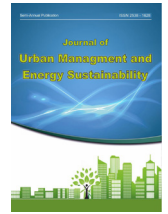


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Analysis of the Physical Components of Tradition and Modernism in the Identity of Diplomatic Buildings: Implications for the Sustainability of Urban Identity**

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ABSTRACT

Diplomatic buildings are among the most important architectural typologies through which governments and nations represent their identity: through their physical body, form, materials and ornamentation, they project an image of the sending country's culture, history and architectural patterns within the host country. The aim of this study is to extract the physical components of tradition and modernism and to examine the contribution of each component to the formation of identity in diplomatic buildings, together with its implications for the sustainability of urban identity. The research adopts a mixed-methods, qualitative-nested-in-quantitative design: the components were first extracted in the qualitative phase and then analyzed numerically in the quantitative phase. The statistical population comprised 384 academic specialists selected on the basis of the Krejcie–Morgan table, while the case-study buildings were chosen through a Delphi expert panel using Kendall's W as the criterion of concordance. The results show that, within the tradition dimension, the application of proportions carries the largest factor share (1.000) and physical adaptation the smallest (0.246); within the modernism dimension, solid-and-void volumetric composition carries the largest share (1.000) and freedom from classical geometry the smallest (0.217). These findings indicate that the purposeful integration of the components of tradition and modernism in diplomatic buildings not only strengthens architectural identity but can also contribute to the continuity and sustainability of urban identity and to the symbolic quality of the urban landscape.

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**This article is derived from the thesis of Milad Taghi Zadeh in Architecture, entitled "Design of the Embassy and Consulate of Iran in Beijing, China", defended at the Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, under the supervision of Dr. Nasim Najafgholipour Kalantari.

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is one of the principal expressions of a government's identity, with a history as old as that of cities themselves. Diplomatic buildings embassies above all are the representatives of a foreign country, and the most decisive factor in the design of such spaces is the image that the guest country wishes to present within the host country; among diplomatic buildings the embassy, to which access is strictly controlled, is the most significant (Afshar Naderi, 2009). Achieving national unity and giving it visible expression depend on awareness and recognition of national identity. Iranian national identity, however given the diversity of the country's cultural landscape and despite possessing a formative and ordering core remains a fluid matter, and attaining political cohesion is bound up with broadening public participation in the governance of the country. Embassy buildings are the physical embodiment of nations beyond their own borders. They can serve as places for forging stronger connections between nations and for easing tensions in bilateral relations. In the contemporary world, embassy architecture emerges as a reproducible art, as the representative of each country's architecture, and as a salient built body; it multiplies as a powerful political instrument in the form of national identity, looking simultaneously to the past and to the future. Frequently, quite apart from their functional role, these buildings act as monuments that articulate ideology. Architecture and the built environment have served to depict collective aims since the most ancient periods of history: in earlier eras such aims were expressed chiefly through political buildings palaces and they're like which acted as vehicles for proclaiming ideals and for legitimizing rule. Diplomatic buildings, and embassies in particular, are not merely edifices with political and administrative functions: because they occupy important urban locations and possess a symbolic quality, they also shape the image of the city and citizens' perception of its physical identity. From this perspective, the quality with which

the components of tradition and modernism are integrated in these buildings is not confined to their architectural identity; it can also play a role in the continuity, legibility and sustainability of urban identity. Examining these components is therefore significant not only for their architectural value but also from the standpoint of the sustainability of urban identity. The aim of this research is to identify and analyses the physical components of tradition and modernism in diplomatic buildings and to explain their role in the formation of architectural identity and the sustainability of urban identity. It seeks to answer the following question: which of the physical components of tradition and modernism play the greater role in shaping the architectural identity of diplomatic buildings, and how can these components contribute to the sustainability of urban identity?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tradition and modernism in architecture

Tradition and modernism in the context of contemporary Iranian architecture

The Naseri era constitutes one of the most important cultural turning points in Iran (Saremi, 1995). From the middle of the Qajar period a fundamental transformation took place in Iranian architecture: the sources of inspiration, the structure of design ideas and the architectural form and, in their wake, building materials and construction methods turned towards the Western world, and Iran's architecture of several millennia was pushed into the background (Ghobadian, 2013). The turn to the West in contemporary architecture was the fruit of a broader cultural orientation, and the modern architectural movement in Iran grew out of the ground prepared by that orientation. The decline of the Ottoman Empire, the dispatch of Iranian students to Europe, the founding of Dar ul-Funun, changing social customs and the adoption of the industrial and civilizational achievements of the West formed a legacy that could not be ignored; architecture and urbanism, following

this cultural current, underwent essential transformations (Mokhtari Taleghani, 2011). Although the roots of these developments were laid in the Qajar period, their comprehensive turning point appeared under the first Pahlavi state, when the pace of change accelerated to such a degree that this period can be regarded as the founding era of modern architecture in Iran (Bamanian, 2006). A comparable trajectory can be traced in the transformation of Iran's educational architecture from the traditional to the modern school (Alaghmand, Salehi, & Mozaffar, 2017), and parallel confrontations between modernism and nationally rooted architectural movements have been documented in neighboring contexts such as Turkey (Majedi & Soheili, 2011).

Modern architecture in Iran as the stylistic school of architectural modernism began in a relatively active manner in the closing years of the first Pahlavi period. Flight from history and the rejection of historical and classical signs and forms were principles that modern architecture in the West had made its own; the same occurred later in contemporary Iranian architecture, as modern architecture strove to sever itself completely from the past and decisively from tradition (Kiani, 2003). Under the second Pahlavi state, and under the influence of Western modern architecture, modernism became the dominant and most influential current (Bani Masoud, 2012); one of its salient features, as before, was its outward gaze and its adherence to a theory that promoted a universal, uniform and standardized way of life including a standardized architecture (Naghizadeh, 2000). The founding of the University of Tehran marked the beginning of formal architectural education in the country and played a prominent role in transmitting Western modern art (Behnam, 1994); between the 1950s and the 1970s this faculty trained the most expert and influential architects of the period. In parallel with the modern movement, an architecture combining modernism with vernacular and historicist orientations took shape during the 1960s and 1970s. In these decades architects

sought to create a synthesis of modernism and tradition so that the resulting space would possess an Iranian identity (Bani Masoud, 2012). A number of distinguished architects Houshang Seyhoun, Nader Ardalan, Kamran Diba, Hossein Amanat, Kourosh Farzami, Ali Sardar Afkhami and Gholamreza Farzanmehr designed important and valuable buildings in which these two profoundly different architectures were fused in novel and elegant ways. Thus, even before postmodern architecture spread in the West and beyond, a form of Iranian modern architecture attentive to Iran's civilization, culture and history developed within the country. In this period the traditional forms of Iran's architectural past were not used as mere adornment for modern buildings; rather, from the outset of the design, the architect sought to integrate and display both the indigenous culture of Iran and the universal characteristics of the modern age in the physical body of the building in contrast to the general run of new buildings, which are either entirely modern or entirely traditional in form, or use traditional motifs as cosmetic dressing for modern structures (Ghobadian, 2004). After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iranian society experienced comprehensive change in every sphere of life, and religious traditions and values received renewed emphasis. Architecture, influenced by the ideas and works of the second Pahlavi period and by architects' acquaintance with the postmodern currents of the 1990s, was likewise transformed. In this way the eightfold tendencies of post-revolutionary architecture took shape: literal revival of traditional Iranian architecture, vernacularism, an eclectic taste for Western styles, continuation of high-modern architecture, fusion of Iranian architectural concepts and elements with modern technology and architecture, orientation towards high technology, neo-modern architecture, and computational architecture (Hamzenejad & Radmehr, 2017) and the tendency towards modern architecture and its synthesis with tradition has continued.

The indicator of tradition in architecture

In the Dehkhoda dictionary, “tradition” denotes way and method, rule and law, rite, custom and institution, religious precept and obligation, the recommended (as against the obligatory), the school of the community, and the opposite of innovation (bid’ah). In the view of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, tradition places its emphasis on continuity and transmission, while religion emphasises revelation and the reception of a message from a divine origin; from another standpoint the two are in essence a single reality. In Webster’s dictionary, tradition means the unwritten transmission of beliefs and customs from one generation to the next (Hojjat, 2014). Etymologically the word “tradition” is bound up with transmission, and its semantic range embraces the transmission of knowledge, customs, techniques, laws, models and many other elements of both oral and written character (Nasr, 2001).

When tradition in Iranian architecture is spoken of, what is meant are the forms, compositions, procedures and ornamentation accepted as the hallmarks of Iranian architecture—consistently employed in important, large and consciously designed buildings, above all in ritual and religious buildings which, beyond climatic, material, environmental or functional reasons, also carried a cultural dimension and were regarded as a distinguishing feature, a sign and, in some cases, a symbol (Soltanzadeh, 2003). The manifestation of tradition in today’s architecture thus remains a live question of contemporary practice (Pourmand & Khazaei, 2005), and the negotiation between inherited built patterns and contemporary demands is an increasingly global concern, as studies of vernacular refurbishment and “invented traditions” in Catalonia (Alcindor & Coq-Huelva, 2020), of neo-vernacular and semi-vernacular adaptation in Chinese village revitalisation (Zhao & Greenop, 2019), of perceptions of the courtyard between tradition and

modernity in Kuwait (Al Haroun, 2019) and of the dialogue of tradition and modern development in the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar (Mannan, 2019) demonstrate. The most common terms used to define this architecture are historical architecture, old architecture, authentic architecture, architecture with identity, indigenous architecture, meaningful architecture, vernacular architecture and local architecture. Surveying these synonyms, traditional architecture can be said to carry the fourfold weight of time, place, culture and meaning (Akrami, 2004), and its three essential characteristics may be stated thus: (1) traditional architecture possesses patterns that crystallize the culture of society, patterns that have endured over time and been handed down from generation to generation; (2) traditional architecture is bound up with the sacred and is a valuable, meaningful kind of architecture; and (3) traditional architecture is the product of a traditional method of design and construction (Sadeghipsey, 2009).

Indicators capture the most general, most important and most fundamental impressions that an observer receives of the properties of an architecture, and they reveal the principal attributes of its works. Indicators are the alphabet of spatial design in every architecture and the measure by which different architectures are told apart. Although any single indicator of one architecture may well appear in others, the complete set of indicators of an architecture should, as a rule, be capable of distinguishing it from all others. By attending closely to the design of buildings and its various levels in any architecture, further indicators can be discerned, providing ever more precise instruments for distinguishing it from other architectures (Haji-Qassemi, 2012). Table 1 summarizes the views of leading scholars on the characteristics of traditional Iranian architecture. (Tab. 1)

Table 1: Views of selected scholars on the characteristics of traditional Iranian architecture (Source: Authors)

Scholar	Characteristics of Iranian architecture
Moham-mad-Karim Pirnia	Human scale (mardomvari), self-sufficiency, avoidance of futility, structural rigour (niyarehsh) and introversion (Hashemi, 1995)

Latif Abolghasemi	Climatic accord, orientation of settlement, privacy and sanctity, inner and outer quarters (andaruni/ biruni), introversion, spatial hierarchy, precedence of the divine sense over the sense of beauty and goodness
Nader Ardalan	Symbolic vision, environmental adaptation, the archetypal model of the paradise garden, positive spatial systems, complementarity, human scale and social participation, innovation
Moham-mad-Amin Mirfendereski	Reflection of the ideas and values of the age through a system of visual–dimensional–geometric signs; the bond between cosmic and terrestrial order; the centrality and four directions of the earth; reverence for light; reflection of ideas and values in architectural typology and morphology; urban linkages
Yaghoub Danesh-doust	Legibility and freedom from ambiguity; connection with the order of creation through geometry; introversion; the complementary and harmonizing role of ornament; manifest harmony of form and function; reflection of the design lines in the structure; climatic compatibility; reflection of function in the character of the building; receptiveness; movement, fluidity and lightness; narrativity
Darab Diba	Geometric diversity and richness, spatial and temporal hierarchy, human scale, adaptation to the environment, empathy with nature, unity in multiplicity
Hossein Sheikh Zeinoddin	Inducing a sense of unity through rhythm, repetition, order and geometry; completeness of the part while serving the whole; introversion and the distinction between interior and exterior space shaped by climate and visual privacy; the non-redundancy of beauty in function; the elevation of function beyond the satisfaction of ordinary need
Mahmoud Tav-assoli	Simplicity and clarity; balanced, proportionate, reciprocal and equilibrated composition of mass and space
Ali-Akbar Saremi	Vaulted ceiling structures (karbandi)
Hadi Mirmiran	Transparency (a perpetual movement from material towards spiritual quality, hence the reduction of matter and increase of space); magnanimous humility through the horizontal extension of the building; joyfulness arising from a positive worldview
Mohammad-Reza Haeri	Definition of space, single or multiple, by degree of enclosure, through the articulation of floor, ceiling and wall as open, covered and closed spaces; arrangement of closed and covered spatial groups and walls around open space by means of connection, junction, extension, sequence, interpenetration and continuity of space; fluidity and buoyancy of space; multivalence of spaces; subordination of structure to spatial organization; architectural response to nature and climate; subordination of space to human movement and repose; light, vista and orientation
Hossein Soltan-zadeh	Invention of part-space patterns such as the iwan and the dome; invention of the four-iwan plan as the culmination of iwan and dome; invention and refinement of the chahartaqi, chahar-soffeh and hasht-behesht patterns; invention of ornament through brickwork, tilework, stucco, karbandi and muqarnas
Abdolhamid Noghrekar	Centripetality, axuality, symmetry in centripetal architecture, spatial gradation, organisation of movement within space, fluidity of space (Noghrekar, 2008)
Kambiz Haji-Qassemi & Kambiz Navaei	Privacy and seclusion (orientation towards the interior, relation of inside and outside); crystalline order (purity and perfection of forms, central organization, emphasis on axis and direction, symmetry, repetition); a gem within (the geometry of karbandi); the hidden warp and weft (the concealed geometry of Islamic buildings); earth and alchemy (the materials of traditional Iranian architecture); wondrous pattern (geometric and vegetal motifs); the voice of love's speech (colour in Islamic architecture); the imaginative pen (the presence of calligraphy in Islamic architecture); in the garden of imagination (the design of open spaces) (Navaei & Haji-Qassemi, 2011)

Kambiz Haji-Qassemi	Architecture of the interior; architecture of courtyards; architecture of the bond between open and closed spaces; architecture of semi-open spaces; architecture with a complete narrative; architecture of order and adornment; architecture of dignity and moderation; architecture of clarity and fluency; architecture of non-directional space; architecture of the simple-yet-inimitable; architecture of diversity and harmony; architecture of ceilings; architecture of refinement and delicacy; architecture of pattern and colour; architecture of the similarity of part and whole; architecture that nurtures light; companionship with water; poetic architecture; architecture of the soul's serenity (Haji-Qassemi, 2012)
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The indicators of modernism in architecture

The word “modern” (modernus) was first coined by the Romans in the sixth century CE from modo, meaning “recently”, and the word “modernity” was first used by Baudelaire in 1863 in an essay on Constantin Guys entitled *The Painter of Modern Life* (Jahanbegloo, 1995). The term “modernism” has been employed as the emblem of the new ideas and practices that replaced traditional ones and that came to embrace every aspect of the individual and social life of Western humanity, above all those bound up with religion, religious knowledge, art and beauty. The comprehensive dictionary of political science describes modernism, or renewalism, as the endeavor to harmonies traditional institutions with the progress of science and civilization: modernism constitutes the outward manifestations of the new Western civilization, while modernity comprises its inner intellectual, philosophical and cultural elements and consists of a chain of interrelated fundamental concepts. Modernity names the age in which the human being, as the knowing subject and in a self-grounding manner, converts the whole of the world and of humankind into the model of its own knowledge and authority;

in this era humanity becomes the measure of all things and all things are placed at humanity's service (Aghajari, 2001). This historical era began after the cultural Renaissance in post-medieval Europe (Ahmadian & Noori, 2010). Yet before being a historical event it is a philosophical outlook one which, as it happens, took shape belatedly in the eighteenth century and was institutionalized with Enlightenment thought. Modernity operates as a self-organizing, transformative practice across the different strata and sectors of society; it has now migrated to non-European regions and become a global phenomenon. Modernity is a process which, by elevating science to a mythic station, sought to draw on science as the sole path to felicity, and by laying down the two principles of rationalism and progress it demanded the transition away from tradition (Bauman, 2013). The intellectual project of modernism, in its general philosophical sense, is the ideal of the individual's sovereignty over personal and social life; in other words, the core element of the intellectual and philosophical project of modernism is rationalism (Haghighi, 2004). Table 2 gathers the views of international and Iranian thinkers on the characteristics of modern architecture.

Table 2: Characteristics of modern architecture in the view of international and Iranian thinkers (Source: Authors)

Theorist	Characteristics of modern architecture
Peter Collins	Modern architecture was born of a change in the definition of architectural beauty. In Collins's words: “... all that has been added to the Vitruvian trinity firmness, commodity and delight is that space is a positive architectural quality, and this is the essence of modern architecture...” (Collins, 1996)

Ernest Burden	Modern architecture is the architecture of breaking earlier moulds and frameworks. Refusal of the past as a source of artistic inspiration and the candid use of technology are central concerns of modern architects. Early modern: aesthetic deployment and extension of the possibilities of industry. High modern: functionalism, machine aesthetics, urban themes, production and construction. Late modern: release from purely functional constraints, development of formalist traits, engagement with symbolic analogies (Kamelnia & Mahdavejad, 2014; Burden, 2002)
Bruno Zevi	The language of modern architecture comprises: the inventory of functions, asymmetry, anti-perspective, breaking the box, cantilevered, membrane and shell structures, space-in-time, and the building in the city (Kamelnia & Mahdavejad, 2014)
Kate Nesbitt	Formalism and functionalist thought, a “radical break” with history, the “honest” expression of materials and structure (Nesbitt, 2015)
Ali-Akbar Saremi	Elimination of ornament; complete abandonment of history and historical elements; a plan freed from the constraints of classical geometry; particular attention to the performance and function of the building; composition of simple, pure geometric volumes cube, cylinder, cone and the like; and, ultimately, the erection of buildings capable of answering to all human beings of every culture and origin (Saremi, 1995)
Amir Bani Masoud	Renewal of the processes of construction and design; negation of traditional environments in pursuit of universality; subordination of construction to uniform principles; a rational, functional order; use of the new materials of glass, concrete and steel; avoidance of unnecessary ornament (Bani Masoud, 2013)
Vahid Ghobadian	An end to historicist architecture and the backward gaze; invention of novel and unprecedented forms; emphasis on function; adherence to modern science and technology; observance of geometric and mathematical proportion; optimism towards rational and scientific solutions (Ghobadian, 2007)
Isa Hojjat	Modern architecture rests on innovation; it is time-bound and pattern-breaking. Philosophically it follows modern thought (modernity); it draws on advanced techniques and materials and is in constant flux. Relying on new technologies, it does not hold itself obliged to adapt to local conditions or draw on environmental resources, and it can be established in the most varied settings. In the West modern architecture appears as an authentic phenomenon; elsewhere it appears as an imported substitute (Hojjat, 2014)
Mostafa Kiani	Flight from history; reduction of the building to its simplest elements; concentration of spatial existence on a principal core; uniformity of all parts through utmost simplification; avoidance of ornament and of even a single redundant form; forms that display the building's principal function; concision, functionalism and extreme simplicity (Kiani, 2003)

National identity in architecture

National identity and its implications for urban identity

Identity may be considered in several dimension individual, group and social, and national. National identity as a socio-political phenomenon is a product of the modern age, arising first in Europe and reaching the East and other lands from the late nineteenth century onwards; as a scientific concept, however, it is a more recent construct of the social sciences which, since the mid-twentieth century, has been replacing the

Romantic-era notions of “national character” and “national temperament”. Every person belongs to a nation, and people define themselves through their shared past and their national identity: a nation or a historical community offers its people a distinct outlook, formed according to a shared culture, way of life and language. The objective components of identity at the level of society constitute the structures of national identity and distinguish it from other national identities and nationalities; national identity is transformed by changes in the political system and in cultural beliefs and by its openness

towards other cultural teachings, becoming a relative and epochal category. Identity may be likened to the footprint that a civilization leaves behind as it moves through history—that footprint being the culture, or identity, of the civilization. A nation that has lived through history acquires tastes and attachments, and the sum of these tastes and attachments becomes the identity by which it is known. Identity is not something that can change suddenly and at once. The identity of a nation is a continuous affair, yet not a fixed one: it changes, rises and declines, and has its peaks and troughs. Whoever wishes to understand the identity of an entity must look at this curve and grasp the formula governing it (Hojjat, 2014). Having recognized the several functions of identity and the role of history in the formation of national identity, it may be concluded that what makes a work appear, in the public eye, as possessing or lacking identity is its belonging or not belonging to a collective and enduring identity; on this view a work with identity is one whose identity lies in line with the collective identity. In the recognition of individual and collective identity which acquires substance in the course of time history has always played a key role and is one of the principal components conferring distinctiveness on national identity; in other words, the identity of any land takes shape in the bed of history and through its historical continuity. Hence the study of the architectural history of a land, in the continuity and quality of that continuity across historical periods, and the recognition of its enduring and changing elements, leads to the recognition of its national identity. Given the place of each land's history and architectural heritage in forming and sustaining the chain of its national identity itself the highest level of the manifestation of collective identity drawing on the architectural heritage is a response to the demand that new works of architecture possess identity.

Components of national identity in architecture

Some Iranian architects have sought, by examining the Iranian architectural past, to analyse it and enumerate its fundamental principles or characteristics. Yaghoub Daneshdoust holds that Iranian architecture is legible and unambiguous, and for that very reason induces ease, familiarity and intimacy; geometry binds this architecture to the order of creation; it is animated, alive, narrative and introverted; ornament is in harmony with the body, and harmony obtains between form, function and structure and the architectural design; in his view Iranian architecture accords with culture and climate. Darab Diba identifies the characteristics of Iranian architecture as introversion coupled with ambiguity; the formation of space upon rich and firm geometric diversity with spatial and temporal hierarchy; beauty and superb proportion in the service of human scale; measured empathy with nature; and the multiplicity of dispersed elements in the creation of unity (Diba, 2012). Master Pirnia states his celebrated principles of Iranian architecture as human scale, introversion, self-sufficiency, avoidance of futility and structural rigour (Pirnia, 2011). Nader Ardalan sets out his view in seven principles. For him the only architecture worthy of note is that which rises from the heart and settles upon the heart: the heart is the focal point and true centre of spiritual and bodily being, where intellect meets soul—where the material sciences meet the sciences of the spirit. The following seven design principles are, in his account, particular to the Iranian masterpieces (Ardalan & Bakhtiar, 1973):

- Symbolic vision: this architecture seeks to express and awaken in the beholder a profound sense of the eternal meanings of “spiritual transcendence” and “the unity of all beings”.

- Environmental adaptation: Iranian architecture stands in a harmonious and enduring relation with nature and with its particular climatic setting.

- The archetypal model of the paradise garden: the garden has always inspired the primary

form of the “sense of place” in this architecture outwardly the garden, inwardly the courtyard.

- Positive spatial system: introversion rests on the premise that space is a positive element; unlike Western architecture, it creates by the aid of geometry and mathematics an important positive space through a sequence of negative volumes. The linking of one space to another follows, in essence, a threefold pattern: arrival, transition, culmination.

- Complementarity: the alchemy of color, matter and line suffuse this architecture.

- Human scale and social participation: this architecture is founded on human scale and the golden proportions of the human body; from the scale of the room to the courtyard house, the neighborhood and the city there runs a hierarchy of rings of social attachment binding the individual to society.

- Innovation: innovation in building techniques vault, dome and tilework.

- Diba, in his study of Iranian architecture, further points to concepts such as introversion; spatial continuity and the cohesion of place about linear or central axes; transparency together with dignity and stability; a calculated and coherent geometric order; distinctive axiality; centrality; the articulation of joints connecting spatial sections amid the interpenetration of surfaces; well-being with nature; materials in accord with the environment; and many other notions which, in a reasoned analysis, may serve as instruments for attaining creativity and invention, though in sum they cannot necessarily guarantee the lawfulness of a successful composition (Diba, 2012).

- Hadi Mirmiran, in his analysis of Iranian architecture, shows that despite the multiplicity, diversity and complexity of its buildings, relatively few models have been employed in varied guises across time; and, further, that the evolution of Iranian architecture has rested chiefly on the refinement of these principles, foundations and models through a kind of intelligent and masterly activity rather than on their invention

(Mirmiran, 1998).

Diplomatic architecture

Diplomacy and diplomatic buildings

The word “diplomacy” is a French term of Greek origin denoting the knowledge of relations among statesmen and heads of state; the statesman so engaged is called a diplomat, and the instruments attached to diplomacy are termed diplomatic. Diplomacy is one of the principal expressions of a government’s identity, with a history as old as that of cities. In the distant past, envoys were dispatched to foreign lands to negotiate particular matters, returning home once their mission was concluded (Afshar Naderi, 2009, p. 4). Although diplomatic relations among governments date back to antiquity, modern diplomacy and the construction of diplomatic buildings have a history of only a few centuries. Modern diplomacy arose in the Renaissance, and the first diplomatic buildings were erected in nineteenth-century Europe. Many of today’s diplomatic customs took shape in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. In earlier times ambassadors were drawn from the aristocracy, their standing dependent on the standing of the guest country. By the end of the sixteenth century the ambassador had been established as the highest rank of the diplomatic mission, and foreign ministries were founded to organise and administer diplomatic missions. Diplomatic buildings fall into three principal groups: the embassy, the consulate and the ambassador’s residence. In Iran, modern foreign embassies took shape from the first half of the nineteenth century. The embassies of Russia, France, Britain, Germany and Italy are among the oldest in Tehran; they hold buildings and historic gardens of great value which, thanks to the continuous presence of diplomatic missions, have been well maintained and stand as fine witnesses to the history of the city. Today the embassies of Turkey, Germany, Russia, Britain and Italy command very extensive compounds that are prominent in the townscape of Tehran (Afshar Naderi, 2009). Diplomatic premises are

deemed part of the territory of the sending state, and the law governing them is that of the sending state; this principle, the inviolability of mission premises, is enshrined in the conventions of diplomatic law, and host governments accordingly refrain from interference in the internal affairs of these missions (Afshar Naderi, 2009).

Diplomatic missions must present a worthy image of their country and likewise provide a safe refuge for their nationals. For many residents of the host country, the diplomatic mission is the place where they first become acquainted with the identity and national convictions of the guest country, and the manner in which that country's cultural values are presented undoubtedly exerts a decisive influence on their view of it and, in consequence, on bilateral social and political relations. Moreover, under the Vienna Conventions on diplomatic and consular relations, one of the principal purposes of establishing a mission in a foreign country is the protection of the interests of the sending state's nationals in the receiving state. Diplomatic architecture may therefore be regarded not merely as the representation of the sending country's national identity but also as an element bearing on the symbolic structure, the physical landscape and the sustainability of the urban identity of the host country.

Embassy design as representative of national identity and as an agent in urban identity

Diplomatic buildings, and embassies above all, represent a foreign country in the capital or major cities of the host country. The most decisive factor in the design of such a space is the image that the guest country wishes to present in the host country. This image relates on the one hand to the fundamental ideals and convictions of the country that owns the embassy, and on the other to the character of its relations with the host. Since the essence of diplomacy is mutual understanding, the architecture of diplomacy, at its best, is the expression of understanding between different cultures; respect for the aesthetic criteria of the host country is among the principles

of embassy design. Here the perennial problem of identity in architecture comes to the fore: many governments seek their national identity in history, so the elements that represent it are necessarily historical in kind whence a further tension between history and contemporary aesthetics (Afshar Naderi, 2009). Notwithstanding the importance of the principle of invitation and its effect on bilateral relations, the principle of security cannot be neglected. Foreign buildings should present a "friendly" face to their hosts; yet instilling confidence in the occupants of the diplomatic building and providing them with maximum security is likewise fundamental. At the same time, diplomatic buildings must be attuned to the architecture of both origin and destination: they should speak of the culture and identity of the guest country while remaining no stranger to the host country and establishing the necessary bond with it, and harmony should obtain between the design and its context. Diplomatic buildings must be compatible with the existing fabric and take account of climatic considerations and of urban and vernacular design criteria. Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical consensus among the concepts of identity, tradition and modernism developed above. (Fig. 1)

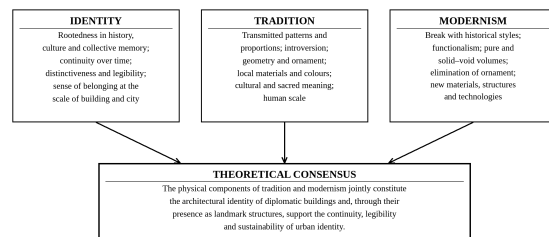


Figure 1: Theoretical consensus among the concepts of identity, tradition and modernism. (Source: Authors)

The sustainability of urban identity and the role of landmark buildings

Urban identity results from the interplay of physical, historical, cultural and perceptual elements within the setting of the city. What renders a city recognizable, meaningful and distinct for its

inhabitants and its visitors is not only the function of its spaces but also their physical quality, their landmarks, their spatial patterns and their pictorial continuity. The sustainability of urban identity may accordingly be understood as the continuity of distinguishing features, cultural meanings and physical coherence in the urban landscape. Landmark and official buildings, diplomatic buildings among them, can by virtue of their symbolic standing and their presence in significant urban spaces help either to consolidate or to weaken urban identity. The more such buildings succeed in balancing contemporary requirements, the urban context and the components of identity, the stronger their role in sustaining urban identity becomes.

The concept of urban identity

Urban identity is the set of physical, semantic and functional characteristics that distinguishes one city from others and confers individuality upon it. In the urban-design literature, identity is not merely a visual notion: it is rooted in the history, culture and collective memories of citizens. Urban identity takes shape through the interaction of people with the physical environment and consolidates over time. Seyyed Mohsen Habibi observes that urban identity is the product of citizens' reading of the text of the city within the setting of history, and that without a bond to the past the city becomes a spiritless space devoid of attachment ([Habibi, 2001](#)). From the physical standpoint, architectural elements, the fabric of neighborhoods and the form of streets and squares constitute the skeleton of the city's identity. Jahanshah Pakzad holds that the identity of a place is realized when that place is recognizable to the observer and clearly distinct from other places ([Pakzad, 2006](#)). Urban identity is thus the resultant of environmental, cultural and social characteristics that awaken a sense of place attachment in inhabitants and elevate the city from a mere settlement to a meaningful place. Preserving and strengthening this identity requires precise knowledge of the indigenous patterns of

architecture and of the values latent in the urban habitat, so that it may withstand the homogenizing pressures of globalisation ([Falamaki, 2010](#)).

Sustainability and continuity of identity in urban space

The sustainability of urban identity does not mean freezing the city in its past or opposing development; it means the continuity of cultural and physical values within the flow of change and of the present-day needs of communities. Within the framework of sustainable urban development, the preservation of identity is recognized as one of the pillars of social and cultural sustainability. Seyyed Hossein Bahreini emphasizes that sustainability in urban identity occurs when the city, while admitting innovations and new functions, maintains a logical and continuous relation with its historical past, so that citizens do not feel estranged in the new environment ([Bahreini, 2010](#)). The sustainability of identity also requires that the physical development of the city be aligned with the environmental and climatic capacities of the region. Kourosh Golkar, in setting out the components of urban design quality, counts social cohesion and the sense of belonging among the fruits of identity sustainability, and holds that the destruction of identity markers leads to the psychological disintegration of urban society ([Golkar, 2001](#)). The sustainability of urban identity thus means creating a capacity for flexibility in the physical and semantic structure of the city, such that contemporary architecture can act as the link between past and future and generate a new language of indigenous identity attuned to the requirements of sustainability economic, social and environmental.

The effect of landmark buildings on the formation of urban identity

Landmark buildings are among the most important elements shaping citizens' mental image of the city and forming urban identity. Owing to their exceptional qualities of form, scale, function or location, they act as turning points in the legi-

bility of the city. Kevin Lynch, in his theory of the city's image, identifies landmarks as one of the five principal elements of the urban image, aiding citizens in orientation and spatial perception and gradually becoming anchorages of collective memory (Lynch, 1995). Landmark buildings do not have a physical function alone: they represent the cultural and historical symbols of a society within urban space. Mahmoud Tavassoli, examining the structure of Iranian cities, notes that landmark buildings such as congregational mosques, bazaars and citadels in traditional cities not only ordered the visual identity of the city but were also the focus of social interaction and the crystallization of collective beliefs (Tavassoli, 2000). In the contemporary era, too, the design of landmark cultural, commercial or monumental buildings can contribute to the regeneration of urban identity. A successful landmark building is one which, while possessing distinctive aesthetic values, stands in dialogue with its historical and cultural context and comes to be recognized as an identity symbol of its city at the national or international level (Pakzad, 2006).

Diplomatic and symbolic buildings in the continuity or transformation of urban identity

Diplomatic buildings such as embassies and consulates occupy a dual and complex position from the standpoint of architecture and urbanism. On the one hand they represent the identity, culture and political authority of the guest (sending) country; on the other they must take their place within the physical and cultural setting of the host city. This opposition or interaction can play an important role in the transformation or enrichment of urban identity. Amir Bani Masoud, in his study of contemporary architecture, observes that diplomatic buildings, as instruments of "architectural diplomacy", often seek to display their national power and identity through symbolic forms an ambition which, if pursued without care, can turn them into discordant patches in the urban fabric (Bani Masoud, 2009). Sustainable approaches to the design of diplomatic

buildings, however, emphasize the creation of spatial dialogue. Symbolic diplomatic architecture can, by borrowing from the climatic patterns and indigenous materials of the host city, preserve its own identity while contributing to the continuity and diversification of the host city's identity. Mahmoudi holds that successful embassy regard architecture as a bridge for the dialogue of cultures: by creating in-between spaces and respecting the skyline and grain of the adjacent fabric, they avoid harsh physical imposition and add to the visual and identity-related richness of the urban landscape (Mahmoudi, 2011).

Methodology

This research is applied–developmental in type and adopts a mixed-methods approach (qualitative → quantitative) of the qualitative-nested-in-quantitative kind: the qualitative strand serves the confirmation of components, extracting and classifying the physical components of tradition and modernism with a view to explaining architectural identity and its implications for the sustainability of urban identity. The research variables are as follows: the principal variables are the physical components of tradition and modernism; the interpretive dependent variable is the architectural identity of diplomatic buildings; and the secondary level of explanation is the sustainability of urban identity. To refine the components and their denotations in the selected cases, semi-structured interviews were used; the results were subjected to open and axial coding drawing on the approach of textual reduction based on description and interpretation, and ATLAS.ti 8 software was employed to facilitate the coding-based reduction of the data. In the next stage, quantitative methods were used to examine the factor shares of the identified components on the basis of coefficients of determination. The data-collection instrument was a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale for each component; responses were entered in JMP (SAS) 17 and scored on the integer range 1–5. The results were analyzed through the inferential

statistics of regression and correlation in order to explain cause-and-effect relations. Credibility in the qualitative phase was established through a Delphi expert panel, and reliability in the quantitative phase through the content validity ratio (CVR = 0.831) and Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.714$), both of which were satisfactory. The statistical population of the qualitative phase consisted of

scholars selected through snowball sampling; 28 experts were interviewed, with data saturation emerging from the twenty-fourth interview onwards. In the quantitative phase the participants numbered 384, the upper bound of the Krejcie–Morgan table, chosen for the stronger warrant it lends the results. The process of the research is depicted in Figure 2. (Fig. 2)

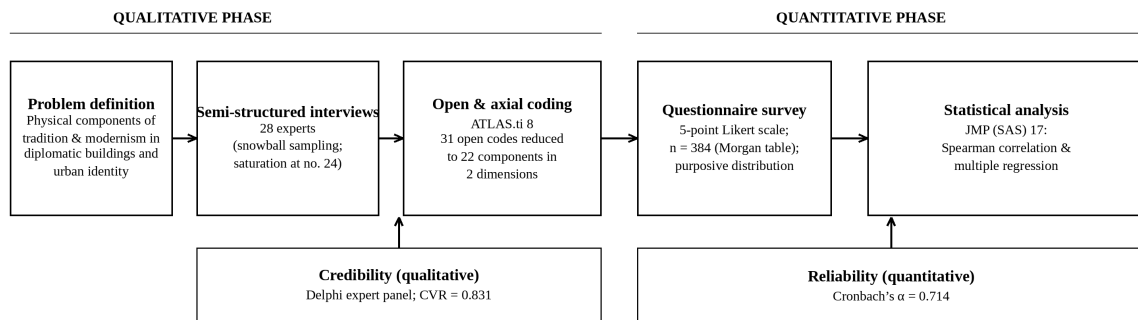


Figure 2: The research processes. (Source: Authors)

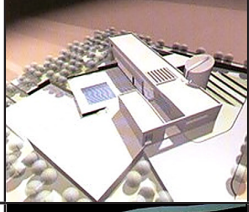
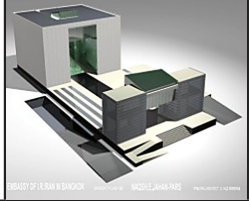
Case Studies: Iranian Embassies Designed in Other Countries

The buildings examined in this research were selected through a preference-rating system

based on the judgement of an expert panel: the buildings eligible for study were scored from 1 to 10, and those with mean scores above 5 were selected for the research. They are presented in Table 3. (Tab. 3)

Table 3: Selected diplomatic buildings of Iran in other countries and the structuring principles of their designs (Source: Authors)

No	Project location	Architect(s)	Identity concepts employed in the design	Images of the project
1	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tokyo	Hossein Sheikh Zeinoddin	1. Establishing a balance between the elements of Iranian architecture and the Tokyo site. 2. Use of materials and technology in harmony with the geographical conditions of Japan. 3. Deployment of simplified elements of Iranian architecture, such as the central courtyard and the curved wall which, in this building, recalls the adobe walls of Iranian architecture.	
2	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dushanbe	Iraj Kalantari Taleghani	The design idea took shape as a pavilion (kushk) with a flat Persian garden, yet in the course of its multiplication and refinement it was transformed to such a degree that a new composition emerged: in siting the pavilion within the Persian garden, the overall mass slid along the axes until it secured the best position and possibilities.	

3	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Berlin	Darab Diba, Jahangir Safaverdi and associates	1. Expression of a primordial pattern of enduring design. 2. A sense of unity and an aspiration to transcendence. 3. A space of remembrance and memory. 4. Observance of geometry. 5. Exploitation of light. 6. Transparency and spatial continuity. 7. Chahartaq and iwan. 8. Natural materials. 9. The Persian Garden.	
4	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Yerevan	Iraj Kalantari Taleghani	1. Attention to the natural environment. 2. Distance from ornamentation and stylistic fashions. 3. Use of modern lines with the geometry of the central courtyard garden as the manifestation of concepts such as visual privacy and sanctuary (separation of the public from the private realm).	
5	Embassy and Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Stockholm	Farhad Ahmadi	Conveying a symbolic sense of the world of archetypes in accordance with the design idea: a composition suspended between earth and sky, one part inclining heavenwards and another earthwards.	
6	Embassy and Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bangkok	Seyyed Hadi Mirmiran	1. The final design idea rests on the Persian garden. 2. The spatial idea of the design is the reduction of matter and the increase of space. 3. The design seeks to develop the interior space in such a way that the mass of the building is diminished and a floating, transparent space takes its place.	
7	Embassy and Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Amman	Pol-e Shir Consulting Engineers; Mohammad-Reza Ghanei	1. Provision of security. 2. Preservation of privacy. 3. Creation of an Eastern space. 4. Grandeur allied with balance. 5. Adaptation to the nature and culture of the site. 6. Instilling a sense of permanence.	

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical saturation emerged from the twenty-fourth interview onwards. In the open-coding stage 31 codes were extracted; after relating them to the principal category and condensing the data they were reduced to 22, and axial coding was then used to classify them within the two domains of tradition and modernism. The most frequently recurring component of tradition is the reflection of ideas and values in the building's body, with a groundedness (salience) of 21, and the least recurrent concerns local colors, with a groundedness of 6. Among the components of modernism, the most recurrent is purity of volumes, with a groundedness of 24, and the least recurrent is freedom from classical geometry,

with a groundedness of 10. The results are depicted in Figure 3. (Fig. 3)

Quantitative findings

Descriptive statistics

The statistical population of this phase consists of designers and specialists. The Krejcie–Morgan table was used to determine the sample size, and since the exact size of the population was unavailable its upper bound of 384 was adopted. The questionnaires were distributed purposively. Of the participants, 39% are women and 61% men. The largest age group, at 54%, is 18–22 years; 25% are 22–26 years and 21% are 26–30 years. The greatest frequency relates to the physical charac-

teristics of the units, with a value of 1914, and the smallest to duration of residence, with a value of 984. The support of the moving average for the dispersion of the data attests to the soundness of the measurement instrument; the responses are, moreover, mutually correlated and can be predicted by means of the fitted curve.

Inferential statistics

(a) Correlation

The two-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to examine whether the data should be treated parametrically or non-parametrically (Tab. 4).

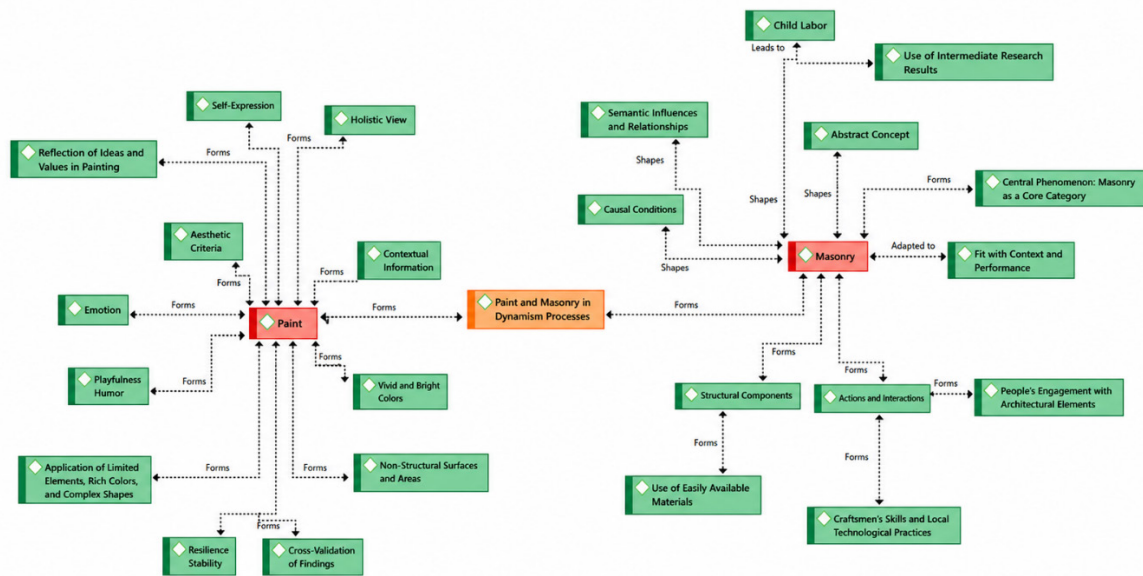


Figure 3: Codes extracted through the open and axial coding of the interview texts in ATLAS.ti 8. (Source: Authors)

Table 4: Kolmogorov–Smirnov test of the distribution of the tradition and modernism variables in diplomatic buildings (Source: Authors)

Variable	Mean	SD	Kolmogorov–Smirnov Z	p
Components of tradition and modernism in diplomatic buildings	41.25	5.28	0.893	0.585

As Table 4 shows, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic for the scores of the physical components of tradition and modernism in the diplomatic buildings is not significant ($p = 0.585$). Given this result and the ordinal, Likert-type nature of

the data, a normal distribution was not assumed for the variables under scrutiny, and non-parametric analyses were accordingly employed for them (Tab. 5).

Table 5: Spearman correlations of the components of tradition and modernism in diplomatic buildings (Source: Authors)

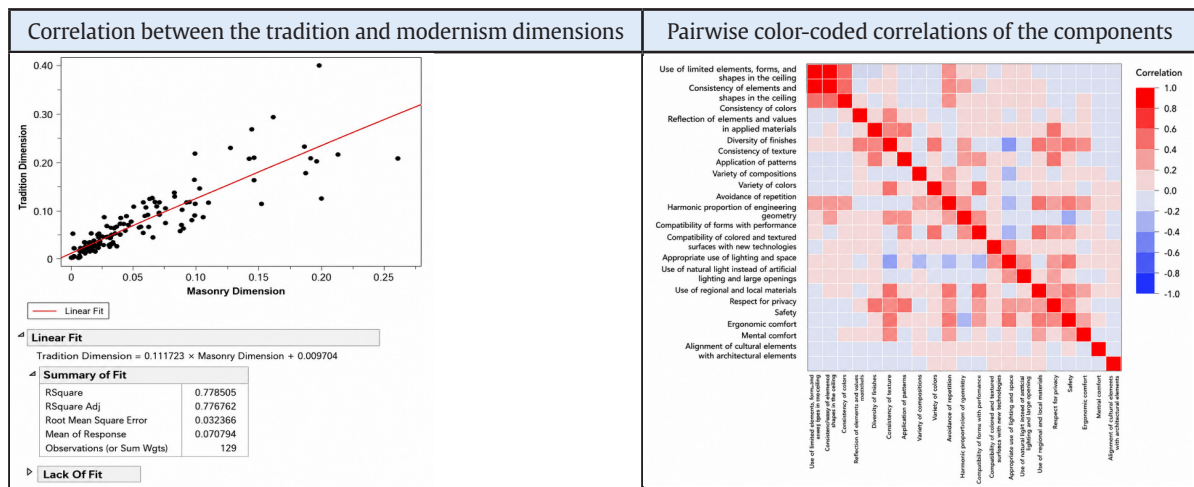
Dimension	Component	Correlation coefficient	Sig.	df
Tradition	Limited use of traditional elements, forms and shapes	0.741	0.001	374
	Traditional materials in facades	0.842	0.011	374
	Physical adaptation	0.625	0.012	374
	Geometry in the body	0.635	0.014	374

Tradition	Reflection of ideas and physical values	0.742	0.008	374
	Geometric diversity	0.961	0.007	374
	Horizontal extension	0.489	0.006	374
	Application of proportions	0.789	0.006	374
	Traditional motifs	0.598	0.007	374
	Local colors	0.745	0.006	374
	Complexity of form	0.895	0.006	374
Modernism	Elimination of ornament	0.856	0.002	374
	Freedom from classical geometry	0.748	0.003	374
	Form appropriate to function	0.869	0.003	374
	Consistency with the characteristics of modernism	0.795	0.002	374
	Application of new materials and technological achievements	0.786	0.003	374
	Use of new structural technologies	0.788	0.004	374
	Use of wide windows	0.855	0.004	374
	Purity of volumes	0.749	0.004	374
	Solid-and-void volumes	0.946	0.003	374
	Sculptural quality	0.875	0.002	374
	Element-like quality of architectural components	0.915	0.010	374

According to the correlation results in Table 5, the strongest correlation within the tradition dimension belongs to geometric diversity (0.961) and the weakest to physical adaptation (0.625). Among the components of modernism, the strongest correlation belongs to the element-like quality of architectural components (0.915) and

the weakest to freedom from classical geometry (0.745). The results in the two dimensions of tradition and modernism further indicate that they explain one another to the extent of 0.77. For ease of reading, the pairwise relations of the components are presented through a colored correlation plot (Tab. 6).

Table 6: Graphical plots of the overall and pairwise correlations between the dimensions and components of tradition and modernism in diplomatic buildings (Source: Authors)



(b) Regression

At this stage, to determine the appropriate use and form of regression, the inter-variable correlation matrix was examined; the results show that the dispersion of the variables is non-linear, so that multiple regression is the better route to a precise answer (Fig. 4).

On the basis of the moving-average estimates of the coefficients of determination of the components of tradition and modernism, it emerged that within the tradition dimension the application of proportions has the largest factor share (1.000) and physical adaptation the smallest (0.246); within the modernism dimension, solid-and-void volumes have the largest share (1.000) and freedom from classical geometry the smallest (0.217). The full results are given in Table 7.

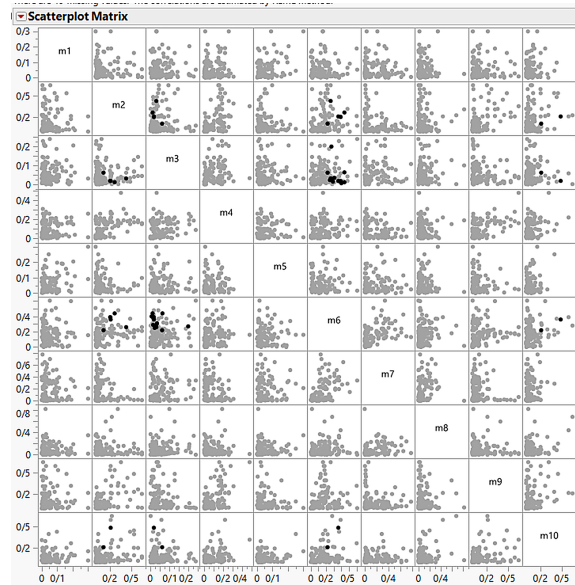


Figure 4: Scatterplot matrix of the correlations between the variables. Source: the authors, from JMP output.

Table 7: Multiple regression of the components of tradition and modernism (Source: Authors)

Dimension	Component	R ²	Sig.	F	B	β	t
Tradition	Limited use of traditional elements, forms and shapes	0.615	0.001	523.232	1.000	0.781	46.522
	Traditional materials in facades	0.451	0.011	435.144	1.000	0.732	42.152
	Physical adaptation	0.246	0.012	224.354	1.000	0.662	40.223
	Geometry in the body	0.746	0.014	199.943	1.000	0.648	38.239
	Reflection of ideas and physical values	0.762	0.008	201.612	1.000	0.664	8.958
	Geometric diversity	0.483	0.007	643.623	1.000	0.662	11.134
	Horizontal extension	0.753	0.006	849.683	1.000	0.652	18.441
	Application of proportions	1.000	0.006	349.603	1.000	0.665	19.144
	Traditional motifs	0.571	0.003	527.222	1.000	0.711	54.551
	Local colors	0.770	0.002	405.122	1.000	0.723	42.166
Modernism	Complexity of form	0.795	0.001	217.343	1.000	0.552	56.233
	Elimination of ornament	0.993	0.006	199.943	1.000	0.748	33.219
	Freedom from classical geometry	0.217	0.007	201.612	1.000	0.754	18.938
	Form appropriate to function	0.750	0.008	643.623	1.000	0.662	21.434
	Consistency with the characteristics of modernism	0.674	0.001	849.683	1.000	0.642	28.314
	Application of new materials and technological achievements	0.567	0.001	349.603	1.000	0.665	29.214
	Use of new structural technologies	0.518	0.004	527.222	1.000	0.781	43.524
	Use of wide windows	0.732	0.003	405.122	1.000	0.688	45.134

Modernism	Purity of volumes	0.467	0.003	217.343	1.000	0.462	32.223
	Solid-and-void volumes	1.000	0.002	199.943	1.000	0.988	31.223
	Sculptural quality	0.674	0.002	201.612	1.000	0.764	21.958
	Element-like quality of architectural components	0.567	0.011	643.623	1.000	0.562	21.134

According to the comparative PN modelling of the application of the components of modernism and tradition, within the modernism dimension the components support and enhance one another, and their integrated application increases the effect size for explaining the character of the architecture; considered case by case across the questionnaires, however, the effect size of the component “use of wide windows” exceeds that of the other components. Within the tradition dimension the largest case-wise effect size in the questionnaires belongs to geo-

metric diversity, and the joint application of the components in two groups raises their effect sizes: the first group comprises the reflection of ideas and physical values, horizontal extension, geometric diversity, local colors and geometry in the body, while the remaining components fall into the second group. A noteworthy point is the independent behavior of geometric motifs relative to the other components in conveying tradition in the selected diplomatic buildings (Fig. 5).

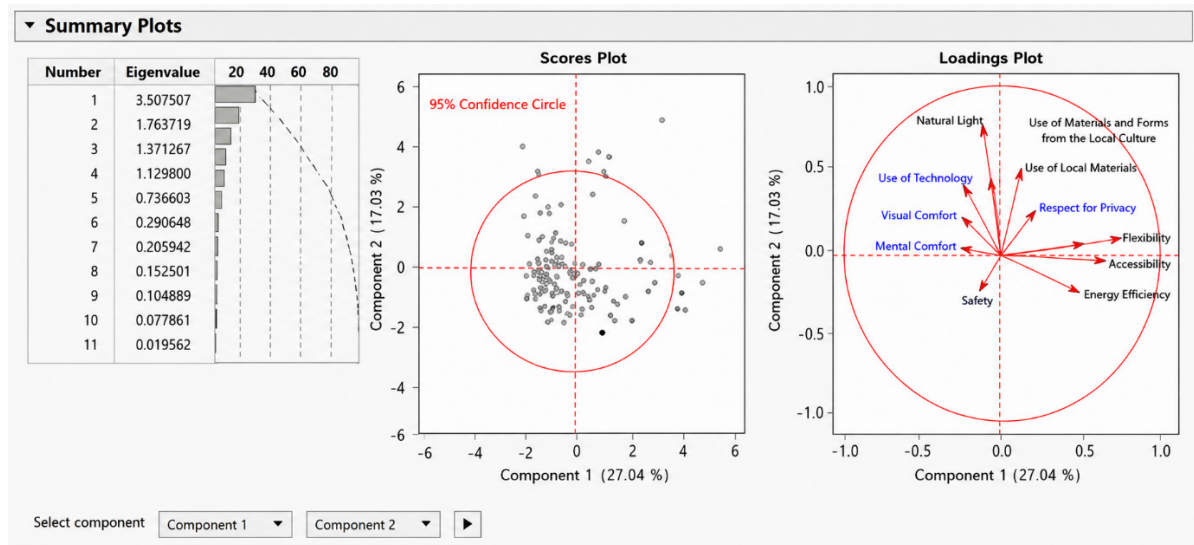


Figure 5: Comparative PN modelling of the components of tradition and modernism. Source: the authors, from JMP output. (Source: Authors)

The upshot of the quantitative findings is that components such as proportion, geometric diversity, solid-and-void volumes and formal purity play a greater part than other factors in shaping the physical identity of diplomatic buildings. Since these buildings rank among the landmark elements of the city, strengthening these components can also further the visual

coherence, symbolic legibility and sustainability of urban identity.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

In this research the point of effect and manifestation of identity is taken to be the body of the buildings. It was first necessary to extract the physical components derived from the manifes-

tation of identity and then to classify them under tradition and modernism. The qualitative phase established that the extracted components concern overall shapes, overall volumes and detailed shapes, and the divergence between salience and frequency in the quantitative findings underlines the point that as the number of respondents increases the results change appreciably. Twenty-two codes were extracted in two sets of eleven, for tradition and modernism respectively. In the quantitative findings a difference appeared between the results of the inferential and the descriptive statistics, and the inferential statistics were taken as the unit of analysis. The support of the moving average for the frequency of the data confirms the soundness of the method and instrument, and the dispersion of the components indicates their high frequency. On the evidence of the correlations, deploying geometric diversity in the elements and members of the components can exert the greatest influence in conveying the historical and cultural identity of a land; in the modernism dimension, solid-and-void volumetric composition holds the strongest relations with the other components and also carries the larger factor share. Observation suggests that all the selected embassies whether in their detailed shapes, their overall shapes or their dominant form give shape to their bodies by means of solid-and-void composition. Physical proportions drawn from Iranian systems of proportion, such as the peymoon module and the golden section, play a decisive role in conveying traditional identity in buildings of this kind. The findings of the research indicate that the architectural identity of diplomatic buildings arises less from the direct representation of traditional elements than from the manner in which the body is organized its proportions, geometry and volumes and from the quality of their integration with modern characteristics. This matters from the urban standpoint as well: diplomatic buildings ordinarily stand as landmark structures in the urban landscape, and their physical quality bears on the public perception of the city's identity, visual order and

cultural image. In consequence, the purposeful application of the components of tradition and modernism can, alongside creating architectural identity for the building, contribute to the continuity and sustainability of urban identity.

A diplomatic building is a symbol of presence in a foreign land, and it must give expression to the culture and identity of its country. Yet however important it is to create a building attuned to the culture and architectural identity of the guest country, the identity of the host country must not be disregarded: employing indigenous themes of the host country in the design of diplomatic buildings conveys peace ableness and goodwill, and by offering a reassuring, receptive architecture it prepares fertile ground for the development of diplomacy. A further tension in the design of such buildings is therefore stylistic in kind: countries prefer their diplomatic buildings to carry signs of their own culture, while in many cases the people of the host country have no wish to see buildings of alien architecture in their capital and major cities. The architect must accordingly view the several problems of design from the standpoints of both the country of origin and the country of destination, and answer to both. Examination of the case-study diplomatic buildings shows that in some instances the designer has sought, in the interior architecture and the choice of materials, to allude to the guest country: to introduce the guest country, recourse is had chiefly to direct reference through its characteristic architectural elements, materials or technologies, or to indirect evocation of its character through spatial compositions and symbolic elements. The measurement of a work's identity rests on observation, for it is the application of the components in the body of objects that can convey the culture of a society; the components used to create this culture must therefore first be identified. Diplomatic buildings, and embassies in particular, represent the culture of a society, and the encounter of tradition and modernism within them can heighten its physical manifestation and act as a point of effect in shaping their

form. This research has shown to what degree the components representing tradition and modernism are applied in the contemporary period in pursuit of an Iranian-Islamic identity, and how, in the judgement of architects, each finds expression in the building's body in conveying an Iranian-Islamic identity with historical depth. From the standpoint of the sustainability of urban identity, moreover, diplomatic buildings by virtue of their official standing, their symbolism and their presence in significant urban fabrics act as more than isolated buildings and can play a part in consolidating or transforming the cultural image of the city. On this basis, attention to components such as proportion, geometric diversity, solid-and-void volumes, materials and the manner of integrating traditional and modern elements is essential not only for shaping the architectural identity of these buildings but also for strengthening the legibility, coherence and sustainability of urban identity.

The results of this research can be applied to emerging building types rooted in the presentation of culture, and the following recommendations are offered:

- Application of geometric motifs selected from indigenous systems of proportion, such as the peymoon module and incommensurable (surd) numbers, executed in new materials as ornament at the level of detail.

- Deployment of solid-and-void volumetric composition and the creation of an overall modern form from simple volumes, with the removal of classical geometry from the large-scale overall form.

- Simultaneous application of the components evocative of modernism alongside one another, and the branching of the components of tradition in the manner of their joint application.

- Attention to the body and overall form of the building as the bearer of identity, through the composition of small and large shapes with a concentration on small-scale ornament.

- Attention to materials as the final cladding of modern forms, and continuity in their use

through the interweaving of interior and exterior space in identity-bearing buildings.

- Attention, within the design process, to the role of diplomatic buildings in the landscape and image of the host country's city.

- Establishment of a balance between representing the national identity of the sending country and preserving the physical and identity-related coherence of the host urban fabric.

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