

## The role of Aga Khan award in addressing the identity crisis in the eastern arab city

### Abstract:

Identity as a significant demand for human life, embraces both our ability to recognise ourselves, and the possibility of being recognised by others. In urban mass society, identity, or rather the loss of it appears to be a growing problem. The loss of architectural identity in Eastern Arab cities and the role of Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) in addressing this crisis are the main interests of this research. In this sense, we tried to answer a critical question, through this paper; which represents the main theme of the research that is; does the framework of AKAA represent an appropriate step towards addressing critical issues related to the identity crisis in the Eastern Arab architecture? The main objective of this research is to examine the role of AKAA in addressing this crisis. To attain this objective, AKAA as a program that is interested in addressing the identity crisis in the architecture of Islamic world, of which Eastern Arab world is a part, was investigated. The investigation dealt with the appropriateness of AKAA objectives for the current situation in the region. In addition, the research examined the possible impact of the awarded projects on the identity crisis in the Eastern Arab cities and the implications for the architectural practice. This research relies on the theoretical investigation. A documentary analysis of secondary data was used to attain the objective and answer the research question. This research concluded that the AKAA objectives are appropriate to deal with the symptoms of identity crisis in the Eastern Arab architecture, and the awarded projects in this region could play an effective role in guiding the designers for the appropriate solutions. It also concluded that factors of recognition of these projects represent criteria and guidelines for designers in dealing with the architectural identity in their contemporary designs. This research proposed a number of recommendations for the municipalities of the Arab cities, schools of architecture, and practicing architects.

### Identity crisis in the Eastern Arab city

Because of the great transformations that the Eastern Arab world witnessed during the last century, [Fig.1] especially in the last 25 years, the social and cultural norms have been affected negatively (Abdelsalam, Edwards, and Sibley, 2000).



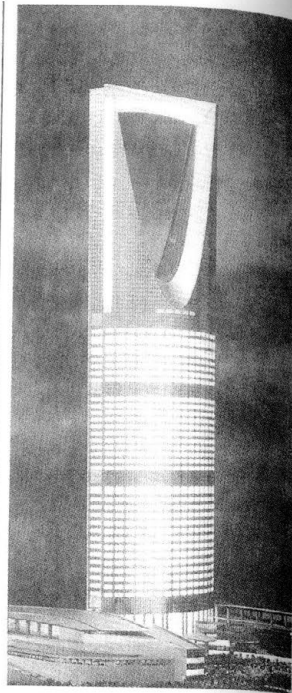
Eastern Arab cities have been subjected to pull and push forces. The authentic and traditional values pull the architecture of these cities towards an authentic character and the conservative architects call for the absolute adoption of the traditional model. While the occidental, global, and western thoughts push it away towards globalisation. The followers of this trend slipped into the blind copy of western architecture (Abdelsalam, 2002 A). Consequently,

most of the contemporary designs in the Eastern Arab cities have failed to achieve an appropriate contemporary expression that preserves the local or regional identity while responding to the contemporary needs of the Eastern Arab society (Abdelsalam, 2001).

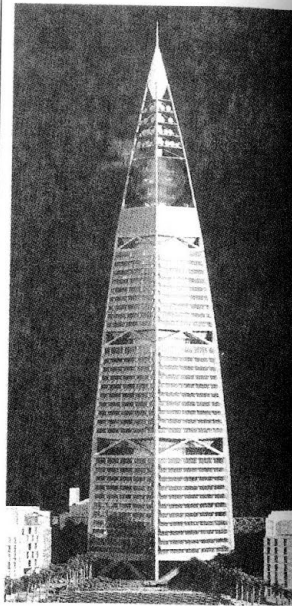
Nevertheless, the programme of Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) recognised some excellent architectural projects in this region that express the local or regional identity of the contemporary society from the Award point of view.

This crisis emerged as a consequence of the phenomenon of globalisation. In this sense, Paul Riceur points out the dilemma that non-western societies face due to the devastating invasion of western culture to the local societies and its negative impact on local cultures (Riceur, 1965). The review of thoughts and writings in the context of contemporary Arab architecture demonstrates that there is an agreement among scholars and theorists regarding the crisis of identity that we have been facing for decades. Kaizer Talib underlines the false identity in Gulf architecture as a result of the negative impact of inappropriate western architecture (Talib, 1989, p115). Khalid Asfour supports Talib's argument as he sees that a process of "cutting and pasting" was introduced to contemporary Arab architecture (Asfour, 1998). Udo Kultermann (Kultermann, 1999), Rashad Bukhash (Bukhash, 2000), Afeef Albahnasy (Albahnasy, 1989), and Salma Aldmloji (Aldmloji, 1995) have a similar view regarding the negative impact of inappropriate western architecture on the dilemma of architectural identity in Arab world.

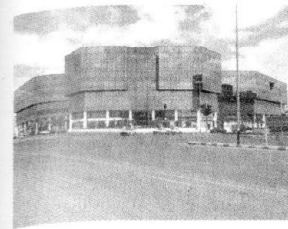
At this point we can limit the identity crisis of Arab architecture to the western thought dominance on one hand and the absence of regional and local distinction on the other hand (Abdelsalam, 2003). Through a comprehensive research carried out by the author, the specific symptoms of the identity crisis were identified as follows: (a) ignorance of local climate [Fig. 2], (b) ignorance of local materials [Fig. 3], (c) absence of



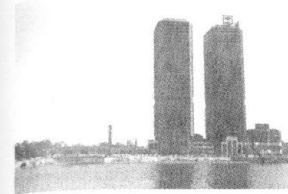
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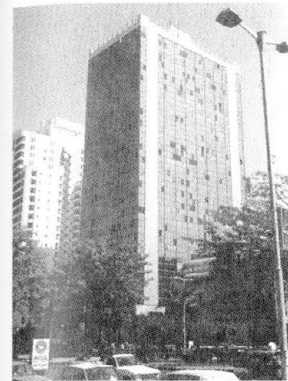
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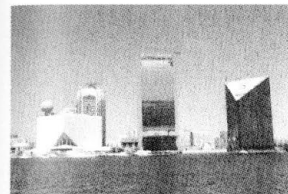
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traditional vocabularies [Fig. 4], (d) lack of integrating modern technology with the local context [Fig.5], and (e) absence of principles and values derived from the architectural heritage [Fig. 6,7] (Abdelsalam, 2002).

## Reasons for choosing the programme of AKAA

We will consider the programme of AKAA for our investigation. Our choice of this programme is based on four main reasons that we can summarize as follows:

a- This unique programme focuses on addressing the crisis of local-global conflict to make the built environment more appropriate in the Muslim world of which Eastern Arab world is part. In addition to its interest in the issue of cultural and historical identity the uniqueness of this programme is based on many factors. Among these factors is the seriousness and depth with which it examines architecture in the Muslim world (Jenks, 1995, p 118). The crisis, as we explained, has a form of global thought dominance in Eastern Arab architecture. The relevance of the Award intentions to this issue could be clarified through Robert Campbell's discussion. He claims,

"nobody else is investigating the problem of striking the right balance between the local and the global like those who present the Aga Khan Award" (Campbell, 1998, p 69).

Jim Antonio (Antonio, 1983) asserts the uniqueness of this programme in the Muslim world as he indicates that it has established itself as a major and prestigious event for all involved in making the built environment more appropriate for Muslims.

b- This programme has received national and international recognition at both professional and public levels. From Campbell's point of view it is the wisest prize programme in architecture. He ascribes this to three factors: it is the most serious, the most thoroughly researched, and the most thoughtful. He claims that it is almost the only programme that deals with anything more important than the latest fashions in architecture (Campbell, 1998, p 70). The recognition is emphasized by Benjamin Forgey, who sees AKAA as a pioneer programme that the rest of the world can learn from (Forgey, 1983). Mohammed Arkoun denotes one of the important factors that led to such an international recognition. The most talented and successful architects in

the world have contributed to the Award as members either of the Master Jury or the Steering Committee (Arkoun, 1998, p 152). Such recognition supports the reliance on this programme in examining issues related to the architectural crisis in Arab world and resolving any debate concerning the reliability and validity of this reliance.

c- The Award has been giving Eastern Arab architecture a remarkable interest through its last eight cycles. Through the last seven Award cycles (since its beginning in 1977), 560 projects from the thirteen countries of the Eastern Arab world were considered for the Award. These projects were nominated. Many of them were presented, some of them were technically reviewed, and others were awarded. This number represents more than one third of the total number of projects that were considered for the Award from the Muslim communities all over the world (1616 projects). The Award's interest in addressing the architectural crisis in this region is a part of its comprehensive interest in the built environment in the Muslim world. This interest supports our selection of this programme for this research.

d- Our investigation focuses on the architectural crisis in Eastern Arab countries since the mid 1970s. This period coincides with the Award's time span, which started after the mid 1970s. It means that all the problems and contradictions of this specific period that we are dealing with were considered and addressed by the Award programme. This leads us to argue that all the recognised projects of this region presented different approaches for resolving the emerged problems and contradiction in this region at that period. It is clear that there is a coincidence in time and place of our investigation with those of AKAA, in addition to the coincidence of the main objective. All of these factors support the selection of AKAA programme for this investigation.

### The framework of AKAA

The Award intention is to encourage a more appropriate architecture in the spirit of Islam through integrating cultural traditions with modern technology. This represents the general message of the Award, which it attempts to convey through its comprehensive activities. However, the programme of AKAA has specific objectives that interpret its general message and express its intentions. These objectives represent the first constituent part of the Award framework. They are invariable for the different Award cycles. We can

argue that they form the backbone of the Award and play a major role in guiding its continuous search for excellence in architecture of Muslim communities. The second constituent part of the Award framework is the factor of recognition of the awarded projects, which represent significance of these projects from the Master Jury point of view.

### Objectives of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture

It is the Master Jury assignment to examine the attainment of these objectives in the nominated projects. The awarded project should convey a certain message to the public and profession. This message interprets one of the Award objectives. We can argue that for the Award, the project serves as a medium to convey a certain message and attain the objectives. These objectives were set by the Award since the first cycle. However, the members of the steering committees and Master juries have different expressions for these objectives within the original context. We can summarize these expressions as follows:

. James Steele expresses the first objective as; "*to increase public awareness of Islamic culture*" (Steele, 1994, p 29).

. Steele expresses also the second objective as; "*to create a forum for examining the appropriateness of contemporary architecture through the extremely diverse community of Muslims worldwide*" (Steele, 1994, p 30).

. Ismail Serageldin expresses the third objective as; "*to bring to the attention of the world examples of architectural excellence from within the Muslim world*" (Serageldin, 1995, p 13).

. Serageldin expresses also the fourth objective as; "*to sensitise those who would build in the Muslim world to the unique heritage of Muslim art and architecture*" (Serageldin, 1989, p 16).

. Oleg Grabar expresses the fifth objective as; "*to look with care, intelligence, and affection at the traditional structures of the environment in which Muslims live now and have lived in the past*" (Grabar, 1994, p7).

Steel, Serageldin, and Grabar have served as members of the steering committee or Master Juries through different Award

cycles. It is clear that AKAA focuses on five major issues that are: (1) public awareness of Islamic culture, (2) Contemporary architecture in the Islamic world, (3) architectural excellence, (4) Islamic architectural heritage, and (5) traditional architecture.

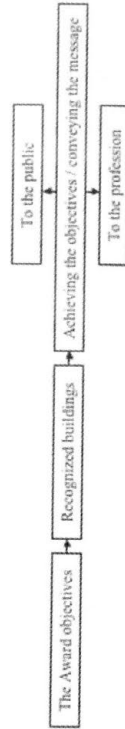
### Achieving the AKAA objectives

After defining the specific objectives of AKAA, a critical question is posed, which is, how these objectives can be achieved. The Award searches for architectural developments in the Muslim world that reflect issues related to these objectives. By recognizing these projects and emphasizing the significant issues, the Award can convey its message to the public and profession and attain its objectives. It means that the Award's tool to achieve its objectives is to recognise projects in the Muslim world or for Muslim communities everywhere all over the world. These projects should interpret the objectives and convey the Award message to the public and the profession. In this case, recognizing the project is not for the sake of recognition. The project is simply the means through which the Award conveys its message to the public and profession. [Fig. 8] shows a structural diagram for achieving the Award objectives and conveying its messages.

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### Appropriateness of AKAA objectives for the current situation in Eastern Arab architecture

The current situation in Eastern Arab architecture is characterised by the dominance of western thought on one hand, and the absence of local and regional distinction on the other hand. These are the two key factors of the identity crisis in the region. In this research, we will examine the appropriateness of AKAA objectives to address this crisis, and define to what extent these objectives meet the reality of Eastern Arab architecture. To carry out this investigation, each Award objective will be analysed according to its relevance to the crisis symptoms and the current situation in Eastern Arab architecture.



### Objective one: Public awareness

The first objective of AKAA is to increase public awareness of Islamic culture. In Eastern Arab world, as we indicated previously, the most significant feature of the identity crisis is the dominance of inappropriate western thought. The first thing that is negatively affected by this dominance is the local thought and norms. The thought and norms are an expression of the local culture, which is in this case the Islamic culture. Hence, we can argue that the dominance of inappropriate western thought, which characterized Eastern Arab architecture, hindered the Islamic culture in this region. At this point, it is clear that the dominance of inappropriate western thought in Eastern Arab architecture has a negative impact on public awareness of Islamic culture. By its endeavour to increase public awareness of Islamic culture, the AKAA confronts this dominance.

### Objective two: Contemporary architecture

The second objective of AKAA is to create a forum for examining the appropriateness of contemporary architecture through the extremely diverse community of Muslims worldwide. The Award examines the possible choices and assesses their appropriateness for contemporary Muslim architecture. In attaining its objective of creating a forum for examining the appropriateness of contemporary architecture, the AKAA searches for projects that recognise local values and heritage, and integrate them with contemporary needs. As we explained in this research, the absence of principles and values derived from the Islamic architectural heritage is one of the crisis symptoms in Eastern Arab architecture. It is clear that in its search for the appropriate contemporary architecture, the Award deals with these principles and values.

### Objective three: Architectural excellence

The third objective of AKAA is to bring to the attention of the world examples of architectural excellence from within the Muslim world. In its search for architectural excellence, the Award focuses on innovation and excellence in social and cultural sense. Serageldin denotes the Award's interpretation of innovation in the awarded projects. These projects reflect new



solutions not just to old problems, but to new problems that are not yet fully posed. New solutions require leaps of the imagination that break with the conventional and define possibilities not perceived by others (Serageldin, 1995, p 14). It is clear that innovation as a constituent element of architectural excellence is based on the imaginative abilities of the designer. In a similar way, excellence in a social and cultural sense is a reflection of innovative and creative solutions of social and cultural problems. From this discussion, we aim to clarify the architectural excellence that AKAA focuses on as one of its objectives. If we look at the five symptoms of the crisis in Eastern Arab architecture, we find that all of these symptoms represent a hindrance of innovation at many levels.

#### Objective four: Islamic architectural heritage

The fourth objective of AKAA is to *sensitise those who would build in the Muslim world to the unique heritage of Muslim art and architecture*. The Award intention is to remind those who would build in the Muslim world of the Islamic architectural heritage at two levels; content and form. "Content" of Islamic architecture reflects its values and principles, while its "form" expresses its elements and vocabularies. The AKAA aims to sensitise architects to adopt these values, principles, and elements in their contemporary designs. When we look at the symptoms of the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture, we find that the absence of principles and values derived from the architectural heritage is evident. As the heritage of this region is Islamic, the architectural heritage expresses the Islamic architectural heritage of the region.

#### Objective five: Traditional architecture

The fifth objective of AKAA is to *look with care, intelligence, and affection at the traditional structures of the environments in which Muslims live now and have lived in the past*. Through this objective, the Award calls for investigating and taking lessons from the traditional built environment. These lessons could be drawn at the content or form level or both. Renata Holod denotes one of the criteria used by the Award to attain this objective, which is the contemporary use of a traditional building language in a search for a new architectural idiom (Holod, 1983, p 14). James Steele discusses a different approach as he indicates that the re-use of traditional forms

and decoration reawakened a controversial issue that has run through recent Award cycles. This issue concerns the blind copy of forms from the past without a full understanding of their meaning (Steele, 1994, p 31). It is clear that employing traditional language in contemporary designs should be based on full understanding of its deep meaning rather than its surface features. This is what the AKAA means by looking with care, intelligence, and affection at the traditional structures. When we look at the symptoms of identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture, we find among them the absence of traditional vocabularies. Yet, objective five of AKAA concerns this symptom.

From the previous investigation, we can conclude that the five objectives of AKAA are appropriate to deal with symptoms of the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture. As these symptoms represent the current situation in Eastern Arab architecture, the Award objectives have relevance to contemporary practice in this region. However, appropriateness of the AKAA objectives for the current situation in Eastern Arab architecture does not mean that the AKAA framework provides an appropriate approach to address the architectural crisis in the region. The ways through which these objectives are achieved need to be discussed to examine if these ways work to address the crisis. As we explained, factors of recognition of the awarded projects are interpretations of the Award objectives through the projects. It means that they reflect the ways of achieving the objectives.

#### Factors of recognition of the awarded projects

Before investigating factors of recognition, we need to define what we mean by this term. The Master jury citation of the awarded projects defines their factors of recognition, which emphasize and highlight the projects' significance. It means that factors of recognition of AKAA projects are the factors of significance of the awarded projects from the Award point of view. The importance of these factors relies on two elements; firstly, they express the architectural significance of the awarded projects, and secondly, they interpret the Award objectives in the projects.

In the present research we will focus on factors of recognition of the awarded projects in the Eastern Arab world. These factors represent the factors of significance of good architecture in this region from the AKAA point of view. We can

argue that these factors serve as distinctive characteristics or criteria for an appropriate contemporary architecture in Eastern Arab world. If we look at factors of recognition of the awarded projects in the region, we can classify them into seven themes that are related to AKAA objectives. These themes are: (a) the prevailing customs, (b) local environment and heritage, (c) local architecture, (d) design principles of traditional architecture, (e) innovation, (f) modern technology, and (g) elements of traditional architecture. We will discuss these themes and define the related factors as follows.

### Lessons from the awarded projects for addressing the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture

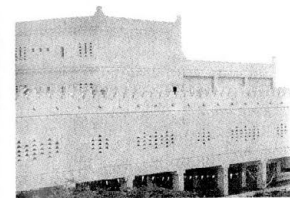
In this investigation, we will focus on the second constituent part of AKAA framework, which is the factors of recognition of the awarded projects in Eastern Arab countries. The outcome of AKAA efforts in achieving its objectives, which is a group of recognised projects, will be investigated. As we concluded in the previous investigation, AKAA objectives are appropriate to deal with symptoms of the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture. In this investigation, we examine the factors of recognition of the awarded projects and its appropriateness to address the symptoms of architectural crisis in this region. Fourteen architectural projects were recognised in the Eastern Arab countries since the first cycle in 1980 till the last cycle in 2001. Each project poses certain issues and deals with problems related to the current situation from the Master Jury's point of view. The factors of recognition of these projects will be analysed according to their relevance to the symptoms of architectural crisis. These symptoms represent categories for analysing the factors of recognition.

### Expressing climatic considerations

As we indicated in this study, the first symptom of the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture is ignorance of the local climate. This symptom represents a common problem in the architectural developments in the region. Accordingly, the Award has given a special interest to resolve this problem. It recognised projects that present promising solutions and



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approaches for dealing with climatic issues. If we look at factors of recognition of the awarded projects in Eastern Arab countries, we find that three projects were recognised for reasons related to climatic considerations. These projects are: Ramses Wasef Arts Centre, Halawa Residence, and Al-Kindi Plaza. Factors of recognition of these projects will be analysed according to the response to local climate to examine the appropriateness of these projects to resolve this problem through introducing solutions and approaches.

The first factor of recognition that dealt with issues related to local climate is *the perfect understanding of the local environment and heritage*. This factor expresses the architectural significance of two awarded projects in Eastern Arab countries that are Ramses Wassa Wassef Arts Centre in Egypt [Fig. 9] and Halawa Residence in Egypt also. From the Master Jury's point of view, Ramses Wassef Arts Center is perfectly adapted to its environment (AKAA Master Jury, 1985). If we focus on the climatic considerations, we can argue that the project reflects a perfect response to the local hot arid climate by adopting elements of traditional architecture. It is clear that this project gives a good example for addressing the climatic issues in Eastern Arab architecture.

Another factor of recognition, which is related to climatic considerations, is *the successful re-use of traditional architectural thoughts and elements*. This factor expresses the architectural significance of the project of Al-Kindi Plaza in Riyadh [Fig. 10]. This project is an example of the absolute adoption of the traditional model. One of the main principles of traditional architecture is the response to local climate. This factor is manifested in the project through the use of internal courtyards with plants and water features and small openings in the external facades to create the appropriate internal microclimate. Around the central plaza, arcades and shaded areas are used to protect people from the harsh climate in summer. The composition of the project is compact and organized to give maximum shading. These elements denote that this project presents a specific and perhaps generic solution for climatic issues in Eastern Arab architecture.

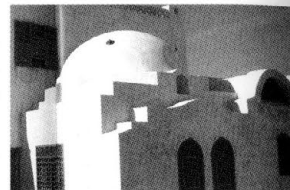
### The use of local building materials

Ignorance of local materials is the second symptom of the identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture. Inappropriate

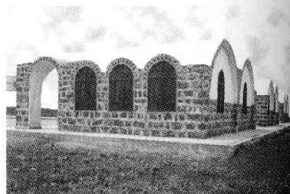
imported or manufactured building materials replaced the local materials. This phenomenon characterized the western oriented thought in this region. If we look at the awarded projects in the Eastern Arab countries and their factors of recognition, we realize that the AKAAs has focused on issues related to the use of local building materials in its continuous search for the appropriate architecture in Muslim communities. Three projects were recognised in this region for reasons related to the use of local building materials. These projects are: Ramses Wasef Arts Centre, Halawa Residence, and Stone Building System. Factors of recognition of these projects will be analysed according to the use of local materials. This analysis enables us to define the appropriateness of these factors to deal with the problem of ignorance of local materials. The projects Ramses Wissa Wassef Arts Centre and Halawa Residence in Egypt were recognised for *the perfect understanding of the local environment and heritage*. When we deal with local building materials, the perfect understanding of the local environment reflects the role of earth as a building material. In Halawa Residence [Fig. 11] the ancient Upper Egyptian tradition of masonry construction was employed. The undressed local limestone is the main building material, in addition to burnt red brick. The Award interest in recognising initiatives that deal with the issue of local building materials is manifested through recognising a stone building system, which was used in building four primary schools in Syria [Fig. 12]. The Master Jury found this system a strong design, a wise plan, and a rational product, which can be applied to all other types of rural construction where stone is available (AKAA Master Jury, 1992). In this project, the local basalt stone was used in the vaulted construction. The designer used the local building material and local techniques that reflect the potentials of this material.

### The Impact of traditional architecture

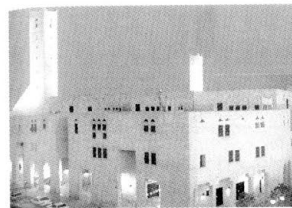
As we indicated previously in this study, the absence of traditional vocabularies is one of the symptoms of identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture. In this investigation, we will try to define if the AKAAs has dealt with this issue through the awarded projects in this region, and to what extent the recognised projects introduce appropriate solutions. The Award has recognised three projects for reasons related to the impact of traditional architecture on contemporary design. These projects are the Great Mosque of Riyadh and Al-Kindi Plaza. Both of projects are in Riyadh and were influenced



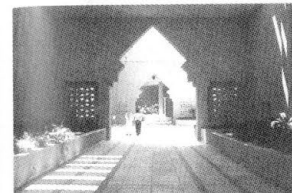
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by the traditional Najdi style of the region. The third project is the Nubian Museum in Egypt. We will investigate factors of recognition of these projects and examine their appropriateness to deal with the issue of traditional architecture impact on contemporary designs.

The project of Great Mosque of Riyadh [Fig. 13] was recognised for *redefining the local architecture in contemporary methods, materials, and construction techniques*. Local architecture here is the traditional Najdi architecture. From the factor of recognition of this project, we understand that the traditional Najdi architecture was reinterpreted rather than copied. The designer re-created the spatial character of the Najdi architectural idiom without copying it. This project introduces an appropriate approach for dealing with traditional vocabularies and elements in contemporary designs. This approach is based on redefining these vocabularies and elements by using the designer's creativity in reinterpreting them in a contemporary manner.

Another factor of recognition, which is related to the impact of traditional architecture on contemporary designs, is *the successful re-use of traditional architectural thoughts and elements*. This factor of recognition expresses the architectural significance of the project of Al-Kindi Plaza in Riyadh [Fig. 14]. In this case, the traditional architectural elements were re-used rather than re-defined. It means that these elements were copied from the original Najdi architecture and employed in this contemporary building. It is an absolute adoption of the traditional model without any intervention from the designer to create contemporary expressions. This project introduces another approach for dealing with traditional vocabularies and elements, which is based on the absolute adoption of the traditional model. However, this approach is inappropriate to be generalized in all cases in contemporary Eastern Arab architecture as it ignores the contemporary expressions. Yet, in some cases, where the context is traditional or historic, this approach is appropriate.

### Expressing local culture and values

The absence of principles and values derived from the architectural heritage is one of the crisis symptoms in Eastern Arab architecture. It is important to denote that the architectural heritage of the region (Islamic Arab architecture)



embraces many values and principles at different levels. However, we will focus here on values and principles that are related to the factors of recognition of the awarded projects in Eastern Arab countries. These factors will be analysed to examine their appropriateness to deal with the absence of values derived from the heritage. Since its beginning, the AKAA has recognised three projects in the region for reasons related to principles and values derived from the architectural heritage. These projects are the Cultural Park for Children in Cairo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh, and SOS Children's Village in Jordan.

The AKAA recognised the project of Cultural Park for Children [Fig. 15] for *the ingenuous expression and enhancement of the prevailing customs*. From the Master Jury's point of view, this project has generated a renewed sense of community by extending its presence into the surrounding streets (AKAA Master Jury, 1992). This presence was attained through developing some activities on the adjacent Abu Aldahab Street to express the prevailing customs and traditions. In view of the fact that expressing and enhancing the prevailing customs and traditions is one of the principles of architectural heritage, we can argue that this factor of recognition is appropriate to deal with the absence of these principles in Eastern Arab architecture.

The second project, which the Award recognised for reasons related to principles and values of the architectural heritage is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh [Fig. 16]. The Master Jury recognised this project for *the contemporary expression of design principles of traditional architecture*. It is important to distinguish between design principles and values of traditional architecture on one hand, and design elements and vocabularies on the other hand. The AKAA recognised the intelligent use and interpretation of general Islamic urban concepts. These concepts are manifested in the organization of interior spaces. These lively, exciting, and spectacular spaces are hierarchically organised around streets. This concept is derived from principles of traditional urban fabric in old Islamic districts. The designer wanted also to incorporate the basic principles of Islamic traditional design with contemporary architectural language.

### The use of modern technology

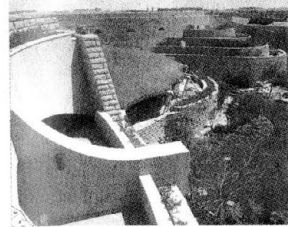
The lack of integrating modern technology with the local



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context is among the symptoms of identity crisis in Eastern Arab architecture. In this investigation, we will go through the awarded projects of AKAA in this region and define the projects that deal with this issue. Then, we will examine the appropriateness of the factors of recognition of these projects to present solutions for this problem. If we look at the awarded projects in this region, we find that the AKAA has recognised three projects for reasons related to the use of modern technology. These projects are Tuwaiq Palace in Riyadh, Hajj Terminal in Jeddah, and Intercontinental Hotel and Conference Centre in Makkah. The number of recognised projects reflects the AKAA interest in the issue of employing modern technology in contemporary designs in the region.

The projects of Tuwaiq Palace and Hajj Terminal were recognised for *the architectural quality and innovative approach*. In Tuwaiq Palace [Fig. 17] the Master Jury recognised the architectural quality of the project. This quality is manifested in the idea of soft fortification, which integrated hard and soft spaces. The combination of concrete, stone, tensile structures, and landscaping reflects another aspect of the architectural quality. Modern technology represents an important aspect of the architectural quality of the project. Three white Teflon tents pitched on the exterior walls are used to provide sheltered views of the desert for those inside. This reinterpretation reflects a successful marriage of tradition and high tech.

Another factor of recognition, which is related to the lack of integrating modern technology with local values, is taking full advantage of the modern technology. This factor of recognition expresses the architectural significance of the project of Intercontinental Hotel and Conference Centre in Makkah [Fig. 18]. The use of modern technology is manifested through the structure system of the auditorium. It is the first hanging roof structure in the Middle East and it is the first of its kind anywhere to rely on the weight of the roof itself to balance uplift forces. The tent-like roof of the conference centre demonstrates that advanced technology was employed to enhance local values and reflect traditional symbols. The Master Jury denotes this point as an effort to combine modern technology and functional forms in the context of Islamic culture (AKAA Master Jury, 1983).



## Conclusion

Seven factors of recognition of the awarded projects in Eastern Arab countries were analysed in the previous investigation to examine their appropriateness to address the symptoms of architectural crisis in this region. The general aim of the investigation was to identify if these awarded projects could influence the architectural situation in this region through introducing promising approaches and solutions for the identity crisis. We can summarize the conclusions of this investigation as follows:

. The seven factors of recognition are appropriate to deal with issues related to the symptoms of identity crisis in this region.

. The awarded projects play a significant role in guiding the designers in their continuous search for appropriate solutions that avoid the crisis symptoms.

. AKAAs objectives are appropriate for dealing with the current architectural situation in this region.

. The framework of AKAAs represents an appropriate step towards addressing the identity crisis in this region. The Award succeeded in this area by setting up objectives related to the crisis and recognised projects that introduces solutions and approaches for addressing this crisis.

## Recommendations

. In the design process, the factors of recognition of the awarded projects can serve as design principles and guidelines to control and guide the process of maintaining the local identity in contemporary designs.

. This research recommends the use of the factors of recognition as design controls that the municipalities and governmental organisations can impose to maintain the local identity in the contemporary designs.

. In architecture education, the factors of recognition can be used as a basis for a comprehensive framework for teaching and training the students how to deal with the expression of identity in the built environment.

. This research recommends that developers who are interested in maintaining local identity in their architectural developments can add the factors of recognition of the awarded projects as design principles and guidelines to the design brief given to architects.

. In architectural criticism, the factors of recognition can be employed as a basis for a framework of criticising the expression of identity in architecture.

## Acknowledgement

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