

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE & URBAN IDENTITY BETWEEN NOSTALGIA & REALITY: THE CASE OF BAHRAIN

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Abstract

The rich architectural heritage of Bahrain has been subject to dilapidation and destruction as a result of rapid urbanisation and its complex physical, social and economic dimensions. The two major cities of Muharraq & Manama have been undergoing profound changes facing serious challenges and problems that are threatening whatever left of the fine organic traditional urban areas. Large scale developments, high-rise buildings, shopping centres and infrastructure expansions; coupled with political and economic changes; manifest these intricate processes of urban transformations. Remarkably enough, all these come at a time when globalization has dominated all aspects of life with its clichés, challenges and possible potentials. In such a complex situation, an important question could be asked of how urban identity could be sustained in fast-transforming cities?

The paper focuses on sustaining the urban identity of Manama and Muharraq that goes beyond the mere nostalgic romanticism to realistic futurism by employing a combination of observation and participation qualitative research methods. It aims to provide a holistic approach integrating between the various scenarios of restoration, new functional rehabilitation, in-fill and new development. Hence it examines not only the physical

aspects but expands the discussion to a wide range of issues and their interrelations including appropriate land-use systems and building regulations, financial resources and incentives, education and heritage, urban and architectural practices, and stakeholders' involvement and institutional developments. The paper acknowledges that the approach should filter between short-term solutions and far-sighted strategies, between private interests and public good, between market efficiency and social welfare, between bottom up approaches and top down ones, between physical development and heritage protection and between large scale and small-scale developments. Based on this discussion, comprehensive policy measures are to be addressed focusing on the possibilities of turning the "wicked" challenges into "potential" opportunities

Key words: *Architectural Heritage, Urban Identity, Urban Transformation, Bahrain*

Introduction

In a fast urbanizing and globalizing world, the issue of city identity has become a matter of great concern. Alienation, animosity and visual pollution, typical characteristics of today many urban areas, have different and serious implications on humanity and environment. The confusion of our cities has become intolerable and requires careful assessments of conservation strategies as well as of 'modern' urban and architectural approaches - their invalidity and inefficiency. It is also becoming evident that the issue of urban identity should not be treated only as a mere stylistic and nostalgic matter. On the contrary, it should be integrated in the heart of the processes which shape, manage and finance urban developments.

Growing urban areas, especially in the Gulf including Bahrain, have become arenas of many contradictory forces associated with the growing of commercialism and consumption attitudes, architectural fashions and professional egoism, and many misconceptions regarding progress and modernization. These fake values, transferring cities into functional mechanism of material values, have overtaken the local genuine forces used to shape the traditional settlements. Therefore, many modern cities stand in isolation from its culture and, in many cases, functioning against the grains of the culture. This discontinuity with tradition is causing an identity crisis, disorienting people and dehumanizing cities of enormous social, economic, physical and environmental problems. Hahn & Simonis (1991:199) best describe these problems as following:

Cities have become a symbol for and a product of the careless treatment of scarce and sensitive environmental goods. Cities have thus become a symbol for the neglect of organic, cultural traditions and the destruction of the

identity of places. Respect of traditions and factors specific to certain places is, however, of highest importance for a symbiotic development of the human environment relationship. As individual characteristics are different so it should be with cities, with urban planning.

As cities becoming more complex and obscure, signs and exhibits grow larger as well as the strangeness feelings minimizing people's self-esteem and sense of potential and fostering attitudes of defence and defeatism. Identity becomes 'bizarreness of uniqueness' manifested in colour, texture, shape and location depending on visibility. It reflects different set of values from the traditional local ones; buildings and space are symbols for economic and political power, importance and status, achievement and wealth, ours and theirs, and finally poor and rich. The prerequisites are visibility and surprise; the creation of a distinct image in the observer's mind for capturing his attention. This goes to the extent of borrowing symbols and motifs from earlier periods or from other culture in order to legitimize a new social order.

Research Approach

The discussion of the recent developments in Bahrain is based on the method of observation and in some cases on participant observation supported by an extensive documentation of local newspapers, informal discussions and project leaflets. As research is the 'art of possible' (Patton, 1990: 13), the method should be seen within the context of limited research

and information on urban issues in Bahrain, and within the evolving situation which is still shaping up. To be part of this dynamic sometimes as an observer and another time as a participant provides insights into the setting. Also the author, as an outsider living in Bahrain since October 1994, has been able to observe these transformations with neutrality and for a considerably long period. The validity, reliability and insight generated from the method capitalise on the information richness and on the observational analytical capability rather than on statistical quantitative procedure. This qualitative approach goes beyond the numbers game and emphasises on depth versus breadth (Patton, 1990: 185).

Urban Developments of Muharraq & Manama

Bahrain spatial planning has been experiencing different stages and developments to respond to rapid urban growth, population increase and socio-economic changes. This has been associated with the establishment of different institutions entrusted in overseeing the design and implementation of urban planning policies and housing projects. More recently, there have been several ongoing processes; most importantly are the Ministry of Works & Housing Management Development Plan (2004) and Bahrain National Planning development Strategies (2006), to enhance urban planning system in Bahrain in response to physical, political and socio economic developments. Adoption of constitutional democratic monarchy, division of Bahrain into

five municipalities, encouragement of the private investments and empowerment of women are just to name few. From traditional urban planning system, to modern and more recently to be influenced by global forces, the urban structure and form of both Muharraq and Manama have been undergoing four different stages experiencing rapid changes and transformations in their social, economic, environmental and physical structures (Table1).

Urban Structure: from Tradition to Modernity

Since the 60's, the accelerated urban growths have left many scars on the compact organic traditional areas in Muharraq and Manama. Modern building forms and urban grid systems, with no relation to the local culture and architectural heritage, developed under the increase influences of external forces; the pressure for modernization and rapid construction; and the inability to develop institutional frameworks and traditional architecture to keep pace with the needs of a growing and changing society. This has been articulated by Al Hathloul (2004-642) when describing:

Entering into the new Millennium, the Arabian Gulf Countries will be facing serious challenges due to fast population growth and escalating needs for urban infrastructure; housing and employment opportunities. As such, these countries must pursue a more holistic approach to urban planning and management as to enable them to deal with the macro urban issues and

Stages	Urban Characteristics	
Late 19 th C. to 1930's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life depended on agriculture, fishing, pearling & trading • Community-oriented & family-driven despite involvement with world at large • Culture founded on Islamic principles hybridised with Middle-Eastern, Asian & African traits. • Slow & measured growth balanced between local & regional forces • Dense & organic urban fabric based on districts (<i>Farij</i>) system responded to cultural & natural requirements and reinforced community & territorial identity. • Courtyard house characterised by bent entrance to ensure privacy, flexible rooms' usage, & innovative ventilation techniques: courtyard, Badgir / Wind Tower, Waresh (Al-Oraifi, 1978; El-Masri, 2005a; Waly, 1990; Yarwood, 2002?). 	Form Follows Family
From 1930's to 1960's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from agriculture & pearl diving based economy to oil based economy • Desire to keep pace with rest of the world, particularly West • Changes accommodated progressively as demands grew • Construction of extensive road network & extensions over reclaimed lands followed modern grid planning system leaving core of old core almost intact • Infra-structure provision in peripheries extended inwards to improve old stock • Massive foreign labour influx and introduction of 'modern' town planning supported by British colonial power, and the pursuit of modernisation process • Gradual destruction of traditional areas encouraged by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desertion of locals to modern housing areas & Invasion foreign labour (cheap accommodation) • Uncoordinated building activities & lack of comprehensive conservation strategy • Misunderstanding the value of traditional areas as opposed of modern housing projects (Mandeel 1992: 91-108). 	Form Follows Function
From 1960's to 1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban changes accelerated under pressure for modernisation & population growth. • Massive government projects: new cities (Isa Town 1963 & Hamad Town 1982), urban renewal & rural projects implemented in prosperous economic condition, based on western model of planning • Formation of many public urban institutions • Private initiatives limited to private housing in the form of villas and residential compounds to cater for increasing number of expatriate, and the need for office buildings (Diplomatic Area neighbouring the old core of Manama) • Further deterioration of traditional areas 	
Since 1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban developments characterised by slow start from 1990 to 2000, accelerated in 2000 -2006, to be intensified between 2006 -2008, and to strongly being affected by late 2008 economic crisis. • Continuous government involvement in urban projects in addition to emergence of real estate & land market with increase globalisation phenomenon • Neighbouring states moving on the fast tract, Bahrain certainly does not want to be left behind" Goveas (2006). • Massive urban developments: Diyar Al Muharraq & Anwaj Islands in Muharraq; Financial Harbour, Reef Island, Lulu Towers, City Center, Manama Lagoon, Bahrain Bay in Manama; and Bahrain International Circuit, Durrat Al-Bahrain, Al Areen Desert Resort and Al Salam Resort in the rest of Bahrain are visible signs and symbols of a massive architectural / urban production in the age of globalisation. • Recent economic crisis (late 2008) affected implementation of many iconic projects in the Gulf including Bahrain. Cancelling, resizing, phasing or re-evaluating is common trend nowadays. 	Form Follows Finance / Fashion

Table 1: Urban Development in Bahrain: Stages & Characteristics
Source: El Masri Al Raouf (2006)

the bottlenecks that will impede their future development. Among these bottlenecks are the inefficiency and non-transparency of their land markets; shortage of affordable housing; lack of effective institutional coordination among agencies concerned with the delivery of services as well as agencies responsible for the protection of the urban environment which will be threatened by city rapid growth.

In deed, these are dilemmas shared by many cities in the Gulf (Hamouche 2004, Mahgoub 2004, Al Biss & Al Salafi, 2004). Foreign experts and labour, lack of local expertise and comprehensive conservation strategy, and misunderstanding of the potential and value of traditional settlements led to rapid deterioration or disappearance of traditional buildings and settlements.

Muharraq and Manama architectural heritage

does not only share many of the physical characteristics of the Arab Islamic cities but also suffers from the same problems and pressures caused by rapid urbanization. Since the second half of the 20th Century in the Arab region, modern foreign planning and building systems had rapidly replaced the traditional local processes. Desire for modernization, pressure for rapid building, lack of institutional frameworks and expertise, and the recent globalization phenomenon are, to name few, some of the reasons. The traditional and modern processes are of opposite ways with no relations: organic dynamic pattern versus grid rigid system; local materials technologies and skills versus modern imported ones; mix uses of functions versus zoning and separation, social/cultural values versus professionals' preferences and building regulations (Table 2).

TRADITIONAL	MODERN
P r o c e s s	
Evolving guided by adjustments & innovations (Trials & Errors)	Spontaneous follows styles & fashions
P h i l o s o p h y	
Harmonious living within society & with nature Respect cultural conditions	Growth, modernisation, progress Influenced by international conditions
D e c i s i o n	
Local influenced by cultural, social, economic, natural conditions & available materials & skills	Fluctuating between interest groups & influenced by global factors- media, trade, exchange of skills, ideas & fashions
M o r p h o l o g y / F a b r i c	
Organic, hierarchical, & dynamic Mix use	Rigid of grid system Zoning, land use & building regulations
I d e n t i t y / C h a r a c t e r	
Collective allowing for individual personalization (variations within overall unity) Expression of shared values & common patterns of life Strong community and territorial identity	Individual based on images (rich/poor; modern/tradition) & client & architect preferences Expression of regulations, status & modernisation No sense of community
V i s u a l C h a r a c t e r i s t i c	
Subtle, harmonious, understandable	Confusing, bizarre, foreign
E f f e c t s	
Reinforce orientation, attachment, belonging and sense of community	Loss of orientation, creativeness, appreciation of nature and sense of community

Table 2: Comparison between Traditional & Modern Built Environment
Source: El-Masri, 2007

Urban Growth: Salient Features & Constraints

Bahrain urban growth, including Muharraq and Manama, has been the product of their times and the relationship between society and space. Bahrain urban growths also exhibits many similarities of the urbanisation trends in the Arab Region in general and in the Gulf Region in particular, despite the fact that these countries display striking variations in their patterns and indexes of urbanization; in their capitals agglomerations and overall densities; and in their economic bases and natural resources (Khalaf 1983). These salient features & constraints could be summarised (Table 3).

The rapid urban growth and the recent massive architectural production have not been matched with comprehensive urban planning and urban management system, despite the many positive developments and initiatives. What has often unfolded is a process of 'initiations' of sites and localities for development and urbanisation on the

basis of single or multiple projects. These are then followed by 'incremental developments' that emerge and grow around the locations transforming them to significant places although there are few exceptions (Al Khalaf, 2007). Unlike the process of following a carefully orchestrated master plan; a planning process that has been called into question, the ever evolving planning practice has given way to the social, political and financial pressures of the society in which the planners follow, rather than lead, and help shape, rather than give shape to the spaces and forms of urban centres.

This approach, which may be called 'Mushrooming', in fact has transformed a number of significant locations to evolve as hives of activities and places that are likely to generate and survive on their own with marginal linkages and interactions with other locations. A number of such locations can be recognised such as, Seef Mall, Bahrain Mall, Dana Mall, Manama City Center, and the Saar enclave. For sometime, Bahrain

Salient Features	Constraints
Rapid Urban Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High percentage of urban population compared to total population - High population growth & percentage of foreigners - Increase demand for infrastructure, housing & land reclamation - Need for institutional capacity building & comprehensive urban strategies - Need for decentralised urban management and holistic regional planning
Need for Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease dependency on Oil & need for economy diversification - Fragmented industrial structure (except Aluminium) - Need to adapt to technological and managerial advancements - Need for job provision
Diminishing Identity of Built Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapid construction of modern buildings & need for comprehensive conservation strategy - Rapid socio-economic changes & reliance on foreign planners and architects - Misunderstanding of traditional architecture & inability to develop its potentials - Deterioration of old areas, Disfigurement of urban Structure & lack of infrastructure - Depopulation of local communities

Table 3: General Features and Constraints of the Urban Scene in Bahrain
Source: El-Masri 1998

seemed like having acquired appropriate modern centres of consumption sufficient to keep its populace reasonably well engrossed in the western modernism while retaining strong attachments to Bahraini culture.

Architecture in the Age of Hyper-Production

In the Gulf, the accelerated wave of development is project-driven and has snowballed by means of a number of high profile, iconic buildings and building projects. In addition, a number of other signature-developments are in the pipeline to be designed by the world's most leading architects in order to infuse symbols similar to the already reputed, currently known projects spearheading the present phase (*Form Follows Fashion*). From the Palm to the World; from the tallest building to the cloud; and from the twisted, the up-side, the rotated to the dancing towers, the approach emphasis on icon-ism and visibility. The massive architectural production has been encouraged by increase in oil prices; search for feasible investments after the 9/11; availability of infinite supply of cheap labour, mainly from Asia; ability to provide an atmosphere of political stability and security; and ability to introduce sophisticated financial and managerial mechanisms (Kirchner & Rab, 2007: 18-22).

The Gulf has become an international architectural lab for projects never experienced before in terms of scale, idea and complexity. Architecture in the age of "hyper-production" is characterised by several trends/fashions. In many of the projects, the Star / International Architect is a pre-requisite

to produce eye-catching buildings and to promote the idea of uniqueness, iconic and landmark. This is something been repeatedly refer to as "wow factor". Complementing this phenomenon is the growing field for marketing and branding of the projects; attractive brochures booklets and CDs, containing carefully phrased slogans and glossy highly rendered images, are widely used for promotion and marketing especially in the ever-increasing number of property exhibitions in the Gulf. It is known that demands for 3Ds rendered images, physical models, and printing publicity material escalate for about three month before property exhibition. However, this image driven approach has led Ivy, R. (2009) to question: what has happened to drawing?

The range of techniques and the craft present in the sheets of handwork remind us what we have lost in our transition to the electronic. The analogy lies in the piano's transition to the electronic keyboard, where technical ability has thrived but dynamics has disappeared along the way. Rather than the subtle variations in tone, or the slight tremolo and the staccato attack, the nuance that lies in variation of technique, pianists found little but loud and soft in the new technology, resulting in the tonal equivalent of hitting the same key, forcefully, over and over – banging, rather than playing

This age of massive architectural production is also dominated by another phenomenon of rapid project preparation and implementation. Millions of square meters need to be planned and designed in the course of few months. In the age of globalisation, projects have increased in scale and complexity, but their time frames have been compressed to catch

market opportunities and launching and exhibitions schedules. Ironically, this boom has also led to rising attention to tradition, heritage and culture; project to be inspired or guided by tradition, or dialoguing with or translation of tradition are frequently appearing in many project briefs. The importance of traditional architectural has been commercially recognised in the Gulf to create buildings and spaces founded on cultural heritage of Arabia. The opportunity exists; is it however going to be an exploration of heritage DNA or simply scanning of few books and postcard? The role of architect/ planner is in question and the knowledge of the cultural context is imperative. Equally important is that the available and future research on the subject should be explored, distilled and planned. Research should feed into practice and vice versa; it should be a two ways process based on dialogue and integration.

Bahrain Context

In the last few years Bahrain has been experiencing a political transformation encouraging many socio-economic and cultural developments. Adopting a constitutional democratic monarchy followed by municipal and parliamentary elections represent a benchmark in the history of Bahrain. These progresses are guided by a developmental vision, which builds on the past policies and achievements and responds to global and local changes. Consequently, different ongoing processes have emerged such as: decentralisation and the establishment of five

municipalities; the formation of an increasing number of societies and clubs with social, professional or environmental focuses; increased awareness about accountability and transparency; encouraging women participation; and the initiation of many studies such Bahrain Urban Strategy and Management Development Plan for the Ministry of Works and Housing. Undeniably these positive outcomes could pave the path for a prosperous sustainable urban future which promotes place uniqueness and identity. This is the ultimate aim, when cultural / social, economic and environmental aspects are working in mutually complementary and supportive manner.

In addition, there are several other factors which could play positive supportive roles such as: the relative small population and geographical size of the country; the support for and familiarity with the concept of sustainability and cultural heritage; the availability of both financial, institutional basis and human resources; the absence of serious problems encountered by many developing countries; and the various developments in the different socio-cultural, economic and environmental areas. All these factors and developments taken place in Bahrain provide the seeds and a fertile ground for nurturing city identity within the framework of sustainable urban.

Sustaining City Identity

In a fast-urbanized and globalized world, the issue of identity and its implications are increasingly complex and multi-dimensional.

Traditionally, people were able to maintain strong identity in their buildings and spaces because everything was locally influenced, produced and managed. This is not the case of our modern cities, because the power of decision flows between the different groups of capital (commercial, industrial, international, small businesses), the central government, local government and coalitions of special interest groups. Cities are also internationalized through global trade, media, economic connections and free exchange of people, ideas and money.

The current rejection of internationalism and mounting problems of present cities require new approaches to urban design and planning in the pursuit of identity. In dealing with the issue of identity in urban areas, several important concepts (Table 4) should be carefully considered.

Challenges

Designing contextual architecture, which incorporate the culture and ecology of the place, puts people at the centre aiming to humanize the city, to provide a vibrant environment, and to address the problems of space disharmony, estrangement, and disorientation. Translating the previous concepts into actions has to overcome many challenges because it necessitates many changes and adjustments of existing processes and practices. These challenges could be summarized into three main action areas. First is the adjustment of existing planning and urban design approaches from physically economic orientated to incorporate cultural, social and environmental dimensions as well; short term versus long term benefits, international versus local open minded; and growth versus development. Second is the discovery of architectural heritage by analyzing

Concepts	Explanations
Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City not only physical entity, functional container, accumulation of goods or commodities, or pattern of land uses City should respond to social, cultural, spiritual, economic, physical & environmental aspects
Dynamicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City not static tends to be modified in response to changes in dominant patterns : Local & Global City Identity not fossilized but seeks to fuse traditional with modern, regional with universal
Locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human needs & aspirations, social systems & cultures different so cities should be with unique flavour derived from local / regional contexts. Place uniqueness is to be seen as reconciliation between peoples & cities and between human & nature
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity not mere superficial elevation treatments, but to be expressed in space arrangements, buildings relationships & architectural vocabularies. identity not blind copying from the past, but through investigation to learn from its principles, references, values, qualities, images, & wisdoms
Continuity / Futurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relating architecture & urban planning to history of place is to visualize built environment as living memory and to contextualise creation process. Past is part of present and both will be part of future; continuity between old & new should lay strong foundations for future growth & development ensuring that present efforts & investments are adequately placed in long term developmental frameworks. Recognizing uniqueness of ecology and natural history of the place, identity has also an <i>ecological</i> dimension in adjusting the relationship between man and nature from domination to symbiosis

Table 4: Important Heritage / Identity Concepts

it built forms, devices, images, principles and ideas for adaptive contemporary reuse. Such analysis should lead to a deep understanding of its urban and architectural principles, construction systems and of the potentiality of application at present time. This aims not only to re-establish / re-connect with the past but most importantly to harmonise local and international impulses; all are to form the cornerstones for sustainable urban developments. Third is the improvement of professional practices to cater for the complexity and totality of forces of time, place and culture. They should be aware of the social and cultural obligations of their professions in order to resist fallacies and commercialism and to re-adjust the defects in the dominant public taste.

Directions

Sustaining identity of the built environment is an evolving task aiming for meaningful and humane cities. It would require remedying, as much as possible, the mistakes of the past, adjusting present approaches and practices, and responding to future needs and aspirations. The task is enormous considering the complexity but the situation is not incurable and as Mumford pointed out (cited in Hahn & Simonis, 1991: 199): "There is a way back from the concrete jungle to a green world. It requires both social and technical steps – both planning and invention". Three integrated directions- conservation, regeneration and innovation-could re-shape and shape the city within the context of ecology of the site and the culture of people. Integration means the three directions are

planned to operate in mutually supportive and complementary manner; the city is treated as one body of different parts within the regional and national context.

Conservation

Traditional areas and historic buildings echo the 'spirit' of a culture and act as the living memory of the society. They are expressions of the collective attitudes and the common patterns of life, and as such they are a source of identity and inspiration. Old areas should be like living museums where people are not only spectators, but also participants through experiencing architecture – seeing, hearing, smelling, tactility and movement of the body. In many cases of the Arab world including Manama and Muharraq in Bahrain, traditional areas are suffering from deterioration, invasion of commercial activities, and being cheap accommodation for labour. Bringing life to these areas, through conservation restoration, new functional rehabilitation, replacement or in-fill - should tackle fundamental issues. First is integrating between old and new urban areas; old areas stand as isolated island cut from the rest of the city by insensitive urban grid system disregarding the morphological structure of the organic dynamic nature. The survival of these areas depends, to a large extent, on connecting old areas with the rest of the city by introducing compatible transportation systems and infrastructure networks. Second is harmonizing between new and old areas in terms of scale, building typology and urban morphology, as well as enhancing quality within old areas by appropriate in-fill urban

design projects and landscape schemes. Third is developing appropriate incentives, land-use systems, building regulations within a comprehensive planning mechanism capable of translating conceptual abstract manifestos into effective practices. This mechanism should classify opportunities for conservation, functional rehabilitation, replacement or in-fill, than setting clear guidelines for intervention. Fourth are encouraging financial investments from a combination of sources: public, private developers, and from the provision of financial incentives to the owners through soft long-term loans. Fifth is developing traditional construction crafts, which do not freeze up with old techniques and materials, but also able to invent and progress with the use modern materials and technology.

Renewal

Uplifting the quality of modern urban areas is essential to bring back liveability and human scale to our cities. The rationality of sciences and technologies are not the answers to the city crisis; the answers lie in improving urbanity and re-humanizing cities again. Renewal is committed to identify ugly places – vacant plots and neglected buildings - in our cities and to propose remedies by bringing them into effective use. Henderson (1996: 6) declares that: *"Cities are not shaped solely by major developments. They become the sort of places they are as a result of what happens on innumerable small sites"*. The success depends largely on generating funds from urban renewal schemes from private and public sources, ensuring community participation and developing appropriate administrative and

legal frameworks.

Rejuvenation of unattractive city areas demands inserting of meaningful open spaces and encouraging pedestrian networks; and redesigning of traffic networks and harmonising between different building styles and types. There are several options to transfer "unloved" areas into friendlier places by: making them safer and providing adequate accesses; and softening and enclosing spaces using imaginative landscaping concepts. This also involves inserting parks and functions such as open museum, gallery and café shops to attract people and to bring them together; and by introducing landmarks such as gates, sculptures and landscape features in which other artists, children and local communities should be involved. Addressing the ugliness of the city can also focus on individual buildings by creative insertion, demolition, repair, and functional re-use. Mix use, appropriateness and imagination could have lasting positive effects in urban renewal projects. Introducing such as roof gardens, insertion new function, and modifications of elevations are few alternatives. Increasing built up-areas, tax on undeveloped sites, improvement maintenance tax could generate substantial funds to carry renewal initiatives.

Innovation

Attempting to reclaim architectural continuity, in newly developed areas, is to find balance between stability and change, between tradition and modernity, and between internal and external influences. The attempts require genuine architectural expressions that respect the values of the past and yet open the door to

a future full of modernity and promise. Architects must also involve in a progressive creativity adding new dimension in the pursuit for truthful meaningful, liveable 'modern' cities. As Yeang (1987: 28) explains:

Whether the designer may like it or not, all new constructions takes place in the present where contemporary influences, technology, context, world trade and economy, all of which are already there in the present and have the contended with. Rather than negating contemporary ideas and forms of construction, the design question to the regionalist is therefore to seek ways in which the imported technologies, materials, ideas and built forms can be effectively localised (where appropriate) to best fulfil the building, the programme and to be beneficial to the local community.

These approaches depart from the simple imitation of the past to the innovative interpretation, reflection and expression. Instead of leaving cities being drifted by the currents of modernization / globalisation, attempts should focus on localizing international ideas, materials and technologies (Yeang 1987: 12-33) in order to synchronise between tradition and modern, and between regional with universal. It bears awesome responsibilities from government to people, from professional to clients, from teachers to students and from society to environment. It strives at creating meaningful, comprehensible and engaging urban areas, which are not ordered by global forces, professional mannerisms, and short terms goals; but conditioned by the inseparable relationships between place uniqueness, human needs, economic growth, and natural integrity with the framework of sustainability.

Conclusion

From modernisation to globalization; spaces, places and people have been uprooted and transformed often beyond recovery in many. Indeed, it has been more so in the Arab world particularly in the Gulf and Bahrain is no exception. Since the discovery of oil, international travel, modern industrial productions and generation of energy have driven the engine of globalization and have simultaneously created several urban transformations, at different levels and different intensities, in the Gulf Region. In order to construct a healthy way forward, it is necessary to examine the history and continuity of the traditional cultural practices and forms of spaces and places in the face of modernisation - globalization with their various emerging fashions, influences and trends. During the process, attempts must be made to initiate a more profound, strategically sound principles and efficient sensible practices that are based on understanding the transformations of culture and space and how the problems of these transformations could be viewed more as opportunities rather than wicked, insurmountable problems.

City identity is the product of the planning system, the professionals' creativeness and peoples' awareness. The complexity and elusiveness of the concept are clear. Nevertheless, if any concrete result to be achieved, identity of our modern cities should not be treated as a materialistic stylistic matter in isolation of the social, cultural, economic and environmental dynamism of urbanization and or globalization. Identity issue should, therefore, be integrated within the processes, which shape, manage and finance the cities. In

this way, identity is discussed in relation to maintaining ecological integrity, to developing economic bases and to improving social conditions. This is not recycling neither copying of tradition, but requires rethinking and innovating, and changing priorities of productions and behaviours.

In the case of Bahrain, the positive developments that have taken place, in the different socio-economic, physical and environmental, need co-ordination and integration in order to preserve and promote place uniqueness, and to move towards culturally rooted planning and architecture approaches. This requires intelligent

interventions in comprehending the challenges and conceptualising the appropriate measures to be taken. As has indicated, building on the rich architectural heritage, capitalising on the constructive present initiatives and coordinating between the different aspects and layers of the built environment would enable culturally rooted approaches to flourish in the face of rising tides of modernisation and globalisation. The opportunity is waiting to be captured by open discussions & hard works in order to formulate a holistic framework that integrates conservation, revival and new development.

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