

Cross-Border Architecture: Cultural hybridization and innovation under globalization

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Abstract. With the prevalence of globalization, different cultures are frequently intertwined, which has provided a major environmental driver for global economic, cultural, and artistic development. According to Wang and Yeh (2005), hybridization is an integral part of cultural development and in the process, new forms and connections are created. This is because cultural hybridization has formed an irreversible trend in the world and has become an objective part of human cultural life (Chen, 2002). This trend provides a platform for multi-disciplinary cross-border cooperation, which in turn influences deeper hybridization within cultures. The main argument of this article is that cross-border thinking dominated by hybridization has created great possibilities for the development of more cultural possibilities. This article outlines how globalization and the emergence of cross-border thinking can broaden the possibilities of cultural hybridization and will analyze the cross-border cultural products of three buildings with practical examples: Moller Villa (by Allied Architects, 1936); The Armani Fashion Museum (by Giorgio Armani, 2015) and Sassoon House (by Palmer & Turner Architects and Surveyors, 1929).

Keywords: Globalisation; cultural hybridization; modern architecture; cross-border mindset; cultural homogenization; local identity.

1. Context

Globalization appears to be the dominant trend in today's global development, which often changes the form of development of countries in terms of culture, economy, and human sentiment. Giddens defines globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant places (Oncu and Weyland, 1997). In this sequence, globalization is seen as a discourse of knowledge that raises awareness of the connections between various scales of life. This brings with it many opportunities for cultural hybridization and controversial discourses, and there are various variants (Eldemery, 2009).

The most controversial of these are anti-globalization and pro-globalization, two opposing forces influencing the globalization of architecture. Some have argued that globalization means the cultural hegemony of the developed world (the Westernisation of the world). Due to the global nature of cultural hybridization, hybridization between heterogeneous cultures has the potential for cultural mismatch as well as cultural conflict. In support of this argument, Chan (2006) and wang (2006) point out the hybridization of heterogeneous cultures has the potential for greater cultural cannibalization and cultural conflict. This is because unequal cultural exchanges still exist and there is a great possibility that countries will unconsciously accept and identify with other countries' cultures and align themselves with them due to one-way cultural circulation in the process of homogenization. For example, the cultural hegemony of the United States has prompted economically backward countries in Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia to use their cultural values and political and economic systems as standards, thus gradually losing their regional cultural self-esteem. As a result, this leads to a weakening of the distinctive cultural color of each nation, and even the possibility of cultural substitution. These potential problems are mainly due to "the desire of developing countries in transition for modernity and to understand the world through new technologies, such as communication technologies and the Internet." (Levitt, 1983, p.92) This has prompted the gradual erosion of the traditional authority of the nation-state by global corporations and other global actors and factors, which will weaken the ethnostate system (Ullah, A. A., & Ming Yit Ho, 2021). Levitt (1983) also claims that the ease of cultural hybridization brought by technology will trigger a massive

cultural borrowing and it will lead to a massive erosion of individual cultural identities. For example, in an attempt to keep up with modernization, Arabia has readily accepted a large number of large-scale architectural development projects imported from other countries, which has led to a gradual loss of its local identity, distinctiveness, and ability to meet its specific needs. Chorev (2005) and Overbeek (2002) express concern around this universal, neoliberal, created nation hegemony. Some scholars argue that the main manifestation of such cultural erosion is the invasion of commercial culture. They have analyzed the phenomenon of cultural hybridization resulting from globalization by combining the perspectives of consumerism and lifestyles (M.H. Hsiao and S.P. Wan, 2007), which has led to a redefinition of the relationship between social structures derived from the technological dimension of globalization by cultural globalization: globalisation creates a global culture that incorporates identity through consumer behaviour (G. Hofstede and H.M. Bond, 1984). The 'international style', dominated by German architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, intends to use architecture for corporate purposes and product identity through new industrial techniques and materials. For example, landmark skyscrapers, hotel chains as well as shopping centers. This in a way undermined the carrying capacity of local architecture about metaphysics, philosophy, and culture in the physical environment, which forced the city's skyline to be presented to the masses in a new way (El-Husseiny, 2004). This suggests that the process of globalization will increase cultural homogenization around the world and that it will have a detrimental effect on local cultural values (V. Kaul, 2012), which will indirectly lead to a gradual reduction in architectural differences and thus a convergence of urban landscapes and urban fabric (King, 1990).

However, chen (2002) suggests that hybridization is when individuals of distinctive social foundations are willing to be "cultural hands-off" in their intelligence and open themselves to other possibilities. Moreover, the pioneering and challenging new thinking brought about by the "culture hands-off" will lead to a second hybridization of cultures. This second hybridization will drive social and civilizational development. This situation meets the development needs of the country's modernization, because it promotes the invention and dissemination of new forms by emphasizing systemization, flexibility, and interchangeability, using new technologies and materials in response to changing functional needs and sensitivities (Lewis, 2002). As a result, cultural homogenization inevitably becomes a condition for a society to remain modern and advanced (Gellner, 2006). Change and innovation have long been considered part of the modernization of national development, and the changing styles of architectural design in various countries are a good demonstration of this statement. One of the reasons for the shift in architectural design is the innovation of technology. New technologies have stimulated a broader wave of creative thinking among architects, and new visual experiences of architecture have been developed. For example, the upgrading of external shading from the traditional roller shutter form to tempered glass has greatly improved the appearance of buildings and made new possibilities for building facades. While some argue that this shift will pose a threat to "local identity", Michelle Addington (2006) suggests that technology is the maid of honor of design and its relationship is subordinate. Thus, while globalization may have a homogenizing effect on architectural design, it will not dominate design because people's worldviews will not be changed by globalization, nor will cultural differences in perception, awareness, feeling, inspiration and management disappear (Globe, 2004). Nigel Hollis (2009) also maintains that even though cultural hybridization makes the interaction between cultures more intense, the world will not become a global village and the differences between cultures will remain. Therefore, cultural hybridization is different from cultural integration in that it is a process of continuous cross-cultural interaction, transaction, and transformation (Wang and Yeh 2005). Meanwhile, cultural hybridization facilitates trade, technology, and human development. It also makes cultural resources richer and creativity significantly enhanced. This also indicates that the use of appropriate technology in architecture should be a non-compulsory result of adapting to changes in the structure of natural systems. New materials and technology together provide effective forms and images to replace the models provided by the industrialized nations and as Shahin Vassigh (2004:112) mentions, "architectural practice is a

delicate balance of art and science". Therefore, in the context of cultural hybridization, if architects want to effectively balance architectural modernity and local architectural traditions in architectural design, there are three aspects worth exploring and considering: firstly, the driving force of cross-border hybridization in architecture; secondly, the impact of hybridization on architectural expression; and thirdly, how local and global cultures can be effectively integrated through architecture. This essay will extend this discussion with three architectural examples.

2. Architectural examples

2.1 Moller Villa

Cultural hybridization is likely to be an expansion of people's quest for spirituality, such as Moller Villa (figure1). The architect was inspired by a dream of Mahler's young daughter, which was a large house with a fairy tale layout. Therefore, the building is designed with a "fairy tale" appearance, and literary culture is introduced into the building design. For example, the building's red-tiled roof, colorful walls, concave and fanciful shapes, and green and black four-slope spire are typical of the Norwegian architectural style. The double-pitched roof and four tiger windows on the south elevation are a perfect integration with the European Scandinavian mood of the rustic architecture. In addition, since Mahler was a British Jew, he made his fortune in China. Therefore, although the shape of the building is Scandinavian-Norwegian, the pair of stone lions at the entrance is quite Chinese. The hybridization of Chinese mythology and Western fairy tales does not form a conflict form, but rather the overall sense of atmosphere is quite harmonious. In this way, it seems that if a media platform is provided for cultural hybridization that confuses the sense of boundaries, the match between different cultures will be effectively improved. This cross-border hybrid effect also reflects that people's pursuit of beauty and poetry is a latent instinct, and the expansion of cultural hybridization is a trend in line with human development.



Figure 1, Moller Villa, By Allied Architects,1936

2.2 .Armani Fashion Museum

Cultural hybridization not only blurs the boundaries between fields but also allows cultures with commonalities to combine more quickly to produce new forms of cultural expression and the Armani Fashion Museum (figure 2) is considered to be a representative. The museum design incorporates a variety of aesthetic concepts and brand cultures based on the principles of the rationality of practical needs and respect for the original architectural structure. First of all, the design of the facade is inspired by the minimalism emerging in the United States, and the original shape of the silo on the facade is retained to a great extent, with just an additional layer of pleated skin. In addition, the

building's original silos are paired with high windows, which continuously and powerfully show the building's lines and geometric forms while focusing on function. This is a consistent expression of the Austrian Secessionist aesthetic. Next, with the influence of modernist architecture, the entrance is treated with a large amount of glass and steel. This makes the entrance seem like a translucent glass box, which gives a strong sense of presence. Thus, Armani's pursuit of simplicity, understatement, and deep corporate culture was expressed in a new form by Giorgio Armani through mixing and matching different aesthetic concepts within one building. This relatively successful attempt to cross borders demonstrates that when diverse cultures share ideas and exchange ideas, new cultural expressions often appear.



Figure 2, Armani Fashion Museum, by Giorgio Armani, 2015

2.3 Sassoon Building

If the Armani Museum illustrates the greater possibilities of culture that can emerge from the hybridization of heterogeneous cultures through ideas, then the Sassoon Building (figure 3) is a prime example of the great breakthrough of ideas that can result from cultural hybridization. The bottle-like contours of the building's upwardly contracting form and the geometric pattern of its local decoration are inspired by Art Deco in Europe and the United States. The simplified decorative patterns already show the characteristics of Western modern architecture. However, the waistline and eaves are still decorated with floral carvings that indicate the vintage style of classical European architecture. This hybrid form embodies the eclecticism of Western philosophy, and the Sassoon Building thus marks the beginning of modern thinking. This also further proved that in the context of cultural intermingling, thoughts and concepts from different fields influence each other and are likely to drive the development of ideas and culture.



Figure 3, Sassoon House, by Palmer & Turner Architects and Surveyors, 1929

3. Summary

This article discusses the economic, cultural, and life-affirming effects of the "cross-border and hybrid" approach to globalization. Then, through the analysis of three architectural design cases of cross-border hybridization, it explored the blurring of boundaries, new cultural possibilities, and the explosion of ideas triggered by cultural intermingling. These influences illustrate that cultural hybridization may promote a multi-view perspective and contribute to the development of economic, cultural, and humanistic sentiments. Whether these influences can maintain a positive trend, or how the potential threat of cultural substitution and loss of cultural identity can be effectively avoided in the face of uneven development across countries, has not been studied. This may require deeper analysis and exploration of the pros and cons.

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