

Influence of Traditionalism in Tendencies of Iranian Contemporary Architecture

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Abstract: Since the process of modernism in Iranian architecture and after formation of the post-modernist thought, tendency to apply some of the principles, concepts and elements of traditional architecture became widespread. Traditionalism approach in the course of different eras of Iranian Architecture, before and after revolution in Iran; has appeared in different ways and intentions. The thought fields of these eras are distinct to Culturalism, Modernism, post-modernism. Within all the mentioned groups, traditionalism comes to view through the different framework and fundamental principles. Tradition is defined as the continuation of a set of principles, concept and foundations formed gradually in the thought of architects and has been dynamic, according to the environmental conditions and other effective factors in architecture domain; and it is expected that it continues to be dynamic as the time passes. An overview of the thoughts and speech of a number of contemporary architects reveals that most of them have had a glance at sustainable foundations and concepts in traditional architecture. The impact of different thoughts about tradition and traditionalism is reflected on the various trends of Iranian contemporary architecture which some of them apply the sustainable concepts and values of traditional architecture as imitated patterns or as abstractive concepts. Some others reject traditionalism completely and its continuity of the past and finally, trends which go for the presentation of the values and concepts of the traditional architecture in a new form among modern universal movements alongside globalization.

Key words: Tendency • Traditionalism • Iranian traditional architecture • Iranian contemporary architecture

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Iranian architecture has changed due to various social and cultural movements, in a way that traditional Iranian architecture faced harsh criticisms and extreme reactions, based on the invasion of modernist attitudes.

The concern of the tradition in Iran's architecture can be reflected in the title of the first international Iran's architecture congress (Isfahan, 1970). The title was "The Study of the Feasibility of the Link between Traditional Architecture and Modern Styles of Construction" [1]. The congress indicated a kind of dissatisfaction with the expansion of the modern approaches in architecture, as well as the neglecting Iranian art and culture on the one hand; and it represented those architects who wished to regard the architecture from theoretical and domestic viewpoints, on the other hand [2].

Iranian architecture was attempted to mingle traditions and modernity during the Second Pahlavi [3]. The same movement was pursued in years after the Iran's Revolution. Also, the tendency towards post-

modern architecture was one of the dynamic trends in that period [3].

In the mid-1980s under the influence of western architecture an eclectic architecture came into existence with a number of architects taking elements of Iranian architecture and combining them eclectically with the western Post-Modern style [4].

The tendency toward the use of some principles, meanings, concepts and elements of the traditional architecture expanded in Iran along with the formation of Post modernistic thought. Even, a group of sophisticated architects designed and constructed a few works within such affection. Thus, some kind of traditionalism in different periods of Iranian architecture can be observed which has been on the move along the newer inclinations in the contemporary Iranian architecture up to now.

In This research, by reviewing the tendencies of contemporary architecture of Iran after Revolution (1979) and explaining Personal expression of numbers of this era's architects about tradition and traditionalism, the influence of traditionalism and its conflict with modernism is analyzed.

Thought Tendencies in Contemporary Architecture of Iran: Certain pluralism and a variety of points of views are a special feature of architecture during the two decades after the Revolution. On the one hand, creating architecture and urban planning to correspond with the values and ideals of Islamic society was an essential element in this period. On the other hand, western-influenced trends like Post-Modernism, also played a role in Iranian architecture [4].

The architecture and civil designing in 80s could be known as three main thoughts. In spite of such a general categorization, there exist various thinking inclinations in each of these movements. Reviewing these dependent movements and tendencies is not only for having a historical interpretation of them, but it is actually done for getting involved and visit the thinking movements of the previous decades, vernacular forms of the international thoughts as well as the thought orientation of the 90s -possibly the next decades [5].

Culturalism: The political and social events of 1979 created a rupture between architecture before and after the Revolution. New viewpoints related to cultural, national or religious ideals emerged [4]. The movement is rooted in a viewpoint on civil structure which was put forward after the Iranian (Islamic) Revolution. The so-called movement is to refute foreign agriculture and civil designing in order to return to those domestic methods of Modernistic architecture -to aquire a reviewed and recovered past for it. A nostalgic view on the magnificent lost past identities to the extent of the refutation of the recent past, (except those issues which played roles in recovering and the rebirth of the traditional Iranian values) caused four sub-divisions of thinking movements to be formed based on the internal architectural moves [5].

Originalism: This tendency asked for a restoration of the basic values and standards through a full respect to traditions as the foundations of the old values -which come as unchangeable due to the holy traditions- that depends upon understanding Islamic motifs and themes. This movement believes that traditional societies are quite rich in mysteries and valuable truths to be discovered, unfolded and cleared for the public to observe. This approach focuses on the everlasting traditional norms and values which are always on the move, but are reflected in various forms due to time and place, to turn into symbols. Such a tendency relies upon discovering traditional rules of architecture and civil construction as well as reviewing and recovering them in present time [5].

Original ideas emerged in this nationwide competition marking the beginning of other revivalism, historic contextualism, progressist new and contemporary expressions which emphasized a search for the essence of Iranian heritage and an analysis of cultural space emerging through innovative configurations [6].

Traditionalism: This approach assumes that lasting traditions are those which are entangled into humans' opinions. Also, the art and culture founded on these traditions will always be fresh and new. They keep creativity at hand and make room for perfection. In this respect, museums, monumental architecture, old context of cities are the creative and live areas which appear as a linking part for mans' understanding of his position in the world and his joint to the past. Also, they turn out to be a place for mans' changing viewpoints to the present and future [5].

The first period during which some new architecture, rooted in the national heritage and culture, was conceived. It clearly demonstrated a longing for the country's traditional and spiritual essence [6].

This tendency considers the history, tradition and region-based architecture as a station which makes innovation and creation possible. Such an approach beholds content (not form) in its regard to history. In its approach to traditions, it put forward the current creativity with respect to maintaining the past achievements -to add to the present values. The above mentioned approach focuses on the relation of architecture and civil designing with natural and local grounds, having looked upon nativity. Also, it believes that architecture and civil designing in each age have both past elements and symbols and they benefit from the current artistic creativity; thus add to the credits of the past and present traditions some more values. Also, it changes in to the present and current tradition [5].

Historicism: This approach is just limited to collecting and extraction of the rules and principles governing cities more than modernism. It gives no credits to recovering this rule in modern and post modern cities. The definition and concept of civil spaces and areas is performed of the past and avoids generalizing such definitions to contemporary cities. Looking up into the written texts of this approach, one can understand that it evaluates contemporary cities with respect to the old cities' standards and principles in an anti-historical way, but there is no theoretical framework for such a city [5].

Modernism: This movement believes that it could be thought and viewed internationally and performed locally such perspective might be due to a century of modernistic achievements in universal scale and with respect to the empirical and scientific frameworks which were provided by international innovations. Also, serious critical views on Iranian architecture since the advent of modernism have been of importance. This approach focuses on the country's social economical, cultural and political changes and believes that special and construction organization can never be performed without obtaining a scientific procession and apply civil programming, designing and tools in a universal scale. It is believed that this approach can lead to choice and decision making in forms of the country's architecture and civil designing. This modernism movement had had great impacts upon architectural proceedings (particularly in 80s) and focused on the developmental role of these functions. What this movement believes in is the localization of the Iranian modernist views [5].

Ecologism: This approach criticizes the last 100 years of Iranian architecture and finds it a trite copy of the international modernistic architecture. Also, it believes that such an imitative, common-place copying had no result but cultural, social and spatial identity crisis. This tendency assumes that we can access to the most innovative works of today's Iranian architecture through taking notice of traditional, pre-modernist architecture of our country, as well as learning about innovative approaches of the last decades (Pahlavi & Qajar eras). This approach tries to make these basics and principles local and avoids taking senseless imitation of the universal modernist strategies. Contemporary architecture and civil designing applies all new concepts, materials, instruments, planning and designing provided that they are mixed with local meanings. Only in this way, one can attain new, fresh and local mental images of the Iranian contemporary architecture and civil designing in order to refresh the links among man, city and agriculture. Such tendency states that returning to the local lasting values and tradition is not a barrier to modernism, but it is an urgent requirement for any spatial-constructive performance [5].

Structuralism: This approach criticizes the country's recent century modernist architecture. It conveys that such achievements have been inflexible and incapable of giving a stark definition of the main structure of the cities, with respect to a total functional concept of architecture and civil designing.

According to this approach, lack of attention to the main structure of the city - as well as an extremist view towards civil functions in recent decades - have caused the city frame work to disintegrate and civil centers to be neglected. Re- definition of the civil structures, specifying major lasting elements, finding the changeable elements- that is actually a reinterpretation of the main structure of cities, either old or new - should be performed. Such tendency focuses on creation of sample powerful and genuine standards, through working on the contemporary, universal achievements of civil designing and within their application of the local requirements [5].

Modernism: The architecture with having no time and place a long with a universal quality unavoidably leads to structuralism or formalism - an innovative form, unique and noble which can rise in any land according to its characteristics. Thus, the architecture contains both worldwide and local quality. Such architecture has an identity free from time and place, which cannot be classified in tough and solid categories. Such architecture uses all universal pieces of experience which involve these qualities, to change in to symbols through presenting independent identities. Time and place - less architecture conveys purity, originality and directness as its own essence; and that is what involved in all traditional architectures of the world as well as contemporary modernist ones. Such a view on architecture (its equality and sameness) causes the Iranian modernist movements to be disregarded.

Reviewing the past forms and patterns in order to gain their timeless and placeless principles as well as getting access to their genuine quality - without getting trapped by their formal limitations - seems another point which Iranian modernist believes. A large and various numbers of Iranian architects and designers represent such an approach [5].

Expressionism: The followings are the basic points of the contemporary Iranian expressionistic approach: poetic descriptive and sensational adornment of architecture; peaceful agreement between tradition and modernism; balance between past and future, maintaining culture without being trapped by repetition and limitation of the past; welcoming novel and high quality theories of contemporary universal art and architecture; extraction of local signs and symbols of art and architecture in order to apply them for creating new works; focusing on creativity of the artist to produce new pieces; being close to the modern world; blending local architecture with technologies of developed world; applying universal

modes of architecture to locals; and finally, objectifying the artist's feelings in the work. This approach accepts all subjective and concrete movements of the world architecture, to create the contemporary Iranian modernism-using international and principles, mixing them with Iranian needs left from the past [5].

Post-Modernism: Post-Modernism in Iran began with no social and cultural infra-structures; that is, Iranian architects somehow imitated them. While western post modernism can be regarded as a critical reaction to Modernism. Historicism might be viewed as the most outstanding feature of the Iranian Post modernistic architecture [7].

Post-modernist movement in recent two decades supports recovering and reviewing values of architecture. Pluralism, co-operation, discourse, rationalism and discipline are the five main points of civil life according to post modernists. Such attitude believes one could achieve the general concept of stability and civil architecture by using all those five points. This has always been tied with a country's architecture before the advent of post-modernism in to the nation throughout the history [5].

During these years works tended toward a typological known reference to established traditional architecture, weather Islamic, Safavid or Qajar [6].

Getting back to traditions and recovering them lead to the creation of a new order and new values, though the traditional frameworks of architecture are seemingly shattered. In fact such a new values have roots in traditions that are why they come as changing forms of the past [5]. While striving to remain in the path of the international post-modernism movement, they attempted to re-capture some images of the past Iranian classical architecture. Islamic concepts and identity were used as a referential model for revivalism, although it lacked enough clarity to define a style of the architecture adequate to the period of the area [6].

Post-Modernist Realism: In this approach, architecture and civil construction are timeless which cannot be re-performed. But finds its own specific language and presentation. That is for such a historical feature that architecture and civil construction could be a bridge between past and present in any time. Through, conservation of cultural heritage is noted; blowing a new breath in it through using today's current concepts and principles is paid attention. Also, civil rights and concepts would surely be emphasized. To keep a nation's cultural and historical identity, old cities should be adapted to the new requirements. Also for applying traditional patterns,

one needs to adapt them with recent needs. This tendency focuses on the quality of architecture and civil designing and believes it is not possible to find out the same pattern for architecture; that is each town or city appears as unique which can never be repeated again [5].

Neo-Traditionalism: Taking a close look at the domestic architecture with an independent cultural identity- the culture which absorbs whatever pleasant from other civilizations and cultures to add to its own enrichment and moral investment- seems the basic aspect of such an approach. This tendency believes that art in its general term and particularly speaking architecture, are the reflection and projection of culture by themselves, which constantly expands their richness through interaction with other cultures. Such expansion does not occur within any cost, but it is acquired by exact recovery of traditions and returning to the cultural nobility, morality and spirituality [5]. Iranian architects, studying the concepts laid out throughout their history, looked for ways to formulate a vocabulary, modern in expression but relevant to the overall concepts of their patrimony [6].

This tendency is concerned about sustainable development, based on today's universal issues. It assumes that sustainable architecture and civil structure reflect a more profound and newer attitude of the same traditional values and beliefs. In this respect old Iranian cities seem to be the best samples of such sustainability. This approach believes that no new environment and social behaviors can be established without having respect to the traditional features. Also, it asserts that new civil constructions are based on the creation of the constructions, collections and the context which come related to those behaviors. This tendency necessitates the recreation of the old architectural principles- such as symmetry, centricity, domain, contrast, hierarchy, balance, proportion, equilibrium, consistency, unity, plurality,... - in today's Iranian architecture.

It also assumes that having considered those principles, one can access to visual, conceptual, symbolic and aesthetic dimensions as well as a new and fresh function, to reveal the specific identity of architecture and civil construction [5].

Definition of Tradition and Traditionalism: There exist various definitions about tradition by researchers and scholars of different fields of art, humanities and social science, which can be generally divided in to two categories. First, the definitions by which traditions refer to the principles, methods and ideas that have roots in religious, natural, innate and godly aspects.

In this category; lasting, permanent and often stable facets of traditions are focused on. The second definitions can be regarded common in earthly and material aspects of roots and sources forming traditions.

In this respect, traditions are a collection of principles, methods, phenomena and ideas which have been formed throughout the ages and influenced by the social and culture factors - which have met slight changes [8].

Louis I.kahn has referred to the difference between 'tradition' and 'traditional'. He believed that traditional means a limitation of the past and tradition means constancy [2].

Tradition refers to a collection of the features, principles, relations and rules which have been formed throughout the history in architecture field, in a dynamic way- based on which, Iranian frameworks and forms of architecture were established, before the advent of contemporary modernism [9].

Traditions contain a collection of methods, materials, elements, compositions, designs and principles which have been shaped gradually throughout the history- which have had dynamism and movements based on environmental conditions and other effective factors on the formation of the architectural spaces.

In this way, one can find out that lots of elements and compositions of architecture have received symbolic or ceremonial aspects in history. Thus, when we talk about traditions in architecture, it should be noted that traditions (i.e. traditional elements and characteristics) have been formed dynamically and during the ages. So, one can expect them to keep on moving forward in a dynamic manner in time [10].

There is no doubt that our traditional architecture has a great and valuable stand in Iranian architecture. It is because this type of architecture has kept its artistic style of continuity throughout the centuries and has also adapted itself to the technological traditions of its own ago to develop. When studying Iranian architecture and extracting its concepts, principles and characteristics, it is quite clear that its fundamentals have been grounded in philosophical existence of this land. Thus, it is impossible to study Iranian architecture without going in to the depth of social, cultural, religious and literary issues and events [11].

Traditionalism in the Thoughts of the Contemporary Architects: During the constant periods of Iranian architecture, there has been often a concept in to the context of the architecture which is being attempted to be recalled and reviewed. Extracting these ideas not only

unfolds the past secrets and mysteries, but also paves the way for the new thought tendencies.

Thoughts are a kind of mental process which are formed based on a spiritual event. Their characteristics, though out the history, contain a valuable source for the introduction of the ideological characteristics of a culture and civilization. The result is, what causes the formation of a lasting work of architecture - a work which lasts further than time and place - comes to be a thought with great and strong foundations [12].

The sublime architecture involves two outstanding features: valuable thoughts and lasting formation. It requires everlasting and perfect thinking and there is firm connection between these two [12].

Though, few individuals have gone over the thought movements of Iranian architecture or analyzed or criticized them, there are some foot prints of most architects' viewpoints upon architecture and its related issues- mostly in the theoretical of most architects' viewpoints upon architecture and its related issues- mostly in the theoretical basics which most architects utilize for their works and designs. The tendency towards traditions, concepts and the ground of the traditional architecture conveys an ideological foundation which has always been mentioned in recent years. Anyway, the attention to traditions has met some fluctuations in this period. In this section, some of the contemporary architects' approach to the concept of tradition and traditional architecture is going to be mentioned.

From Mr. Qolam-reza Pasban Hazrat's viewpoint, post traditions should be constantly analyzed; since this matter is really important in architecture. The appreciation of these works involves no use, if we will not pay attention to those social, economical and technical structures and situations which caused them to be created. The analysis should be performed together with awareness and knowledge of the past specific time and place grounds, so that it could lead to success and permanence as well as clarification of other values of an art work - to be capable of creating such values based on recent time [5].

Mr. Hossein Sheikh Zein-e-eddin believes whoever that interprets identity and traditions as the repetition of the past, would be incapable of be holding the meaning of the future. Architects must assess the traditional factors in a sensational and obvious manner to solve their problems, being inspired by basic concepts like geometry, order and hierarchy [13].

The architects who are recovering themselves and the profound - principles of a society through paying attention to the lasting principles of the traditional

architecture - not just by limitation - can cut down their mental confusion and the current physical disturbance to create the spaces suitable for the human beings who know their position in the hierarchy of life. The so-called architects do not get themselves to imitate the teachings which do not match with their ideal bases [5].

To Mr. Diba, Iranian traditional architecture conveys a series of rules and concepts; by knowing which we can work on the type of architecture that is adjusted with environment, culture, time, having an Iranian identity [13]. To understand the ideas of Mr. Aliakbar Saremi is rooted in timelessness of the Iranian traditional architecture concepts as well as in its consistency with the movements of the world's contemporary architecture [13].

He believes that we could create the works which convey the values, originality and identity of recent time without direct reference to the past architecture. Though, such performance requires research, practice and experience and cannot be conducted easily [14].

Dealing with the past works rises from a social need which is possibly located in common unconscious as archetypes and metaphorical forms, but have less opportunities to reflect. It is artists' duty to detect and present them from the past and present culture [15].

Mr. Mirmiran is among those architects who could access to a particular combination of the Iranian traditional and modern architecture. He regarded Iranian Architecture in a specific view. To him, Iranian traditional architecture shows that it has been utilized rather various rules, principles, basics and patterns in different forms throughout the time, in spite of having much plurality, variety and complexity of the buildings [13].

In Mr. Kamran Safamanesh's idea, modern time is nothing but triumph of a new image of time and man's relation with the world over his previous image in a historical ground which has always been an expansion of these tendencies and their weakness and power. He does not regard traditions a collection of stable and static events; though, he states that traditions are a dynamic and moving stream in which one must take part [13].

Architecture, like human beings is not restricted to itself, but it is established on an extensive ground which is prone to change and develop constantly within it. With such explanation, it is clear that having a full knowledge of traditions seems quite urgent, since no innovation can be performed without consciously surpassing traditions [13].

To Mr. Farhad Ahmadi, Iranian traditional architecture has a specific view on man and his environment; so with discovering these fundamental characteristics, one can use them in modern contemporary architecture [13].

CONCLUSION

Architecture is an art whose survival requires a thoughtful model and pattern. Architecture is first formed inside an architect's mind and then is expressed. Thus, recognition of an idea's features seems to be the introduction to know the characteristics of an architectural work. No doubt, there exist some thoughts behind the curtain of the traditional architecture whose discovery and knowledge pave the way for the continuity and permanence of those thoughts in our time.

Along with giving rise to the issue of identity in the contemporary architecture in Iran, some consider it in terms of affiliation with the past and blending tradition and modernity. Of course, it is obvious that the traditional architecture - the way it has been in the past - cannot fulfill the modern man's requirements and ideals.

Taking a review on architecture periods of Iran give credits to all ever traditional thoughts. It means the traditional approach, or its rejection, triggered the formation of theoretical trends in architecture. The analysis of different thoughts of architects with various dispositions represents the principal role of traditionalism and its conflict with modernism, as well.

In general, the results given by the research show the impact of traditional thoughts on the formation of various trends of Iranian contemporary architecture as the following:

- The trends which apply the sustainable concepts of traditional architecture as imitated patterns, so that the traditional views of architecture are directly reflected in this perception.
- The trends which use the sustainable values of traditional architecture as abstractive concepts. In this course, there exists a global look into the Iranian architecture and culture and its myths, subjects and motifs, in general.
- The trends which ignore all concepts related to the traditions along their modern advancements and reject traditionalism completely and its continuity of the past.
- The trends which go for the presentation of the values and concepts of the traditional architecture in a new form. They consider faith in traditions to be the solitary way to maintaining identity among modern universal movements alongside globalization.

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