

Pioneering Architect in the Construction of Post-Colonial Iraq

Rifat Chadirji and His Monument Designs

Melek Kutlu Divleli ^{1*}, Abdullah Asım Divleli ²⁾

^{1,2)} Faculty of Architecture and Design, Samsun University, Samsun, Turkey

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Corresponding author:
Melek Kutlu Divleli
melek.kutlu@samsun.edu.tr



Abstract – The idea of the nation-state, which usually emerges in post-colonial periods, uses architecture as a tool of representation in Iraq, as in many other examples that have experienced similar processes. These architectural designs are not context-free and independent productions but are shaped in parallel with official historiographies. While the official historiography in post-colonial Iraq defines the pre-twentieth century as colonialist, it establishes a relationship of belonging with the ancient Iraqi history and the independence movements of the colonial process. Therefore, the architectural structures produced in this period are shaped in parallel with such a historiographical perspective. Although not all of them are labeled as national, the architectural structures built in post-colonial Iraq have a wide variety. Among them, the monumental monuments and sculptures designed and built by government decisions in the city squares are the most characteristic examples of the nationalization policy. This article focuses on Iraq's nation-building process during the colonial and post-colonial periods and will tell the story of the construction of two monuments designed by Rifat Chadirji, considered the most influential architect of this period. Since the analysis cannot be done solely through observation, the diaries of the architect during the aforementioned period and before will also be utilized to record his recollections of the design and construction process. This article concludes that the monuments in Iraq are linked to the politics of the period in which they were built. Each has an ideological symbolic value and has played an essential role in shaping national memory.

Keywords: *architecture, Iraq, monument, Rifat Chadirji.*

I. INTRODUCTION

After the First World War, political movements organized around nationalist ideas emerged in the Arab geography, each transformed into a colonial state, disturbed by the presence of Western states. This discourse of opposition to the colonial states arising from religious and cultural differences expands to encompass the social and political sphere and becomes an organized political structure. Their chief goal was to replace the colonizer and its representatives with a local and nationalist government (Dawisha, 2016). This quest, which took place between the two world wars, represents not only the abandonment of the old but also the construction of a new “self” and “belonging” that would change and define the nature of the human being.

Although this modern nationalism remains a process of localization, the methodological basis for its construction is based on the Enlightenment and post-eighteenth-century European thought, the source

of nationalist thought. After the 1920s, localization in Arab geography had a direct modernist content due to both the theoretical and actual domination of the colonies in the colonial kingdoms until the 1950s. With the transition to the post-colonial period, the coming to power of the nationalist opposition transformed the idea of localization into an ethnic-based nation-building policy (Choueiri, 2018).

In the colonial period, when the theoretical infrastructure and the oppositional language of the nation-building process were constructed, modernism as an effective ideology aspired to construct a universal language, but the nationalist language that modernism constructed internally created many political and cultural structures in the Arab geography, each constructed differently from the other. Arabs adopted the same language and had similar ethnic origins and cultures. Surprisingly, under the domination of modernism, these similarities enabled them to be constructed as independent political and social structures, all belonging to different pasts (Choueiri, 2018).

The colonial and post-colonial periods, which are part of the modern history of many Arab countries, strengthened nation-building by incorporating a highly representational mechanism like architecture into the building process. In the colonial period, a universal architectural style with a transnational characteristic was preferred. While the colonial period was built on these universal architectural similarities, the post-colonial period endures a period in which similarities are destroyed, and the desire for localization increases in political and cultural contexts. Architecture and related designs also keep pace with this change. Architecture has a history almost parallel to this intellectual change. Undoubtedly, this simultaneous relationship between politics and architecture is related to the sufficiently representative structure of architecture.

One of the most noteworthy examples that construct these processes in Arab geographies concerning architecture is Iraq in the easternmost part of the geography. Iraq constructs architecture and localization on an unfamiliar ground due to its ethnic diversity, how the country was governed during the colonial and post-colonial periods, and economic opportunities. Modern architecture experienced a sharp break in the post-colonial period, which localized the modern actors of the period and developed a contemporary architecture of representation, like monuments.

This study will examine the life of architect Rifat Chadirji, one of the most influential architects of Iraq's colonial and post-colonial periods, shaped within the history of modern Iraq and his two monumental designs in Baghdad in the context of nationalization.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study explores the relationship between the nation-building process in Iraq and Chadirji's architecture, as in many examples of the theory-practice relationship between "the theory of nation-building and the architectural tools that built it" spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, the study's theoretical framework represents the idea of nation-building/nationalism, and the material of the study is Chadirji's life and works.

However, the theoretical framework and sampling of the study challenge conventional qualitative research methods (Aspers & Corte, 2021). As Divleli (2021) points out, modern Arab architecture corresponding to the colonial and post-colonial periods has not been studied holistically in the context of architecture and other related disciplines, both in general and locally. In the case of Iraq, this situation has been completely neglected. No catalogs, books, or comprehensive articles on architectural structures and the intellectual and political movements that assisted them into existence exist. Studies on architecture and social sciences, which started in other Arab countries in the 1990s, have not been conducted in Iraq due to the interminable years of war and coups. Therefore, it is not possible to acquire enough data in the archives for a qualitative study on the history of modern Iraqi architecture in general and Chadirji in particular, nor is it possible to find any expert to consult. The unique data available are a few small-scale articles, the architect's surviving works, and the books he wrote (Rabbat, 2021).

Therefore, this study represents an architectural historiography. Its material is Chadirji's written works and the buildings he designed. Therefore, two qualitative research methods, namely observation and review of written sources, will be used to produce the central part of the study related to Rifat Chadirji (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Observation and literature review will be conducted as follows. Modern Iraqi history, Iraqi architectural history, and the works written by Rifat Chadirji will be taken into consideration in the text scans, and the discourses and tools belonging to the nation-building processes will be identified. The

points where the information and discourses here overlap with the theory of nation-building will be considered to be determined.

Chadirji does not directly associate himself with ideas of nationalism and nation-building. Therefore, a qualitative analysis of Chadirji's books will not reveal this relationship. However, the tools of international construction mentioned in the principal sources of nation-building theory are implicitly hidden in Chadirji's books. In contrast, Chadirji's contribution to the nation-building process is more explicit in his architectural works. To define this relationship through his works, this paper will examine the design of the Unknown Soldier and July 14th Monuments as they touch upon ancient history and contemporary social issues. The research questions will be about the architect's thoughts during the design process, what he paid attention to while designing, the form of the design, and the meanings of the figures used in the design of the monuments.

On the other hand, Chadirji's life and the adventure of constructing these two monuments are not independent of the political movements in Iraq and the adventure of modern architecture. To put the process in a meaningful context, the political movements of the period in question and the leading architects who practiced architecture during and before Chadirji's lifetime will also be briefly mentioned.

III. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS AND EVOLUTION OF NATIONALISM: FROM EARLY LANGUAGE-CENTERED CONCEPTS TO MODERN IDEOLOGIES

Considering the historical origins of German idealism, the idea of nationalism, and consequently the idea of nationhood, the idea of nationhood centered on language is a German idea that has been discussed since the seventeenth century. This early language-centered nationalism took on a modern form in the early nineteenth century because of the intra-European expansionist policies and political conflicts between the French and the Germans. This was a nation-building process against the intellectual and political French expansionism that occurred with the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. This modern nationalism, pioneered and founded by the French, British, and Germans, was carried to non-Western colonial geographies in the mid-nineteenth century because of European colonial rivalries. Modern nationalism, as a dominant way of thinking and political tool, became the ground for the quest for new nation-states' independence in the West's colonial geographies. Colonialism, which began in the nineteenth century, causes the other as an enemy that poses a threat to the existence of modern nationalism itself. About fifty years after its fundamental emergence, nationalism transformed into an ideology of power in almost all parts of the world, whether colonized or not, and the first half of the twentieth century is characterized as the era of nation-states. Twentieth-century theorists such as Anthony Smith, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm conceptualize nationalism and the nation-state differently.

According to Smith (1999), the basis of nationalism represents national identity, which corresponds to a political community. Everyone who makes up the nation must possess a national identity. He makes a list of the key characteristics of national identity. These comprise a historical territory/country, shared myths and historical memory, a mass public culture, common legal rights, duties applicable to all community members, and a shared economy where members can move freely around the country.

Hobsbawm (1990), on the other hand, says the idea of nationalism creates nations and that, in this respect, nations consider a political basis, not a necessity. Therefore, the powers that use nationalism as a tool accept a centralized education system, mass ceremonies, and national monuments that will reduce the distance between the state's imagination and the society's beliefs as essential constructive nation-building tools. Realizing all these is possible through technology rather than an inherent commitment to the nation. In this context, architecture and its sub-units are of vital importance.

According to Gellner (1983), nationalism emerged as a political and social necessity because of the political events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argues nothing that builds nationalism and the nation is innate and that the stories, myths, and the like we encounter in nation-building are invented due to political and social necessities. They often manipulate the cultures of societies, give them different meanings, and mythologize them. In this respect, nation and nation is an invented reality.

A. Building Modern Iraq

Building a nation-state within modern Iraq was undoubtedly part of British colonial thinking rather than a local desire, as in many colonial geographies.

The British saw much of Iraq, particularly the southern province of Basra, as one of the key points for establishing a secure transportation route between their colonies in Asia and Africa. Maintaining and sustaining this reasonable point as a valuable ground for a prolonged period was unlikely to be achieved by military means alone. This was to be achieved by constructing a nation-state that, as the British had practiced in many of their eastern colonies, was tied to the British colonial system on the one hand and had severed both textual and physical ties with the “old” on the other. The “textual plane” represented a new “historiography” for Iraq. In contrast, the “physical rupture” involved articulation with the international world as a relatively independent country with defined borders, represented by a set of “infrastructure and superstructure projects” with its executive mechanisms.

According to Jackson (2016), the new nation-state believed the Ottoman presence had destroyed Iraq’s “true nature” and should distinguish the British as a pioneer in Iraq’s modernization. This British historical perspective on Iraq’s recent past is of dual significance for their presence in Iraq and for the construction of modern Iraq.

First, in the new historiography to be constructed by the British, all of Iraq’s belonging relations with the recent past will be severed through a series of negations, and the untouched countryside, with the knowledge and recent definitions attributed to it, will serve as an essential reference in the construction of modern Iraq. Second, for the British, it would legitimize their presence in Iraq and help establish a determined relationship with the countryside and the city for colonial activities.

This new “historiographical perspective,” which characterized Iraq’s post-Ottoman period as a valuable nation-state for the British, can be described as an ordinary modern colonial history regarding its actors and means of representation. From the early 1920s to the late 1950s, a kingdom loyal to the British and architecture is seen in this context as the two usual prominent actors and means of representation in the construction of modern Iraq.

The establishment of a kingdom under British patronage in Iraq was realized in 1921, about a year after the British occupation in 1920. The first king of Iraq was Faisal bin Hussein, a member of the Hashemite family from Hejaz, who led the revolt launched by some Arab intellectuals who had problems with the Ottoman central administration before the First World War. Faisal, one of the eight children of Hussein, the Sharif of Hejaz, was appointed King of colonial Iraq by the British after the Great Arab Kingdom, which had been promised to be established in what is now Syria, was unrealized due to a dispute with the French (Allawi, 2014).

Until 1932, the Kingdom of Iraq was an official British mandate. Although it officially severed its ties with the colony then, it functioned as an unofficial colonial kingdom until the military coup in 1958, when it was renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq. In this thirty-seven-year period, the British dominated almost every aspect of the administrative system, establishing the constitutional relationship between the individual and the state, forming new social classes, and constructing infrastructure and superstructure (Lukitz, 1995).

At a time when the British were recognized as occupiers, Faisal’s kingdom was able to overcome local opposition and define itself as the founder and servant of modern Iraq. These qualities, which concealed the British presence, equally developed a more encompassing field of action, such as modernism rather than Arab discourse, given the ethnic diversity. This preference of the political and administrative sphere in favor of modernism also shapes the period’s most important ground of representation, such as architecture.

Where the new historiographic approach proposes to sever ties with the recent past, historically and administratively, architecture assumes a functional role and becomes a mechanism for constructing modern Iraq. In architectural practice, this historiographic approach also involves a closed nation-building process. For, although architecture is designed within the framework of modernism, the ground to which it turns into belonging represents a new structuring, and this is recognized as the representation of a pre-nationalization process whose borders and framework have yet been undrawn.

Architecture and related building works are predominantly used as a tool to reinforce the imagination of the nation-state. The British connect geographically and ethnically disparate regions through extensive infrastructure and superstructure projects. In this way, each region feels associated

with a thriving, organized center. This also leads to recognition of and loyalty to that center. This gravitational pull of the center, although culturally fed by the periphery, also constructs the fundamental characteristics of the nation-state.

These architectural productions began in 1920 with the construction of modern Iraq. The new kingdom was established after the British occupation of Baghdad. Its official institutions, also run by the British, pursued an infrastructure policy that would build the nation-state imaginary. The Public Works Department, established in 1920, planned and implemented the country's infrastructure and superstructure works such as transportation, communication, irrigation systems, administrative, health, education, customs, police stations, and museum buildings (Jackson, 2016).

These are the founding architectural practices of a closed nation-state. In these buildings, the laws of modern Iraq were drafted, and the executive was carried out. Therefore, each defined a new system because of the public function they represented. On the other hand, they additionally served as a visual image for Iraqis who had never encountered it.

Roughly speaking, the architectural productions of this period were related to the legitimization of colonialism and its local representative, the kingdom. After the experience of a semi-colonial kingdom ruled by a monarchy, Iraq expanded into a period of the emergence of ethnicity-based nations and nationalism with the 1958 revolution. The new government, which took office in 1958 after a group of soldiers overthrew the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq, built its legitimization and representation mechanisms on the objection to the colonial presence and the class order it brought with it. After 1920, Arab nationalism, theorized by Sati al-Husri, was taken as a political ground adopted by the government in this period (Cleveland, 1972).

B. History of Modern Architecture in Iraq

A similar crisis of representation to the crisis of modernism in the colonial period is simultaneously observed in architecture. The primary event that initiated this crisis of representation was the entry of Western thought into Iraq through a colonial mechanism and the intervention of local conditions. The parties to this crisis on the architectural plane are neo-classical and neo-Arab/Islamic architecture, representing the revisionist approach of nineteenth-century Western architecture and the founding figures of twentieth-century modern architecture such as Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius.

Revisionist architectures generally coincide with the early colonial period. It is primarily observed in the architectural designs of urban infrastructure and superstructure projects. They borrow stylistics from Iraq's pre-Ottoman history and the classical period of European architecture. While these local traces are used on the facades, the planimetry bears the traces of a strict rationality. Functionally, all spaces are designed according to absolute definitions.

In the initial years of the colonial period, since there was not yet an independent architectural education in the modern sense in Iraq, public buildings were designed by European architects brought to Iraq by the British. The Scottish colonial architect James Mollison Wilson is the most prolific among them. Wilson, the director of the Iraqi Public Works Department for a period, designed many public buildings, such as Baghdad University, the Institute of Agriculture, the Baghdad Museum, and Basra Hospital, as well as urban planning (Jackson, 2016). Another eminent figure is the colonial architect H. C. Mason, who began collaborating with Wilson after 1935. Like Wilson, Mason was involved in designing and constructing many public buildings between 1920 and 1958 (Jackson, 2016).

In the preceding years of this early colonial period, a group of young people were ordered to Europe and America for university education with the support of the Iraqi Government. This educated class, who began to return to Iraq in the late 1940s, is the first generation of local architects of modern Iraq. Among them, Jafar Allawi was the first to experience Europe. Allawi went to Liverpool in 1933 to explore architecture. Upon his return to Iraq, he worked as an architect in official institutions for a while. He subsequently expanded his own architectural office and practiced architecture for sixty years. Allawi's professional career coincides with the pains of the crisis of representation of architecture in the early colonial period. On the one hand, he attempts to engage with the locals by disposing of traditional materials and forms, and on the other hand, he follows the Bauhaus traces of early modern European architecture (Allawi, 2012). It is impossible to associate Allawi's architectural approach with national architecture directly. It is rather the architectural legacy of the colonial presence in Iraq and the visual traces left in the minds of modern architecture.

Another name who went to Liverpool shortly after Allawi was Mohammed Saleh Makiya. Makiya graduated from the Liverpool School of Architecture in 1941. In 1946, he earned a doctorate from King's College, Cambridge. After graduating and returning to Iraq, he worked as a consultant to government agencies. His extraordinary academic career abroad assesses him an essential factor in establishing the architecture department at Baghdad University. After the 1950s, he worked on architectural projects in Iraq and other Arab countries, especially in the Gulf countries. In this period, he was one of the architects who did the most architectural work outside Iraqi borders. Makiya typically preferred carrying traditional traces into his designs. Early in his career, he was involved in creating the Hulefa Mosque in Baghdad. This was followed by state mosques in Baghdad and Kuwait and the Grand Mosque in Islamabad (Dabrowska, 2022). As Makiya's professional experience shows, the discovery of oil in Iraq and its share in Iraq's development led to the rapid construction of iconic and large-scale public buildings. Based on Makiya's designs, his contribution to national architecture is through public-scale buildings (Makiya, 2001).

Right after these two predecessors, Hisham Munir (1991) stands out as an essential name in Iraqi modern architectural memory. With a scholarship from the Iraqi government, he goes to the United States for higher education. He established his architectural education at the University of Texas in 1947. He completed his master's degree at the University of Southern California. After returning to Iraq, he established the architecture department of Baghdad University with Muhammad Makiya. In addition to architectural education, he also focused on architectural practice. In a short period, he befitted one of the most qualified architects in Iraq. He designed many buildings on a public scale. His works are limited to Iraq and develop a historic architectural memory in the Gulf countries.

In the first four decades of modern Iraq, the discovery of vast oil deposits and the resulting economic mobility and urbanization led to a rapid construction process, especially in the context of housing and public buildings. The first generation of architects, such as Allawi, Makiya, and Munir, became influential actors in this process. Their general tendency is to work as local representatives of the elementary principles of modern architecture. In their minds, the internalized state of modernism bears the idea of linking Iraq with the international world. Architecture is one of the most functional tools for this idea to take hold. Until the 1960s, when the concept of nationhood evolved into an official discourse in Iraq, the vast majority of buildings, from residential to public, were consciously designed according to the principles of modern architecture (Rabbat, 2021).

However, the contributions of the first generation of architects to the modernization process are not limited to themselves. To legitimize this process, which they define through the West, they also consider the leading architects of the West as essential actors. To appreciate this, they actively invited the founding names of modern architecture to Iraq. European architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Gio Ponti, and Alvar Aalto designed architectural projects for Iraq in this context. Their designs constitute the most formidable aspect of the modern architectural productions that were part of the early nationalization process.

The history of Iraqi modern architecture, in which the first generation of architects were actors from the 1930s to the 1980s, experienced its most significant break in 1958 with the overthrow of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and the establishment of the Iraqi Republic. The Republic tried eliminating the traces of almost every memory of the past in daily life. Undoubtedly, extending this destruction to the entire built environment is impossible. This would refer to the demolition of all public buildings. Moreover, what was done during the kingdom and colonial period did not directly represent an ethnic identity, nor did it contain a comprehensive political message. Instead of such a large-scale physical demolition spree, the government initiated an extensive monument-building process that would embody the idea of the nation as a social identity. To a large extent, this change affected early architects. While some clashed with the current rulers, others tried to compromise or work together. This break in modern architecture does not significantly change the design styles of the first generation of architects such as Makiya, Munir, and Allawi.

Although some of the forms used by these names refer to traditional forms, they produce modern architecture by being faithful to modernization, which provides the most substantial ground of the early nation-building process. It would be an unfair characterization to associate these names ideologically with ethnic nationalism. Their contributions to this organization stem from the place of the buildings they designed in the Iraqi architectural memory and the fact that they define the founding period. Although there is not much age difference between Rifat Chadirji and the architects mentioned above,

he is recognized as the second-generation modern architect of Iraq since he developed his architectural education and thus his career late. Undoubtedly, Chadirji was in close contact with these names both before and after his architectural education and digested a lot from them about the current knowledge of the architectural profession. Chadirji frequently mentions this in his book (Chadirji, 1991). While there are no data on the contribution of Makiya, Munir, and Allawi to Iraq's nation-building process, the fact that Chadirji designed two monuments for the first government of the post-colonial period in the initial years of his career shows his contribution to the nation-building process. Therefore, it is possible to read the transition from the colonial period to the post-colonial period and the nation-building process that emerged through Chadirji's life, works, and especially his monument designs.

C. Rifat Chadirji, his life and works

Rifat Chadirji was born in Iraq in 1926. His father Kamil Chadirji enjoyed a vital place in nineteenth and twentieth-century Iraq's political and cultural life (Ghareeb, 2004). He received his primary education in Baghdad, where he was born and raised. He spent his childhood years around his father and his literate friends. He completed private lessons, especially in the fields of art. To such a degree, before attending university, he built a background in Western art, literature, and philosophy (Chadirji, 1991). On the other hand, Chadirji (1985) expressed a keen interest in the profession of architecture in his early childhood. He explains this through his interest in the architectural works around him.

Before establishing his architectural education, he met architects and artists such as Abdullah Ihsan Kamil, Jafer Allawi, Medat Ali Mazloun, and Jawad Salim. They influenced him. While preparing for university, he worked as an intern painter in the architectural offices of these names. Thanks to this environment that bears traces of Western culture, he was introduced to the works of sculptors Henry Morrow and Ben Nicholson and painters Jumper Graham Sutherland and Grant before he went abroad for university. Until he left for England, he devoted all his time to studying architecture, literature, history, and music. These would represent essential achievements for his future (Chadirji, 1985).

Like the architects before him, Chadirji, with a government scholarship, studied architecture at the Hammersmith School of Arts and Crafts in London (Pieri, 2013). During his time in England, he traveled to many European countries. He is interested in contemporary art and modern and ancient architectural history. He reads in these fields. In the same years, he encountered the founders of modern architecture, such as Le Corbusier. He was influenced by the ideas and designs of architects such as Auguste Perret, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and the urban planner Arthur Korn. After completing his studies there in 1952, he returned to Iraq (Chadirji, 1991).

He established his own architectural consultancy office in Baghdad. He introduces the acquaintances he acquired in Europe to Iraq. As an advisor to the Mayor of Baghdad, he helped The Iraqi Development Board invite European architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Italy's Giò Ponti, and Alvar Aalto to Iraq for some of the architectural and urban design projects planned within the scope of Iraq's modernization policies (Kulterman, 1999). In 1954, he became the director of the Architects Foundation. In 1958, he became the President of the Planning Council under the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. In 1961, he was appointed Director General of the Planning Department of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. In 1978, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, and all his assets were confiscated. After twenty months of imprisonment, he was released on condition that some places in Baghdad were restored. After working as a consultant for the Baghdad Municipality between 1980 and 1982, Chadirji left Iraq in 1983 and moved first to Beirut and then to England, where he spent the rest of his life. Between 1983 and 1992, he gave guest lectures on philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy of art in various countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, England, Norway, and America.

On the other hand, he continued his academic studies at various schools such as Harvard University Philosophy Department, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Architecture Department, and University College London. Between 1983 and 1986, he worked as a visiting professor at Harvard University and a laboratory assistant at the same university. In short, after leaving Iraq, he devoted more of his time to archiving and composing his works (Chadirji, 1991).

From the 1950s to the 1980s, when he was in Iraq, he was directly involved in architectural design and practice. He is interested in various design fields, from furniture to urban scale. He manages all

same year, Chadirji wrote three more books. The first was "Taha Street and Hammersmith," about his experiences in Iraq and England. The other two are "A Collection of Twelve Etchings" and "Eight Etchings of Photographs by Kâmil Chadirji." In 1986, he published a new book, "Concepts and Influences," in which he discusses both his philosophical and architectural thoughts. This was followed by "The Photography of Kamil Chadirji-Social Life in the Middle East 1920-1940" and "The Ukhaidir and the Crystal Palace" followed. "The Seating Status in Arif Agha's Household, An Anthropological Study of the Relationship Between the formation of identity and seating artifacts" in 2001, "Dialogue on the Structure of Art and Architecture" in 1995, "Introduction for The Biography of Kamil Chadirji and the History of the National Democratic Party" in 2002, "A wall between two darkness" in 2003, "Introduction for the book of Ahali Newspaper Editorials" in 2003, "Dialectics Causality of Architecture" in 2007, "The Characteristics of Beauty in Man's Consciousness" in 2013 and "The role of the architect in the development of human civilization" in 2014 are his other books.

Chadirji is undoubtedly one of modern Iraqi history's most influential architects and intellectuals. Although he is considered a second-generation architect in the narrative of modern Iraqi architectural history, he is considered a founding figure due to the quality of his architectural and printed works. Although the period after the 1950s, when his architectural career was prepared, was an oppositional time for him, who maintained a liberal identity, with its cultural and political contexts, the nation-building process, which included these periods, was built with architectural works he designed. The intervening years show that the most important architectural representations in Iraqi social memory represent Chadirji designs. Chadirji has a liberal political and intellectual worldview. With his designs emphasizing localism, it would be inappropriate to attribute a nationalist identity to him. Despite this distance from nationalism, Chadirji designed the first and most important monuments built during the periods when nationalization was clearly in process. The following part of the text will focus on the story of two monuments designed by Chadirji in 1958 and their meaning in the history of Iraqi localization.

D. Unknown Soldier and July 14 Liberty Monument

Immediately after the July 14, 1958, Military Revolution, Chadirji was approached by the Secretariat of the new parliament. They asked him to design three monuments to perpetuate the revolution: the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, July 14, and Liberty. Chadirji (1991) saw this as a matter of great responsibility. Despite the ideological gulf between him and the government, this offer was an opportunity to concretize his professional career and what was on his mind.

The localization tendencies in the power and social thought of post-Ottoman Iraq built an idea of Iraqiness in Chadirji's mind, even though he received a modern education that abolished local borders. Therefore, the demand of the new government would allow Chadirji to transform the idea of Iraqiness into a concrete representation.

The Secretariat first asked Chadirji to design the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the July 14 Monument. In response to this rapid response, Chadirji re-submitted his project for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which he had recently prepared for a competition to design two mausoleums in memory of the Classical Arab poet Imru' u'l-Qays, buried in Ankara, and the Turkish poet Fuzuli, buried in Karbala, per an agreement between the Crown and the Turkish Government. The form Chadirji used for Imru' u'l-Qays' mausoleum is similar to the Khorasan ornament he had used to construct the entrance door of the Siraj al-Din Masjid. While the first Khorasan arch was a governmental idea that sought to strengthen Iraq's international relations, the same form that he would present to the new government was the plan of the coup government that made the idea of nationalization a rigid governmental idea. Therefore, Chadirji would represent two ideas of power with a single form he would design.

The Secretariat's second request was for a monument to be built in memory of the July 14 Martyrs. Chadirji takes a different approach to the design of this monument. He does not think of the monument as a design object. Instead, he envisions a slab on which several stories can be engraved.

"I said to myself that the first monument is ready and the second one does not need to be completed immediately in this short time. Then I asked myself, why not have a beautiful sign in the shape of the monument instead of the many stupid signs of today? A beautiful sign/sign and their immortal words... (Chadirji, 1991)."

In a short period, he prepared drafts for both monuments and put them into a presentation. To present his work, he was brought directly to the main actor of the revolution, General Abdulkerim Qassim. He first presented the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and then the July 14 monument. A long conversation and discussion took place between him and the General. The debate is less about the form of the monuments and what they contain and more about where they will be located. General Kasim prefers to place the monuments in a square with a story. Firdevs Square represents a beginning as it was the first place the military entered the city during the revolution. Therefore, this is the most appropriate place for the monument design. As a result, Firdevs Square was decided for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

All design proposals for the July 14th Memorial were accepted in this first meeting except for its location. Chadirji's suggestion that the narratives to be placed on the plaque should not directly evoke the military revolution was also affirmed by Kasim (Chadirji, 1991). The meeting concludes with a decision to construct the two monuments and form the necessary construction committees.

Chadirji says that in the short time given for the design and presentation of the two monuments, the Freedom Monument, which the Secretariat had requested, was never mentioned, forgotten in time and was never brought up again. Much later, the name of the July 14 monument was changed to the Hurriyet Monument.

E. Unknown Soldier Monument

After the meeting, Chadirji goes to Firdevs Square, where the monument to the Unknown Soldier is planned (see Fig. 2). He makes observations about how the monument he designed would look here. When he reconsiders the monument together with the square, he realizes that his design has a size that overwhelms the square. In his own words, the way to cope with this size is to use an illusionary form from the Sumerian period.

The monument consists of a reinforced concrete vaulted reception system. The vault is about twenty meters high and has a similar geometry to the Sassanid iwan of Tak-i Kisra. Compared to the original, the upper part of the new design has a progressively narrower form. The side walls that support the vault are transformed into a two-legged support with semicircular gaps where they touch the ground. This decision allows access to the bottom of the monument from all four directions and increases the possibility. This transitory situation also makes the preferred square for the monument meaningful. On the other hand, the ground on which the monument is placed is a large circular area raised by steps from the road level. The monument, which rises above this wide ground in contrast to its horizontality, reveals a monumental image from almost every angle.



Fig. 2. The Monument of Unknown Soldier, Baghdad
Source: Round City Staff (2020)

Chadirji (1991) describes the design process of this form in his memoirs in his book “*Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Balluri*,” in which he mentions that he made the vault in emulation of the vaulted iwan known as Tak-i Kisra from one of the palace buildings of the Sassanid Empire in Iraq. He had already experimented with this in the mausoleum commissioned for Imru’u’l-Qays.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is one of the most striking examples of Chadirji’s changing architectural approach in the late 1950s. The fact that he had previously used such a form, whether in the mausoleum of the Arab poet Imru’u’l-Qays or in an analogical experiment, to represent the concept of the soldier(s) who fought for Iraq’s independence from a closed file indicates that he began to emulate local forms and behaviors instead of references to modernism in the design-form dichotomy. This is because modern architecture, which Chadirji (1991) had also been fed by in the period in question, neither adopted historical emulation nor analogy as a design approach.

Whether a social reflex or a formal emulation, Chadirji’s relationship with the locals reflects his belief in constructing cultural independence by setting aside political opposition. We can easily see this in his later architectural approaches. To solve an architectural problem of geographical and climatic conditions, he resorts to local resources and experiments before resorting to the formal solutions used in Western architecture.

Although modern representations in Iraq were constructed in a way that encompassed a particular conception of the nation-state, subsequent governments saw these representations as part of political existence and came to terms with them. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was demolished as a result of such a political reckoning during the Baathist years in power and replaced with a statue of Saddam Hussein.

F. July 14 Liberty Monument

Chadirji (1991) is aware that the July 14th Monument (see Fig. 3), just like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, is one of the ways for the new government to legitimize the coup and nation-building. The fact that Chadirji has entered into such a partnership with the government, which he opposes politically and intellectually, lies not only in its oppressive attitude but also in the opportunity that this may represent an idea that exists in his mind. When he brought up the idea of the July 14th Monument to his father, especially after the monument to the unknown soldier, which he treated as plastic art, he told him to design it with this in mind.

The July 14 Memorial also went through a simultaneous design and construction process. The monument was commissioned to be built north of Firdevs Square, known as Queen Aliya, before the 1958 revolution. Chadirji (1991) worked on designing a monument consisting of a ten-meter-high, fifty-meter-long reinforced concrete wall raised six meters above the ground and a group of reliefs placed on top of it. He approached Jawad Selim, one of Iraq’s leading painters, to design the reliefs. Selim, like Chadirji, sees this as an opportunity not to be missed. In Selim’s mind, there is a connection between the Assyrian civilization, which defines the most ancient period in the Iraqi historical narrative, and the present. Chadirji does not have a clear idea of the content of the reliefs. Only a slice of recent history, including the present, will be described here. This idea is a fragment that can be divided into yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Selim affirms this. The relief in the center depicts the day of the coup d’état, the pre-coup situation on the right side, and the post-coup situation on the left, according to the Arabic script.

During the design of the reliefs, Chadirji met with General Kasim from time to time. In the first meeting, Kassim insisted that the sketches did not depict July 14, that they were like a novel, and insisted that July 14 should be depicted directly, and even that his picture should be used instead of the soldier imagery used in the designs. This put Chadirji in a difficult position, but with the intervention of the others in the delegation, the General approved Kasim (Chadirji, 1991).

Construction of the reinforced concrete slab portion of the monument began shortly afterward and was completed in the same year. When Chadirji was dismissed from his ministerial position in 1959, he devoted more time to the monument and worked even harder to complete it. He sees design as a whole and considers each design object to be of vital importance. Lighting is one of them. He tries to give the slab an ancient imprint through lighting, as in Assyrian buildings.



Fig. 3. 14th July Freedom Monument, Baghdad
Source: Authors (2022)

Selim divides the flow of history on the monument into three fragments, as Chadirji had requested. The central fragment represents the date of July 14. This date is a real historical break, encompassing the ancient history of Iraq. It contains the solution to some of the problems that preceded it. According to the flow of the Arabic script, the piece to the right of the center describes the pre-revolutionary Iraqi history and social situation. Socially, Iraq is in a state of collapse. It depicts this as an environment of chaos. He uses human representations in all these representations. On the far left, according to the flow of time, the post-revolution is depicted as an atmosphere of prosperity. Most of these paintings are composed of human figures from different professional groups. The human representations are chosen from different society groups, regardless of gender. This implies that every individual will have a role in the future of Iraq. Such a choice eliminates social classes and makes them partners in social and economic prosperity since only a laboring class is included. The door opened by the revolution does not directly portray a technological development. Instead, it deals with traditional modes and means of production. For instance, the ox and pickaxe signify wheat, and the shovel signifies this. This is also an emphasis on the local. It also defines the identity of modern Iraqi society. It also defines where they belong (Chadirji, 1991).

Chadirji knew that his monument would remain in the visual memory of the people who commissioned it and the people of that period. It would also remain in the minds of subsequent generations and serve as an essential representation in the construction of Iraqi national identity. Therefore, whatever its fate, the monument will have eternal life in the collective memory.

IV. DISCUSSION

Iraq was experiencing a profound political rupture with the transition to the post-colonial era. Although the Arab-origin kingdom of the colonial period shared the same ethnic origin as most of the local population, its legitimacy in power was based on the sanctity of the family's roots and the idea of building a modern Iraq. With the 1958 military revolution, the colonial era ended, and the new government's story was to create a nation-state within the borders of modern Iraq.

The basic premise of the nation-state was, on the one hand, to build a belonging with geography through stories of the ancient past and, on the other hand, to find solutions to the previous period's social problems through the society's relatively essential values.

Architecture was one of the most critical grounds for representing such a policy of nation-building. Although Chadirji was intellectually on different grounds with the new government, he knew

a new Iraq was being built. He was distant from a nationalist government, but he did not have the comfort to harshly reject the jobs that came to him in this new process. These works were an important stepping stone in his career. When he was offered to design a monument, he did not have a big split in his mind about how the design should be. Although he was a representative of modern architecture, the expectations of post-colonial powers from monument design, as in many other examples of nation-stabilization, parallel official historiographies. Chadirji is aware of this. In one of the monuments, he uses an architectural form from the Sassanid period, while in the other, he focuses on traditional objects from Iraqi geography and society. Although Chadirji's preferences are not political, they reflect his belief that any construction activity representing Iraq will lead to cultural independence.

Post-colonial power reflexes in general and Chadirji-like architectural attitudes are not unique to Iraq's nation-building process. Egypt, which experienced modernization and independence the earliest among Arab countries, experienced similar methods. Egyptian nation-building, which began at the end of the nineteenth century, constructed national architecture by emulating the works of the Mamluk period. Similarly, most of the monuments commissioned by the government were designed regarding ancient history, traditional cultures, and objects. Regardless of their way of thinking, prominent architects of the period designed the buildings commissioned to them in the context of the architect-employer or power relationship, with similar relationships in mind.

This fiction is not only found in non-Western post-colonial countries. It is also possible to talk about historiography and the rich architecture produced in parallel to it in shaping German identity and building the nation-state. As a delayed institutionalization, German nationhood became a state in 1871, encompassing all German races. This unification was the gathering of German nationalism, whose theoretical and cultural framework had begun long before, under the roof of a single state. German nationalism, whose theoretical framework had been strengthened through anti-Frenchism until that period, planned the construction of a physical environment by instrumentalizing two necessary structural fields such as architecture and monument design (Pohlsander, 2008).

V. CONCLUSION

As in many former colonial geographies that experienced the post-colonial period, architecture has been one of the means of representation of various ideas and political movements in Iraq. Nationalist ideas and movements, which began to take shape during the colonial period, began to use architecture as a direct means of representation in the nation's construction since they also held power in the post-colonial period. This new use of architecture is treated as a historiographical issue, just like the formation of nationalism. It is transformed from a mere physical necessity into a direct representation mechanism. In doing so, specific stories are attached to them. This is often a story that connects with the ancient past or with contemporary issues of society.

The instrumentalization of architecture as an object of representation in the construction of the Iraqi nation-state is mostly constructed through public buildings. In this context, the government tries to make all kinds of architectural actors a part of the nation-building process. Chadirji, one of the first architects of modern Iraq, is one of them. Although Chadirji was influenced by early twentieth-century modern European architecture and made his designs in this context, he did not remain silent to the demands of power in Iraq's nation-building process. The monuments he was asked to design, especially for public squares, made Chadirji an actor in nationalization. Although Chadirji has a liberal personality, as he comes into contact with the triad of "monument, public space, and power," he adapts to the spirit of the time and his employer, localizing and nationalizing his design. When the architect's life, personality, thoughts, books, and designs are considered as a whole, a course from Bauhaus modern architecture to localization is observed in his architectural approach. But this never makes him a nationalist, nor does it distance him from the modernity that shaped his thinking. However, Chadirji's position in the story of the construction of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the July 14th Memorials, the form he preferred in the design, the local and social objects he placed in them, the meanings he attributed to them, and the long-standing spatial and visual relationship that the monuments have established with the square where they are located make him one of the critical actors of Iraq's nation-building process. Undoubtedly, the power of monuments to represent any idea has an outstanding share in establishing this bond, including Chadirji in the same nation-building process as his other designs are impossible without considering monuments. For this connection, the architect must have serious discourses supporting the nationalization tendency.

In conclusion, this article helps to understand how Iraq's post-colonial monuments built as part of the nation-building policies of the post-colonial period were not only works of architectural art but also closely related to the political history of the period in which they were built and Chadirji's role as an architectural actor in this relationship.

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