition stemmed from the shift in these nations' economies—from being centered on pearling to oil-based economies—and further evolving into more diversified economic frameworks (Boussaa, D., Alattar, D. and Nafi, S. 2021). Since the discovery of oil in the Gulf, the rapid push for modernization has often come at the significant cost of local cultural heritage. In the race to modernize quickly, the preservation of this heritage has been considerably sacrificed and compromised. For approximately four decades, these Gulf states have adopted foreign models and modern infrastructure, neglecting cultural heritage and historic districts. This trend has led to a disconnection of younger generations from their heritage, history, and cultural identity. The abundant availability of resources and advancements in modern technology have resulted in a widespread rejection of traditional regional architecture, materials, and principles. This transition to a hypermodern urban society has led to a departure from traditional building materials and lifestyles (Ricca, S. 2018). However, since the late 1990s, as major cities have become more established, there has been a resurgence of interest in heritage appreciation. A cultural shift emphasizing a return to local values and traditions has started to emerge (Helmy, M. 2008, pp. 29–36).

3.1.1 Historical Overview

The pre-oil era in the Gulf region, prior to the discovery of vast oil reserves, was characterized by a rich and diverse cultural heritage deeply rooted in the traditions of the Arabian Peninsula. This era, which extended well into the early 20th century, was shaped by a nomadic lifestyle, maritime activities, trade, and a strong sense of community. Arabic was the dominant language, and poetry held a special place in Gulf

culture. Oral traditions, storytelling, and poetry were vital for preserving cultural knowledge and history. Nomadic Bedouin tribes were a prominent feature of Gulf society. These nomads, adept at navigating the desert, relied on herding camels, goats, and sheep. They maintained a traditional way of life centered on hospitality, honor codes, and close-knit family structures. Coastal communities thrived through pearl diving and fishing. The pearling industry played a crucial economic role, with merchants trading pearls internationally. Communities built their livelihoods around the sea, mastering the art of pearl diving and developing seafaring skills. The Gulf's strategic location made it a bustling center for trade. Cities such as Muscat, Doha, Muharraq, and Dubai served as pivotal trading hubs along the ancient Silk Road, facilitating the exchange of goods, spices, textiles, and more. These cities boasted diverse populations and a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

After the discovery of oil, globalization and modernization have caused the foundation of urban life to change, causing urbanism in the Gulf countries to start a new phase of development (Furlan, R. 2017). Massive construction developments surrounded by contradictory and deceptive architectural pronouncements of complete irrelevance and invalidity were fueled by the Gulf's abundant new wealth. A kaleidoscope of forms, colors, textures, styles, and fads can only weaken local values, jeopardize cultural continuity, and isolate undeniable validity in mushrooming cities, affecting the historic districts (Helmy, M, 2008). Preserving the city's cultural heritage was not a priority at the time; instead, historic buildings were either demolished or neglected, leading to their deterioration (Boussaa, D. 2014). As Zahran emphasized most of these modern metropolitan settings were unsuitable for the region's urban fabric and climatic conditions. People began to feel that something was missing from their surroundings in the 1960s and 1970s, as development picked up at unprecedented speed, elements

that would have given their cities the distinct character of the Arabian peninsula. Large areas continue to suffer to be set aside for this purpose to accommodate the growing demand for homes, educational facilities, and shopping centers that followed the discovery of oil. The bulldozer had to finish clearing urban areas, which typically included historic and heritage buildings, to make room for modern infrastructure. In actuality, the existing urban fabric of the Gulf states has been replaced by contemporary alien buildings, competing skyscrapers, and modern structures. To expedite the implementation of these huge urban projects, the world's most skilled architects and planners have been hired, detailed plans have been created, and the finest materials have been acquired (Boussaa, D. 2000).

A halt in expansion throughout the 1980s provided authorities and citizens with the chance to consider their disappearing past. Governments realized that time was running out and that they needed to assess the irreversible loss of their urban history in light of the need for an immediate rescue effort (Boussaa, D. 2018). This modernization process gave rise to the issue of cultural identity. As In terms of cultural identity achievement, the outcome was rather negative (Boussaa, D. 2000). The primary challenge remains preserving the remnants of the city's cultural identity from the past while simultaneously facilitating its rapid development (Boussaa, D. 2018). Cultural identity has been prioritized less when modernization has taken precedence over it since the discovery of oil in the Gulf (Fig 7). In order to quickly catch up with modernism, the latter has been drastically compromised and sacrificed. Historic districts, being considered as old fashioned were written off as having little worth and

allowed to rot and fall apart (Boussaa, D. 2018). This rapid development process has severely impacted the region's cultural identity, casting doubt on its future.

Figure 7: The Gulf Region Before Oil-Discovery. Source- Author

3.1.2 Cultural Identity in the Gulf

Cultural Identity in the Gulf necessitates a thorough comprehension of a community's cultural, economic, and social contexts, encompassing both historical and contemporary dimensions (AlSulaiti, F. 2013). The cultural identity of the Gulf states is multifaceted, reflecting a blend of traditional customs, religious beliefs, and modern influences. Tradition and religion plays a central role in shaping societal norms and values along with historical legacies. But rapid modernization and globalization have introduced new cultural elements, impacting traditional practices and cultural identities of the Gulf states. Despite these changes, there remains a strong sense of pride in Gulf Arab culture, evident in art, literature, cuisine, and festivals. This destruction caused by the rapid modernization of the local heritage impacted the

cultural identity of the Gulf states negatively and the rapid immigration process also brought along with itself different cultural identities which although unrecognized still had an impact on the cultural identity of the urban fabric. This highlights that how several factors affected the previously existing identity to such an extent that at one point it was replaced by the modernized image and began to be viewed as a collective identity instead of a local one. This degree of collective cultural identity, according to Relph (Citation1976, p. 61), is a distinctive kind of place identity. In his view, "places are lived and dynamic, full of meanings for us that are known and experienced without much reflection," for "individual perspective or sociality in communion." But the Identity resources of a place should be enhanced to give a city a distinctive character. A city or district should have elements that make it recognizable and unique. The biggest problem that surfaced was how to support the city's rapid expansion without sacrificing the remnants of the city's cultural identity (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Thus, it can be concluded that cultural identity in the Gulf states has been dynamic and not static, thus it cannot be confined to a specific time. Hence, the remnants of cultural heritage that survived the rapid modernization should be regarded as a valuable asset, as it plays a pivotal role in preserving and revitalizing the cultural identities that have been lost in the Gulf cities (Boussaa, D. 2014). How to restore the disappearing cultural identity without impeding the development of these regenerations is one of the most important concerns that must be addressed in this situation. This poses a significant problem for the Gulf cities since oil earnings have the potential to finance large-scale reconstruction projects in a very short amount of time (Boussaa, D. 2018).

3.1.3 Loss of the Cultural Identity in the Gulf States

Before 1950, Gulf was a small fishing and pearling village, with a district cultural identity but today, it has become well known for its mega sports, conferences, and exhibition events. Before reaching this strategic, place in the region, Gulf experienced a staggering rapid urban growth since the discovery of oil in 1940 and the beginning of its exportation in 1950. These Gulf states thus have had rapid development booms resulting in less sustainable decision-making towards the conservation of valuable heritage sites undermined or destroyed during the process of modernization, development, and physical growth of the cities' fabric, resulting in cultural identity issues (Boussaa, D. 2023). Before arriving at this Modernized image in the region, Gulf states went through a phase of large-scale project development. In major gulf cities , what we may see as magnificent kinds of structures featuring different foreign designs aspirations. These structures that range in style from elegant shopping malls to five-star hotels and tall skyscrapers which were introduced in numerous styles undermined the historical Gulf's traditional architecture and distinct cultural identity. A particularly obvious outcome of this period of uncontrolled urban transformation was the emergence of a large number of contemporary cement buildings, which formed a disjointed ring surrounding the old city center (Boussaa, D. Alattar, D. & Nafi, S. 2021).

The fact that people's demand for identity in Gulf cities is closely linked to the sense of threat that these countries' rapid transformation over the past three decades has caused in their traditional practices and local cultural heritage (Al-Naim, M. 2006). Extreme urbanization in the Gulf region has led to challenges with cultural identity and design, as well as risks related to traditional practices and urban management. (Abulibdeh, A., and Zaidan, E. 2020). Such rapid urban expansion dynamics and the

demands of maintaining the historic legacy can often become challenging if not incompatible, and the resulting contradictions lead to physical dysfunction and the degradation of cultural identity.

Therefore, to sustain an identity of a city in a global world, different approaches need to be considered: conservation, adaptive reuse, and constructing the new. These different actions to succeed should be inspired by the local traditions and the past (Boussaa, D., Alattar, D. & Nafi, S. 2021). Ongoing conservation initiatives, in the Gulf is a response to the too-quick and all-pervasive changes to the urban and social environment brought on by the oil "boom," and it could be seen as an expression of the population's strong desire to rediscover their cultural identity and roots (Aslan, Z. and Assi, E. 2016). Since, Historic urban centers have been neglected, and allowed to deteriorate in many parts of the Gulf. In the context of the rapidly globalizing globe, the significance of revitalizing these historic neighborhoods through urban regeneration cannot be overstated for the revival of the cultural identity (Boussaa, D. 2018). Shaikha Mai Al Khalifa , former Bahrain's Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA) who successfully led the urban regeneration of the old City of Muharraq, in Bahrain emphasized that:

> "If you lose your identity, what do you have? The future begins with our history, and this is the most important message."

3.2 Urban Regeneration Efforts In The Gulf Region

Nowadays, conserving the Gulf region's cultural heritage in the 21st century is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a comprehensive and thoughtful approach. The Gulf's cultural heritage is a treasure trove of traditions, customs, and historical legacies that date back centuries. As the region experiences rapid modernization and economic

diversification, preserving this heritage becomes not only a matter of historical importance but also a means of fostering a sense of identity, continuity, and community. Preservation efforts extend to historical city centers scattered across the Gulf region. These along with the historic districts include ancient forts, old bazaars, and archaeological treasures. The ideas of heritage regeneration, preservation, and reconstruction of cultural heritage in the Gulf region have been studied by a number of academics. These researchers came to the conclusion that the Gulf cities' heritage resurgence provides a practical and symbolic counterpoint to globalization (Picton, 2010). Although their preservation may be selective or incomplete, these historical districts ought to be perceived as assets rather than liabilities, with efforts directed toward maintaining their vitality and cultural essence through suitable urban revitalization approaches (Boussaa, D. 2014). The Gulf countries have undertaken extensive restoration and urban regeneration initiatives, focusing on rejuvenating areas situated in historic city centers or coastal regions that have long been abandoned and overlooked (Mazzetto, S. 2022).

The current growing emphasis on preserving historic areas of the Gulf started in Dubai initially. The conservation movement in Dubai began between 1984 and 1986 with the reconstruction of Beit Sheikh Saeed, marking the first conservation project in the district. During the 1980s, conservation efforts adopted a selective focus, targeting a few key monuments in the Shinghada district (Boussaa, D. 2018). This signified a significant shift in attitudes toward safeguarding the remaining cultural heritage. This shift denotes the departure from previous redevelopment strategies between 1971 and 2000, which often entailed the complete demolition of historical buildings. This contends that revitalizing historic areas can be crucial to reconstructing and resurrecting lost cultural identities, in addition to new construction inspired by the past

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(Boussaa, D. 2017). Similarly, Jeddah, Dubai, Kuwait city, and Muharraq also serve as examples of the drastic transition currently underway as well as how legacy and culture are influencing the development of a new vision for Gulf cities in the twenty-first century.

The plans put into action in Dubai and Jeddah over the past ten years demonstrate that the Gulf region has entered a new historic phase marked by concern for the preservation and development of urban history, which is now viewed as both an economic resource and a tool for defining identity (Ricca, S. 2018). This emerging trend of revitalization of these historic districts plays a significant role in safeguarding cultural identities, in addition to the ongoing urban regeneration initiatives (Boussaa D. 2018). This approach utilizing significant cultural heritage elements also serves as a crucial asset for marketing and tourism purposes when it is revitalized through preservation efforts and subsequently enhanced by providing fresh experiences for engaging with the location by utilizing this heritage anew (Alraouf, A.2019). Therefore, these initiatives can also revitalize the historic districts economically while contributing in enhancing it's cultural identity (Boussaa D. 2018). Given its major role in maintaining and reviving the lost cultural identities of the Gulf cities, this urban regeneration must be seen as a blessing (Boussaa D. 2014). Despite the governmental efforts, local architectural circles, concerned citizens, and communities alike should be involved in this process, reflecting the growth of a national consensus for saving the Gulf's cultural heritage (Boussaa, D. 2014).

However, this selective preservation and regeneration of heritage in the Gulf region give rise to the question of emerging heritagization trends. The concept of cultural heritage driving heritagization as an answer to rapid modernization is now pervasive

throughout the world. Cities that value their cultural history equip themselves with the tools they need to better prepare for the future and to recreate an idealized past. As planning becomes a tool to sustain cultural heritage whilst ensuring the continuity of financial security and heritage tourism, the need to conserve and regenerate heritage destinations, identification of urban physical characteristics, and the cohesive collaboration of multidisciplinary professionals involved in establishing these features is measured crucial (Boussaa, D. 2023).

3.2.1 Urban Regeneration to Heritagization

Heritagization through the regeneration of these devastated historic districts in the Gulf has emerged as a strategic response to the rapid transformation and a strong desire to reclaim cultural identity and roots. Neglected historic urban centers are being revitalized, which is crucial for restoring cultural identity in a rapidly globalizing world. Heritagization as a heritage-making process in the Gulf refers to the deliberate and comprehensive efforts undertaken by Gulf countries to identify, preserve, and promote their rich and diverse cultural heritage. This process is driven by the urban regeneration of the historic districts which, is not only a source of historical pride but also a vital component of contemporary identity and a potential driver of economic and social development.

The vitality of heritagization initiates with the 'recognition' of the success of urban regeneration of the historic districts, including historical sites, traditional architecture, and archaeological treasures. Gulf nations are investing in the restoration and maintenance of ancient forts, old town centers, and iconic landmarks, ensuring that they remain integral parts of their urban landscapes. This preservation effort not only safeguards the tangible aspects of heritage but also fosters a sense of connection between past and present. Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition

of heritage conservation as a valuable tool for revitalizing numerous historical districts. (Boussaa, D. 2014).The rapid change has sparked concerns about the emergence of alternative cultural heritage concepts, such as heritagization, potentially diluting the intrinsic culture and paving the way for cultural commodification (DTCM, 2017). (AlShaikh, A. 2017). Such interventions often brought about partial transformation to the original settlement, with preservation efforts primarily aimed at maintaining the existing status of the areas. Consequently, these interventions result in some alteration to the original urban fabric of the location impacting its cultural identity (Mazzetto, S. 2022).

To begin with, efforts to preserve Al Balad began in the early 1970s. The conservation of Old Jeddah was incorporated into the city's 1973 master plan, devised by RMJM (Robert Mathew and John Marshall Consultants). Approximately 537 heritage buildings were identified for restoration. Jeddah presents an interesting example of enhancing the image of Al Balad through the refurbishment of external façades and through beautifying the outside environment and open spaces. While the 1973 master plan laid out the framework for Jeddah's growth and development control, establishing key elements for the city's future structure (Konash,M. 1984), Abdulghani noted that the municipality was unable to implement the plan. This failure was due to the municipality's lack of preparation for the sudden population surge, which led to extensive unregulated development (Abdulghani, K. 1993 ; Sami, S. and Baesse, O. 2012). During the 1980s, these conservation efforts adopted a selective approach, concentrating primarily on preserving a few key monuments. The "selective and piecemeal" approach revealed its limitations by focusing solely on restoring and rehabilitating a few chosen buildings, rather than fostering broader awareness for the conservation of the entire Al Balad area (Boussaa, D. 2018). Hence, the seed of

heritagization can seen from the beginning of regeneration efforts, where the regeneration adopted selecting, preserving, and portraying the heritage in an enhanced way since the main aim was to recognize, revive, and inject a new life in the deteriorating Al Balad district of Jeddah.

The initiative forms a component of broader endeavors initiated by the government to rejuvenate the historic district of Jeddah, transforming it into not only an economic center but also a prominent global destination for culture and heritage. This initiative is just one among several significant projects currently ongoing in Saudi Arabia, aligning with the Vision 2030 strategy geared toward economic and cultural diversification (Gerrard, N. 2023). Jeddah provides a compelling illustration of how urban regeneration enhanced and revitalized the deteriorating state of Al Balad. The regeneration efforts primarily focused on renovating external façades and upgrading the surrounding landscape and public areas (Fig. 8). However, to genuinely revitalize Al Balad and infuse it with new life and vitality, more comprehensive research has been necessary (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Figure 8: Al Balad District in Old Jeddah is One of the Very First Urban Regeneration Projects in the Region- Source- Fatima Sidiya

Similarly, the revitalization of the historic Shindagha area dates back to March 1996, with the objective of retracing Dubai's history by creating a tourist heritage village along the creek. The initial restoration project of Beit Sheikh Saeed in Shindagha cost Dubai US$2 million. This came as a response to the mass demolition of numerous old, deteriorating buildings to make way for modern constructions (Hadjri, K. & Boussaa, D. 2007). Ultimately, the decision was made to develop the entire area for heritage tourism (Boussaa, D. 2014). Thus the conservation movement in Dubai first began in 1984–1986 with the reconstruction of Beit Sheikh Saeed, which was the first conservation project undertaken during that time in this district. In the 1980s, conservation took a selective approach, concentrating on a small number of important monuments in the Shinghada district (Boussaa, D. 2018). But from the late 1990s, several efforts have been directed towards the Shindagha neighborhood, undergoing meticulous reconstruction in what may be the most extensive urban revitalization project in the region. The objective was to offer both Dubai residents and tourists a

vibrant display of Dubai's cultural Identity (Ricca, S.2018). The Shindagha region is now one of Dubai's top tourist destinations for history because of the subsequent rehabilitation efforts (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Undoubtedly, the utilization of heritagization has occurred in the Shindage Historical District (SHD), where authentic buildings that existed within the same location a hundred years ago were completely reconstructed into replicas in the 1960s. Rebuilding material heritage for the purpose of preserving cultural identity may generate a positive perception within the local community, as tangible symbols and structures remain present. However, the lack of clarity regarding the act of heritagization within the city's sole historic district has raised issues of integrity and transparency concerning the preservation and promotion of the authenticity of Emirati cultural heritage. This lack of clarity complicates the reversal of heritagization, particularly when seeking involvement from the local community (AlShaikh, A. 2017).

This endeavor illustrates the early integration of heritagization principles, wherein the rehabilitation of the district not only focused on promoting the preservation of its cultural heritage but also the aesthetic enhancement sought to showcase the heritage in a commercialized way. This directly led to the development of heritage tourism infrastructure and initiatives, such as museums and cultural events, the Shindagha area has been transformed into a vibrant hub that celebrates Dubai's rich history and cultural identity. In Dubai, efforts to preserve and safeguard cultural heritage have included various measures, such as documenting the city's cultural heritage and retrieving authentic presentations of old buildings. These efforts have embraced contemporary solutions, including heritagization, which is defined as the expansion of the heritage-

making process aimed at producing alternative forms of heritage (Sanchez-Carretero, 2013; AlShaikh, A. 2017).

According to Khaleej Times (2015), The initiative in Dubai aims to transform the historical areas into the region's premier culture and heritage center. It will continue to rejuvenate the historical charm of the Shindagha, Bur Dubai, Al Fahidi, and Deira districts (Fig 9). Beyond merely replicating historic monuments and ensembles, this instance of "heritage place-making" employs thorough research and reconstruction to enable creative activities and interactions. This heritagization approach is aimed at recognizing and conveying the traditional essence of the place before its modern transformation. This leads to one of the most commonly criticized aspects of heritagization, which is the reflection of an imagined past.

Figure 9- Shinghada's Urban Regeneration. Source: Bayut.

In Qatar, Souq Al Waqif has emerged as a prominent urban regeneration project that caters to art galleries and workshops, hosting numerous local concerts and art exhibitions during holidays and special occasions. Alongside its array of shops, cafes, restaurants, and hotels, the Souq Al Waqif Art Center stands out within the restaurant district, featuring various artistic shops and exhibition rooms surrounding a central courtyard. Since 2004, efforts have been underway to restore the souq using traditional Qatari architectural techniques and locally sourced materials, with the final phase of rehabilitation currently underway. Renowned as a major tourist destination, Souq Al Waqif has a long history as a trading hub for Bedouins, with its recent redevelopment transforming it into a '*picturesque representation*' of a nineteenth-century souq, characterized by mud-rendered shop facades and exposed timber beams (Boussaa, D. 2014). This effective restoration emphasized the dignity and astuteness inherent in the traditional architecture of the region, particularly when contrasted with modern constructions lacking any cultural identity (Rabbat, N. 2014). Post-renovation, the souk stands as a testament to traditional Qatari architecture, handicrafts, and folk art. It serves as a vibrant representation of Qatar's rich cultural heritage, offering visitors a cultural experience and insight into the nation's traditions and history (Alrouf, A. 2012). The revitalization of Souk Waqif from 2004 to 2010 has transformed it into one of the most appealing destinations in Doha. While the restoration may not be entirely authentic, it represents a successful initiative to rejuvenate the cultural identity (Boussaa, D., 2018).

 The heritagization approach is thus evident in Souq Al Waqif's over-commodification of the heritage and how it aims to display cultural identity. Regardless of how well the interpretation of cultural heritage is portrayed, there is no denying that the whole project is developed and presented as an aesthetically branded and commercialized

shopping district. The cultural identity thus is not recreated but created in an analogous way, where the transformation involves selective restoration work, maintaining the original structures and architectural features, integrating heritage-inspired design elements, and reviving the cultural identity of the souq. Such an approach should not neglect the implementation of suitable tools, such as repurposing old buildings for new uses, enhancing services, generating jobs, and supporting regional handicrafts and arts. The primary causes of this unfavorable sentiment stem from the way various conservation tactics have prioritized the structures and monuments over the surrounding area and people (Alraouf, A.2020).

Yet, Souq Al Waqif presents a stark contrast to the growing number of artificial heritage villages in the region, thriving as an authentic marketplace. Its dynamic atmosphere attracts diverse visitors, offering a vibrant hub of activity day and night. The revival of Souq signifies a remarkable transformation from neglect to a cherished asset, celebrated by both locals and expatriates. The urban regeneration project thus stands out as a distinctive and the most successful architectural and culturally revived initiative focusing on one of Doha's most significant heritage locations (Alraouf, A, 2012; Mortada, H. 2013). Souq Al Waqif was nominated for the 2010 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, after transforming into a revitalized living heritage site in Doha (Fig 10). It remains a traditional open-air market, preserving its historic structures while serving shoppers, tourists, and residents, a sense of identity (Alrouf, A 2016).

In a similar vein, Qatar is focusing on the heritagization of other districts. The Msheireb Downtown Project, a large-scale urban renewal initiative in historic Doha, was started in 2008 and completed in 2016. This mixed-use development project is

situated 35 hectares south of Souk Al Waqif. The goal of this initiative is to develop a different approach to urban renewal in the Gulf. The project's creative method of fusing the past and present—as opposed to pastiche and copy-paste techniques—is its foundation. The "Al Asmakh Project," a new conservation initiative that was started in September 2014 with the goal of maintaining the district's historic identity, is still in progress. In order to position Doha as an emerging global magnet for a diverse economy and to position the city for foreign investment, heritage promotion has become a primary goal (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Figure 10- Souq Al Waqif. Souce- Pullman-Doha-Westbay

The reinvention of heritage in the Gulf states has served to reaffirm the importance of cultural heritage while simultaneously projecting the contemporary image of wealth and power associated with modern identity. In the context of heritagization, the economic and financial implications of regenerated projects are substantial. The transition from urban regeneration to heritagization frequently leads to the

transformation of cultural identity. This cultural identity whether reconstructed or original, has become a crucial economic resource utilized by stakeholders and major private entrepreneurs. This is evidenced by large-scale urban development plans aimed at creating or recreating historic city centers in Qatar, Sharjah, and similar quarters in the other Gulf states (Ricca, S. 2018). The heritagization of historic areas like the Al Balad district in historic Jeddah, the Shindagha district in UAE, and Souq Waqif in Qatar highlight the importance of preserving cultural identity in urban regeneration projects. These efforts not only revitalize the architectural landmarks but also rejuvenate public spaces, fostering a sense of community and identity among residents and visitors alike. This highlights what Mai Le emphasizes, heritagization is the process of designating something as heritage. This process is not self-generated but is influenced and propelled by broader political, cultural, social, and economic factors of modern society (Mai Le, Q. 2018).

3.2.2 Heritagization to Revive the Cultural Identity

Cultural identity which often is viewed as a dynamic entity from a community perspective includes some of the most significant cultural values that society holds dear, such as a sense of belonging, memory, self-awareness, and artistry. It is also a valuable resource that may be used to give new objects meaning by developing new procedures that are grounded in preexisting ideals. A historic district is an artifact, a creation of man, made up of different historically identifiable layers or pieces. There could not be a designated historic region or historic center per se, but rather a historic urban structure that revitalizes itself using distinctive cultural identity components and procedures (Boussaa, D .2000). Picton (2010) argues that issues around "global" culture and worries about "loss" of identity are powerful social variables that might negatively impact historical districts. The creation of "Heritage Villages," which are

modeled after historic districts in almost every city, is a crucial indicator that the Arabian Gulf's heritage revival movement has grown into a major political, cultural, and social force (Picton, O.J. 2010; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020).

Thus, the revival of cultural identity preserving historic districts, creating new economic opportunities, and enhancing social circumstances should be prioritized. It is necessary to rethink, innovate, and adjust the priorities of productions and behaviors—this is not a case of copying and pasting (Boussaa, D .2000). Boussaa further explains this phenomenon as mostly an effort to repair a physical fabric so that it appears neat, orderly and well represented. To restore the cultural identity and feeling of place in the global metropolis of today and tomorrow, it is imperative to steer clear of trends and instead make use of the Gulf's authentic heritage treasures (Boussaa, D. 2018).

Hence, Gulf cities understood over the past decades how much their distinctive history and cultural assets such as historic districts, had suffered. As a result, they started to recognize and revive the heritage. This heritagization process involved the identification, preservation, and promotion of cultural heritage, transforming everyday places and practices into recognized heritage assets. It also entailed the commodification and packaging of cultural elements for tourism and economic gain. This process reshaped the cultural identity and brought an impact on its enhancement. Retracing the city's cultural history and recognizing its heritage is a distinguishable way to revive the cultural identity. Since, heritagization aims to preserve both the heritage landscape and the customs surrounding its use, as a result, it is a process that involves both the cultural practices and the physical components of the built and natural environments that make up the urban structure. As a result, such conservation

is a process whose steps may involve both restoration and rehabilitation (Boussaa, D. 2000). The goal is to strengthen the sense of place, ensuring that the identity is sustainable and not solely exploited for the rapid consumption of intangible heritage (Boussaa, D. 2018). The idea underlying this integrated approach is that cultural heritage cannot be conserved in isolation, but should be an integral part of the living, everyday culture. The function of cultural heritage for society should be to restore a sense of cultural identity (Boussaa, D. 2014).

The complexity of the heritagization approach implies that the absence of emphasis on disparities does not equate to denying their existence or importance. In other words, the complexity of the approach doesn't negate the acknowledgment or significance of existing disparities; rather, it indicates that addressing them may require a nuanced understanding and approach within the implementation framework of heritagization in the Gulf region.

The various values attached to heritage are also mentioned in relation to the growing interest in heritage-making. According to Charbonneau and Turgeon (2010), it is an advantageous tool for reviving cultural identities and a reaction to the growth of cultural tourism (Daher, R. 2007; Saidi, H. 2010; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Here, the term "touristification" (Habib Saïdi) refers to the phenomena of heritagization, which is frequently associated with the growth of cultural tourism or even the direct outcome of travelers' growing demand for it (Saidi, H. 2010; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). A critical factor to consider in this issue is the emergence of heritagization as a novel branding strategy its intersection with cultural tourism in the Gulf region. This aspect intersects with the broader discussions on combating the erosion of cultural identity amid the heritagization of rapidly

modernizing Gulf nations. It also necessitates examining the political direction of tourism development in the context of economic imperatives.

3.2.2.1 Heritagization as A Novel Strategy to Brand Cities

Academic research in urban marketing and urban studies is increasingly concentrating on the application of city branding in Western countries (Houghton, J.P. and Stevens, A. 2011). Governments in the Middle East region have recently introduced policies to reduce their economic reliance on oil. In this context, city branding is increasingly being adopted as a key public policy tool to shape city images and achieve urban development goals (Dinnie, K. 2010a; Lucarelli, A. 2018; Oguztimur, S. and Akturan, U. 2016; Prilenska, V. 2012; Alsayel, A., Fransen, J. and De Jong, M. 2023). Since 1970, oil has allowed the Gulf region to see tremendous developments in the fields of architecture and urbanism, breaking not only regional but also international records in these areas and for economic growth. However, these trends have lately come to light when pertinent aspects of the theory and practice of city branding in these significant Gulf cities have been taken into account. It is argued that various urban branding and city marketing practices, either directly or indirectly through planned strategies, national projects, and city campaigns, or through grand development projects aimed to brand an image of progress and welfare, have shaped the development of oil urbanism in the Gulf region. For political and cultural reasons, the majority of initiatives seek to overestimate the city's image while also promoting along with investors, entrepreneurs, business opportunities, its cultural assets, local heritage, and growing cultural tourism (Helmy, M. 2008).

In an effort to rebrand themselves into international urban hosting centers, several cities within the Gulf region embraced a paradigm of development that suggests a rejuvenation and interconnection between globalization, heritage, and tourism – a kind

of 'cosmopolitan heritage industry.' In this regard, the implementation of 'tradition' is presented as a dynamic counteracting measures to hegemonic globalization. However, this process, 'far from being a type of resistance to globalization, is explicitly its typical consequence' (Melotti, 2014, p. 75; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020).

As confirmed by Alraouf and Clarke (2014, 318), several urban projects in the Gulf cities have incorporated the branding schemes such as the 'Dubaization phenomenon' in urban development. Indeed, the term 'Dubaization' or 'Dubaification' has recently been applied in academic litera-ture to describe cities looking to compete with Dubai's urban large-scale projects (Elsheshtawy, Y. 2010, p. 250; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). According to Al-Zo'by (2019), the rivalry among Gulf cities to mimic Dubai's 'success story' with comparable development projects throughout the region has contributed to a plethora of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of their identities leading to a homogeneity throughout the region in terms of iconic buildings and real estate marvels dominating cities. However, several experts suggest that the 'Dubaization phenomenon' as a platform of urban change and development, neglects and degrades the native, conventional, and communal facets of cultural heritage. (Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). Such initiatives aimed to recreate the Arabian atmosphere and lifestyle within an ultra-modern urban setting display a degree of artificiality and lack historical significance or authenticity. This phenomenon, often referred to as "Disneyfication," attempts to recreate past lifestyle settings without a deep understanding of the local culture (Larkham, P.J. 1995:472). In other words, it has resulted in a form of "façadism," as described by Larkham (1990), which focuses on preserving the visual appearance of historic buildings and areas (Hadjri, K. & Boussaa, D. 2007).

Ali Alrouf further explained in his term "Dohaization" which emerged as a branding campaign, the development endeavors should aim for a distinct identity that sets it apart from models like Dubai or other Gulf states. Comparisons with Dubai are inevitable due to the proliferation of high-end projects. Any strategy for urban branding should also prioritize maintaining cultural identity. This can be accomplished by revitalizing the heritage and ensuring the provision of public services and security. Excluding heritage from any city branding or renewal initiative would result in the demise of community life in the area (Alrouf, A.2016).

In contrast to contemporary towering structures that appear foreign and disconnected, historical edifices and urban features reveal extensive narratives of the past, enriching local sentiment and reinforcing cultural belonging (Boussaa, D. 2014). Hence, under the impact of an oil-driven economy and the rapid rate of change, locals in the Gulf countries are becoming more vigilant toward efforts to safeguard, represent, and develop a unique 'national' culture and heritage which is being portrayed in the form of city branding. Moreover, enhancing the physical built environment, social fabric, and urban spaces within the historical urban framework significantly contributes to their adoption as sites for local-global tourist integration, thereby strengthening the city's branding (Boussaa, D. 2023).

Another frequent branding approach includes the replication of traditional architectural elements in contemporary structures, often mechanically reproduced and exaggerated in scale, which has become a superficial stylistic motif influencing the design of numerous resorts in Dubai's eclectic post-modern architecture (Rab, 2010). However, this replication of architectural and urban patterns devoid of their social and cultural context runs the risk of creating a sterile "heritage" environment that lacks the

vibrancy characteristic of the historic city (Ricca, S. 2018). An extensively industrialized and compartmentalized landscape with very few aspects that represent the cultural identity, history, spirit, and traditions is made possible by this architectural style. An alternative approach would be to focus more on the past and build structures that showcase the rich legacy of Islamic architecture. In an attempt to make a created structure represent the culture and legacy of the city rather than something foreign, architects used surface-level features and designs, like the dome or arches, to portray the Islamic character. In actuality, though, these structures are more a product of global fashion and technology than of regional culture (Ogaily, A. 2015; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020).

Stakeholders have leveraged heritagization as a tangible representation of their nations' burgeoning power and affluence, concurrently crafting distinctive 'brands' to allure investment, political influence, and tourists. While these edifices are contemporary, they revisit longstanding challenges and debates in modern architectural discourse. Notably, stakeholders operate on a global scale and are not native to the region, prompting inquiries into the process of heritage creation in the Arab Gulf. This dynamic illustrates how stakeholders have endeavored to embrace heritagization while retaining traditional values and the historical essence of their built landscapes (Jozwiak, A .2012). Nonetheless, there has been a rise in the need to devise plans for addressing the swift obstacles of urban growth while maintaining the branding scheme of the Gulf cities. Consequently, urban growth and historical and cultural identity are linked by city branding, which is akin to novel commercial branding (Helmy, M 2008).

Significantly, with the global surge in heritage tourism in recent decades, the process of imagining is extensively utilized to rebrand objects, locations, and heritage for commercial purposes. After receiving recognition, the distinctive features are often transformed into narratives designed to capture interest and attract the widest possible audience (Eisenloeffel, J. 2014; Mai Le 2018**).** This recognition of heritage assets i.e. Heritagization has emerged as an urban Branding and city marketing strategy that proceeds to have a significant impact on the cultural identity of the the Gulf region.

 Above all, this novel "Urban Branding" illustrates the dual nature of the developing cityscape: the planned strategies that illustrate the "perceived identity" of the city is in fact the concrete manifestation of its "cultural identity," and "brand image" to create new avenues and directions for cultural heritage. This proliferation of heritage and cultural theme developments planned for city branding also poses a significant threat to the perceived authenticity of the branded city's heritage fabric (Fig 11,12 & 13). This threat encompasses various factors such as stakeholder satisfaction, visitor engagement, and the need for a tourism strategy for existing heritage assets. (AlShaikh, A. 2017). Nevertheless, heritage tourism has the potential to strengthen this novel branding strategy in the context of cultural identity, providing a means to harmonize economic development with cultural preservation (Karolak, M. 2012).

Figure 11: Muharraq's Regeneration Showing Replicating Authentic Facades. Souce-
Author

Figure 12: Muharraq's Regeneration Integrated Modern Amenities Within the
Traditional Setting. Source- Author

Figure 13: Muharraq's Regeneration Presents it as a Bustling and Branded Cultural City. Source- Author

3.2.2.2 Heritagization as Tourism Vision 2030

Tourism in the Arab Gulf countries can be considered Third-World tourism. However, these countries don't heavily rely on the generated revenue. Due to limited physical attractions and a lack of scenic or cultural sites, it's improbable that these countries will experience a mass tourism influx. This question is a matter of concern for the authorities in the Gulf countries and requires extensive discussion on a wide platform (Ritter, W. 1986). While prior research has suggested that perceiving the benefits of tourism and heritage promotes community participation in tourism and heritage conservation, and perceiving the costs of tourism and heritage diminishes this support, it's important to note that the majority of these studies were conducted in North America, Europe, and Australia (Andereck, K.L. et al., 2005; Deery, M. Jago, L. & Fredline, L. 2012; Dragouni, M. & Fouseki, K. 2017; Choi, H. & Sirakaya, E. 2011; Hung et al., 2011; Marzuki, A. & Hay, I. 2014; Tosun, C. 2006; Al-Tokhais, A.

2021). While there is a wealth of research on global tourism's effects, only a few studies have specifically examined the tourism sector within the Gulf countries and its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental implications. Recently, policymakers have prioritized the tourism industry, integrating it into their national strategic agendas. While the GCC countries demonstrate high integration, the majority of studies focus on individual countries rather than the region as a whole. Additionally, most of these studies are applied rather than fundamental research, highlighting a gap in a comprehensive theoretical framework (Saleh, A. & Bassil, C. & Safari, A., 2021).

Tourism promotion is frequently viewed as a crucial component of economic development strategies, especially in developing countries facing a decline in traditional primary industries (Spiess, A. 2012). In the wider literature, the assessment of tourism policy is notably scarce, with Gössling (2008) noting that the majority of studies on tourism policy are prescriptive in nature, focusing on recommendations for government action rather than critically evaluating the outcomes and underlying reasons for existing policies. Hazbun (2008) pioneered a distinctive viewpoint on the political economy of the Middle East through the lens of tourism. He elucidates how governmental elites leverage tourism as a tool for participating in globalization, simultaneously shaping it to align with state interests and exert control over their societies (Spiess, A. 2012). It is noteworthy that limited literature addresses the aforementioned dimensions, suggesting that their implications may be perceived as inconsequential. However, the existing research indicates a consistent governmental inclination to shape tourism policies through National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), particularly given the political ramifications in the realm of international relations (Upadhya, A.2012).

The main goal of economic diversification, the revival of cultural heritage, is also a powerful indicator of how quickly international trade and cultural tourism is developing in these Gulf nations (Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). Stephenson (2013) argued that tourism development in the region goes beyond just investing in tourism products, services, and infrastructure. Concurrently, rapid urbanization and the beautification of spaces (i.e. heritagization) pose threats to historical districts and local heritage. (Saleh, A. & Bassil, C. & Safari, A. , 2021). Within policy planning, a tension arises between preserving the past for its inherent value and the demand for development reflecting evolving tourism values. This dilemma is particularly pronounced in the Gulf, where there has been significant heritage loss on an unprecedented scale (Spiess, A. 2012). Hence, Preserving urban heritage holds promise for its rehabilitation, particularly through the lens of heritage tourism, which serves as a significant driver and motivator for regeneration efforts (Boussaa, D. 2014).

Although some of the Gulf states, such as Bahrain show signs of moving away from their image as a vice destination, it is undertaking new efforts to showcase its historical riches, such as the Dilmun civilization, and to preserve its urban heritage through the restoration of old houses and the multifunctional use of spaces (Spiess, A. 2012). Bahrain's endeavors, such as the rejuvenation of Manama souk and the nomination of Muharraq's pearl traders' houses to the UNESCO World Heritage list, underscore the nation's commitment to achieving global acclaim and recognition in cultural tourism vision (Karolak, M. 2012). Saudi Arabia also stands out as an exceptional case in development policy. The Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities (SCTA), the primary body overseeing tourism development in the Kingdom, distinguishes itself from most Gulf institutions with its dedicated leadership, integrity, commitment,

courage, and strong environmental stewardship, supported by a highly qualified educational background. (Spiess, A. 2012).

Hence, cultural tourism is a vital element of Vision 2030 of these Gulf States. This delineates a strategic framework aimed at fostering the development and enhancement of cultural tourism within the region. This initiative embodies a comprehensive approach toward leveraging cultural heritage and identity as pivotal assets for economic growth and sustainable tourism practices. Through a series of targeted goals and objectives, the vision seeks to promote the preservation, promotion, and utilization of cultural resources to bolster tourism offerings. Central to this framework are Heritagization initiatives designed to enhance visitor experiences, facilitate cultural exchange, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the rich cultural tapestry of the Gulf States. Thus, effective implementation strategies are imperative to ensure the long-term success and viability of Vision 2030.

For instance, The Qatar Vision 2030 outlines four pillars for a more developed and prosperous Qatar, with Human and Cultural Development being a central element. This pillar provides a solid rationale for the concerted efforts to establish Qatar and Doha as emerging hubs for culture and knowledge (Alrouf, A. 2016) In the Qatar Vision 2030, "heritagization" is an integral part of the Human and Cultural Development pillar (Fig 14) The vision emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting Qatar's cultural heritage as a means to foster national identity, enhance cultural understanding, and contribute to the country's global standing. Heritage sites and traditions are recognized as valuable assets that can attract both domestic and international visitors, thereby boosting tourism and cultural exchange. The emphasis

on heritagization underscores the commitment of Qatar to preserve its rich cultural legacy while integrating it into modern development strategies.

Along with the Qatar National Vision 2030, the United Arab Emirates' prospects, and Bahrain Vision 2030 highlight a renewed focus on boosting tourism-related enterprises. In line with this, the Gulf nations are investing heavily in the expansion of tourism and hospitality infrastructure, as well as in the growth of airports and transportation networks (Saleh, A. & Bassil, C. & Safari, A. 2021). Similarly, In the Saudi Vision 2030, "heritagization" plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting the kingdom's cultural heritage. Emphasizing the importance of safeguarding historical landmarks and traditions, the vision aims to revitalize cultural sites to boost tourism and diversify the economy. Heritagization is strategically integrated into fostering the cultural identity and raising awareness among the younger generation about Saudi Arabia's rich history, as we will explore in Historic Al Diriyah's case study in the next chapter.

Figure 14: Souq Al Waqef, A Jewel of Innovation and Culture in the Heart of the Gulf. Source- Thediplomaticaffairs.

Heritagization driving the initiative of cultural tourism in the Gulf serves as a significant incentive for the preservation and revitalization of regional cultural heritage (Fig 15). When choosing heritage tourism in Gulf cities, it's vital to proceed cautiously, considering the local traditions and customs of the host community (Boussaa, D. 2014). While tourism can be encouraged, it's important to ensure that the marketing and use of heritage resources do not diminish the city's identity and authenticity. Over-exploitation of sites for mass tourism prioritizes business over cultural preservation. Thus, promoting high-quality local activities can foster a stronger sense of belonging among residents in their communities (Boussaa, D. 2018). Strategies aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage within the cultural tourism industry are recommended as they provide integrity to the process of heritagization as the demand for cultural heritage tourism attractions and offerings continues to grow steadily with The Vision 2030.

Figure 15: Al Fahidi District of Dubai has Transformed into a Cultural Tourism Spot after the Heritagization Process. Source-Viator.

3.3 Impact of Heritagization on the Cultural Identity in the Gulf Region

Globally, researchers have acknowledged the significance of a processual understanding in heritage studies since the early 1990s. According to this interpretation, World Heritage sites are intentionally undergoing a process known as "heritagization" rather than being intrinsic remnants of the past (Mai Le,2021). Furthermore, heritagization is both tangible and ethereal, affecting both cultural behaviors and items (Turgeon, L. 2009, 2010; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). To be an active participant in the local, national, and worldwide arena, draw tourists, and forge identities that can be mobilized on a local, national, and international scale, every community, group, and nation, heritagization has the ability to recognize and highlight the cultural identity for the common good (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013).

In recent years, Gulf countries are increasingly depending on heritagization to enhance tourism and cultural engagement, leading to significant transformations in historic urban areas and the revitalization of neglected urban centers. Consequently, the concept of heritagization, which views heritage as a transformational process rather than a static entity, introduces new and complex challenges. The lessons gleaned from trends and best practices in cultural and heritage districts worldwide underscore the importance of authenticity, identity, and experience in shaping successful cultural destinations (Halcrow, 2015; AlShaikh, A. 2017).

Hence, the concept of heritagization in the Gulf region presents an intriguing dynamic between modernity and heritage preservation. While the intention may be to represent heritage in a contemporary context, the challenge lies in maintaining the identity amidst the evolving landscape of development (AlShaikh, A. 2017). Heritagization offers a structured approach to rejuvenating the historic urban centers in the Gulf, transforming them into vibrant, livable spaces that harmoniously blend the old with the new. It emphasizes the preservation and revitalization of historic sites, enhancing their economic potential and tourism appeal. These newly developing tourism initiatives address contemporary demands and correspond with tourism imaginaries (Gravari-Barbas and Graburn, N.. 2011, 2012, 2016), significantly contributing to the revitalization of the tourism sector.

It should also be emphasized again that, since conservation can only be accomplished through the appropriate and modern use of buildings and urban space, development through functional restructuring and conservation should be seen as two supporting and complementary parameters rather than as two opposing ones (Doratli, N., Hoşkara, S. Ö., Vehbi, B. O., & Fasli, M. 2007). Introducing entirely new features within such

regeneration or reconstruction urban development requires careful consideration and strategic planning. Both can reflect their historical narrative and cultural identity with each being reliant on the other for preservation.

Yet Conservation should not be rushed; it's typically a slow and meticulous process requiring full engagement from society. It involves ongoing care and maintenance by those who identify with the value of conservation. Hence, conservation is an endless cycle — children learn from their predecessors and continue the tradition, passing down the knowledge to future generations (Khan, F. 2015). This approach promotes sustainable development, balancing conservation with modern functionality and ensuring environmental and cultural sustainability. Collaborative planning involving stakeholders and global recognition through bodies like UNESCO further bolsters the effort. Heritagization thus becomes a catalyst for preserving the region's rich heritage while fostering economic growth and cultural identity.

Heritagization also has the potential to rejuvenate heritage, infusing vitality into myths via festivals, museums, and conservation initiatives (Isnart 2008; Tapia 2020; Thouki, A. 2022). The shared division among governments, investors, and visitors has fostered the narrative of rehabilitating cultural identity as a means of economic revival, particularly in developing nations. This narrative emphasizes viewing the remnants of the past as avenues for economic rebirth, with heritagization emerging as a potential tool to generate and stimulate the experience economy (AlShaikh, A. 2017). Thus, heritagization, if adopted appropriately seems to be a tool for preventing conflict, identity loss, and rash economic progress (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013).

These days, heritage is a subject of dispute and negotiation rather than a mutually agreed upon purpose (Gravari-Barbas and Veschambre, V. 2003; Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Thus, heritagization is mostly concerned with the cultural outputs of the present and is not just about the past itself (Daher, R., and Maffi 2014). Rather, it is about how the past is used in the present (Gillot, L., Maffi, I. & Trémon, A.-C. 2013). Within the practice of heritage-making, and in the process of understanding the heritagization methods employed by various regions, there exists an intrinsic critical pedagogy. This involves highlighting how knowledge, identities, and values are generated within and among various social relationships (Giroux, 2011). By actively engaging with, analyzing, and elucidating the diverse possibilities inherent in heritagization as a form of citizenship, it becomes feasible to critically assess past histories and practices. This enables moral judgments to be made regarding what constitutes a "valued inheritance" or "cultural identity" that can be shared with others and passed down to future generations (Ashley, S.L. 2014). Nyaupane and Timothy (2010) discovered that as residents become more aware of their heritage, their positive attitude toward heritage preservation also grows. This awareness of cultural identity is also shaped by various factors such as social media, education, and personal experiences. To further enhance this awareness of cultural identity, it's crucial to implement targeted educational and capacity-building programs that emphasize the significance of heritage preservation and its positive outcomes, tailored to the specific context of the community (Al-Tokhais, A. 2021). Having said that, cultural identity revival through the heritagization process can impact both, increased awareness and opportunities for the government and the local inhibiting community.

3.3.1 Cultural Identity in Flux: Perspectives and Challenges

As rapid growth and urbanization persist in the Gulf, maintaining a cultural identity for each city poses a significant challenge for architects, urban planners, and researchers. It is crucial to bypass fleeting trends and instead leverage the heritage assets of the Gulf to reestablish the cultural identity and sense of place in today's and tomorrow's global cities. Maintaining the identity and vibrancy of the historic center is becoming a crucial cultural concern for both current and future Gulf cities (Boussaa, D. 2018). The conflict between the lost cultural identity and newly developed identity is at its height in the Gulf, where both issues are relevant, and finding a way to balance these two forces is essential for the future portrayal of the cultural identity of the historic Gulf districts. However, since the late 1990s, when the major cities had become well-established, a new cultural approach that emphasizes heritage appreciation and seeks to idealize a "return" to regional values and customs has started to emerge (Helmy 2008, 29–36; Simone Ricca 2018). Hence, the importance of integrating culture into development planning is growing as a result of globalization and the rise in the competitiveness of metropolitan and regional destinations. One effect of globalization is the increasing homogeneity of societies and identities (Zaidan, 2016; Zaidan, E. and Abulibdeh, A. 2020). Concepts of cultural identity manifest through and circulate around these dimensions, which are dynamic rather than static, evolving over time to reflect the array of social and cultural values within and surrounding a community (AlSulaiti, F. 2013).

Cultural Identity should be a key consideration in city development plans, with design and planning tools evaluated for their role in preserving this identity. The planning principles need updating to address changes in the existing city and adapt to new design requirements. Prioritizing respect for cultural identity enhances the quality of

regeneration of historic districts and should be a central element in urban planning tools. Given the rapid pace of urban transformation, it's crucial to regularly assess cultural identity to identify any shifts that could jeopardize the city's character. A coordinated effort involving all stakeholders is essential to ensure the preservation and uniqueness of the cultural identity. In a globalized world, identity becomes central to people's lives and is shaped by their perceptions of and associations with cities. Identity demands careful consideration and study of its guiding principles rather than merely copying things verbatim from the past (Boussaa, D .2018). Thus the reclaimed identity ought to be considered not just in terms of physical characteristics but also take in account the intangible aspects such as the essence and the aura of the existing historical place.

On the one hand, Mohammad bin Shams, a junior engineer involved in urban regeneration highlights that the current trend in revitalizing souqs and other historic districts, can bring a growing focus on cultural preservation and thus maintaining the cultural identity. On the other hand, Fahad Al-AbdulJalil, who serves as the president of the Kuwait Heritage Society, expressed his dissatisfaction with the new layout of Souq al Mubarakiya, an urban regeneration project in Kuwait, where a similar approach is adopted, stating that it fails to capture the traditional ambiance of cultural identity that visitors typically experience in the narrow and historic pathways. According to him, the proposed design of the "new regeneration" poses a threat to the historic souq's cultural identity as a heritage site. Al-Abdul Jalil believes that the proposed changes will be incongruent with the historical Kuwaiti structures that embody the essence of the location, eroding the market's cultural ties to Kuwaiti society. Dalal Al-Dayel, a historian and the founder of the Tura Initiative dedicated to preserving oral history, also criticized the new designs. In her view, these designs

encroach upon the collective memory of the Kuwaiti nation and its individuals. The sentiments expressed by both Al-AbdulJalil and Al-Dayel highlight the concerns about preserving the cultural and historical significance of the historic district amid proposed alterations that pose a threat to cultural identity (Ke, Y.,2022). Similarly, Al Misbah, involved in the urban landscaping of the historic districts in Bahrain, highlights that this approach has limited heritage to just aesthetics and that is what just meets the eyes instead of having a profound connection with the cultural identity that continues to suffer due to urban modernization.

This can further be argued by considering that cultural identity cannot simply be created by adding or removing substances that were not part of the authentic existing identity. Similarly, cultural identity does not return or reestablish the original state in such cases, but this process reveals only the present state of the cultural identity that once existed. As Alrouf explained this by stating that the revitalization of the historic district of Souq Al Waqif's development was an intriguing urban experience that combined the authentic, the authentic fake, and the fake using Eco's notion of Faith in Fake (Eco, U. 1986, Alraouf, A.2020). According to Baudrillard (1993), the result of the new marketing paradigm is the consumption of the city as a spectacle. Building a persona or a picture of the past is a component of what Baudrillard refers to as "reality by proxy," or an environment that is stimulated. Identity takes on a "bizarreness of uniqueness" that is expressed through form, color, texture, and placement (Alrouf, A.2014).

Henceforth, an attentive and crucial approach is required in tracking the reclamation of cultural identity, its awareness on a national level, and the preservation of cultural heritage to encourage pride in regional customs while welcoming progress. The future

course of Gulf regions' cultural identity is also called into question by this rapid increase in the heritagization process, which makes it difficult to strike a balance between preserving authentic or existing cultural identity and the newly produced cultural identity. Since Identity is dynamic and not static, thus it cannot be confined to a specific time. Therefore, to sustain the identity of a city in a global world, different approaches need to be considered. These different actions to succeed should be inspired by the local traditions and the past (Boussaa, D., Alattar, D. and Nafi, S. 2021).

In a similar vein, any strategy for cultural identity revival should include keeping a permanent resident population. This can be accomplished by offering public services, security, and rehabilitation for the current housing stock. The district's life will end with any attempt to remove housing from any urban regeneration program. Though their goal is to strengthen a place's identity, these guidelines also ensure that the place identity is authentic and not exploited only for the quick consumption of intangible cultural assets. In order to restore the cultural identity and feeling of place in the global metropolis of today and tomorrow, it is imperative to steer clear of trends and instead make use of the Gulf heritage treasures (Boussaa, D. 2018).

3.3.2 Authenticity of Cultural Identity in Question

The discourse surrounding authentic heritage has given rise to the concept of heritagization, driven by concerns over the social and environmental impacts of modernity and globalization. Authenticity plays a crucial role in making cultural destinations unique and appealing to travelers. However, in the pursuit of authenticity, there has been a tendency to fabricate cultural assets, leading to the creation of staged authentic experiences. These experiences are often met with disapproval from both the local community and cultural tourists. This ongoing discourse between heritagization and authenticity raises questions reminiscent of Ashworth's (2009) critical inquiry:

does the degradation of heritage sites stem from tourists themselves, or is it rather a consequence of inadequate management (Thouki, A. 2022). Picton (2010) highlights that the absence of deliberation regarding authenticity has fostered a belief that, given the fluid nature of memory, authenticity cannot be firmly tethered to the past.

On one hand, (Selfslagh, B. 2002) argues that authenticity in cultural heritage is not renewable, because it cannot be rebuilt once it has been destroyed. 'Not only must new work be 'distinct' or 'distinguishable' or 'recognizable' 'from the original', but it also 'must integrate harmoniously with the whole' (ICOMOS, 1964: Articles 9, 12 and 15) The Operational Guidelines (OG) forbid its reconstruction since it poses a threat to "authenticity" (UNESCO-WHC, 2017: Paragraph 86). (Khalaf, R.W. 2017). A property that has been rebuilt is a modern recreation, and as such, it should be evaluated to see if it still qualifies for world heritage status. Thus, this is only acceptable if adequate documentation is available and conjecture is minimal (Khalaf, R.W. 2017). On the other hand, scholars argue that 'heritage undergoes a continuous process of evolution' (Japan ICOMOS, 2014: 2) and reflects 'changing values over time' (Bandarin, F. and Van Oers,R. 2012: 178) because it can be created and re-created 'to meet the needs of a changing world' (Lowenthal, D. 1985: 289). The spiritual aura can be conveyed to new replicas, meaning authenticity lies in continuity, not solely in the material form (UNESCO 2007, 4). (Thouki, A. 2022) Therefore, decisions involving authentic cultural identity must be made from the perspective of the present. This also impacts the decision on whether to restore or [re]build damaged tangible heritage or leave it in its current state of ruin and if the decision should be based on the demands of the present rather than those of the past or the future.

Heritage's response to authenticity is, therefore, more than just a policy, it is largely a reaction to the requirements of the present (Nilson, T. & Thorell, K.,2018).

This approach challenges the current contemporary aspects of authentic cultural identity but doesn't debunk the significance of authenticity and rather adapts a different perspective towards it. In light of this analysis, if a property continues to be culturally significant and to have a 'function in the life of the community' – which is the wording of the WH Convention (UNESCO, 1972: Article 5) – its authenticity would be supported. "Authenticity is never negotiated and defined in the past; it is always a quality of the present." (Bortolotto, C. 2007: 42), due to this it is a dynamic "human construct." (Holtorf, C. 2001: 287). Finding a balance between the needs of the occupants for continuous occupation and the needs for continued conservation inevitably results in a compromise. The historic structure must then be modified to accommodate its current or projected use (Burra Charter 1999:2). Heritage is however a contemporary re-creation (Grimmer, A.E. 2017: 226). Our profession has reached a level of emancipation that allows it to position itself with strength in the broader conservation community, reach out to different parties involved, the community, and promote its ideals (Mairesse, F & Peters, R.F. 2019). Influenced by differing views on the question of authenticity, Karlström (2015) explores the concept of authenticity, urging future research to reevaluate this 'ambiguous' concept using 'performative authenticity.' This approach prioritizes embodied experience over material-based and constructivist views, which often overlook alternative worldviews grounded in popular practices (Karlström, A. 2015; Thouki, A. 2022).

Hence, the authenticity of the cultural identity of the Gulf region cannot be viewed as a materialistic aesthetic issue divorced from the social, cultural, economic, and

environmental dynamics of urbanization if any authentic outcome is to be realized (Boussaa, D. 2018). Consequently, there arises the argument that whether or not there is a definitive concept of authentic cultural identity in the Gulf region (AlShaikh, A. 2017). Thus, the authenticity of cultural identity should not be viewed as the necessity to maintain monuments in their original state indefinitely. Instead, it should represent the intricate process of evolution and recurrence that encompasses all historical periods, including the present (Hanif, S. 2023). Thus, the revived identity as long as it continues to adhere to most if not all the aspects of authenticity, can still be categorized as the cultural identity of an authentic historic district if not an authentic cultural identity of the historic district.

Chapter 4

EVALUATION OF THE LOSS OF CULTURAL

IDENTITY AMIDST HERITAGIZATION

4.1 Research Methodology

In this research, a qualitative approach is utilized to explore new research questions and objectives concerning a novel phenomenon of heritagization. In the realm of cultural heritage research, the mixed methodology can serve as a robust methodological approach particularly suited to investigating the revival of cultural identity via the heritagization or heritage-making process. Such an approach allows for an open exploration of the intricate and multifaceted processes inherent in heritagization, encompassing motivations, stakeholder involvement, practices, and resultant outcomes. This method facilitates the identification and development of emergent themes, categories, and relational dynamics central to the phenomenon under study. Through systematic data collection and analysis, it aids in the formulation of intervening factors that encapsulate the complexities and nuances of heritagization within cultural heritage conservation.

Thus, the research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of research problems. Quantitative methods, such as surveys, were utilized to gather numerical responses from a selected sample,

allowing for statistical analysis to generalize findings to a broader population. The quantitative approach in this study specifically, measured the awareness of the cultural identity, identifying its loss due to post-oil discovery modern developments that erased the previously existing historic districts, Which in turn led to ongoing urban regeneration efforts in the Gulf region trying to revive the cultural identity.

Additionally, the aim is to identify the emerging heritagization approach and its role in reclaiming the lost cultural identity in the Gulf region. To achieve this the survey was used as a tool to gauge the awareness of the local community residing in the historic districts of the Gulf region inclusive of nationals, immigrants, residents, and tourists. The survey was divided into 3 parts, first one categorized the participants in terms of socio-cultural aspects. The second part includes the Likert scale, to specify the level of agreement to the given statement in five points 1) Strongly Disagree 2)Disagree 3) Neutral/not sure 4) Agree 5)Strongly Agree. The third part focused more on the general statements emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage, and participants' willingness to engage and contribute to the heritage-making process, thus identifying the awareness of the term "Heritagization". See Appendix A.

To determine the correct sample size, Daniel and Terells's formula(explained below), was used to determine the sufficient number of participants to understand the required awareness level of the raised issue. The software Jamovi version 2.5.5, designed for statistical data analysis, is used in this study. to evaluate the significant correlation between the participants and, the Gulf country that they are from. This provided a better understanding of which of the six Gulf countries (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman) has a better understanding of the ongoing reclamation efforts of the cultural identity within the "heritagization" context. In

determining the appropriate sample size for this investigation (Equation 1), it was

assumed that the method formulated by Daniel and Terrell (1995) for applications with

finite populations would be the most effective technique.

Equation 1: Daniel and Terrell formula (Daniel & Terrell, 1995)

$$n \geq \frac{Z^2 \; x \; N \; x \; p \; x \; q}{N \; x \; D^2 + Z^2 x \; p \; x \; q}$$

n = Sample size, Z = Confidence coefficient (z = 1.645 for 90% confidence level), N = Population size, p = Proportion of the sample in the population (as the proportion of the sample in the population was unknown initially and due to the lack of a preliminary investigation, values p and q were taken equal to each other and 50%), q = 1-p = 0.5, D = Sampling error (% 10)

According to the latest census data of the areas, the population in the historic districts

was estimated as follows:

Population of Historic AL Diriyah, Saudi Arabia - 74, 000   (dgda.gov.sa. 2023).

Population of Al Muharraq, Bahrain- 263,370   (ceicdata.com. 2020).

Population of Sharq, Kuwait City- 14,700   (Iiab. me. 2019).

Population of Souq waqif, old Doha, Qatar- 679   (Wikipedia. 2024).

Population of Al Baraha, UAE- 24,373   (Population Bulletin Emirate of

Dubai 2018, 2018).

Population of Muscat, Oman, - 230,881   (citypopulation.de. 2020).

$$n \geq \frac{(1.645)^2 \; x \; 371{,}003 \; x \; (0.5) \; x \; (0.5)}{371{,}003 x \; (0.10)^2 + (1.645)^2 x \; (0.5) \; x \; (0.5)}$$

$$n \geq 273$$

According to this formula, the calculated value of "n" was 273.

Expected number of volunteers: 273

Table 2: Table Illustrating Where Participants are From and Where Do They Currently Reside

Gulf Countries	No of Participants	Participants Residing
Bahrain	57	64
Saudi Arabia	44	52
Qatar	9	9
Kuwait	16	24
United Arab Emirates	11	12
Oman	7	7
Expatriates, Immigrants, and Tourists	56	

The survey was distributed to over 273 participants; however, only 202 responses were received. Nonetheless, the primary objective of the sample size was to target participants currently living in historic districts or those who previously resided there including the urban peripheries of the historic districts. Understanding these historic districts has become increasingly challenging due to rapid oil-driven modernization, which has blurred boundaries and integrated new developments, further extending the boundaries of historic districts. This modernization has also led to the establishment of newly built settlements that stretch to previously barren lands not originally part of these historic districts. Therefore, the population sizes mentioned above are based on the census targeting entire cities with new margins, where the original historic districts constitute only a portion of these areas. Consequently, the respondent size of 202 can be justified, as the survey aimed to focus on residents of historic districts, avoiding the interpretation of newly emerged high towers and skyscrapers residents, which have minimal relevance to the cultural identity of the Gulf region.

The number of experts' opinions needed for research on a particular topic can vary depending on several factors. There is no fixed rule or predetermined number that

applies universally. The appropriate number of experts to include in your research will depend on the specific objectives of your study, the depth of analysis required, and the availability of experts in the field.

In general, researchers aim for a sufficient number of experts to ensure diversity and representativeness of perspectives, while also achieving data saturation. Data saturation refers to the point at which collecting additional interviews or opinions does not yield substantially new or different insights. Hence, structured interviews included 10-12 questions and targeted 5 stakeholders, 5 academicians, and 5 of the local community members.

Ten interviews were conducted in handwritten form, while the remaining 5 were audio-recorded with verbal consent obtained to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were purposively selected from the Gulf region and were briefed about the research question and the purpose of the research. Interview questions focused on the cultural identity of the Gulf region, its disappearance post-oil modernism, the reclamation efforts by the government, and the awareness of the term Heritagization. The interviews were analyzed by identifying key themes through coding, conducting thematic analysis, and interpreting the data as selecting relevant quotes and examples helps support findings. The analysis was reported concisely, considering ethical guidelines and ensuring confidentiality. This process enables a comprehensive understanding of the experts' and stakeholders' opinions, contributing to research on preserving and promoting cultural heritage in the Gulf region. By following these steps, the researcher aims to effectively analyze the interviews and derive meaningful insights that will contribute to the research on the reclamation of the cultural identity of the Gulf region.

Lastly, as noted by Creswell (2013), a case study methodology was employed to delve deeply into the subject, gathering insights through interviews and observations. Qualitative methods enabled the collection of narrative data, facilitating a profound understanding of social phenomena that may not be easily explained through statistical analysis. Historic Al Diriyah was selected as the case study to further explore the emerging phenomenon of "Heritagization" amidst the urban revival developments in the Gulf region. In 2010, the At-Turaif District of Al Diriyah gained recognition as a World Heritage Site due to its fulfillment of Criteria (iv), (v), and (vi). Criterion (iv) was met as it showcases exemplary Najdi architectural style and decoration, utilizing traditional building techniques suitable for the environment. Criterion (v) was satisfied by its representation as a remarkable desert settlement. Criterion (vi) acknowledges its historical significance as the initial unifying force in the Arabian Peninsula (Al-Tokhais, A. 2021). Since then the whole historic district has undergone a massive urban regeneration project aimed at identifying, highlighting, and showcasing its cultural identity via the process of heritagization and thus turned into a branded heritage destination for cultural tourism and cultural activities.

4.2 Survey: Gauging the Awareness of Cultural Identity in the Gulf Region

Jamovi version 2.5.5 was employed to summarize all conceptual model constructs and analyze the data collected from the participant survey. Jamovi was utilized to statistically analyze, categorize, and evaluate responses based on each country in the Gulf region. This included assessments of cultural identity awareness, determination of cultural identity loss due to post-oil modernism, ongoing regeneration efforts, and the awareness of the term "heritagization." For further details, refer to the Appendix A.

4.2.1 Socio-Cultural Factors

1. Age
201 responses
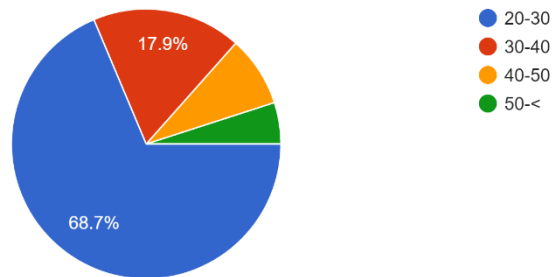
Figure 16: Age Group Of Participants.

68 % of the survey participants were from the 20-30 age range and 18 % were between 30-40. The remaining 12 % were of the aged group. This highlights that the majority of the participants are young adults and thus have only witnessed the post-oil modern era of the Gulf region (Fig 16).

2. Gender
197 responses
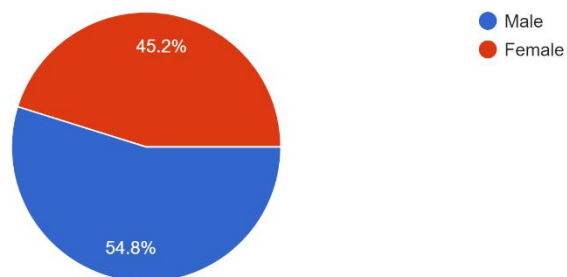
Figure 17: Gender Difference.

Almost 55 % of the participants were male and 45 % were female. This means there was just a 10 percent difference in the gender category eliminating any higher possibility of gender biases (Fig 17).

3. Country
200 responses
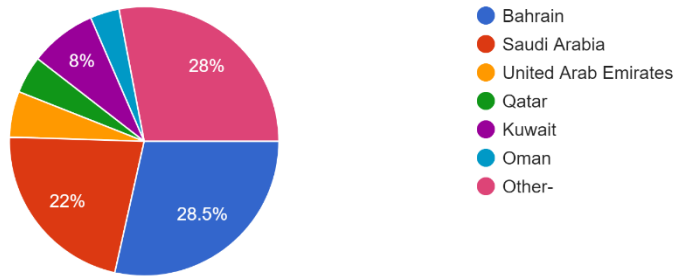
Figure 18: Country Participants Are From.

28.5 percent of the residents are from Bahrain, 28 % are expats living in these Gulf countries 22% are from Saudi Arabia, out of which 15 % are residents of Al Diriyah (case study). 8 % of the participants were from Kuwait and the remaining participants which is less than 15 % were from Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (Fig 18).

4. Where do you currently reside?
201 responses
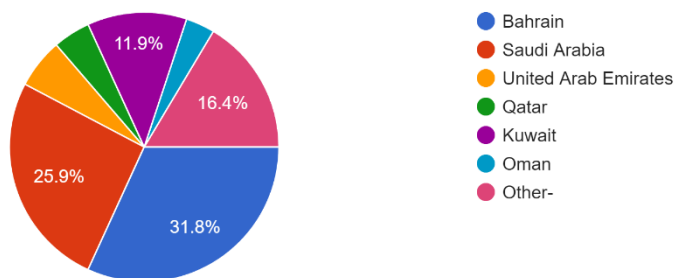
Figure 19: Participants' Country of Residence.

31% of the participants reside in Bahrain 25% reside in Saudi Arabia and 11% reside in Kuwait. 16 % are either former residents of the Gulf region or students studying abroad (Fig 19).

In the following part, the 5-point Likert scale Questions will be analyzed.

4.2.2 Awareness Of Cultural Identity

1. Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the nation?
200 responses
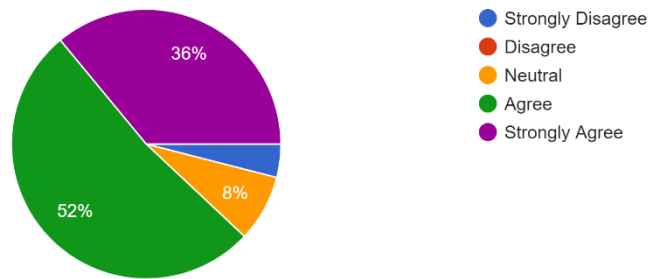
Figure 20: Cultural Heritage and Identity's Relation.

52% of the participants agree and 36 % strongly agree. This illustrates that most of the participants agree with the fact that cultural heritage plays a significant role in shaping the identity of a nation. This highlights that cultural heritage is in fact a vital factor in the formation of cultural identity (Fig 20).

2. Do you think that culture and identity are co related?
201 responses
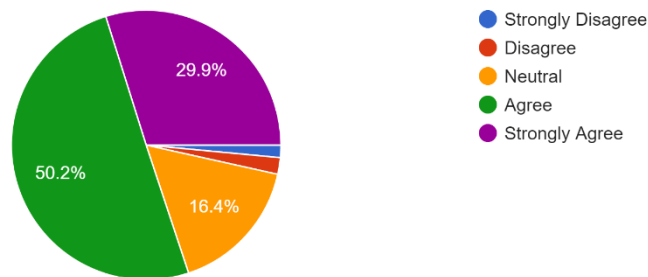
Figure 21: Awareness of the Cultural Identity.

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50 % of the participants agree and around 30 percent strongly agree. This highlights that the majority of the participants believe that culture and identity are co-related in contrast to just 16 % who responded neutrally and less than 4 % disagree with the statement. The positive response from the majority of the participants also illustrates their strong awareness of the components of cultural identity (Fig 21).

The awareness of cultural identity was assessed through the distribution of frequencies, resulting in an average awareness level of 7 out of 10. This analysis was conducted using Jamovi to evaluate responses to Likert scale questions (Table 3) (Fig 22).

Table 3: Participants Response Towards the Impact of Modernization

Frequencies of Cultural Identity CTotal			
Cultural Identitiy CTotal	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
2	2	1.0 %	1.0 %
4	4	2.0 %	3.0 %
5	3	1.5 %	4.5 %
6	8	4.0 %	8.5 %
7	35	17.4 %	25.9 %
8	66	32.8 %	58.7 %
9	40	19.9 %	78.6 %
10	43	21.4 %	100.0 %
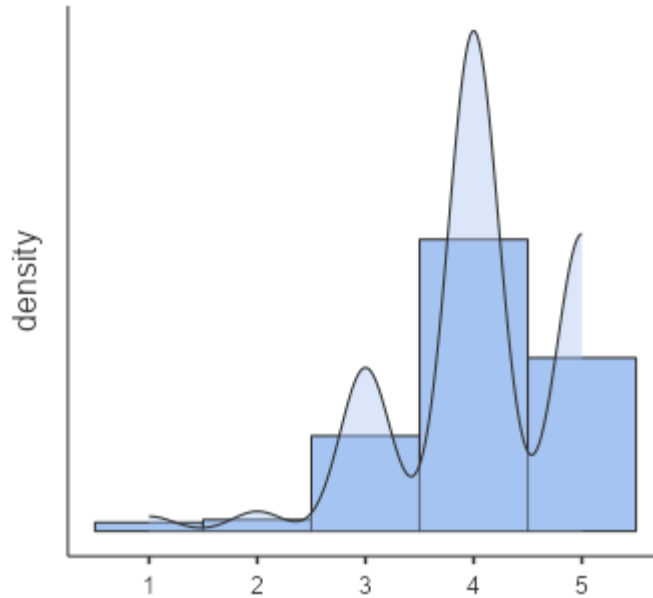
Figure 22: The graph Illustrates the Table of Frequencies Mentioned Above.

4.2.3 Impact Of Modernization On Cultural Identity

3. The discovery of oil has effected the Cultural Heritage of the Gulf region negatively?
201 responses
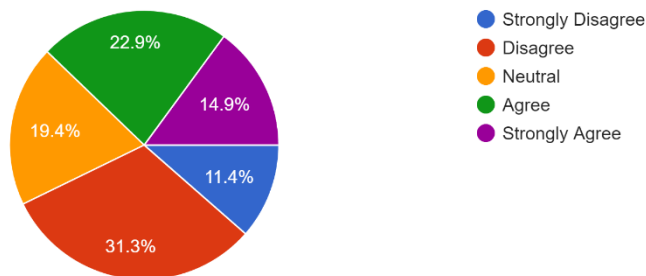
Figure 23: Post-Oil Effect on the Cultural Identity.

Interestingly only 23 % percent of the participants agree and around 15 percent strongly agree that the discovery of oil has impacted the cultural heritage negatively. This means only 38 percent agree with the given statement. while, 31 % disagree and 11 % percent strongly disagree, making the disagreement 42 %. The remaining 20 % opted for a neutral view. This evaluation presents that most of the participants (as we

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witness the youngsters 20-30 range) believe that cultural heritage was not really effected by the oil discovery and thus they do not necessarily see it as a negative impact (Fig 23).
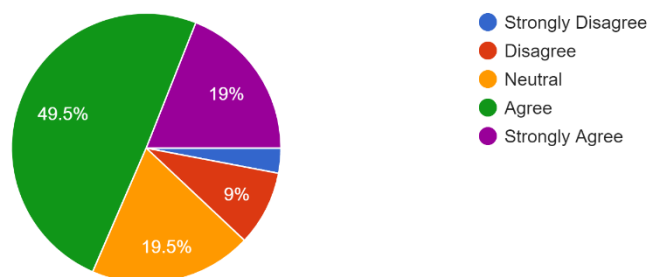
Figure 24: Modernization Impact on the Cultural Identity.

Approximately 50 % agree and 19 % strongly agree. Around 20 % opt for neutral and only 9 % disagree. This is particularly intriguing as the modernization is led by the discovery of oil in the Gulf region. Although the majority of the participants disagreed with the negative impact of oil discovery in the previous question, they still promptly believed that modernization affected the cultural heritage of the Gulf region (Fig 24 & Fig 25) (Table 4).

Table 4: Illustrating the Impact of Modernization that Erased the Cultural Heritage of the Gulf Region.

Frequencies of Impact Of Modernization On Cultural Identity			
Impact Of Modernization On Cultural Identity	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
2	4	2.0 %	2.0 %
3	7	3.5 %	5.5 %

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Frequencies of Impact Of Modernization On Cultural Identity

Impact Of Modernization On Cultural Identity	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
4	10	5.0 %	10.4 %
5	26	12.9 %	23.4 %
6	53	26.4 %	49.8 %
7	27	13.4 %	63.2 %
8	37	18.4 %	81.6 %
9	27	13.4 %	95.0 %
10	10	5.0 %	100.0 %
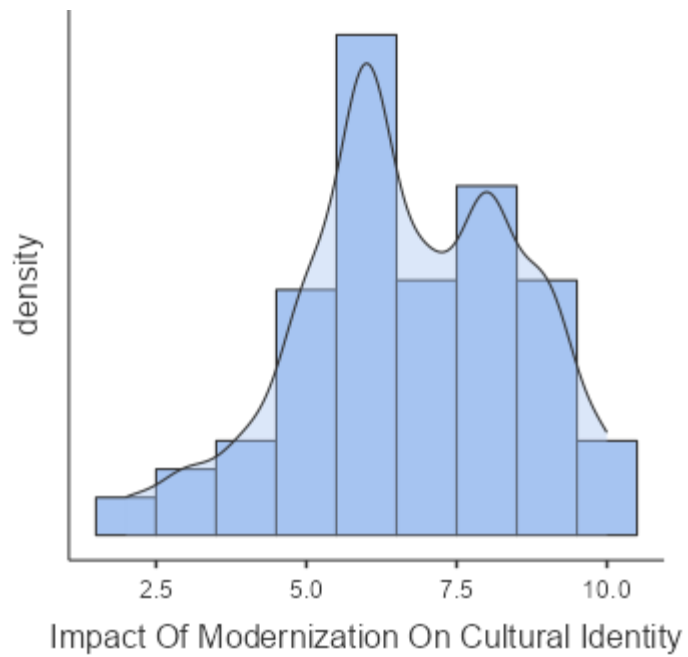
Figure 25: Graph Showing the Response Rate of the Impact of Modernization on Gulf's Cultural Identity.

4.2.4 Ongoing Efforts to Preserve the Cultural Identity

5. There have been successful initiatives in the Gulf region that balance modernization with the preservation of Cultural Heritage?
200 responses
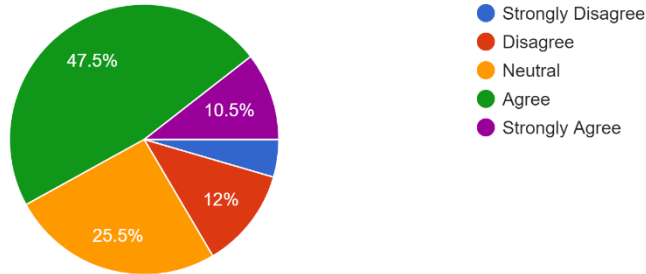
Figure 26: Initiatives for Cultural Preservation.

47 % of the participants do agree and 10% strongly agree that there are successful initiatives in the Gulf region to strike a balance between modernization and preservation of the cultural heritage. In contrast to agreement, only 12 % disagree and 25 % are neutral which shows their hesitancy or lack of clarity with the matter (Fig 26).

6. Do you believe Cultural Heritage can influence your values, beliefs, and traditions?
200 responses
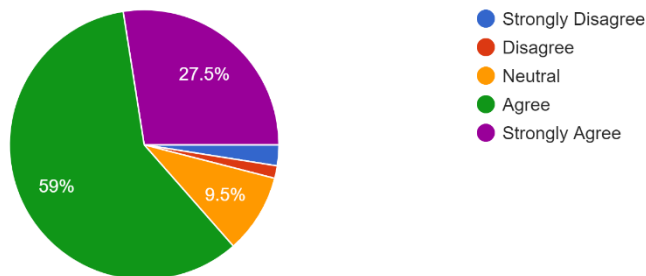
Figure 27: Influence of Cultural Identity.

59 % agree and around 28 % strongly agree while less than 10 percent are neutral in their response. The majority of the participant i.e. 87 % agree with the fact that cultural heritage can influence their values, beliefs, and traditions. This underscores the participants' strong awareness of the significant impact cultural heritage has on their lives. They recognize how deeply cultural heritage influences their identity, community cohesion, and sense of belonging, highlighting its influence (Fig 27).

7. Do you agree that Cultural Heritage should be protected by law?
199 responses
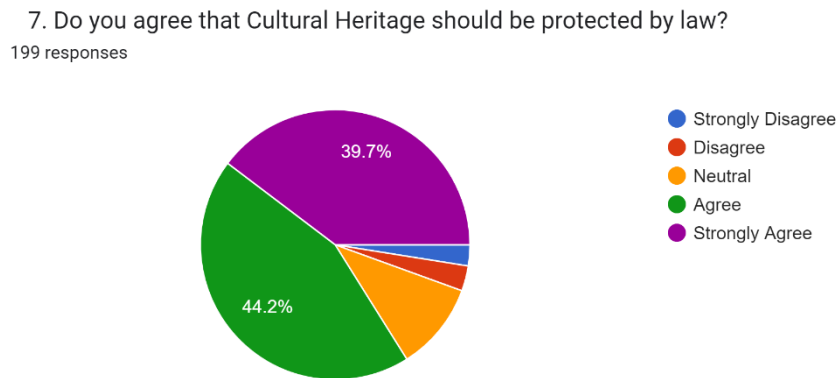
Figure 28: Need for the Protection of Cultural Heritagr by the Law.

44 % of participants agree and around 40 percent strongly agree that cultural heritage should be protected by law. This demonstrates that the majority of participants favor legal protection for cultural heritage. They believe that enacting laws to safeguard cultural heritage is crucial for preserving their history, traditions, and identity (Fig 28).

8. Do you think Government or stakeholders needs to take certain actions in order to preserve Cultural Heritage for future generations?

201 responses
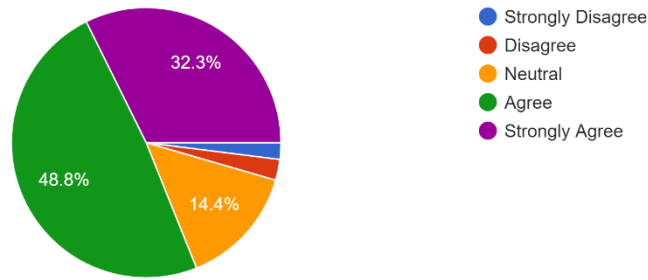
Figure 29: Actions for the Future Generations.

Almost half of the participants agree and 32 percent strongly agree that the stakeholders need to take certain actions in order to preserve the cultural heritage for future generations. This means that 82 percent of the participants believe that the government and stakeholders ought to take certain actions for preserving the cultural heritage ensuring that these cultural assets are maintained and respected for future generations (Fig 29).

9. Cultural Heritage is important for future generations. Do you agree with this statement?

201 responses
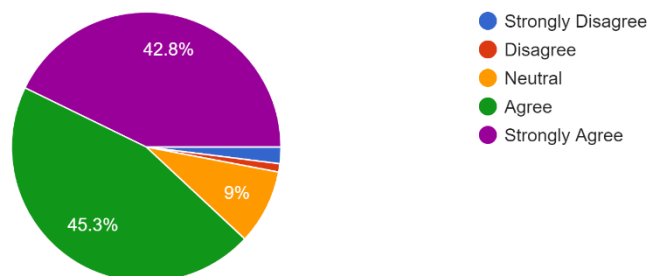
Figure 30: Importance for the Future Generations.

Similarly, 45 % of participants agree and 43 % strongly agree that cultural heritage is important for future generations. This implies that the majority of the participants are

aware that cultural heritage is crucial for our future generations (Fig 30 & 31) (Table

5).

Table 5: Participants Reponse Towards the Ongoing Cultural Identity Preservation
Efforts in the Gulf Region.

Frequencies of Ongoing Efforts To Preserve Cultural Identity			
Ongoing cultural preservation efforts	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
5	3	1.5 %	1.5 %
13	1	0.5 %	2.0 %
14	3	1.5 %	3.5 %
15	10	5.0 %	8.5 %
16	4	2.0 %	10.4 %
17	5	2.5 %	12.9 %
18	16	8.0 %	20.9 %
19	32	15.9 %	36.8 %
20	37	18.4 %	55.2 %
21	27	13.4 %	68.7 %
22	26	12.9 %	81.6 %
23	23	11.4 %	93.0 %
24	12	6.0 %	99.0 %
25	2	1.0 %	100.0 %
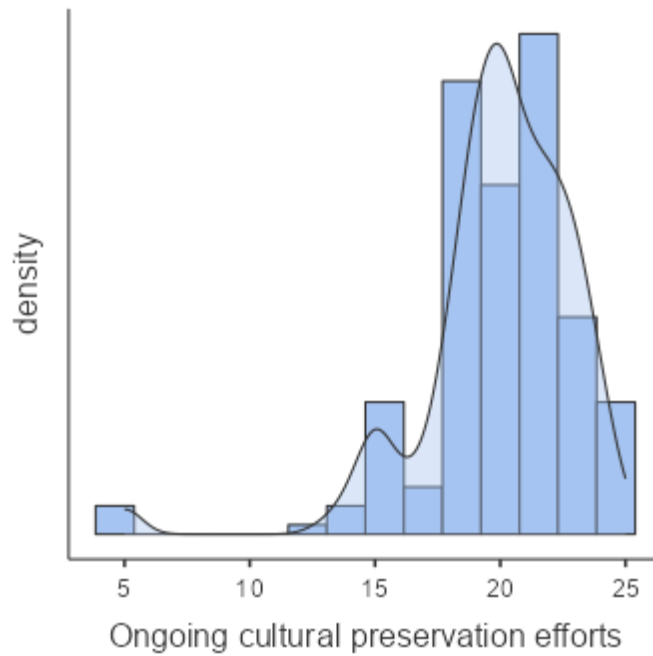
Figure 31: Graph Illustrating that Most of the Participants Scored 20 Out of 25 on the Likert scale.

4.2.5 Raising the Awareness of Cultural Identity

10. Do you think that cultural activities and events can be helpful in increasing the awareness of the importance of Cultural Heritage?
199 responses

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

32.7%

57.8%

7%
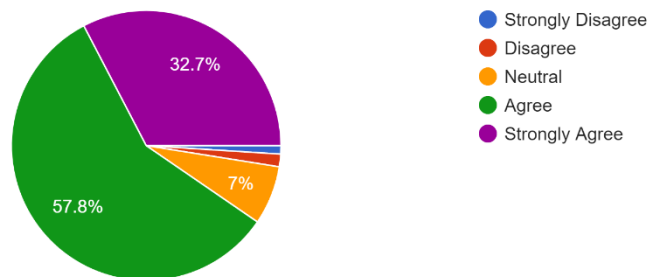
Figure 32: Increasing the Awareness of the Cultural Identity.

Almost 58 percent agree and 33 percent strongly agree with the statement. This means more than 90 percent of the participants agree that cultural activities and events can be helpful in increasing awareness of the importance of cultural heritage. This illustrates

how crucial these cultural activities are for the strengthening of participant's awareness about the cultural heritage and thus strengthen their sense of cultural identity (Fig 32).

7. Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?
194 responses
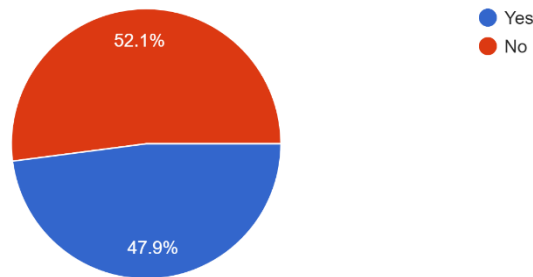
Figure 33: Participation in the Recent Cultural Events.

Yet the majority of the participants, 52 % state that they have not participated in the cultural heritage activities in contrast to 48 %, who did participate. This prompts the question of whether cultural activities are indeed lacking, or if existing events fail to capture participants' interest or are simply not well-publicized. It suggests a need to evaluate the effectiveness of current cultural events and their promotion to ensure they can reach out to a wider population and attract them effectively (Fig 33).
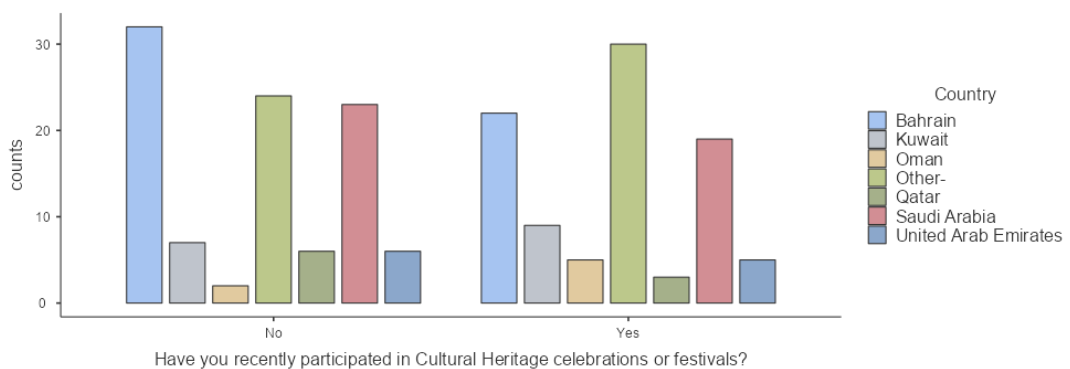
Figure 34: Graph Showing theRecent Participation of the Participants in the Cultural Events Categorized by Each Country of the Gulf Region.

The graph above highlights that since participation in cultural events can be a strong indicator of the awareness of cultural identity and sense of belonging, it varies from country to country(Fig 34).

9. Can technology be utilized to preserve and promote Cultural Heritage effectively?
193 responses
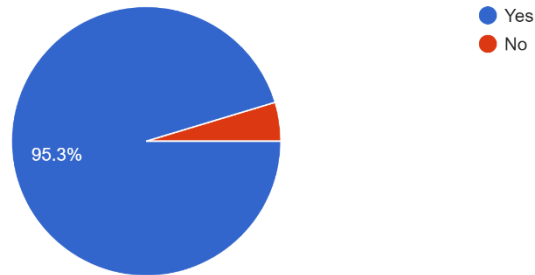
Figure 35: Digital Preservation of theCultural Identity.

An enormous percentage of participants 95 % believe that modern technology can be utilized to preserve as well as promote cultural heritage effectively. This calls for innovative digital strategies to raise the awareness of cultural heritage and thus impact their cultural identity (Fig35).

4. 2.6 Awareness of Heritagization

10. Do you know the term Heritagization?
193 responses
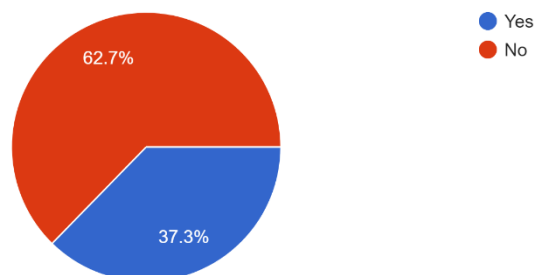
Figure 36: Awareness of the Term Heritagization.

Almost 63 % of the participants are unaware of the term heritagization and only 37 % agree that they know the term heritagization. However, the ones who do agree do not necessarily know the accurate definition of heritagization and the process of it. This issue will be explored in the following section of the interviews where interviewees were asked to define it according to their own understanding (Fig 36).

Table 6- Awareness of Heritagization Categorized by Each of the Gulf States

Frequencies of The Awareness of the term Heritagization?

Do you know the term Heritagization?	Country	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
No	Bahrain	35	18.2 %	18.2 %
	Kuwait	15	7.8 %	26.0 %
	Oman	4	2.1 %	28.1 %
	Other-	23	12.0 %	40.1 %
	Qatar	8	4.2 %	44.3 %
	Saudi Arabia	29	15.1 %	59.4 %
	United Arab Emirates	7	3.6 %	63.0 %
Yes	Bahrain	19	9.9 %	72.9 %
	Kuwait	1	0.5 %	73.4 %
	Oman	3	1.6 %	75.0 %
	Other-	30	15.6 %	90.6 %
	Qatar	1	0.5 %	91.1 %
	Saudi Arabia	13	6.8 %	97.9 %
	United Arab Emirates	4	2.1 %	100.0 %

Figure 37: Graph Illustrating the Awareness of the Term Heritagization Categorized by Each Gulf Country.

The graph and table above highlight the awareness of the term heritagization, categorized by each of the Gulf countries shown above as frequencies in the table (Fig 37) (Table 6).

Participants from Bahrain exhibited the highest level of unawareness regarding the term "heritagization," followed by those from Saudi Arabia. In contrast, participants from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates demonstrated similar levels of limited awareness of the term. Oman had the lowest awareness of not knowing "heritagization."

Conversely, expats, immigrants, and tourists showed the highest awareness of the term, followed by participants from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Participants from Oman and the United Arab Emirates reported some knowledge of "heritagization," whereas those from Qatar and Kuwait displayed very limited awareness of "heritagization".

4.2.7 Summary of Survey

Cultural heritage awareness shows that most participants are aware of the strong sense of identity, its co-relation with cultural heritage, and the factors that are vital in creating

this sense of belonging. However, a large number of participants, mostly of the age group 20-30 intend to believe that post-oil modernism did not have a particularly devastating effect on the cultural identity and has in fact impacted it rather positively from the aspects of economic and lifestyle standards. Similarly, participants also believe that this post-oil modernism also contributed to the awareness of cultural heritage (albeit by the destruction of it in the beginning era) and has thus eventually led to the preservation of cultural heritage nowadays.

Participants claim familiarity with the term heritagization; however, this does not necessarily imply a comprehensive understanding of its true definition. This discrepancy will be further investigated through interviews. The lack of evidence does not equate to the absence of knowledge, and one-on-one interviews can more accurately assess the participants' awareness of heritagization and its dynamics within the modern Gulf society. These interviews will provide deeper insights into the nuanced understanding and implications of heritagization on the cultural identity of the region.

4.3 Interviews: Exploring The Cultural Identity And The Term Heritagization

As stated by Menz and Bogner (2009), Expert interviews can provide detailed accounts of an individual's views, comprehensions, experiences, and behaviors within the environment in which they work. Depending on the particular research emphasis, the researcher designates 3 separate groups. The first one includes the stakeholders or the professionals working in the cultural heritage field of the Gulf region. These experts are often considered to be those with privileged access to information and contextual expertise regarding a certain subject or procedure. The Second group consisted of

academicians and researchers currently working on safeguarding the various aspects of the cultural heritage of the region. These researchers are more critically able to evaluate the ongoing regeneration efforts and are already involved in various cultural research projects. Apart from this, they have a considerable grasp of the literature related to the historical and cultural context. The last group was specifically selected to be the residents of Riyadh which now includes the peripheries of Al Diriyah (selected case study). These residents have witnessed the urban regeneration and the ongoing transition of Al Diriyah from a mere historic district to a UNESCO Designated World Heritage which eventually led to the heritagization of the historic diriyah transforming it into a living heritage museum including vibrant social spaces that they now frequently visit with friends and family.

The primary objective in selecting three distinct groups—stakeholders, academicians, and the local community—was to ensure a diverse and unbiased perspective on cultural identity. The study aimed to explore how cultural identity has emerged, how it has been affected by post-oil modernization, and whether there are ongoing efforts to revive the deteriorated cultural identity. Additionally, these groups were questioned about their awareness of the term "heritagization," acknowledging that this is a relatively unfamiliar concept in the region. The responses were particularly intriguing when participants were briefed on heritagization and subsequently asked whether this process of heritage creation is being implemented in the Gulf region as part of city branding or to promote historic districts through emerging cultural tourism initiatives.

The participants were informed of the main question's outline to meet the expectations for the accuracy and significance of their answers. All participants who consented to the interview being digitally recorded so that it may be transcribed at a later time were

defined as research ethics. After the material was automatically coded, the projected duration of each interview was between 15 to 40 minutes. This allowed for an objective and methodical approach to both content and situational analysis.

Since there is a particular need to examine the characteristics of demand and expectations, as well as the evaluation of cultural identity in this heritage-making process, the inclusion of open coding is justified by taking into account issues of cultural identity and the rarity of the term "heritagization." As mentioned in the literature study, more research on the subject is required in the context of the region. The results of the coding process are used to investigate these traits and the fundamental requirement for a possible resurgence of the cultural identity that was severely damaged by post-oil modernism.

4.3.1 Interviews With Stakeholders

The responses reveal a complex picture regarding efforts to regain affected cultural heritage and the awareness of cultural identity in the Gulf region. While there are ongoing actions, such as preservation, documentation, and reconstruction of damaged sites, these efforts are often criticized for focusing on facades, thus creating a superficial cultural identity. Gulf's cultural heritage significantly contributes to the sense of identity and pride among local communities through various means. While some locals may lack awareness of the full significance of their cultural heritage, there is considerable pride in both tangible and intangible aspects of their culture.

The evolution of traditional neighborhoods in the Gulf region specifically reveals a complex interplay between rapid modernization and the preservation of cultural identity. While traditional historic districts suffered due to neglect, efforts are being made by the stakeholders to tackle the issue in urban regeneration and modern

development plans yet challenges to preserving the Gulf's cultural identity include the rapid modernization and prioritization of modern infrastructure over traditional architectural forms.

The responses highlight the awareness of heritagization and its role in preserving cultural identity through traditional architectural elements. The responses indicate varying levels of familiarity with the term "heritagization," ranging from limited awareness to recognition of its implementation in heritage preservation efforts, in the region. This demonstrates varying perspectives on the use of heritagization in reclaiming cultural heritage in the Gulf region. While some view it positively as a means to revive identity through blending past and present elements, others express concerns about its misuse, including the imposition of foreign architectural styles and the distortion of authentic heritage.

These interviewees also emphasize the importance of preserving the Gulf's cultural heritage for future generations. They highlight the need for a comprehensive vision and plan, increased global awareness, integration of modern technologies, and critical examination of the heritagization process. There's a consensus on the significance of maintaining cultural identity, with a call for continued celebration and awareness-raising initiatives.

4.3.2 Interviews With Academia

The responses highlighted the deep-rooted cultural heritage of the Gulf region, emphasizing its significance in shaping cultural identity through traditions, beliefs, and customs. These factors underscore how cultural heritage serves as a vital component of collective identity, passed down through generations and contributing to a sense of belonging and continuity within the community. The historical context of the Gulf

region, marked by trade, migration, and diverse influences, has profoundly shaped its cultural identity in recent years making it a global region. This historical narrative highlights the interconnectedness and complexity of Gulf's cultural heritage, reflecting its rich and diverse cultural background.

However, modernization in the Gulf region has brought about significant changes, impacting cultural heritage in various ways. While it has led to economic growth and technological advancements, it has also posed threats to traditional customs and values, leading to the erosion and loss of cultural identity. Rapid urbanization, demolition of heritage sites, and the commodification of heritage are some of the challenges arising from modernization, highlighting the need for careful preservation efforts amidst development. Yet this Modernization and globalization recently, have also led to the preservation and promotion of the Gulf's cultural heritage for tourism purposes. While this cultural tourism offers new avenues for showcasing cultural traditions, there are concerns regarding cultural commodification, loss of authenticity, and exclusion of the original cultural identity that once existed. The influence of Western values on preservation practices has also led to a divergence from local perspectives and values, potentially resulting in further loss of cultural identity.

However, the term heritagization was only known by 2 out of 5 participants highlighting its unawareness even amongst the researchers working on cultural heritage topics. The term "heritagization" basically refers to the process of identifying, selecting, and promoting cultural heritage for various purposes such as tourism and identity building. As most of the academicians were not aware of it, this highlighted a potential gap in understanding of the term within certain contexts of the Gulf region.

However, after explaining the term Heritagization, the responses suggested varying degrees of awareness and understanding of the term "heritagization" in the context of reclaiming lost cultural heritage in the Gulf region. While some recognize its potential as a tool for preservation and restoration efforts, others express concerns about its implementation and impact on authenticity. Overall, there appears to be an agreement on the implementation of heritagization in safeguarding cultural heritage, albeit with differing perspectives on its effectiveness and consequences.

4.3.3 Interviews With Local Community of Al Diriyah: Focused Region

The responses collectively highlighted a strong awareness of cultural identity in the Gulf, stating that cultural heritage is deeply rooted in traditions, beliefs, and customs passed down through generations. This heritage, integral to the community, holds significance due to its historical resilience and role in international trade and cultural transmission. Thus, the historical context of the Gulf region has profoundly shaped its cultural heritage, influencing lifestyle, dress, and architecture through the availability of local materials. Trade, especially the pearl trade, agriculture, and livestock practices have also shaped the cultural identity significantly. Major historical events like the discovery of oil have also contributed to its unique cultural identity according to the local community answers.

Interviewees highlighted that modernization in the Gulf has had both positive and negative effects on cultural heritage. But mostly Positive, since it has improved the economy, upgraded lifestyles, developed modern infrastructure, and raised educational levels. However, it has also led to a loss of traditional culture, the demolition of vernacular architecture, and the destruction of cultural heritage assets due to the influence of Western lifestyles and globalization.

Since most participants were young adults, interestingly they viewed the whole process of oil discovery as rather Positive, since it facilitated rapid regional promotion, and the Gulf emerged as a popular living destination. They also consider that these processes have also helped in supporting modern conservation efforts, and increased awareness of cultural identity by social media and modern festivals. However, there are also negative impacts, such as the risk of cultural homogenization, extreme touristification, and initial neglect of historic districts on the outskirts of the capital cities.

In terms of the awareness of the term "Heritagization", 3 of the interviewees were completely unaware of it. However, the other 2 mentioned that it is "the Inheritance of Heritage" or "is to inherit the traditions from the past generations", which interestingly is anything but the definition of the term "Heritagization". The responses illustrate a lack of awareness of heritagization in the Gulf region. After further explanation, some view it as an ideal means of preserving and passing down traditions and values within communities, others see it as part of a broader strategy to balance modernity with tradition, attracting tourists while raising awareness of cultural Identity.

4.3.4 Key Themes Emerging From The Interviews

Open coding was used to identify themes, and these themes were compared based on the different groups. Table 6 lists the major themes that emerged and how each group of interviewees responded to them.

Table 7: Key Themes Emerging From Each of the Group of Interviewees

Code	Key Theme	Stakeholders Perspective	Academicians Perspective	Local Community's perspective
CI1	CULTURAL IDENTITY	Celebrations, Imagery, Authorized Heritage Discourse	Traditions,customs, beliefs, desert nomadic life, Pearl trade and hospitability	History, tradition, architecture, privacy and religion
CI1a	IMPORTANCE	Sense of Belonging. Preservation, pride	Sense of belonging, diversity,meaning-making, interaction	Strong awareness of roots and sense of belonging.
CI1b	AWARENESS OF	Storytelling, Music, immigration, intangible heritage	Cultural events, national identty	Cultural events, Ramadan, and national days.
CI2	LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY	Deterioration, heritagization,	Destruction and demolition of cultural heritage	Modern infrastructure, destruction of cultural heritage.
CI2a	REASON OF LOSS	western impact, un-authentic revitalization	Urbanization and oil discovery	Discovery of oil and globalization
CI2b	IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION		economic progress, promotion of culture, loss of authenticity	Positively, economic growth, better education, urban fabric,

			and conservation efforts along with increased tourism
CI3	EFFORTS TO PRESERVE	Revitalization, Heritagization	Western preservation	Cultural events and restoration of neglected cultural heritage
CI4	ROLE OF MODERN STRATEGIES IN REVIVAL	Digital documentation, critical examination and integration of physical and digital heritage awareness programs	Virtual exhibitions, digital documentation, safeguarding against the homogenization of cultural identity	Digital media, Cultural Documentaries, scanning, marketing for cultural tourism
H1	AWARENESS OF THE TERM HERITAGIZATION	Heritage-making process, branding of the cultural assets	Selection and Promotion of heritage, cultural practices, tourism, . Heritage making process.	Inheritance (wrong) or no awareness.
H1a	HERITAGIZATION IN RECLAIMATION	Urban regeneration, cultural tourism destinations,	Identity building, recovering and reclaiming lost cultural identity.	VISION 2030, Reviving the traditional aspects of cultural

		un-authenticity and safeguarding the heritage.		heritage, increased cultural activities, and cultural tourism
H1b	HERITAGIZATION IN AL DIRIYAH	-	Promotion of cultural tourism, regeneration. Unauthentic and lacking the soul	Regenerated site, different space from past era and awareness of cultural identity.

4.3.5 Summary of the Interviews

The interviews reveal varying perspectives on cultural heritage and heritagization across stakeholders, academia, and the local community. Stakeholders emphasize preservation and awareness but note challenges with authenticity and modernization. Academia highlights deep-rooted cultural identity shaped by history and trade but underscores modernization's dual impact, and they identify a gap in understanding heritagization. The local community stresses cultural heritage's significance, viewing modernization positively for economic and educational benefits but noting the erosion of traditional culture. All three groups acknowledge the need for balanced preservation efforts, increased awareness of cultural identity, and integration of modern technologies to maintain cultural identity.

However, there is a notable lack of understanding of the term "heritagization," even among researchers. This gap highlights the need for greater awareness and education

about heritagization processes to ensure authentic preservation efforts. Interestingly, no one could describe the exact heritagization except one researcher who's been already working on the issue. Interviewee stated that.

> *"Because of the lack of awareness and understanding of heritagization processes, I think it has been abused widely to either mutate existing cultural heritage in their tangible, intangible or natural forms or completely jeopardies the validity and value of heritage authenticity. At times, I believe heritagization could be an excellent safeguarding approach for reviving lost heritage, however, once the roots or factors of authenticity are gone, this reclaim loses its value, thus loses the meaning of heritage".*

4.4 The Intersection Of Heritagization And Cultural Identity: An Exploratory Study Of Historic Al Diriyah

An interesting case that can be taken into consideration is the historic Al Diriyah region in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia has successfully turned their ancestor's village into a cultural capital and Heritage Museum. This Earthen-built Saudi dynasty town from the sixteenth century underwent a decade of exceptional investment to become a living heritage for the cultural identity revival. At-Turaif, which lies in the center of the historic district is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a famous mud-brick city that functioned as both the first Saudi State's capital and the residence of the Al Saud family. Al Diriyah went through an exceptional process of urban regeneration, making it the largest such cultural development in the Gulf region reviving the cultural identity for future generations (Fig. 38).
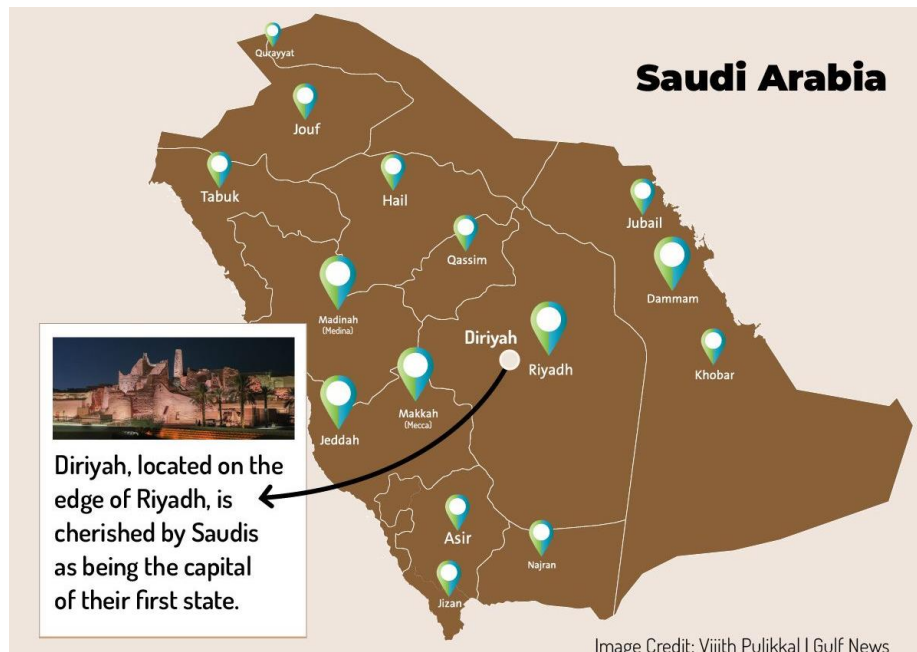
Figure 38: Location of Al Diriyah in Saudi Arabia. Source-Gulf News

The previously neglected site went under a massive reconstruction and regeneration process being restored and renewed with an aim to showcase 300 years old authentic history and culture. The reconstruction of the site includes cultural museums, educational institutions, and prestigious residential projects along with outstanding lifestyle offerings such as entertainment, shopping, and dining experiences (fig 39). The Diriyah Project is part of the 2030 vision which aims to attract 27 million local and international visitors. This supports the national tourism policy, which calls for the Kingdom to welcome 100 million visitors from around the world by the year 2030.
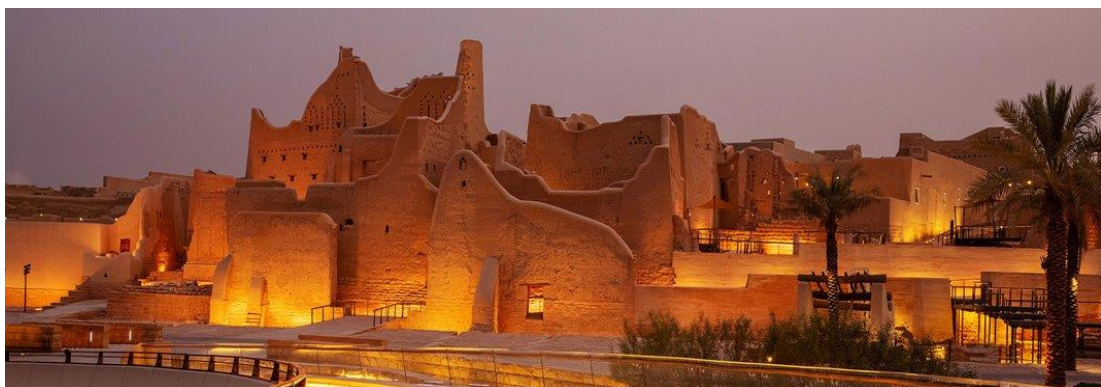
Figure 39: Regenerated Historic Al Diriyah.Source- UNESCO

Al Turaif, around which the whole project revolves has been an inscribed World Heritage site since the year 2010. Most of the Diriyah district was deserted and futile land until the Saudi government commissioned the Diriyah Development Gate Authority to carry out an extensive recreation and reconstruction project that aims to turn the district into an exciting tourist destination and culture memorial (Fig. 40). The theme is inspired by new Saudi urbanism and previously dominating Najd architecture of the region. Reconstruction is set to replicate Najd traditional architecture with exaggerated various districts emphasizing history, culture, entertainment, lifestyle, and educational institutes (Nedeljkovic, N. 2022). Within the boundaries of the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone, the at-Turaif Quarter's conservation and development project in Al Diriyah seeks to put strategic decisions and a site management plan for heritage protection, tourism development, and urban management into practice. In addition to functioning as a component of a broader environmental and urban project for future development, it establishes a meticulously designed institutional structure intending to fulfil UNESCO's requirements for at-Turaif as a recognized World Heritage Site (Heritage Conservation Consulting).

Figure 40: Al Diriyah Before the Urban Regeneration.Source- Documentalium

Bujairi Terrace, which overlooks the historic hub of trade and culture At-Turaif, was constructed organically from the same Diriyah mud, water, and straw that was used to build At-Turaif. The residential scheme has prioritized sustainability with their water conservation, energy efficiency, and a green environment. Al Diriyah is a vital part of Saud's grand vision and is set to be established as not solely a paramount historical site, but instead a place that will create a community that focuses on culture preservation, and quality education and will promote great hospitality along with showcasing the authenticity of Saudi's history. (Fig. 41 & 42).

Despite the grandeur of the project, Authenticity was taken into consideration from the beginning of the project.

> *"I was really pleased when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stated that only authentic, traditional-style mud bricks should be used in Diriyah."*- Njoud Alanbari, a conservation architect with the Diriyah Gate Development Authority.

Figure 41: Bird's Eye View of the Historical At-Turaif District. Source - DDGA

Figure 42: Al Diriyah's Panoramic View After The Urban Regeneration. Source-
Royal Commission for Riyadh City

However, this aim to replicate authenticity goes hand in hand with the desired novel branding strategy, which at the same time will allow visitors to dive deeper into cultural activities and seminars such as Najdi architecture study, bricklaying, date harvesting, calligraphy, Arabic poetry, ardah dance, bedouin tentmaking, along with other cultural activities. It will offer a unique heritage experience and is planned to have a traditional Arabic bazaar as well as an array of traditional and contemporary galleries, different cuisines, and high-end retail shops. Historic Al Diriyah is set to be

the luxury shopping hub along with an astonishing array of fine dining restaurants all the while keeping its historical integrity and cultural identity alive.

The revival of Historic Diriyah into a branded tourism destination while adhering to World Heritage Site (WHS) guidelines and sustainable development practices poses a significant scholarly inquiry. It prompts consideration of the extent to which a WHS can undergo mega-development while maintaining its cultural and historical integrity (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

4.4.1 Designation Of Historic Al Diriyah As a World Heritage Site

Al Diriyah being the birthplace of the Saudi royal state and an important cultural heritage site in the region has urban peripheries that are characterized by traditional buildings, neighborhoods, and public spaces that reflect the history and traditions of the local communities that have lived there for generations. Despite the cultural significance of these areas, the urban peripheries of Al Diriyah have faced significant challenges in recent years. Rapid urbanization and economic development have led to the demolition of remaining traditional buildings and neighborhoods, and this posed a threat to the complete erasure of the cultural identity of this significant historic district (Fig 43).
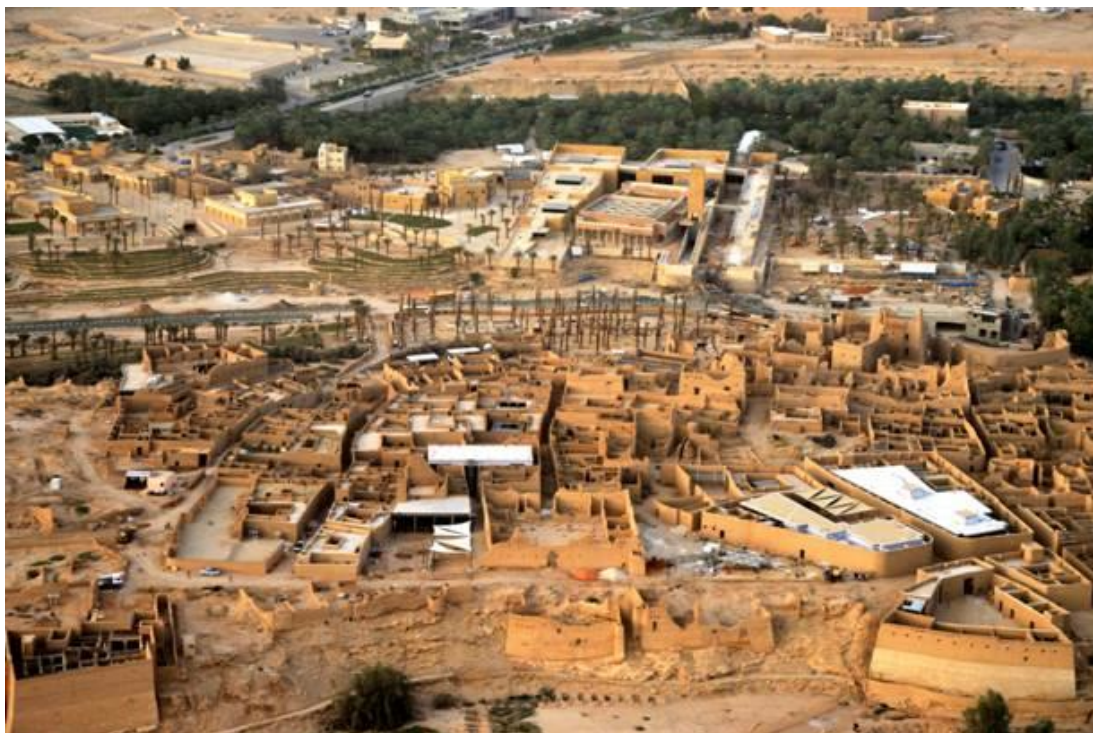
Figure 43: Al Diriyah Under the Transformation. Source:-Tropmanarchitects.

In the mid-twentieth century, efforts were initiated to resettle Al Turaif, resulting in the construction of numerous courtyard houses at the eastern end of the site. By the 1990s, these structures were in significantly better condition than the remnants from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that surrounded them. Building materials were readily available; mud from the old ruins was repurposed into new bricks and mortar, stone was used for columns and foundations, timbers for roof supports, and old doors were reused. Subsequently, power lines were installed to bring electricity to the buildings, and rudimentary modifications were made, such as replacing old decorated wooden doors with metal ones and padlocks, the former becoming sought-after collectibles (Harrigan, P. 2015).

In 1974 (1394), the Department of Antiquities and Museums expressed interest in preserving the remains of ad-Dir'iyah. UNESCO sponsored a study of the site, conducted by a team of archaeology and conservation specialists. In 1976, at-Turaif

was placed under the protection of the 1972 Saudi Antiquities Act. By 1978, a second survey was conducted. Both studies aimed to recommend structures for preservation and restoration and to propose methods for achieving this. The Department of Antiquities and Museums (later integrated into the Saudi Commission of Tourism in 2003) tackled this challenge by "*selecting specific buildings*" for restoration, following the UNESCO reports' recommendations. Within at-Turaif, since the 1970s, the department focused on restoring the Palace of Nasir initially, and then the Palace of Saad and the Faysal Tower in the late 1980s. By 1982, the last houses in at-Turaif had been abandoned, with only a few former residents nostalgically visiting their family mud-brick homes. A Royal Decree authorized the Historic Al Diriyah Development Programme, overseen by the High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh. In 2010 (1431), following the efforts and guidance of the Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) and based on the documents prepared by the High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh, at-Turaif was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Harrigan, P.2015).

4.4.2 Urban Regeneration Of The Historic Al Diriyah

In the initial phase (1986–2010), efforts primarily centered on preserving Historic Al Diriyah to mitigate decay and establish a development master plan, laying the groundwork for a potential UNESCO World Heritage Site listing. Subsequently (2010–2017), there was a heightened focus on achieving UNESCO recognition, maintaining its status, and implementing the proposed development plan. In the current phase (2017-Present), AlDiriyah has become the focal point of an ambitious initiative to promote the area as a premier international tourist destination, surpassing the mere goal of a World Heritage listing (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). Hence, after the Unesco World Heritage designation, urban regeneration of

the Al Diriyah gained momentum to provide visitors with more contemporary facilities, these initiatives gave rise to new constructions that illuminate the histories of the First, Second, and Third Saudi States while coexisting with the ancient buildings. One such example is Al Turaif's modern set of amenities**.**

Al Diriyah's regeneration strategically aims to reinforce the cultural identity and encompasses ambitious projects in urban heritage and environmental development that highlight national, cultural, and spiritual values. Additionally, it underscores the importance of inspiring the younger generation to understand the Kingdom's ideals and to become role models who exemplify the qualities necessary for success, ongoing development, and the preservation of cultural heritage (Harrigan, P. 2015). The ambitious balance sought by the regeneration project situates it squarely within the "*domain of heritagization*". This process involves transforming previously neglected heritage sites to align with established heritage values, while simultaneously balancing the imperatives of conservation and tourism (Fig 44). The project's restoration efforts have extended beyond mere preservation, leading to the branding of the site as a heritage destination aimed at attracting global attention. However, this approach raises critical questions about the authenticity and integrity of the site, as the commodification of heritage for tourism can sometimes overshadow its historical and cultural significance. The challenge lies in ensuring that the site retains its genuine heritage values amidst the pressures of global tourism and economic development.
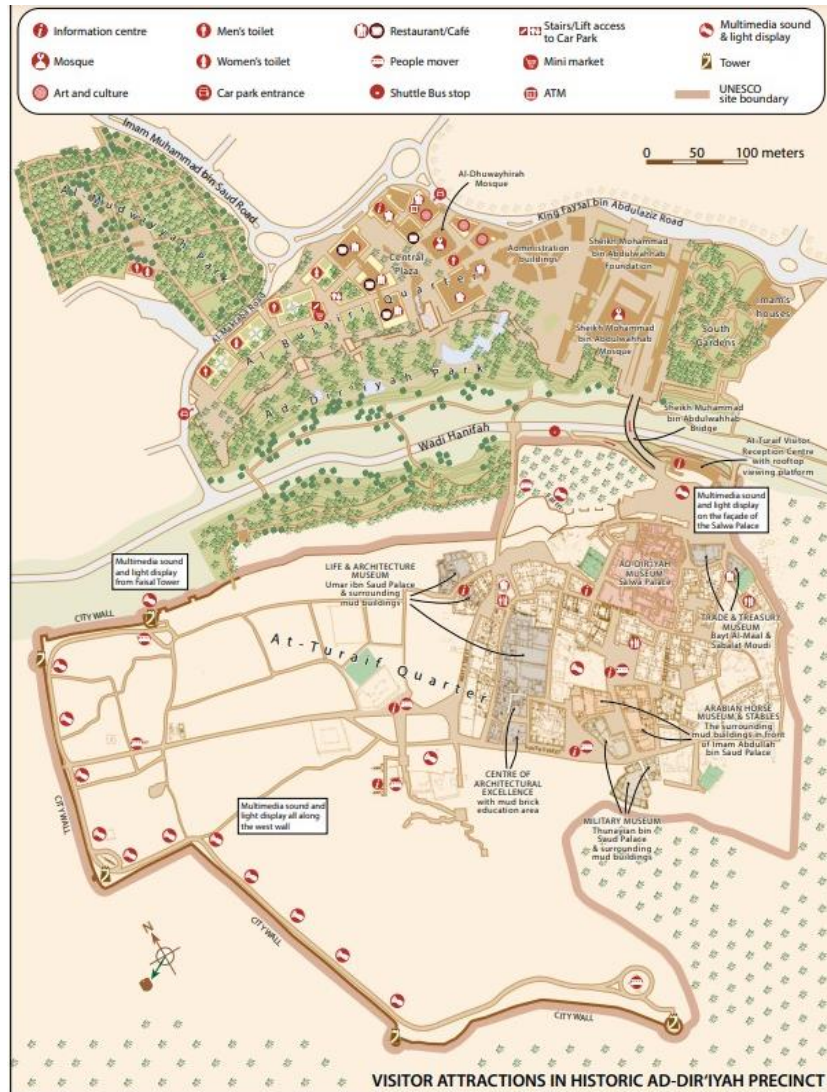
Figure 44: Urban Plan of Regenerated Historic Al Diriyah. Source- Al Bujairi: Heart of the Call

4.4.3 Recognizing The Heritagization Of The Historic Al Diriyah

With the founding of Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA) in 2017, the Saudi government began several ongoing conservation initiatives as part of the Vision 2030 program, which aims to move the nation away from an oil-centric economic model and toward a more diversified portfolio with a focus on tourism, the arts, and culture. In December of last year, the DGDA formally opened the Al Turaif quarter to the public, allowing both domestic and foreign guests to experience this ancient quarter. (McKelvey, R. 2023).

This significant restoration and rehabilitation project was initiated to preserve the cultural identity of the Al Diriyah precinct and transform the area into a sustainable heritage and cultural tourism destination. The Arriyadh Development Authority led the studies and implementation, coordinating efforts with the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, and the Al Diriyah Municipality. Upon completion of this ambitious restoration and development program, which includes the creation of new museums, it became evident that Al Diriyah and its various quarters are poised to become a living heritage site. This transformation serves as a bridge to the past and a source of pride for the Saudi nation and its future generations (Harrigan, P. 2015).

This heritage-making process has rejuvenated a historical urban development, breathing new life into its centuries-old heritage. The initiative has revitalized a historically significant urban development spanning several centuries, showcasing Najdi town planning from the 18th to 19th centuries. Using traditional adobe materials and construction methods, the project is overseen by the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA). This open-air museum features cultural attractions such as the Al Bujairi pedestrian area, Diriyah Museum, and Al-Zawihra Mosque. The project emphasizes sustainable reuse, enhancing both socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions through improved local attachment and new tourist offerings (Mazzetto, S. 2022).

4.4.3.1 Dissecting The Heritagization Of Historic Al Diriyah

The historic region was initially built in distinctive Najdi typical Saudi style architecture- using mud, sun-dried bricks and locally available wood. The buildings demonstrate specific linearity in their design highlighting extremely decorated rectangular forms such as mashrabiyah and other geometrical patterns traditionally

used in Islamic architecture and décor. A similar approach is planned and traditional and archeological ruins are thus recreated as an open-air museum where visitors are once again able to experience the centuries-old rich history of the site and witness its authentic culture.

This commercialized transformation of the historic district required a careful approach, balancing visitor access with the need to minimize environmental impact. In their initial survey, the landscaping contractors Bödeker expressed concern about the rapid expansion of Riyadh's outer suburbs potentially encroaching on Al Diriyah and its surroundings. This suggested a strategy: by supporting these established visitor habits, encroachment could be minimized, thereby preserving the area's identity. A balance needed to be achieved between preserving the site sensitively and making it tourist-friendly. Protecting the entire precinct's setting, age-old atmosphere, and heritage was a priority. After completing surveys, the first phase of work began in 2007, starting from the perimeter of the precinct and moving inward. (Harrigan, P. 2015) (Fig 45).

Figure 45- Urban Regeneration Proposal of Al Diriyah. Source- Ahlanwasahlan

The scientific community and international experts viewed the at-Turaif project as a unique opportunity to observe an extraordinary living laboratory where purposefully designed conservation and management solutions are tested and applied on a daily basis during the conservation work's execution (Heritage Conservation Consulting). Although enormous amounts of the necessary mud-and-hay mixture are being produced using modern machinery rather than human hands and feet used in the original manual production process, the craftsmen trained by the development authority are still making and using millions of the same type of bricks that were used to construct At-Turaif nearly 300 years ago. The humble mud brick, far from being an obsolete technology, is having a revival as the inspiration and the raw material for one of the most ambitious projects to date in Saudi Arabia. These bricks are tough, demonstrably durable, and are the very essence of sustainability. A distinctive, traditional Najdi experience will be provided by these bricks and the reconstruction is set to accurately reflect the appearance and atmosphere of the old city. This prevalent method employed is the utilization of these sun-dried mud bricks, with over three million such bricks manufactured and utilized for the restoration of at-Turaif alone. Each of these handcrafted bricks is imprinted with the stamp of the ADA (Arriyadh Development Authority), along with the year and month of its production. In the Al Bujairi Quarter, a notable instance of their application can be observed in the restoration of the old Al Dhuwayhirah Mosque, where the bricks are concealed beneath a layer of mud plaster (Harrigan, P. 2015).

Dr. Mahmoud Bendakir, an architect and consultant involved in the project, and a renowned expert on adobe building technology, firmly believes in the potential of mud brick. He sees its inclusion in Al Bujairi as a validation of UNESCO's approach to recognizing architectural heritage sites. According to him, the Adobe process, utilizing

simple unfired materials to construct structures suitable for millions, is highly ecologically sustainable and consumes minimal energy. Bendakir emphasizes that regular maintenance is crucial for the longevity of these structures and should be ingrained in the building culture. With a solid foundation and proper waterproofing, a well-maintained adobe building can endure for centuries. Therefore, within the framework of the Historic Al Diriyah Development Programme, architects, engineers, and craftsmen collaborated to revive the ancient traditional construction methods and techniques along with the diminishing cultural identity (Harrigan, P. 2015).

4.4.3.2 Interpreting Vision 2030 In The Heritagization Of Historic Al Diriyah

Heritagization strategy is evident in Al Diriyah's urban regeneration efforts, as it has transformed from an ancestral village into a vibrant cultural capital and Heritage Museum. Significant investment has revitalized the historic district, turning it into a cultural and tourism destination, featuring retail shops, cafes, and cultural institutions. Substantial progress has been made not just within the officially designated historic zone, but also in the adjacent areas and neighboring neighborhoods. The Saudi government has embarked on a forward-looking initiative aimed at drawing in 25 million visitors annually. To support this ambitious goal, an impressive budget of nearly USD 18.5 billion has been earmarked to establish Historic Diriyah and its environs as one of the premier and most frequented destinations globally (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

Nast elaborates on how Saudi Arabia is reviving the historic city of Al Diriyah to become the Kingdom's new cultural capital, Al Diriyah, once again emerging as one of the Kingdom's major mega projects. The area is expected to become a significant regional and international center for lifestyle, tourism, entertainment, and culture. This district is eager to become the center of Saudi Arabia's creative scene. From the

revitalized area of Al Bujairi, a pedestrianized maze of winding walkways aligned with boutiques, to JAX, a vibrant hub for artists and creatives that also houses several museums, art galleries, and offices for the Saudi Ministry of Culture, there is something for everyone (Nast, C. 2024). "At-Turaif region of the historic Al Diriyah will feature cultural academies, museums, and a cultural district in addition to—and maybe most significantly—art commissions throughout the master plan. Digital libraries and archives, internal knowledge, capacity building, traditional arts and crafts schools, and other topics are all being discussed. The Diriyah Gate Development Authority collaborated with the Ministry of Culture and the Diriyah Biennale Foundation on a range of diverse cultural initiatives with the aim of establishing Diriyah as the Middle East's branded cultural hub by 2030 (Arab News. 2022) (Fig 46 and Fig 47).

A cultural rebirth is taking place in Al Diriyah as part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. With the help of cutting-edge facilities and infrastructure, Al Diriyah is being transformed into a popular tourist and cultural destination on a global scale. These initiatives not only protect Saudi cultural identity but also establish a global standard for long-term cultural preservation (Goetz, C. 2024).

Figure 46: Branding Strategy of Al Diriyah. Source- Arab News

Figure 47: Objectives of Al Diriyah's Transformation. Source- Vision2030.Gov.Sa

4.4.4 Heritagization of the Cultural Identity of Historic Al Diriyah

Since the materials used for restoration and conservation work were the same as they were back in the 1970s, It is quite challenging to differentiate between building methods. Setting priorities was a challenge given the size of the historical site and its urban regeneration, but the previous identity was aimed to be conserved from the beginning of the transformation. The most recent habitation periods were significantly challenging even though they were constructed with mud, the technical abilities were frequently worse than in the past, but the community cherishes them and are to be passed down to the following generations. "Interacting with the local community is the

only way to ensure long-term, regeneration on the site." "People are very attached because they see it as part of their identity, so in a way, it's already happening (Njoud Alanbari).

"When choosing the best techniques for the preservation of the cultural identity, the DGDA had to use extreme caution. In Al Turaif, for instance, the team is attempting to avoid using the traditional technique of replastering the building walls to create a sacrificial layer that protects them from the effects of sun radiation and rain. This is because doing so would make the older buildings blend in with the newer ones, potentially erasing the visual history these structures embody (McKelvey, R. 2023). Revitalizing streets, neighborhoods, or towns with rich historical heritage requires a holistic approach and a deep comprehension of the historical significance and values associated with them (Ivan Cabrera-Fausto et al. 2021; Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). This approach was previously successfully adopted In the historic center of Al Jeddah, but not on such a grand scale. Drawing from contemporary urban regeneration principles, these plans appear to encompass both the past and the future, acknowledging and positioning the historic center as a valuable resource for the future (Ricca,2018). The transition is attributed to the absence of policy and regulation, alongside the drive to execute economically motivated projects and developments in a competitive environment (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

Although Diriyah has notably influenced architectural and urban policymakers, fostering an appreciation for integrating heritage sites into broader visionary of cultural identity frameworks. Yet the extensive development taking place at Historic Diriyah has sparked concerns regarding the authenticity and integrity of the designated World

Heritage Site (WHS) and its cultural identity (Alqahtany, A.; Aravindakshan, S. 2021; Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). As Jennie Sjöholm,(2016)illustrates that the heritagizaion process can be interpreted as invaluable insights into the mechanisms through which heritage is transformed into a cultural commodity and the effects of this transformation on communities and individuals. Thus, Heritagization, exemplified by Al Diriyah, aims to impact the local community by boosting the economy, fostering cultural awareness, and shaping the identity. Yet, the success of the project in reflecting authentic cultural identity is what signifies the strength of community cohesion and improved cultural tourism. While the reconstructed project promotes cultural identity, there's concern that the authentic identity may be overshadowed by *"the thematic Period village"* concept highlighted in the project's promotion.

Another factor to consider is whether the heritagization process of Al Diriyah has led to the creation of luxurious lifestyle squares designed to offer tourists unforgettable entertainment experiences. If the village is being reconstructed to reflect an authentic 300-year-old style, the presence of such vibrant, modern squares raises questions about the authenticity of the reconstructed urban environment. Furthermore, the royal village, historically imbued with private and regal values, is now being commercialized on a large scale to cater to cultural tourism, promoting values more aligned with public interest. This commercial transformation contrasts sharply with the area's original cultural identity. Additionally, the use of modern materials to replicate an old, authentic style—achieved through smart and innovative contemporary technology—suggests that what remains authentic is primarily the visual façade. Consequently, this raises critical questions about the preservation of cultural identity when the authenticity is reduced to superficial appearances. Cronberg (2009) links this

transformation to a fantasized, aestheticized, and idealized past—a carefully designed imitation that creates the illusion of experiencing history. This "imagined" past can trick people into believing that the time and place genuinely existed in the past. This method of shaping a desired image introduces artificiality, contradicting authenticity and leading to the imitation of historical styles (Uluca-Tumer, E. 2012) (Fig 48).

Figure 48: Heritagization Approach in Historic Al Diriyah. Source- Vision 2030.Gov.Sa

4.4.5 Constructing the Branded Cultural Identity of Historic Al Diriyah

To address these challenges and preserve the cultural identity, the Saudi government has undertaken several initiatives. These include the development of a comprehensive master plan for Al Diriyah that seeks to balance economic growth, cultural heritage preservation, and cultural identity. Both the regeneration project and the promotion of Historic Diriyah as the "Jewel of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" contribute to its

branding. Emphasizing its uniqueness, Historic Diriyah is marketed as unparalleled, with the slogan "only one Diriyah " (Lochhead, G. Jerry Inzerillo, 2021; Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). Hence, Al Diriyah has transitioned into a branded cultural destination, now managed in alignment with heritage standards, following a significant branding and infrastructure overhaul to position the site as a prominent international destination (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

> *"A significant part of our life is culture. Both our identity and our future are shaped by it. Developing a world-class cultural platform that links Diriyah's past, present, and future is our aim.* " Culture Director at DGDA, Dalya Mousa

These resources are leveraged by governments not solely for tourism purposes but also to strengthen collective identity. (Andrés, B.; José Peinado-Cucarella, J. 2008; Cabrera-Fausto, I.; Fenollosa-Forner, E.; Serrano-Lanzarote, B. 2020) Hence, the Saudi government envisioned Historic Diriyah as a cornerstone of the nation's cultural identity and a globally acknowledged travel destination, a vision validated by its UNESCO inscription in 2010 (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

In contrast, several European cities, rebuilt swiftly post-World War II, are now reassessing the adverse effects of certain policies and architectural styles on their historic landscapes. (Caja. M, 2021) Nonetheless, the Diriyah project signifies to urban and architectural policymakers in Diriyah and Riyadh that prioritizing the preservation of traditional urban structures and architectural contexts is the emerging agenda critical for realizing the 2030 Saudi Vision (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). By 2025, the At-Turaif District and its surrounding areas are set to undergo further extensive revitalization as part of the

DGDA's ambitious redevelopment plans. (Al-Zhrani, A. 2010) Emphasizing destination branding, the DGDA aims to implement a range of entertainment activities in the area (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022).

As observed, the grand project of Al Diriyah aims to promote a novel branded cultural identity alongside promising cultural tourism, which in turn may stimulate further regeneration efforts. Although the scope of this branded cultural project is extensive and aligns with the overarching Vision 2030, there is a fine line between the regeneration of the historic site and the reconstruction of a newly branded cultural identity. This delicate balance underscores the complexity of preserving authentic heritage while simultaneously creating a marketable and engaging cultural destination.

4.4.6 Fear of Over-Commodification in Historic Al Diriyah

The term 'conservation' is employed in its broader context in such heritagization initiatives**,** serving as an overarching term synonymous with the heritage-making process. This approach aims to pivot the discourse toward considerations of authenticity, contemporary values, and the crafting of destination images (Muñoz Viñas, S. 2005; Orbașli, A. 2008; Thouki, A. 2022). While the Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA) made early attempts to outline preservation plans for the physical structures and environment and to propose urban design solutions for repurposing the historic site, these endeavors did not align with the established scope and guidelines for UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Bay, M.A.; Alnaim, M.M.; Albaqawy, G.A.; Noaime, E. 2022). This hierarchical Top-Bottom approach also restricted locals' involvement in heritage preservation and tourism advancement in ad-Diriyah. To address this, there's a call for a collaborative research strategy encompassing cultural, social, economic, and environmental facets, involving local authorities, educational institutions, and independent researchers. Emphasizing a scientific approach in

decision-making and translating research outcomes into practical policies is essential for effective planning and implementation (Al-Tokhais, A. 2021).

Furthermore, it is vital to consider that significant alterations that compromise the authenticity of a site can lead to its inclusion in the Danger List or removal from the World Heritage List (Jimura, T. 2019). The challenge often stems from a shortage of qualified experts in the heritage sector capable of managing sites with scientific rigor (Al-Tokhais, A. 2021). , In an article for Asharq Alawsat, Zahi Hawass, a globally recognized Egyptian archaeologist, voiced concerns over projects initiated to construct roads within the historic town of Al Diriyah, aimed at facilitating tourism and potentially benefiting construction companies. Rather than promoting pedestrian accessibility and protecting unsustainable development practices. This raises critical questions about the wisdom of compromising authentic heritage to cater to transient tourists for the sake of heritage commodification, while simultaneously depriving those who prioritize a more responsible and sustainable approach to preservation (Spiess, A. 2012).

Consequently, a key aspect of the heritagization process in Al Diriyah involves the development of luxurious lifestyle and entertainment districts designed to offer tourists an unforgettable cultural experience. This approach has led to significant commercial exploitation, transforming the site on a large scale primarily for a cultural tourism destination. As a result, the novel branding strategy to turn the historic district into a living heritage site or an open cultural museum has introduced new challenges. Chief among these is the fear of over-commodification, where the World Heritage site risks losing its authentic cultural value in favor of a tourist-centric model. Such heritagization, aestheticization, and artification can act as opposing forces to places

that primarily function as commercialized spaces (Gravari-Barbas, M. and Jacquot, S. 2019).

4.4.7 Summary of Focused Case Study: Heritatagization of Historic Al Diriyah

Al Diriyah, a historic district in Riyadh, underwent a massive heritage-making process that involved extensive restoration and regeneration efforts. This heritagization aimed to revive its cultural identity while integrating modern amenities, transforming it into a novel branded heritage district with vibrant cultural activities and a tourist destination that showcases a blend of traditional and contemporary elements.

Hence, the ongoing regeneration has reached the extent of heritagization and now teeters on the brink of over-commodification of heritage. Amidst these excessive heritagization efforts, the authentic identity of the site is being marginalized and overshadowed by a branded approach driven by the goals of increased cultural tourism and Vision 2030. This new approach to recreating branded cultural identity is unprecedented on such a grand scale in the region. It is important not to entirely dismiss this initiative or categorize it negatively, as the project will actively contribute to the conservation of intangible heritage and raise heritage awareness among the local community, tourists, and future generations, who might otherwise have little knowledge of the historic site's significance. An interviewee from the local community emphasized that, despite the recreation, the initiative has positively influenced the new generation's perception of cultural identity. This suggests that the regeneration project has the potential to bridge the gap between modernity and tradition, fostering a renewed appreciation for cultural identity.

The commodification of Al Diriyah continues to progress as The Diriyah Company just revealed the concept design for The Arena in Diriyah, a 20,000-seat venue, part of

a $63.2 billion masterplan by the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) to further develop Diriyah's heritagization process. Designed by HKS, the arena's concept draws on the area's natural geology and historic Najdi forts, combining historical reflection with modern digital and tech-forward elements. Furthermore, the developers spearheading the city's transformation into a major cultural tourism project also recently revealed plans to construct King Salman Boulevard, a 1.9km avenue modeled after the Champs-Elysees in Paris, along with the kingdom's first Royal Diriyah Opera House (Halligan, N. 2024).

Figure 49: The Diriyah Company Just Revealed the Concept Design for the Arena in Al Diriyah, A 20,000-Seat Venue, This March 2024.Souce Paramatric Architecture

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Key Findings

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the reclamation of cultural identity, which has been compromised due to post-oil modernism, within the contemporary context of the heritagization process in the Gulf region. This exploration has led to three key findings.

Firstly, the study identifies the ongoing potential loss of cultural identity in the Gulf region despite efforts to preserve it. The cultural identity has been significantly affected by post-oil modernism, and this erosion continues unabated. This evaluation also provides insights into the residents' definitions of cultural identity and the importance they attach to it. Secondly, the research explores how cultural identity has deteriorated, its role in urban regeneration, and how heritagization affects the cultural identity of historic regions. Thirdly, the study delves into the various aspects of the heritagization process in the Gulf region which involves recognizing, preserving, and promoting cultural heritage. The research analyzed that although the process of "heritagization" can offer economic benefits and enhance tourism, it also requires careful management to avoid risks such as over-commercialization, cultural commodification, and heritage degradation. These findings collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of cultural identity and the emerging novel branding strategy of heritagization in the context of the Gulf region.

Simultaneously, the research further highlights the transformative impact of heritagization on the cultural identity of the Gulf region, using Al Diriyah as a focused case study. The heritagization process, while initially aimed at preservation, can often lead to an uncontrolled novel branding strategy that may threaten the historic district's integrity. This commodification and touristification of heritage sites undermine their historical authenticity and cultural identity. Despite preservation being the primary goal, the ensuing commercial interests can overshadow the need to maintain the site's historic integrity and cultural continuity. Therefore, a critical examination is essential to balance heritage conservation with the heritagization process, ensuring that economic interests do not compromise cultural identity.

5.2 Future Prospect of Heritagization in the Gulf Region

Thus far, we have explored the potential for reviving cultural identity within the framework of heritagization . However, heritage-making in metropolitan settings can also be used in another way to strengthen identity. Tradition and modernity, as well as internal and external influences, should coexist in harmony. According to Yeang (1987), the endeavor necessitates sincere architectural representations that honor the principles of the past while simultaneously providing access to a modern and promising present and future. New interventions inherently occur in the present, incorporating modern influences, technology, and global economic factors. The challenge for the heritagization of historic districts is to effectively localize imported technologies, materials, and ideas to benefit the local community and fulfill the building's purpose, rather than rejecting contemporary methods. This approach bridges the gaps between culture and technology, tradition and change, and the local and global contexts (Boussaa, D. 2000). The past is integral to the present, and together they will shape the future. Ensuring continuity between historical and contemporary elements is

essential for establishing robust foundations for future growth and development. This paradox is highlighted by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) about the global "World Heritage" initiative. While heritage is specifically linked to a group or society, it is also universal in that it belongs to all people. It is important to remember that national governments are responsible for managing and mediating heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006).

The historic urban centers in the Gulf, which are usually the victim of this heritagization process should evolve into livable spaces where people reside, work, and leisurely engage, rather than being treated solely as museums. Each deteriorating historic district has the potential to be transformed into a vibrant living heritage by reintroducing a blend of residential, commercial, administrative, and tourism endeavors, thereby converting it from a state of "blight" to one of "blessing" (Boussaa, D.). The objective is to encourage the "*regeneration*" of these historic structures, thereby increasing the commercial appeal of these areas as new tourist destinations. Since, this approach aims to bolster the local economy and enrich the socio-cultural fabric of the region (Mazzetto, S. 2022). It involves various stages process comprising research and investigation, evaluation and management strategies, and development of the site within its cultural, social, and institutional contexts. This process should prioritize conservation and sustainable tourism initiatives (AlSulaiti, F. 2013). However, effective management is crucial to prevent the proliferation of counterfeit and inauthentic structures, which have the potential to undermine the character and identity of these historic centers (Boussaa, D. 2014).

The recent pursuit of international recognition, as demonstrated by Saudi Arabia's first inscription on the World Heritage List in 2008 and the United Arab Emirates'

inscription in 2011, symbolizes the evolving significance of "heritage" in the Gulf region (Ricca, S.2018). In recent years, there has been a shift towards an innovative approach that prioritizes heritage, identity, and tourism in development initiatives of historic districts, leading to a significant change in how heritagization is viewed. Previously, conservation efforts focused on "preserving" heritage as a relic of the past, separate from urban development. However, current plans seek to integrate heritage into urban and economic activities, recognizing its value in shaping the city's present and future (Ricca, S.2018). Boussaa (2014) elaborates that visitors, particularly those culturally inclined, prioritize such experience over historical evidence when engaging with cultural heritage. They seek a new reality rooted in both tangible and intangible remnants of the past, viewing this as the essence of the cultural identity.

Thus, in the Gulf region, the emerging trend of the heritagization of historic districts has become an integral part of a broader strategy aimed at empowering and stimulating fresh urban dynamics rooted in its abundant heritage. Recent strategies and plans are outlined, emphasizing the unique characteristics of the Arabian Peninsula context and its intricate and evolving connection with its history and heritage. The nominations for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List are seen as a driving force behind the formulation of these new planning and conservation policies that integrate heritagization into urban development strategies. These strategies intending to outline a development approach encompassing both the historic nucleus and the contemporary metropolis should be rooted in a comprehensive evaluation of the particular issues involved.

But at the same time, without any set boundaries on heritagization, we can wreak havoc for the sake of economic progress. The state's and highly skilled individuals'

involvement is necessary for the successful analysis of a neglected authenticity of the recreated or rebranded cultural identity in the process of heritagization. It can be accomplished by thoughtful design that balances present authentic values with the needs of contemporary development. The issue of when heritagization is acceptable is undeniably significant. Heritagization is considered appropriate only when it meets contemporary needs while preserving authentic elements from the period of their original introduction, thereby paying a genuine tribute to the past. Therefore, the primary goal should be to avoid manipulating authenticity in connection with heritagization while safeguarding cultural heritage (Reisinger, Y. & Steiner, C.J. 2006; AlShaikh, A. 2017).

5.3 Final Remarks

Within the framework of this research, an understanding of the process of heritagization behind the ongoing urban regeneration efforts in the Gulf region depends on a comprehension understanding of the deteriorating cultural identity due to post-oil modernism. These ideas allow for a more nuanced description and interpretation of the cultural identity complexity. As one of the most important cultural issues facing the Gulf city of today and tomorrow is how to maintain the cultural identity of the historic urban centers while maintaining its uniqueness and vitality (Boussaa, D. 2018). Part of the essence of a cultural identity is its continuous evolution, change, and transformation, but when the change is swift and far-reaching, how can the link between past, present, and future be maintained? There is currently a significant transformation occurring, wherein cultural heritage plays a pivotal role in shaping a new vision for the 21st-century Gulf region. To achieve meaningful results, the cultural identity of the Gulf states—whether in the context of regeneration or the reconstruction process, should not be perceived merely as a superficial stylistic

concern. Instead, it must be integrally connected to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of urban regeneration.

As new locations and physical settings are created, identity is no longer only a noun but rather a broad subject and concept (Cheshmehzangi, A. 2015). As Lowenthal emphasized rejecting a heritage is the mark of an abnormal ingrate; those who are deprived of such identity are rootless and grieving. Today, birthright nations regret their loss in the same way that the people of Genesis lamented the loss of Esau (Lowenthal, D. 1998).Yet, it is not necessary to have personally experienced a past in order to recognize it as heritage (Lowenthal 1998). Thus, emphasizing cultural heritage to prepare for the future by recreating an idealized past, and utilizing heritage for economic revitalization can positively reinforce the cultural identity. Heritage comprises not only the monuments of the past but also includes living places, communities, and environments that are in a continual state of evolution. The process of evolution leading to heritagization, aimed at appropriately preserving the continuity of cultural identities of the Gulf's surviving historic districts, necessitates strategies grounded in local knowledge and community engagement. This approach advocates for a more organic and inclusive methodology, shifting the focus from singular projects to holistic district, neighborhood, and city-wide revitalization endeavors. It calls for a bottom-up approach rather than the commonly practiced top-down one.

The significance of safeguarding the cultural identity in the Gulf is still an ongoing debate but has not received adequate attention. This oversight appears rooted in the absence of comprehensive planning strategies and effective platforms facilitating negotiations among various stakeholders. This issue is further accelerated by the ongoing urban regeneration projects in the Gulf region where the implementation of

the novel branding strategy of heritagization transforms the historic districts into tourism and leisure destinations. Heritagization initiatives often go unnoticed as they are commonly accepted and integrated into regeneration or adaptive reuse practices. Nonetheless, the lack of clarity in the approach of commonly practiced heritagization does not imply its complete absence. It is crucial now to better gauge the effects of heritagization and urban regeneration interplay and how it is affecting not just the cultural identity but also its interpretation and awareness in the Gulf region.

Thus the protection of cultural identity can be a vital element in ensuring the success of heritagization in emerging urban regeneration projects. Hence, proposals aimed at transforming the existing cultural identity should be clear from the beginning of the project and should considered as an integral aspect of urban development. This necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses all modernization alterations, aiming to harmonize heritage conservation with societal progress and the intrinsic identity of the districts in question whether they be the historic ones or the ones constructed to honor the historic ones such as the case of Al Diriyah.

In conclusion, research findings emphasize that the need for a controlled heritagization that is in line with the region's rapid modernization and transformative changes, as the reclamation of cultural identity cannot be seen as accomplished but rather as a process that should be subjected to the context and thus occur organically. Moreover, it underscores the significance of several factors, such as the nature of the novel branding strategy of heritagization, urban regeneration dynamics, and factors intervening in the policies, in influencing decisions related to the revival of cultural identity.

While the existing literature considers heritagization within the bureaucratic process of nominating and designating sites into the World Heritage list (Di Giovine, M.A. 2009), this study has taken a step further by investigating heritagization within the regional context for the possibility of reclaiming the lost cultural identity and thereby recovering from the erasure of cultural heritage as a result of ongoing developments and rapid modernization.

As a result, this research introduces a preliminary categorization of influencing elements that can inform the decision-making process concerning the increasing heritagization projects of the historic districts in the Gulf countries which aim to balance their modern progress while preserving the existing cultural identity. While this study relies on the theoretical framework, future research involving stakeholder interviews and practical design implementation could offer deeper insights into the varying degrees of importance among different strategies.

Subsequent studies might adopt a broader perspective to delve into the multifaceted challenges and rivalries inherent in the process of heritagization (Smith 2006; Hall 2006; Leask 2006; Ashworth 2008; Silva 2011; Rajapakse 2018; Thouki, A. 2022) Therefore, viewing heritagization as a 'layered phenomenon' (Elder-Vass 2010), researchers can clarify the specific ways different stakeholders, including institutions, influential social actors, and various discourses, are structured within specific relationships. Since, undoing the act of repetitive heritagization proves challenging, as each iteration of the process creates a lasting impression on the consumer (AlShaikh, A. 2017). In order to investigate heritagization across many sizes (local, regional, national, or global), Harvey (2015) urges academics to use a more progressive, open-

ended approach. However, in the interim, these scales also need to be viewed with fluidity and interconnectedness (Mai Le, Q. 2021).

In order to address this difficulty, research has identified several elements that have contributed to the heritagization process in the Gulf region. Further examination may prompt further questions and considerations for future research to thoroughly understand the effect of heritagization on cultural identity. Future studies could investigate the impact of dark heritagization, the future of World Heritage Sites undergoing extensive heritagization, and the involvement and attitudes of local communities towards the heritagization process. Additionally, the research could focus on touristification as a byproduct of heritagization and the gentrification that often accompanies it. Expanding these studies beyond the Gulf region can also provide a more holistic understanding of the global implications of heritagization and its impact on cultural heritage studies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Reclaiming The Lost Cultural Identity Via Heritagization : The Gulf States

The objective of this survey is to collect data for understanding, analyzing, and exploring the impact of oil discovery on the cultural identity of the Gulf region. The questions are designed to gauge respondents' awareness and understanding of cultural identity. Furthermore, the survey aims to investigate the awareness of heritagization strategies employed as tools to reclaim lost cultural identity and enhance urban regeneration efforts.

1. 1. Age

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ 20-30

    ◯ 30-40

    ◯ 40-50

    ◯ 50-<

2. 2. Gender

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Male

    ◯ Female

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3.   3. Country

Mark only one oval.

◯ Bahrain

◯ Saudi Arabia

◯ United Arab Emirates

◯ Qatar

◯ Kuwait

◯ Oman

◯ Other-

4.   4. Where do you currently reside?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Bahrain

◯ Saudi Arabia

◯ United Arab Emirates

◯ Qatar

◯ Kuwait

◯ Oman

◯ Other-

5.   6. How long have you been residing in your current location?

_____

6.   5. What is your current profession?

_____

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Likert scale Questions

Please mark one choice for each question
on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

7.   1. Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the
      nation?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

8.

2. Do you think that culture and identity are co related?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

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9.

3. The discovery of oil has effected the Cultural Heritage of the Gulf region negatively?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

10.

4. Do you think modernization has affected the Cultural Heritage of Gulf region?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

11.   5. There have been successful initiatives in the Gulf region that balance modernization with the preservation of Cultural Heritage?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

12.   6. Do you believe Cultural Heritage can influence your values, beliefs, and
        traditions?

        Mark only one oval.

        ◯ Strongly Disagree

        ◯ Disagree

        ◯ Neutral

        ◯ Agree

        ◯ Strongly Agree

13.

        7. Do you agree that Cultural Heritage should be protected by law?

        Mark only one oval.

        ◯ Strongly Disagree

        ◯ Disagree

        ◯ Neutral

        ◯ Agree

        ◯ Strongly Agree

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14.

8. Do you think Government or stakeholders needs to take certain actions in order to preserve Cultural Heritage for future generations?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

15.

9. Cultural Heritage is important for future generations. Do you agree with this statement?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

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16.

10. Do you think that cultural activities and events can be helpful in increasing the awareness of the importance of Cultural Heritage?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

General Questions

Answer in two to three words.

17.   1. How important is Cultural Heritage to you?

_____

18.   2. What is your favorite Cultural Heritage site in your country?

_____

19.   3. Have you actively explored and learned about your Cultural Heritage?

_____

20.   4. In your opinion, what are the benefits of preserving and promoting Cultural Heritage?

_____

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21.   5. How do you feel when encountering Cultural Heritage that is different from your own?

_____

22.   6. Are there any Cultural Heritage practices or traditions that you feel are at risk of being lost or forgotten? If yes, please elaborate.

_____

23.   7. Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

24.   8. How do you think modern developments has impacted Gulf's Cultural Heritage?

_____

25.   9. Can technology be utilized to preserve and promote Cultural Heritage effectively?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

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26.   10. Do you know the term Heritagization?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

27.   11. Can you share any personal experiences or stories related to Gulf's Cultural Heritage that have had a lasting impact on you? (optional)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for the participation.
For further information you can contact-

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No.	Questions	Stakeholder 1 Conservation of Landscape	Stakeholder 2 Conservation team (old historic Jeddah)	Stakeholder 3 Project Manager (urban Regeneration Projects)	Stakeholder 4 Ministry of Culture	Stakeholder 5 ARC-WH-member	ANALYSIS
1	Are here any ongoing actions being taken to regain the effected cultural heritage?	Cultural identity continues to suffer in the region, Actions that are being taken but only on the facades thus providing more of a fake or imagery cultural identity. In Bahrain, except the city of muharraq, there is no cultural integrity left in the previous historic city centers.	There are many efforts focusing on not just preservation but also on documenttation and integration tests. And then there is rebuilding and reconstruction of damaged sites.	Continues celebrations such as national days can help us celebrate our culture and also at the same time learn more about it since it provides a good opportunity and atmosphere for the cultural heritage	There are some initiative focusing on therevitalization of historic quarters of the gulf countries	I believe the international commitments (such as the ratifications of UNESCO cultural conventions) heavily impacted approaches and measures of cultural heritage preservation or promotion as a form of good globalization (reference: Sophia Labadi, heritage and globalization). Because of these international (or western) understandings or values of heritage are somehow imposed, local understandings were compromised, state-sanctioned preservation practices heavily driven by the Unesco provisions, resulted in exclusion or passive participation of local communities who are the owners, bearers and practitioners of heritage. This discourse is widely known now as Authorized Heritage discourse (Laurajane Smith) and it created a mutated form of local heritage that	The responses reveal a complex picture regarding efforts to regain affected cultural heritage and the awareness of heritagization in the Gulf region. While there are ongoing actions, such as preservation, documentation, and reconstruction of damaged sites, these efforts are often criticized for focusing on facades, thus creating a superficial cultural identity. Bahrain's exception is the city of Muharraq, where genuine cultural integrity efforts are more evident. Celebrations like national days provide opportunities for cultural engagement and learning. International commitments, particularly UNESCO conventions, have significantly influenced preservation practices.

					in essence is far from the understandings of local communities.	
2	How has the traditional neighborhoods in the Gulf region evolved over time, and what is its significance in preserving cultural identity?	They have involved quite rapidly but traditional aspect is getting limited. Many village areas having traditional aspects are not growing and are infact suffering. So village culture is being effected negatively atleast in Bahrain	Many civilizations throughout the region, Privacy and migration has played role in developing the historic districts and thus contributed to cultural identity.	The traditional neighborhoods were already there, Some parts of the city and some parts of the villages since the beginning of kingdom of Bahrain and it has been evolved over time and these neighborhoods have become very small and outdated, thus people started moving to new and modern cities on other locations, especially parking issue had great impact on people moving to developed areas or cities, and this effected the cultural identity as modern houses took the new style which Is not related to the cultural and traditional ones.	They have evolved significantly, after the oil discovery they were left to deteriorate until the expats and immigrants occupied these neighbourhoods and thus despite the criticism somehow have managed to save them from further destruction.	This is a contained research of its own for the fact it's broad and heavily diverse. The Gulf region is not just about Bedouins, poetry, and language. The historical context is constructed through human interaction, engagement, creativity, and narrations throughout thousands of years. This construction is bonded by geographical aspect, however different power dynamics were key in this cultural process including political, social, economic, have been exchanged and shaped its cultural heritage effectively.	The evolution of traditional neighborhoods in the Gulf region reveals a complex interplay between rapid modernization and the preservation of cultural identity. While traditional aspects are increasingly limited, some village areas, particularly in Bahrain, suffer from neglect. Historic districts developed through privacy and migration, contributing to cultural identity, but modern housing and infrastructure have led to a cultural disconnect. The oil discovery accelerated deterioration, but the presence of expats and immigrants has ironically helped preserve some areas. This highlights the intricate historical and cultural dynamics that shape heritagization and cultural identity in the region.
3	What role does oral tradition, storytelling, and folklore play in preserving and	Also the budget limits the reality of traditional arts and folkware. As more	Actually, we need more awareness of the culture, as we neglected our cultural heritage.	This is actually very good in making events during Ramadan and national days, and each year it is helping	Traditions such as story telling, poetry and folk music do play a vital role in transferring the cultural identity to future	Weaving and braiding crafts such as Sadu, Sifafa or Talli. Practices related to hospitality	Oral traditions, storytelling, and folklore are crucial for preserving the Gulf's cultural

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	transmitting the cultural heritage of the Gulf?	importance is being given to the modern infrastructure and activities.	Raisinag the awareness of cultural identity is very vital for know through these means.	the new generation learn about their old culture, Bahraini traditional style and also the traditional food and overall cultural behavior.	generations but unfortunately in gulf, this trend has somehow neglected and these practices are almost forgotten.	such as coffee-making, poetry, and bukhoor associated to Majlis. Knowledge and the know-how related to nature such as the old irrigation systems (aflaj) or Durur (Astrology associated with dictation and navigation through the stars). These key elements are forms of intangible heritage. other customs are related to traditional performances (dances or chanting such as ayyala, taghroodah) depending on the cultural or national occasions.	heritage and identity. However, these practices are often neglected due to modern infrastructure priorities and limited budgets. While events during Ramadan and national days help educate the younger generation, traditional arts and folk practices like weaving, poetry, and hospitality rituals are vital intangible heritage forms that need more emphasis and awareness through heritagization efforts.
4	Are there any particular challenges or threats to the preservation of Gulf's cultural heritage? If yes, what are they?	There are few tourist areas promoting cultural heritage in Bahrain but if we look at our neighbors Saudi Arabia, they are doing great job regarding the preservation of cultural heritage.	Time duration specifically, current state of the neighbourhoods. We also need to limit the damage and integrate new modern technologies.	Yes, there are challenges and threats that are preventing the gulf heritage and new generation is now educating in private schools and these schools focus more on western culture, like American and british. So they are more into the English type of English people, lifestyle,dressing and style. This is actually big effect threatening the gulfs cultural heritage but in a way that to prevent this many govermentl and non governmentl entities such as	The first and foremost challenge is how to preserve the cultural heritage without sabotaging the authentic cultural identity of them.	Due to insufficient awareness and comprehension of heritagization processes, it has been widely misused to alter existing cultural heritage in its various forms or even compromise the authenticity and significance of heritage. While heritagization can sometimes serve as an effective method for restoring lost heritage, its value diminishes if the	Challenges to preserving the Gulf's cultural heritage include the rapid modernization and prioritization of modern infrastructure over traditional arts. Additionally, the influence of Western culture in private education systems poses a significant threat to the cultural identity of the younger generation. Efforts are being made by governmental and non-governmental

			youth ministry and cultural ministry are focusing on renewing the cultural and heritage themes and terminology and the entire culture through different media programs and events.and this is going well in reteaching the new generation about the cultural aspects		foundational elements of authenticity are lost, thereby diluting the essence of heritage.	entities to renew cultural themes through media and events. A key challenge is maintaining the authenticity of cultural heritage amid heritagization processes, which, if misused, can dilute the essence of the heritage they aim to preserve.
5	How does Gulf's cultural heritage contribute to the sense of identity and pride among the local communities?	Nobody in gulf is really aware of the significance of their cultural heritage and their sense of identity. Government and local bodies should take an initiative to raise the awareness especially amongst the less privileged people of local community.	They are proud of Heritage and value it considerably. Mostly the intangible but now focus is on tangible aswell.	The gulf culture contributes to sense and identity, as I mentioned earlier through the events and the programs.	Cultural identity fosters the sense of belonging amongst the communities, however in the gulf , there is a certain diversity within the realm of cultural identity . Back in the days it was due to pearl trade and now it is because of the multicultural population.	The gulf region bestows significant cultural identity (language, ethnicity, morality, religion, traditions, customs, norms, practices), in a way its local people perceive it as a form of existence. Being an individual from a tribal background from this specific region, cultural heritage in my region is a transgenerational meaning-making and heritage-making processes; provides a sense of place, time, and belonging in both individualistic and collective manner.	Gulf's cultural heritage significantly contributes to the sense of identity and pride among local communities through various means. While some locals may lack awareness of the full significance of their cultural heritage, there is considerable pride in both tangible and intangible aspects of their culture. Events and programs play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and cultural identity, despite the region's diverse population. Historically linked to the pearl trade and now influenced by multiculturalism, Gulf heritage embodies language, ethnicity, religion, and

							traditions that provide a sense of place,
6	In what ways do you see Gulf's cultural heritage being passed down to future generations?	There are no appropriate or we can say enough efforts for the future generation. Bahrain should focus more on this subject, however Qatar and Saudi are progressing better in this process. Kuwait is lagging behind in this matter despite their growing economy and strong worldwide reputation.	Receive it and preserve it for the coming generations. Teach them the importance of cultural heritage so they can do the same.	As I answered, these events and programs are done twice a year for new generation, teaching them the traditional identity and how to speak,dress, eat according to bahrain's traditional culture	Through cultural awareness events and seminars , and most importantly by engaging in the dialogue, which critically examine the ongoing conservation efforts	Through shared traditions, customs, practices, meanings, value and uses of local heritage. We still function collectively, and our cultural heritage is seen as a social activity that effectively still functional in the gulf rather than historical, political or economic, which heavily influenced the sense of belonging and pride among its local people.	Gulf's cultural heritage is being passed down to future generations through various methods, although the efforts vary by country. Qatar and Saudi Arabia are making significant strides in this area, while Bahrain and Kuwait need to intensify their efforts. Key methods include cultural awareness events, educational programs, and seminars that teach the importance of heritage. Additionally, shared traditions, customs, and practices are vital in maintaining cultural continuity. Engaging in critical dialogue about conservation efforts also plays a crucial role.
7	Are there any specific architectural styles or historical sites in the Gulf region that are considered significant in preserving cultural heritage?	Mahrabeiyah (wooden interlaced traditional windows) and barjeel (windtowers) are the traditional architectural elements that can be brought back not just as a decorative piece and also in-	Islamic style and the architectural elements such as wooden interlaced windows, wind tower, woodcraft and also the calligraphy and poetry.	The architectural style and historical cities now actually, it is like an ongoing trend and there are entities which are focusing on cultural architecture to save it and maintain it as it is respecting the cultural heritage, and even the new architectural buildings some	Windtowers, wooden interlaced windows and the wooden doors	. Example, traditional housing: people at the coastline use Arish house (made of fronds and trunks, rich people use more sophisticated raw material such as coral and processed bricks of sand), Desert people lives in tents made of Sadu	The responses highlight a strong awareness of heritagization and its role in preserving cultural identity through traditional architectural elements like Mahrabeiyah, barjeel, Islamic styles, and traditional housing.

		terms of function. It can also help impact the harsh weather of the region in a sustainable way. These traditional architectural features can also be incorporated with a modern twist in the new upcoming projects.		of them are focusing on old traditional architectural elements such as souq al baraha, is an amazing example of modern architecture with high efficiency and air to o ac cooling system is there but it is designed in the heritage style of Bahrain and there also other minor souqs, malls and houses being constructed with cultural heritage theme.		fabric, Mountain-dwellers use rocks and palm trunks (such as Bait AlQufl, house of the lock).	Modern projects also incorporate these elements, emphasizing both cultural heritage and functionality.
8	Do you know the term heritagization?.	Not really, but I would like to know about this.	New object in heritage actually I am no sure of it in the first place.	Actually, this is my first time hearing aboiut heritagization but I have seen this in many places , there are new restrictions from the king of Bahrain that the city of muharraq now has to be aligned with its rich cultural heritage, and they have provided the guidelines for the houses there so tht they stay on heir cultural theme but are maintained appropriately.	Is it like branding of the heritage?	Yes. as a heritage-making process as one of its common definitions. Unfortunately , we do have a severe lack of academics, experts, sources and material of this specific term in the Gulf Region.	The responses indicate varying levels of familiarity with the term "heritagization," ranging from limited awareness to recognition of its implementation in heritage preservation efforts, particularly in Bahrain. There's an interest in understanding its implications, but a lack of academic resources on the concept in the Gulf region.
9	Do you think that heritagization is being used as a tool to reclaim the lost cultural heritage in the gulf region?	Actually, Authentic design elements that once reflected the local cultural identity are not being followed but instead the Egyptian and Greek styles are	Yes, as we witness in Doha, mashreib new town and the urban regeneration of Souq al waqif. Bringing back the old elements to blend past and present for the sake of heritage can help	I think that it is being used a s a tool to reclaim the lost culture as the new generation re not very keen on old houses and they will not try to implement the traditional and cultural architectural features in their houses or even commercial	Indeed it is, we can see heritagization in various historic districts has impacted the cultural identity and transformed them into culturaldestinati ons. But the main concern is that most of these initiatives are presenting a polished and enhanced	Because of the lack of awareness and understanding of heritagization processes, I think it has been abused widely to either mutate existing cultural heritage in their tangible, intangible or	These responses demonstrate varying perspectives on the use of heritagization in reclaiming cultural heritage in the Gulf region. While some view it positively as a means to revive identity

		being implement ed in the conservati on projects mostly.	revive identity.	spaces such as malls based on heritage ones. So this can set a benchmark for them to look upto how the cultural heritage has been previously.	heritage when in truth the authentic heritage was not similar to what is being presented now.	natural forms or completely jeopardies the validity and value of heritage authenticity. At times, I believe heritagization could be an excellent safeguarding approach for reviving lost heritage, however once the roots or factors of authenticity are gone, this reclaim loses its value, thus loses the meaning of heritage.	through blending past and present elements, others express concerns about its misuse, including the imposition of foreign architectural styles and the distortion of authentic heritage. Overall, there's recognition of heritagization 's impact on cultural identity, but also a need for greater awareness and understanding of its processes.
10	What do you hope the future holds for Gulf's cultural heritage, and what steps do you think should be taken to ensure its preservation and continued celebration?	A proper vision and plan is needed. Hope the stakeholde rs involved in the decision making open their eyes before it is too late for the areas that still have cultural context remaining. There should be open visitor centers as well as investing opportuniti es for the locals commmun ity Personally , I would like to see the conservati on of my village AlQadam which continue to suffer	More global awareness. I hope it get's the same importance as we see in the western world. Integrating modern and digital technologies can help us with the initiatives.	My Hope and aim for the future is that the gulf culture such as Bahrain, Saudi and all GCC countries to hold onto their cultural identity and their dressing,langu age, architecture because this is our real identity as this is what makes us different from the western culture.So we have to maintain it and make it very efficient by arranging more programs raising awareness about the cultural knowledge. Even government should make proper efforts to make sure they maintain this identity very well and not be lost with the time.	Critical examination of the loss of cultural heritage followed by the proper assessment of the ongoing conservation initiatives. Better collaboration between the stakeholders, researchers and the local community is vital to ensure the successful heritagization of the lost cultural identity of the region.	At times, I believe heritagization could be an excellent safeguarding approach for reviving lost heritage, however once the roots or factors of authenticity are gone, this reclaim loses its value, thus loses the meaning of heritage	These responses emphasize the importance of preserving Gulf's cultural heritage for future generations. They highlight the need for a comprehensiv e vision and plan, increased global awareness, integration of modern technologies, and critical examination of conservation efforts. There's a consensus on the significance of maintaining cultural identity, with a call for continued celebration and awareness- raising initiatives.

		from the loss of cultural identity.		Continues celebrations such as national days can help us celebrate our culture and also at the same time learn more about it.			

No.	Questions	Academia 1 Urban Regeneration and post-Conflict Reconstruction - PhD Candidate	Academia 2 Conservation and Restoration- PhD Candidate	Academia 3 TA- Cultural Studies	Academia 4 Urban Regeneration	Academia 5 Heritagizatio, Authenticity and Community Participation in Heritage-making Process in the Gulf Region	ANALYSIS
1	1. Can you tell me about the cultural heritage of the Gulf region and its significance to the local communities?	The cultural heritage of the Gulf region includes a rich heritage of traditions, beliefs and customs that are passed down from generation to generation. It holds significance to the local community who values the preservation of their history, values, and identity	The current growth of World Heritage activities in the Gulf region is very encouraging, especially given that all of the involved nations have historically played important roles in international trade as well as the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills.	The Gulf region has a rich cultural heritage deeply rooted in its history, traditions, and Bedouin lifestyle. The cultural heritage of Aldiriyah for example is very rich and the history is quite fascinating how it survived the battles in old days	Cultural Heritage in the region, with time, has been an integral part of the norms that exist currently. Therefore, its significance lies in the fact that it has shaped the people we are today.	The gulf region bestows significant cultural identity (language, ethnicity, morality, religion, traditions, customs, norms, practices), in a way its local people perceive it as a form of existence. Being an individual from a tribal background from this specific region, cultural heritage in my region is a transgenerational meaning-making and heritage-making processes; provides a sense of place, time, and belonging in both individualistic and collective manner	The responses highlight the deep-rooted cultural heritage of the Gulf region, emphasizing its significance in shaping local identity through traditions, beliefs, and customs. They underscore how cultural heritage serves as a vital component of collective identity, passed down through generations and contributing to a sense of belonging and continuity within the community.
2	What are some key traditions, customs, or practices that are unique to the Gulf region?	Key traditions and customs specific to the Gulf region	The main religion observed in the Arab world is Islam, which has	Traditional practices like, pearl diving, falconry, camel racing, and	The cultural heritage in the gulf region is diverse and	Weaving and braiding crafts such as Sadu, Sifafa or Talli. Practices related to hospitality such as coffee-making,	The responses highlight key traditions and customs unique to the

	include hospitality, traditional dress such as the dishdasha and abaya, pearl diving, falconry and camel racing. These customs not only reflect the region's heritage, but also reflect its values of generosity, hospitality, resilience and connection to the land.	a significant impact on daily social traditions. The political, social, and economic atmospheres of Arab nations are governed by what is known as the Islamic rule of law, which is a form of governance rather than a collection of religious principles.	calligraphy are cultural customs of the Gulf's culture. Hospitality, expressed through gatherings and ramadan is also a key tradition.	therefore, the process of listing them is an extensive task. Additionally, there is a lot of diversity in traditions, customs and practices within the region itself. The key traditions, I would say, can be seen in great detail in special occasions such as weddings, celebrations of Eid/Ramadhan, etc.	poetry, and bukhoor associated to Majlis. Knowledge and the know-how related to nature such as the old irrigation systems (aflaj) or Durur (Astrology associated with dictation and navigation through the stars). These key elements are forms of intangible heritage. other customs are related to traditional performances (dances or chanting such as ayyala, taghroodah) depending on the cultural or national occasions.	Gulf region, emphasizing practices like hospitality, traditional dress, and cultural events such as Eid/Ramadan celebrations. These customs reflect the region's diverse cultural identity and serve as symbols of its values, resilience, and connection to tradition and land.
3	How has the natural environment, such as the desert or the coastline, influenced the cultural heritage of the Gulf region?	The natural environment, including desert landscapes and coastlines, has significantly influenced the cultural heritage of the Gulf region. It has shaped traditional livelihoods, architecture, cuisine and social customs, fostering a deep sense of harmony and interdependence with nature in Gulf communities.	Al-Ahsa Oasis is situated in the eastern region of the Saudi Arabia and is surrounded by the deserts of Ad-Dahna,. The environment of the oasis, which has changed through thousands of years, depicts a way of life common to the Gulf area of the Arabian Peninsula. This cultural environment includes ancient structures as well as gardens, canals, springs, and wells, as well as a lake used	The harsh desert landscape and the proximity to the coastline have greatly influenced the Gulf's cultural heritage.That's why people of the gulf region once had a distinct lifestyle based on desert nomadic culture.	Due to the small area of Bahrain, the desert has not been a large influence in the cultural heritage. Although, some activities done in the past were done in the empty vast desert lands, such as picking truffle mushrooms and hunting.	the influence is basically a cultural process that is related to the either meaning-making (interpretation) or heritage-making (heritgaisation) processes or both combined results in series of heritage presentations and productions. The natural environment dictates the function, value, and use of the cultural heritage practices such as weather conditions and availability of materials. Example, traditional housing: people at the coastline use Arish house (made of fronds and trunks, rich people use more sophisticated raw material such as coral and processed bricks of sand), Desert people lives in tents made of Sadu fabric, Mountain-dwellers use rocks and palm trunks (such as Bait AlQufl, house of the lock).	The responses highlight how the natural environment, particularly the desert and coastline, has profoundly shaped the cultural heritage of the Gulf region. This influence is evident in traditional livelihoods, architecture, and social customs, fostering a deep connection between Gulf communities and their surroundings. It underscores the significance of harmony and interdependence with

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						nature in defining the cultural identity of the region.
4	Are there any specific festivals or celebrations that hold great importance in Gulf's cultural heritage? Could you describe them?	According to my general knowledge, several festivals take place not only in the Gulf but in all Arab countries, such as Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. Other important festivals include Eid al-Adha, and sure, there are other National Day celebrations and traditional festivals such as the Al Dhafra Festival, the Liwa Date Festival in the UAE, and the Muscat Festival in Oman.	In order to diversify their economies, the six GCC nations are all putting forth ambitious plans. The development of tourism and the provision of local communities with cultural events that open up new possibilities and celebrate national heritage and identity are both goals of these strategies, and festivals are a key component of both.	Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are significant festivals celebrated with family and community. National Day events are also celebrated widely in the region showcasing their pride in their national identity.	I believe Ramadhan is one of the best examples. Although it is a religious month of worship and fasting, cultural aspects have become an integral part of the holy month. This can be seen in the clothes people wear during this month (usually thob for men and jalabiyas for women) and the food consumed (dates, rice dishes, etc.)	There are many localized festivals depending on the cultural expressions and variety in the region, and reflects different social, cultural, religious or national purposes. However, in my opinion, the only celebration that is common is Gargee'an in all the 6 countries of GCC in addition to Iraq. Almalid is another example.	The responses highlight the significance of festivals and celebrations in preserving Gulf's cultural heritage and fostering a sense of national identity. Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and National Day events are widely celebrated, showcasing pride in cultural traditions and national heritage. These festivities serve as key components in promoting cultural identity and community cohesion across the Gulf region.
5	How has the historical context of the Gulf region shaped its cultural heritage?	The historical context of the Gulf region, characterized by trade routes, migration, and interaction with neighboring civilizations, has played a key role in shaping its cultural heritage. In addition, there are World	The Gulf region, has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that has been shaped by its complex historical context. key historical factors that have influenced the cultural heritage of the Gulf region are Ancient	Historical events like the pearl trade and the discovery of oil have profoundly shaped the Gulf's cultural heritage back in the days. The region's history of trade and interaction with diverse cultures has contributed	In historical content, in terms of trade routes and also before independence from the British Empire, the gulf region has been exposed to various cultures along the way. In Bahrain, some of the words used in the main	This is a contained research of its own for the fact it's broad and heavily diverse. The Gulf region is not just about Bedouins, poetry, and language. The historical context is constructed through human interaction, engagement, creativity, and narrations throughout thousands of years. This construction is bonded by geographical aspect, however different power dynamics were key in this cultural	The historical context of the Gulf region, marked by trade, migration, and diverse influences, has profoundly shaped its cultural identity. Trade routes, interaction with neighboring civilizations, and historical

		Heritage Sites like Bahrain's Qal'at al-Bahrain, Oman's aflaj irrigation systems, and Saudi Arabia's Al-Hijr.	Civilizations, Trade and Commerce , Islamic Influence and cultural identity.	to its unique identity and made the region , for people with different backgrounds.	dialect come from either Indian, Persian or English words. This is a testament to the exposure the region had throughout history that shaped its cultural heritage in some aspects.	process including political, social, economic, have been exchanged and shaped its cultural heritage effectively.	events like the pearl trade and oil discovery have contributed to the region's unique heritage, showcasing a blend of diverse cultures and identities. This historical narrative highlights the interconnectedness and complexity of Gulf's cultural heritage, reflecting its rich and diverse historical background.
6	Do you think modernization has affected the cultural heritage of Gulf?	Modernization has surely impacted the Gulf's cultural heritage and created both opportunities and challenges. While advances in technology and infrastructure have allowed for economic growth and communication, they have also resulted to rapid urbanization, cultural uniformity, and the erosion of traditional customs and values.	Yes, modernization has had a significant impact on the cultural heritage of the Gulf region. The rapid economic development and modernization efforts that took place in the region, particularly after the discovery of oil reserves, have brought about profound changes in various aspects of Gulf societies and their cultural practices. Here are some ways in which modernization has affected	Modernization has introduced many changes in life quality, architecture, and technology, impacting locals as well as the foreigners. Although it brought economic development, it eventually also led to the demolition and destruction of cultural heritage assets.	Modernization has affected physical cultural heritage in the region due to increased urbanization. In some situations, this has posed a threat on existing heritage sites. However, these threats can be viewed as a pathway to which extensive solutions have been discussed, further emphasizing their importance. On the other hand, intangible cultural heritage, unfortunately, could face	Because of modernization in specific, heritagization process was born as the definition of building new heritage in the gulf region, as such creating a sort of selection process of heritage. It emerged through practices of urban heritage however recently intangible forms of heritage were also 'heritagised' as a consequence of modernisation demands such as commodity, staged heritage, interpretation and presentation of heritage. All are forms of meaning-making or heritage-making processes.	Modernization in the Gulf region has brought about significant changes, impacting cultural heritage in various ways. While it has led to economic growth and technological advancements, it has also posed threats to traditional customs and values, leading to the erosion and loss of cultural identity. Rapid urbanization, demolition of heritage sites, and the commodification of heritage are some of the challenges

		the cultural heritage of the Gulf:		instances of being lost or watered down in the face of modernization.		arising from modernization, highlighting the need for careful preservation efforts amidst development.
7	How has the modernization and globalization impacted the preservation and promotion of Gulf's cultural heritage?	Each had a negative and positive impact on preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Gulf. While digital platforms and global networks offer new opportunities to demonstrate and share cultural traditions, they also create threats such as cultural commercialism, loss of authenticity, and the exclusion of original knowledge and practice.	Modernization and globalization have had both positive and negative impacts on the preservation and promotion of the Gulf's cultural heritage	Modernization and globalization have both positive and negative impacts. While they provide exposure and economic opportunities, there is a risk also, of cultural homogenization and touristification, specifically for the sites undergoing cultural renovations.	Globalization, I believe, has helped in the process of preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the Gulf. Th inscription of the pearling path of Bahrain in the UNESCO World Heritage List has put a spotlight on the tangible and intangible heritage of the region. This inscription is a beautiful example of how architecture that holds testament to a cultural phenomenon has been preserved to showcase the rich history it has witnessed.	The influence of international commitments, such as UNESCO cultural conventions, on cultural heritage preservation and promotion has led to a phenomenon known as "Authorized Heritage discourse," as described by Laurajane Smith. This discourse reflects how state-sanctioned preservation practices, influenced by Western values and UNESCO provisions, often disregard local understandings and actively exclude or passively involve local communities.Consequently, this approach has resulted in a mutated form of local heritage that diverges significantly from the perspectives and values of the communities who own, uphold, and practice it.	Modernization and globalization have brought about both positive and negative impacts on the preservation and promotion of Gulf's cultural heritage. While digital platforms and global networks offer new avenues for showcasing cultural traditions, there are concerns regarding cultural commodification, loss of authenticity, and exclusion of original knowledge and practices. The influence of international conventions and Western values on preservation practices may lead to a divergence from local perspectives and values, potentially resulting in a loss of cultural identity.
8	How does Gulf's cultural heritage contribute to the sense of identity	Gulf's cultural heritage plays a	The cultural heritage of the Gulf	Gulf's cultural heritage plays a	Cultural heritage is very unique to	Through shared traditions, customs, practices, meanings, value	Gulf's cultural heritage serves as a

	and pride among the local communities?	vital role in fostering a sense of identity and pride in local communities. It is the source of collective memory, resilience and continuity that grounds individuals and fosters a sense of belonging.	region plays a significant role in shaping the sense of identity and pride among local communities.	crucial role in fostering a sense of identity and pride among local communities. This distinguishes them from other countries in the world.	every region and therefore contributes to the identity of the people. Also among regions in the gulf, specific dialects and celebrations distinguish them from each other. These slight differences bring about the unique nature of every region.	and uses of local heritage. We still function collectively, and our cultural heritage is seen as a social activity that effectively still functional in the gulf rather than historical, political or economic, which heavily influenced the sense of belonging and pride among its local people. In other words, cultural heritage contribute to the sense of identity and pride among the local communities through its present functions and meanings, thus maintained its value from the past to the next generations.	cornerstone for fostering a strong sense of identity and pride among local communities, providing a source of collective memory and belonging. It distinguishes them from other regions and strengthens their cultural uniqueness. This collective heritage, encompassing traditions, customs, and practices, plays a vital role in maintaining a sense of belonging and continuity, preserving the essence of cultural identity amidst changing times.
9	Are there any regional variations or subcultures within the Gulf region that contribute to its diverse cultural heritage?	Yes, each Gulf country has distinct cultural traditions, languages, and social customs formed by location, history, and external influences.	Yes, there are regional variations and subcultures within the Gulf region that contribute to its diverse cultural heritage. While there are overarching similarities in language, religion, and cultural practices, each country in the Gulf	The Gulf region exhibits diversity in cultural. As most of the Gcc countries have higher expat to local ratio. This highlights how diverse the culture of these Gulf nations has become and this is why people from other countries continue to feel safe	As mentioned earlier, dialects and subcultures do exist and contribute to a diverse cultural heritage. The location of the gulf meant that throughout history, it has been exposed to various cultures and ideas from all over the world. Additional	Influenced through routes of trade, whether on land (Silk Road, Zubaida Road) or the sea from Latvian countries, Persia, North and Middle Africa, India, also from the Far East.	The presence of regional variations and subcultures within the Gulf region underscores its diverse cultural heritage, highlighting the influences of history, trade routes, and external interactions. These distinct cultural expressions contribute to the richness of Gulf's identity,

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		has its own unique traditions, customs, dialects, and cultural expressions	and home here.	ly, the land borders some gulf countries have introduce these subcultures that other countries might not have – an example is the cultural differences between Jeddah in Saudi Arabia (close to Egypt) and Abha (closer to Yemen) and AlKhobar (closed to Bahrain).		safeguarding against the homogenization of cultural identity and preserving the uniqueness of each community.
10	How can technology and digital platforms be utilized to preserve and promote Gulf's cultural heritage effectively?	Create virtual exhibits, interactive maps, and educational resources using digitized archival materials, and develop online communities for cultural exchange and dialogue.	Technicians and digital platforms can play a crucial role in effectively preserving and promoting the Gulf's cultural heritage. Such as Digital Documentation and Archiving as well as the Online Platforms .	Technology and digital platforms can be utilized for documenting and promoting cultural heritage. Nowadays Virtual museums and online exhibitions can help us spark the interest of younger generation , which is more digital oriented.	In relation to archaeological sites, technology has been proven to be a useful tool in regenerating what a structure might have looked like. Today, the promotion of cultural heritage has been done using social media platforms.	I think digitization of cultural heritage can only be effective through collecting and validating data, information, stories, images and the different sources. Then, this knowledge builds a narrative, interpretation that shapes a digital presentation of heritage. if used properly, it can revive and reuse many different elements of cultural heritage, especially those that have been lost thought-out time, crisis, or lack of human resources.	The presence of regional variations and subcultures within the Gulf region underscores its diverse cultural heritage, highlighting the influences of history, trade routes, and external interactions. These distinct cultural expressions contribute to the richness of Gulf's identity, safeguarding against the homogenization of cultural identity and preserving the uniqueness of each community.
11	Do you know the term heritagization?	I think term heritagization refers to how cultural heritage is	Heritagization refers to the process by which cultural	No	Not sure.	Yes. as a heritage-making process as one of its common definitions. **Unfortunately, we do have a severe**	**The term "heritagization" refers to the process of**

		identified, and promoted for various purposes, including tourism, nation building and identity building.	practices, or something like that.			**lack of academics, experts, sources and material of this specific term in the Gulf Region.**	**identifying, selecting, and promoting cultural heritage for various purposes such as tourism and identity building**. It involves creating policies and frameworks for preserving and managing cultural assets. While some are familiar with the concept, others may not be aware of it, highlighting a potential gap in understanding within certain contexts like the Gulf Region.
12	Do you think that heritagization is being used as a tool to reclaim the lost cultural heritage in the gulf region?	Heritagization is indeed being used to recover lost Gulf region cultural heritage, promote sustainable development, and preserve cultural identity in the face of rapid urbanization.	Yes, heritagization can be used as a tool to reclaim and preserve lost cultural heritage in the Gulf region. The Gulf countries have experienced significant changes in recent decades due to rapid modernization, urbanization, and globalization. As a result, certain aspects of	Heritagization is indeed used in the Gulf region to reclaim and preserve lost cultural heritage. Efforts including the restoration of historical sites, documentation of traditional practices, and the promotion of cultural tourism as we witness in Al diriyah is one such example. But I do	Heritagization is not a term I am familiar with, but there are cases where lost cultural heritage is now being documented at an effort of maintaining its memory and history.	Because of the lack of awareness and understanding of heritagization processes, I think it has been abused widely to either mutate existing cultural heritage in their tangible, intangible or natural forms or completely jeopardies the validity and value of heritage authenticity. At times, I believe heritagization could be an excellent safeguarding approach for reviving lost heritage, however once the roots or factors of authenticity are gone, this reclaim loses its value, thus loses the meaning of heritage.	The responses suggest varying degrees of awareness and understanding of the term "heritagization" in the context of reclaiming lost cultural heritage in the Gulf region. While some recognize its potential as a tool for preservation and restoration efforts, others express concerns about its

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			cultural heritage may have been threatened or lost over time.	feel the authentic ambience of the place is somehow lost and now it feels more lie regenerated cultural place lacking the soul.			implementation and impact on authenticity. Overall, there appears to be a recognition of the importance of heritagization in safeguarding cultural heritage, albeit with differing perspectives on its effectiveness and consequences.

No.	Questions	Local Community 1 Abuzanad	Local Community 2 Adel	Local Community 3 Yousaff	Local Community 4 Sari	Local Community 1 Fatema	ANALYSIS
1	1. Can you tell me about the cultural heritage of the Gulf region and its significance to the local communities?	The cultural heritage of the gulf region was brought by the islamic religion and more than 80% in the rest of the middle east area such as iraq, egypt, jordan, syria, palestine, and lebanon. The islamic religion taught people who live in saudi arabia a life style of worshiping and caring for the others	It is the existing traditional architecture that can be found in the historic centers. Cultural heritage is something that plays an important role in passing the cultural identity to the younger generations.	Architecture showing the past lifestyle of the local people like mosques, souks and the materials used in the building proess such as bamboo, reed and mud.	Cultural Heritage has more private aspects but now it's changing with time. Small windows and high exterior walls for privacy were dominant along with Islamic architectural elements.	The Gulf region has a rich cultural heritage deeply rooted in its history, traditions, and Bedouin lifestyle. The cultural heritage of Aldiriyah for example is very rich and the history is quite fascinating how it survived the battles in old days	The Gulf region's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in traditions, beliefs, and customs passed down through generations, shaping the identity and values of local communities. This heritage, integral to the region's norms and Bedouin lifestyle, holds significance due to its historical resilience and role in international trade and cultural

						transmission. For local people, cultural identity is perceived as a form of existence, providing a sense of belonging
2	What are some key traditions, customs, or practices that are unique to the Gulf region?	The traditions in the Gulf area was also brought by islam, first of all, group breakfast in ramadan, in this holy month, people in the middle east and the gulf region share their breakfast meals with each other in order to cherish the others and the poor as well. People in the gulf region teach their kids how to ride a horse, how to live or camp in the desert, and how to hunt animals for food and the pilgrimage season.	It is the existing traditional architecture that can be found in the historic centers. Cultural heritage is something that plays an important role in passing the cultural identity to the younger generations.	Nowadays, Museums and cultural centers showcase the traditional lifestyle and the cultural events that are held in order to honour the cultural heritage	Generosity and hospitality as they are very welcoming. This is one key tradition that seperates them.	Traditional practices like, pearl diving, falconry, camel racing, and calligraphy are cultural customs of the Gulf's culture. Hospitality, expressed through gatherings and ramadan is also a key tradition.	The responses collectively highlight a strong awareness of cultural identity in the Gulf region, emphasizing religious practices, traditional skills, architecture, museums and cultural centers, hospitality, and cultural events. These elements are integral to maintaining and promoting the rich cultural heritage, ensuring its transmission to future generations.
3	How has the natural environment, such as the desert or the coastline, influenced the cultural heritage of the Gulf region?	The environment in the gulf area is desert, it influenced its people by the way they think (how to move in the desert without getting lost), and how do they live in the desert	According to what I have heard coastline was famous for the fishing and mountain regions like the ones in Saudi Arabia influenced the lifestyle.For instance Abha has stone	This is something that is effected globally, Solar cycle influence the lifestyle in the gulf region since it has hot and dry climate.Thats why we had windtowers and small openings for ventilation	Interms of Material, it has impacted the archiure, for example some areas have stone architecture while others used mud brick. So availability played key role in this.	The harsh desert landscape and the proximity to the coastline have greatly influenced the Gulf's cultural heritage.That's why people of the gulf region once had a distinct	responses collectively reveal a strong awareness of how the natural environment has influenced the Gulf region's cultural identity. The desert, coastline, and mountain

		under high temperature	architecture which is different to mud houses in other GCC regions.	and thus the sun direction and exposure has heavily influenced the architecture		lifestyle based on desert nomadic culture.	environments have shaped lifestyle adaptations, architectural styles, and material use. This awareness underscores the deep connection between the natural landscape and cultural practices, emphasizing how environmental challenges have led to innovative solutions and distinct cultural traits.
4	Are there any specific festivals or celebrations that hold great importance in Gulf's cultural heritage? Could you describe them?	There is celebrations which is bairam, people tend to celebrate this ocasion after the holy month of ramadan is finished and the pilgrimage is finished	Weddings and the Eid celebrations mostly. These are the only major festivals celebrated throughout the region.	The ones I mentioned before, religious events and cultural events.	Cultural festivals and celebrations such as in Al Driyah now are changing the way people interact with the Cultural Heritage.	Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are significant festivals celebrated with family and community. National Day events are also celebrated widely in the region showcasing their pride in their national identity.	The responses reveal a strong awareness of significant Gulf festivals, with religious celebrations like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha being central to cultural identity. Modern cultural events and National Day celebrations further enhance community interaction and national pride. This highlights the multifaceted nature of Gulf cultural heritage, encompassing religious, cultural, and national elements.
5	How has the historical context of the Gulf region shaped its cultural heritage?	It changed their cultural heritage by the way they dress	Availability of local material affected the architecture , for	I am not quite sure about the exact effect but the trading and	The trade , agriculture and livestock were commonly	Historical events like the pearl trade and the discovery	The historical context of the Gulf region has profoundly shaped its cultural

		and the way they live (their lifestyle)	example traditional souks that used wood and mud in their distinct style accommodating the public space characteristics	souks that we had in the past for the pearl trade has impacted the lifestyle.	practiced way of life and this has impacted the traditional life.	of oil have profoundly shaped the Gulf's cultural heritage back in the days. The region's history of trade and interaction with diverse cultures has contributed to its unique identity and made the region , for people with different backgrounds.	heritage, influencing lifestyle, dress, and architecture through the availability of local materials. Trade, especially the pearl trade, agriculture, and livestock practices have significantly impacted traditional life. Major historical events like the discovery of oil and the region's history of trade and cultural interaction have contributed to its unique cultural identity.
6	Do you think modernization has affected the cultural heritage of Gulf?	Yes, because of modernization people in the gulf region started to forget their culture and following the lifestyle of the western side of the world	Yes it has effected. Positvely to have better economy and upgraded lifestyle and negatively in demolishing vernacular architecture for the sake of modern structures.but overall it has costed them with the loss of authentic identity.	Offcourse , when we see Dubai and now Riyadh, they have entirely modernized themselves to align with globalization and that is 100 percent positive impact.	Offcourse, Positively. It has developed the modern Infrastructure and raised the level of education. This upgrade has also effected the cultural aspects.	Modernization has introduced many changes in life quality, architecture, and technology, impacting locals as well as the foreigners. Although it brought economic development, it eventually also led to the demolition and destruction of cultural heritage assets.	Modernization in the Gulf has had both positive and negative effects on cultural heritage. Positively, it has improved the economy, upgraded lifestyles, developed modern infrastructure, and raised educational levels. However, it has also led to a loss of traditional culture and authentic identity, the demolition of vernacular architecture, and the destruction of cultural heritage assets due to the influence of Western lifestyles and globalization.
7	How has the modernization and globalization impacted the preservation and promotion of Gulf's cultural heritage?	Because of modernization, people in the gulf started to forget about their culture, but it also promoted	There was a stage where they neglected the heritage but now the modernization is somehow helping	It has helped in the preservation, keeping the same language in modern structures as they had in previous	Recently, It has influenced the restoration of cultural heritage too on a better scale such as Al	Modernization and globalization have both positive and negative impacts. While they provide exposure	Modernization and globalization have had a dual impact on the preservation and promotion of Gulf's cultural heritage.

		the gulf region very fast since the gulf area (which includes Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar) is rich which crude oil were countries around the world promoted their area in exchange for oil	them with the conservation efforts where they try to blend the past with the present.	traditional ones	Diriyah and increased the awareness of cultural identity too.	and economic opportunities, there is a risk also , of cultural homogenization and touristification, specifically for the sites undergoing cultural renovations.	Positively, they have facilitated rapid regional promotion, supported modern conservation efforts, and increased awareness of cultural identity. These processes have helped in preserving traditional aspects within modern structures and improved restoration efforts. However, there are also negative impacts, such as the risk of cultural homogenization , touristification, and an initial period of neglect for cultural heritage.
8	How does Gulf's cultural heritage contribute to the sense of identity and pride among the local communities?	The Gulf's cultural heritage identify themselves by the way they dress, since the gulf region is mostly hot, they dress cool things in order not to get too hot and for women they dress something called abaya which covers her body among with the hijab, it is designed to make a woman look beautiful and covered at the same time.	All of them actually have similar culture culture driven from the religion of islam and lifestyle and traditions are also very similar.but since geography is not that diverse, they tend to have the same sense of unified cultural identity.	Cultural Identity is erased somehow and the young generation is prone to lose it even further.	The cultural identity is actually shifting and changing after modernization since mindset has shifted more towards the western lifestyle .	Gulf's cultural heritage plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of identity and pride among local communities. This distinguishes them from other countries in the world.	The Gulf's cultural heritage contributes to the sense of identity and pride among local communities in several ways. Traditional dressing customs, rooted in adaptation to the climate and religious beliefs, play a significant role in cultural identity. Despite geographical diversity, a shared Islamic culture unifies Gulf countries. However, modernization and Western influence pose challenges to

			252			the preservation of cultural identity among the younger generation, highlighting the need for cultural preservation efforts.
9	Are there any regional variations or subcultures within the Gulf region that contribute to its diverse cultural heritage?	yes there is, since the gulf region are full of different tribes, each tribe wear the head scarf or the Shimagh differently to identify themselves from the tribe they came from	Not really, since the geography is mostly same.	In Saudi Arabia, Riyad and Jeddah have different urban fabric, the lifestyle and architecture is different too as material of construction varies across cities and countries	They do actually, for examples the ones on the borders of other arabian countries have different cultural identity.	The Gulf region exhibits diversity in cultural. As most of the Gcc countries have higher expat to local ratio. This highlights how diverse the culture of these Gulf nations has become and this is why people from other countries continue to feel safe and home here.	The Gulf region exhibits both regional variations and subcultures that contribute to its diverse cultural heritage. Tribal affiliations, reflected in differences in headscarf/Shimagh styles, highlight regional variations. Additionally, urban fabric differences and architectural variations between cities like Riyadh and Jeddah within Saudi Arabia emphasize subcultural diversity. Border regions of Arabian countries further contribute to diverse cultural identities. Moreover, the presence of expatriates in most GCC countries fosters a multicultural environment, enriching the cultural landscape of

						the Gulf region.
10	How can technology and digital platforms be utilized to preserve and promote Gulf's cultural heritage effectively?	By sharing the gulf's history and culture among social media	A lot actually, softwares , scans, digital media marketing can help promote the culture, attract more tourists and also raise the awareness amongst younger generations.	Al Ula Museum is an interesting example of how the modern technology can be utilized and it is helping in increasing the awareness of cultural heritage locally and globally.	Perhaps cultural videos such as documentaries can help with the loss of identity	Technology and digital platforms can be utilized for documenting and promoting cultural heritage. Nowadays Virtual museums and online exhibitions can help us spark the interest of younger generation , which is more digital oriented.	Technology and digital platforms offer various opportunities for preserving and promoting Gulf's cultural heritage effectively. These include leveraging social media for wide dissemination, utilizing software and scanning technologies for marketing and tourism, showcasing examples like the Al Ula Museum for global awareness, creating cultural videos to address identity loss, and employing virtual museums and online exhibitions to engage the digital-oriented younger generation.
11	Do you know the term heritagization?	Yes, it is to get something/ object/ or traditions from the past generations	I do not actually.	It is the Inheritance of Heritage .	No, can you explain	Nop	
12	Do you think that heritagization is being used as a tool to reclaim the lost cultural heritage in the gulf region?	Yes, since each tribe in the gulf region inherit their traditions, hospitality, and their generosity and giving it to the future generations	Yes I guess. It is part of their vision to balance modern and traditional cultural heritage. It is bringing more tourists and at the same time raising the awareness	Yes totally, Cultural events are one part of this. I feel really different when I visited Al Diriyah after the Urbsn regeneration. It was like is it the same place or	Yes it can actually If we select modern strategy for reviving the traditional aspects of cultural heritage, so it counts as a positive initiative for the gulf.	Heritagization is indeed used in the Gulf region to reclaim and preserve lost cultural heritage. Efforts including the restoration of historical sites, and	The responses illustrate diverse perspectives on heritagization in the Gulf region. While some view it as a means of preserving and passing down

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		for their tribes	in the local community about the significance of cultural heritage.	something new. But at the same time I also felt that I was in the past era or as if back in time		the promotion of cultural tourism as we witness in Al diriyah is one such example. But I do feel the authentic ambience of the place is somehow lost and now it feels more lie regenerated cultural place lacking the soul.	traditions and values within communities, others see it as part of a broader strategy to balance modernity with tradition, attracting tourists while raising awareness of cultural heritage. Personal experiences of visiting regenerated cultural sites highlight both the sense of connection to the past and concerns about authenticity and loss of the place's original character.

Appendix B

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Cultural Identitiy CTotal	Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the nation?	Do you think that culture and identity are co related?
N	201	200	201
Mean	8.19	4.16	4.05
Median	8	4.00	4
Mode	8.00	4.00	4.00
Standard deviation	1.47	0.882	0.823
Minimum	2	1	1
Maximum	10	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Cultural Identitiy CTotal			
Cultural Identitiy CTotal	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
2	2	1.0 %	1.0 %
4	4	2.0 %	3.0 %
5	3	1.5 %	4.5 %
6	8	4.0 %	8.5 %
7	35	17.4 %	25.9 %
8	66	32.8 %	58.7 %

Frequencies of Cultural Identitiy CTotal			
Cultural Identitiy CTotal	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
9	40	19.9 %	78.6 %
10	43	21.4 %	100.0 %

Awareness of Cultural identity as analyzed by the distribution, was reported that the awareness level is 7 out of 10. This was done by assestment of the likeart scale questions using jamovi

Frequencies of Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the nation?
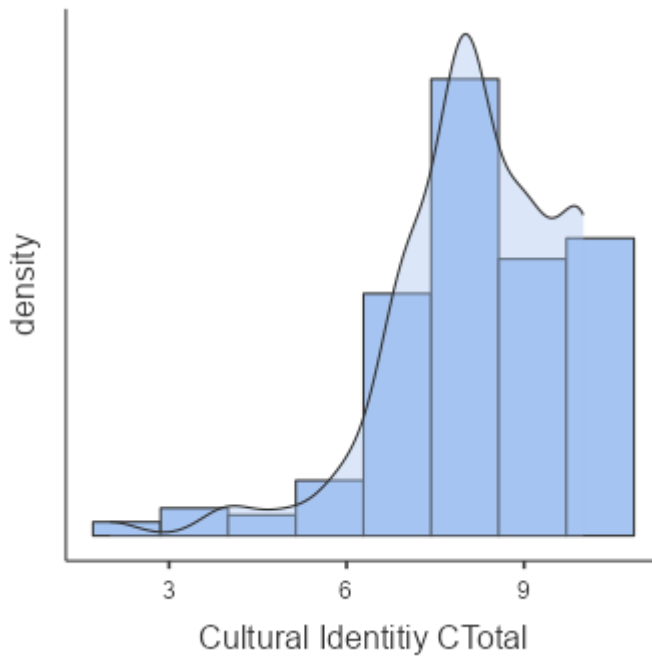
Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the nation?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	8	4.0 %	4.0 %
3	16	8.0 %	12.0 %
4	104	52.0 %	64.0 %
5	72	36.0 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Do you think that culture and identity are co related?

Do you think that culture and identity are co related?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	3	1.5 %	1.5 %
2	4	2.0 %	3.5 %
3	33	16.4 %	19.9 %
4	101	50.2 %	70.1 %
5	60	29.9 %	100.0 %

Plots

Cultural Identitiy CTotal

Cultural Identitiy CTotal

Do you believe Cultural Heritage plays a significant role in shaping identities of the nation?

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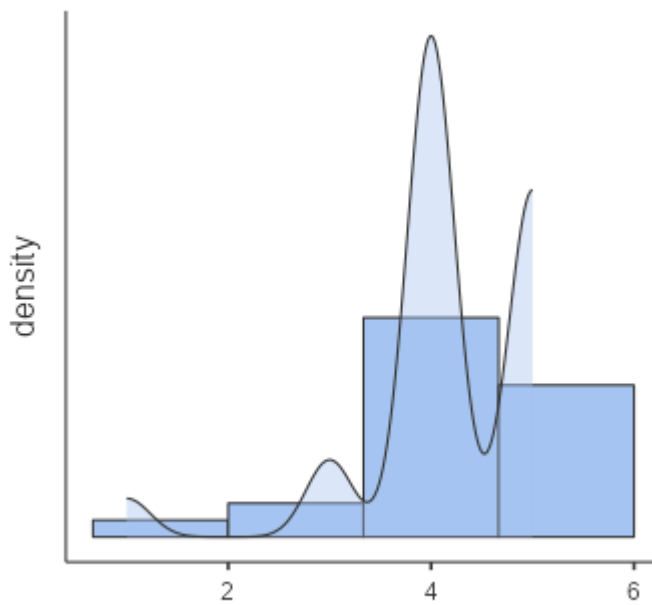
Do you think that culture and identity are co related?

Do you think that culture and identity are co relate

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Country	Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?	Do you know the term Heritagization?
N	Bahrain	54	54
	Kuwait	16	16
	Oman	7	7
	Other-	54	53
	Qatar	9	9
	Saudi Arabia	42	42
	United Arab Emirates	11	11
Mode	Bahrain		
	Kuwait		
	Oman		
	Other-		
	Qatar		
	Saudi Arabia		
	United Arab Emirates		

Frequencies

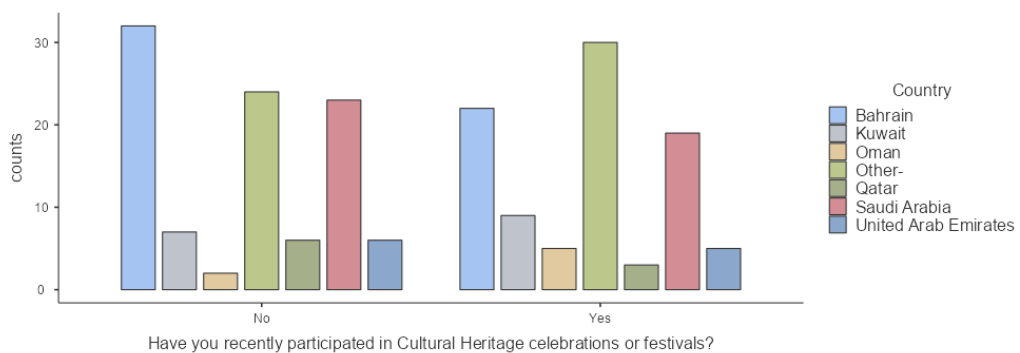Frequencies of Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?

Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?	Country	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
No	Bahrain	32	16.6 %	16.6 %
	Kuwait	7	3.6 %	20.2 %
	Oman	2	1.0 %	21.2 %
	Other-	24	12.4 %	33.7 %
	Qatar	6	3.1 %	36.8 %
	Saudi Arabia	23	11.9 %	48.7 %
	United Arab Emirates	6	3.1 %	51.8 %
Yes	Bahrain	22	11.4 %	63.2 %
	Kuwait	9	4.7 %	67.9 %
	Oman	5	2.6 %	70.5 %
	Other-	30	15.5 %	86.0 %
	Qatar	3	1.6 %	87.6 %
	Saudi Arabia	19	9.8 %	97.4 %
	United Arab Emirates	5	2.6 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Do you know the term Heritagization?				
Do you know the term Heritagization?	Country	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
No	Bahrain	35	18.2 %	18.2 %
	Kuwait	15	7.8 %	26.0 %

Frequencies of Do you know the term Heritagization?				
Do you know the term Heritagization?	**Country**	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
Yes	Oman	4	2.1 %	28.1 %
	Other-	23	12.0 %	40.1 %
	Qatar	8	4.2 %	44.3 %
	Saudi Arabia	29	15.1 %	59.4 %
	United Arab Emirates	7	3.6 %	63.0 %
	Bahrain	19	9.9 %	72.9 %
	Kuwait	1	0.5 %	73.4 %
	Oman	3	1.6 %	75.0 %
	Other-	30	15.6 %	90.6 %
	Qatar	1	0.5 %	91.1 %
	Saudi Arabia	13	6.8 %	97.9 %
	United Arab Emirates	4	2.1 %	100.0 %

Plots

Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?

Do you know the term Heritagization?
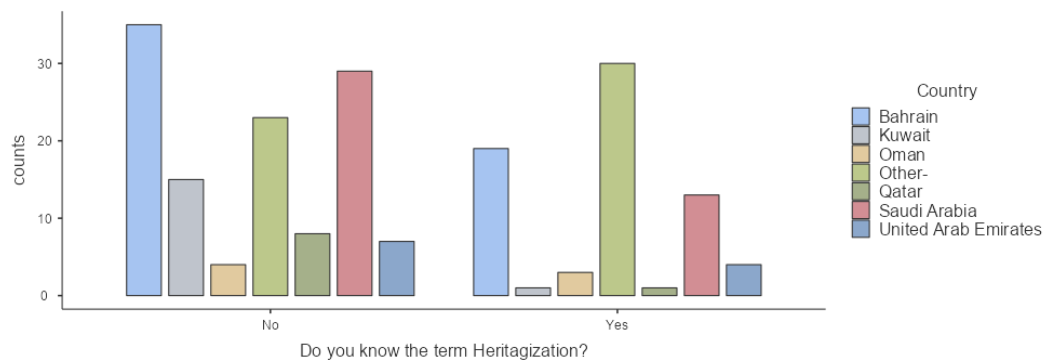
NORMAL

Results

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?	**Do you know the term Heritagization?**
N	194	193
Mode		

Frequencies

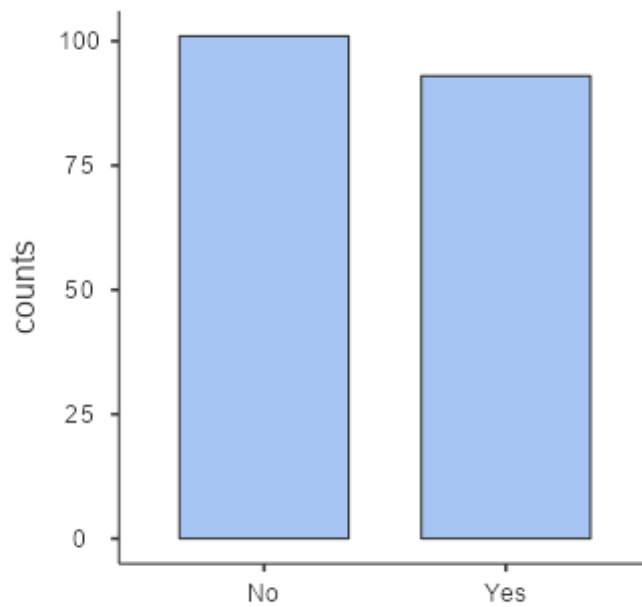Frequencies of Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?

Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
No	101	52.1 %	52.1 %
Yes	93	47.9 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Do you know the term Heritagization?

Do you know the term Heritagization?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
No	121	62.7 %	62.7 %
Yes	72	37.3 %	100.0 %

Plots

Have you recently participated in Cultural Heritage celebrations or festivals?

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Do you know the term Heritagization?

Do you know the term Heritagization?
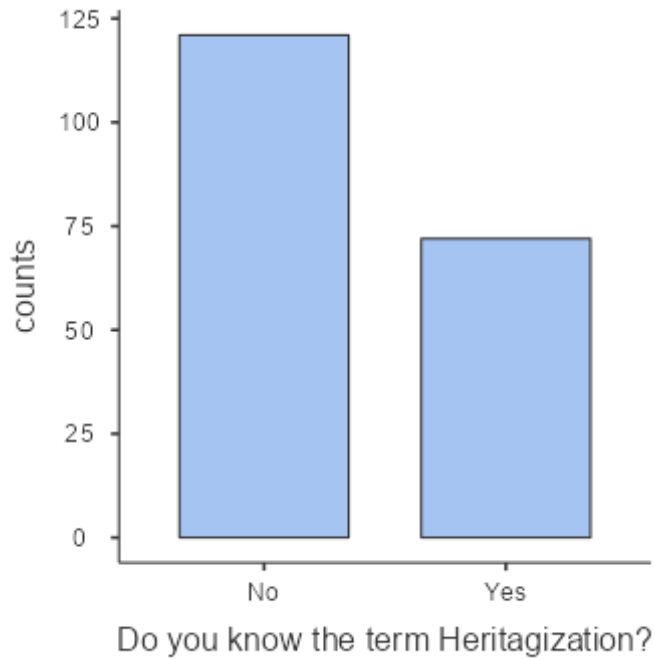
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