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Architecture as a Human Right Matter

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Abstract

The history is crowded with destruction of cities and their architecture following wars and conflicts. As a consequence, large number of architectural cultures had been removed from the earth or ended as ruins. Unfortunately, this problem is not only from the past but it is also taking place in the present civilized age. This paper is building on case studies to show how this phenomenon is rooted in the history and which consequences it has into the continuity of the local architecture in forming the present built environment. The case studies are historical evidences-based explanation, prediction and theory about the extent to which elite groups or dominating ethnical groups contribute to form the architecture of the multi-ethnic countries. The study's evidences show the necessity of finding solutions for this problem in education, decision making and applied projects. To make the solution sustainable, the study is suggesting considering the architecture as a human right for all ethnical groups. Such shift can help us to secure all nations' architecture as human resources for present and future generations

Keywords: Architecture, Architectural heritage, History of Architecture, Human Right; Multi Ethnic country; dominance; elite, Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

After 1st and 2nd World War large number of new countries had been established by the new major powers mainly USA, UK, and France, without considering the ethnical and cultural realities. In the contemporary, the World has more than 7 billion people and speaking more than 7000 languages, yet they live in only 193 states. Since these countries are composed of multi-cultural and ethnical nations, so they also have multicultural architectural heritages . Several studies showing this finding among them is The Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World edited by Paul Olive. The architectural development of these countries has been resulted from the new imposed power realities. Parallel with this process UN had issued The Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. It came after several destructive wars with large consequences to our world's social, economy and environment. One of the focal issues of the declaration is bring human and ethical considerations in considering all nations equal rights where all members of human family are entitled to these rights without distinction of any kind .

In large number of countries the multi ethnic reality is ignored and the country is considered as one unified culture defined by the dominating ethnical group culture . As a consequence architectural heritage of the dominating ethnical group is considered as the national architectural heritage. It is applied in architectural knowledge, architectural changes and transforming the cities. As a consequence the architectural heritages of the ethnical minorities have been ignored, deteriorated and even destroyed because they are belonging to minorities who have no access to decision making. It is common among scholars to consider culture as a resource that needs to be considered in local sustainability of cities. Yet in multi-ethnic cities, this consideration is limited to a particular culture in the country not cultures of all ethnical groups.

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The birth of modern architecture and modern city planning has brought the abstraction and the international architecture as new basis for the new generation. But this trend has faced large problems since it ignored the local tradition and the community's architectural heritage. Although we have developed several trends to solve this dilemma such as regional architecture , yet the problem is continued in the cities because the living quality is not considered. The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs is considered as a landmark in the changing the modern city architecture towards more user friendly city. Yet, all projects that have been applied and studies about the liveable city and architecture in multi ethnic countries are mostly considering the majority's architecture.

Thematic approach

The Man started the civilization by architecture. It was his wonderful achievement to turn the earth into a home by forming living built environments of villages and cities. It was from this home the civilization story had started. Along with this achievement the early established civilizations had also inherited the desire to dominate and control others. In some cases the goal was to secure the continuity and most other cases the goal was only to be larger, wealthier, and stronger. To achieve that, they had started with the culture of war to dominate, control and demolish other cities and cultures. Almost all old civilizations had their own War Gods to assist them in their wars, win and dominate or destruct the enemy cities and their gods. Therefore, establishing empires was started from building a strong city then, expanding and controlling other cities under protection of their war god (fig.1).

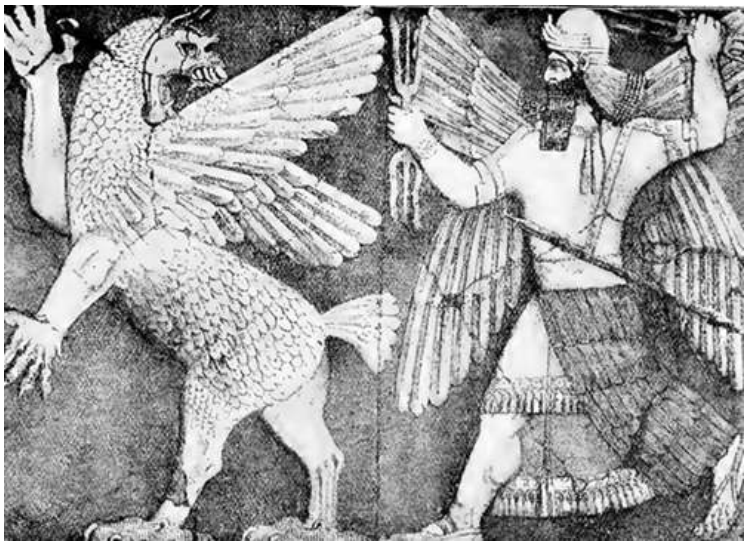
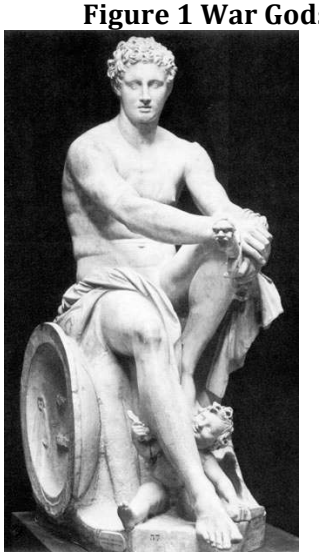
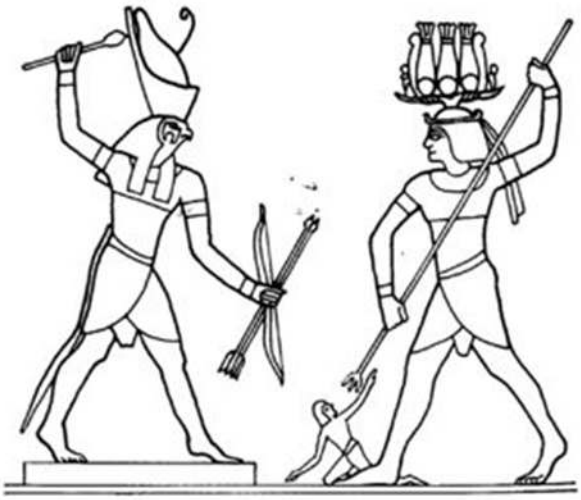


Figure 1 War Gods: Marduk Babylon's war god

Mars Rome's war god



Ares Greek war god

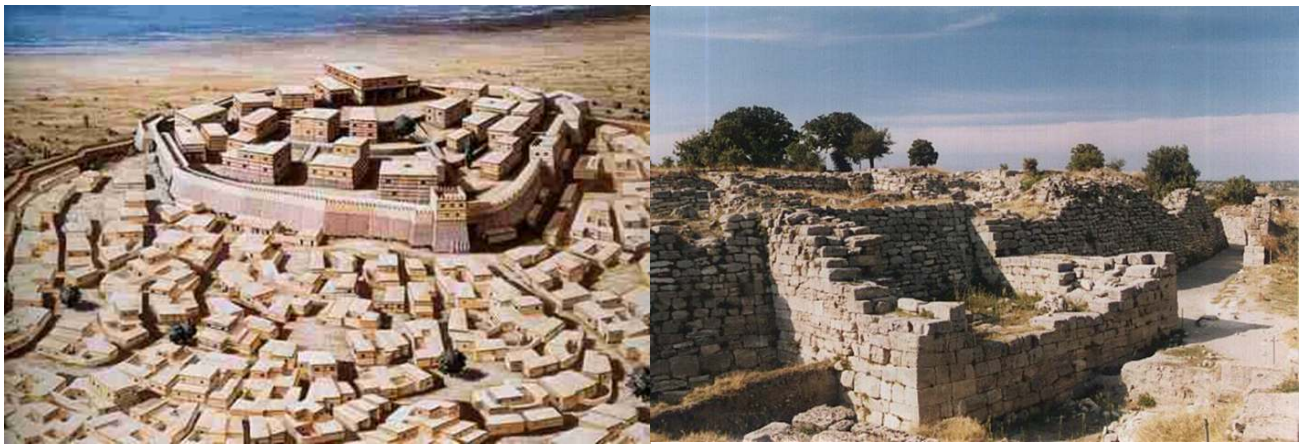


Horus Ancient Egypt's war god

It was then the conflicts, terrors and had started along with rules to justify punishing the others cities and destructing them. The cities that had lost a war should accept being ruled by the winner city (or cities) or accept particular obligations. Once the pact was violated (some time even without violation) the city could face a new war that could end with destroying the whole city and its population. The result of these events had resulted in disappearing large number of architectural heritages and their cultures from our planet. Among these cities are (fig. 2) Nineveh 612 BC and Jerusalem in 587 BC destroyed by Babylon. Troy the ancient Greek city founded in 3000 BC and destroyed in 1250 BC in Trojan war, Palmyra in Syria became a city around 1st century and ended in 275 AD by the Roman, Hatra in Iraq founded during 2nd or 3rd century BC and ended in 241 AD by Sasanian rulers in Mesopotamia. Chan Chan in Peru built in 850 AD (fig. 3) and destroyed in 1470 by the Inca. All these cities ended as dead cities, because the buildings had been destroyed and their people forced to abandon them. The only remaining things from these cities are ruins of dead architectural heritages. Some cities had experienced better fate because people had returned to them and rebuilt new cities on the devastated sites such as Athens, Jerusalem, and Baghdad. Although these cities have managed to continue yet their previous architectural heritages were also changed and in many cases only few buildings were managed to continue as landmarks from the past.

Figure 2:

Destroying Nineveh in 612 BC by Babylon Destroying Jerusalem in 587 BC by Babylon



Troy 3000 BC (modern Hisarlik, Turkey) Destroyed in 1250 BC by Achaeans ended as ruins

Figure 3: Chan Chan in Peru, south America built in 850 AD and destroyed by the Inca in 1470 AD ended as ruins

Baghdad was built by the Abbasids in 762 AD (fig. 4) as a predesigned rounded city and became a centre of culture and power in Middle East and North Africa and Central Asia. The Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258 and destroyed the city and most of its architectural, educational, religious and literary monuments, including the irrigation system that had initiated the region's prosperity. The people had managed to rebuilt the city but with different city structure that continued till the end 19th century.

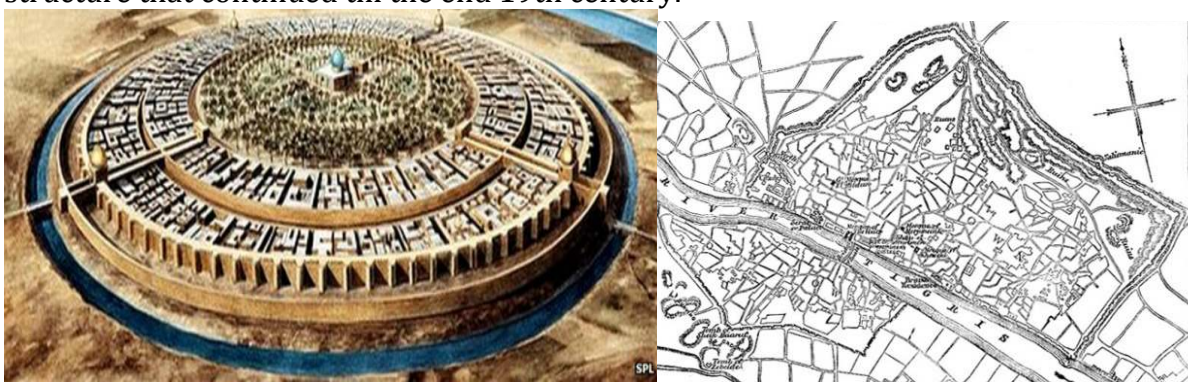


Figure 4 Baghdad built in 8th century destroyed in 1258 AD Baghdad 19th century

Same situations had been repeated in the contemporary history following destructions of the 1st and 2nd World Wars such as in London, Berlin, and Hiroshima (fig 5). Despite of rebuilding these cities after the war, the original architecture had been lost and new forms of architecture and city forms had been replaced the old architecture.

Figure 5: Hiroshima following the atom bomb attacks in 1945.

On the other hand, changing of ruling powers had often contributed to change architectural identity and architectural heritages of existing cities. Cairo in Egypt (fig 6) had been built by the Fatimids in 10th century as a royal city with a regular semi-rectangular shape, predesigned streets and buildings. The Fatimids built this Royal city outside the existing city of the defeated capital city. In 1171the Ayyubids had defeated the Fatimids and had started demolishing their buildings which had transformed city's architecture. This process was continued by the next ruling powers, the Mamluks in 1250 then the Ottomans in 1516. Similar phenomenon can be found in many other cities in the world where political struggles and power shifts were contributed to transform the cities architecture according to the dominating powers demands

Figure 6: Cairo 10th Century Cairo 11th Century Cairo 18th Century

Reconstruction following WW1, and WW2 (table 1) had played a similar role in changing and transforming architecture of the old cities and their architectural heritages rapidly and on global level by replacing them with new urban design and architecture such as London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Hamburg. But their influences have much larger global dimensions, higher speed and global consequences on humanity compared with the previous cases of the pre-industrialization.

Bastogne	Berlin	Nuremberg	Cassino, Italy	Nagasaki
Coventry	Braunschweig	Stuttgart	Civitavecchia	Kobe
Gdansk	Cologne	Szczecin	Foligno	Tokyo
Manila	Dresden	Wroclaw	Fusignano	Kiev
Nanjing	Dusseldorf	Berlin	Gaeta	Minsk
Rotterdam	Hamburg	Chemnitz	Milan	Kharkiv
Warsaw	Hanover	Freiburg	Pescara	Rzhev
Caen	Kaliningrad	Magdeburg	Terni	Smolensk
Calais	Kiel	Schweinfurt	Velletri	Volgograd
Dunkirk	Mainz	Wuppertal	Zadar	Vyazma
Le Havre	Munich	Xanten	Hiroshima	

Table 1: Cities that had been destroyed during 2nd World War

The same phenomenon took place in many other places in developing countries during the 20th century such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Korea, Israel, Palestine, Bosnia, Croatia, Cypress, and South Africa. Followings are examples from around the world which show existing of this phenomenon which are justified by different ways but all are resulted from similar desire of domination and ignoring the multi ethnical architectural reality of the country.

Soviet Union: Architecture and Socialist Realism

The Bolshevik revolutions in Russia in 1917 had replaced old political system. It had led to creation the Soviet Union in 1920 which was total controlled by a Bolshevik (Communist) government. The Communist government had applied ideas of communism in all society's sectors including how they will live and which kind of architecture will form their living built environment. This should be based on the communism's principles not on local heritages or traditions. The architecture of the Soviet Union during Stalin is a unique example of the total enforced architecture of the elite group in a multi ethnic country. The architecture type during Stalin was called Stalinist Architecture and its major characteristics are Stalin's role as the key person in describing the required architecture and selecting the design. This central role of Stalin was practiced in single buildings, urban design, and town plans. Among these projects are Moskva Hotel, Mokhovaya Street Building and Red Army Theatre in Moskva. On the other hand, socialist realism was an architecture style that was developed in Soviet Union and communist countries to realize principles of the communism and socialism. In 1934 it became state policy and called the official style of Soviet Culture and it was enforce ruthlessly. Therefore, architecture and urban planning was directed by these ideological, political, social as well as small elite groups. It was a restricted centrally controlled architecture and urban development plans with simplified methods. It was applied across the Soviet Union regardless the local architecture of the cities in the different regions and ethnical groups' architecture. The same policy and styles where applied in all Eastern European countries. The images bellow shows social housing projects that had been imposed and built during the Soviet era in Soviet Union and East European Countries and shows strong similarities despite the multi-ethnic realities of Rusia itself and the large differences between communist countries (Fig. 11). The goal was remove locality in order to create unity of architectural style and society (fig. 7-10).

Figure 7: Communist Romanian apartment blocks in Bucharest

Figure 8: Prague-Hostivař, the Czech Republic.

Figure 9: A House quarter in Moskva **http://cultureru.com/category/architecture/page/2/**

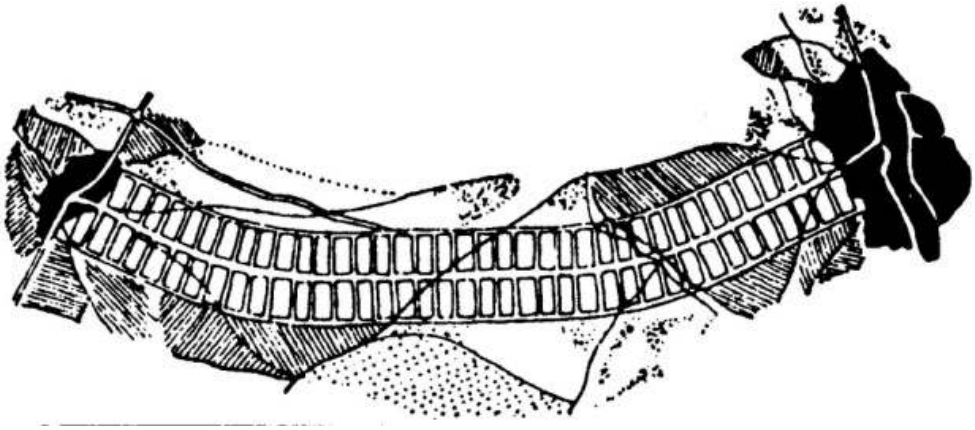


Figure 10: The Linear City: An Option for the socialist cities to applied in the whole of Russia, proposed by Miliutin in 1930

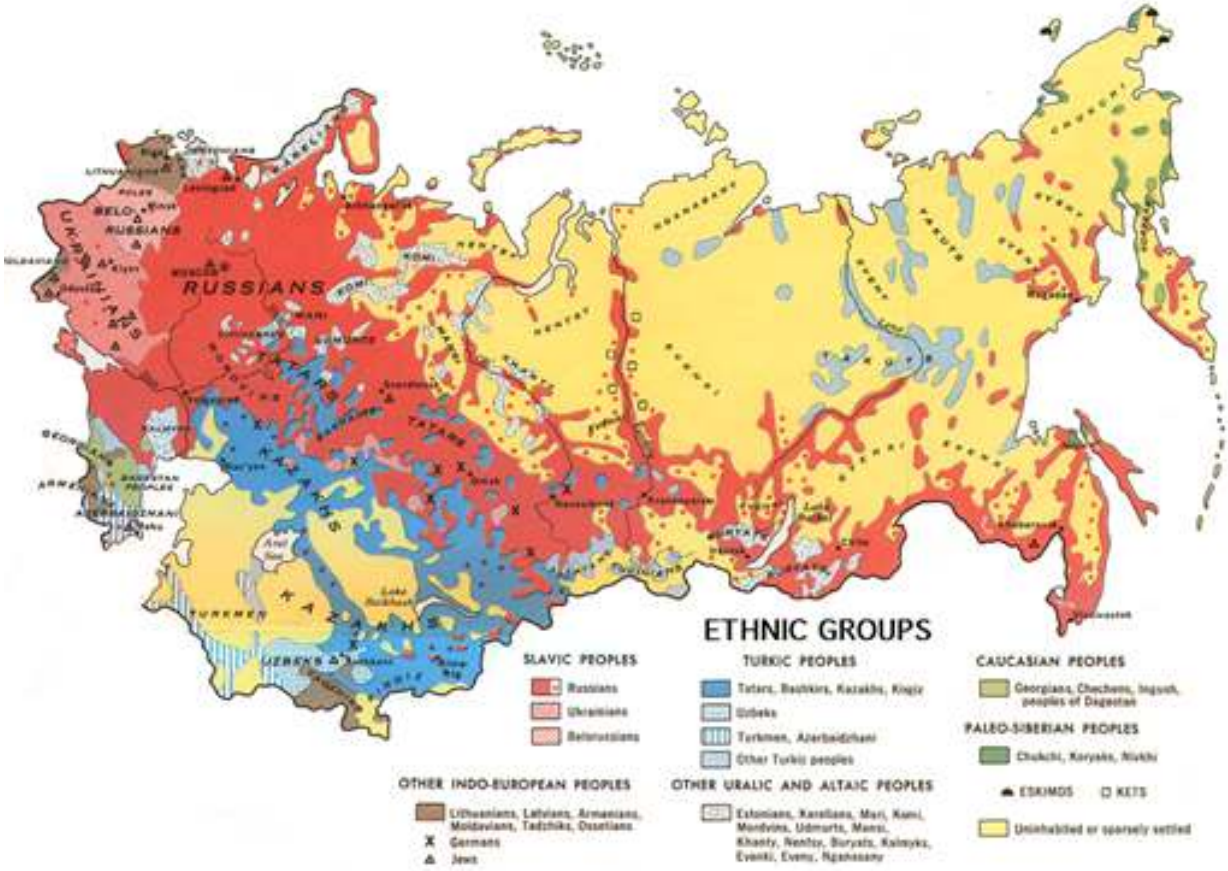


Figure 11: Multi-Ethnical Map of Asia And Rusia http://www.uiowa.edu

Israel-Palestine: Ethnical Discrimination Architecture

Israel represents a unique example of changing the architecture as a consequence of changing ruling powers. Israel was attached twice by the Babylonians and in 587 BC was totally destroyed and its population had been relocated. Since then new settlements were emerged or built by people or new ruling powers It's long urban history shows several powers and civilizations who controlled the region including Canaanits, Israelites, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Kurds, the Mamluks, the Ottoman Turks and currently Israel. Establishing Israel in 1948 has created the desire to build own architectural identity and revive it's the architectural heritage.

But practicing this is done on ethnical bases which is a typical example of imposed architecture in a country with multi-ethnic social structure. Cities and settlements within Israel are built in a style that considers heritage and local situation creating a contemporary local identity (fig. 13), but architectural heritage of the occupied areas are either destroyed or left for deterioration (fig. 14). Even the names of the cities differ between the Jewish society and Palestenian Society. This issue is rooted in the history and it shows that names were changed following changing the ruling powers during the history. For example city of Nablus was founded by the Roman Emperor in in 72 CE and called flavia Neapolis and since then it has been ruled by different empires. In 244 Philip the Arab named the city Julia Neapolis. In 636 CE, Neapolis became part of the Islamic Caliphate and its name changed to Nablus. Since Israel was established in 1948 most of Arabic villages and cities were either demolished or their architecture was totally changed with new and different architecture to show their belonging to Israel (fig 13). This strategy is not only applied in Israeli area but also in the occupied Palestinian territories which are declared as Palestinian since 1967.

Figure 13: Israeli settlement in Westbank

Figure 14: Demolishing Islamic Heritage site-Jerusalem

Iraq: Architecture of the Ethnical Dominance

Iraq has three main ethnical groups Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens (fig 15). Each ethnical group has its own territory and culture. Some cities have mixed ethnical groups. This multi ethnic situation is can be shown also in Turkey, Syria, and Iran. In Turkey the Turks are the major ethnical group while in Iran the Persian are the majority. The national boarders of all these countries had been created after 1st World war.

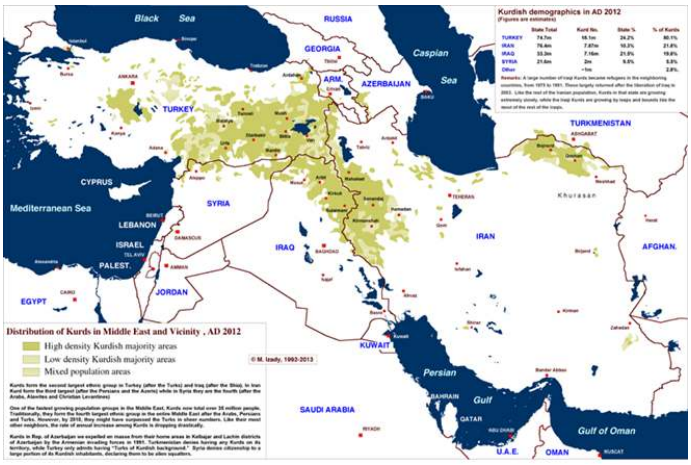


Figure 15: Distribution of Kurds in four countries in the Middle East

The historical evidences in Iraq show that since the ancient time many cities had been destroyed following power struggle such as Hatra and Baghdad. The present Iraq had been

established as an independent country in 1921. It has a multi ethnic society where each ethnical group has its own culture, cities and geographical areas. Yet, the multi-cultural realities of Iraq's architecture, heritage, and cities have been ignored by the authorities and the architects. In many cases cities, small towns, and historical sites, have been demolished and enforced people to resettle. The dominating groups have decided which architecture to be applied, what to be transformed and developed as the result of the total centralized decision making process. The system has also decided which heritage to be maintained and what to be ignored or even demolished. The local governments had also contributed to change the existing architectural heritage of many Kurdish cities by destroying some historical sites such as the ancient Kirkuk citadel and enforced its residents to move out. In other cases, they have demolished old heritage buildings and monuments such as Gate of Erbil City in order to change its identity.

Kirkuk Citadel

City of Kirkuk is located south of Iraqi-Kurdistan and has a multi ethic society (Kurds, Turkmen, and Arabs). Its citadel is an ancient settlement which had developed its unique city form and architecture. In 1990s the authority had demolished the citadel arguing that the buildings were deteriorating and dangerous for living. But in reality was a punishment against its Kurdish and Turkmen population who opposed the central authority. The second goal for the demolishing was to remove the historical identity of the city (fig 16-19).

Figure 16: Ancient Citadel of Kirkuk City

Figure 17: Demolished in 1998

Figure 18: The citadel's buildings after their destructions

Figure 19: View of the Kirkuk citadel after the destruction

Erbil Citadel

Erbil city is the capital town of Kurdistan Region in Iraq. It has a unique round city form which is resulted from building around the citadel. The citadel is considered as one of the oldest urban living settlements in the world. In June 2014, the Citadel has been listed in UNESCO World Heritage list. The citadel has a clustered structure with houses of different sizes and narrow streets which have very organic shapes (fig. 20-21). The clustered houses at the outer side form the city wall. In 1960 the main gate of Erbil Citadel (fig. 26) was demolished (Fig. 22) by the local authority as part of its effort to open a main straight street across the citadel. The street has divided the citadel to two parts. This was done parallel with applying a new city plan that totally ignored the existing historical city network

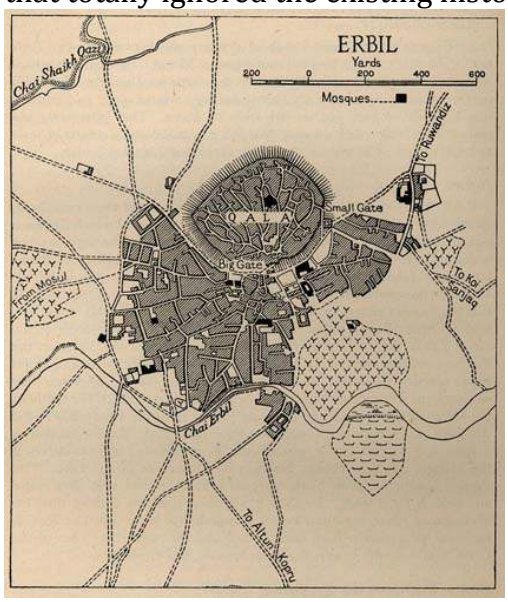


Figure 20: Erbil city and its Citadel in 1900

Figure 21: Erbil Citadel in 1950

Fig 22 Erbil Citadel1960, demolishing its historical gates

Figure 23: Erbil Citadel 1985: Building a new gate

In 1981, the authority had rebuilt the gate with a new design done by Architect Rifat Chadirji (fig. 23 and 27) which had reflected principles of Babylon Gate (fig. 24-25). The design was both unrespecting the local architectural heritage and its historical value. The same process

have been applied in developing the city's new town plan and designing the monumental buildings which all have been done in Baghdad with the central authorities selected architects.

Figure 24: A model of Babylon gate

Figure 25: Babylon gate in Berlin Museum

It is an example of how architecture can be used in political struggle. The new change in Iraq after 2003 has created a possibility to conserve the historical site of the citadel where many international heritage centres started with conservation of the citadel. In May 2013, the local authority has decided to demolish the gate to replace it with the original gate using its old and original architecture (fig. 28-29).

Figure 26: The Citadel gate in early 20th century

Figure 27: The Fake Gate 1981(Copy from ancient Babylon)

Figure 28: Demolishing the Gate in 2013
Photo: Noor Nooraddin & Osama Nooraddin

Figure 29: Rebuilding the original Gate in 2013-2014

America: Architecture of the immigrants

Although the contemporary architecture of America can be identified as a unique example of imposed colonists' architecture, yet historical evidences of large number of nations that have been mentioned earlier in this paper had practiced same way of architectural process. Discovery of America in 1492-1493 and the start of European migration had reduces the native populations (The Indians) to underclass and almost wiped out. The history of America up till 19th century and particularly during the slave trade and Great Removal has large ethnic cleansing where large ethnic groups being forced to resettle to other places and their homes were destroyed such as during the Great Removal where thousands of main five clans (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and Creek) were resettled to the west where large number had died. All countries of present North and South America share this phenomenon. Yet in South America the Indians had gradually managed to be integrated with the new migrant society creating a different social structure situation than USA and Canada. There are large disputes about the Indian's architecture because it has been considered as a shelter architecture. The Indians have developed different types of architecture. But their settlements had been systematically demolished or neglected and replaced by the architecture of the immigrants or the new comers or what is called the Colonial Architecture (fig 32-33) and the later styles architecture (fig 34-35). Each particular group of ethnical colonists had built a settlement using architecture of their original home country. Few settlements were managed to survive and continue with its Indian architecture and population. One of these sites is Pueblo de Taos from 13th century in New Mexico (fig. 30-31), USA. It is the only living community in the list of UNESCO World Heritage of the Native American sites. Its population is 150 person only.

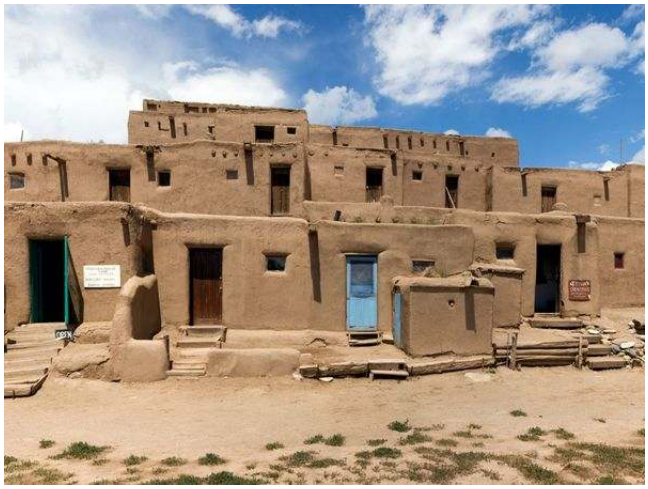


Figure 30: Pueblo Inians Architecture, New Mexico,

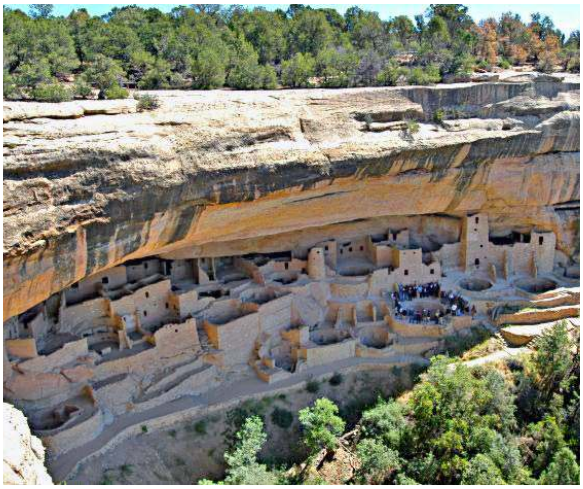


Figure 31: Pueblo de Taos Ancient Pueblo Peoples (Ancestral Pueblo peoples)

Figure 32: Corwin House, Salem, MA 1660 English

Figure 33: Gonzalez-Alvarez, Fl. 1723 Spanish

Fig 34Trinity Church, New York, 1839

Figure 35: Collins Street, Melbourne (The Victorian era buildings)

CONCLUSIONS

The historical and present evidences of violations against cities and heritages that ended with demolishing whole cities and cultures need a paradigm shift in understanding the city and its architecture as a human right. The historical learning shows that demolishing and punishing the city and its architecture had often been and still used as a tool and target in ethnical power struggle. This has been practiced globally and during the whole history. It has been applied mainly in two ways: first by physical destruction of the entire city and relocate its population, Second by demolishing heritage sites and buildings to change the city's identity. It is also common to see that during the whole history new ruling powers may even change names of cities and historical building's names to re-identify them. This issue is directly influenced by a tradition that is rooted in the mankind's history which uses the architecture as a tool in the power struggle and applies the strategy of (name it tame it). It also reflects the user's limited or no ability to participate in decision making process within the city. There is need to give all nations (not only dominating ethnical group) equal rights in considering the UN human rights declaration (Each particular cultural group shall get the possibility to decide how to conserve, reuse, and develop its architectural heritage in the present city to create a living domain with identity) . The conflict starts when one particular ethnical group dominates on the architectural decision making and neglects the other cultural groups' rights. Such situation has contributed to deteriorate and/or to destroy architectural heritages of the other cultural groups in the same country. This problem requires more study about how architectural heritages are researched and reused in urban development of multicultural countries. .Although, this phenomenon had been existed since earliest human cultures yet the present knowledge, experiences and requirements to establish sustainable development in each particular country rises the issue of correcting this historical mistake and violation. Doing this will require among others understanding role of the present architects and the contemporary architectural knowledge. Such change is also necessary to realize equal sustainable development for all nations which considers architecture of each nation as an important resource for future generations.

The case studies are showing a serious global architectural problem that needs correction. The human civilization had started with architecture which had created cities. Yet, there are large numbers of cities and architectural heritages of different nations had been destroyed as result of power struggle and dominance since earliest civilizations till the present.

In the present, most of the world's countries are composed of multi ethnical groups, yet the world is full with example of neglecting cities and architectural heritages because of the multi ethnic conflicts. This phenomenon is a direct reflection of dominating a particular cultural group or an elite group on the decision making and ignoring the other cultural groups. Since this is a global phenomenon and rooted in history, it needs a global effort to correct it and stop it by giving all cultural groups equal rights towards developing their cities and maintaining architectural heritages.

Both the architectural education, regulations, decision making and the architectural practice in each particular country need to be reformed in order to consider the multi-ethnic architectural realities of the country and how architecture of each particular ethnical group be used and developed in a way that can support its sustainable development. The contemporary cities do not need the ancient models of War God but equity and social justice in applying architecture to build sustainable cities with high life quality for all cultures on this earth.

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