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**Economic, Social, and Political
Attitudes in the UAE:
A Comparison of Emirati and
Non-Emirati Youth in Ras al Khaimah**

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Abstract

Schooling is widely acknowledged as one of the key arenas in which the basic economic, social, and political attitudes of a population take root. In the UAE, much tends to be assumed about young people's attitudes toward risk, competition, achievement motivation, responsibility, and other areas relevant to national development. But relatively little research has been conducted to confirm or deny popular assertions in these areas, or to explore the variation that may exist across individual emirates or across school types within each emirate. This paper will report preliminary findings from a study of the economic, social, and political attitudes of youth in Ras al Khaimah, using data collected across a range of secondary schools including two government schools, one elite private school, and two Indian schools. Findings should help construct a more nuanced empirical picture of the UAE's growing youth population by investigating the different ways in which its members are being socialized. The research may also offer insights into how to improve policymaking for national development.

Calvert W. Jones was a Visiting Scholar at the Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Yale University.

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Introduction

The fundamental beliefs and attitudes that prevail in a society can play an important role in the types of social, economic, and political outcomes it is able to achieve. For example, where people believe that their efforts to educate themselves and then to work hard will lead to improvements in their own lives and those of their family members, economies are more likely to grow and thrive (Huntington & Harrison, 2000). In the UAE, rulers have embarked on ambitious strategies aimed at diversification away from hydrocarbon reliance, which involve channeling their citizens into leading roles in new economic sectors. The country's national strategy Vision 2021 asserts that "ambitious and responsible Emiratis will successfully carve out their future, actively engaging in an evolving socio-economic environment..." (Vision 2021, 2010, p. 2). "In their professional lives," it continues, "they will prove that the route to success lies through personal commitment, dedication, and a strong work ethic. Satisfaction and motivation will reward their self-reliance and initiative; their appetite for risk-taking will be fuelled by a vigorous entrepreneurial spirit" (p. 4). It goes on to envision that a "diversified and flexible knowledge-based economy will be powered by skilled Emiratis and strengthened by world-class talent to ensure long-term prosperity in the UAE" (p. 14).

Successful efforts at economic transition, however, typically require popular support and "buy-in," especially when citizens are expected to play the new and demanding roles that are described for them in Vision 2021. At the same time, empirical research on how UAE youth, both Emirati and non-Emirati, view their own roles in these transformations is limited, especially in the northern emirates. This paper presents findings from an exploratory study of the economic, social, and political attitudes of secondary school students in Ras al Khaimah, with a focus on comparing Emirati and non-Emirati youth. First, it discusses the background and theory guiding the study, focusing on assumptions about attitudes in the Gulf, which are generally shared by rulers, educators, and other stakeholders. Second, the paper describes the survey methodology used and the ways in which dependent variables were operationalized and measured. Next, it reports key findings on differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis in the sample. Finally, it discusses implications of the findings, though preliminary, and areas for further research and consideration by policymakers.

Theory and Background

Although a number of assumptions are made about the beliefs and attitudes of UAE youth, both Emirati and non-Emirati, few of these have been empirically verified at the local level, especially in the northern emirates. On the one hand, stereotypes about Gulf Arabs and UAE nationals are not unusual. UAE nationals are said to lack a strong work ethic, the motivation to achieve, a sense of civic responsibility, and a number of other attitudes seen as important for national development. These assumptions are easily found in research on stereotypes in the country (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2010) as well as the media, particularly in reports on employer opinion and the politics surrounding Emiratization (Al-Gergawi, 2008; Shaw, 2010). Some of these claims


can also be explained by theory about the implications of the rentier political economy for citizens' attitudes, or else the strength of tribal over national ties (Davidson, 2005; Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010; Hudson, 1977). As Ayubi argued in *Over-Stating the Arab State*, for instance, many citizens in the Middle East's resource-rich countries, especially the conservative, kin-ordered monarchies of the Gulf, show a sense of entitlement rather than responsibility, having grown accustomed to a strong welfare state, significant subsidies, and high-paying public sector employment. Instead of the state taxing the citizen, then, the citizen is seen as taxing the state (Ayubi, 1995, p. 319).

On the other hand, expatriate residents of the UAE are often assumed to possess the kinds of productive attitudes that UAE nationals lack, largely because they are often not eligible for the kinds of social benefits provided to UAE citizens. This is one reason given for why private businesses and some government offices prefer to hire non-nationals, and why nationals themselves, when they are hired as human resource managers, also prefer to hire non-nationals (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2010). Recent government-funded initiatives focused on socializing a new generation of Emirati youth also suggest an implicit concordance with this view. The mission of Al Shaheen, for example, a private company founded in 2007 that works with UAE government clients, especially in public schools, is to "deliver exceptional change to the people of the UAE through leadership, character, and organizational development."² Its youth development program focuses on developing the "qualities of leadership, team work, discipline & loyalty amongst students." The federal government's Vision 2021 opens with a telling quotation from Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi: "Work is a true criterion of citizenship. It is evidence of sincerity and loyalty. We all share the responsibility of building this country..." One of the strategy's key goals is to "ensure that UAE nationals have ambition and a sense of responsibility."

But relatively little empirical research, particularly outside of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, has been conducted to investigate these assumptions. Moreover, as the UAE and other Gulf states seek to diversify away from hydrocarbon reliance and foster entirely new economic sectors, such research is needed more than ever. Both UAE citizens and the country's majority population of non-national residents have important roles to play if the rulers' ambitious plans for diversification are to succeed. Understanding variations in their beliefs and attitudes should help inform national strategies by showing how initiatives may be fashioned to build on the local cultural context, rather than impose new and unfamiliar demands on it. In addition, by providing a more comprehensive picture of the local cultural context and the differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis, such research may help governments tailor strategies to take advantage of the UAE's diversity more effectively.

This exploratory study of youth attitudes in Ras al Khaimah is partly inspired by recent theory about economic development as a form of "self-discovery." Hausmann and Rodrik (2003) argue that scholars of economic development have not paid sufficient attention to a certain type of learning, namely, how societies learn what they are good at producing. Even though an analysis of factor endowments can provide insights, there is often still significant uncertainty about what a

² See website of Al Shaheen, <http://www.alshaheenme.com/>, accessed on March 2, 2011.



country will be good at producing, since those insights are so general. “Knowing that Bangladesh’s comparative advantage lies in labor-intensive manufactures and not in high-tech machinery,” for example, “is useful for sure,” they argue, “but that still leaves hundreds, if not thousands, of different types of activity up for grabs” (Hausmann & Rodrik, 2003, p. 615). For entrepreneurs (or the state) to choose the right investments among the full range of possible economic activities—to learn what can be produced at low-cost—they need to know much more about the local context in all of its economic, cultural, and political dimensions. This insight into development as a kind of “self-discovery” may be especially relevant for the resource-rich Gulf economies. Since they have relatively little experience experimenting with different types of economic activity and investigating what their own populations will be able to produce at low-cost, or be willing to produce, uncertainty in these areas is likely to be high.

Research Methodology

To generate empirical data about youth attitudes relevant to national development and the rulers’ strategic directions, a sample population of 62 students in Ras al Khaimah were surveyed about their economic, social, and political attitudes in December 2010 through January 2011. The sample population was drawn from five secondary schools, which were selected to include a range of public and private providers. These included one elite private school with a multinational student base, two government schools (all Emirati), and two private Indian schools. The sample frame consisted of students in grade 10 or grade 11, and available samples were used. There were 34 Emiratis in the sample and 28 non-Emiratis, most of whom were Indian. To measure and compare their economic, social, and political attitudes, the survey used a battery of items, combining existing instruments validated in previous research and new measures where no suitable instrument could be found.³

Economic attitudes were measured first. Respondents were asked if they intended to get a job after finishing their education, and if so, in what sector. They were then asked to describe the profession within that sector that most interested them, if they could, and how they became interested in it. Next, they were asked to assess how important various items are to them in selecting a future career, such as prestige, job security, salary, and opportunities to solve problems. Because of UAE policymakers’ interest in promoting entrepreneurship, they were asked specifically about their perceptions of entrepreneurs in the UAE, particularly to determine whether they view entrepreneurship positively. The four Likert items used to measure attitudes toward entrepreneurship were drawn from the 2009 Gallup Poll of Arab youth, which included a representative sample of Emirati youth (Gallup-Silatech, 2009). Finally, respondents were presented with a battery of items associated in theory with productive economic activity, including achievement motivation, risk-taking propensity, the belief that hard work pays off, attitude toward competition, attitudes toward work in general, and locus of control (Harrison, 1992; McClelland, 1961; Tabellini, 2005).

³ Details on the measures used for all the relevant concepts, and a copy of the online questionnaire, are available from the author upon request.

Achievement motivation was measured with 12 items drawn from an achievement motivation inventory with strong evidence of cross-cultural reliability (Schuler, Thornton, Frintrup, & Mueller-Hanson, 2002). Risk-taking propensity was measured with two items. The first was a self-assessment (scaled 1-7) asking respondents to rate how willing or unwilling they are to take risks, assuming there is a good chance of a reward. The second was a domain-specific scenario in which respondents were asked how much money out of 100,000 AED they would be willing to invest in a friend's new company. Both were drawn from recent work on measuring risk-taking (Rohrmann, 2005; Weber, Blais, & Betz, 2002). Opinion scales from the World Values Survey were used to measure the belief that hard work pays off (1 item), attitude toward competition (1 item), attitudes toward work (4 items), and locus of control (1 item).

Second, the survey measured social attitudes. Respondents were asked about their attitudes toward women's independence, youth independence, and the role of expats in the UAE. Because of UAE policymakers' interest in promoting scientific research and a knowledge-based economy, respondents were also asked about their attitudes toward the role of science and technology in society, using a scale from the Eurobarometer surveys (Dierkes & von Grote, 2000). To assess their value systems, they were asked about what values ought to be encouraged in children today. Finally, two types of social capital, associated in theory with economic development, innovation, and good governance (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Saxenian, 1994), were measured. First, the survey used an original proxy for social network capital by asking respondents if they maintain a profile on a social networking website, such as Facebook. If they said yes, they were then asked about the diversity of their social networks, including whether those networks involved individuals outside of Ras al Khaimah and outside of the UAE. Second, the survey assessed social trust. Respondents were asked to what extent they believe people in the UAE can generally be trusted, using two Likert items drawn from the World Values Surveys.

Third, the survey measured political attitudes. Respondents were asked to rate their interest in local politics in Ras al Khaimah, federal politics in the UAE, and regional politics in the Middle East. Next, they were asked about their levels of interest in improving local and federal decision-making, and then to rate how likely it would be for them to engage in certain types of political action, if they felt strongly about an issue, such as writing a letter to a newspaper, starting a Facebook group, or contacting a local authority. These questions were drawn from the World Values Surveys. In addition, respondents were asked about their perceptions of the social contract, including how responsible individual citizens should be in providing for themselves and whether governments ought to guarantee jobs for all citizens. They were also asked how much influence they think certain groups in UAE society ought to have, such as business-people, experts or well-educated people, and ordinary citizens. Finally, respondents' levels of nationalism and group affiliation were measured. Nationalism was measured using items from a scale by Kosterman and Feshback (1989). Group affiliation was measured with "feeling" thermometers (1-100) drawn from the World Values Surveys, which asked respondents to rate their feelings of warmth toward the UAE as a whole, Ras al Khaimah, and their families.

Findings and Discussion

In the overall sample of sixty-two students, 34 were Emirati, and 28 were non-Emirati. Table 1 reports the gender and income distributions for the sample as a whole as well as for the two groups. Neither was significantly different across the two groups. All non-Emiratis, however, attended private schools, while most non-Emiratis in the sample attended public (UAE government) schools. This is partially explained by the fact that few non-nationals are permitted to attend UAE government schools, and those who do are typically expatriate Arabs. The majority of non-Emiratis in the sample were Indians attending the two private Indian schools that were included. Table 1 also shows that Emiratis and non-Emiratis were not significantly different in terms of their intention to go to university after finishing secondary school, or to get a job after finishing their education.

Turning now to attitudes, a number of intriguing differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis were found, some that align with popular assumptions about UAE youth and some that do not. The findings are grouped into the three categories of economic, social, and political attitudes. They are reported in the tables and figures that follow the text of the paper.

Economic Attitudes

First, the data confirm other reports and research findings that most young Emiratis are interested in public sector careers. Over fifty percent of Emiratis selected “government,” “police,” or “military” as their top choice when given a choice of seven sector options—government, education, military, police, private business, government business, entrepreneur, non-profit organization, and other. Twenty-three percent of Emiratis selected “government,” while another thirty-two percent selected “military” or “police.” By contrast, non-Emiratis were more likely to select careers in private business. Thirty percent of non-Emiratis selected this as their top sector choice, compared with sixteen percent of Emiratis. Almost no respondents of any nationality selected “entrepreneur” or “non-profit.” Given recent surveys suggesting a high interest in entrepreneurship part of young Arabs (Gallup-Silatech, 2009), this last finding is surprising.

The respondents’ written comments about their career interests also suggest an interesting difference in the way Emiratis and non-Emiratis in the sample think about the private sector. Most of the non-Emiratis who selected “private business” as their top sector choice went on to describe relatively specific professions within the private sector that interested them. They justified these choices by stating their own interests in relevant subject matters, or listing other reasons why the profession interests them. Below are the responses given by the eight non-Emiratis who selected “private business” as their top sector choice.

1. *“I prefer being a pharmacist because I like chemistry.”*
2. *“I prefer being a doctor, so that I can serve people who are less fortunate.”*
3. *“Architect. As I like designing, drawing stuffs,”*
4. *“I’d like to become an architect because home is a place where we feel we are secure.”*
5. *“Chartered accountancy. I love accounts because I love MATHS.”*
6. *“Engineer. I got to know that it has good income and facilities.”*

7. *"I prefer private business. I became interested by seeing others and also in our private if we have loss it doesn't matter because it's your own."*
8. *"I am not sure who I want to be but I would like to do anything that involves creativity. I am good in art so that's why I prefer anything creative."*

By contrast, the Emiratis who selected "private business" as their top sector choice tended to be less specific in their responses. Several listed the exam or degree qualifications they planned to obtain, rather than writing a specific profession of interest.

9. *"GCSE because it will move me to a better university."*⁴
10. *"A doctorate, I'm interested in it because my father achieved it and it provides many good jobs."*
11. *"Doctorate in medicine. Because of the high status of doctors, especially those who have a doctorate."*
12. *"The career that I want to participate in is one that has something to do with politics. I care a lot about this pursuit/domain in a serious way, with serious effort to reach what I aspire to."*
13. *"TOEFL. English language teacher."*

These written responses suggest a difference in how the two groups think about a career in private business. In response to the question, "If you know what particular profession you most prefer, what is it? How did you become interested in it?" the non-Emiratis describe specific professions and their reasons for being interested in those professions. The Emiratis, however, describe educational qualifications first, and then possible careers for which those qualifications might prepare them. Although these are very small numbers, of course, they hint at the possibility that internal factors, such as personal interest, guide the professional ambitions of non-Emiratis, while external ones like exams and qualifications are figuring more heavily in the young Emiratis' professional calculations. Another possibility for the difference could be young people's level of exposure to different types of careers, based on their parents' employment. Since more non-Emiratis work in the UAE private sector, it could be that their children have more knowledge and experience of the opportunities available there, compared with the young Emiratis in the sample.

Job priorities in the two groups were also markedly different. As Table 2 indicates, for every single item listed in the survey, Emiratis were significantly more likely than non-Emiratis to find it important as a priority in selecting a future career. Items ranged from "money" and "rewards for creativity and initiative" to "prestige" and "opportunities to solve problems." All differences were significant at the .01 level. These results suggest that Emiratis are generally pickier job-seekers.⁵ Emirati respondents displayed the greatest difference with their non-Emirati counterparts in how much they valued "contributing to UAE society." This was followed by "same-gender work environment" and "respect from friends." When examining the data for Emiratis only, the most important item was "respect from friends," followed by "contributing to UAE society" and then "job security." These findings challenge the conventional wisdom that Emiratis value the amount of salary above all else, and that this is the main reason they prefer public sector work (Forstenlechner

⁴ General Certificate of Secondary Education (in Britain).

⁵ Although another explanation for this pattern could be a systematic difference in the way Emiratis and non-Emiratis interpreted the question, some differences were much larger than others. This suggests that real differences in economic outlook explain some of these results.

& Rutledge, 2010). Among only non-Emiratis in the sample, the top priority was “job security,” followed by “parents’ expectations” and then “personal interests/a job I like.”

In their attitudes toward entrepreneurs, Emiratis showed no differences compared to non-Emiratis on the four items except in one case, as shown in Table 3. They agreed significantly more ($p=.000$) with the statement that “Entrepreneurs ought to be admired by other people.” (On average, both groups agreed with the statement, but the Emirati average was closer to the “strongly agree” endpoint.) There were no significant differences between the groups in the other items in this category, including “Entrepreneurs help create jobs,” “Entrepreneurs spend too little time with family and friends,” and “Entrepreneurs are just out to make money.” Thus, the young Emiratis in the sample appear to have somewhat more favorable attitudes toward entrepreneurs compared to their non-Emirati counterparts. One possible explanation for this difference may be the recent emphasis placed by federal and local governments on promoting entrepreneurship among young UAE nationals. This would explain why the young Emiratis in the sample were more likely to think entrepreneurs ought to be admired by other people than non-Emiratis, if they have been targeted by these efforts. At the same time, however, only one Emirati in the sample selected “entrepreneur” as a first-choice career, and that respondent offered no details explaining the choice.⁶

A few other remaining differences were found in economic attitudes. In two items measuring risk-taking (Table 4), Emiratis were significantly less inclined to take risks than non-Emiratis. They first ranked themselves as less willing to take risks ($p=.002$), using the self-assessment item. Next, given a scenario in which they were asked how much money they would be willing to invest in a friend’s new company, they selected a significantly smaller amount than did non-Emiratis ($p=.03$). Out of 100,000 AED, Emiratis and non-Emiratis were on average willing to invest 33,000 AED and 45,000 AED, respectively. Emiratis also displayed lower mean scores on individual achievement motivation, based on the aggregate 12-item index, but the difference ($p=.08$) was not significant at the .05 level. When analyzing the items individually, the one that most contributed to this difference was the statement, “When faced with a new job or task, I am often afraid of doing something wrong.” Emiratis agreed significantly more ($p=.005$) with this item than non-Emiratis.⁷

Emiratis also agreed less strongly with the item, “In the long run, hard work usually brings success” ($p=.04$), and, compared to non-Emiratis, were significantly closer to the other end-point of the seven-point opinion scale, “Hard work doesn’t generally bring success—it’s more a matter of luck and connections.” But, as Table 5 shows, no significant differences were found in their attitude toward competition or locus of control. Likewise, on attitudes toward work (Table 6), no differences were found, with the exception of one item among the four: Emiratis agreed significantly less with the statement “It is humiliating to receive money without working for it” ($p=.009$). Given the extent of social welfare provided in the UAE for Emirati citizens, this result is not surprising.

⁶ Another explanation for this result could be the general importance of respect and esteem in Emirati culture. It may be that the Emirati respondents reacted not so much to the concept of the entrepreneur in the item as to the notion of being admired. Given that “respect from friends” is the Emirati respondents’ top job priority, this explanation also seems plausible.

Breaking down the achievement motivation index revealed further differences on individual items, but none with the same level of statistical significance. Emiratis agreed more with the item, “It does not bother me when others perform better than I do,” ($p=.08$) and agreed less with the item, “I sometimes take risks in order to try out something new” ($p=.08$). Emiratis also agreed more ($p=.02$) with the item, “I like to compete with others” than non-Emiratis.

Social attitudes

Emiratis and non-Emiratis also showed significant differences in social attitudes, particularly in terms of social capital and attitudes toward science and technology. As Table 7 shows, the first measure of social capital reported a significant difference: Emiratis were much less likely ($p=.001$) to maintain a profile on a social networking site, like Facebook. Among those who did, their networks, compared with non-Emiratis, were less international. Not surprisingly, non-Emiratis reported having more friends in their social networks who live outside the UAE than non-Emiratis. They also had significantly more non-Emiratis in their networks, again not surprisingly, while Emiratis had significantly more Emiratis in their networks. The other measure of social capital, however, showed no significant differences. Emiratis and non-Emiratis reported similar levels of trust regarding people living in the UAE (Table 8).

In addition, Emiratis reported significantly more favorable attitudes toward the role of science and technology in society (Table 9). The items that contributed most to this difference were “Science and technology are making our lives healthier” and “We depend too much on science and not enough on religious faith.” Analyzed as individual statements, Emiratis agreed more with the first ($p=.03$) and disagreed more ($p=.000$) with the second.


Several individual items in the aggregate scales measuring respondents’ attitudes toward youth independence or women’s independence showed significant differences. In particular, Emirati respondents disagreed more ($p=.04$) with the statement, “Young people should be allowed to do as they please without interference from their parents.” On women’s independence, Emiratis agreed more with the statement, “It’s more important for a woman to have a family than pursue a career” ($p=.03$). The aggregated scales overall, however, showed no significant differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis, as Table 9 reports.

Non-Emiratis were, not surprisingly, more positive than Emiratis about the role played by expatriates (such as themselves) in UAE society, as Table 9 reports. The items that accounted most for the difference were “Expatriates contribute to economic growth in the UAE” ($p=.007$) and “Expatriates who live in the UAE for many years should be granted UAE citizenship” ($p=.001$). Emiratis agreed less with both statements. Less difference was found on the other items, analyzed individually, including “Having large numbers of expatriates threatens national identity,” “The government should provide free education for the children of expatriates,” and “Non-Arab expatriates who live here for many years should learn Arabic.”

Finally, the groups differed on what values ought to be encouraged most in children today, as shown in Table 10. Compared with non-Emiratis, Emiratis were significantly more likely to value obedience ($p=.006$), love of country ($p=.002$), and religious faith ($p=.001$).

Political Attitudes

As we might expect, Emiratis were significantly more interested in local politics in Ras al Khaimah ($p=.006$) and federal politics in the UAE ($p=.000$) than were non-Emiratis (Table 11). Interestingly, however, the groups showed no differences in their levels of interest in the regional politics of the Middle East. This suggests that the salience of pan-Arab group affiliation for young Emiratis is not very high. The groups also showed no differences in their likelihood of writing a letter to



a newspaper or contacting a local authority, if they felt strongly about an issue. But, as Table 12 shows, there was a significant difference in one type of political action: Emiratis were significantly less likely ($p=.04$) to start a Facebook group, if they felt strongly about an issue. This is consistent with the findings above suggesting that the Emiratis in the sample are less active users of online social networks. Emiratis also reported significantly greater interest ($p=.03$) in improving UAE government decisions than did non-Emiratis (Table 13). But the groups showed no difference in their interest in improving decisions made in their schools or local communities, or local government decisions in Ras al Khaimah.

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups in terms of how much influence they think different social groups should exercise in UAE society (Table 14). But the small differences in these areas are intriguing, if only suggestive. Compared with Emiratis, non-Emiratis in the sample felt business-people should have more influence, while Emiratis felt that popularly elected representatives (such as members of the Federal National Council) should have more influence. Again, however, these differences were not significant. There were also no significant differences in the groups' perceptions of the social contract (Table 15), including how responsible individual citizens should be in providing for themselves and whether governments ought to guarantee jobs for all citizens.

By contrast, and again as we might expect, significant differences were found in the groups' levels of UAE-focused nationalism. On the nationalism index, as Table 17 shows, Emiratis were significantly more nationalist. The items that contributed most to this difference were "I plan to raise my family in the UAE" ($p=.000$), "In general, I have very little in common with other people in the UAE" ($p=.01$), and "I love the UAE" ($p=.04$). Emiratis agreed more with the first and third, and disagreed with the second. Consistent with their higher UAE-focused nationalism, Emirati respondents also displayed higher levels of trust in the UAE federal government, but the difference ($p=.07$) was not quite significant at the .05 level (Table 16).

Finally, Emiratis displayed significantly higher levels of warmth toward both the UAE and Ras al Khaimah than did non-Emiratis, but both groups reported similar levels of warmth toward their families. As Table 17 shows, Emiratis as a group felt warmer toward the UAE than they did to Ras al Khaimah, and warmer to their families than to either political entity.

Study Limitations

Limitations of this exploratory study include generalizability, due to the use of available samples, and several possible confounding factors. First, although the gender distributions across the two groups were not significantly different, as Table 1 shows, these are small samples, and other research in the UAE suggests there are major differences in Emirati attitudes by gender (Ridge, 2010). As a result, because the Emirati sample contained twice as many males as females, gender may be a confounding factor in these results. To explore this possibility, the differences discussed above were examined by gender as well. For most variables, when gender was held constant in a linear regression of the variable on a dummy indicator for being Emirati, the differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis remained significant. But there were several cases in which gender was

found to be driving these differences. For example, it was primarily Emirati males who were less likely than non-Emiratis to maintain a profile on a social networking website. When only Emirati females were compared with non-Emirati females, the difference was not significant (though the sample size was greatly reduced).


It was also primarily males who accounted for the difference between Emiratis and non-Emiratis in the belief that hard work pays off. The difference remained significant, controlling for gender, but when comparing only Emirati females to non-Emirati females, the significance fell away. Likewise, in risk-taking, it was the males in the sample who were driving the main results in which Emiratis were found to be less willing to take risks. It was the males again driving the differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis regarding attitudes toward science and technology and work. Emirati males had significantly more favorable attitudes toward the role of science and technology than non-Emirati males, while the difference was not significant when comparing only the females. The same pattern was found with attitudes toward work. It was the Emirati males who agreed significantly less with the statement, "It is humiliating to receive money without working for it." The difference was not significant when comparing only the females.

Other potential confounders in this study include income levels and school type. Although the groups were not significantly different in terms of reported income levels, as Table 10 shows, the two Indian private schools were noticeably poorer than the two public (UAE government) schools serving Emirati citizens. On a scale of one to seven, respondents in both groups placed themselves, on average, slightly above the midpoint. This could reflect differing frames of reference, or the possibility of lower income inequality in Ras al Khaimah, where Emiratis have a lower per capita income compared to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. School type is also a confounding variable in this study, since all non-Emiratis in the sample attended private schools, as noted above, while most Emiratis attended public schools.

Conclusions

Although the findings from this study are preliminary, they suggest that Emiratis and non-Emiratis are being socialized at relatively young ages into attitudes that are rather different in some key areas. First, the Emiratis agreed significantly less with the statement, "In the long run, hard work usually brings success." Both groups, on average, chose answers closer to this statement than the statement at the other end of the seven-point opinion scale, "Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections." But the Emiratis were significantly closer to the latter statement than the non-Emiratis. This is a striking result. Why are Emiratis less confident than expats that hard work will lead to success?

One answer, common in the literature on modernization within traditional societies, is culture (Lerner, 1958). For example, it may be that kinship relations and networks of patronage and clientalism are so embedded in the tribal society of UAE nationals and their governing structures that young people grow up believing success is "more a matter of luck and connections." Yet, luck and connections are presumably also important, if not more so, for expatriate Indians. Lacking UAE citizenship, their job prospects, in this country at least, are probably less secure than those of



Emiratis, who are now favored in both the private and public sectors due to efforts to nationalize the workforce. Under these conditions, one might have expected them to believe more readily than Emiratis, who are favored precisely because of their connections to the country's national identity, that success is more a matter of luck and connections.

Another possible explanation for the difference between the Emiratis and the non-Emiratis in this regard is not cultural but institutional. Perhaps these young Emiratis feel that economic institutions do not reward hard work or individual effort. Thus, their attitudes are not rooted in culture so much as the country's particular legal and economic institutions. For example, they may feel that institutions do not promote people on the basis of merit. Indeed, some appear to feel that Emiratisation policies themselves do not reward hard work on the part of nationals as diverse individuals so much as "luck and connections" (e.g. Al-Gergawi, 2008).

This is an important finding that calls for further research and consideration by policymakers, especially if they wish to convince their citizens "that the route to success lies through personal commitment, dedication, and a strong work ethic" (Vision 2021, 2010, p. 4). This brings us to another key difference: the Emiratis in the sample were also significantly less willing to take risks given the chance of a high reward. In reference to future Emirati citizens, it is also written in the UAE national strategy Vision 2021 that "Satisfaction and motivation will reward their self-reliance and initiative; their appetite for risk-taking will be fuelled by a vigorous entrepreneurial spirit" (p. 4). Yet Emiratis not only ranked themselves as more risk-averse but also chose to invest less on average than their non-Emirati counterparts in a friend's new entrepreneurial venture. Moreover, they scored lower on achievement motivation.

These results are thus consistent with some assumptions about UAE nationals and citizens in rentier states more generally. But the results also provide some evidence that challenges stereotypes. For example, the Emiratis in the sample were significantly more positive about the role played by science and technology in society than were the non-Emiratis. Given that Emiratis and other GCC nationals have traditionally preferred studying the arts, humanities, and religious studies, and the technology sector in India is much more advanced, this difference is surprising. It is also good news for UAE rulers who expect science and technology to play a major role in economic diversification and the transition to a knowledge-based economy. Emiratis also agreed significantly more than non-Emiratis with the statement, "Entrepreneurs ought to be admired by other people." As discussed, this result is not straightforward, but it is suggestive. It may be that low entrepreneurship among UAE nationals results not from a lack of role models or supportive cultural norms so much as institutional constraints. Indeed, perhaps Emiratis admire entrepreneurs in general, but do not wish to become entrepreneurs themselves, because they doubt that the hard work and risk-taking involved will pay off.

The results also challenge conventional wisdom in other ways. In selecting a career, Emiratis are said to care primarily about their salaries and job security (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010). Yet, for these young Emiratis, "respect from friends" was the most important factor in selecting a future career. This is consistent with the findings of a recent survey of Qatari secondary students, whose top job priority was finding a job that "makes me feel respected" (Martorell, Nadareishvili, & Salem, 2008). The next most important factor in this study's sample was "contributing to UAE society." This goes against the notion that UAE nationals, and citizens in resource-rich states

more generally, lack a strong sense of civic responsibility. The Emiratis in the sample were also significantly less likely to maintain profiles on social network websites, raising questions about recent reports about the extent of ICT penetration in the country and citizens' facility with social media, Facebook in particular (Cherrayil, 2009; Mourtada & Salem, 2011).

Further research is needed on variations in economic, social, and political attitudes across the UAE, especially on sources of change. As Gulf rulers seek to adapt traditional social contracts and foster knowledge-based economies, research is needed to help policies and initiatives fit the local cultural context. For example, the fact that the Emiratis in the sample felt "respect from friends" was most important in selecting a career may have important policy implications for job training programs, career counseling, and entrepreneurship initiatives. The results suggest that such efforts could benefit from targeting peer groups rather than individuals, or developing a collective model for entrepreneurship promotion. The results also suggest that efforts to promote science in high schools as a means of contributing meaningfully to UAE society will be welcomed by Emirati secondary school students. Further research on economic, social, and political attitudes may also help advance general knowledge about how social contracts evolve in response to changing economic needs.



Tables and Figures

Table 1: Demographics

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Gender (1=Female, 0=Male)	.40 (.49)	.32 (.47)	.50 (.51)	.18 ($p=.16$)
Income (Scaled 1-7)	4.80 (.91)	4.88 (1.07)	4.70 (.67)	.18 ($p=.45$)
Attends private school (1=Attends private school, 0=Does not)	.56 (.50)	.21 (.41)	1 (0)	-.79*** ($p=.000$)
Intending to get a job (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Maybe)	1.23 (.58)	1.26 (.62)	1.18 (.55)	.08 ($p=.57$)
Intending to go to university (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Maybe)	1.63 (.91)	1.62 (.89)	1.64 (.95)	-.02 ($p=.92$)

Economic Attitudes

Table 2: Job Priorities

The importance of these factors to respondents in selecting a future career was measured on a scale ranging from 1 ("Not important at all") to 5 ("Very important").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Money	4.70 (1.16)	5.23 (1.15)	4.08 (.84)	1.15*** ($p=.000$)
Parents' expectations	5.12 (1.27)	5.67 (1.42)	4.52 (.70)	1.15*** ($p=.000$)
Prestige	4.53 (1.46)	5 (1.68)	3.96 (.86)	1.04*** ($p=.008$)
Rewards for creativity and initiative	4.52 (1.46)	5.07 (1.62)	3.83 (.87)	1.23*** ($p=.001$)
Living near extended family	4.13 (1.90)	5.03 (1.90)	3 (1.18)	2.03*** ($p=.000$)
Contributing to UAE society	4.75 (1.89)	6.10 (1.22)	3 (.88)	3.10*** ($p=.000$)
Job security	5.42 (1.21)	6.07 (1.14)	4.64 (.76)	1.43*** ($p=.000$)
Same-gender work environment	3.68 (2.15)	4.74 (2.25)	2.42 (1.11)	2.32*** ($p=.000$)
Opportunities to solve problems	5 (1.44)	5.87(1.23)	3.96 (.87)	1.91*** ($p=.000$)
Respect from friends	5.42 (1.46)	6.45 (.93)	4.19 (.94)	2.26*** ($p=.000$)
Personal interests/a job I like	5.21 (1.36)	5.87 (1.45)	4.42 (.64)	1.45*** ($p=.000$)

Table 3: Attitudes toward entrepreneurs

To measure attitudes toward entrepreneurs, respondents were given four Likert statements. Answers ranged from 1 ("Strongly agree") to 5 ("Strongly disagree"). Thus, low scores indicate agreement with statement and high scores indicate disagreement.

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Entrepreneurs are just out to make money.	2.82 (.97)	2.65 (1.01)	3.04 (.87)	-.39 (p=.12)
Entrepreneurs help create jobs	2.22 (.67)	2.24 (.71)	2.19 (.63)	.05 (p=.78)
Entrepreneurs ought to be admired by other people.	2.12 (.90)	1.73 (.67)	2.64 (.91)	-.91*** (p=.000)
Entrepreneurs spend too little time with family and friends.	2.74 (1.13)	2.69 (1.12)	2.8 (1.15)	-.11 (p=.71)

Table 4: Attitudes toward risk-taking

Attitudes toward risk-taking were measured with two variables. The first was a self-assessment in which respondents were asked to place themselves in a seven-point scale ranging from 1 ("I'm willing to take risks") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("I'm not willing to take risks"). Thus, lower averages signal higher willingness to take risks. The prompt was "In general, are you willing or unwilling to take risks if there is a good chance of reward?" The second was a common investment scenario in which respondents were asked how much, out of 100,000 AED, they would be willing to invest in a friend's new company. This ranged from 1 ("None of it") to 21 ("All of it"). On average, Emiratis were willing to invest about 33,000 and non-Emiratis 45,000.

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Willingness take risks	2.58 (1.38)	3.06 (1.41)	1.96 (1.08)	1.10*** (p=.002)
Amount willing to invest in friend's new company	8.7 (4.62)	7.59 (4.51)	10.07 (4.46)	-2.48** (p=.03)

Table 5: Achievement motivation, beliefs about hard work and competition, and locus of control

Achievement motivation was measured with a 12-item aggregate index, with the scale for each Likert item ranging from 1 ("Strongly agree") to 5 ("Strongly disagree"). The following three variables were measured with seven-point opinion scales. The belief that hard work pays off was measured with a scale ranging from 1 ("In the long term, hard work usually brings success") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("In the long run, hard work doesn't generally bring success--it's more a matter of luck and connections." The belief that competition is good was measured with a seven-point scale ranging from 1 ("Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people"). Locus of control was measured with a seven-point scale ranging from "I have a lot of control") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("I have very little control"). It was preceded with the standard prompt, "Some people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. How much freedom of choice and control do you feel you have over the way your life turns out?"

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Achievement motivation	4.63 (4.59)	3.71 (4.84)	6 (3.92)	-2.92* (p=.08)
Belief that hard work pays off	2.67 (1.71)	3.09 (1.82)	2.15 (1.43)	.94** (p=.04)
Belief that competition is good	2.29 (1.86)	2.55 (3.36)	1.96 (1.59)	.58 (p=.23)
Internal locus of control	3.65 (1.56)	3.36 (1.51)	4 (1.57)	-.64 (p=.11)

Table 6: Attitudes toward work

To measure attitudes toward work, respondents were given four Likert statements on scales ranging from 1 ("Strongly agree") to 5 ("Strongly disagree"). Thus, lower scores indicate stronger agreement.

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
To fully develop your talents, you need to have a job.	2.35 (1.06)	2.21 (.98)	2.54 (1.14)	-.33 (p=.22)
It is humiliating to receive money without working for it.	2.35 (1.09)	2.68 (1.01)	1.96 (1.07)	.71*** (p=.009)
People who don't work become lazy.	2.16 (1.24)	2.24 (1.07)	2.07 (1.43)	.16 (p=.16)
Work is a duty toward society.	1.77 (.86)	1.82 (.85)	1.71 (.90)	.10 (p=.64)

Social Attitudes

Table 7: Social network capital

Social network capital was measured in two ways. Respondents were first asked if they maintained a profile on a social networking website (1=Yes, 0=No). If they said yes, they were asked to estimate the composition of their social networks. For each category below, they were asked about how many people in their network fell into that category, with scales ranging from 1 ("None of them") to 4 ("About half of them") to 7 ("All of them").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Have a social networking profile (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.35 (.48)	1.53 (.51)	1.14 (.36)	.39*** (p=.001)
Diversity of social network				
Close friends or family	3.76 (1.65)	3.25 (1.77)	4.13 (1.49)	-.89 (p=.10)
Emiratis	2.95 (1.52)	4.25 (1.06)	2.04 (1.07)	2.21*** (p=.000)
Non-Emiratis	4.7 (1.78)	3.25 (1.18)	5.67 (1.40)	-2.42*** (p=.000)
People living in Dubai	2.47 (1.29)	2.25 (1)	2.64 (1.47)	-.39 (p=.37)
People living in Abu Dhabi	1.78 (1.00)	1.87 (1.06)	1.72 (.98)	.14 (p=.68)
People living in other emirates	3.05 (1.56)	2.93 (1.49)	3.12 (1.62)	-.19 (p=.71)
People living outside the UAE	3.45 (1.74)	2.62 (1.31)	4.05 (1.79)	-1.42** (p=.01)
People working in the private sector	2.11 (1.42)	2 (1.30)	2.19 (1.54)	-.19 (p=.70)
People you don't know very well	2.24 (1.17)	2.2 (1.37)	2.26 (1.05)	-.06 (p=.88)

Table 8: Social trust

As a second measure of social capital, respondents were also asked about their general levels of interpersonal trust. Both Likert statements below were measured on a scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly agree") to 5 ("Strongly disagree").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Most people in the UAE can be trusted	2.49 (1.02)	2.61 1.06	2.36 .99	.25 (p=.35)
If you are not careful, most people in the UAE will take advantage of you.	2.40 (1.18)	2.38 (1.35)	2.43 .96	-.05 (p=.88)

Table 9: Attitudes toward science and technology, youth independence, women's independence, and expatriates

The four variables below were each measured with an aggregate index, compiling the responses to a set of Likert statements. Higher aggregate scores indicate more favorable attitudes toward science and technology, youth independence, women's independence and expatriates.

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Attitude toward science and technology	1.59 2.73	2.35 (2.09)	.75 (3.12)	1.60** (p=.02)
Attitude toward youth independence	-2.31 2.45	-2.59 2.61	-2 2.26	.59 (p=.35)
Attitude toward women's independence	1.61 (3.41)	1.24 (3.15)	2.04 (3.71)	-.79 (p=.37)
Attitude toward expatriate population in UAE	.78 2.76	-.39 2.03	2.22 2.87	-2.62*** (p=.000)

Table 10: Values that should be encouraged in children

Respondents' values were measured with the question, "People value different things when raising children. What do you think is most important to encourage in children today?" For each item, respondents' answers were measured on a scale ranging from 1 ("Not important at all") to 4 ("Moderately important") to 7 ("Very important").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Obedience	6.1774 (1.4087)	6.62 (.92)	5.64 (1.70)	.97*** (p=.006)
Love of country	6.0656 (1.3275)	6.55 (1.06)	5.5 (1.40)	1.05*** (p=.002)
Determination, perseverance	5.8871 (1.5692)	6.21 (1.30)	5.5 (1.93)	.71* (p=.08)
Religious faith	6.3226 (1.3763)	6.82 (.72)	5.71 (1.72)	1.11*** (p=.001)
Hard work	6.1639 (1.3314)	6.24 (1.13)	6.07 (1.38)	.16 (p=.64)
Thrift, saving money	5.5246 (1.4788)	5.53 1.21	5.52 (1.78)	.01 (p=.98)
Independence	5.4355 (1.789)	5.65 (1.69)	5.18 (1.91)	.47 (p=.31)
Feeling of responsibility	6.0806 (1.4632)	6.24 (1.1)	5.89 (1.79)	.34 (p=.36)
Tolerance	6.0161 (1.3848)	6.26 (1.05)	5.71 (1.67)	.55 (p=.12)
Academic achievement	5.9016 (1.4911)	6.21 (1.27)	5.71 (1.67)	.68* (p=.08)

Political Attitudes

Table 11: General interest in politics

Respondents' levels of interest in politics were measured with scales ranging from 1 ("Not interested at all") to 4 ("Moderately interested") to 7 ("Very interested").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Local politics in RAK	3.4839 (2.0465)	4.12 (1.97)	2.71 (1.90)	1.40*** (p=.006)
Federal politics in UAE	4.3548 (2.0494)	5.41 (1.60)	3.07 (1.80)	2.34*** (p=.000)
Regional politics in Middle East	3.7869 (1.9071)	3.79 (2.03)	3.79 (1.79)	.002 (p=.99)

Table 12: Likelihood of engaging in different types of political expression

Respondents' likelihood of engaging in different types of political expression, if they felt strongly about an issue, was measured with scales ranging from 1 ("Not likely at all") to 4 ("Moderately likely") to 7 ("Very likely").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Write a letter to a newspaper	3.4677 (1.7715)	3.18 (1.70)	3.82 (1.83)	-.64 (p=.16)
Start a Facebook group	3.6129 (2.3001)	3.06 (2.26)	4.28 (2.21)	-1.23** (p=.04)
Contact a local authority	3.7581(2.0138)	3.65 (1.86)	3.89 (2.22)	-.25 (p=.64)

Table 13: Interest in improving public decision-making

Respondents' levels of interest in politics were measured with scales ranging from 1 ("Not interested at all") to 4 ("Moderately interested") to 7 ("Very interested").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Decisions made in your school	4.9839 (1.6346)	4.91 (1.69)	5.07 (1.59)	-.16 (p=.71)
Decisions made in your local community	4.7419 (1.7643)	4.82 (1.73)	4.64 (1.83)	.18 (p=.69)
RAK government decisions	4.2623 (1.9656)	4.41 (1.91)	4.07 (2.06)	.34 (p=.51)
UAE government decisions	4.8226 (2.0448)	5.32 (1.70)	4.21 (2.28)	1.11** (p=.03)

Table 14: Attitudes toward the influence of different social groups

Respondents were asked how much influence they feel the social groups below should play in UAE society, with scales ranging from 1 ("No influence") to 4 ("Moderate influence") to 7 ("A lot of influence").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Experts and well-educated people	5.3279 (1.6301)	5.30 (1.72)	5.36 (1.54)	-.05 (p=.90)
Ordinary citizens	4.8852 (1.4955)	4.79 (1.43)	5 (1.59)	-.21 (p=.59)
Popularly elected representatives (e.g. members of the Federal National Council?)	5.3 (1.4297)	5.48 (1.30)	5.07 (1.57)	.41 (p=.27)
Business-people	4.9 (1.5811)	4.55 (1.40)	5.18 (1.68)	-.63 (p=.16)

Table 15: Attitudes toward social contract

Attitudes toward the social contract were measured in two areas, using seven-point opinion scales. First, attitude toward individual responsibility for social welfare was measured with a scale ranging from 1 ("People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for"). Second, attitude toward government responsibility for citizen employment was measured with a scale ranging from 1 ("It is the government's responsibility to give a job to every citizen") to 4 ("Neutral") to 7 ("Citizens should be responsible for finding jobs for themselves; the government should not guarantee jobs for everyone").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Attitude toward individual responsibility for citizen welfare	3.86 (1.99)	3.63 (1.90)	4.15 (2.09)	-.52 (p=.32)
Attitude toward government responsibility for citizen employment	3.87 (1.88)	3.64 (1.82)	4.15 (1.96)	-.51 (p=.30)

Table 16: Trust in institutions/federal government

Trust in federal institutions was measured with the question, "In general, how much trust do you have in federal government policies to make progress in the country?" Answer categories were 1 ("No trust at all"), 2 ("Not very much trust"), 3 ("Some trust"), and 4 ("A lot of trust").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Trust in the federal government	3.09 .81	3.27 (.67)	2.89 (.91)	.38* (p=.07)

Table 17: Nationalism and group affiliation

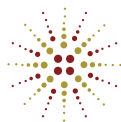
Nationalism was measured with an aggregate index, compiling responses to a set of Likert statements on scales ranging from 1 ("Strongly agree") to 5 ("Strongly disagree"). Feelings of warmth toward the UAE, Ras al Khaimah, and family were measured with "feeling" thermometers ranging from 1 ("Low warmth") to 50 ("Neutral") to 100 ("High warmth").

	Sample Means (<i>St. Dev</i>)			Raw Difference in Means
	Total	Emirati	Non Emirati	
Nationalism	2.64 (3.38)	3.94 (2.42)	1.12 (3.74)	2.83*** (p=.001)
Warmth toward UAE	69.91 (36.37)	83.38 (18.20)	53.5 (25.71)	29.81*** (p=.000)
Warmth toward RAK	62.94 (29.11)	70.53 (26.04)	53.71 (30.42)	16.82** (p=.02)
Warmth toward family	84.75 (24.72)	88.41 (18.09)	79.96 (31.12)	8.45 (p=.19)

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