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Architecture of mosques and Islamic centers in Non-Muslim context

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Abstract Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. The Muslim population increases as Islam spreads around the world, which leads to an increasing demand for Islamic buildings such as mosques and Islamic centres. Mosques play an important role in Islam and Muslim life. In several countries, in particular, the Western mosques are seen as a newcomer whose building type is both unique and foreign to local people who are unaccustomed to the visual expression of Islam in the West.

The mosque is one of the most visual expressions of global Muslim religious identity in non-Muslim context. The significant numbers of countries have a lot of different architecture styles of their Islamic buildings. Each mosque has its own individual touch. The most important factors behind this variation in form and styles can be divided into nature impacts as (local materials and environment), followed by man-made impacts by (Muslim immigrants, colonialism, funding, and laws, culture, and traditions).

The study aims to examine each factor and their influences on the architecture of mosques and Islamic centers in non-Muslim context through analysis and a comparison of a number of examples. © 2017 Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

In many Western capitals such as London, Washington, or Paris where the mosque or Islamic centre functions as a point of reference for Muslims in the city, mosques serve to express a Muslim presence as a symbol of Islam as well as space for social gatherings, education, and community service [1].

Usually, these buildings are financed by groups of Muslims of different origins and backgrounds. They also serve as indi-

cators of the role in which immigrant groups see themselves within the context of a foreign culture [2].

In this context, there are many factors contributing to the shaping of the typology, design, and role of the mosque in a multicultural atmosphere. Among those factors are immigrants to these countries, laws of the country, the materials available for construction, the funding available, colonialism influence, culture, and tradition.

In this paper, these factors will be discussed and their influence on the architecture of mosques and Islamic centers through analysis and comparison of a number of examples in a non-Muslim context that will help create a sample of Islamic buildings suitable while also achieving harmony with their

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locations. In addition to express Muslim presence, its identity, and its sacredness without a loss of validity, identity, or value.

2. Research methodology

The study will be based on a descriptive, deductive, and analytical approach as follows:

- Firstly, this paper begins with the assumption that there are some factors that influence the design of mosques.
- Secondly, study and analyze a selection of samples of mosques and Islamic centers span several different continents around the world such as Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe.
- Thirdly, examine the main factors in each building that determined the architecture and construction.
- Fourthly, explain how each factor impacted the design and construction of the mosque.
- Fifthly, analyze results and begin a discussion based on analyzed examples.

3. Influential factors on architecture of Muslim in different countries

The major factors shaping the form and function of a mosque.

3.1. Muslim immigrants backgrounds

The great variety of religious diversity and ethnicity among Muslims in western countries is reflected in the variety of building design and construction.

People from different countries have their own ethnicities and cultures. When immigrants arrive in a different country, they often retain many of their traditional customs and beliefs, which may range from language to food and clothing styles and, perhaps most importantly, to religion [3].

A large number of Muslim migrants began emigrating from a different array of countries, the vast majority of which moved to England, France, and other parts of Europe as well as North America during the 1950s and 1960s. About a third of Muslim migrants to Europe came from the Middle East-North Africa, and more than five million came from the Palestinian. At the same time, nearly half of Muslim migrants arrived from the Asia-Pacific region. A significant number of Muslims also left Pakistan, Bangladesh and India during the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent and the withdrawal of the British in 1947. Russia's Muslim migrant population (approximately four million) comes mainly from neighboring countries like: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. Over three million (nearly half) of Germany's foreign-born Muslim immigrants came from Turkey, but they also include large numbers from Kosovo, Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Morocco, and Iran. About three million of Muslim immigrants in France are from the former French colonies of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia [4].

Projects for mosques expressing Muslim presence in non-Muslim countries essentially started to take shape in the late of 1940–1950s, which coincided with the end of colonial rule

and the rise of the independent states achieved by Muslims population of the Islamic world [2].

By the 1960s the immigrant communities began to feel the desire to express their presence by articulating new mosques. Projects that had been initiated in the 1950s like the Imam Ali Mosque in Hamburg, Fig. 1 built between 1960 and 1973 and funded jointly by the Iranian community in Germany and religious institutions in Iran [5].

3.1.1. Mosques and Islamic centers in France

World War I in 1914 was the main reason for direct migration between Europe and North Africa. A lot of North Africa countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco sent soldiers to fight alongside the French. In the early decades of the twentieth century, these North African settlers interacted in the culture process on the French mainland [6].

The photos show influence of Moorish architecture or Mudéjar style architecture (Berber–Islamic architecture of West North Africa, Al-Andalus (Spain), Al-Garb Al-Andalus (Portugal)) on France's Islamic buildings. The square minaret of grand mosque in Paris and Islamic Cultural Centre of the Servant of the Holy Mosques in France were inspired by North African architecture from the Zitouna mosque in Tunisia (Fig. 2). Some elements of Paris mosque as: horseshoe arches, its courtyards, and green-tiled roofs were borrowed from the El-Qaraouiyyin Mosque in Fez, Morocco (Fig. 3).

3.2. Funding

Funding and financial resources, an essential element that affects mosque development can affect the size of mosque, form, style, construction, architecture elements, and details.

More significant funding can create a wealthy mosque while poor funding generally creates minimum facilities in the mosque.

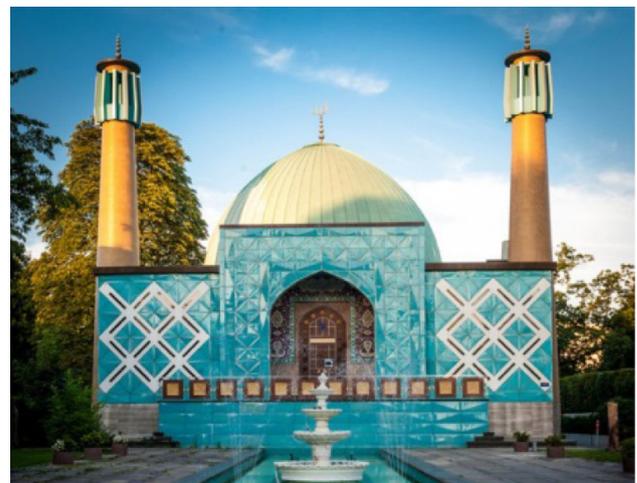


Fig. 1 The influence of Iranian Muslim immigrants on architecture of Imam Ali mosque, Germany <http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/DIK/EN/Magazin/Lebenswelten/Ramadan2013/ramadan-2013-node.html?docId=4601970>.

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