Architecture For "Other"? Building A Critical Account On Architecture "Othering" From Colonial To Post-Colonial Time (19th Century - Present Time)

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Abstract

Historically architecture as an art form design medium has prevailing characters used to express various messages. Architecture is manifested to serve different ideologies and philosophies. One defining issue is how architects dealt with "other" (contrary to self, alien) geography, context, culture and situation? Within constructed mindsets that understand "other" as distinct, strange, weak, uncivilized and "self" as strong, civilized, universal and etc. This dichotomy served imperialist ideology and exploitation and paved the way for architects to find "other" as an opportunity to impose their beliefs, annihilate alterity, and exploit it. These three trends incepted from imperialist ideology in colonial times and continued their influence until now. This paper critically explores how architecture for "other" is constructed, manifested and represented by "self" through the discourse of colonialism to the post-colonial era. The architecture for "other" research has adopted a methodology different from the normative historiography of post-colonial scholarships that emphasises the West vs. non-West confrontation. It is based on foundational meanings derived from the philosophy of "other" and "Self". Whether it is the relationship between colonizer/ colonized, post-war cultural politics of American influence on Europe, Asia and elsewhere and the socialist globalisation by soviet and multiple globalisation from different parts of the world have marked lasting impacts on constructing "other" architecture. This paper unmasks this issue by specifically elaborating on the triad features of 'self' and 'other' binary relations in architecture discourse. These triad features of architecture for "other" are; architecture as a medium to practising hegemony, the architecture of

rationalism (civilizing world), and others as a platform to experiment with the newest architectural ideas.

Keywords: Post-colonial theories, Architecture theory and criticism, Othering philosophy Globalism

Introduction:

Architecture for "other" is a very rhetorical phrase used by the author to make reflections utilising the philosophy of the "other" constituted by Western philosophers. How does the self (West, superior, civilized and etc.) approaches or represent the "other" (subordinate, inferior, uncivilized, etc.)(Trombley, 1999) p. 620 through architecture (19th century-present time)? Levinas along with other philosophers, criticized or acknowledged that the western philosophies took self for all understanding and perceptions. This leads to thinking of the "other" as a reflection of self or making it difficult to comprehend the relationship with "other" which has created a negative tendency to dominate the "other" due to its alterity(Edwards, 1967; Inwood & Honderich, 1995; Rieder, 2012). Said depicts oriental western expression, whether academical or artistical, that builds a fictitious border between the East and the West and the Orientalist and the Orient, with exotic, fantastical, irrational fears and Western rational progressives (Edward, 1978). This premise raises the question of How you represent or express the Orient as "other" people in your civilized self? Architecture as an art form embodied the philosophy of "other" to serve a colonial mission (Metcalf, 1989; Rabinow, 1995; G. Wright, 1991), civilizing mission or universalizing by erasing difference (AlSayyad, 1992; Fischer-Tiné et al., 2004; Metcalf, 1989; G. Wright, 1991) and "other" as a platform for exploitation(Avermaete et al., 2017; Cohen & Eleb, 2002; Lu, 2010).

Colonial architecture is much influenced by imperialism. Reviewing the Daniel brook historical accounts, in the early stages of colonialism, architects were doing architecture for "self" in the colonial territory, simply transplanted; design decision making, and drawings made by architects in the metropole, without considering "other" context. Even the construction labour and some building materials were exported to the colonial territory (Brook, 2013). Metcalf and Gwendolyn discuss that this trajectory of architecture praxis was altered in the later period of colonialism, and the socio-cultural context of "other" is explored. Local architecture elements were amalgamated with western architecture languages. Thus, evolved the new stereotyped architecture or hybridized or syncretic architecture. The British and French created a vision to minimize themselves as foreign ruler but legitimately the indigenous rulers (Metcalf, 1989; G. Wright, 1991). At the same time, Mark Crinson and Anthony D.King argue that this imperial vision is persisted in post-colonial settings in various shapes and forms to dominate the "other" (Crinson, 2003; King, 2004). The architecture for "other" was principally fabricated to practice hegemony.

The essence of colonialism was based on the idea of self-legitimation, the most powerful claims of colonists to bring progress and modernity to the uncivilized people. In colonial logic, those who were different because they were inferior had to be equalized and therefore equalizing by civilization. However, when this equality is achieved, the foundation of colonial rule disappears (Fischer-Tiné et al., 2004). New architecture, more obviously modern architecture, is escorted the "Civilization Mission". The idea persisted to the present time. Modern aspirations of the western leadership persuaded all nations in the direction of the modernization model originated from the West. Some are

less developed, and some are more developed, but all nations are in the direction of modernization brought by western knowledge (Lu, 2007a). This wisdom propagates the vision of difference. There is a difference between "diversity" and "difference". The diversity that recognizes the "other" but difference is an attempt to dominate the "other" by cultural supremacy (Bhabha, 2012)p.34. The tropical architecture was constructed in colonial settings to legitimate the modern architecture for "other" (J.-H. Chang, 2010).

There was very little to work on in Europe; thus, western architect turned their attention to the colonial territory, which became a laboratory to experiment with their modernist ideas. They considered "other "context as tabula rasa. The main assumption is the orientalist vision that "other" possess primitive cultures and thus need European assistance for modernization (Cohen & Eleb, 2002; G. Wright, 1991). Le Corbusier's plan for Algiers is criticized by many scholars. Lamprakos claims that the plan largely ignored the actual cultural and geographical setting of the city. In essence, the entire product was an imposition by an individual within an established colonial framework. Perhaps the plan curves inspired by Algerian women and the city's geography were only superficial gestures and did not reflect an understanding of the underlying structures. Le Corbusier projected European imperialist ideology behind its interesting modernist concept (AlSayyad, 1992). Celik argues the curved shape of his residential block and the expression of Kasbah as a veil in an Algeria project show that Le Corbusier defined "non-West" as an "exotic" feminine masculine male of "West" (Celik, 1992). This ideology continued in post-colonial times in different forms and shapes. The economic boom of the Middle East attracted foreign architects. The large firms like SOM, HoK and star architect firms like rem Koolhaas (OMA), Norman Foster, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, and others all found 'other' as an interesting platform to experiment with their models (Sartawi, 2010). In China, starchitects, architecture pieces as "weird" architecture and President Xi said, "No More Weird Architecture" ("No More Weird Architecture" in China Says Chinese President, 2014).

1. Architecture for "other" as a way of practising hegemony

Historical globalization paved the path for exchanges of architecture and urban models and played a significant role as a carrier of culture exchanges (Ghirardo, 2008). These exchanges of models influenced each other architecture and cultures (Volait & Nasr, 2003)¹. In colonial times, the architecture of colonizers was influenced by the imperial ideology of culturally colonising "others". In this paradigm, for instance, "self" and "other" philosophy is realized where "self" is West, superior, civilized, powerful while the "other" are East, subordinate, inferior, uncivilized, etc., resulting into "othering" processes. One of the influential books of post-modern time is "Orientalism" by Edward Said. Proffered in this ideology that the western orientalist artists, poets, storytellers and others played their role in misrepresenting, alterity and distortion the "other" identity (AlSayyad, 1992; Edward, 1978; Inwood & Honderich, 1995). Foucault argues that othering is a process of fabricating fictitious knowledge of the "other", composed of cultural representations that establish hierarchies of domination that serve socio-political power. This constituted binary relation of the west powerful while the non-west weak needed to be ruled (Rieder, 2012). Using Lefebvre's term this "production

¹ How native actors play a significant role in diffusion, appropriation of foreign urban models and how then it is again exported to other places. Architecture influenced by way of culture exchanges between two parties form colonial to present time but dependent on power relationships specific to every case.

of abstract" become driving ideology of imperialism to control "others". Some post-colonial scholars (Anthony D King, Metcalf, Wright, Mia fuller, Nezar alsayyad, Paul Rabinov) extended the meaning of "other" ideology in architecture. These scholars mainly pointed out two "othering" architecture approaches. On the one hand, a powerful representation of European architecture. While On the other side, the distortion, misrepresentation of "other" architecture identity, for example, using some of the native architecture symbols, i.e. hybridization, individual interpretation excluding others, creation of dichotomy between tradition and modern city, a tradition that is a native filthy, miserable city and modern that is imported from West which exemplifies highest achievements of human being, etc., which is in the word of Homio Baba is Entstellung (Bhabha, 1985). In the post-colonial era, some scholars criticised the exportation of modern architecture and its variants like tropical architecture and through contemporary globalisation. The exported architecture continues an ideology of indirect western cultural and technological supremacy and imperialism on "other" (AlSayyad, 1992; Crinson, 2003).

The premise conforms architecture was intrinsically hegemonic in colonial and in asymmetric globalisation settings, then it could be interesting to know some concrete examples of these architecture representations for "other" and perceptions by "other". The Empress market of Karachi is one fine example while exploring architecture representing in the colonial setting with the lens of Architecture for "other". Scholars did not too much discuss this example in the international arena. In 1890, the grand Empress Market was constructed in Karachi, an important seaport of the British Empire in India. The site has an important location because here, the uprising rebellion "sepoy" was brutally executed by firing cannonballs at them. By that time, this location had gained importance as locals frequently visited to pay respect to their freedom fighters. The British colonizers fear that they would erect a monument in memory of such sepoy and spark resistance. Thus, they came up with a smart solution to construct the empress market to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. It was designed by then chief municipal architect James Strachan. The foundation was completed by English construction firm A.J Attfield and the building was constructed by two local firms 'Mahoomed Niwan and Dulloo Khejoo'. The sandstones were brought from Rajasthan deserts. The architectural design was unique. The spatial layout is comprised of four side galleries arranged around a courtyard 130ft by 100 ft, inspired by Mughal architecture. The gallery provided accommodation for 280 shops and other stall keepers. The façade was designed in gothic rival architecture style, the watchtower, gothic arches. This hybridized architecture is also known as Mughal gothic architecture. The architectural representation exemplifies the power of colonial masters on their subjects (Saeed, n.d.; C. Wright, n.d.). While on the other side, it also endorses the Metcalf argument that the Indian architecture was constructed by the British to portray a traditional society to admire the Europe progress. The British architect combined the Indian architecture pastiches with gothic revival style to form Indo Saracen style, which was proclaimed to represent the British Raj as legitimately Indian and socially and culturally modern (Metcalf, 1989; G. Wright, 1991). These architectures have an enduring influence on the "others". The loyal colonisers, the wealthy landlords or Trible chiefs also employed classical Mughal and Victorian architecture elements intending to avoid conflicts with their colonial masters. Spivak describes this in-between phenomenon; she discusses it with an example. The Indian widow has two options: either follow the traditional Hindu customs to die for it or live to embarrass the modern ideology of the colonizer. In

this two-countering dilemma, the widow evaporated between it (Nelson & Grossberg, 1988) 271-333.



Figure 1. Empress Market, picture taken by an unknown person. Source: British Library

In the Post-colonial era, according to Anthony D. King, discusses "the persistence of colonizing practices in an arguably post-colonial world" (Avermaete, 2012; W. Chang et al., 2019; Mittal Institute, 2015; Stanek, 2012). In Post-war, two grand projects emerged: US Marshal Plan and Soviet Molotov Plan to aid development in war-torn and developing countries. In this cold war era, these superpowers initiated their political, economic and cultural agenda to influence the "Others" (Alexander, 2020; Antonescu, 2014; W. Chang et al., 2019; Ding & Xue, 2015; Roskam, 2015; Stanek, 2012, 2020).

There are many examples but one of notable example is culture centre Warsaw that the Soviet Union exportation of architecture projects to "other" countries. The structure reveal power of Stalinist styles, the soviet hegemonic architecture for "Other". Palace of Culture in Warsaw was actually a sort of gift offered by Stalin to people of Poland and constructed in 1955. It is financed by USSR, constructed by soviet builders and most of materials imported from USSR. It is tallest building in Poland with 42 storey and 237-meter height. The architect followed the Viacheslav Molotov instructions as he said to him "How would you like a high-rise building, just like one of ours, in Warsaw?" thus, followed Stalinist gothic architecture style skyscraper model just similar to the Moscow ones. However, the soviet architects visited the Poland and were introduced with typical polish architecture, but the end product was just similar soviet skyscrapers. The only thing the polish government did was to provide land for construction. The skyscraper named on Stalin palace of culture and Science, but the name was change with course of time. It's rare to build a skyscraper without a practical purpose, and

obviously there were many political and ideological purposes: the demonstration of Soviet supremacy this side of the Iron Curtain.



Figure 2. The Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw, 1955. Source: A photo by Władysław Sławny / Dom Spotkań z Historią

The Soviet's pretence of offering better help than the Marshall Plan (2018). This powerful model was exported as a token of friendship to a free state, not on colonial territory. Again, this is an asymmetric power relation between the "self" and "other". Here "self" again saw the "other" as weak ready to be exploited or dominated. The architecture of the Palace of Culture and Science was a dominating landmark in Warsaw, representing the power of the Soviets, and the Poles saw it as soviet supranationalisation. When the Soviet Union fell, many poles were interested in demolishing it, but some regard it as our history we are obliged to preserve it (2017). Therefore, architecture for "other" as a way to practice hegemony and doesn't need colonial settings. Whether you say it is cultural imperialism or hegemony, in a true sense, it represented "other" as subordinate weaker need desperate assistance of "self". On the other hand, the American city models were undoubtedly exported to modernize developing countries and expand global capitalist models, which has influenced their cities and escalating new identity problems.

2. Architecture of rationalism (civilizing world)

Chakrabarty discusses the colonial idealist that civilizing mission of the "other" is not yet finished. The "other" still desperately needs the west's assistance for modernisation to come to a level of European standards (Chakrabarty, 2009). Marks Weber's polarization of traditional and modern societies and the conviction that Western development was a universal, neutral and linear process that each society follows (Lerner, 1958). Lu Duanfang discusses that in post-colonial time despite the end of direct colonial rules, the modernist mission of civilizing the universe persisted. In this notion, all nations are heading in the same direction. Some arrived earlier than others. With this keen self-awareness, a temporary lag has turned into a nationalist desire for development (Lu, 2007a). These policies influenced the developing countries by international agencies. It is precisely the promise of development that provides the conditions for the centre to realize its continued surveillance of

peripheral nations and their citizens (Lu, 2007b). Therefore, the modernization project is now the main agenda of less developed countries. In a similar way, many other post-colonial scholars criticised the exportation of modern architecture and its variants like tropical architecture, and through contemporary globalisation, the exported architecture continues an ideology of indirect western cultural and technological imperialism on "other". Anthony D.King argues that in the post-colonial era, the nation-states are independent that using western assistance to be modernization. However, the issue of "other" identity is still not addressed in his words "can we extend the meaning of colonialism in contemporary globalisation era?" Modernism is a new way self-colonising the developing nations beginning in the West experimented by West in Africa as tropical modern architecture and continuous making its acclamation on other subjects (AlSayyad, 1992; Crinson, 2003; King, 2004). Le Corbusier planned Chandigarh city with Nehru's vision of modernization of India. The paramount character of Le Corbusier exported his greater influential Corbusierian architecture with minor modifications in an alien land (Kalia, 2004).

For example, in post-war time, the following agencies CIAM, the Ford Foundation, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and others have become the main vehicles to implement American globalism. Following neoliberalism, many paramount American architects have become the main source of Americanisation. Neoliberalism ideologies have created many urban issues in newly developing countries. Where gleaming skyscrapers of multinational companies are exported from America and stand adjacent to the slums (Cody, 2003; Stephan, 2005). Marxists criticized such a process as Henry Lefebvre's slogan of "the right to the city" claims collective participation of local endeavours is needed in the production of urban space (Carabelli, 2016). There are many cases to expand the discussion on this issue but let's see one case thoroughly. The case study is Korangi town, one of the largest refugee camps constructed in Karachi, financed by the Ford Foundation and designed by Greek architect Doxiadis. He was a member of the housing and settlement plan in the Harvard Advisory Group of experts with a task to assist in developing Pakistan's first five-year plan. The mission was funded by the Ford Foundation, which was part of the American soft power policy. Doxiadis's inclusion in this group represents his mission of anti-communism and pro-American. The Greek planner has finished working on his section plan without any discernible contribution from the Pakistani members of the planning commission (Daechsel, 2013). He employed his theory' Ekistics' or 'science of human settlements' in the planning of Korangi town. The first phase was completed within a short period of time. Doxiadis designed modest one and two-room houses with wind catchers and courtyards. The spatial configuration of houses planned to have privacy, and gender separation, and he made his references to typical Muslim societies (Daechsel, 2015).

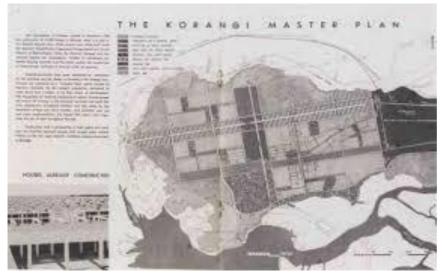


Figure 3. Greater Karachi resettlement housing program, map published in brochure, 1962 Source: (Soomro, 2018)

This grand plan of mass housing wasn't much reviewed by the local authority, who have weak expertise in planning and thus failed in the initial phase due to lack of public transport and infrastructure (Bates & Mio, 2015). The Korangi town residents rejected many aspects of the Doxiadis blueprint for the Muslim urban community because their living and cultural requirements were very specific. The private smaller spaces for women were encroached. The civic centre spaces are left unused (Bates & Mio, 2015). The house itself incrementally changed with residents' requirements over a period of time. Most of the wind catchers were replaced; in the present time, the conceived Korangi architecture designed by doxiadis is completely altered (Soomro & Soomro, 2018). Thus, the Doxiadis' modern Islamic society vision was ineffective base on his research on Islamic cities and tropical architecture. Tropical architecture is again a confusing terminology firmly attached to the east "other". Jiat-Hwee Chang argues the establishment of tropical architecture research centres by the British is likely to facilitate not only the acceptance of modern architecture for tropical conditions but also the continuation of British influence on "other" in post-colonial time (J.-H. Chang, 2010). Does the above case study raise the question of that is it a best practice to use modern models with self-interpretation of other cultural life without the inclusion of others in the process of production?

3. "Others" as a platform for architecture experimentation

The researchers on colonial modernism demonstrated, that modernism was not a disavowal of colonialism (Cohen & Eleb, 2002; Metcalf, 1989; Rabinow, 1995; G. Wright, 1991). Instead, the colonies were considered as tabula rasa or laboratories to experiment with their newest ideas (Cohen & Eleb, 2002; Lu, 2010). Through these experiments, the metropole could impose political and cultural influence on the rest of the world. For example, Le Corbusier, along with many other prominent architects, found exciting sites for "others" to experiment with their modernist visions. The "other" context is used as merely tabula rasa, an experimentation platform to favour the western global ambitions. The discourse of modernism in colonialism was clearly exhibited by the French in Morocco. Rabinow depicts the construction of urban colonial morocco as a result of long experimentations in urban planning. Modernism obligatorily implied the identification, evaluation

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and operationalisation of tradition. On the other hand, modernizing through scientifically derived healthy spaces and forms. The aim was to overcome history and culture through universalism. In such experimentation, the Le Corbusier attempted to integrate French and locals-only where the French were master and locals were subordinate (AlSayyad, 1992).

In soviet times, urban planners and architects invented Mikrorayon, a socialist urban form over the course of time. In the post-war era, these Mikrorayon not only disseminated to the Soviet Union but also as an aid to developing countries with an ideology to influence them politically and culturally. The Mikrorayon is a standardised city block having residential, school and all other necessary amenities. The architectural features were lack of artistry and differentiation across urban spaces. No residential area should be more appealing because of style, size or location. Equality a key ideological feature of socialist residential planning. Everything was meant to be the same for all locals (Metspalu & Hess, 2018; Stanek, 2020). One fine example is the exportation of Mikrorayon to Kabul, which was described by Americans as a miniature of Moscow. No doubt, the Soviets extended their support to gain a positive response from the locals of Kabul (Nasseri, n.d.).



Figure 4. A six-story, Soviet-built Mikrorayon in Kabul, 2010 Source: A photo by Michal Hvorecky

During the cold war cultural politics, modernist architecture was Americanised and exported to a different parts of the world. The socialist ideals were replaced with a commitment to democracy, which was used strategically to identify the flaws of the enemies of the liberal West (Cody, 2003). Globalization opened up new opportunities for western architects. Almost 90 per cent were designed by the western studio and 10 per cent by local firms in the Gulf region (Sartawi, 2010). The western modernisation, especially in American cities allured the middle eastern countries. The western star architects found an opportunity to re-experiment their design concepts in new territory and also get handsome remuneration and fulfil a local ambition to modernise their cities. Many Gulf cities have become centres for experimenting with iconic skyscraper design; for instance, it is evident in the Doha tower designed by Jean Nouvel (2005–12) that replicates the same form of the architect-

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designed of Barcelona tower, but with an addition to wraps it with a second layer of a Mashrabiya motif to cast ornamented shadows inside (Akcan, 2016).

In socialist Mao China, the practice of architecture was strictly limited by socialist visions and other domestic complexities. The China Aid Project for Developing Countries offered Chinese architects opportunities with fewer constraints, allowing them to explore more creative modern architecture. In such experiments, the Chinese architects learned the techniques from experiments conducted abroad, which were translated into the design and construction of parallel projects in China (W. Chang et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The architecture othering is an unavoidable practise of globalization. Firstly, Architecture is very sensitive art form. It has many implications when it is tied with socio-cultural philosophies. When architecture is tied with cultural imperialism, it has an adverse effect on cultural identity. These misleading interpretations of others always become banal architecture. Second, architects face architectural identity issues when working in cross-cultural environments. It is very difficult to translate "other" architectural languages, especially "other", that is: the global south, where very little research has been done on its architectural culture. Lack of local architectural information could lead to architectural identity issues. Thirdly, standardization of architecture models is proliferating around the world. It is thus opening up many issues. Therefore inclusive approach model is very effective in transnational architecture practices. The inclusive approach includes the involvement of local construction workers. Similarly, the incorporation of local construction materials is sustainable and reliable.

The research concludes that architecture "othering" mechanisms of colonialism, imperialism and other hegemonic ideologies can be used as a foil for understanding new mechanisms related to 21st-century globalization. It invites us to understand 21st-century globalization through the prism of architecture othering a post-colonial critique and how it differs from previous colonial or neocolonial Western imperialist ideologies? The main purpose of this research was to ensure architectural best practices for the global future so that globalization does not evolve into a new form of imperial imagination.

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