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Regeneration of sustainability in Contemporary Architecture: Approach Based on Native Function and Activities to Strengthen Identity

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Abstract

Qatar is exemplary for a country that has experienced fundamental economic and political changes in the last decades. One of the challenges that Qatar faces in achieving the national vision 2030 is the environmental development. This is by management of the environment such that there is harmony between economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Identity becomes an increasingly prominent topic in GCC region. It is a way of locating people within their social context and one with clear relevance to environmental attitudes and behaviors. This paper focuses on a valid input to strengthen the identity as a part of the urban context in Qatar and describe how it is relevant to the natural environment. There are many researches that have directly or indirectly addressed environmental identity, and that has shown the importance of identity in the building elements. This study analyzes data about three districts throughout Doha city- the capital of Qatar. The study aims at determining whether cultural practices were associated with stronger local identity.

In this paper, a detailed review of the contemporary architecture in Qatar is carried out. This review demonstrates where 'Traditional Criteria' are available in three chosen contemporary areas in Doha- Native Function/ Activities responsive contemporary trend. An analytical study based on a survey process produces a framework of unifying cultural practice with contemporary architecture in the State of Qatar. The results of the cases study demonstrate what was learned and what was gained in understanding the Qatari contemporary architecture and how the cultural practice can be integrated to the contemporary architecture to support the identity of the country.

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1. Introduction

The local sense of place is at risk if it is not properly sustained. The increase of globalization has led to a homogenization of urban identity. This is particularly the situation in smaller urban areas, which do not receive as much attention, and frequently find themselves attracted to foreign 'solutions', which do not value the local identity. (Radstrom 2011). Middle East is undergoing transition from traditional economies and societies to one of modern development, which has yet to find any real stability. This is most clear and most evident in the field of urban design and planning. It can be pointed to the many changes brought about through growth and transition, whether it is in the form of the built environment or the increase in squatter communities and people at the edges of the town. While the origin of the city was dependent on mainly external factors, the Arab city's traditional development pattern was affected by a variety of other factors, one of which is the division of the social hierarchy (Bianca 2000 and Lapidus 1969).

The urban includes buildings landscape and activities. All together can draw the whole trend of the area of the town. (Madanipour 2008) states that public domain extends from the streets, squares and parks of a town or city into the buildings; it makes the most important part of towns and cities. This is particularly obvious in cities in the Middle East, where single buildings are an integral part of the general fabric and where urban neighborhoods have traditionally organized their functions and services in relations to the whole. In this regard, Wen mentioned: "The task for contemporary architects is to take the old and now culture into consideration, and to find out a practical approach to vitalize the tradition" (Wen 2010).

The building environment of Arab cities has undergone major transformations, where the last two decades have witnessed numerous scientific achievements that have resulted in significant fundamental changes to architecture. Due to the forced pace of modernization, the conflict between traditional values and imported ideas has been quite sharp in some countries and recently the resulting resentment gave rise to fundamentalist movements (Saqaaf, 1986). Identity is one of the essential goals for the future of a good environment. Cities and regions are facing great challenges as a consequence of globalization. The term "globalization" was coined in the latter half of the 20th century, but the term and its concepts did not permeate popular consciousness until the latter half of the 1980s (Holm, 2006). The phenomenon of globalization has attracted more significant global attention than perhaps any other issue in recent memory. Globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Oncu and Weyland, 1997). In that sequence, globalization is considered a discourse of knowledge that elevates awareness of the links between various scales of life. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines globalization as the process by which the experience of everyday life is becoming standardized around the world (Adam, 2008). It is also a contested discourse exhibiting many variants, some of which are clearly more influential than others.

The tension between local and global architecture forces has long existed, with two opposing forces. One force seeks to safeguard and promulgate established indigenous architectural traditions, forms, decorative motifs and technologies. It advocates historical continuity, cultural diversity and preservation of identity, all symbolized by a particular architectural vocabulary, just as spoken languages and local dialects impart identity. The other force promotes invention and dissemination of new forms using new technologies and materials in response to changing functional needs and sensibilities. It places a premium on systemization, flexibility and interchangeability (Lewis, 2002).

This paper adopts the idea of Oliver (Oliver 1997) by integrating the traditional architecture that is related to the local environment contexts and available resources into contemporary architecture in Qatar. The relationship between Architecture and the Climate is always a hotspot in the recent Architecture studies. Traditional architecture, which perfectly show the principle of climate oriented Architecture, have become very popular study project by more and more researchers. This paper develops a framework for integrating a native Qatari cultural practice into the contemporary architecture that as an approach for strengthen the identity of the country. It is a continuation of a previous published paper (Ibrahim, 2013) that focused on the theoretical part of the topic by studying the three variables of traditional architecture (Building components, landscape components and function/ activities). In this paper, the results of the qualitative survey are to be concluded to establish the developed framework for implementing Qatari architecture language toward any proposed contemporary urban.

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