The Socio-Environmental Metamorphoses: U.A.E. as a Case Study

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Abstract. This paper explores the relationship between the tangible objects reflecting the use of the space and the cultural aspects expressing the identity of the place. The importance of the public spaces in the communication of identity might be seen as one aspect of the area of research into the meaning of the urban space and its relationship to the physical form of housing in the U.A.E. It is assumed that the physical form of the urban space mediates and structures gender relations. This will be illuminated by elements of the urban development and particularly of the urban activities, and an explanation of its relationship to changing ideologies and architectural norms. Typically, the urban and public places symbolize accepted notions of the appropriate function of the gathering spaces and preferred public relations, such notions are in themselves profoundly important in structuring gender relations. The city of today differs from its past in several respects: size and scale, street layout, land use patterns, architectural style and type of housing. Traditional urban form and building which would have provided information about regional and national identity have been largely replaced by forms characterizing the international and universal buildings and spaces. These changes have altered the city’s form and have given rise to questions about the impact of these changes on the image of the city in terms of size and cultural values.

1. Introduction
This U.A.E is marked by the rapid and unprecedented urban growth. This presentation deals with the different transformations by looking at the interaction between the urban life, the architectural language, the cultural aspects and the life style. The importance of the urban and public spaces in the communication of identity might be seen as one aspect of the broad area of research into the meaning of the urban space and its relationship to the physical form of housing in the U.A.E.

The method used in the development of this work is more descriptive rather than analytic. It examines the main aspects characterizing the built environment and how different people modify their spaces differently. It is assumed that the physical form of the urban space mediates and structures gender relations. This will be illuminated by elements of the urban development and particularly of the urban activities, and an explanation of its relationship to changing ideologies and architectural norms. Typically, the urban and public spaces symbolize accepted notions of the appropriate function of the plaza.
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2. Theoretical Framework

It seems that there is a very strong correlation between COVID 19 and density. In fact, this kind of behavior is not specific to the big cities or to our contemporary life; historically and from the chronological point of the view, it was Leonardo De Vinci who was the first trying to construct a safety space, then we had the utopian who developed some spatial organizations highlighting the hygienic issues and later appeared ideas and studies of Henard, Howard and Perry, who tried to solve both functional and traffic problems, touching more or less aspects of public safety, this stratification led to the development of a new way of thinking about the production of our build environment and called Environmental Design. Among those who are behind the development of tools in Environmental Design, I mention Jane Jacobs, in her the death and life of the great American cities, suggested that the city center can be livable and secured, she advocates open and permeable environments, in which strangers passing through spaces, as well as inhabitants, are part of the natural policing mechanism.[1] Oscar Newman at the late 1960s has been an author of the idea of ‘Defensible Space’, based on strong integration of small neighborhoods around closed or semi-closed, impermeable spaces. [2] Bill Hillier, in his book entitled Social logic of space, developed a technique that can be used for morphological analysis of buildings, architectural plans, urban areas and urban plans. The aim of this technique is to describe different aspects of the relationships between the morphological structure of man-made environments and social structures/events. It is a method that tries to relate some forms of human behavior with morphological features and analysis: the basic concept of Space Syntax is integration. Space Syntax is supposed to relate morphological features with the distribution of use of public space, with the quality of environmental cognition, with personal crime, with the inhabitant-visitor interface. [3]

3. Retrospective of the urban structure:

The city of today differs from its past in several respects: size and scale, street layout, land use patterns, architectural style and type of housing. Nowadays, the conditions for any settlement to be classified as urban agglomeration are:

- Size of the agglomeration: the number of inhabitants should be more than 4000 inhabitants;
- 75% of the active occupied population should be involved in the secondary and tertiary sectors;
- The agglomeration should be compact, the distance between the buildings should not exceed 200 meters.

During Roman times, the elements of the urban composition were the use of the grid and the disposition of the main buildings along two major axes: Cardo and Decumanus (figure 1). The use of the aqueducts for the provision of the water. The dimension of the grid was in fact determined firstly for some agricultural issues before using it for urban consideration [4]. The use of such tool defining the same plot and ending by imposing an order. (figure 2).
The main characteristics of the Medina, comparatively to the Roman town, are the existence of an order between the public and the private spaces, and the spaces are developed through and by Islamic codes and norms that are behind the determination of a hierarchical distribution and organization, even though that the urban structure of the medina looks as labyrinthic where the structure of the Medina was based on a controlled hierarchy of roads, spaces and buildings. Narrow and steep alleyways divide the residential districts, with various widths ranging from 3-6 meters [7].

The compact layout of the dwellings reducing the land waste to a minimum and ensuring a network of cool alleyways and squares, creating agreeable microclimatic conditions (figure 3). Except for the fortified walls, the main Mosque; Madrassa, the Souq, and El – Hara constitute the main components of the Medina’s urban fabric.

For defensive considerations, most of the towns were gated. In our times, the gates are the airports and the railways stations.

The discovery of the perspective and its use as a tool of the urban composition, during the Renaissance times, transformed entirely the structure of the city. The urban fabric was based on the disposition of the major buildings by using the axis of perspective and the symmetrical composition of the building. Such composition ended by having the public space as a theatrical space and the façade of the building as the back of the stage.
(figure 4). The production of space based on the use of the perspective, the orthogonal and geometrical space of the Greco-Roman model highlighted the dichotomy between the mental and the real spaces [9].

![Figure 4: Paris with the use of the grid and axis of perspective as elements of urban composition](image)

The impacts of the Industrial revolution in the XIX Century can be summarized by firstly the report done Karl Marx and Engels on the insalubrity conditions of the labors in Manchester that led to review the architectural spaces and the buildings from the hygienic issues; Baron Hausman made a great transformation mainly on the infrastructures of Paris; creating boulevards, avenues, enlarging roads and emphasizing perspectives for hygienic considerations and the aesthetical aspects in terms of shape or proportions of the public spaces, the disposition of some urban furniture was raised by Camillo Sitte with his book the birth of Modern City Planning (Figure 5). [11] Cerda was behind the introduction of the linear city where the notion of the center of the city is not anymore, a focal one, this development relies on the introduction and the use of the railway as one of the main modes of transport in the city (Figure 6). [12] On the other hand, the called “Utopian” introduced the Phalanstery and the familistere as a mode of living based on social consideration but emphasizing the relationship between the mode of living and the efficiency in the work (Figure 7). In 1870s, the reconstruction of Chicago was behind a new typology of buildings, with high rise buildings and skyscrapers, that introduced a new approach to the city and based mainly on functional issues.

![Figure 5. Camillo Sitte, Place & Monument, Florence](image)

![Figure 6. Cerda, Master Plan for Madrid](image)

![Figure 7: C.Fourrier, Drawing of his phalanstery](image)

In the XX Century, many transformations took place starting the number and sizes of the towns and cities, the industrialization and the wars accentuated the exodus towards the urban agglomerations. At the beginning of the XX Century, we assisted to two antagonists’ approaches, both are identifying the facilities according to the size of the agglomeration by using implicitly the principle of the repartition of the facilities through the isochrone. The main value of the first approach, developed by Tony Garnier, is the efficiency and based on the zoning leading to the separation between the activities and ending by transforming the physical and social relations in an urban agglomeration and at the same time encouraging the urban sprawl. The second approach developed by Ebenezer Howard whom is behind the movement of the “Garden city” with the objective to control the urban growth through the limitation of the size’s agglomeration and the creation of the green belts, in this approach, the services and facilities were classified proportionally to the needs of the population and in the same time each agglomeration had mixed areas for residence, industry and agriculture (figures 8, 9).
The encouragement of the industry of the cars, the use of the prefabrication preconized as one of the most recommended modes of building construction (due to that situation at that time and with the objectives to provide shelter or a decent apartment or house in a very short term with the lowest cost) and referring to the CIAM’s charter [Congres Internationaux de l Architecture Moderne]. The combination of these aspects led to the urban sprawl that ended by creating that dichotomy between the center and the periphery, and the main impact was that built environment might be considered as ANTI-URBAN [18]. The result is that the relation between the plot was lost, the cracks were behind the determination of the disposition of the buildings and most of all is that the loss of the sense of belonging, the residents were seen from mainly from the quantitative aspect. The repercussion on the social life was inevitably negative and the spirit of the community was lost: the voids are developed mainly for functional and technical considerations; the psychological aspects were entirely ignored. Since the mid of the last Century, many approaches highlighting the urban design and the environmental psychology dimensions, the objectives were to give a character to the built environment through the diversity of the activities and the typologies of the buildings and by taking into consideration the kinesthetic dimensions as summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Approaches in urban design in the XX Century where one can notice the diversity through the references and values or the principles implemented for each approach

| Type of Approach | Authors & Values | Principles |
|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Ekistics         | C.A.Doxiadis     | Nature, Man, Nature, Network (Infrastructure), Social and Shelter. Maximum of contact and profit with a minimum of effort and time. |
| Townscape        | G.Cullen         | Space, Perception-Feeling-Content-Prediction. |
| Environmental Psychology | K.Lynch | Identity, Path-Nodes-Landmark-District-Edges. |
| Historical       | A.Rossi          | Culture, Classification of the city based on the typology of the buildings. Chronological approach and determination of the INVARIANTS. |
| Social           | J.Jacobs         | Diversity, Diversity of activities increases opportunities for gathering and a secure environment. Diversity of buildings in terms of age and style. Density. |
| Urban Composition| E.Bacon & L.Krier| Geometry, Urban development determined by some physical [Neo-classical] consideration (Shape, Perspective and Monumentalism). |
| Folkloric         | R.Venturi & D.Scott | Image & Symbolism, New shape by using and referring to traditional and old features. |

At the end of the XX Century and the use of the NTIC (New Technologies of Information and Communication), it was supposed that the fact of introducing the online (working, shopping and learning) the relation between the form of the space and the location of the place will be entirely reviewed. It was supposed also that with the adoption of the NTIC, the problems of the transportation with the traffic jams will be reduced and the worries about the warming planet will be solved. One of the aims of the NTIC was the flexibility...
whether in terms of the use of time or space. We expected that these Technologies would constitute the network of communication and replace the motorways and the city will be structured as a machine for happiness based on a disconnected sprawl encouraging the individualism and the loneliness. It was thought that with these technologies, the speculation on the central areas will be controlled and at term annihilated, the mechanical circulation would be fluid. Briefly, the impacts of the NTIC are behind the development of the dispersed city where everything is separated from everything else and ending by leading us to be more dependent on the car. It is known that people stuck in traffic are more likely to experience rudeness, anger and incivility. For consideration of prestige and symbolism, most of the companies would like to be implemented in central areas that had the repercussion of the value of the land and increased the speculation and the concentration of the companies in “the central area” is one of the main reasons of the traffic jams. From the health point of view, the dependence on these technologies is behind the increase of the obesity rate and the diabetic persons. For the social relations, the playing areas for the kids and the gathering places for the adults are most of the time empty; the urban environment is becoming less social and more stressing due to the fact that most of those who are living in the big cities spend some of their time in commuting.

4. Metamorphoses of the U.A.E
The U.A.E. is composed of seven Emirates (figure 10). Cities in the U.A.E are expanding at an unprecedented speed. Before the discovery of the oil, most of the cities and towns were developed along the coast. The impacts of architecture and urbanism on the skyline, the urban composition and the tangible objects of the collective memories constitute a challenge for the local identity. The following consists of describing briefly these metamorphoses. This description is chronological taking the three main periods of the U.A.E. (Before 1971, 1971-2005 and 2005-2020), and based on four aspects: Urban life, Architecture, Culture and Life style.

![Figure 10. The UAE, the concentration of the main cities and towns along the gulf][19]

4.1. Urban life
Before the union, the urban fabric of most of the cities and towns was compact and dense in terms of masses; the courtyard is one the main element organizing the masse. This compactness might be explained by some climatic consideration by creating a micro-climate and reducing the transmission of heat and ending by an organic and labyrinthic tissue erected by and for the pedestrian. This organic growth is also justified by defensive aspects and through it, the social relations of the community were strengthened (figure 11). Among the characteristics of such organization, the low density of the population and the height of the buildings are developed as low rise. With the discovery of the oil, many changes had been operated starting with the adoption of the zoning as a mode of management of the urban sprawl accompanied by Modern infrastructure and services. The sprawling housing encouraged the use of the car and is behind that dichotomy between the center and the periphery. Since the first decade of this Century, the urban growth is marked by the use of the high rise buildings used not only for the residence (residential commercial mainly for the expat) but for the offices too; the increase of the urban sprawl with the use of the private car reinforced the segregation between the communities and the adoption of the zoning as a mode of an urban organization and leading to the conurbation and the metropolises (Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman, figure 12) [20]. For the micro-climate aspect, the strategy for creating a comfortable...
microclimate is based on ventilation where the cooling effect should be created by wind blooming urban spaces. The towers built separately side by side allow air movement between buildings as well as offering large surface of shadow even when the sun is at zenith. As a consequence of this, altered shadows from façade to another, during the day is reducing heat loads as well as creating more current around buildings. The major improvements of city climate are results of the interaction of building height, street geometry and vegetation, all together offer the city large surface of shadow. The climate in the U.A.E has also influenced people’s activity. Urban activities are shifted to late afternoon, evenings and nights. As climate shaped cultures habits, people’s adaptation to hot days leads the city slowing its activity between 2pm and 5pm.

![Figure 11](image1.png)

**Figure 11.** the figure a illustrates the two types of houses developed along the Khor (one with the coral stone and usually composed of two levels with wind towers, and the second one called al arish built by using the trunk of the palms); the figures b is showing the compactness and the wind towers, the figure c one can see the transformation from the labyrinthic and compactness of the masses where each mass is developed around a courtyard to the repetitive detached masses and the grid [21]

![Figure 12](image2.png)

**Figure 12.** Conurbation, linear development along al Khor, Dubai- Sharjah-Ajman [22]

4.2. Architecture

In the past, most of the shape, dimensions and spatial organizations of the buildings were determined by two main constraints: the availability of the material and the harsh climate. In the U.A.E., we distinguish four types of shelter and houses: the tent, the arish house, the mountain house (using the stone) and the house along al khalij (Using coral and coral stone), (figure13). The characteristics of this vernacular architecture are the use of the courtyard ending by a low rise building that the ordonnance of the indoor spaces is regulated by a courtyard. The compactness of the masses is determined by the harsh climate and the shaded public areas as alleys were fixed by agreement between the owners of the plots for the purpose that none of the inhabitants should be disturbed whether in terms of movement or interface. The use of the wind tower (called Barajeel) was one of the ingenious elements to create a thermal comfort inside the indoor space, the barajeel add another value not only to the building in itself but to skyline by rhythmning and breaking that monotony of the masses (most of them are of one or two levels) (figure14 a, b). These masses have a rectangle shape determined by the availability of the material. The thickness of the walls is not less than 60cm leading to have reduced and small openings but at the same time, the building looks massive and heavier with a high thermal mass. These
walls are also used as structural elements as load wall bearing and the roof is usually composed by the trunk of the palms so the width of the spaces was dictated by the dimension of the trunk palm (figure 15).

Figure 13. The houses are developed according to the climate and the availability of the material. In the U.A.E.; we distinguish four types: The tent, Al Arish, House in the mountain and house along Al Khor

Figure 14. View of Dubai; a) and Sharjah [23]; b) as photographed in 1960, showing the use of the wind towers (Barajeel), the skyline and the urban density of districts, known as Fareej [24]

Figure 15. Plan of one Traditional house in Sharjah showing the spatial organization by using the courtyard as a central space and the shape of the indoor spaces determined by the dimensions of the trunk palm [25]

In the first decades of the union, the realization of the new infrastructure for the mechanical traffic conditioned the urban morphology that encouraged the segregation. The use of modern material (curtain wall, concrete, air conditioning) in the realizations of a massive and rapid public building with new programs in different sectors (Educational, Cultural, Economical, Administrative…etc.) opened the door to the
introduction of different typologies and architectural languages [26]. In housing, a tremendous effort in the provision of individual dwelling for the Emirati was done, as it led to the delimitation of the architectural territory through the erection of the walls and fences that affected the social relations. The neighbors are not chosen according to the kinship or the tribal considerations. Other aspects that are behind the socio-environmental metamorphoses: the standardization and the repetition in the housing model (figure 16 a, b).

The last two decades, an extraordinary urban change is brought in the U.A.E. leading them to be one of the most attractive countries whether for the skilled labors or for the tourist (Dubai for example counts expat from around 200 countries). For almost one decade, more than 80% of the population consists of town dwellers and we are expecting, in 2050, that the urban population may be around 95% [27]. The impact of this urban metamorphose is the repartition of the population whether in terms of density, social classes or ethnicity, the radical alteration by a combination of the decentralization of population and businesses and the increasing amounts of space given over to the motor car. Adding to the standardization in housing adopted at the end of the XX Century, the built environment has been through main tendencies: the most dominant one is taking the importation and adaptation of the western style as a mode of production and consumption; the second tendency might be qualified as a nostalgic one as the new buildings are referring to the traditional features and using them in a folkloric or artificial way (figure 17). [28]

![Figure 16. a) high rise building for residential commercial and offices, the same dimensions for the plots; [22]; b) development of a neighborhood for social housing with the reproduction of the same types of individual houses [29]](image1)

![Figure 17. a, b and c photos showing the use of traditional features (barajeel) in contemporary buildings [a: a resort in Dubai, b: office in Sharjah and c: Villas as row houses in Sharjah]; d & e: high rise building in a western style [d: the waterfront at Abu-Dhabi, e: Sheikh Zaid Road at Dubai]; f: juxtaposition of contemporary buildings using Postmodern and Traditional languages, Mina Salam at Dubai](image2)
4.3. Cultural
Culture is seen as a set of traditions, beliefs, customs and ideas transmitted from one generation to another. It is a non-genetical code in the reproduction of the society or the definition of a nation but it is a fundamental aspect in the definition of the vernacular Architecture. Before the union, the areas that constitute the U.A.E. were controlled by different tribes and each one had a clear but smaller geographical territory. The dominants tribes were Beni-Yass for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Qassimi for the Emirates of Ras Al Khaimah and later Sharjah annexed in the XVIII Century. Most of these tribes were concentrated along the coast, their economy depended on the traditional and maritime trades (fishing and the collect of pearls). For the tribes controlling the desert, some of them were nomads and their mode of life led them to be dispersed and the other settled in oases relying on the culture of the date. The tribes that took mountains as a refuge were also dispersed and their main source was hunting. [30]

The tribal culture is based on sharing the same values and beliefs, as the hierarchy is a fundamental principle applied whether at the level of the community or the family. The tribal life is also structured around the large families that were multigeneration household with the segregation between the genders.

During the second period (1971-2005), the tremendous effort made in the provision and development of the infrastructures and facilities attracted and enhanced the migration to the cities. This urban growth in the U.A.E is generated by the improvement of the socio-economic conditions by considering the education of the society as one of the priorities in the nation. The tolerance of the country might be seen through the diversity of nationalities of expat with diverse faith and belief living in the U.A.E. The impact of the modernization on the society can be appreciated through the reduction of the family’s size and the encouragement of the working women mainly in the education and the administration. The modernization was done by respecting some traditional aspects such as the segregation between man and women and the tribal culture in terms of hierarchy or privacy. However, it also enhanced the personal mobility and increased the commuting distance and time that encouraged the individualism and let the member be less dependent of the social bound.

The economic development let the U.A.E. become a magnet for the attraction of the skilled labors and to an unprecedented urban growth of its cities. These two factors explain the multicultural composition of the cities and the diversity of beliefs and ethnicities. The Emiratis are representing less 20% of the population living in the U.A.E. and that might be seen as a cultural threat. Another aspect noticed in the previous period and might be seen as negative dealing with the reduction of the family size. The actions preconized to overcome such a threat were to preserve the segregation between the two genders. In the same time, more opportunities were given to the women for their contribution and participation in the development of the country. The promotion of the awareness about the values and heritage of the Emirates was one of the key actions towards the young in a way to let them be proud of their belonging and strengthen their Identity.

4.4. Life style
As most traditional societies, the life style in the U.A.E. was modest and very simple based on rudimentary needs. However, there was a very strong interaction between Man and the environment and for U.A.E. in a way that the mode of subsistence was farming in the oases, hunting in the mountains and fishing or pearl diving along the coast. As mentioned earlier, we distinguish two types of organization Nomadic and Sedentary both based on a slow paced lifestyle.

The discovery of the oil changed entirely the society whether in terms of life style or spatial organization. Firstly, there was a shift from what might be seen by the young as the black days where most of the population was poor but the use of the oil as an industry increased the GDP. Another change and concerns the shift from the tribal relations limited to the region to international relations and recognition of the U.A.E as a nation. The modernization of the country relied on the transfer of the technology that can be illustrated
through the use of the A.C or the private car. The globalization and the development of the means of transportation and communication were behind the introduction of the international goods. One of the negative aspects might be the dependence on technology and ending by encouraging the culture of consumption. The consumer culture materialized through the development and the competition between the indoor shopping malls. Each indoor shopping mall tries to be more attractive not only in terms of provision or exhibition of goods or foods produced in a different part of the globe but the competition and the attraction rely on the innovation (Marina mall or Ibn Battuta mall as examples). The globalization affected the development of the touristic activities to such an extent that it is considered as an industry and one of the main flourishing sectors in some Emirates (Dubai or Ras Al Khaimah). Nowadays, the U.A.E is a highly connected society, if not the highest at least in the Arab world, that raised some issues dealing mainly with the change of the climate and aspects related to the sustainable environment mainly in terms of renewable energies. [31]

4.5. Challenges
In the pre-oil era, most of the settlements, developed along the coast, had few commodities. The culture of pearls and fishing were the sources of income. In the desert, adding to the harsh climate the conflicts and tribal wars were due to the lack of water. The life style was very simple and the poverty leading to the fulfillment of the basic needs as the main targets and the urban development was limited to the natural growth.

The discovery of oil and the Union of the Emirates as an independent nation had operated many transformations at the economic and urban levels. The attraction of the skilled labors (most of them none Arab) increased the diversity of the society and beliefs that constituted a threat for the Arabic language and the Identity of the Emiratis. The urbanization went an unprecedented development whether in speed or scale and the urban sprawl was accelerated by personal mobility and the use of private cars. The consequences are the urban growth in segregated physical and social zones. Such development encouraged the nuclear instead of the large family.

The economic crisis revealed some aspects such as the inflation and the expensive life style and at the same time, the inhabitant is becoming more anxious. The limited or reduction of out-door social activities might be due to the harsh climate and the use of Air Conditioning reoriented the city design to focus on the indoor design through the use of the malls. To reduce from the urban sprawl, the land speculation and carbo foot print, the strategy was based on the densification with the objective to reduce the pollution seen as a threat whether from the ecological or health issues. The urban sprawl neglected the socio-cultural factors that shaped the old and historical areas; the streets are designed mainly for the cars ending by having of the maintenance of infrastructure as one of the highest in the region and where the side walk and urban furniture are neglected. One of the indicators of the expensive life style is the water consumption per capita considered as the highest in the region. In terms of the urban fabric, the cohabitation between the old and new tissues is most of the time done in a brutal way and the historical area might be seen as disconnected. This disconnection of some historical areas led to their marginalization. The increased and multicultural society, the Arab population does not exceed 25% of the total population, constitute another challenge and threat for the Arabic language.

5. Discussion
The researchers condense their understanding of the challenges of the socio-environmental transformations in the U.A.E, sets of recommendations and questions related to the urban growth in the U.A.E. are as follows:
Recommendations:
- Redefining urban structure and patterns through comprehensive interventions is becoming key elements in re-linking identity, culture, and place.
Careful designing of future urban patterns and their morphological and functional impacts on the structure and form of cities.

Establishing vibrant living urbanism through a coherent, innovative and rational, sustainable approach to development.

Authenticity and substance are becoming of utmost importance in facing the realities that contemporary urbanism presents, but vital nonetheless.

Creating possibilities for increasing choices in non-hierarchically organized urban spaces, rather than classical systems.

Future Urban Patterns: Some Questions

- Will terms such as “city” and “urbanism” continue to exist in the future urban planning, or must we invent new descriptions for the future urban condition?
- How will future functions and typologies be embodied in the urban landscape?
- What kind of public space and urban life will the future city experience?
- What roles can urban design play to direct future development towards the generation of sustainability?
- How can urbanism respect the socio-cultural differences of particular cities against the challenging of universality all over the world?

6. Conclusion

Since 1971, through the modernization of the built environment and infrastructures, the U.A.E. is constantly looking for ways to define its identity through the built form. Most of the countries in the region are having the same strategy. However, the awareness of the Genus Loci of each unique place is a must.

This modernization opened the door to many architects (western mainly) to use some metaphors or reinterpreting some historical architectural elements that the connoisseur considers them as folkloric.

The unprecedented rapid urban growth and the multicultural social composition are seen as a threat for the perseverance of some tangible and intangible objects expressing the Identity of the nation.

It is a quest to shift development goals and architecture from a kind of financial-machine-inspired functionalist, nature dominating approach to more holistic, human scaled sustainable and spiritually inspired design paradigm. If this paradigm shift is explored diligently and through built work, there is a significant chance that it would elevate the U.A.E. to become the place of tolerance, prosperity and where the human habitations will be in harmony with nature and thus to be a reference to the world.

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