TRADITIONALISM OR TRADITIONA-LIEISM
Authentication or Fabrication?

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Abstract
Muslim cities with their notable architecture and morphology have always attracted scholars, architects, and planners. Regionalism, Historicism, Neo-Traditionalism, and Revivalism are but a few postmodern approaches that emerged calling for reviving the spirit of the place and searching for an identity associated with history and context. Structuralism, Semiology and Critical Studies offered significant methodologies in this respect. This research argues that traditional Islamic built environment has its own structures stemmed from Shari'a (Islamic legal system), which gave it its authenticity. Similarly, contemporary built environment has its own structures based on capitalism and its mechanisms. Those two modes (Islam and capitalism) are substantially different, and hence their structures. Adopting linguistic methodologies, Revivalism of Islamic heritage, or Traditionalism, is in effect imposing solutions originated in one mode onto another. This led to internal contradictions in the structures of contemporary built environment and thus to a state of in-equilibrium that might be depicted as a crisis. Therefore, the process of "authentication" of contemporary built environment turned out to be a "fabrication" of contemporary Islamic architecture. It is thus "Traditiona-lieism."

Keywords: *Islamic built environment; Capitalism; Structures of the built environment; Traditionalism; Rights-based mechanisms.*

INTRODUCTION

Given the implicit sense of imitation contained in the term "tradition," a question arises here: does tradition change? If so, can we maintain continuity within a changing tradition? One of the questions Karl Popper put forward in his formulation of a theory of tradition is that: How does tradition arise and persist? Drawing an analogy with science, Popper considered tradition as bringing some order and regularity into our social structure, yet tradition is amenable to change (Anderson, 1965). In that respect, Pocock (1962) argues that societies are organized to ensure continuity with their own past. He stated that "awareness of the past is in fact society's awareness of its continuity" (Al-Hathloul, 1998, p.18). Then, how the present with its rupture with tradition came to be what it is, especially in the contemporary Arab Muslim world? And how can we re-establish a sense of continuity with our tradition?

Looking at Islamic cities, one can discern a stable and dominant tradition which has gone through cycles of development, assessment, criticism and transformation, but a sense of continuity persisted throughout its history. However, since the beginning of the 20th century this tradition, derived from Islam, was challenged. A new mode based on modernity and capitalism was introduced. Today, the Muslim World lives a state of dualism between what is inherited from Islam and what is acquired from capitalism and the West. This dualism is clearly expressed in the built environment. As each of the two modes (Islam and capitalism) has its own mechanisms and roots that are different from the other, such a dualism created internal contradictions in the

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prevailing societal system and led to a state on in-equilibrium in its built environment, or what some refers to as a crisis. It is a crisis in identity, in the perception of the built environment production processes, of professionalism, and in the architectural style that should be developed, among others. To solve such crises and to eliminate the rupture with tradition and the sense of alienation caused by the new mode, many approaches emerged, acknowledging the authenticity and value of the past as a source for the present, called for referring to the past or the inherited traditional Islamic built environment for solutions to be applied in the acquired capitalist mode.

In view of the above, a few questions occur: how did the inherited tradition persist and maintain its continuity among the changing conditions (e.g. different dynasties) it encountered throughout the Islamic history? And why did different contemporary approaches of traditional revivalism fail to restore that continuity? To answer such questions the structures of the built environment have to be scrutinized first.

STRUCTURES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As argued in this research, the urban built environment in general consists of three interrelated levels or structures: first, the "manifested structure" defined as the physical status quo. This structure is visible and tangible. For example, the prevalence of dead-end streets and courtyard houses in Islamic built environment belongs to this level. Second, the "operative structure," which is invisible yet perceptible. It is defined here as the tools that relate the visible effects to its perceptible causes, such as the city's institutions (political, administrative, economic, social, etc.). Such causes are not static but susceptible to change. Thirdly, the "imperceptible structure," defined as the underlying relatively static causes that produce the perceptible effects (operative and manifested). This structure is invisible and latent. It embodies society's values, principles and mechanisms (generated by ideologies, or derived from religion as in Islam), as well as the societal rights and power structure. Therefore, this structure influences the built environment's two other structures. In a city, the manifested structure is the expression of the imperceptible structure implemented through the operative structure, also the manifested structure affects the imperceptible structure through its effect on the operative structure. It is an iterative, integrative process of interrelating the three structures together in any built environment. Each societal system, employing its own mechanisms, produces its distinct built environment according to the relationship and pattern of interaction between its three structures. Cities might have similar manifested structures (e.g. traditional Greek and Islamic towns); however, their operative and imperceptible structures are different. Similarly, some built environments might be similar at their operative and imperceptible levels but have different manifested structures, such as the case between the city of Tunis with its compact tissue and courtyard houses and the low-density fabric with free-standing dwellings in Safranbolu, Turkey. Thus, to comprehend a built environment it has to be studied comprehensively on its three structures; otherwise, its methodology will be deficient and will inevitably lead to misinterpretations, as transpired in many Orientalists' investigations of Islamic cities.

ISLAMIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT: AUTHENTICITY UNINTERRUPTED

Islamic built environment, characterized by its stability and continuity, represented a clear materialization of the interaction between its three structures. The mechanisms implemented in the production process of Islamic built environment were rights-based mechanisms, where rights, as derived from *Shari'a*, regulated such a process. It was a decentralized process with bottom-up[1] decisions taken by inhabitants in their sites, without any external intervention. Any party has

[1] The reader might think that the term "bottom-up" as a decision-making mechanism in Islamic territories (*khitat*) implies a positive denotation compared to the "top-down" mechanisms of decision-making that may include a negative denotation. The social and spatial territorial structure of Islamic cities is non-hierarchical; it does not encompass a ladder of decision-makers, i.e. there are no top or bottom levels. However, use of the term here is merely because it is very common and widely accepted among researches

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the right to act freely in his/her property, however, without harming others, socially and/or spatially. As such, the territorial structure of the Islamic built environment was a mere realization of the rights regulating its production. For example, the *Khitta*[2] (from the manifested structure), as an autonomous territory of which control falls upon its inhabitants, does not denote a spatial territory *per se*, however, it reflects a set of rights from the imperceptible structure that bestow its inhabitants with power to decision making regarding the territory. It is thus a rights-based territory. The Islamic city was composed of interconnected types of territories or *Khitta*; the house is a small *khitta*, the dead end street is a khitta, the through street is a larger *khitta*, and so on. To clarify this, the following case (*nazila*) cited in an authoritative *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) source will be demonstrated as an example.

In one case, a man whose house is at the end of a dead-end street extended a wooden box and a three hand-spans toilet to the street next to his neighbour's house. The neighbour objected but without success. He raised the case to the judge who ruled that since the principle in dead-end streets is that its benefits are shared by all its residents, no one of them has the right to appropriate any of its benefits for his own without the consent of all residents. He added that if this is done then the extension should be eliminated (al-Wansharisi, n.d., v.8, p.499).

It can be inferred from the above case that the decision to carry on any physical change in the dead-end street lies in the hands of the dead-end street inhabitants themselves; their consent has to be sought before any physical change. That is, the dead-end street, as all Muslim jurists agree, is owned by the owners of abutting properties which doors open to it, collectively as a one party. They share the ownership of its substance as well as its usufruct, thus they have the right of control over their collective property. As such, the dead end street is a collectively-controlled property regulated by well-defined rights where no external party has the right of intervention.'Ibn Qudamah (a well-known Muslim jurist) relates that building a shop or a projected cantilever or an overpass in a dead-end street is disallowed unless its people permit. As rights of the street pertain to them, actions are allowed if they all permit as a one owner-party ('Ibn Qudamah, n.d., v.7, p.33). Likewise, 'Ibn Ar-Rami (building expert) (d. 734 H/ 1335 AD) states, "if there were houses on a dead-end street, and some residents wanted to establish a gate at the mouth of the street, they are not allowed to do so without the consent of all inhabitants" (336). It is clear from these statements that inhabitants' collective consent is a pre-requisite for any action to be allowed in the dead-end street. Hence, decision making was a consensus-based process carried out by inhabitants themselves without any external intervention from the state or its representatives. This grants these territories a great degree of autonomy in the production, development, and management of their built environment and internal affairs.

The dead end street constituted but a one type of territory (*khitta*) in the Islamic built environment, with its well-defined set of rights. Other territories such as through streets, *fina'*,[3] and the market, each enjoyed a specific set of rights that regulated its production and reproduction. Thus, Islamic built environment encompassed a rights-based territorial structure. *Khittas* or territories enjoyed a state of autonomy. Gates at the mouth of dead end streets were a clear indication of that autonomy. However, such autonomy did not lead to a mosaic territorial

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in the field of planning and built environment. Nonetheless, it is not intended from using the term "bottom-up" here to denote its exact meaning that reflects its innate hierarchical societal structure.

2 *Khitta* is a territory resulted from the act of claiming a property, often by establishing the boundary of the property by the inhabiting party itself (Akbar, 1988).

3 *Fina'* is defined as the space on the street abutting a property, used exclusively by the residents of that abutting property (Akbar, 1988).

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structure, but an overlapped and intermeshed structure due to rights that bonded the three structures of the built environment together, with inhabitants at its centre.

Distribution of rights in Islamic built environments (from the imperceptible structure) was the main determinant of its territorial structure. Two sets of right can be discerned here. First, there exists a clear set of "spatial rights" derived from *Shari'a*, related to physical properties (dead-end street in the case above), regulating their relationship with other properties and places (e.g. rights of ownership, control, usufruct, *istitraq* right, easement right, etc.). Spatial rights from the imperceptible structure interact with the manifested structure, regulating the formation of its territorial structure. Inhabitants stood at the centre of such relationship; spatial rights were self-implemented by inhabitants themselves. Second, a set of rights (imperceptible) that pertains to inhabitants themselves (operative), referred to here as "social rights," exists in these territories (manifested), regulating the relationships between inhabitants as to their properties and restricting the domination of one party over the other, such as the rights derived from the Prophet (ppuH) tradition of damage "neither *darar* nor *dirar,*"[4] meaning "there should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm."[5] The inhabitant has rights in his house, in his territory, and in the street, in addition, there are rights associated with the house, the dead-end street, the street, and so on. Those rights, as noted in the above case, were self-implemented except in cases of dispute between parties concerned (then the judge's ruling is binding to all disputed parties). Through these rights, relationships between territories (*khitat*) and their inhabitants were regulated, spatially and socially. The Islamic built environment was a realization of the continuous interaction between its three structures, which is a vital criteria of its authenticity.

Self-implemented mechanisms of decision-making in Islamic built environment enabled its inhabitants and granted them the necessary power derived from their rights to make decisions (without harming others), thus freeing them to generate appropriate solutions from within their sites; they are enabling rights (Al-Lahham, 2005). These solutions were commensurate with inhabitants' subjective needs, values, and specific circumstances of their *khitta* (territory). As rights were transparent and well known to all parties, each party was aware of its rights in its *khitta* as well as the rights of others. This produced a territorial structure with minimum hierarchical relationships between parties, if not eliminated altogether. The societal power and rights structure in Islamic built environments can thus be portrayed as non-hierarchical. Hence, mechanisms of the production of Islamic built environments were enabling mechanisms with consensus-based decision making process, implemented by the inhabitants themselves, without any external intervention.

Moreover, as collective control in the dead end street (in the case above) is based on agreement between residing parties (intraneous) and never on intervention by an outsider party, it led to intensive dialogue between members of the controlling party in cases of dispute. This principle, in turn, increases the communication and social interaction and thus cohesion between residents and eliminates any domination that might exist between parties in such a shared property. Likewise, the interconnectedness of adjacent territories through their properties and physical structures sustains and intensifies the interconnectedness and interaction between its inhabitants, creating networks of spatial and social relationships. Through repetition of such cases and other shared physical elements and properties (e.g. *Sabat* or overpass between territories, party wall, water spouts) territories turn in its totality into a one well-interweaved network, spatially and socially, which has its impact on the Islamic built environment as a whole, increasing its solidarity and connectedness. As such, due to rights-based mechanisms (imperceptible), besides being a spatial territory (manifested), the dead end street and all other

[4] Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik (Beirut, 1981) p.529. *Darar* means what an individual benefits from at the expense of damaging others. *Dirar* means the actions which damage others without benefiting the acting party (Akbar, 1988, p.256).

[5] The translation is by Ibrahim and Johnson-Davis (1977), An-Nawawi's forty Hadith (An-Nawawi, n.d., p.106).

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khittas comprise social territories (operative); the three structures are welded together, forming a one harmonized entity.

Such integration is clearly evident in the production of many physical elements in the Islamic built environment. For example, *Ihya'* in Islam is the revivification of dead land without, according to most Muslim jurists, the ruler's permission. Dead land can be revived and consequently owned by the reviver. *Iqta'* or allotment is the act by the ruler of granting a piece of land to individuals. It is another form of revivification, however, conditioned by the ruler's permission. *Ihtijar* is the demarcation of land prior to revivifying it, without the ruler's consent. It bestows its party the right of privatation (taking precedence over others) but not ownership, unless the land is revived. It also differs from revivification in that the demarcator might keep the land as long as the local conventions allow, however, in revivification, the land has to be revived after its acquisition. These three spatial elements have the same manifested end-product; however, their processes of production are different according to the operating rights-based mechanisms and thus the interaction between the three structures. Aware of such differences, Muslims assigned different terms for each of the three elements, according to their operating mechanisms.

In brief, the three structures of Islamic built environment were in a continuous state of interaction. They were deeply intermeshed, thus constituting a net-form relationship. In view of that, the three structures in the Islamic built environment don't symbolize levels with hierarchical relationships, but scopes of continuous interaction, with inhabitants forming their axis. Such integration gave the traditional built environment its authenticity and continuity. Traditional built environment witnessed several changes that led to transformations in its manifested structure, geographically and historically. For example, the Mamluki architectural style in Cairo is different than the Fatimid, and both are different from the Ottoman style in Constantinople. Nevertheless, maintaining its integration, the threes structures of Islamic built environment continued to interact in a net-form manner, using their rights-based mechanisms. As a result, tradition relatively changed, yet without ruptures; it maintained its continuity, thus stability and equilibrium.

MODERNITY: BREAK WITH TRADITION

Since the eighteenth century, the emergence of the modern project necessitated the presence of the modern state as an organizing body and regulator responsible of implementing the modern project. It was based on concepts of sovereignty, representation, and legitimacy (Badie, 1992, p.102). It is characterised by its legal authority and the idea that the state embodies and represents the will of its people (Pierson, 1996, p.23). This led to a distinction between who rules and who is ruled (citizens). Stemming from its legitimacy, the modern state was in essence based on the concepts of modern power and authority. Relationships between the ruler and the ruled are asymmetric power relationships. They are hierarchical relationships directed from top (supreme power) to bottom (subjects), where the state gives itself the right to decision-making in most institutions or to intervene in the decision-making processes of its subjects. Foucault conceives of the modern state as denoting certain rational exercises of power over others (subjects) (Hindess, 1996, p.97). It is thus a centralized "interventionist" state; it took responsibility for education, public health, introduction of material infrastructure, city planning, and the like. Gradually the state started to enact regulations and policies for most aspects of life. This conception of the modern state constitutes the roots of the state in the capitalist mode.

The emergence of the modern state led to substantial changes in the mechanisms of built environment production as well as in the party/ies responsible for implementing such mechanisms. This has affected the interaction pattern of the three built environment structures; instead of being rights-based mechanisms in the Islamic built environment where inhabitants constitute their axial party, it turned in the capitalist mode into power-based mechanisms where power is in the hands of the state. The inhabitant was withdrawn from the production process, and the state usurped its role as the central party responsible for the production process.

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Responsibility of built environment production was transferred from pertinent "intraneous" parties (inhabitants) in the inherited mode into centralized "extraneous" party (the state) in the capitalist mode. This embodies a change in the party shouldering the responsibility and in its concentration; it changed from being dispersed among all inhabitants, each within his site, to being concentrated in one party, the state. Moreover, rights from *Shari'a* were replaced by laws and regulations enacted by the state in the imperceptible level, to be applied through, and in, the operative level (by professionals) in the manifested level. Physical and spatial elements in the manifested level are subject to building regulations such as zoning, land-use, and building heights which restricted inhabitants' freedom in their own environments and shaped the territorial structure of contemporary built environment. Instead of being self-implemented rights, they became enacted, implemented, and supervised by the state. The inhabitant became a passive receiver, with no role in the decision making process, thus his knowledge and awareness of the built environment surrounding him diminished.

This change in mechanisms and responsible parties affected the three structures of the built environment and their interaction. They changed from being intermeshed scopes or circles of exercitation in the inherited mode, into hierarchical levels that are related vertically, with the state as the central determinant party at the imperceptible level, holding the supreme power and controlling the societal power structure. Therefore, it is a one-way vertical relationship from the imperceptible level (state, power holder) to the operative level (professionals) to the manifested level (territorial structure). Such relationships open doors for domination from higher level parties (the state) over lower level parties and territories (on the manifested level). It is a domination-subordination structure. As a result of this transformation, contemporary built environment lives today a state of in-equilibrium and destabilization, characterized by inequality, injustice, subjugation, and conformity.

POSTMODERNITY: TRADITIONAL REVIVALISM

Since the late 1960^{s}, in the light of the failure of modernity and its reformation project particularly in the built environment, evident in the sense of alienation between the built environment and its users, the lack of cohesion and interaction among users, and the nihilism of meaning embodied in the built environment as a result of modernity's break with space (context) and time (tradition), postmodernity emerged as a means to re-establish the connection with time and space so as to reinstate the communication between the built environment and its users, and restore the spirit of place or the "Genius Loci" lost with modernity.

In that respect, several postmodern approaches emerged advocating the concepts of contextualism and historicism. Examples of such approaches are "Critical Regionalism," "Historical Revivalism," and "Traditionalism," part of which are the widespread movements of Islamic architecture revivalism known as "Islamic traditionalism" or "authentication of Islamic architecture." Seeking to re-establish continuity with traditional Islamic built environments and searching for a distinct identity that meets contemporary challenges within the spirit of Islam, most of these approaches focused on the manifested structure of the Islamic built environment, thus reducing the issue of identity to a stylistic, formalistic one.

Performing within the capitalist milieu, these approaches maintained the capitalist power-based centralized mechanisms of built environment production and the hierarchical relationships between its three structures. As power is the cornerstone of the capitalist state, postmodern approaches accepted the already established power relationships and the dominance of the state in the decision making processes and the production of the built environment. The imperceptible level constitutes a barred, impenetrable scope that the state protects and sustains. Therefore, revivalist postmodern approaches were restrained in their actions mainly in the manifested level and partially in the operative level (restrained by state regulations), however, within the framework of the centralized capitalist mechanisms and societal power distribution.

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In view of that, it can be said that the contemporary rupture with Islamic tradition occurred since the emergence of modernity with its capitalist power-based mechanisms of built environment production, and not as a result of shifting paradigms of architectural styles such as modernity and postmodernity, or currently deconstruction, as many architects claim. This transformation of mechanisms led to disintegration in the three structures; they split into three distinct levels with hierarchical relationships which consequently led to divergence in the process of built environment production. As such, postmodern revivalist approaches maintained a continuation with their immediate predecessor, modernity, but not with their inherited tradition.

TRADITIONALISM: AUTHENTICATION OR FABRICATION?

Whereas modernity adopted science as its prime referent in fulfilling its reformist project, postmodernity referred to linguistic studies. Structuralism, semiology, and critical studies offered significant methodologies in that respect. Drawing an analogy with language, postmodern scholars and architects adopted such methodologies in their studies of the built environment. They considered the built environment as a text that can be deconstructed into its main elements, and then reconstructed by reforming these elements in a new spirit.

Some postmodern architects and planners (e.g. Aldo Rossi, Leon Krier) relied in their attempts to achieve communication between the user and his context and to restore the sense of place (Genius loci) on activating users' "urban memory" through associating the built environment with some images from users' mental background (spatial and/or temporal). History and context are perceived as sources for eclectic disjointed physical images to be used as signs related to user's memory. This methodology was employed by many architects of Islamic architecture revivalism (architecture traditionalists) in representing the inherited built environment. They reduced the inherited tradition into a set of physical and spatial elements stored in the user's memory as images that embody signs loaded with meanings from user's past and context. Aiming at creating a contemporary built environment in the spirit of Islam, architects dragged up images from tradition so as to reconstruct them in a new architectural manner. Architecture in that sense tends to be no more than syntax of images and signs. History was perceived as a frozen and figurative, aesthetic entity that can be transferred into the present through its images; it was dealt with as a static entity, annulling its dynamic character, changeability, and continuity through time. In other words, revivalist architects concentrated merely on the tangible elements from the manifested structure of traditional built environments, ignoring the intangible processes and mechanisms embedded in the operative and imperceptible structures and their integrative relationship which produced the manifested elements. These approaches were quite superficial. They are, as Harvey argues, contradictory approaches; they "stabilize and control the processes that must be mobilized to build them" (Harvey, 2000, 173). Scott Lash termed this approach as one of "historicity" rather than "historicism" because, as he contends, "it is selective, elective, and lacks the coherence of a true historic revival" (cited in Gottdiener, 1995, p.129).

However, the process of dismantling the inherited built environment into its basic elements was accompanied by a process of dismantling its contents and meanings. Physical elements (signs) were dismantled into their "denotation," or according to J. Stuart Mill, the immediate meaning of the physical element which belongs to the manifested structure, and "connotation,' which is the indirect or implicit meaning of the element. Connotation belongs to the imperceptible structure of the built environment. Traditional revivalist approaches maintained the first while disregarded the latter. This turned the physical and spatial elements extracted from the inherited Islamic built environment such as the arch, the dead end street, the vestibule, the winding street, the *sabat*, and alike into symbols and slogans promoting Islamic architecture.

Relying on linguistic methodologies in the design process, these elements were emptied of their non-architectural contents which essentially belong to the operative and imperceptible structures, and dealt with through their physical forms only, i.e. on the manifested level.

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Consequently, these elements are not any more the end-product of the integration of the three structures and their rights-based mechanisms. They became used merely as an expression of formality that reflects nostalgic feelings. For example, the dead end street no longer reflects the decision-making process emanating from the system of rights operating in it (connotation), specifically its pattern of control and ownership, as explained above. Today, cleared from its connotative meaning, the dead street is simply considered as a notable traditional spatial element (denotative meaning) that prevailed in the Islamic city and reminds us of our past and meets our nostalgia; it is just a symbol of traditional Islamic architecture, in a postmodern perspective. Moreover, connotatively, it is today a property owned and controlled by the state; its inhabitants are only granted the right of use, however, within the framework of the state's laws and regulations. Accordingly, mechanisms operating in the decision making process of the production of the dead end street today (imperceptible level) are completely different from those prevailed in the Islamic built environment. As such, the dead end street today does not relate whatsoever to its predecessor from the traditional built environment, except in its formal configuration.

The built environment production as such became dictated by the power-holder in the imperceptible level, which dominates the other two structures and their parties. Professionals from the operative level are subject to the state power (laws and regulations) and its mechanisms of operations. At the same, being the parties responsible of much of the decision making process in the built environment production, the state through professionals dominate the manifested level. Inhabitants in the manifested level became receptors, with no substantial role in the production process. Even in traditional revivalism approaches, the professional chose which images to reactivate in the inhabitant's memory and how to reconstruct them. Therefore, the built environment turned to be dominated by hierarchical power relationships, and is the outcome of a decision making process in which a few extraneous parties participate, but not the lots of pertinent, intraneous parties, i.e. the inhabitants.

One of the contemporary traditionalist approaches that is widely accepted and spread today is the movement of "New Urbanism." Adopting a postmodern neo-traditionalist standpoint, the movement of "New Urbanism" (NU) emerged in the eighties of the last century to resolve the dilemma of social heterogeneity and alienation created by modernity and the decline of the notion of community. Enfolding a nostalgic traditionalist standpoint, NU aspires to retrieve the spirit of community as existed in pre-industrial societies. This, according to NU, can be achieved through restoring the sense of "place" as against the modern "space," or what is known as "Genius Loci," as well as reviving the concept of the public space. The distinction between space and place, according to NU, cannot be determined physically as much as socially through the pattern of social relationships that prevail among inhabitants and their association with place itself. To reinstate the sense of place, identity, belonging, and intimacy, NU linked the built environment with its spatio-temporal context. NU communities are thus place-based communities (Al-Lahham, 2012). Manifestly, this resembles to a certain extent the concept of *khitta* in the Islamic built environment, however, the divergence lies in the system of rights and mechanisms of production associated with place and its inhabitants, particularly the right of control.

In an attempt to create contemporary built environments in the spirit of Islam, NU was adopted by a few architects from the Muslim world. Quest for identity was their prime goal. However, that identity was re-established on the manifested, formal level only. It is a fake identity that does not constitute any continuation with traditional Islamic identity. This design method encountered vast criticism that denied dealing with history as a frozen and figurative entity and the commodification of its nostalgic feeling, claiming that this methodology resulted in the production of what is known as "Café society,"[6] i.e. a consumerist society founded on fascinating

[6] The term "Café society" emerged in the 1920s. It signifies the so-called "Beautiful People" who gather in fashionable cafes and restaurants (Wikipedia, August, 2008). Currently, the term is employed in many urban studies to denote a venue associated purely with the consumption of goods rather than a place for creative culture and democratic activities. It is a place where the

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people through the industrialization of attractive architectural scenes rather than re-establishing deep-rooted continuity in tradition.

Continuity in tradition cannot be fulfilled unless it is established on restoring the production mechanisms of Islamic built environment and the integrative relationship between its structures. As the manifested structure is changeable and the operative structure is relatively dynamic; changes in tradition occur mainly on the manifested level and to some extent on the operative level, and not on the imperceptible level which is considered the essence of tradition's endurance and stability. The interaction between the three structures produces its varied built environments that comply with prevailing conditions. Islamic built environment experienced different manifested architectural styles that varied historically (e.g. Umayyad, Fatimid, Mamluki) and geographically (e.g. Umayyad in Damascus, Umayyad in Andalusia), yet retained its rights-based mechanisms. Today, through restoring the Islamic production mechanisms, a new style of contemporary Islamic architecture might be developed, different than the inherited ones, yet fulfils the continuity in tradition.

TRADITIONA-LIEISM, NOT TRADITIONALISM

Employing the same linguistic methodology of semiology and post-structuralism to read the so-called contemporary authentication of Islamic architecture, one can find that the "signifier" (image) has overshadowed its "signified connotation" (implicit meaning). That is, the original signifier became "emptied," robbed of its original connotation that reflects the integration of the built environment's three structures and the mechanisms operating within them. The true meaning of the real sign is distorted by being emptied of its history. Subsequently, the signifier is reloaded with new connotation that communicates with user's memory and meets its nostalgia; it is a commoditized meaning. Principally, the unity between the signifier (image) and the signified (meaning) is a cultural convention (Gottdiener, 1995), however, instead of being reproduced to maintain its continuity, the inherited meaning of objects (signified) that is produced by one culture (Islamic) has been decomposed and then re-used in the other (capitalist). In that sense, history is dealt with in a theatrical de-realized manner, where reality is turned into fantasia cultivated in the "hyperreality" or virtuality. It is, as depicted by Baudrillard, a "game of images" where the virtual overshadows the real (Proto, 2006). It is a game of architectural syntax in which meaning is brought about through "system of signs" (Baudrillard, 1994). Accordingly, the authentication of Islamic built environment turned out to be a fabrication process. It is a process of industrialization of contemporary Islamic architecture that operates at the manifested level only, within a capitalist milieu.

The continuity that Islamic built environment maintained regardless of the challenges it witnessed throughout its history is fundamentally due to the maintenance of the integration and intermeshed relationship between the three structures and its rights-based mechanisms, where inhabitants as pertinent intraneous parties represented the central axis of that integration. The territorial structure of the Islamic built environment and its physical elements, characterized by cohesion and homogeneity, were immediate reflections of these mechanisms. Today, adopting capitalist mechanisms and design methodologies, these places and physical elements produced by one system were imposed onto another, however without their connotations. They turned in the contemporary built environment to places for the exchange of symbols extracted from past images that belong to the manifested level of traditional built environment. It is a process of

richness and meaning of public life and public space, promoted by postmodernity, is simply reduced to industrialization of leisure and entertainment by use of architectural metaphors to generate a manufactured spectacle (Walters & Brown, 2004).

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identity fabrication that sustains the capitalist consumerist attitude and consumption of space. Hence, Islamic built environment is perceived today as a commodity; history and tradition are exploited, so as people's nostalgia. Phrases like "commodification of nostalgia" became well-known in such approaches.

In conclusion, it can be said that contemporary attempts of "Traditionalism" are but "Traditiona-lieism," a fib that we live and will continue to live, unless they are founded, instead of on capitalist mechanisms, on the Islamic rights-based mechanisms of built environment production and the interconnectivity and harmonious spirit of its structures, then authentication of contemporary Islamic architecture will take effect, and continuity with tradition will be realized.

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