
An Overview of Architecture Education in Islamic Countries

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The formal education of architects in the Islamic world began only at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early decades of the present century. A highly structured system of apprenticeship had, of course, been developed much earlier, dating back to the establishment of palace organisation and central institutions of Islamic empires, but this overview will focus on the development of architectural training in schools. In the Middle East, the first institutions to train architects were established in Istanbul and Cairo, two important cultural centres of the time. In Istanbul, the School of Fine Arts, which later included architecture, was founded in 1883. But architectural education in the Ottoman Empire dates further back to the seventeenth century, if the training offered at the Military Academy of Engineering is taken into account.

Prior to the organisation of architectural education formally in schools, both Ottoman Turkey and Egypt relied on expatriate assistance in the training of architects. Though Ottoman Turkey was never colonised and Egypt retained political autonomy until almost the end of the nineteenth century, both countries came under the economic and technological subjection of the colonial powers. The colonial penetration in the economic sphere brought with it new functions, modes of production and services, and hence a need for new buildings, railroad stations, port terminals, multi-storey apartment buildings and office blocks

There was no locally available expertise either for the design or for the construction of such buildings. The technical expertise required for the emerging needs of Turkey and Egypt could not be met by expatriate or colonial resources alone, forcing these countries to set up means for training architects within their educational systems.

The first known architect to be trained formally, in the western sense, was Mimar Vedad, son of Abdülhamit II's chief secretary. His desire to study architecture in Paris did not meet with immediate approval from his father, who considered architecture to be an inferior profession and would have preferred his son to study literature, which was then considered the most appropriate course of study for the elites, especially since it was a requisite to enter the ranks of powerful and influential bureaucrats. Mimar Vedad, after completing his studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, returned to Istanbul to open his private practice and then joined the Academy of Fine Arts as an instructor. He was not regarded favourably by the Muslim population of Istanbul, for public opinion did not regard the practice of architecture as a suitable profession for a Muslim. It was not until the realisation of the Central Post Office Building in Sirkeci (1908) that Vedad's talent was acknowledged by the elite and the Court.

At about that time, a section of the Royal School of Engineering was reorganised as a

School of Fine Arts. This was a major departure for the status of architecture, manifesting its separate professional and academic identity, having, until then, been conceived as part of military training. Due to the Ottomans' strong alliance in the military and educational fields with Germany, architectural education in Istanbul was begun along the lines of the German model, which was technology-oriented. However, thanks to the presence of Vedat Bey and several Italian expatriates in Istanbul, aesthetics, in a rigid academic sense, was fully incorporated in the curriculum.

Similarly, architectural education in Egypt evolved from the Germanic Technische Hochschule model, with a strong Swiss influence in Cairo University, where the training of architects was begun as early as 1880. As in the Ottoman case, architectural education was monitored by civil engineers, and architectural skills were conceived merely as a means to prettify sound buildings, which were the ultimate goal. The guiding force behind the new educational system was Newnham, a professor and a prominent architect, whose influence in Egypt remained strong until the 1930s. Like Jachmund and Vallauray who taught in the Istanbul School of Fine Arts in the late 1800s, Newnham, also an expatriate, had close connections with the Court.

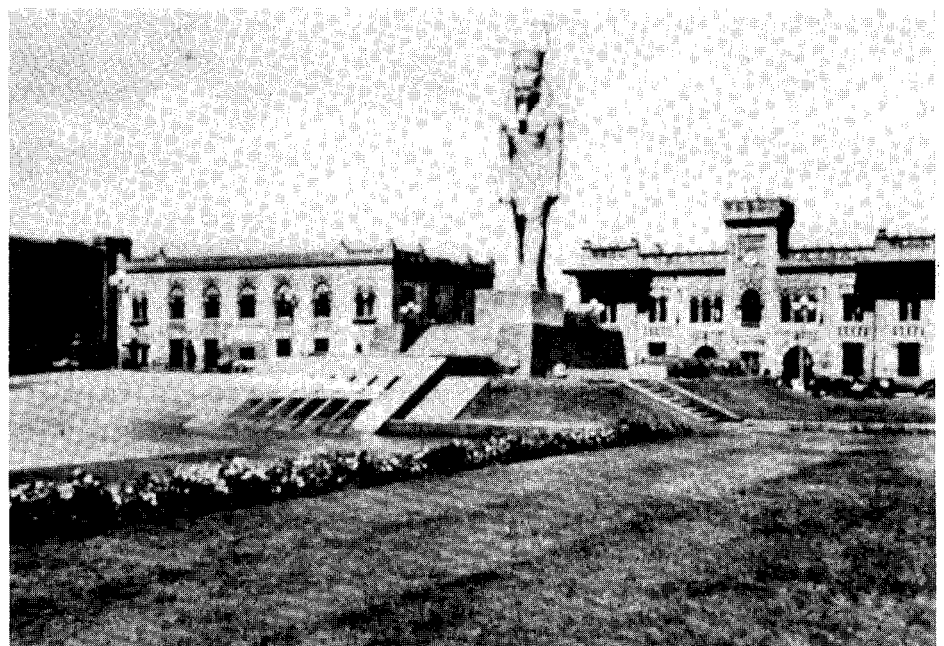
It was a growing sense of national identity in Egypt in the 1920s and the 1930s, and similarly, a new spirit of nationalism in Turkey with the establishment of the Republic as a nation-state that resulted in the lessening of expatriate influence in the teaching and practice architecture in both countries. Thereafter, both Egypt and Turkey sought to meet their needs and solve their problems utilising national resources.

In the Turkey of the 1930s the first generation of graduates who began to disseminate architectural expertise were all educated in Istanbul. Similarly, in Egypt during the same years, the prominent national architect was Mustafa Pasha Fahmi, who was educated in Europe and held a "proper" degree in architecture, but who, more importantly, was the son of the Master Builder Mahmud



Vedat (Tek), Haydarpaşa S. Cedilla Boat Landing, Istanbul, 1909

Photo University of Pennsylvania.



Cairo, Central Railway Station and Limoun Bridge

Photo University of Pennsylvania

Fahmi. He was, therefore, equipped with credentials both to practice and to teach architecture. Although Mustafa Pasha Fahmi did not make any substantial change in the curriculum, he left his imprint both on architectural education and on architectural practice. His concern was to develop nationalism formally in architecture. His efforts, as in the case of Mehmet Vedad, Ahmet Kemalettin, Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu, and Giulio Mongeri of Turkey, were genuine ones in a search for an authentic expression of Islamic character.

It would have been too much to expect from this generation of architects a mature idiom which could differentiate the abstract qualities of architecture from excessive stucco work, ornamentation and decoration. As they entered into a search, they were already laden with too many responsibilities with regard to all the problems facing the architectural establishment.

The years between the two World Wars were crucial both for Egypt and Turkey, as they witnessed a complete transformation in the organisation of architectural profession and allied institutions. A large group of Egyptian students went abroad to study architecture, many of them to Paris. As a result, the Beaux-Arts model of architectural education came to be favoured, reinforced by the strong cultural ties linking Egypt and France. At that time, not only did the School of Architecture at Cairo University come to be dominated by Beaux-Arts ateliers, but a new school that was established in Alexandria adopted the same model in the 1940s.

During the same period in Turkey, German influence became predominant owing to the political and cultural ties with that country. Ernst Egli, an uncompromising modernist, was placed in charge of the Academy of Fine Arts after Giulio Mongeri, an appointment that implied a major ideological shift away from the search for authentic Ottoman, Turkish, local and Islamic forms towards the creation of a new modern and contemporary image. While the new generation of architects assumed the task of creating this new image befitting the new nation-state, the ter-



G Mongeri, Agricultural Bank Headquarters, Ankara

Photo S Özkan

mination of Mongeri's chairmanship was soon followed by the closing of his and Vedad Bey's studios in the Academy. The architectural objectives they professed were seen as "retrogressive", and opposed to the desired "contemporary" and "progressive" objectives.

German influence became more explicit and dominant when the Department of Architecture in Istanbul Technical University was reorganised; "modernism", in its truly Germanic sense, became the lingua franca of the Turkish architectural milieu. This attitude became so widespread that it was soon acknowledged as the official style. At times it was produced by local architects, but the leaders of the country did not hesitate to bring in Austro-Germans to obtain a more correct image of "contemporaneity". The entire quarter of Ministries in the new capital, Ankara, was built in the Germanic style of New Monumentalism with low-rise, colonnaded buildings of locally cut stone.

Meanwhile in Egypt the School of Architecture at the newly established Alexandria

University got a nephew of Mustafa Pasha Fahmi as its head. At the same time, the head of the Cairo University's School of Architecture was another nephew, while the Government School of Design was headed by a third of his nephews. Until the early 1960s, Hassan, Mustafa and Shafique remained the most influential personalities in the fields of architectural education in Egypt. They controlled the curricula, which was designed in the most strict sense of the Beaux Arts.

Four of the schools mentioned above — two in Istanbul, one in Cairo and one in Alexandria — constituted the major schools of architecture in the Islamic world until the end of World War II. And all of these schools underwent transformation, as new members were added to their faculties. The Egyptian schools, starting out with a mixture of the English and Swiss systems in their curricula and approach, in time adopted the Beaux-Arts system of ateliers, whereas the Academy in Istanbul, first organised as a German Hochschule, gradually grew to re-



Istanbul Technical University, built as military barracks in the early nineteenth century

Photo S Özkan

semble a Beaux-Arts system due to contact with other studios of the fine arts.

The Technical University of Istanbul, firmly established on engineering grounds, began offering a new status for architects as “architect-engineers”, implicitly stripping architecture of its fine arts aspects and defining its role more in the field of construction.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Istanbul Technical University remained a major asset in the country’s development and became the most competitive school, offering the most prestigious professional qualifications in Turkey.

The fifth major school of architecture was founded in Iran. When Tehran University’s Faculty of Arts charged André Godard to establish a department of architecture, Godard transplanted the Beaux-Arts model in Iran with an uncompromising application to teaching of the ideals of the Modern Movement.

Development plans following World War II, as well as rapid urbanisation and large-scale

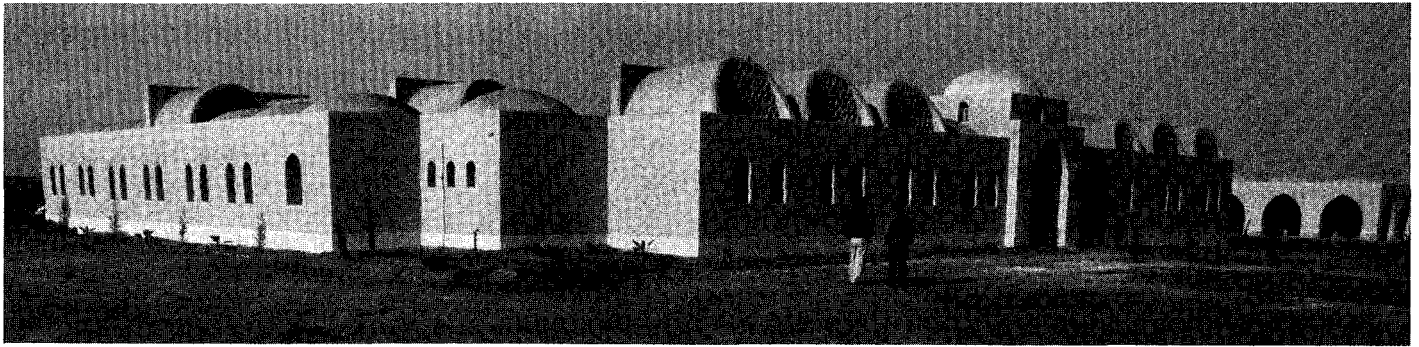
construction, demanded an ever-increasing number of architects. At the turn of the century, architects’ expertise was needed only for public and prestige buildings, necessary for political and cultural purposes, but certainly not indispensable for ordinary building needs. After World War II, architects and civil engineers became fervent rivals.

Among the many reasons for this rivalry was the enormous influence of the Modern Movement, where architects themselves stripped down their profession to a minimum, making it possible for anyone with engineering skills to invade the professional territory that had essentially belonged to architects. The past definition of professional qualifications, which excluded unqualified practitioners, did not apply to engineers. By the 1950s, architects had begun to pursue and organise professional societies for the defence of their rights, and the distinction between architecture and engineering became the core of this struggle.

Charles Abrams, a renowned and respected scholar of the human habitat, following his United Nations mission to Turkey, suggested that changes in the urban environment, specifically in Turkey and in the Middle East at large, demanded new capabilities from technical experts. These went far beyond the received definition of “architect”. The Middle East High Institute of Technology (now Middle East Technical University: METU) was the first of a series of a new generation of universities to be opened in Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon and other countries of the Middle East, and to become an important reference point in architectural education in Turkey. It had among its initial aims to assist rural and regional development, to attempt to cope with the problem of the rapidly changing urban environment, and to develop local indigenous, intermediate techniques that would reduce to a minimum the requirements of technology in the process of urbanisation. Even though METU has become a recognised *and* alternative voice and a capable educational institution since then, to what extent it has realised its initial objectives remains questionable. The same can be said about the other schools with similar emphasis: the American University in Cairo and the American University of Beirut. All three universities have become notable institutions of higher education, but they have not performed the role that they were intended to play.

In the 1960s, architects were among the most sought-after professionals throughout the Islamic world. This was not because of their problem-solving capabilities to meet the urgent needs created by rapid urbanisation, but rather, they were asked to build in the urban centres where land had become a scarce commodity. Building high-rise blocks became a lucrative economic activity.

What were formerly less than ten schools of architecture multiplied and came to exceed sixty over the course of two decades as the need for architects increased in the developing world. To what extent the new architects were equipped with the expertise to cope with the merging problems of their societies



A Naguib, American University, Heliopolis Campus, 1981

Photo A Naguib/AKAA

was the crucial issue of the profession and, therefore, of education, too

Problematic issues, such as rapid and vast urbanisation, the informal housing sector, land speculation, rural development, and appropriate and/or intermediate technology, were never brought to the attention of architects in their education or in professional practice. Even when it was attempted to address these issues, the problems were defined in a fragmented fashion. The schools addressed themselves to the solution of problems at high technical levels. That which might have proved useful to society was either not requested from the schools by the society or was viewed as academically uninteresting

The exogenous factors of the academic world have always dominated the schools of architecture in the Islamic world. The endogenous factors, where solutions were sought to the particular problems of a society, were seldom included in the academic promotion process that had a dominant influence on the realm of academic research. The knowledge gained through research was applied only negligibly in teaching. In the early 1950s, more than a dozen theses were submitted for academic promotion in Istanbul Technical University. All of these undertook to document and praise the vernacular architecture of various regions of Anatolia, and the resultant quality of the research, the documentation and the visual materials were

excellent. There was only scant interpretation, but perhaps such was not then necessary. Yet, the influence of these impressive studies of architectural education in the same school is absolutely nil. They were produced for purposes of academic promotion, and never as sources of inquiry; the authors' professional and teaching objectives, therefore, had little to do with these important contributions.

As this attitude toward competent, albeit ill-used, documentation was current in Istanbul, there also were genuine attempts to develop new expressions of cultural heritage. In this respect, the efforts of Hassan Fathy, Rifat Chadirji and Sedad Hakki Eldem are noteworthy. Fathy devoted his life to regenerate traditional forms using still-existing building practices and social interpretation. The forces of modernisation, however, exerted other pressures and, along with ever-increasing bureaucracy, dominated the community where Fathy worked. Fathy's struggle was received coolly, not only in academia, but also by those in the building professions prevalent in Egypt. The recognition of Fathy in the Western world, as opposed to the lack of recognition in his native Egypt, is probably the most dramatic example of how Islamic countries ignored the genuine, endogenous contributions to their architecture, and how they excluded such contributions from education.

Eldem, an outstanding member of the pioneering generation of architects in Turkey, has had a similar fate, but with some differences. Eldem and his contemporaries saw as their first priority the establishment of architecture as a legitimate, if not honoured, profession. During the early stages of Eldem's career, Turkish society was undergoing enormous change, forging redefinitions of the manifold values of architecture and architectural expression. Eldem was dedicated to the development of expressions applicable and relevant to Turkey. His search for forms, constructional systems and proportions was a path of devoted research that he would maintain for more than half a century. He founded the "Seminar of National Architecture", which was probably the first of its kind to explore local resources rather than to import foreign canons that were developed elsewhere and for completely different social, political, economic, and most importantly, environmental circumstances. The Turkish academic system tolerated his seminar as a continuing effort, but there was no genuine attempt to encourage this approach to flourish, to become an alternative, to generate what could become "Turkish". This was also reflected in Eldem's own career. Given important commissions for public buildings, he strove to prove himself capable as a "contemporary architect" according to Western standards, and, as well, to adhere to the ideals of his teachings.

Chadirji's work shared with Eldem's "Seminar" a great affinity, yet he was even less compromising than the Turkish master. The school of thought he has come to represent, which he almost single-handedly founded, focussed on the development of an architecture at once Iraqi and, above all, contemporary. Chadirji rejected the nostalgia of a romanticised vernacular whose validity, especially in urban areas, was fading. He sought the development of an architectural identity and character with environmental and aesthetic significance, but with a contemporaneity that could re-insert architecture more realistically into the realm of Iraqi social and economic environments.

Looking back, it is painfully evident that Fathy was obliged to limit his oeuvre to the rural setting and to several private residences. Eldem was forced to apply a double standard with markedly different results in public buildings versus large residences. Chadirji in his teaching as well as in his practice was forced to change his mode of discourse from building to theory. These three dedicated architects and educators nevertheless marked the architectural scene and education from the 1950s to the 1980s, bringing into their teaching and practice a focus on endogenous sources for the contemporary environment and balancing the concern with exogenous sources.

The endogeneity and exogeneity of the sources of education have been the most crucial aspect of the teaching of architecture. Exogeneity, or seeking to meet the standards of the Western world, has been inevitable; to claim the opposite would be futile, as is indicated by several obvious factors:

- The world is, indeed, small. The influence of rapidly changing life-styles and, thus, environments, has escaped the limits of geographical, political and cultural boundaries. To seek exclusively that which is local is not only limiting, but impossible, and it establishes a dilemma at the psychological level that is, at best, discomfiting.
- Schools of architecture like other educational institutions, strive to meet standards universally applicable, and competitive

with other schools. This is a vital aspect for the existence of the schools.

- In the Islamic world, the clients who determine the milieu and structure of education are, almost exclusively, governmental, and necessarily have a vested interest in developing educational systems on international standards. Even when there exists a sensitivity to local issues, it would be asking too much to differentiate architecture from, say, the fields of medicine or engineering, where the highest, most progressive standards are called for at an international level.

Thus, the curricula of schools of architecture in the Islamic world have been developed with world-wide standards in mind. Be it the visual arts-based Beaux-Arts system, or the technology-oriented German system, or the Bauhaus-generated American system, the end product is a similar preoccupation with international educational norms, although the qualification standards have been set to address entirely different professional circumstances.

Today, no American architect is equipped with the intellectual or technical resources to cope with the long-term problems of the building boom in the Gulf; nor is any English architect capable of dealing with the problems of floods and cyclones in Bangladesh. No French architect is furnished with the technical know-how to solve the shelter problems resulting from drought and desertification in the Sahel, and no German architect can provide an immediate solution for the informal housing problems in the urban areas of Turkey, Pakistan and India, which affect more than half of their urban populations.

The transplantation of foreign models may provide technical expertise, a valid tool for use in the practice of architecture anywhere in the world, but does it provide the requisite expertise within a country? This pertinent question remains to be asked, if not answered.

Here, we do not intend to imply that architects in the Islamic world have been educated to serve as valid technicians everywhere in the world except in their own con-

texts. Nor are we saying that they are over-qualified to deal with the very simple problems of their day-to-day professional lives. We are simply trying to emphasise the fact that what is urgent and relevant for a specific country is often overlooked. Architects, therefore, even though they are much needed, become luxury products in their own societies. This is an injustice to this group of professionals who, intellectually and technically, are so very much concerned with the problems of their countries.

The curricula of schools of architecture in the Islamic world are not much different from those from which they were derived; in other words, the generic model has been maintained at the core of the system. In all schools of architecture, design forms the backbone of the curricula, but the time spent at and credit given to this course varies from school to school. The final product of education is primarily assessed by the competence developed in this realm.

Whether students are left to plunge into architectural design or filtered through a course of basic design depends on the model used to organise training in design. In almost all cases, design studios are organised in a progression from simpler to more complex problems to be solved by means of developing design skills.

There is an implicit universality of design values in architectural education. Put in abstract terms, design is a skill, a method of problem solving, and architects are called upon to exercise these skills. Design, the ultimate tool of architects to intervene in the environment, does not address issues related to *what* should be done, but develops expertise in *how* to do it. Therefore, the problem of generating endogenous factors in the design process does not have much to do with design itself, but with education as a whole.

With this in mind, we observe that fact-oriented courses in architecture schools are important to enable architects to ask the right questions in order to generate the right answers for the problems they will encounter. In all curricula are found the following categories of courses to complement architectural education.

Sciences: Statics, Mechanics, Structures, Computers.

Theory: History, Arts, Methodology

Environment: Landscape, Urban.

Technology: Steel, Timber, Reinforced Concrete, Materials, Construction, Equipment.

Parallel to the category of design courses that is generally structured as a continuum of basic, intermediary, advanced and final stages, other courses are organised as a compound of subjects whose internal consistency follows, in many cases, the pattern of simple to complex, from basic to applied, or from early to recent. The knowledge that architects need to possess is mainly defined in terms of whatever is relevant elsewhere, that is, in the Western world.

Ethically, there can be no harm in acquiring more knowledge than what is absolutely necessary. Yet, the crucial issue is whether or not we are providing the students with what will be useful for them. For example, in courses of technology, usually the prevailing contract-based technology of the country is taught in schools of architecture. Structural behaviour, usually of steel and timber, is also discussed, but the implicit aim of technology courses is to bring the students to a level permitting them to design with reinforced concrete, because it is taken for granted that one should use the material and technology of the times. Frankly, there are only a very limited number of curricula that incorporate and aim to develop an awareness of — if not expertise in — bearing wall construction, earth or pisé not to mention reeds, bamboo, and the like. Paradoxically, on the other hand, academics vividly express their devotion to and admiration of dissertations on the range of technologies which fall under the common title of “vernacular”. Yet little effort is made in the educational system to ensure the continuity of the vernacular, an alternative source to provide solutions to problems while minimising reliance on exogenous factors and taking the least risk of disruption.

Similarly, in teaching, much effort is given to calculations of the need and equipment for air-conditioning, heating or elevators

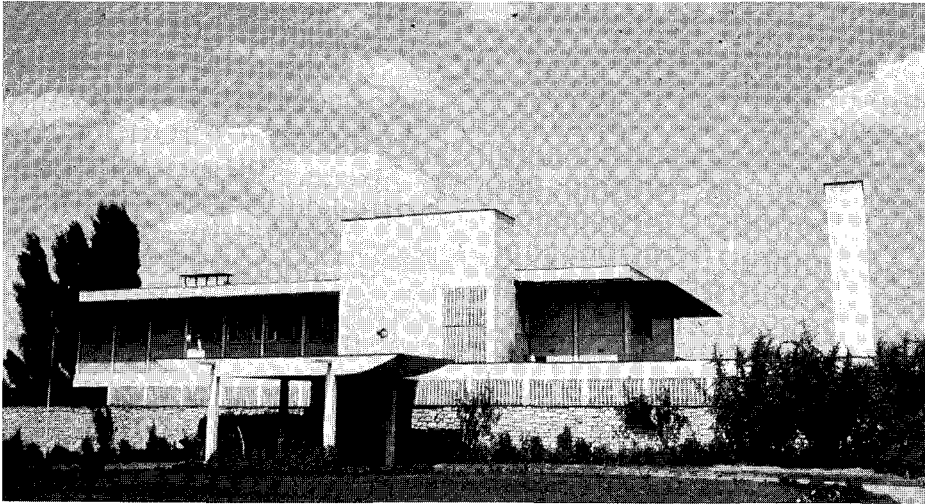
However, in how many schools do we find equipment courses that stress passive energy systems, the principles of solar heating, or natural ventilation systems? Furthermore, by the time architects graduate from schools of architecture, it would be considered a disgrace if they did not know the tenets of classical Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Gothic and Renaissance architecture. An architect who cannot carry on a detailed conversation on Wright’s Falling Water House, Mies’ Farnsworth House, the Sears Tower or the Seagram Building will not be taken seriously. But how many of them are aware of the internal and external forces that shaped the environment in which they have been living? The educational discourse does not orient prospective architects towards the expression of their own cultures. It is our belief that a sharper focus on support courses could serve to align the design courses so as to address the context relevant to each country and culture, and to their histories.

In considering this issue, we may look at the curricula in schools of architecture in Islamic countries. For example, in the Department of Architecture of King Abdulaziz University at Jeddah, architectural design and courses related to the development of graphic and architectural communication skills take up 42 per cent of the total credit hours. This ratio is 41 per cent in the Department of Architecture of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; 45 per cent at the former Fine Arts Academy (presently Mimar Sinan University) in Istanbul; about half in Tehran University’s Fine Arts School; 51 per cent at l’Ecole Nationale d’Architecture in Rabat, and 52 per cent at the University of Garyunis in Benghazi. Our survey of more than sixty schools of architecture in the Islamic world indicates that, usually, more than half of the teaching time is allocated to support courses. This ratio increases in Beaux-Arts based curricula with atelier systems, where the design studio becomes the melting pot for all related information. In the cases of Anglo-American or German-based models, the support courses have more autonomy than in the French system. Whichever model is considered, more than half of teaching time is

devoted to informative areas sometimes with, but usually without, studios to emphasise the local, regional or cultural context.

Years ago, Dogan Kuban criticised the over-education of architects. In doing so, he wanted to stress the fact that architects were equipped with knowledge which had no use-value for what they were to encounter professionally. He called for a new prototype of architect who could handle problems of a simpler nature with professional competence. His idea reflected the important point that there are no longer any intermediary technical skills between architects and the building practice. The single-level qualification system produces architect-stereotypes, all of whom would like to design and build, whereas the complex and multi-faceted physical environment calls for different performances from architects or other qualified persons who can assume the responsibility for dealing with the physical environment.

Since the late 1970s we have found ourselves in the midst of an unending debate and continual redefinition of architecture. In reality, these redefinitions reflect what architects desire to become. The professional and institutional definition of “architect” is often far from being appropriate to what architects are actually qualified to do. But, they also reflect the reality of the confusion which we have been experiencing: Is the architect a “decision maker”? Or is he a “social engineer”? Or, possibly, an “agent for change”? More humbly, is he perhaps “an enabler”? Why cannot we be content with an architect who is a designer who designs projects for the building(s) to be built in the society where he is expected to do so? Because in the turmoil of the past two decades or so, the role of the architect has been invaded by many other interest groups. Architects all over the world, in their meetings and conventions, have been trying to redefine their role, instead of reclaiming the rights of their profession that they should historically have possessed. To regain what has been lost will require proper education and useful knowledge to solve the urgent problems of our societies and our time.



Eldem, Indian Embassy, Ankara

Photo University of Pennsylvania.

Architects can be expected to perform properly and meet their responsibilities only when they have secured their professional rights and privileges. Do our societies today offer these securities?

There is little evidence that they do. Even in societies where the number of architects exceed thousands, as in Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan, the security and professional rights of architects are not guaranteed. On the one hand, there is a regression from the existing rights for architects (as the case is in Turkey and Iran), and, on the other hand, in some countries architects even lack a basic recognition of professionals (as is the case of many African countries and in Bangladesh). In some countries the organisation of the profession is totally forbidden by governments. Today, the most advanced professional recognition of architects in the Middle East is only under the Union of Engineers and Architects. In other words, the “soundness” of the building is more important than anything else to be secured by governments on behalf of the society. As a result, the issue of the “quality of environment”, for the protection of which the architect is qualified and expected to be responsible, remains totally meaningless.

It is well known that the strength of the professional organisation depends on its control over the quality of the education that is put forth. Weaker professional organisations end up with only loose control over acceptable levels of qualification. We must not forget the fact that the strength of the architect stems mainly from the strict control of the profession. RIBA and AIA are the major forces controlling educational organisation in the United Kingdom and the United States, and these organisations are more demanding than any other group with respect to who is accredited as an “architect” and who is not. In all of the educational organisations in our part of the world, there is no control mechanism over the qualification except that provided by the state. The state offers education as its responsibility. But, who is to assess the quality of the product remains unanswered. The state, by definition, cannot disqualify what it offers, and, therefore, there is a need to assess the standards of education. There seems to be a long road ahead of us before we see our governments consulting professional organisations on the qualifications of who is entitled to be recognised as an “architect”, and who is not.

At this point, the problem arises as to what happens if some graduates are not equipped with the expertise that the profession demands. Let us take the case of the soundest profession in the world, including the Islamic world, which is law. Who is qualified to be a lawyer and who is not, is the right, responsibility, and the privilege of the bar. The same applies for the medical profession. What happens to those who cannot qualify is a crucial issue. In the field of law, there are multitude of other professions, in and out of the bureaucracy, that provide a livelihood for those who do not — or do not want to — qualify for membership in the bar. Do we have such alternatives for the architectural profession? To be frank, absolutely not. The vital problem of qualification lies, in the final analysis, with the educational system, which needs to provide intermediate outputs who can efficiently function in society with adequate professional competence. A group of intermediary technicians skilled in the building arts, but who are not necessarily architects, is needed. Since this does not exist, we end up with a group of qualified people who do not want to deal with architecture whatsoever; they disqualify themselves. Statistics show this clearly. How many of the 15,000 Egyptians and 17,000 Turkish “qualified architects” are doing anything which, even tangentially, is related to architecture, to the environment, or even in the remotest sense to building? This, probably, is the saddest and most urgent problem on our hands, and one that merits our attention.