

Comparative Analysis of Regional Architecture: Education, Theory, and Practices of Rifat Chadirji and Sedat Hakkı Eldem

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Abstract

This paper raises the issue of a lack of awareness of significant regionalist architects from the Middle-east and neighbouring Muslim countries in comparison to Western architects. Hence, It aims to highlight on a comparative analysis between the life and works of two regional architects from the Middle-Eastern regions, Rifat Chadirji, an Iraqi, and Sedat Hakkı Eldem, from Turkey. Both have had similar Western educational background, developed their ideologies and design theories in their architectural teachings and practices, concerning their countries' regional contexts. The objectives are (1) To establish the impacts of both of their lives and regional architectural manifestations towards their societies; and (2) to discover the unique regional interpretation and transformation of architectural design theory and ideology in their works-“Turkish House” and “Hamood Villa”. The research applied thematic qualitative data analysis, under the theme, "Regional Architecture", using descriptive and categorical comparative analysis between the two architects, based on social background, education and ideologies; precedent studies of their works, and expert interviews. The findings suggest that both architects have acquired a deep understanding of the roots of authentic regional expression while appreciating modernism's principles. They have also successfully synthesised form and function, which translate traditional architectural idioms into contemporary expressions, as inspirations for future regional architects generations. This justifies the significance of regionalism architecture as a cultural and country's identity for any society in any part of the world.

Introduction

As an architectural philosophy, Regionalism and Critical Regionalism emerged in the early 20th century to provide context and identity as well as a reaction towards the western ideology of modernism from colonisation as protection from uncontrolled globalisation (Rabbat, 2012). This paper aims at studying the two architects, Rifat Chadirji and Sedat Hakkı Eldem from Turkey and Iraq respectively, of their regional architectural ideology. The study was conducted to reveal the similarities or differences between the two architects of the region, their respective ideology through their architecture as case studies: Rifat Chadirji “Hamood Villa” and Sedat Hakkı Eldem “Turkish House”.

Aim and Objectives

The objectives are (1) to establish the impacts of both of their lives and regional architectural manifestations towards their societies; and (2) to discover the unique regional interpretation and transformation of architectural design theory and ideology in their works-“Turkish House” and “Hamood Villa”

Methodology of the Study

The research applied thematic qualitative data analysis, under the theme, "Regional Architecture", using a descriptive analysis of literature reviews of the two architects' social, education and ideological backgrounds to achieve research objective no.1; and comparative analysis between their precedent works, to achieve objective no.2 accordingly.

Descriptive Analysis from Literature Reviews:

Personality 1: Sedat Hakkı Eldem (Turkey)

Background

Sedad Hakkı Eldem was born on August 31, 1908, in Istanbul during the decline of the Ottoman Empire, as the third child of Mrs. Ismail Hakkı and Azize. The family of Eldem is an important family of the Ottoman upper class educating intellectuals. Ismail Hakkı Bey has been a translator for 15 years of age. He has published five works when he came to his 20s. He is a musician father who is curious about music and even takes one of his children to the opera every week. Ms. Azize is the daughter of a family that is well known by the intellectual community of Istanbul. Eldem's great-uncle was Osman Hamdi Bey, the Ottoman statesman, painter and founder of two major Istanbul institutions: the Academy of Fine Arts (today Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University) and the Archaeology Museums. As was typical for a young man of his background, Eldem was given an education that emphasised on Western European language and culture.

Education

After a childhood and adolescence spent in Europe, young Eldem returned to Turkey right on the eve of the proclamation of the Republic of Atatürk. In 1924 he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, and it was here that he began to learn from his city, starting with the Topkapı Palace (Accıaı, 2012). Academy of Fine Arts will be an institution that will not leave until it dies. Sedad Hakkı Eldem starts working at prof. Mongeri's workshop, a little more alafrañga than his other friends, and doesn't lose sight of Mongeri, and they start paying special attention to Sedad Hakkı Eldem. He does his internship in his private office with his teacher and in the Ziraat Bank building where he is building in Ankara. In 1928, just like Sedad Hakkı Eldem, he won the diploma project and won the right to do an internship in Europe for three years. In 1930, the director of the Academy Namik Ismail called Sedad Hakkı Eldem to Istanbul for the formation in the Academy. In 1932 he started to work as an instructor at the Academy. this is the starting point of his long academic life. He established the National Architecture Seminar in 1936 and the fact that it became a power in the Academy after 1938 (Korkmaz, 2008).

Transformative Interpretation of Regional Architecture:

Eldem was destined to become the greatest interpreter of modern architecture in Turkey. Who else but he who had conversed with the Masters of Modern in Europe and America, and was a son of Ottoman aristocracy, could open a Turkish path to the modern movement? His family's background, and the infinite possibilities that opened up for him when he returned from the West, made him capable of creating the first modern architecture in his homeland. (Accıaı; 2012). Sedad recounts that he received a traditional academic education that was strongly tied to the Anatolic and Ottoman traditions and, at the same time, to the cosmopolitan principles of the Empire (Accıaı, 2012). The most important theme of the work of Sedad Eldem was the study of the Turkish-Ottoman house and its reinterpretation in a modern key by utilising an updated technological system with the use of modern materials. In particular, the ancient wooden frame system of the Ottoman houses was re-proposed by Eldem but using a reinforced concrete frame system (Accıaı; 2012). Eldem from the beginning tried to revise existing houses according to a modernist taste. He added horizontal windows, corner glazing, a balcony, a

recent-model European car, thinking a different context, use, and lifestyle than a typical house in an Anatolian village. This process with modernizing modifications suggests that Eldem's motivation was to find an architectural guide for the design of new buildings (Harrington, 2014).

a. Localised Modernist Practice

Whilst the reproduction of modernism under the conditions of the country was discussed in the architectural circles, Sedad Hakkı Eldem was the first to realise that internalising modernist design practices was through localising them (Tanyeli, 2001). According to Eldem, in the 1930s, Turkey had to find its own architectural language both to overcome the Neo-Ottoman tendencies carrying imperialist styles and to go beyond international interference that implied colonialist principles (Akcan, 2012). The Social Security Complex (SSC) (1962-70), for which Eldem won the Aga Khan Award in 1986, is widely recognized as Eldem's landmark contribution to Turkish architecture. For Sedad, the new architecture should have been modern, and therefore national, and vice versa (Bozdoğan 2001, Bozdoğan S, & Resat 1997). He claimed that Turkey did not have to be an orientalized copy of European architecture and that a modern country should have its own national architects.

b. Cultural Resilience and Technological Innovation

As a well-known architect of a newly established Republic's western culture, Sedad Hakkı Eldem tried to idealise the Turkish House as an indicator of historical continuity and not breaking with tradition. This idealisation is an effort to transform the Ottoman House into a Turkish House under a single definition (Korkmaz, 2008). This is to minimise the risks and make a building that is familiar to the eye suitable for "new Turkish architecture" and to offer a Turkish House suitable for "modern "life with the effect of technology. He emphasised that the Turkish House is the House of the Turkish Nation. The Republic of Turkey, with its own materials, construction procedures must be performed by the Turks. Although the Turkish House is made with different interpretations in different regions, it should be in totality. What he tries to build should not be perceived as just a structure, but what he tries to build is also a "we". However, this "we" "completely closed" to them. He always claims to use the technology of the West, whilst stressing the importance of adopting only the good parts, but to discard what the locals do not use without letting it spoil our Turkish decency and decency.

Personality 2: Rifat Chadirji (Iraq)

Background

Rifat Chadirji is an Iraqi architect, theoretician, and educator who lives in England. He had born in 1926 as a son of Kamil Chadirji who was the political leader of the bash party.

Education

In 1952, Chadirji graduated from Hammersmith School of Arts and Crafts in London (Pieri, 2013). He designed and conducted numerous projects: architecture, industrial, furniture, landscape, gardens, interior decoration, urban and regional studies, etc. While in England he came under the influence of architects such as Auguste Perret, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe and the town planner Arthur Korn. After his return to Baghdad in 1952, he founded the firm Iraq Consult. In his capacity as an adviser to the mayor of Baghdad, he was instrumental in commissioning leading international architects to build large-scale complexes. These included Frank Lloyd Wright (Opera House), Le Corbusier (Sports Hall), Walter Gropius (University City), Alvar Aalto (Art Museum), Werner March (Museum), and Pier Luigi Nervi. Of these, only the Sports Hall and the University City were completed. (Kulterman, 1999) Chadirji has practiced in Baghdad since 1952 when he returned from England.

Early Practice in Iraq

Upon his return to Iraq, the young architect was confronted with the concepts of the international architects who, within the same decade were invited to do prominent works in the country. There was little emphasis on traditional Iraqi architecture at-that-time and only the writings and teaching of Mohamed Saleh Makiya was a force in this direction. The first phase of Rifat Chadirji's work between the years 1956 and 1962 was dominated by houses that reveal the European education of the architect and his adherence to ideals which in principle were alien to his country. The first steps toward a recognition of local values and regional traditional necessities were taken in the Wahab House in Baghdad of 1953. The change came about as the architect began paying more attention to old buildings which were intensified by his appointment as director of the architectural department of the Waqaf, the government agency in charge of the preservation of old mosques, khans and houses (Kulterman, 1982).

Reviving Authentic Regional Expression

Rifat Chadirji is an architect who has imbued his work with a deep understanding of the roots of authentic regional expression, as well as a true appreciation of modernism and its principles. Chadirji has shown a unique capacity for the synthesis of form and function that translates traditional architectural idioms into contemporary expressions. Chadirji's contributions transcend a mere body of work, important as that may be, for he also is a major figure in one of the most important and influential architectural schools in the Arab world. The Baghdad School of Architecture, where Chadirji taught for many years, has keenly felt Chadirji's influence. Rejecting the use of the forms of the past, Chadirji devised a synthesis of form that could translate into a new and contemporary urban aesthetic -one that would guide the articulations of a genuinely modern Iraqi town-scape in the latter part of the 20th century (Bazarov, 1987).

Redefining Modern Iraq Architecture

At that time Iraq was implementing an ambitious modernist development that it could afford given the booming oil revenues. As of 1952 Rifat Chadirji was to take part actively in the renewal and redefinition of architectural practices, aims, and spirit, by playing a prominent role in several concomitant fields: as an advisor in the Ministry of Public Works he became familiar with construction policies and strategies; as the founder of his own private company, Iraq Consult, he could use the opportunities given by private commissions to freely express formal experimentations; as belonging to a prominent family of political leaders and intellectuals, he was in close touch and permanent dialogue with artists, writers, and academics, all involved in the major debate: how to attain an artistic language able to be both Iraqi and modern at the same time. (Pieri, 2013)

Reinterpreting Heritage Architecture

Chadirji's interest in old Iraqi buildings grew and when he was commissioned to design the Monument for the Unknown Soldier in Baghdad in 1960 he chose a motif from the Iraqi past: the parabolic arch of the Sassanid Palace of Ctesiphon of the year 531, one of the most powerful documents of old architecture in Iraq. The choice was programmatic and in spite of the contemporary use of the old motif the turning point was clear. Chadirji openly verbalised this when he wrote: "... we selected the arch of Ctesiphon as our feature in designing the memorial. We thought that we would like to work within a field that the people would understand and like". After 1960 the firm Iraq Consult became involved in larger projects and with them the fruits of Rifat Chadirji's studies of the Iraqi past became visible.

Iraq Architecture & Urban Identity

Chadirji's building for the Tobacco Monopoly Company in Baghdad in 1966 became one of the most famous buildings of the firm. With it, the architect entered a new phase of his career as here the traditional elements more strongly articulate and directly relate to buildings of the past, such as the Palace of Ukhaider or the Great Mosque of Samarra. Two houses in the Seventies are especially significant as they express a clear sense of Iraqi identity and are unmistakably designed and conceived for Arab clients. The Villa Hamood in Baghdad of 1972 and the architect's own house in Baghdad of 1979 are mature works where tradition is rejuvenated. After 1970 Rifat Chadirji received increasingly more commissions from outside Iraq. Since 1980 he continued to devote his efforts to new buildings in Baghdad, where he was as a special advisor to the Governor in matters of architecture and urbanism. Contemporary architecture in Iraq has matured in spite of interferences from outside and contemporary political difficulties (Kulterman, 1982).

Merging Technological Advancement with Regional Architecture

The driving force behind Rifat Chadirji's architecture has been his attempt to reconcile contemporary social needs with new technology. This crystallisation of "the two determinant poles in this dialectical interaction" began, when in 1952 as a student, Iraqi architect Chadirji found no models or even a paradigm that he could turn to for inspiration in his designs. So during that time, he formulated a proposition which has guided his work. The proposition is this: trade and international development tend to create a common base for today's architecture which serves as a priori knowledge for a universal architecture that shuns local, regional or national architectural styles. On the other hand, new building technologies are essential to the socio-economic and cultural evolution of developing countries. To ignore modern building technology is to delay development. But every advance has a negative side. In construction, this means the introduction of unfamiliar materials and methods of production which are often incompatible with the traditional indigenous technology or local styles. As Chadirji puts it, "since each era has its own constituents, each must beget its forms. In time, some of these forms are established and their totality manifests itself as the epochal style". However, he differentiates the situation after the Industrial Revolution as being new in the history of civilisation.

Chadirji perceived the need to control and discipline the development of technology in such a way to ensure particular cultural and environmental solutions for specific locations: What he has called "regional modernism" (Khan, 1984). According to Chadirji the modern designer or craftsman has been deprived of his traditional technology because it is no longer economically viable. His aesthetic values are not equipped to satisfy contemporary everyday needs, because his everyday life has been transformed and nourished by international standards and his own culture is too local and too stagnant. With no definite culture and technology of his own to act as a base from which to receive and absorb new influences, he must now choose between alternatives which he perceives as undifferentiated and unintegrated. His designs must be produced in conditions for which he is culturally unprepared. And because he cannot absorb the new input, cultural frustration and aesthetic collapsed, as a result (Chadirji, 1986). In 2015, Chadirji was awarded the Tamayouz Architectural Lifetime Achievement Award, an award that celebrates the pioneers of Iraqi architecture and is "presented annually to an individual who has had a significant contribution towards the advancement of architecture in Iraq." In November of the same year (2015), Rifat Chadirji was presented with an honorary doctorate from Coventry University in the UK (Bazarov, 1987).

Comparative Studies of the Turkish House- Sırer Yalısı versus "Chadirji's House-Hamood Villa Regional Architecture Interpretations

Chadirji’s and Eldem’s buildings, Hamood Villa (1977) and Turkish House (1967) are chosen as case studies, because of the close similarity of construction years, as well as a significant example to synthesise form and function, which translate traditional architectural idioms into contemporary expressions. **Table 1** demonstrates the comparative analysis between the two architects’ famous building designs according to the predetermined categories as follows:

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Sireer Mansion(Eldem) and Hamood Villa(Chadirji)

<p><i>Turkish House- Sireer Mansion, Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1966-67;</i></p>	<p><i>Chadirji’s House-Hamood Villa, Baghdad, 1977;</i></p>
 <p>Figure 1: Turkish House, Sireer Mansion,Istanbul, 1967</p>	 <p>Figure 2: Chadirji’s House, Hamood Villa, Baghdad, 1977.</p>

<p>1. House Archetype: Mansion</p> <p>2. Location/setting: Istanbul, Turkey.</p> <p>3. Design Concept: Traditional bay window style in Turkish houses. (The three-storey balcony on the seafront facade).</p> <p>4. Regional Design Interpretation:</p> <p>a. Layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact layout scheme. <p>b. Form, Space & Facade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow facade-an adjacent layout. <p>c. Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main body is made reinforced concrete, • the seafront facade is made of steel, • the joinery is made of aluminium, and • oak was largely used in the facade cladding. <p>d. Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design is respectful to the Bosphorus mansions with its horizontal and vertical proportions; • It differs from them with its organisational chart; and, • Its front which attracts attention with the use of different and contrasting materials and the structure overflows to the outside. 	<p>1. House Archetype: Villa</p> <p>2. Location/setting: Baghdad, Iraq.</p> <p>3. Design Concept: Traditional reed houses made by the Madan people in southern Iraq.</p> <p>4. Regional Design Interpretation:</p> <p>a. Layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single layout scheme. <p>b. Form, Space & Facade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaulted facade. <p>c. Materials: Local brick material and glass.</p> <p>d. Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hamood Villa exemplifies Chadirji's quest to apply local build techniques through a modernist lens. • Chadirji used local motifs reinterpreted in a contemporary approach. inspired by the Marsh Arabs of the region, which can be gleaned from his photography inspired by the Marsh Arabs of the region, which can be gleaned from his photography. • Chadirji is inspired by the Marsh Arabs of the region, which can be gleaned from his photography(Alsammeroe, 2017).
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Conclusions

These two houses are two of the most famous designs of Eldem and Chadirji. Both designs have historical parts with modern materials and new technologies. Chadirji used traditional Madan reed houses style in old Mesopotamia with vaults. He added large glass openings on the facade, modern entrances and landscaping with modern space organisation. He also used local brick material. Besides, Eldem modernised traditional bay window style in Turkish houses and used a new concrete system and different modern materials such as steel, aluminium with traditional oak. These houses show that both Chadirji and Eldem worked hard to create a regional architecture of their country with modern technology and modern effects. Chadirji and Eldem intended to preserve aspects of their architectural culture in these projects. They chose to reinterpret modern architecture and used the proportion that will not fall contrary to the historical environment.

Regionalism in general, architecture, local culture, climate, topography data, region-specific building materials, techniques, such as the understanding of the foreground shows itself as an understanding. Regionalism should be considered as an approach. There has been a widespread discourse in architecture for different purposes in different periods. Sometimes it has created

architecture that tries to find unique answers for a certain region, culture, and climate, and sometimes it is used as a follow-up approach to strengthen or establish the identity of a community. It represented the desire to get rid of the repressive forces because of creating an identity or strengthening identity, and sometimes it was used as a means of reflecting the discourses and programs of nationalism in architecture (Paköz,2017). In this broad framework of regional architecture, revealing the similarities and differences between the two important architects of the East, Chadirji, and Eldem is an important step to better understanding the ideologies of regional architecture.

Both architects came from elite families and both built for the government and elite families rather than the general public. Both are educated in the West. When they return to their country, they have similar questions on modern architecture. They explored the tradition and thought about the local, history, material, nation-nationalism under similar social conditions. In terms of political conditions, in general, there was a similar historical background in Turkey and Iraq, but in Turkey, there was the big enthusiasm of the Republic and nationalism after World War I. When established in the Turkish Republic. Role of the Turkification had a great influence on Eldem. However, there wasn't the same influence on Chadirji like Eldem, although Iraq gained its new freedom in the 1950s during the years of his productions. Chadirji didn't reject the internationalism while Eldem sad that the internationalism in architecture is not a productive choice (Bozdoğan, 1987). Chadirji doesn't believe there is such a thing as unity. He just derived inspiration from the forms that surround him and he would like to live with a traditional and see continue (Chadirji, 1986).

In spite of certain differences of opinion, the sources they have inspired in their solution to similar cases are also different. Eldem mostly used the Anatolian-Ottoman houses, emphasizing the territoriality of Turkey. Some of Eldem's interiors even drew on Selcuk and Central Asian designs. Chadirji, meanwhile, drew entirely on pre-Ottoman, Arab and Persian history. By referencing not only Arab history but also Persian, he, like Eldem, emphasizes the territoriality of the state. In brief, birthed in a privileged community, Sedad wrote that the newly established Republic of Turkey "of reaching the western level" and "modernisation" are merely being profits to initiatives that have gone out of the way of protecting the cultural identity. Rifat Chadirji is an architect who has imbued his work with a deep understanding of the roots of authentic regional expression, as well as a true appreciation of modernism and its principles. Chadirji has shown a unique capacity for the synthesis of form and function that translates traditional architectural idioms into contemporary expressions. These two personalities, although educated in the West, deep in their hearts through their work, still proud of their heritage and determined to bring them to the forefront, thus transforming their traditional architecture into modernity. The chief aim of their professional lives have been to create a regional architectural style. They have acquired a deep understanding of the roots of authentic regional expression while appreciating modernism's principles.

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