Architectural Expression and Identity-Case Studies in Iconic Building Designs

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Abstract

The practice of expressing cultural identity through architecture is not limited to Kuwait but is widespread. It focuses on architects and the methods they use to reflect cultural identity in their built environments. The main goal is to learn more about their viewpoints and recent work in this area. The latter half of the 20th century saw significant architectural changes in Iraq as a result of a variety of reasons, including economic, regional, and global shifts. A study was done with 18 Iraqi architects to examine their opinions and methods for expressing their cultural identity. Focused interviews and a standard questionnaire were employed in this survey to get respondents' opinions. Their architectural works were also examined to provide specific examples of their viewpoints and thought processes.

The study's key conclusion was that Iraqi architects employ a variety of strategies to convey Iraqi cultural identity in their architectural endeavors. To visually represent the spectrum of these strategies and their relationship with architecture in Iraq, a three-dimensional matrix was developed. This matrix serves as a valuable tool for practitioners and architectural critics interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the prevailing trends in achieving cultural identity within Iraqi architecture.

Overall, the study underscores that the pursuit of cultural identity in architecture is a global phenomenon, with architects across different regions grappling with similar issues and employing diverse strategies to express their cultural heritage through their work. This ongoing exploration of identity in architecture contributes to the rich tapestry of architectural expression worldwide.

Keywords: Architecture, Cultural Identity, Iraqi Architecture, Heritage

1.   Introduction

It is true that architecture is essential for both reflecting and maintaining a society's culture. It functions as a material representation of how a society interacts with its social, political, structural, historical, and economic facets. Architecture and art are inextricably intertwined and are effective mediums for expressing cultural values, identities, and ideas. In this way, architecture is more than just building structures; it's also about telling the story of a community's past, present, and future goals.

Any society's core is its culture, which is the intangible substance of day-to-day existence. It includes all of the norms, beliefs, traditions, and behaviors that influence how people live and interact. The individual identities of cities, regions, and countries run the risk of being undermined by homogenization in a more globalized world as they embrace uniform architectural styles and urban planning. Similar skylines across cities may arise from this tendency; while visually arresting, these skylines may lack the cultural nuance that distinguishes each location.

In light of globalization, maintaining architectural identity that is based in culture and tradition becomes crucial. Every location has a distinct past, moral code, and cultural legacy that ought to be honored and preserved. The tangible representation of these intangible facets of culture is provided by architecture. It narrates the history of a community, its ties to the land, how it has responded to natural disasters, and its shared goals for the future.

Culturally and traditionally influenced architectural designs incorporate features that have been passed down through the generations, such as local materials, building processes, and aesthetics. By doing this, people establish a concrete connection to the past and a feeling of continuity in a world that is changing quickly. Furthermore, the community can take pleasure in this type of building, which helps to promote a feeling of identity and belonging.

Moreover, a culturally grounded architectural identity provides a chance to revive and maintain customs and values that could otherwise be overlooked or rejected in the face of modernity. Architectural monuments can support the transmission of traditional knowledge and practices to future generations and act as reminders of the cultural value of a building.

1.1. Identity

The concept of identity is complex and wide-ranging, encompassing much more than just personal recognition. It captures the essence of what, in the huge fabric of life, distinguishes, makes something or someone special. Identity is a concept that permeates many facets of our life, including geographical and building identities as well as personal and cultural identities. It is an essential idea that helps us comprehend, value, and relate to the world around us.

When we talk about personal identity, we explore the complex tapestry of traits and life events that make up a person. Personal identity is made up of both concrete characteristics, like physical appearance, and abstract components, like values, experiences, and beliefs. The combination of these individual qualities is what sets one person apart from another. The foundation of our sense of self, our relationships, and our life decisions are all based on our personal identities.

Conversely, cultural identity expands the definition of identification to include more diverse communities or larger groups of individuals. It includes the common beliefs, practices, languages, artistic expressions, and accumulated memories that unite a community. A person's cultural identity gives them a sense of community and a lens through which to view the world and interact with others. This identity, which influences a society's collective consciousness, is frequently firmly anchored in history. A culture's identity might be compared to an intricate fabric made of common experiences and ancestry.

Now that we are looking at a location or building's cultural identity, we are starting to look at architectural and geographic identity. Buildings and locations have distinct histories and qualities of their own that frequently reflect the culture and history of the people who built them. The cultural character of a group or region can be discerned through the architectural styles, materials, and design decisions chosen. Different cultural identities are communicated, for instance, through the elaborate patterns of Islamic building or the simple aesthetics of Scandinavian design.

Furthermore, locations themselves can have distinct identities based on their history, topography, and the events that have taken place there. Famous sites like the Great Wall of China or the Eiffel Tower in Paris are not only emblems of national identity but also well-known worldwide representations of their own cultures.

Possible categories of differentiation include:

1. Customs and conventions;

2. Significant locations.

3. Social norms

4. Customs of the area

5. The Politics

6. Background of the area

7. Sense of Religious Self

Colour, touch, scent, sight, shape, motion, and light polarisation are all used to help people in a city find their way about.

A region's identity is a dynamic concept that changes over time based on users' experiences and associations with it rather than being stable or continuous.

A place's landmarks contribute to its identity by creating a lasting impression and serving as a backdrop for experiences and memories. A location's identity can also be shaped by a variety of factors, such as its cuisine, dancing styles, music, or traditional attire.

This shift may also have a lot to do with the generation. This is a generational representation of identity and culture. Each person's identity of a location may vary depending on the kind and duration of their association with it. Identity formation is a lifelong process that is always exploratory.

Even if the change may not be significant, important facts and experiences always alter. Hall claims that monotony might undermine our sense of self and incite hatred. One may argue that the more a person resembles us or seems like us, the more dangerous it is that they are similar to us. It is imperative to keep a distinct and unique identity as there could be significant discord based on this foundation.

- **Cultural Identity**

Architecture is important because it provides a physical manifestation of the intangible and non-materialistic requirements of the people who live in a certain location. It is a reflection of the cultural, social, and even psychological components that define human life in that particular context, therefore it goes beyond merely being a reflection of the architecture and design of a building. The built environment, be it a city or a building, is a canvas upon which the needs, aspirations, and values of a society are painted. This canvas might be anything from a city to a single building.

Urban environments owe a great deal to architecture, which plays a crucial role in shaping their identity and ensuring that residents' needs are met. Not only do urban planners and architects take into account concrete necessities such as housing, transit, and infrastructure, but they also take into account less tangible features such as a neighborhood's culture and character. A city's skyline, its layout, and the architecture of public places, for instance, all have the potential to either support or question the cultural norms and values of the community. Some cultures place a higher value on public areas and actively seek out opportunities for people to engage with one another, whereas other cultures may place a greater emphasis on independence and privacy. Architecture evolves into a tool that may be used to address the cultural and social complexities that exist.

In a similar vein, architecture is a tool that can be used in the world of building design to create spaces that are in tune with the cultural and emotional needs of the people living in the building. Buildings have the potential to be more than just useful buildings; they may also serve as symbols of a culture's identity. For instance, the architecture of religious structures typically incorporates aspects that mirror the spirituality and beliefs of the particular faith for which the structure was designed. Architectural forms that evoke particular time periods or regional customs might help people feel more connected to their history and strengthen their sense of cultural identity.

You made an excellent point when you said that an individual's sense of self and their worldview are directly influenced by their cultural identity. It has a substantial bearing on how individuals understand both themselves and their place in the wider world. Our sense of cultural identity has an impact on our core beliefs, values, rituals, and practices. It influences how we speak with one another, the foods we eat, the works of art we make, as well as the buildings we design and live in. In its most basic form, it is the filter through which we read and make sense of the reality that surrounds us.

Identity is not something that is fixed; rather, it is something that is dynamic and can change through time. Globalization, migration, and encounters with people of various cultures are all potential elements that could have an effect on it. People who live in multicultural communities frequently have to negotiate their numerous cultural identities, which may be an experience that is simultaneously enlightening and frustrating. In order to ensure that the built environment respects and accommodates the varied cultural identities and requirements of its inhabitants, architects and urban planners need to be aware of the complexity involved.

The very idea of a location that is not related in some way with a particular cultural environment is, in reality, quite implausible. Given that locations are always understood in connection to one another, this is the case.

Community is the term used to describe a collection of people who share aspects of their culture, geographical setting, government, or intercommunication with one another.

Communication is an essential component of culture because individuals who share a culture have a similar mode of communicating with one another.

When people in a certain group engage in a variety of practices or behaviors for an extended period of time in order to foster a sense of belonging, that community eventually develops its own unique culture. The result of these operations is a transformation in both space and form.

1.2.   The Experience of War in Kuwait

The British found oil in Kuwait in the 1930s, but they kept it a secret until the conclusion of World War II to keep Nazi Germany's focus off the region. This is when the effects of war began to affect Kuwait. About 8 percent of the worlds proven oil reserves, or about 100 billion barrels, are found in Kuwait. With the exception of seafood, its severe climate restricts agricultural development, leaving it nearly totally dependent on food imports. The impact of political conditions in the region on oil pricing and supply to the global market has always made them a major source of concern.

Political tensions in the area have affected Kuwait since the Islamic revolution in Iran was successful in seizing power in the early 1980s. It persisted during the eight-year First Gulf War between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, which put the security of the entire Gulf area at jeopardy. Kuwait provided financial support to the Iraqi side during the war, but disagreements over the extent of Kuwait's financial assistance to Iraq led to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. In the 1980s, Kuwait battled to maintain its official neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war, according to Vale. Although it provided its neighbors in Iraq with an estimated $1 billion in financial aid annually, as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait quickly demonstrated, this support did not lessen the country's ongoing border disputes or other problems with Iraq.

The 1990 Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait had a profound effect on the entire region and set off a conflict between the United States and other nations over Kuwait's liberation. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the Second Gulf War—also known as "Desert Storm"—was a pivotal moment that offered the US the chance to assert its dominance as the only superpower in the world following the conclusion of the Cold War. After the events of 9/11, the United States of America (US) resolved to overthrow Saddam Hussein's political system in Iraq as a major catalyst for global instability and aggression. Kuwait's urban and economic development is being overshadowed by the Third Gulf War, the unsettling situation in Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam's administration in 2003, and, more recently, the nuclear war with Iran. Kuwait serves as a major entry point for US and ally military forces into Iraq.

- ## Architecture in Kuwait after the War

The Gulf conflict, according to Huda Al-Bahar, has had a devastating effect on Kuwait's industry, infrastructure for services, economy, environment, and academic, cultural, and intellectual institutions. It is projected that restoring and repairing the damage caused to Kuwait during the occupation will cost between $25 and $30 billion. "During this time, no new design projects are anticipated to be commissioned as the primary focus will be on repairing the damage done to existing buildings." Kuwait's post-war construction industry will mostly

need the professional services of structural surveyors, civil engineers, construction managers, and interior designers rather than architects, even though architects could contribute in some way to the rebuilding efforts.

The example of Kuwait demonstrates how wars affect urban environments and architecture. Following the US-led coalition's liberation of Kuwait on February 26, 1991, the preparations for recovery and reconstruction were carried out. The plans included infrastructure and public building repairs, mine and explosive dump removal, and firefighting for oil wells. The field of innovative architectural design and planning came to a standstill as a result of this endeavor. Reconstruction needs following the invasion led to a reduction in the quality of architectural services and a lack of understanding of the significance of the architectural design field. As a result, the surroundings lacked skill and fine architecture. It also caused significant delays in the creation of a new master plan, over ten years, and severely hindered the execution of the Second Master Plan.

The confrontations between the Iraqi dictatorship and the outside world in the 1990s prevented the establishment of the kind of security needed for quick progress. The fall of Saddam Hussein's administration in 2003 ushered in a more stable and upbeat environment for growth and development. Kuwait Municipality hired Kuwait Engineering Group (KEG) and Colin Buchanan and Partners (CBP) as consultants in 2002. KEG was tasked with reviewing and updating all data and information to make room for new projects and plans and to create a new master plan that would last until 2030. In Kuwait, there are now a number of massive projects under development or planned, however they are never going to happen due to the protracted bureaucratic processes involved in project implementation. Regarding Kuwait's inadequate standing in the area, people and critics are airing their opinions in media and conferences. "What needs to be done to unlock the country's vast potential and streamlining the project approvals process" was the topic of discussion at a recent MEED conference.

Kuwait finds itself caught between two stark contrasts: the rapid expansion of neighboring Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai, and the entire destruction of Iraq's people and material culture. Kuwait dominated the Arab Gulf states in economics, health, education, and building development during the 1970s and 1980s. Kuwait was still recuperating in the 1990s from the shock of the invasion and liberation. The emergence of other regional financial and commercial hubs has made Kuwaitis feel as though their country is losing its position as a leader in the region.

The devastating effects of Iraq's invasion experience led to a stark dichotomy in Kuwaiti culture. As the neighboring "Arab brothers" from Iraq invaded Egypt in the 1960s, the "Arabization" rhetoric put forth by Nasser became highly dubious. On the other side, respect for the Western nations' tenacity and perseverance in leading the US, England, and the allies to free Kuwait fostered a sense of confidence in western ideals and culture. This circumstance caused a great divide in Kuwaiti architecture creation. It represented the necessity of erecting new, contemporary structures that unite Kuwait with the outside world while also paying homage to the country's past and sense of place.

1.3. Modern architecture in Iraq

The Berlin Baghdad line and the Orient Express were first proposed by the Ottoman administration in the late 19th century as a means of connecting Europe and the Middle East by train. German engineers introduced contemporary architectural designs and materials to Iraq, where they constructed a number of buildings, particularly railway stations. However, it wasn't until 1921 that architectural activity gained momentum and underwent significant transformation, thanks to the efforts of British army architects who assumed the role of government architect (GA) and created numerous buildings required by the newly formed state of Iraq. Ahmed Mukhtar Ibrahim was the first Iraqi architect to hold this role and become the head of the Public Works Office in 1939, while British architecture continued to be practiced in Iraq throughout that time.

We can distinguish three periods in modern architecture in Iraq –

➢ The 1930s, when European art deco and classic architecture collided to create a distinctive look.
➢ The 1950s, when masters of modern architecture created specific structures with a modernist cultural vibe.

➢ Iraqi architects worked throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to build modern architecture that was connected to the country's historical and regional history. The 1950s stands out among these eras for its impact on the nation's architectural philosophy and on the following decades.

- **Abstractions of Traditional Architecture**

Iraqi architects aim neither to replicate a common architectural composition and plant it in a different climate or topography, nor to convey the values of modernity that are prevalent in a particular nation. Instead, they use the local architectural heritage to extrapolate positive elements and revive them under the advancement of technology. Some architects have cleverly employed this strategy by examining international architectural styles and fusing them with modern components to produce an architecture that is uniquely Iraqi. The end product is a modern building that has been shaped and adjusted to fit the local architectural style.

Iraqi modernist architects, each with their own unique style, strove to abstract historical aspects such as traditional vernacular arches and historical Islamic arches in order to incorporate them into regionalized modern architecture.

1.4. Multimodal city identity construction through architectural design

What is portrayed in architecture is the utterly diverse structures of wanted interactions between humans, their institutions, and the normal world; architecture is, after all, an illustrative craftsmanship, a specialty of representation, maybe.

Material, visual, and rhetorical sign systems interact to characterize how a city might be unique and how its implications have developed over time; they are the building blocks of a city's identity, formed and represented by its architecture. The built environment is multimodal since the same sign conveys literally, outwardly, and rhetorically, but we separate different sign frameworks for analytical clarity. The Eiffel Tower, for instance, is a visible landmark that serves as a point of reference for visitors and residents alike. It's a convoluted reference whose shape and arrangement chart the progression from classicism to modernity. It serves a similar purpose to that of a rhetorical referent, in this case representing Paris.

We use a multimodal approach in our research to illuminate the nature of city identity. This method addresses the five distinct architecturally based material, visual, and rhetorical sign frameworks, their defining modes and affordances, and the pivotal on-screen personalities that the institutions they represent inevitably attract. In addition, we are aware of the ways in which material, visual, and rhetorical elements all work together to construct the image of a city, from the perspective of both outsiders and its own citizens. One way that multimodality improves clarity is by making it simpler for both residents and visitors to learn their way about and get to know a city. A city's material needs and visual styles communicate to define neighborhoods and help people find their way around it; for example, the winding restricted roads and white buildings of the Parisian Latin Quarter converse with the straight avenues and modernist buildings of the thirteenth arrondissement of Place d'Italie. The Latin Quarter in Paris is a good illustration of this.

1.5. Architecture as symbol of culture

Architecture is, in fact, a diverse field that goes much beyond the realm of aesthetics. It is a public figure and a reflection of a society's culture, values, and mental attitudes; as such, it functions as a public figure. The purpose of architecture is not simply to produce things that are appealing to the eye; rather, it is a medium through which a people can express their shared identity within the framework of their historical past. Societies are able to articulate their connection to nature, their history, and their cultural legacy through the types of architecture that they create. This might include features such as religion, nationhood, and ethnicity.

One of the significant functions of architecture is to capture the essence of a society's sentiments and feelings towards its own history and culture. This is one of the more important tasks that architecture plays. When architects construct buildings and urban environments, they have the ability to elicit feelings of nostalgia, pride, or veneration for the past. This can happen in any of these ways. Architectural aspects, such as the use of traditional materials, the incorporation of religious symbols, or the preservation of historical sites, can serve as conduits for cultural memory. This enables cultures to keep a tangible link with their roots by allowing them to

maintain a connection with their ancestry. In this sense, architecture transforms into a form of storytelling, assisting culture in remembering and transmitting to subsequent generations its extensive past as well as its rich traditions.

In addition to this, architecture is a reflection of society in and of itself. It is a reflection of the priorities, values, and goals that a community or nation has for itself. For instance, magnificent government structures, such as the Capitol in Washington, District of Columbia, are a symbol of the strength and authority of a nation. On the other hand, innovative and environmentally sustainable architectural designs highlight a society's commitment to being a good steward of the environment. A society's architectural diversity also reflects the heterogeneity of its people and exemplifies the peaceful coexistence of a variety of cultures and identities.

It is impossible to exaggerate how important architecture is to the process of nation-building. It has a significant role in shaping the personality and reputation of a nation. Oftentimes, a country's progress and prosperity can be symbolically represented by its most recognizable landmarks and metropolitan skylines. They have the potential to entice tourists, increase feelings of national pride, and contribute to economic expansion. In addition, well-planned urban landscapes that give priority to practicality as well as beauty can improve the quality of life for inhabitants and build a sense of belonging and community in the process.

2.   Literature Review

Delanty and Jones (2002) sheds light on the evolving role of architecture in Europe, particularly its changing significance as a representation of national identity. Traditionally, architecture has been a potent symbol of a nation's heritage and cultural identity. However, the research by Delanty and Jones highlights a noteworthy transition – a shift away from this conventional perspective towards one where architecture serves as a platform for post-national expressions. In this context, the research underscores the diminishing significance of architecture as a tool for asserting and preserving national identity. Nations are progressively relinquishing their architectural ties, moving away from the notion that a specific architectural style or heritage defines their identity. Instead, what emerges is a novel spatial European identity that transcends individual national boundaries. This transformation signifies a profound shift in the way architecture is perceived and utilized within the European context. One of the critical implications of this shift is its influence on contemporary architectural production. Since fewer countries are trying to make a statement through their buildings, architects and designers need to find other means of self-expression. This has sparked debates and discussions within the field of architecture regarding the authentic formation of local identities. There is a growing emphasis on developing architectural styles that are distinct and reflective of the contemporary era, rather than relying on historical imitations that are tethered to nationalistic sentiments. Moreover, the research conducted by Delanty and Jones points to the evolving role of architecture in the broader context of cultural identity. Once closely bound to the state and its expression of identity, architecture now serves as a significant cultural vehicle for post-national identities. These identities may transcend the boundaries of nation-states and encompass a more fluid and diverse understanding of European identity in the contemporary era. Consequently, architecture plays a pivotal role in reflecting and shaping this evolving European identity, which is increasingly characterized by its adaptability and inclusivity.

Gospodini (2004) contends that as our world becomes increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse, the need to preserve and convey cultural identity through architectural design becomes all the more important. This concern resonates not only among scholars but also within the general population, emphasizing the urgency of delving deeper into the relationship between architectural forms and the unique identities of the places they are situated in. Architecture, as a visual and physical manifestation of human culture, has the potential to both reflect and shape cultural identities. It influences and shapes how people see themselves and their heritage while also expressing a society's values, beliefs, and aspirations. In a rapidly changing world, where global architectural trends often converge and homogenize design practices, the role of architecture in preserving and expressing cultural identity stands out as a critical concern. Furthermore, the multifaceted nature of architectural identity goes beyond the superficial aesthetics of buildings. It encompasses the spatial organization, materials used, and the way architecture interacts with the natural and built environment. Architectural forms are not

static; they evolve over time, reflecting the changing cultural dynamics and societal needs of a place. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of how architecture can reflect and shape cultural identity necessitates an examination of both historical and contemporary architectural practices within the context of specific regions or communities.

In Lim's (2004) Lim's (2004) study sheds light on the fascinating evolution of architectural practices in Singapore. The research delves into the proactive approach adopted by Singaporean architects, who demonstrated a keen embrace of evolving cultural, societal, and lifestyle changes. Rather than simply adhering to traditional design principles or blindly pursuing modernity, these architects skillfully amalgamated traditional elements into their architectural designs to reflect the contemporary context. This synthesis of tradition and modernity culminated in the conceptualization of a "contemporary vernacular." This term encapsulates the architects' deliberate commitment to unveiling traditional responses to spatial organization, locality, and climate within the context of a rapidly changing society. One of the key findings of Lim's study is the architects' adeptness at manifesting these distinctive and symbolic characteristics into innovative architectural forms. This aspect is particularly noteworthy as it highlights the architects' creative prowess in translating abstract cultural and historical elements into tangible and functional structures. This innovative approach allowed them to create architectural designs that served as a bridge between the rich heritage of Singapore and the demands of a modern, globalized society. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of the unique architectural identity forged by these architects in Singapore's urban landscape. This architectural identity not only celebrates the nation's cultural and historical roots but also harmonizes them seamlessly with contemporary aesthetics and functionality. The result is a landscape that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the nation.

After WWII, a new architectural style evolved in the Philippines, and Ogura et al. (2002) investigates it. The study's principal goal was to clarify the unique characteristics of this architectural style, which was pioneered by well-known architects of the time. The study's primary finding was the importance of classic shapes' direct assimilation into this architectural style. This incorporation served as a notable and clear expression of domestic aesthetics, a pivotal aspect in defining the essence of Filipino architectural identity. The study highlights that the architects of the post-World War II era faced a unique challenge in their pursuit of blending traditional Filipino architectural elements with the demands and expectations of the modern era. This challenge revolves around the need to reconcile the desire to create architecture deeply rooted in Filipino culture with the evolving preferences and requirements of contemporary design. In essence, the architects grappled with the tension between preserving their cultural heritage and embracing the practicality and aesthetics of the modern age. This delicate balance has persisted as an ongoing dilemma for Filipino architects, further underscoring the complex and multifaceted task of crafting a distinct Filipino architectural identity.

(Khattab, 2001) Recent studies suggest that rapidly growing cities are embracing a 'co-existence' model that balances modernization and globalization with the preservation of traditional elements in society. Researchers argue for the examination of this model's viability and its potential applicability to other urban centers. They also advocate for a reevaluation of the prevailing discourse on the 'loss of identity' in a globalized world. Additionally, Kanna's work highlights how Dubai's residents have adapted to cultural changes and modernity, portraying these transformations as culturally assimilative rather than a homogeneous dystopia. These findings underscore the dynamic and adaptable nature of cities in the face of globalization. After Iraq's claims in Kuwait and the Second Gulf War, Khattab writes, "especially in the case of Kuwait, reasserting the local identity has lately become a matter of great importance.

In K. Asfour's (2004) delves into the intricate relationship between architecture and the construction and expression of diverse identities across different historical eras. The book's central argument is that buildings in the Arab world play a crucial role in forming and communicating personal and national identities. This work represents a meticulous investigation of numerous case studies that span the spectrum from traditional Arab villages to contemporary skyscrapers. One of the central themes that Asfour meticulously examines is the role of traditional Arab villages in shaping the identities of their inhabitants. He dissects the architectural elements and urban planning of these villages, illustrating how they have historically embodied the cultural values, social

norms, and community identities of the people who lived within them. Asfour's analysis reveals the profound influence of these structures on the individuals who inhabited them, as well as on the larger collective identity of the Arab communities they served as homes to. As the book progresses into the modern era, Asfour shifts his focus to contemporary skyscrapers and urban landscapes in the Arab region. He argues persuasively that architecture continues to be a powerful force in shaping identity in this ever-evolving context. Through his examination of contemporary architectural marvels, Asfour demonstrates how the fusion of traditional and modern elements in these structures reflects the complex interplay between tradition and progress, heritage and innovation. This exploration highlights how modern Arab cities use architecture as a means to communicate their evolving identity on a global stage.

M. Castells (2004) examines the complex relationship between globalization and cultural identity, offers a valuable perspective on how these two forces intersect and influence one another. Castells argues that rather than erasing traditional cultures, globalization encourages a phenomenon he terms "cultural hybridization." In this process, traditional cultural elements are not lost but instead evolve as they interact with global influences. This view challenges the notion that globalization inevitably leads to the homogenization of cultures and emphasizes the resilience and adaptability of local identities. One of the key ideas in Castells' argument is that individuals play a central role in this process of cultural hybridization. They actively engage with diverse cultural facets, integrating them into their own identities. This suggests that globalization does not simply impose a single, dominant culture on societies but instead enables people to construct fresh and multifaceted identities that incorporate elements from various cultural sources. In essence, individuals become cultural synthesizers, weaving together different threads of their heritage and the global cultural landscape. This perspective has significant implications for understanding the complexities of designing for dynamic and diverse societies. It highlights that the challenges faced in accommodating evolving cultural landscapes are not merely about preserving traditional cultures in their original forms but about facilitating the dynamic and ongoing negotiation of cultural identities. Designing for such societies requires a deep appreciation of the fluidity of cultural boundaries and an awareness of the potential for creative and innovative expressions of identity that emerge from the interplay between global and local influences.

An intriguing viewpoint on the connection between building design and personal identity is provided by Borden, Rendell, Kerr, and Pivaro (2002). At its core, the paper challenges the traditional notion that architecture merely mirrors or reflects the identity of a place or society. Instead, the authors propose that architecture plays an active and dynamic role in shaping and constructing identity. This shift in perspective is significant because it suggests that architectural design is not a neutral backdrop but rather a catalyst for shaping human experiences, interactions, and the development of identity. Central to their argument is the concept of "flow filters." Borden et al. introduce this concept to illustrate how architectural design influences the movement of people and objects within a given space. These flow filters can be physical elements like walls, corridors, doors, and staircases, as well as more intangible factors like lighting and acoustics. By regulating and channeling the flow of movement, architecture can control and mold how individuals engage with their surroundings and with each other. One critical implication of this idea is that architecture has the power to shape social interactions and the formation of identity. For instance, the design of a public square with ample seating and open spaces may encourage social gatherings, fostering a sense of community and collective identity. Conversely, a prison's architecture, characterized by narrow, restrictive corridors and isolated cells, can enforce a sense of isolation and reinforce an inmate's identity as a criminal.

Soja (2002) delves into the intricate relationship between architecture and identity within the evolving landscape of globalization and urbanization. He contends that architecture serves as both a reflection of and resistance to the homogenizing forces of globalization. This dual role of architecture is pivotal in shaping and reinforcing place identity. Globalization, with its economic, cultural, and technological interconnections, has a profound impact on architectural styles and structures. Soja acknowledges that architecture often mirrors the globalized aesthetic, characterized by skyscrapers and modernist design. However, he warns that this can lead to the erasure of cultural and historical distinctiveness in urban environments. Crucially, Soja argues that architecture is not a passive participant in globalization but can actively resist it. By advocating for the preservation of local

architectural traditions and vernacular styles, architecture becomes a tool for communities to assert their unique identities and resist the homogenization of their built environment. Central to Soja's thesis is the concept of place identity. He underscores the importance of architecture in shaping and reinforcing this identity by designing buildings that resonate with the cultural, historical, and social context of a place. In essence, architecture becomes a storyteller, narrating the history and values of a place through its design.

Abel (2000) delves into various facets of this intricate relationship, shedding light on how architecture plays a pivotal role in shaping and reflecting different aspects of identity. Abel analyses many factors, one of which is how buildings contribute to the formation of national identities. He explores how architectural designs, styles, and symbols are often used to evoke a sense of national pride and belonging. For instance, iconic structures like the Eiffel Tower in France or the Taj Mahal in India are not just architectural marvels but also powerful symbols of national identity. Abel's analysis helps us understand how architecture can serve as a potent tool in nation-building efforts, fostering a shared sense of identity among citizens. Religious identity is another critical dimension that Abel investigates. He delves into how religious architecture, such as mosques, churches, and temples, embodies the beliefs and values of different faiths. The design, layout, and ornamentation of these religious structures not only serve functional purposes but also convey spiritual and cultural messages. Abel's exploration provides insights into how religious architecture can reinforce and express the religious identities of communities and individuals. Furthermore, Abel addresses the relationship between architecture and social class identity. He examines how architectural choices, such as the design of residential neighborhoods and the use of materials, can reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies. For instance, gated communities and luxury high-rises often serve as physical manifestations of economic privilege, while informal settlements may signify marginalization and poverty. Abel's analysis highlights the ways in which architecture can both mirror and perpetuate societal inequalities.

The research of Singh, M. K., Mahopatra, S., and Atreya, M. K. (2009) into solar passive characteristics in North East Indian vernacular building is extensive. This region is known for its diverse climate, characterized by varying temperature ranges and weather patterns throughout the year. The authors adopted a comprehensive approach by surveying 150 households and conducting interviews with 300 occupants across different bioclimatic zones within North East India. This extensive data collection allowed them to gain insights into how local architecture adapts to the region's unique climatic challenges and harnesses solar passive design principles. Finding numerous solar passive features incorporated into North East Indian vernacular building was a major finding of their study. These features encompassed a range of design elements, construction materials, and spatial arrangements aimed at optimizing energy efficiency and thermal comfort. Such features included the strategic placement of windows and openings to facilitate natural ventilation, the use of thermal mass in construction, and the utilization of local materials that possess inherent insulation properties. These findings underscore the importance of indigenous knowledge and traditional building practices in addressing climate-responsive architecture, particularly in regions with diverse climatic conditions. Furthermore, the study highlighted the significance of understanding and preserving the vernacular architectural heritage of North East India. By documenting and analyzing these solar passive features, the authors not only contribute to the body of knowledge on sustainable building practices but also advocate for the integration of these time-tested strategies into contemporary architectural designs.

Sandeep Sharma and Puneet Sharma (2013) delves into the architectural heritage of Himachal Pradesh, India, with a specific focus on traditional and vernacular buildings. Their objective is to underscore the ecological sensitivity and climate-responsive designs inherent in these structures and argue for their role as models of sustainability. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on sustainable architecture by shedding light on the wisdom of indigenous architectural practices in the context of changing climate and environmental concerns. Himachal Pradesh, nestled in the lap of the Himalayas, is known for its diverse climatic conditions and challenging terrains. The authors emphasize that traditional buildings in this region have evolved over centuries in response to these specific environmental challenges. These structures exhibit a remarkable adaptation to the local climate, effectively regulating temperature and managing natural resources. Through meticulous observation and analysis, the authors unearth the intricate details of architectural design that facilitate this

adaptation, such as orientation, use of materials, and construction techniques. In doing so, they underscore how these traditional buildings inherently embody sustainable principles. One of the key arguments put forth in this literature review is the significance of local materials and construction techniques. Sandeep Sharma and Puneet Sharma highlight that traditional Himachali buildings predominantly utilize materials sourced from the immediate vicinity. Not only does this help the local economy, but it also lessens the environmental impact of transportation. Moreover, these locally sourced materials possess unique thermal properties that are well-suited for the region's climate. The authors argue that this aspect of resource utilization aligns perfectly with contemporary sustainability goals, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices that minimize environmental impact.

3. Research Methodology: Case Study

The survey were subjected to statistical analysis, while the in-depth interviews underwent thematic analysis to uncover the shared and differing perspectives of Iraqi architects.

- Regarding the architectural identity in Iraq, 88% of the participants concurred that there is presently no discernible identity in Iraqi architecture, whereas 12% acknowledged the existence of an identity expressed in contemporary Iraqi architecture. A significant 94% opined that there should indeed be a distinctive identity in Iraqi architecture, with only 6% holding a contrary view. Furthermore, 94% of the respondents believed in the necessity of establishing building regulations to instill an Iraqi identity in architecture. While 32% of respondents said they felt Iraqi architecture had a distinct identity prior to 1950, only 5% said they felt the same about building built after 2000.

- Climate (cited by 94% of respondents), society's culture (88%), construction laws (87%), client preferences (81%), and building technology (47%). Traditional Iraqi architecture had the strongest support from respondents at 100%, followed by desert architecture at 94%, Arab architecture at 92%, Gulf architecture at 88%, Islamic architecture at 87%, and international architecture at 71%. As for the sources of architectural identity, all respondents agreed that climate, area, and culture should be the core pillars, with 75% also recognizing religion as a component.

- Ninety-four percent of respondents agreed that courtyards (al-housh) and native color palettes should be incorporated into modern building designs to better represent Iraqi culture. Another 88% agreed that architectural features such as the dareehz (entry), diwaniyah (men's receiving room), and liwan (colonnade) should be used to represent Iraqi culture. Only half of those polled, nevertheless, agreed that columns should help convey personality. In addition, as shown in Figure 3, 81% of respondents favored incorporating numerous traditional aspects into a building at once as a means of expressing cultural identity.

- 69% of respondents said they think Iraqi architects are helping the country's architectural character flourish, while 73% said they think the Iraq Municipality is hindering the process. Also, 94% of people said they thought there would be a beneficial impact on the future development of Iraqi identity from the presence of local consulting offices and improved social awareness. One hundred percent of those polled said that it was important for public buildings to reflect Iraqi identity, while 94% said the same thing about government buildings and private houses. The new Seif Palace, Souq Al-Mubarkiah, and Souq Al-ZulWa Al-Bishut were also viewed favorably by 94% of respondents as accurate representations of Iraqi culture. Compared to the Liberation Tower's 13% approval rating, the Iraq Towers' 40% approval rating falls short of being considered an accurate representation of Iraqi culture and national pride.
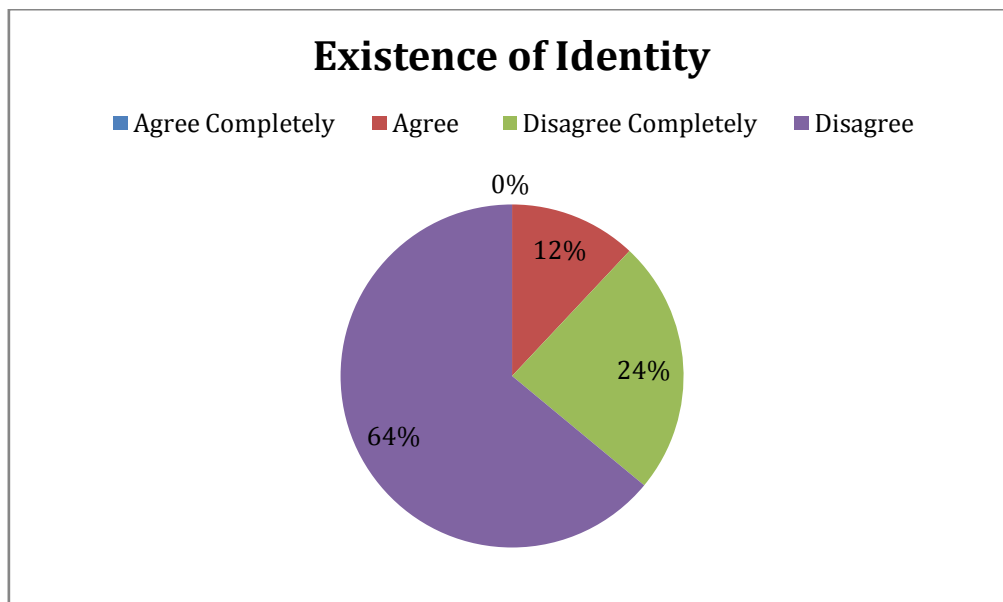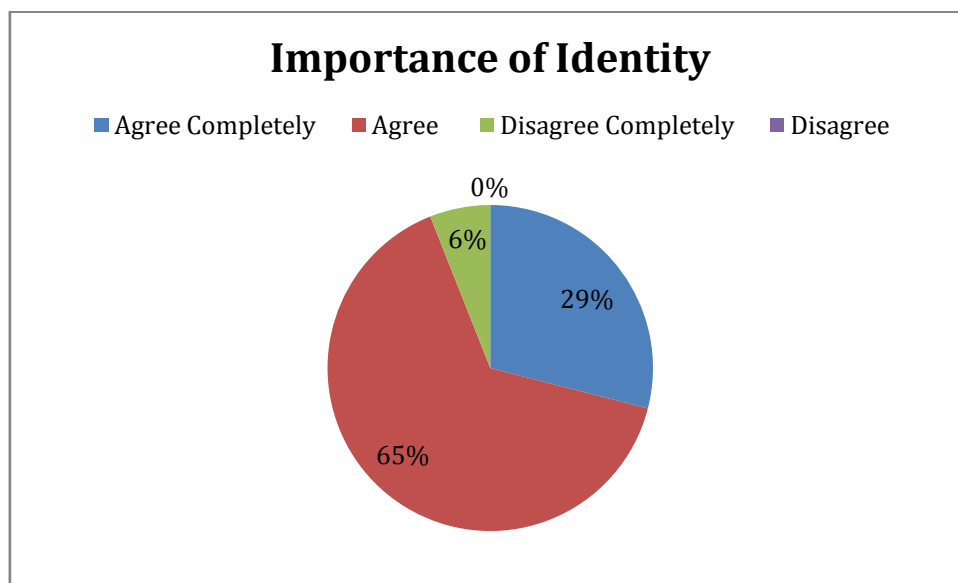
Figure 1:Existence of Identity

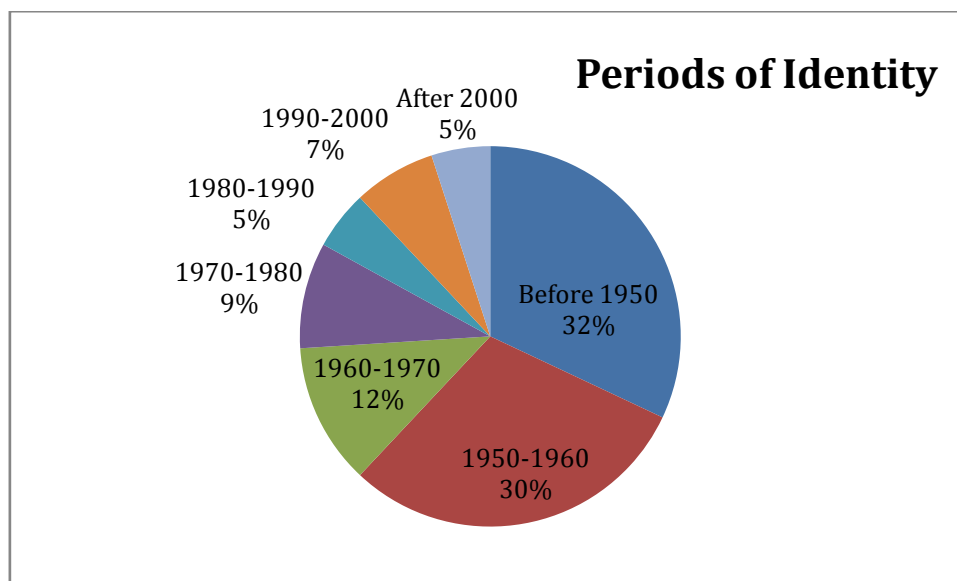**Figure 2: Importance of Identity**
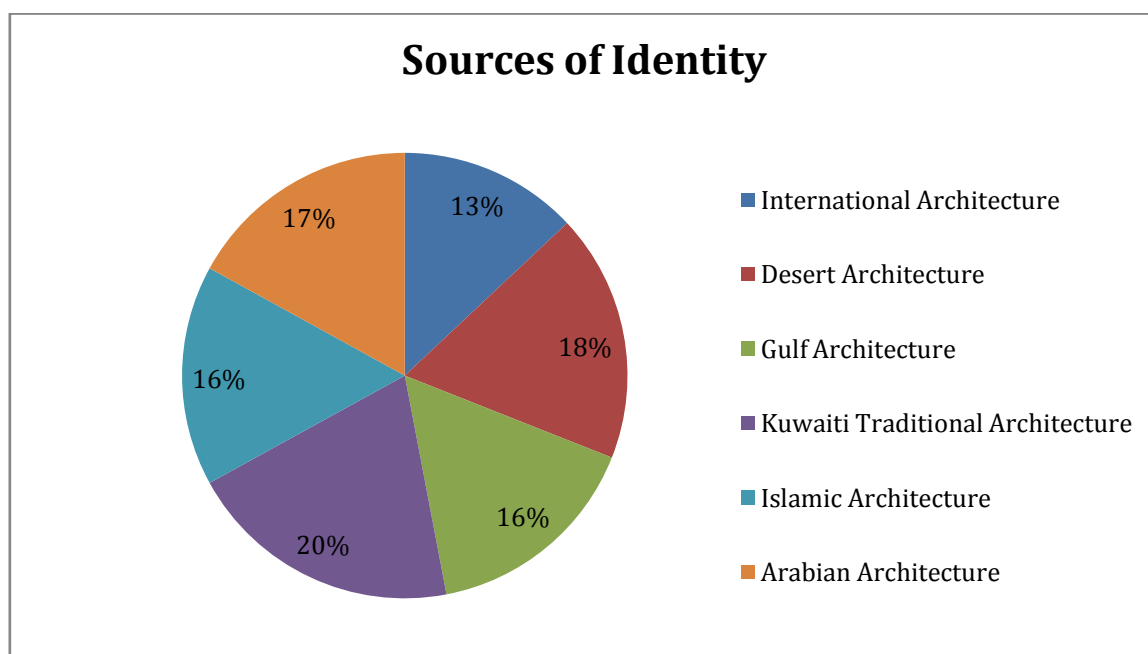
Figure 3: Periods of Identity

Figure 4: Sources of Identity

The most noteworthy examples of traditional and modern Iraqi architecture were selected by the participants. The old Seif Palace, other ancient homes, diwaniyas, educational institutions, mosques, neighborhoods, and markets were all examples from the past.

Figure 6: Souq Sharq

Water towers, the Iraq Towers, governmental buildings, Souq Sharq, Souq Al-ZulWa Al-Bishut, the headquarters of Arab organizations, and the New Seif Palace were among the modern landmarks depicted in these works.

Figure 7: New Seif Palace

The interviews were quite helpful for getting a deep understanding of the issues that Iraqi architects face. While there were certain recurring aspects, each architect focused on different details. When taken as a whole, the interviews showcased a wide variety of perspectives and methods.

Figure 8: The Baghdad Tower

It's worth noting that none of these architects had access to a formal architectural education in Iraq until 1996, therefore they all went to the United States to get their degrees in the 1980s. They worked for the government for a while afterward, but eventually went into private practice as architects. Following an examination of shared threads, we give thematic profiles that capture the perspectives of some of the Iraqi architects interviewed for this project.

After earning his degree in architecture in the United States at the Wisconsin School of Architecture in 1985, Muhamad Al-Khedr worked for the Iraqi Ministry of Public Works. He launched MAC, an architecture firm he founded, in 1999. He claimed, "Present buildings were built with local materials and labour, primarily driven by family needs, before the discovery of oil." After the oil boom, however, buildings began to take on a more personal style, influenced by the work of international architects using cutting-edge techniques and materials.

According to Al-Khedr, one of the most important ways for a community to express its identity is through the way its architecture responds to the demands of its residents. He argues that Iraq's architectural identity should be based on "traditional desert architecture," which is characterized by courtyards and adobe-style construction. The harsh weather conditions over the extended summer months serve as a crucial driving force in the way that climate plays a part in establishing a genuine architectural identity. As he puts it, "there is some public interest in reflecting traditional architecture, but it tends to be for the sake of individualism." He offers his opinion that, while there have been some attempts at identity expression via architecture in Iraq, there is not yet a single building that can be said to represent the architectural identity of the country. Sad to say, the Iraqi municipality overlooks architectural considerations in favour of economic ones when it comes to regulating building design and public education."

Fareed Abdal has worked in the public, private, and military sectors since earning his Master of Architecture from the University of Wisconsin in the United States in 1983. Numerous papers and research on Iraqi architecture have been produced by him. According to Abdal, Iraq doesn't have a unified architectural style because so many structures are influenced by other countries. He also suggests that the region as a whole should be prioritized over a singular identity by adopting a "environmental response" to the weather. As he sees it, "Iraq had a distinct identity only during the pre-oil era, particularly the 1950s and earlier, when architecture reflected societal and environmental characteristics." He believes that all of Iraq's natural, cultural, behavioural, economic, material, and technical characteristics play a role in shaping the country's architectural identity. According to him, "Arab culture responds to the desert climate and nature, and architecture should likewise reflect the environment and our values." Abdal stresses Islam's significance by saying, "Islam is intrinsic to our nature, in harmony with nature at its best." To quote him: "the more we embrace environmental solutions, the closer we come to our identity." In his opinion, "there should be mandatory guidelines to preserve a unique architectural identity, but not overly restrictive laws that stifle creativity."

In 1980, Saleh Al-Mutawa earned a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Miami in Florida, and in 1982, he earned a Master of Architecture with a focus on passive solar cooling, heating, and repair of existing buildings. His Highness the Amir of Iraq recognised him for his efforts to preserve traditional Iraqi Architecture and presented him with a medal for writing the book "History of Architecture in Old Iraq City" (Al-Mutawa, 1994). Saleh Al-Mutawa: A New Vision in Iraq was also written by Godfrey Goodwin and published in 1997 (Goodwin, 1997). He took a pessimistic view of the state of Iraqi architecture today, saying, "No, it's lost, but I am trying to incorporate it into all of my projects to revive it." He is adamant that the preservation of Iraqi architectural styles is crucial because they represent the "character and soul of the country, which should not be denied or altered." According to Al-Mutawa, the period best exemplifying Iraqi architecture was before 1940, and the most important variables determining Iraqi architectural identity are "vocabularies, proportion, and materials." He says that "Islamic architecture and desert architecture" are the two main influences on Iraqi architecture and argues that individuals who practice Iraqi architecture should be rewarded in many ways.

Jamal Al-Hajji, who earned his degree in the United States in 1991, has worked for both public and commercial organizations. His argument is that the destruction of the Old Iraq Wall in 1950 marked the beginning of the end for Iraq's sense of national identity, which had existed in the country since the early 1960s. At the moment, Iraq doesn't have its own identity. He thinks it's a mistake for contemporary architects to appropriate design cues from traditional Iraqi architecture in an effort to give their buildings a sense of cultural identity. He says that the old city architecture is what truly defines Iraq, with its distinct atmosphere created by the arrangement of buildings to maximize their height. According to Al-Hajji, the figural buildings that are popular in modern Iraq are contributing to energy waste and pollution despite their practical success. He agrees that these structures are critical to understanding Iraq's modern history. From his experience, Al-Hajji says, "Rarely do you encounter a client who truly values identity." This is the biggest problem architects have to deal with. It may take several conversations to steer a customer with a skewed conception of identity in the proper direction. He thinks that different projects use different approaches to fostering a sense of community.

In 1984, Tariq Al-Saqabi earned a BSc in Architectural Engineering from a U.S. institution, and after working in a few different government agencies, he joined the faculty of Iraq University's Department of Architecture. That "there is no identifiable Iraqi architecture" is his firm belief. What we have here is Gulf architecture, which combines elements from several cultures and eras, including Egypt, Rome, Babylon, and other places. Existing architecture in Iraq, which is generally referred to as Iraqi architecture, is influenced by a variety of traditions and cultures. As a result, there isn't just one type of Iraqi architecture, just a collection of styles and techniques. Asked if Iraqi buildings should share a common style, he said, "it is not necessary for every building to adhere to a single identity." When asked about the distinctive style of Iraqi architecture, Al-Saqabi said, "There is no specific historical period that possessed that identity." Iraqi architecture displays a synthesis of Najdi and Hijazi styles as well as other regional influences. According to him, ancient Iraqi architecture, Islamic architecture, Gulf architecture, but not desert or Arabic architecture, are all possible sources for Iraqi architecture because

they all incorporate environmental, religious, and social components. He agrees that codes should be in place to encourage the development of Iraqi architecture.

4.   Outcomes

The research showed that the views of Iraqi architects on the origins of Iraqi cultural identity varied widely but also shared some commonalities. There is widespread agreement that the local climate and environment significantly impact the development of local culture and architectural style. The degree to which a people can adjust to new circumstances is indicative of its culture. Because of its location in a particularly harsh desert region, Iraq experiences lengthy, scorching summers that well outweigh the shorter, milder winters.

As the southernmost country on the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq is a prime example of traditional Gulf architectural styles. Seafaring activities such as trading, pearl diving, and fishing have long been an essential part of the local culture. Simple metaphors, such as seashells and fishing boats, are often used by architects. Religion has a profound effect on cultural norms, profoundly altering how people think about and approach issues of personal space, family relationships, and the built environment. Due to global consumerist trends and rising living standards, these features are evolving. In contrast to the current trend towards independence and extravagant displays of riches, religion is considered as a unifying factor that unites individuals with nature and society.

Traditional Iraqi architecture, architects agree, has its own unique components, languages, proportions, and materials. However, opinions are divided on whether or not these features should be reinstated in modern buildings. Some architects think that bridging the gap between modern and traditional Iraqi architecture is impossible without employing these components and vocabulary. On the other hand, there are many who argue that while it is crucial to account for weather and the unique requirements of Iraqis, it may not be necessary to strictly apply these traditional features and vocabularies.

And Iraqi architects know that structures alone can't tell the story of a people's history and culture. The architectural context plays a vital role in creating the setting in which architecture can be understood. The urban settings of the past added a meaningful interpretation to the experience of traditional architecture. Traditional components and vocabulary, when juxtaposed with contemporary streets and structures, can look more like something out of a theme park than like true and authentic architectural expressions.

5.   Discussion

Many different approaches are used by Iraqi architects, as shown by an examination of their designs, to convey the country's cultural identity through the built environment. To better explain the relationship between these tactics, the use of precedent, and the various constructions at play, a three-dimensional matrix was created. This matrix makes use of the four design strategies—pragmatic, iconic, analogous, and canonic—that Broadbent first articulated in 1973. To round out the set of methods already established, we added two more: symbolic and metaphorical.

According to the results of this research, traditional habitats are no longer seen as socially and physically isolated, non-urban, pre-modern spaces, even in the so-called Third World. Instead, tradition is now widely recognized as a highly charged arena where intricate power dynamics play out on a worldwide scale. This change highlights the move from romanticized views of tradition towards an examination of the ways in which tradition is entangled with unequal power dynamics in the realms of state, global business, the architectural profession, and the discourse on tradition itself.

This study has important ramifications for the fields of architecture and architectural studies in Iraq. It's a great resource for understanding the motivation behind the recent push for architectural expressions of cultural heritage. This could be taken further in the future by using the same methods in several nations and methodically comparing the outcomes. It can be instructive to compare and contrast the views of native Iraqi architects with those of foreign architects working in the country. As more Iraqi architects become involved and as new building forms emerge, continuous studies will be able to capture the dynamic nature of cultural identity as it develops in Iraqi architecture.

This research's matrix is a helpful tool for analyzing how different architects in Iraq deal with issues of cultural identity. To better understand the dynamic terrain of architectural identity in Iraq, it can be used by practitioners, researchers, and spectators. Furthermore, future research could compare and contrast industrialized and developing nations to investigate architects' perspectives on cultural identity representation in building design.

Cultural identity expression takes many forms and evolves over time. Neil Leach disputes the idea that a person has a single, unchanging identity, instead stating that people have a variety of identities that are constantly shifting and even at odds with one another. In order to convey a sense of national or ethnic pride, some architects turn to time-tested techniques and materials. Some people, meantime, have found ways to express their cultural identity that are in tune with modern success and hope. Therefore, identity continues to be diverse, malleable, and dynamically formed by the imaginations of its members.

The research yields several important suggestions for improving the architectural representation of cultural identity:

1. Building laws and regulations should be updated to reflect the knowledge and wisdom gained from the country's historical and cultural architecture. This ensures that the architectural heritage and cultural identity are considered in contemporary construction practices.

2. Incorporating Globalization and Localization in Architectural Education: Architectural education should integrate topics related to understanding the processes of globalization and localization into its curriculum. This will equip future architects with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complexities of cultural identity in a globalized world.

3. The architectural field as a whole should support the efforts of those within it who aspire to use their craft as a vehicle for cultural expression. Architects might be encouraged to study their past by participating in competitions and receiving incentives for doing so.

4. Public lectures, scholarly works, and media coverage can help raise the general public's consciousness regarding the value of cultural identity in building design. This can get more people talking about how buildings express their identities in the neighborhood.

5. Sustainable architecture and urban development practices that are sensitive to and expressive of the local environmental and climatic conditions should be promoted and accepted as standard procedure. These methods can be harmonious with and supportive of a person's cultural identity.

6.Take a holistic view of identification; you can't just focus on one building when you're trying to create a sense of community, you need to look at the whole picture. Collectively, the interrelationships between buildings, the social mix of people, activities, and events, and the larger geographical surroundings define the character of a town or place.

In conclusion, buildings and their architects have always been and will continue to be vehicles for the expression of cultural identity. A society's level of agreement, commonality, distinctions, harmony, or contrast can be inferred from the collective image of these identities at any particular time. It contributes to the varied cultural expressions seen in buildings by serving as a manifestation of common and unique outlooks on the past, present, and future.

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