

The Architecture of Colonialism

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Abstract Colonialism has had a major impact on civilizations around the world. British colonialism and French colonialism have spread their influence throughout the world, and have become one of the world's major powers. In addition, these powers have influenced many countries in terms of culture, education, art, architecture and urban planning. The influences continued, however, even after independence. Thus, this paper presents an overview on the architecture of colonialism. This paper has explored the effects of colonialism on the architecture point of view among the nations, which were colonized, by the French and the British. This paper has looked into the history of colonization whereby the traces of French and British colonization were presented. Likewise, the architecture aspects of the French and the British on the colonized countries were also discussed. Thus, it is concluded that the countries, which were colonized, by the French and the British have adapted the architecture aspects of the colonizer.

Keywords Architecture, Colonialism, French, British, Building Design, Structure

1. Introduction

Colonization can be classified as an act of transferring the population to a new place and living there as they used to live in their original place, preserving their culture of origin and obedience [1]. The word colony is primarily derived from the Latin word "Colonus" meaning farmer [1]. Colonialism is a sensitive issue because it involves the domination of people of another culture.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, architecture was an important element that led to cultural change. Therefore, understanding the connection between culture and architecture is necessary for creating a civilized environment [2]. Colonial architecture is a hybrid architecture that incorporates the classic elements of the architecture of the motherland into the buildings or structures of overseas territories [3]. The former European "colonies" are good examples, with continental architecture entering the Americas, Asia and other regions. Usually, the fusion of traditional elements and local culture will produce a mix of styles, which is a unique architectural style in the world [3]. However, the colonists' buildings were mainly reserved for the cultural elite and were only available to local residents after the colonial country's demise [3]. Therefore, colonial architecture is to a large extent a way of expressing the power, wealth and status of colonists.

The Second World War undoubtedly had a huge impact on architectural concept and principles. After the Second World War the European empire collapsed, the geopolitical world was transformed, and a huge gap began to appear between architecture and cultural theories [2]. The success of many pre-colonial independence movements has caused people to refocus on the anthropological structure of the earth and reconsider cultural concepts in a way that accepts diversity instead of insisting on unity [2]. In addition, the political and economic systems have a powerful influence on urban and domestic lifestyles, while the domestic lifestyles are influenced by the ruling authority, social relations and family units [2].

As example, the American colonial houses are usually two to three stories high and traditionally built with

emphasis on symmetry [4]. Public spaces such as the living room, kitchen, dining room, and family room are traditionally located on the first floor, and the bedrooms are located on the second and third floors [4]. The advantages of colonial houses are suitable for entertainment, spacious, reasonable layout, rectangular, and easy to expand [4]. The disadvantages are difficult to heat and air-condition a large room, excessively formal style, and the central staircase makes renovations a challenge [4].

In Malaysia, the built colonial buildings are the country's most valuable asset. They are adapted from each colonist's own architectural style, although they have been modified to adapt to the country's hot and humid climate and environment [5]. Therefore, these buildings show the combination of the multicultural influences of the Chinese and Indians when they immigrated to Malaya [5]. Therefore, Malaysia has many types of colonial buildings because it has inhabitants of several races and has been colonized by several powers such as Portuguese, Dutch and British in the past [5].

Besides that, the history of architecture is significant because architecture is essential to human experience. James-Chakraborty [6] has doubt that the new knowledge about the people who commissioned, designed, built, lived, and observed colonial and post-colonial buildings had an impact on the entire humanities and social sciences because it subverted the unique preconceptions of

architectural historians.

The colonial built environment leads to hybrid culture as a product of overlapping political boundaries, the emergence of the concept of mixed culture seems to only disturb architectural theorists, because it reiterates the need to reconsider whether architecture really affects culture, and vice versa [2]. Recently, the growing phenomenon of "global culture" and "traditional consumption" in some parts of the world has triggered a further shift in the interpretation of architecture [2].

The colonizers have affected many territories, where the colonizers have had major influences and effects on the culture, art and architecture of the colonized people [7]. Thus, this paper presents an overview on the architecture of colonialism.

2. Methodology

This study aims to outline and discuss the impact of colonialism on buildings colonized by France and Britain. Therefore, this study collects information from secondary data obtained from library resources and online journals and published articles. The overview and influence of colonialism on architecture is divided into several parts, covering from colonial history to post-colonial, as shown in Figure 1.

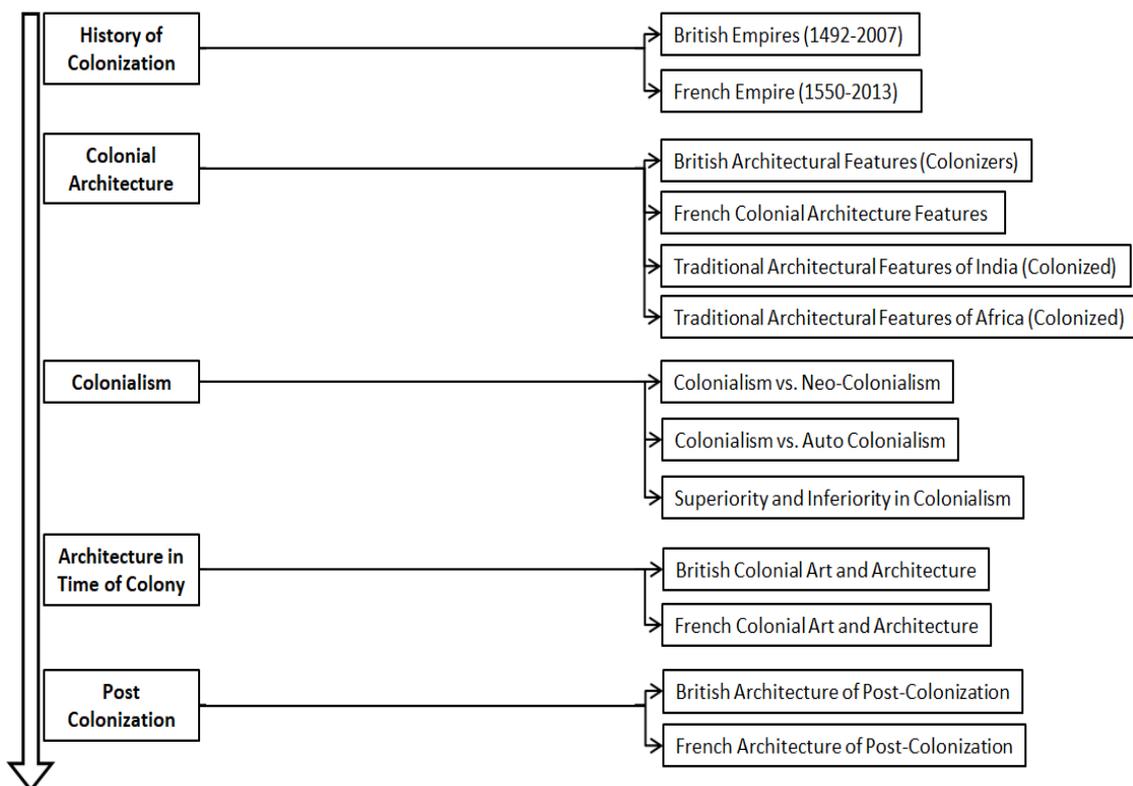


Figure 1. Process flow outlined in colonial architecture in this study

3. History of Colonization

The Roman Empire was the greatest colonial power at the time of the old colonization [8]. It stretched from northern Britain to the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf. However, the empire fell in 476 AD [8]. After that, at the time of modern colonization, Britain became a major empire, and then the French empire followed. These two empires have had a major impact on the cultures and languages as well as on the architecture of the countries [9].

3.1. British Empires (1492-2007)

The British Empire was the most dominant and the growing in the world, with a huge influence on the planet. They have ruled many countries and have achieved more than the French Empire [10]. They have colonized regions of Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. They have managed to occupy the United States, Jamaica and the Bahamas in the Caribbean, Canada in North America on the continent of America. In addition, they have entered Australia, New Zealand and Papua Guinea. Other regions include Egypt, South Africa, East Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, West Africa, Asia, such as Bahrain, India, Oman, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan, UAE, Borneo, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen (Aden), Burma, Kuwait, Qatar, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Malaya and Sarawak [10].

3.2. French Empire (1550-2013)

France may be divided into two colonial territories. The first began in the 16th century until the 17th century [11]. It involved most of North America, some of the richest Caribbean islands and a large part of India; most of it was transferred to England as a result of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The second was established at the end of the 19th century. In addition, the purpose of the Second French Empire was to challenge the British Empire. It involved Northern Africa, a large part of Western and Central Africa, Indochina and islands all over the world. There, the French colonial empire reached 12.3 million square miles [11], which is 25 times the size of France. In addition, European nations have begun to explore the world, aiming to control other countries. The empire included several colonies under its rule, including parts of America, Asia and North Africa [11].

4. Colonial Architecture

Colonial architecture is an architectural style from the motherland that has been incorporated into settlements or colonial architecture in remote areas. This section discusses the architecture of the British and French colonists and the colonial architecture of India and Africa.

4.1. British Architectural Features (Colonizers)

British colonial architecture defined by dark wood furniture and flooring, light walls, high ceilings with Punkahs that are fans like screens operated by a machine or a servant. In addition, their roof featured wide verandas accessible to the outside and along the verandas with potted plants, windows and greenery. They also used tall, rounded windows and garden doors. In the case of decoration, they featured traditional woven sisal elements of the Anglo-Indian type; while they made sure they imported elegant accessories from England to retain the English theme in the building.

4.2. French Colonial Architecture Features

French colonial architecture characterized by symmetrical square shapes, because their houses are small and if more rooms are needed, they will be added later to avoid excessive construction. In addition, their houses feature exterior stairs, wrought-iron balconies and roof shingles, high ceilings for ventilation purposes [12]. In addition, the houses also have narrow, tall windows on the first and second floors. In the case of its exterior, the entrance door is located between two windows in the centre. Furthermore, interior contains exposed wooden beams as well as large rooms with lounges, which are spaces where the family gathers together. However, the houses were elevated to one level above the ground for cooling purposes [12].

4.3. Traditional Architectural Features of India (Colonized)

The traditional architecture of India is mainly based on local environmental availability and climate confederation. Because of this, their building material is baked brick [13]. In fact, their buildings, and especially their temples, reflect the artistic craftsmanship of carvings and sculptures on walls, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Traditional architecture of India

In terms of their houses, they consisted of a one to two-storey building, characterized by wide doors that create a welcoming entrance for visitors. They also feature large multi-purpose rooms, such as crafts, celebrations and many other activities [13]. Notably, storage is one of the primary needs where hunting and fishing tools are stored. Whereas the windows were only placed around the central courtyard of the house and the roofs were flat. In addition, the urban planning of their cities has been carefully designed in the context of the environment and cultural demand [13].

4.4. Traditional Architectural Features of Africa (Colonized)



Figure 3. Traditional architecture of Africa

Madagascar's traditional architecture is characterized by a two-storey building with linear shapes erected above the ground and covered by sloping roofs with balconies, as shown in Figure 3. In addition, local materials, mud and brick are used. However, the style of the houses may differ from one region to another, for example; in the Plateau

region, they used to build large houses with red bricks treated with stucco on the outside and roofs made of clay straws or tiles [14]. While in the coastal region, they are usually built smaller with one or two bedrooms and raised above the ground to cope with the floods. The materials used are bamboo, mud, branches, grass and palm leaves. In the northern region, however, the building material used is red clay, while the roofs are stretched from the chalk to the portico [14].

5. Colonialism

Colonialism is a practice or policy whereby a power controls a subordinate area or people. This is mainly for economic dominance and the direct exploitation of the population by imposing their religion, language and other cultural practices.

5.1. Colonialism vs. Neo-Colonialism

Colonial architecture is the architectural style of the colonial empire that was forced and implemented in the architectural style and town planning of colonized countries such as India, Africa and Lebanon and many others during the colonization period [15]. Neo-Colonialism in architecture is the implementation of historic symbolic styles or architectural features for a given event. This movement is commonly used in industrial cities or cities with high immigration rates [15].

5.2. Colonialism vs. Auto Colonialism

Auto colonialism is a phenomenon that usually occurs when a country gains its independence from colonial rule,

but still adapts the styles and architectural features of the colony [16]. For example, the French colonial period affected the architecture and urban planning of other cities such as Dakar, Beirut and many others. In fact, even after independence, it introduced its architectural style in the colonized countries [16].

5.3. Superiority and Inferiority in Colonialism

Europeans, British and French empires believed themselves to be superiors, while other countries believed themselves to be inferiors. They therefore thought that they had a responsibility to replace those inferiors. The two European empires used the term superiority and inferiority to justify their colonial activities. According to Brigadier General John Jacob, an officer of the British East India Company at the beginning of the 1800s, the British Empire would control India as a superior race to the Asians [17]. Unless the reputation of the British being superiors was incorrect, they would not have the right to keep India for one week. However, if it was true, then they really are the "superior race." The British will then form the rule and seek to improve the country's ethical and academic powers.

6. Architecture in Time of Colony

In order to adapt to the local climate, the colonists modified and adopted their art and architectural style in the local building. These unique architectural styles and patterns have cultural relic value, and so many have been preserved to this day.

6.1. British Colonial Art and Architecture

British colonial rule has had a tremendous influence on Indian literature. Throughout the paintings of the period there was a strong convergence between Indian styles and European theme. Under colonial rule, a variety of colonial artistic painting styles were developed, such as scenic artworks, which depicted India as a distant land to be discovered by British adventurers and artists [18]. Furthermore, the portrait paintings that depict the influence of the British representatives in India were indeed one of the colonial artistic trends. Historiography artwork is another royal culture that has been developed to re-create and magnify some of the significant events of British imperial heritage in India. Prior to the British colonization, the Indian traditional painting was mainly influenced by cultures, philosophy and ethics. Indian art usually depicted the world of gods, supernatural beings, and livestock (Figure 4). In addition, scientism was visible in Indian art. Furthermore, before British colonization, the typical architecture of India composed of a mixture of Hindu and Islamic characters and designs decorating temples, civic buildings and homes [18]. Employing a double roof, a recessed archway, white marble and parks, though

stressing symmetry and description, Quranic verses were also defined on the walls of the buildings. Taj Mahal is one of the most prominent traditional architectural figures. In addition, during the British Colony, a percentage of new cities were designed to house the British in India. The architecture and urban design elements of the British reflected some concepts, but mostly attempts were made to physically distinguish the Europeans from the local Indians.

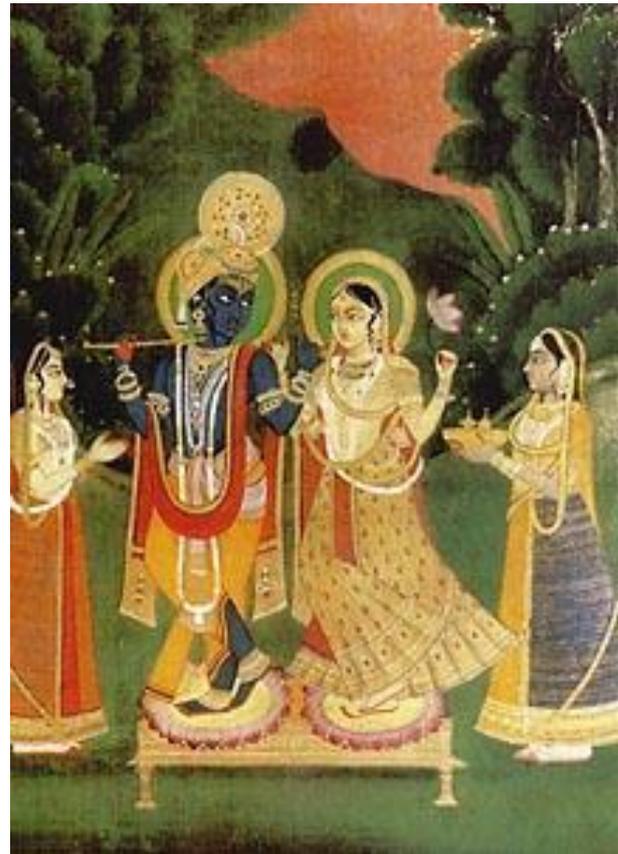


Figure 4. Indian Art

6.2. French Colonial Art and Architecture

During the time of French rule over Syria and Lebanon, the academic structure and social climate of Beirut governed French language and culture. The colony was quickly accustomed to modern and international art and had little aversion to nude paintings [19]. In comparison, the landscape of art remained a regional theme, depicting still life, rural scenes, increasingly vanishing rural life, and urban landscape. Further, some of the artworks from that time period were paintings by Orientalism. Before the French mandate, the main architectural style was Ottoman architecture, having ruled Lebanon for more than 400 years [19]. The elements of the Ottoman style can be traced: central courtyards, open arcades and fountains. The city was inspired by the fusion of traditional architecture with western themes and designs, as well as by foreign building methods and equipment [19, 20]. French imperial

architecture was brought to Lebanon at the beginning of the 20th century under the French mandate, taking together a number of design features from the West, combining traditional Neo-Ottoman and Eastern models that were common at that period (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Historic Buildings of the French Mandate Period in Lebanon

7. Post Colonization

The development of architecture in the post-colonial era embodies the consciousness and spirit of exploring national identity. In the post-colonial perception, modern architecture does not simply present modernity based on new materials and advanced technologies, but focuses on the non-material forms that shape the history, meaning and political ideology of architectural design [21, 22].

7.1. British Architecture of Post-Colonization

The key influence on architecture since the decolonization of India under British regime is that architecture hybridity has developed steadily and has emerged on modern buildings. For example, the Tajhat Palace in Rangpur is a classical colonial building adorned with some of the typical Indian motifs (Figure 6) [23]. The building is a combination between western colonial designs with little conventional Indian architecture.



Figure 6. Tajhat Palace in Rangpu

7.2. French Architecture of Post-Colonization

The French colonial period affected the architecture and urban planning of Lebanon and, in particular, the center of Beirut. Even after Lebanon became independent, new buildings with the features of French architecture were built. One of the key examples is the central district of Beirut (Figure 7). Throughout the post-civil war era throughout Beirut, the houses and facilities of the city were significantly damaged [18]. Nevertheless, they were inspired by French design in the rebuilding of the central city.



Figure 7. Architecture at Beirut

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, colonialism is simply a case that has affected the architecture of the past and the present. In the past, when the colonizers began to build, they built buildings that suited their own culture and environment, not the colonized. Whereas, at present, colonialism has been transformed into auto-colonialism, which means that citizens are now adapting the same architectural style left by the colonizers in their new buildings, and that in the eyes of many is negative. The beneficial impact created at the advent of colonialism, though, is that it provided citizens with a new background and history. Finally, study of cultural heritage and its cultural connotation requires constant negotiation and reassessment. Therefore, authors who compile the history of colonialism and colonial

architecture should focus on the viewpoints, research techniques, and narratives of decolonization.

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