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W O R K I N G   P A P E R   S E R I E S

COSMOPOLITANISM AT THE MARGINS

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DOMESTICITY AT THE STOREFRONT: NOTES ON THE IMPURITIES OF "EVA" HOUSES

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This paper will critically Between 1952 and 1971, Portuguese architects Joaquim Bento d'Almeida (1918-1997) and Victor Palla (1922-2006) designed and built a series of 17 houses for the women's magazine 'Eva'. These residences, known as "Eva Houses," were raffled off fully equipped and decorated to readers as part of 'Eva''s "Grand 1st Christmas Award." Beyond showcasing architectural design, these houses prominently featured both national and international household appliances, furniture, decor, and other everyday objects, serving as a storefront for domestic life.

Portuguese architecture during this period was marked by a transition from traditional styles to modernist influences, reflecting broader socio-economic changes in the country. Joaquim Bento d'Almeida and Victor Palla were at the forefront of this movement, blending local traditions with modernist principles. 'Eva' magazine, a prominent publication aimed at women, played a significant role in shaping public perceptions of domesticity and modern living. The 'Eva' Houses were not just architectural projects but cultural artifacts encapsulating the aspirations and lifestyle of the modern Portuguese family. Each house was designed with meticulous attention to detail, incorporating contemporary design elements and the latest household technologies.

The integration of consumer products into these homes was a deliberate strategy to create a hybrid form of domesticity, where traditional living spaces were infused with modern conveniences. This paper examines the 'Eva' Houses within their publication context, focusing on articles about the Christmas raffles, reports on the delivery of these houses, and the corresponding product advertisements. The study involves a detailed content analysis of 'Eva' magazine, considering the narratives constructed around the houses and the advertised products. This approach allows for an exploration of how domesticity was marketed and perceived.

The integration of advertised products—referred to as "impurities" due to their consumerist nature—into the architectural design promoted a hybrid form of domesticity. These impurities were not random but carefully selected to reflect a modern lifestyle. Products ranged from kitchen appliances to living room furniture, each contributing to the overall aesthetic and functionality of the house. The negotiation among various stakeholders, including 'Eva' magazine, the architects, and the brands, highlights the complex dynamics involved in creating these hybrid spaces.

By analyzing these materials, the study aims to reveal how this "impure architecture"—a fusion of architectural purity and consumerism—helped redefine domesticity during that era. The concept of impure architecture challenges traditional notions of architectural purity, suggesting that domestic spaces are inherently hybrid and influenced by multiple external factors. This redefinition had significant cultural, social, and political implications, influencing public perception of domestic spaces and the broader community.

The case study of 'Eva' Houses exemplifies the dynamic interplay between local traditions and global cosmopolitan influences in shaping residential architecture and culture. It also contributes to the understanding of how architectural practices can reflect and influence broader socio-cultural trends, promoting a modern lifestyle that was aspirational yet accessible, reflecting the socio-economic aspirations of the Portuguese middle class.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 1952 and 1971, a Portuguese women's magazine did something extraordinary: it gave away

modernist homes. Portuguese architects Joaquim Bento d'Almeida (1918–1997) and Victor Palla (1922–2006)

designed and built a series of 17 houses for the women's magazine *Eva[1]*.Known as the *Eva Houses*, these

residences were raffled off fully furnished and equipped to readers as part of the magazine's annual *Grand 1st*

Christmas Award. Beyond their architectural merit, the *Eva Houses* functioned as curated domestic showcases—integrating both national and international appliances, furniture, and décor—effectively transforming private homes into public storefronts for modern domestic life.

While comparable initiatives existed elsewhere—**s**uch as American Case Study Houses, and other examples—the *Eva Houses* remain unique in the international context for being awarded randomly through a magazine raffle to readers, many of which remain inhabited today. At this rare intersection of media, architecture, gender, and consumerism, the Eva Houses prompt a key question: what were they, and what did they do? What were the *Eva Houses*, and how did they mediate domesticity, modernity, gender, and consumerism in mid-20th-century Portugal?

Fig. 1."Casa da *Eva*" delivery, 1958

This paper argues that these homes operated at the intersection of modernist design and branded domesticity—what this paper terms architectural 'impurities. 'In doing so, they played a significant role in shaping gender roles within the context of Portugal's Estado Novo regime. Methodologically, the study combines semiotic and discourse analysis of *Eva* magazine's visual and textual materials—architectural drawings, advertisements, and reports on the houses—drawing on Hilde Heynen's work on gendered domesticity, Judith Butler's theory of performativity, and Rachel Bowlby's and Dana Cuff's critiques of consumerism to frame architectural 'impurities' as the deliberate integration of consumer goods and branded objects that disrupt the notion of architecture as a pure, autonomous art.

2. THE CONTEXT: NEW STATE (ESTADO NOVO), THE WOMEN'S PRESS, AND ARCHITECTURE

In the decades following World War II, Portugal experienced a complex period of economic and cultural transformation. During the 1950s and 1960s, the authoritarian New State (Estado Novo) regime, led by António de Oliveira Salazar since 1933, sought to modernize the country while simultaneously maintaining strict political control. Paradoxically, modernization became a strategy for preserving power: the regime hesitated but ultimately accepted participation in the Marshall Plan, opening Portugal to external influences— particularly from the United States. This marked the beginning of an emerging consumer society, characterized by the arrival of new brands, products, and lifestyles that increasingly shaped everyday life.

Within this shifting landscape, the women's press, particularly *Eva* magazine, led by Carolina Homem Christo, a female leader, emerged as a unique platform navigating the contradictions of the regime. On the one hand, *Eva* disseminated conservative values aligned with Estado Novo's ideals of domesticity, family, and femininity. On the other, it became a vehicle for introducing readers to modern lifestyles, new domestic technologies, and international products. By blending traditional content with subtle glimpses of modernity, *Eva* skillfully navigated the boundaries of state censorship while promoting a modernized domestic sphere.

Simultaneously, Portuguese architecture was undergoing its own modernization process, absorbing new programs, clients, and building types reflective of the changing economy. Factories, schools, shops, and even snack-bars—an entirely new typology at the time—began populating the urban landscape. At the forefront of this transition were architects like Joaquim Bento d'Almeida and Victor Palla, whose 25-year partnership produced a prolific and diverse body of work. Their projects ranged from industrial buildings to residential houses, from modern schools to the introduction of the American-inspired snack-bar into Lisbon, the Portuguese capital city. Their evolving architectural language reflected a delicate balance between functional modernism and a sensitivity to context, color, and festivity —qualities that would also define their work on the *Eva Houses*.

It is also important to situate the *Eva Houses* within a broader international genealogy of media-driven domestic experiments and the Ladies' Home Journal Houses similarly used architecture to model modern living for a mass audience. However, the *Eva Houses* represent a distinct case. Unlike these international precedents—typically situated in democratic and welfare-state contexts—the *Eva Houses* were conceived under a dictatorship and materialized as fully furnished homes randomly awarded to magazine readers through a lottery system. This unique condition not only blurred the lines between architecture, publicity, and consumerism but also reflected the particular social and political dynamics of mid-20th-century Portugal.

3.   THE EVA HOUSES: ARCHITECTURE AS A MEDIATED SPECTACLE

At the core of the *Eva Houses* program was the transformation of domestic space into a mediated spectacle—a site where architecture, consumer culture, and middle-class aspirations converged. Carefully designed by Joaquim Bento d'Almeida and Victor Palla, these homes were not just built structures but cultural artifacts where ideals of modern Portuguese domesticity were materially and visually staged.

Architecturally, the *Eva Houses* embodied the modernist emphasis on geometric clarity, and functionality. Yet what distinguished them most was how thoroughly they were embedded in the magazine's media narrative. Photographs, floor plans, and descriptive captions published in *Eva* guided readers through every corner of these homes, transforming private domestic space into a public showroom.

Fig. 2. 17 "Casas da *Eva*" by Palla and Bento de Almeida

The 1957 Eva House stands as a particularly compelling example. A compact, single-family residence, its flat roofs, large windows, and flexible open-plan interiors reflected the architects' characteristic modernist language. However, what truly set the house apart was its media construction. *Eva* magazine's pages featured detailed photo spreads of fully furnished interiors—kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms—each product carefully labeled with brand names. These images functioned not simply as documentation but as scripts, teaching readers how to inhabit the space and imagine themselves performing modern domestic life.

Fig. 3. Advertisements published at *Eva*

Central to this construction was the integration of branded appliances and consumer goods—what this study terms *architectural impurities*. While the design prioritized clarity and rationality, the insertion of products— electric stoves, sewing machines, radios, and decorative objects—disrupted any notion of architectural purity.

Portuguese brands like Oliva, Junex, and Gaz-Cidla appeared alongside international names such as Singer, Morphy Richards, and Philips, turning the home into a hybrid space: part residence, part curated commercial stage.

The kitchen embodied this synthesis of modernity and consumerism most clearly. Outfitted with the latest technologies—electric stove, refrigerator, stainless-steel counters—it was designed for efficiency and rationalized labor. Likewise, living rooms became multifunctional spaces furnished with sleek modernist pieces and heavily advertised consumer goods. Captions named each product and manufacturer, transforming the domestic interior into a catalogue of aspirational objects.

Ultimately, the Eva Houses collapsed the boundaries between architecture and advertising. Their curated interiors constructed a narrative where domestic consumption signified progress, comfort, and middle-class success. In doing so, these homes operated as dynamic intermediaries between architecture, media, and consumer culture—revealing the modern home as both a lived environment and a carefully staged storefront for mid-century aspirations.

This role as a spectacle also carried significant implications for gender representation. As Hilde Heynen argues, the domestic realm is where gender is negotiated and made visible[2]. Beyond architectural display, the Eva Houses became cultural devices through which *Eva* magazine constructed the figure of the "modern Portuguese woman." Operating within the conservative framework of the Estado Novo regime, the project walked a careful line—reinforcing official ideals of family, motherhood, and domesticity while subtly introducing modern appliances, consumer goods, and spatial innovations that redefined women's roles within the home.

4.   GENDER, CONSUMERISM, AND THE MARKETING OF DOMESTICITY

Central to this negotiation was the figure of the housewife as consumer. This hybridization of domesticity, consumerism, and spectacle positioned the housewife as both caretaker and curator. Winning or simply reading about the Eva Houses positioned women as active participants in modernity, tasked not merely with maintaining the home but with curating it through their mastery of domestic technologies and branded goods. Refrigerators, washing machines, sewing machines, and radios became symbols of feminine success, linking modern womanhood to consumption and technological proficiency. This dynamic foreshadowed what Rachel Bowlby describes as consumption becoming a performance of desires and aspirations.

Additionally, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity offers a useful lens here[3]. Gender, in Butler's terms, is not fixed but repeatedly produced through daily acts shaped by social norms. The Eva Houses

staged domestic space as a site of such performances. Kitchens, living rooms, and gardens became arenas where the modern housewife enacted her role, guided by *Eva*'s visual and textual cues. Carefully photographed interiors and product labels offered readers scripts for performing femininity—turning consumption into a daily rehearsal of gender identity.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the kitchen, marketed as *"the heart of the modern home."* Equipped with the latest appliances, these spaces promised to rationalize housework and liberate women from drudgery. Yet, this liberation was double-edged. As Dana Cuff argues[4], such innovations professionalized housewifery, transforming domestic labor into skilled work requiring knowledge of products, brands, and their proper use. Efficiency and modernity became intertwined with femininity, recasting the housewife as both domestic manager and savvy consumer.

Living rooms and social spaces reinforced this dynamic. Branded furniture, decorative objects, and consumer goods did not simply fill these spaces—they dominated the visual narrative. *Eva*'s captions named each product and manufacturer, positioning the homemaker as a curator of taste, responsible for harmonizing private domesticity with the public world of consumer markets. Domestic consumption became a performance, where success was measured by one's ability to create a modern, aspirational home.

Rachel Bowlby's notion of consumption as performance captures this dynamic: shopping and display became acts of performing desires, identities, and aspirations[5]. The Eva Houses embodied this perfectly: the fantasy of having a "Casa da Eva"—or even imagining oneself within it—became a fantasy of upward mobility and modern femininity.

In this sense, Eva's model paralleled contemporaneous international media experiments, such as American magazines like *Ladies 'Home Journal* or *Better Homes and Gardens*, which similarly promoted modern domesticity through model homes. Yet Eva's approach was distinct. By constructing and raffling real houses, the magazine transformed abstract ideals into inhabitable realities. Unlike other international models—often unattainable—the Eva Houses were, at least theoretically, winnable by any reader. This democratized modern domesticity, embedding it directly into the aspirations of Portugal's growing middle class.

Fig. 4. 1964 Kitchen and *1958 Living Room*

Ultimately, *Eva* did not merely reflect socio-cultural shifts but actively shaped them. By offering both a vision of modern domestic life and the tools to achieve it, the magazine helped construct the modern Portuguese woman as both caretaker and consumer. This entanglement of gender, media, and consumerism remains the defining feature of the Eva Houses and a testament to their enduring significance as architectural and cultural artifacts.

5. CONCLUSION: ARCHITECTURE, MEDIA, AND THE SHAPING OF MODERNITY

Raffled off rather than sold, the Eva Houses uniquely blurred class aspirations with architectural spectacle, embedding consumer modernity into everyday dreams. As architectural apparatuses designed to produce desire, the Eva Houses reveal the complex entanglement of architecture, media, gender, and consumer culture in mid-20th-century Portugal. Through the deliberate integration of commercial goods, domestic technologies, and staged visual narratives, *Eva* magazine transformed these homes into carefully choreographed spectacles—spaces where modern domesticity was not only imagined but also performed and consumed.

By blurring the boundaries between architectural purity and market-driven domesticity, the *Eva Houses* challenged the modernist ideal of the autonomous architectural object. Instead, they embraced what this study terms *architectural impurities*—the infiltration of consumer products, branded appliances, and aspirational objects—ultimately reframing the home as both a site of living and a showroom for the modern lifestyle.

This case study contributes to architectural history by illustrating how mass media and consumer culture actively shaped not just representations of modernity, but architectural space itself. The Eva Houses functioned as dynamic intermediaries, channeling Estado Novo's conservative ideals through the aspirational lens of global modernism and consumer culture.

Future research could deepen this inquiry by exploring the afterlives of these homes: how they were inhabited, adapted, or resisted by the families who won them. Additionally, comparative studies with other European housing programs or the emerging influence of television could shed further light on the intersections of domestic space, gender, and media in shaping modern subjectivities.

Fig. 5. "Casa da *Eva*", 1955; *Morphy Richards Ad,* 1963

In revisiting this unique intersection of architecture, media, and gendered domesticity, the Eva Houses reveal the modern home as never a neutral space—but always a stage where power, desire, and ideology were not only choreographed but sold.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Eva: Jornal da Mulher e do Lar (Eva: Women's and Home Journal) described itself as the "first magazine of the Portuguese press" and originated in 1925 as a subsidiary publication of *Diário de Notícias*. As its subtitle suggests, the magazine focused on themes related to women and the home—particularly fashion and beauty care, as well as advice on how to be a good housewife. This included everything from recipes and food preparation to decoration tips and domestic trends, featuring "visits" to celebrity homes and the publication of interior design projects (with illustrations and designs by Luís Cristino da Silva, João Simões, and examples of modern American homes, among others).

2. Heynen, H. (2005). Modernity and Domesticity. Tensions and Contradictions. Negotiating Domesticity. Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture. London and New York, Routledge.

3. Butler, J. (1999 [original ed.1990]). Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. London, Routledge.

4. Cuff, D. (2023). Architectures of Spatial Justice, MIT Press.

5. Bowlby, R. (1985). Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola, Routledge.

'COSMOPOLITAN TRADITION' OR COUNTER NARRATIVE': THE ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE OF THE 'MALAYS' IN COCOS/ KEELING ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

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The narrative of our built environment revolves around comprehending human encounters, recollections, customs and societal history that define the architectural culture of a place. Therefore, the architecture in the collective memory is inherently located at the point where multiple narrative intersects, like a palimpsest. The migration and movement add complexity to the phenomenon buy raising questions about what is borrowed, authentic, and rebuilt as identity through time and in multiple places. Nevertheless, the concept of multicultural Australia is often misrepresented in current discourse on architectural history, where it is reduced to simplistic notions of British colonial past, a laid-back way of life, iconic images of beautiful beaches, eternal summers, and the expansive outback. In the 21st century, the indigenous or first nation discourse along with migrations in Australia challenges this stereotypical notion by presenting a counter narrative that asserts a more cosmopolitan tradition of architectural culture. The discourse became intriguing while a small group of Southeast Asian from Cocos and Keeling Island descendants claimed indigenous status.

This paper is based on the extensive fieldwork conducted by the principal author through two research projects, undertaken between 2014 and 2019. These projects investigated the dwelling culture of the Malays and Islamic diaspora in Australia, during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Citing the case of this small diasporic group, "The Cocos Malay', this paper this argues for the need of re-positioning ourselves as architectural historian to interpret the architectural culture of minor diasporic communities within larger cosmopolitan traditions. It raises questions about gaps, or histories untold, as well as necessitate the need to examine hybridized forms of shared architectural narratives to counter the apparently myopic persistent representation of supposedly authentic of either of the two larger traditions, in one hand the larger tradition of 'Malay' vs the 'Colonial Australia'.

1. INTRODUCTION

In May 2028, a group of Southeast Asian descendants and a man of Scottish heritage from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands traveled to Canberra, the capital, seeking formal recognition of their Indigenous status.[1] Though their roots on the islands span just over two centuries, their presence predates the very formation of the Australian nation. As the first inhabitants of this land, they were colonized, developed a distinct language and culture, and now face the threat of marginalization—meeting the very criteria that define Indigenous identity. Yet, Australia remained unprepared to acknowledge a small, predominantly Muslim island community, along with a lone European, as indigenous. Despite this, they continue to uphold their unique traditions, asserting their right to be recognized as the true custodians of their homeland. This paper argues for a critical repositioning of architectural historians in interpreting the architectural culture of minor diasporic communities within larger cosmopolitan traditions. It examines the overlooked narratives of the Cocos Malays, highlighting the gaps in architectural history and the need to explore hybridized forms of shared architectural identity. By challenging the binary representation of 'Malay' and 'Colonial Australian' traditions, this study advocates for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of architectural heritage that acknowledges the complexities of cultural hybridity.

2. BACKGROUND

The first description of Cocos Malay cultural ceremony dates from 1836:

> "After dinner we stayed to see a half superstitious scene acted by the Malay women. They dress a large wooden spoon in garments, carry it to the grave of the dead man, and then at the full of the moon they pretend it becomes inspired, and will dance and jump about. After the proper preparations, the spoon held by two women became convulsed, and danced in good time to the song of the surrounding children and women. It was a most foolish spectacle, but Mr Leisk maintained that many of the Malays believed in its spiritual movement. The dance did not commence until the moon had risen."

<div align="right">Charles Darwin[2]</div>

Who are these Cocos Malays? What are their ethnic origins, and how did they come to inhabit a remote coral atoll, 900 kilometers from Christmas Island and 1,000 kilometers from Java and Sumatra? Most importantly, how has life in isolation shaped their customs and identity? The ensuing paragraphs will explore these complexities, examining the historical foundations of Cocos Malay identity, their relationship with the Clunies-Ross dynasty, and the political implications of seeking Indigenous recognition.

2.1. Geography

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands, a small atoll in the Indian Ocean, lie southwest of Indonesia, approximately 2,800 km northwest of Perth and 1,000 km southwest of Indonesia. The atoll comprises 27 low-lying coral islands with a total land area of 14 square kilometers (Fig. 1), but only West Island and Home Island are inhabited.

West Island houses government offices, an airstrip, and a small airport with flights, primarily serving a connection between the city of Perth and Christmas Island carrying primarily Australian and European tourists. Home Island has historically been home to the Cocos Malays, including the former Clunies-Ross estate, The Oceania house, now privately owned. While some sources refer to the settlement as *Kampong Bantam*, islanders simply call it *Pulu Home* or Home Island. The remaining islands are uninhabited, hosting only wildlife and flora.
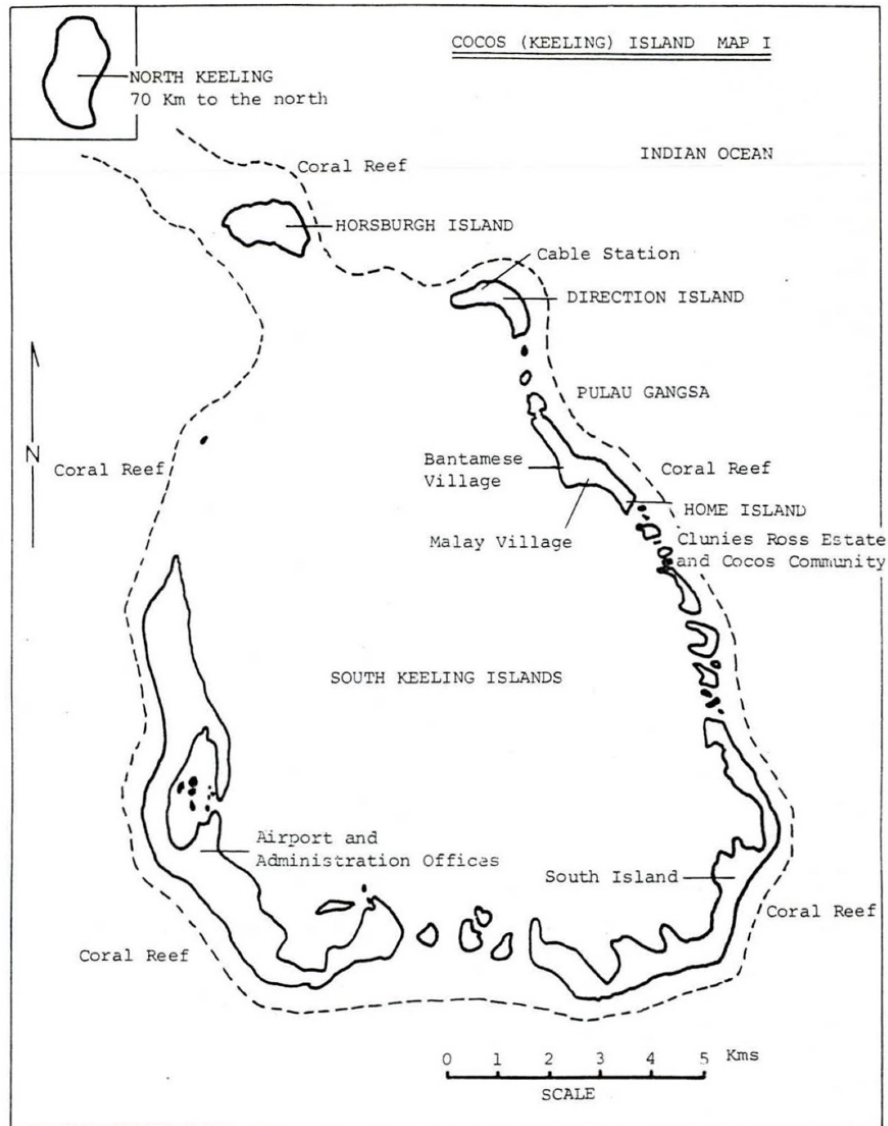
Fig. 1: Map of Cocos, Keeling Island (Source: Brockman R.A., *Captive in Cocos, The Origin and evolution of the planation community of the Cocos (Keeling) island*, 1981)

2.2. Brief History

This small atoll, known as Cocos (Keeling) Island, was discovered by Captain William Keeling of the East India Company during his voyage from Java to England in 1609. But it was not until 1827 that Alexander Hare, an English merchant and former British Resident in Banjarmasin, with a group of his slaves set up the first settlement for copra plantation in Cocos Island.[3] After falling out with the Sultan of Banjarmasin, Hare, accompanied by approximately 112 laborers, sought to establish a settlement. Assisted by Scotsman John Clunies-Ross, Hare settled on Home Island, initially intending a temporary stay but later engaging in coconut

oil production, which became a thriving industry [4]. By 1831, Hare withdrew to Java, where he died in 1834, leaving Clunies-Ross to take full control of the islands and establish a hereditary rule lasting nearly 150 years [5].

The Clunies-Ross family ruled the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as a de facto private domain, maintaining control over the Cocos Malays as an indentured workforce with restricted freedoms. On December 22, 1837, an agreement was signed between Clunies-Ross and 20 family heads, obligating him to provide housing and gardens in exchange for labor. Workers received a fixed wage—½ Java rupee per 250 husked coconuts or "lawful and reasonable labor"—with free passage off the island for those terminating their service. Wages were to be paid for those, who would be leaving, in metal coins, exchanged for Cocos-issued paper money. Legally dubious, this contract remained in effect until 1978, as the islands remained outside any national jurisdiction at the time of its inception.[6] In 1857, Captain Fremantle of the British Navy annexed the islands, declaring them part of the British Empire, but in 1886, Queen Victoria formally granted control back to George Clunies-Ross, who was regarded as a benevolent leader [7] . The island's administration was later challenged by World War II, during which food shortages prompted emigration to North Borneo between 1948 and 1952.[8]

In 1955, sovereignty was transferred from Britain to Australia, though the Clunies-Ross family retained significant authority.[9] Australian governmental intervention in the 1970s, influenced by UN decolonization efforts, led to the 1978 purchase of Clunies Ross' land for AUD 6.25 million, significantly reducing the family's control [10]. In 1984, the Cocos Malays voted for integration with Australia, marking the end of Clunies-Ross' dominance and the establishment of self-governance.[11] Since then Cocos (Keeling Island) became part of Australia and residents are considered as recognized as Australian.

Under 150 years of Clunies-Ross rule, the Cocos Malays developed a distinct linguistic and cultural identity, blending Malay traditions with Scottish influences in, language, music and dance. The recent documentary 'Australia's Forgotten Islands' [12] highlighted how militarization now threatens the Cocos Malays' fragile cultural identity, suggesting that seeking Indigenous status is not merely about heritage but a strategy for political survival. The potential construction of a military base raises concerns about land control, environmental degradation, and further displacement, echoing how military expansion has historically undermined local autonomy.

Now Australian citizens, they are increasingly seeking recognition as "Indigenous", a status that could offer greater political representation and legal protection for their rights and environment.

Many local groups worldwide have pursued Indigenous status to safeguard their land, identity, and autonomy from dominant national cultures. However, there is no universal definition of who qualifies as Indigenous.

Some groups establish their claims based on being the first-known inhabitants (such as America's First Nations), while others argue for recognition as long-term residents (like the descendants of Pitcairn Islanders on Norfolk Island). Additionally, demonstrating a unique, enduring language and cultural tradition is often key to securing Indigenous status—especially in post-colonial contexts where identity claims emerge as a form of resistance to historical or ongoing marginalization.

To fully understand the Cocos Malays' claim, we must examine their history, cultural continuity, and longstanding connection to their homeland. Achieving Indigenous status could provide critical legal protections, especially when negotiating with the Australian government and external industries that may exploit the islands' resources. However, without clear legal definitions, the Cocos Malays must navigate a complex political landscape, where military interests, national policies, and historical legacies intersect in shaping their future.

2.3. The People

The original people who first settled in the island are the slaves brought Alexander Hare, who was banned to Netherlands West Indies territory, along with his business partner John Clunies-Ross. Initially they moved to Cape colony (South Africa) in 1819. In 1827, John Clunies-Ross arrived on Cocos Island with 112 settlers of diverse backgrounds, including Bataks, Bugis, Dyaks, Javanese, Javan-Chinese, a Mozambique Negro, and a Papuan woman.[13],[14] Later a conflict occurred between both of them regarding the territory that led Hare to travel back to Batavia, Java in 1831 and eventually died there in 1834. John Clunies-Ross then took over Hare's operations and this mark as the beginning of Clunies-Ross' family legacy as a ruler of the islands started in 1834 and ended in 1972. Other than the Clunies-Ross' family the inhabitants of the islands were mostly the slave labors brought from different part of Southeast Asia, a combination of different races though popularly known as Cocos Malay or locally as *Orang Cape*, referring towards their last point of departure.

Soon after settling, John Clunies-Ross began recruiting indentured laborers, known locally as *Orang Banten* or Bantamese, on contracts of ten or three years. These workers came from Sunda, Central Java, and Madura, and many eventually made Cocos their permanent home [15]. Compared to the *Orang Cape*, the Bantamese were fewer in number, darker-skinned, and more reserved, with a strong sense of independence. In contrast, Cocos-born islanders were more easygoing and closely tied to the Clunies-Ross family.[16] Official reports recorded Bantamese dissatisfaction with living conditions, highlighting their different worldview and weaker emotional attachment to the island compared to the *Orang Cape*. However, by the 20th century, intermarriage and shared experiences led to the emergence of a unified local identity. Over time, all islanders became

Cocos-born, identifying as *Orang Cocos* or *Orang Pulu*, with their own distinct socio-cultural and linguistic traditions.

3.   INSULARITY AND ARCHITECTURE OF POWER

Geographic isolation profoundly shapes architecture, influencing not only material choices but also the social and political structures embedded within the built environment. On top from the very beginning Cocos Island developed as plantation settlement.[17] Though utopian to certain extent, its physical distance from closest colony made it possible for John Clunies- Ross to develop it as a political as well as a social institution, by keeping the core objective of typical plantation settlement. Nineteenth-century plantation society had a rigid social structure and strict political organization, functioning as a highly controlled system. E.T. Thompson described it as an impersonal and unyielding mechanism, governed by fixed norms that applied to both planters and laborers alike. Plantations operated as privately owned "total" institutions, established by European mercantilists as tools of colonization and economic exploitation.[18]

Insular plantation settlements, such as those on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, are often defined by a duality—adaptation to natural constraints and the imposition of external influences. This tension is evident in the transformation of the islands' material culture, architectural and spatial organization, reflecting both colonial authority and the evolving identities of its inhabitants.

Fig. 2: Comparative study of the master planning of the settlement showing the transformation/ evolution of the settlement. (source: Author)

The settlement (kampong) planning on Home Island initially featured three distinct zones. The *Orang Cape* and Bantamese communities were placed in separate settlements, as shown in Fig. 2, reflecting social connections between the Clunies-Ross family, their shipmates, and later Javanese indentured laborers. Strategically positioned, the Clunies-Ross villa, the Oceania House, placed at the middle of the two kampongs, overlooked the island, likely symbolizing authority and control. Clunies-Ross's influence was evident in the settlement layout. Dwellings were simple houses with a backyard garden and was built from local timber with an atap roof. They were numbered, with the owner's name above the door, sometimes alongside a bird, star, or crescent moon.[19] The quality of house and furnishing were slightly better in Cape Orang settlement than the Bantamese, where they had timber flooring, mattresses and dining tables.[20] The island lacked piped water and sewage systems, relying on 100 brick-lined wells fed by rainwater. The beach served as the toilet, and coconut oil lamps provided the only lighting at night. The Clunies-Ross system restricted private cultivation, allowing Islanders only small garden plots for crops like bananas and maize. However, Clunies-Ross later admitted that soil limitations prevented significant production.[21] While Islanders could gather coconuts, fish, and rear poultry in their spare time, they were prohibited from selling produce, except for chickens supplied to ships—violations resulted in wage penalties. Dependency on the plantation economy was enforced, as essential foodstuffs, including rice, had to be sourced from the estate. This land scarcity and economic control mirrored the structural dependence of plantation workers described by Beckford.[22]

Darwin's April 3 diary notes describe the early settlement:

> "Capt Ross and Mr Liesk live in a large barn-like house open at both ends and lined with mats made of woven bark: the house of the Malays arranged along the shore of the lagoon."

<div align="right">Charles Darwin[23]</div>

A sketch of the early Oceania House also appears in Darwin's notes (Fig. 3). By 1894, it had been transformed into a grand, two-story brick mansion in the English picturesque style, featuring multiple porticos, large windows, and a tower-like staircase. The house boasted guest rooms, a library, a ballroom furnished with top-range pieces from London, and modern plumbing. Constructed from Scottish bricks and Christmas Island teakwood, the imposing structure symbolized power and authority.
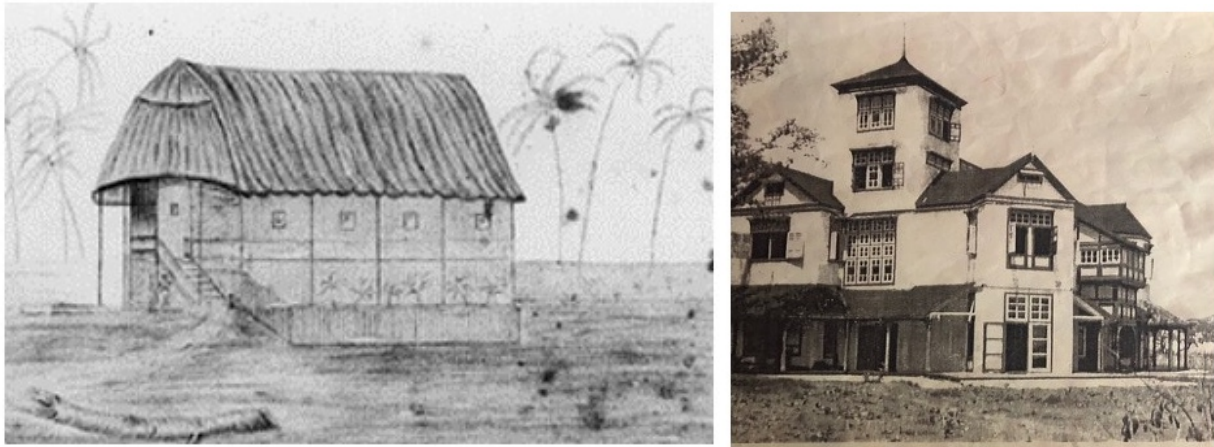
Fig. 3: The Clunies-Ross residence: As depicted by Charles Darwin (Left) and the image of the Oceania House (Right) (Source: Hunt, John G., *The Revenge of the Bantamese,* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, 1989)

The evolving settlement layout mirrored societal changes over time. The proximity of the '*Orang Cape*', the island's original settlers, to Oceania House reflected their loyalty to the Clunies-Ross family. In contrast, the Bantamese, as later arrivals, were placed near the jetty and in more distant areas. Though both groups were Muslim, the '*Orang Banten'*s initially maintained separate religious practices with their own mosque. However, the island's isolation fostered interactions, leading to intermarriage between the *Orang Cape* and *Orang Banten*, and even some unions with Scottish clerks.

By the early 20th century, nearly all Home Island residents were born there and identified as *Orang Cocos* or *Orang Pulu*. The settlement pattern evolved accordingly, as seen in later master plan (Fig. 2) that shows the complete disappearance of the Bantamese settlement and the expansion of the *Orang Cape* dwellings.

The 1909 cyclone devastated the Cocos economy and forced the integration of the previously separate Cocos Malay and Bantamese kampongs, leaving most Home Islanders homeless, though the Ross family house survived. The Islanders built temporary atap huts while struggling with food shortages, as the rice store had to be rebuilt before new supplies could arrive.

In 1913, John Sydney Clunies-Ross proposed cyclone-proof brick houses with cement bases and reinforced roofs, but the plan was abandoned due to costs and lack of expertise. Instead, traditional atap houses were rebuilt in a grid layout, unlike the kampongs of the Archipelago (Fig.4). Standardized housing eliminated former distinctions between the *Orang Cocos* and the *Orang Banten*, with each house numbered and named. Roads of beaten coral, named Piccadilly, Sauchiehall Street, and Leith Walk, divided the kampong into four wards. Each home had a living room, two bedrooms, and a separate kitchen and storehouse, ensuring safer cooking conditions.
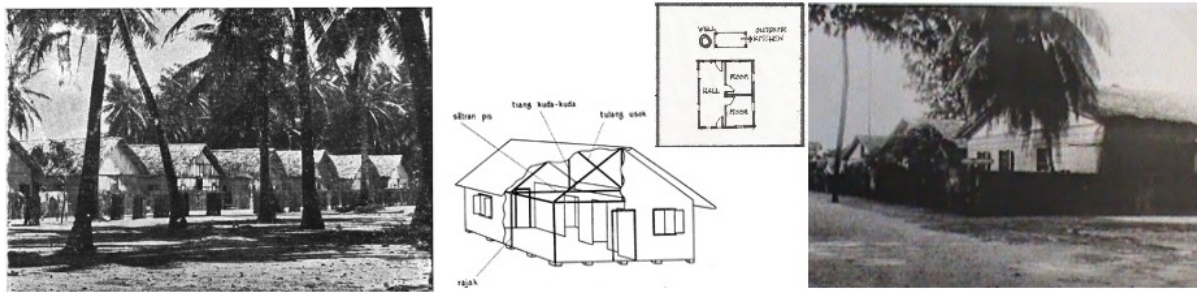
Fig. 4: Early dwellings in the settlements; huts made of local timber and atap roof later replaced by brick and corrugated iron. The diagram shows the internal structure and their local Malay names. (Source: Authors' reconstruction after Gibson-Hill, C.C., 'Notes on the Cocos and Keeling Island' *JMBRAS,* VOLXX Part II, 1947.)

The built environment of Home Island illustrates how architecture can serve as a tool of power, hierarchy, and cultural integration. The early settlement patterns enforced social divisions, with the Clunies-Ross family at the apex, the loyal *Orang Cape* positioned in proximity, and the later-arriving Bantamese placed at the periphery. Over time, however, isolation fostered interactions between these groups, reshaping social structures and, eventually, the physical layout of the settlement. As the settlement evolved, so did its architecture, from simple timber dwellings to the imposing Oceania House, a structure symbolizing colonial authority (Fig.3). This transformation underscores how architecture in insular environments is not merely functional but deeply political, shaping and reflecting the identities of those who inhabit it. The following discussion delves into this intricate relationship, tracing the spatial and architectural shifts that defined life on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The settlement and dwelling culture of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands reflect a deep interplay between environmental adaptation, colonial influence, and evolving socio-economic conditions. Home Island, the central settlement of the Cocos Malays, has undergone significant architectural transformations, categorized into three phases: *Rumah Atap* (1920s–1950s), *Rumah Batu* (1950s–1980s), and *Rumah Baru* (1980s–present).[24]

Initially, homes were rudimentary, constructed with locally available materials, and organized to accommodate communal living. The layout of Home Island was strictly regulated under Clunies-Ross rule, enforcing uniformity and hierarchical spatial organization. The 1908 cyclone prompted the reconstruction of dwellings into standardized *Rumah Atap*, modest palm-frond houses that reflected the community's resilience and self-sufficiency. There was significant difference between the dwelling of the two Kampongs, *Orang cocos* and the *Orang Banten*. While the previous one was cleaner and comparatively luxurious with wooden floor, the later were austere hut with mud floor.

By the 1950s, *Rumah Batu*, prefabricated concrete structures, replaced the traditional attap houses, marking a shift towards more durable materials. These houses maintained spatial configurations suited to communal

lifestyles while incorporating modern elements such as separate kitchens and wells. The *Rumah Baru*, introduced in the 1980s under Australian governance, standardized housing further, introducing modern utilities but imposing uniformity in design and color.

Currently, the Home Island follows a gridiron plan with well-organized public amenities, including a mosque, school, clinic, and cyclone shelter, ensuring self-sufficiency under Australian administration. Despite modernization, the island retains a slow-paced lifestyle with a tightly knit community of fewer than 500 inhabitants.
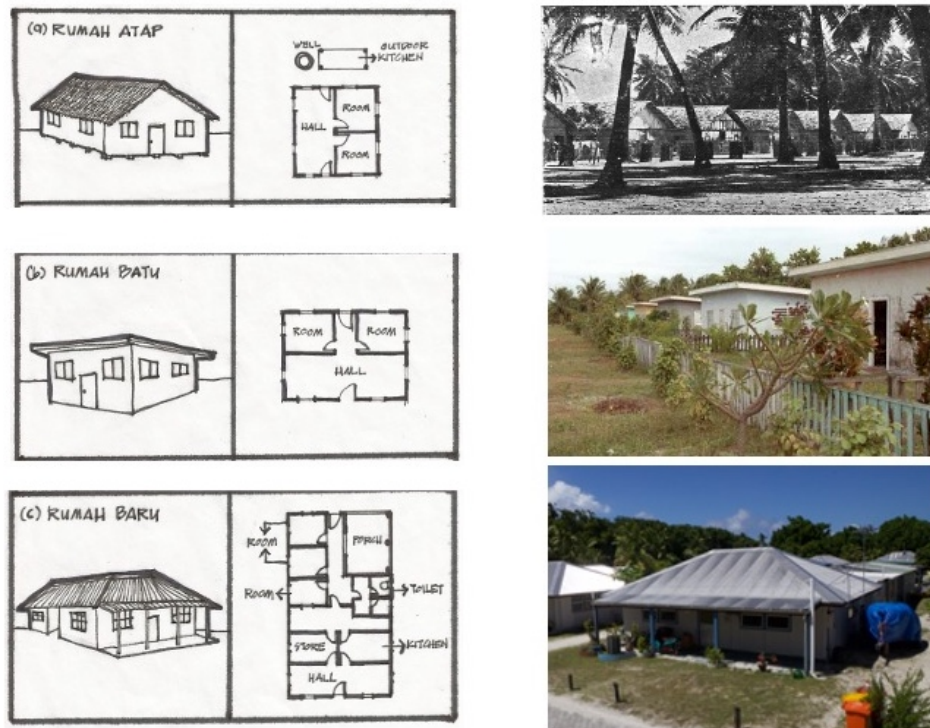

Fig. 5: Gradual transformation of the dwellings in the island (Source: Author's reconstruction with sketches and old images).

While modernization improved living standards, imposed architectural uniformity eroded cultural distinctiveness. The transition from vernacular *Rumah Atap* to government-designed *Rumah Baru* represents both progress and loss—balancing functional necessity with the risk of cultural homogenization. The evolving settlement structure highlights the broader tension between preserving traditional identity, worldview and integrating with external governance.

4. EVOLUTION COCOS WORLD VIEW

The worldview of Cocos Island dwellers, primarily the Cocos Malay community, has been shaped by their unique insular environment, cultural heritage, and historical experiences. In one hand the closed economy

device by the Clunies- Rosses kept the islander completely detached from the outside world. On the other hand, the mixed nature of the people living as laborer with multiple cultures and linguistic dialects, *Bahasa Cocos*, [25] along with Scottish clerks and boss, the gradually developed a unique dwelling culture in the island.

The Cocos Malay identity was deeply tied to the islands, with residents calling themselves "*Orang Pulu*" (island people) or "*Orang Cocos*" (Cocos people). Home Island was central to their world, referred to as "*Pulu Cocos*" or "*Pulu Kelapa*", in contrast to West Island and South Island, which were considered plantation or jungle areas. The idea of living elsewhere was almost inconceivable, and exile was seen as a cultural death sentence, though no recorded instances exist.

Despite their isolation, the Cocos Malays had limited contact with the outside world. Few had traveled beyond Cocos, and the external world, called "*Negeri*", remained distant and abstract. Encounters with Singapore, Java, and British influences shaped a worldview where the "white man's world" was seen as dominant in material achievements, while Malay identity was rooted in spiritual strength.

Cocos Malay patriotism coexisted uneasily with a sense of Malay identity and a connection to the broader Javanese-Malay world, which most "*Orang Pulu*" knew only through secondhand accounts. An Elderly Cocs man Nek Bika (b. 1913) articulated this contrast through the concept of two worlds (*Dunya*): the white man's world and the Malay world.[26]

The white man ("*orang putih*"), often synonymous with the British, possessed a visible, tangible magic ("*ilmu*")—manifested in technological advancements like airplanes—which reinforced their dominance. In contrast, Malay magic was unseen, rooted in spiritual beliefs, encompassing heaven and hell ("*surga dan neraka*"). This worldview reflected both awe of Western power and a deep cultural conviction in the unseen forces of Malay tradition.[27]

The Clunies-Ross family, particularly John Sidney Clunies-Ross, was perceived as a mediator between the European and Malay worlds. He was seen as a benevolent authority who provided for the islanders, commanded loyalty, and was linked to British royal legitimacy. The belief in his influence over Christmas Island and ties to Singapore further reinforced his elevated status within the community. However, the Cocos Malays retained their distinct identity, separate even from their Javanese and Dutch-influenced neighbors. This is quite evident during great emigration between 1950-40s.
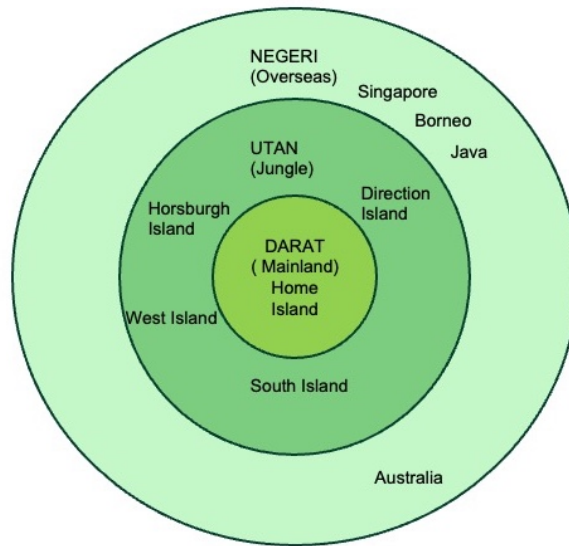
Fig. 6: The Macrocosm of the Cocos Worldview (Source: United Nations Report 1973).

The forced migration of nearly half the Cocos Malay population to Singapore and later Sabah disrupted their insular world and collective identity. The 2014 fieldwork in Tawau, Sabah, highlighted their ongoing struggle to assert uniqueness within the broader Malay culture. Despite their geographic and historical separation from the Cocos Islands, they maintain a hybrid cultural heritage blending English-Scottish and Malay influences and cultural practices[28] [29], most visible in social gatherings, religious ceremonies, and traditional festivities. These intangible cultural practices shape their spatial organization and settlement patterns, reinforcing their distinct identity.

Although many Sabah Cocos Malays have never visited the islands, they continue to reference Home Island as their origin, preserving customs that transcend time and distance. While those in Sabah have integrated into a globalized context, the Cocos Islanders maintain an insular way of life, reflecting a complex, transnational identity that remains deeply rooted in shared heritage.[30]

5. DISCUSSION

J.S. Furnivall's 'plural society' concept describes societies where different groups coexist but interact primarily through economic forces rather than shared values.[31] Kuper[32] and Smith[33] later refined this idea, identifying such societies as self-sufficient and internally autonomous but bound by regulation rather than integration. In hierarchical and rigid plural societies, economic forces dominate, and there is no common social will to unify the population. In contrast, homogeneous societies are integrated through shared values and motivations that moderate economic forces.

Colonial plantation systems, including Cocos Island, reflected 'cultural pluralism' rather than full institutional pluralism due to their smaller scale. The Cocos Malay society demonstrated pluralistic traits in dress, food, housing, language, customs, and values, shaped largely by its economic and colonial history.

The Cocos Island community historically exhibited a mix of social and cultural pluralism, yet its economic structure was tightly controlled by the Clunies-Ross family plantation. Which is evident in the Clunies-Ross mansion, the Oceania House, a grand estate rebuilt with imported Scottish bricks and surrounded by high walls, becoming a symbol of authority and hierarchy. The plantation workers, despite their limited mobility, engaged in ritualized acts of deference, offering gifts like ripe fruits and large eggs to gain favor with the ruling family[34]. However, genuine opportunities for social advancement were scarce, particularly for those outside the Clunies-Ross family circle.

The plantation system itself fostered a cycle of dependency and stagnation, as described by Beckford.[35] He identified three major causes: workers lacked a real stake in their society, they were disconnected from decision-making, and their motivation for progress was suppressed. This 'oppressive paternalism' led to a lack of ambition and a monotonous way of life, as noted by Straits government official Keyser, who observed that the islanders appeared

> 'dull, heavy, and uninterested beyond their immediate subsistence needs'. [36]

By the early 20th century, the importation of indentured labor had ceased, and most of the population was 'Cocos-born', reinforcing the isolation and rigidity of the community. The entrenched plantation structure, combined with paternalistic rule, ensured that Cocos remained a closed and underdeveloped society, with little prospect for change.

Fieldwork conducted in 2015 reveals the complexities of Cocos Malay dwelling culture, shaped by historical traditions and external interventions. The Australian government's introduction of *Rumah Baru* (New Houses) imposed a standardized housing model that, while providing modern amenities such as running water and sewerage systems, disrupted traditional spatial organization and limited personal expression. These brick-walled, metal-roofed houses were built in a grid layout, with uniform designs that residents were not allowed to alter. Moreover, the homes are leased rather than owned, reinforcing a sense of impermanence. When residents pass away and their descendants choose not to return, many homes remain unoccupied, weakening generational continuity and contributing to the slow erosion of Cocos Malay settlement culture.

Despite this imposed uniformity, the Cocos Malays have preserved their social structure through the tripartite relationship of *Depan* (front), Tengah (middle), and *Luar* (backyard) within the dwelling. *Depan* serves as the

formal reception area, a verandah or patio, while *Tengah* or functions as a transitional family space with bedrooms and living quarters. However, *Luar* remains the true center of daily life—a microcosm of Cocos Malay social culture. It is in *Luar* that families cook, eat, socialize, and even entertain guests (Fig. 7). Activities that would traditionally occur indoors, such as studying and watching television, take place in this open communal space. This inversion of the intended housing design subverts the imposed model, reaffirming the communal nature of Cocos Malay society. The proximity of houses further facilitates social interaction, with neighbors easily engaging across the narrow spaces between homes.

Yet, this cultural resilience is under increasing threat. The potential construction of a military base on the islands could accelerate displacement and further erode the Cocos Malays' connection to their homeland. The imposed *Rumah Baru* already serves as a tool of soft colonial control, reinforcing dependency and limiting cultural autonomy. Military expansion risks transforming the island from a living cultural space into a strategic asset, further marginalizing the Cocos Malays. In this context, the push for Indigenous recognition is not just symbolic; it is a necessary means of resisting external pressures and securing the future of the Cocos Malay identity.

Cocos Malay dwellings are more than just shelter; they embody a historical narrative of resilience, adaptation, and cultural hybridity in an isolated insular environment. As Paul Oliver argues, traditional architecture is deeply tied to environmental context, shaping where and how people build[37]. The Cocos Malays, initially housed in barracks and sheds under the Clunies-Ross plantation system, gradually developed a sense of place and belonging despite their imposed living conditions. Over time, isolation fostered camaraderie among the *Orang Cape*, *Orang Banten*, and their Scottish overseers, leading to the emergence of a unique hybrid identity within the broader Border Malay diaspora.

Architecture functions as a material expression of cultural memory, shaped by human experiences, rituals, and histories [38]. The Cocos Malay built environment reflects a "culture of building"—a coordinated system of knowledge, practices, and traditions that determines the form of settlements[39] . This system does not exist in isolation but evolves in response to historical processes, colonial interventions, and socio-political pressures. However, dominant narratives often obscure these complexities, reducing Cocos Malay architecture to simplistic labels like "Malay" or "Multicultural Australian." Instead, as Velinga (2004) suggests, vernacular traditions are dynamic and adaptive, continually reshaped by cultural challenges of the past, present, and future.[40]
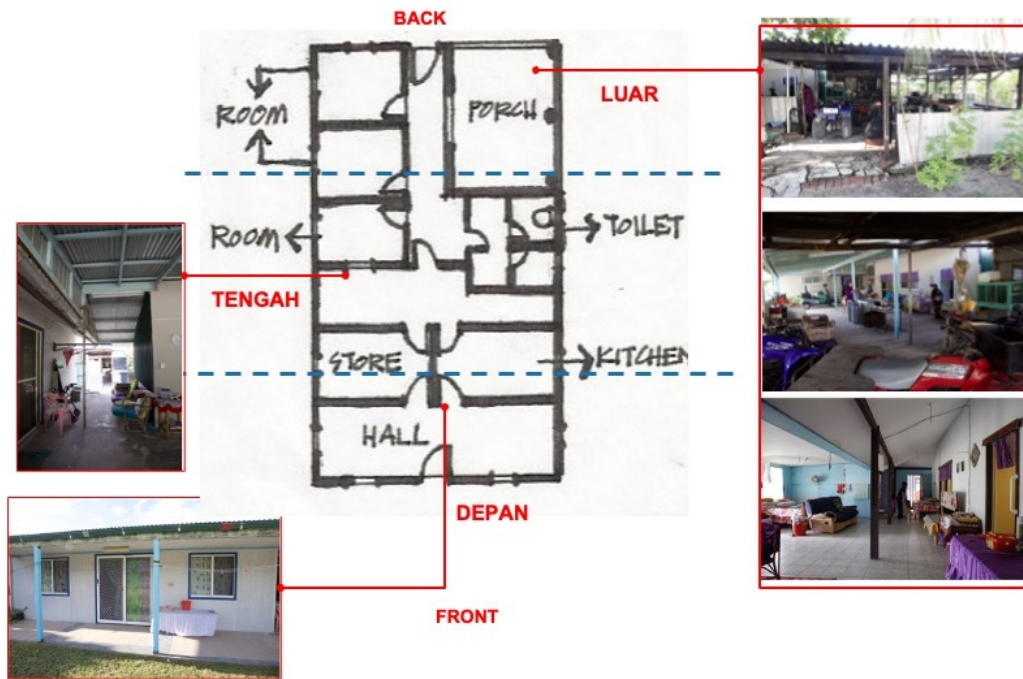
Fig. 7: The tripartite microcosm of the Cocos Island dwelling and the use of space (Source: Author)

The classification of Cocos Malays within Australia raises a deeper tension between *Cosmopolitan Tradition* and *Indigenous Australia*. While Australia increasingly embraces multiculturalism, Indigenous recognition remains contested. The Cocos Malays—descendants of seafarers and plantation workers from across the Malay Archipelago—exist outside the conventional framework of Indigenous Australian identity, yet their experience of marginalization, land control, and cultural survival mirrors that of Indigenous groups. Their built environment reflects not only centuries of cultural hybridity but also an imposed order under colonial rule. In contrast to the Indigenous Australian struggle, which often centres on land dispossession and sovereignty, the Cocos Malays face a different challenge: asserting their right to space and identity within a state that simultaneously champions multicultural inclusion while maintaining rigid categories of Indigeneity.

A crucial aspect of Cocos Malay architecture is its rootedness in a transnational *Cosmopolitan Tradition*, shaped by maritime trade, migration, and cultural intermixing. The tripartite spatial division of *Depan*, *Tengah*, and *Luar* underscores this adaptation, with *Luar*—the informal, communal outdoor space—remaining the true heart of domestic life. This inversion of intended design highlights how the Cocos Malays resist architectural uniformity and assert their social identity. However, this fragile cultural ecosystem faces contemporary threats, particularly the looming possibility of a military base that could further erode their spatial autonomy and cultural identity. If Cocos Malay heritage is to be preserved, there must be a critical reassessment of imposed architectural models and a recognition of local agency in shaping space. The

recognition of the Cocos Malays as Indigenous could provide not only political leverage but also a means of safeguarding their built environment as a living testimony to their unique cultural history.

6. CONCLUSION

The dwelling culture of the Cocos Malays is a product of their insular environment, colonial subjugation, and subsequent integration into the Australian governance system. Initially shaped by the rigid hierarchy of the Clunies-Ross regime, their settlements reflected imposed social and spatial orders that reinforced communal resilience and deference to authority. The transition to Australian administration after 1955, culminating in the 1984 Act of Self-Determination, marked a shift toward agency, civic participation, and modernization. However, this process also introduced tensions as Australian legal, economic, and architectural frameworks disrupted traditional practices, eroding indigenous expressions in language, religion, and the built environment.

Today, the Cocos Malays negotiate a complex identity at the intersection of Islamic traditions, colonial legacies, and contemporary Australian influences. Despite their distinct architectural and cultural heritage, their austere, functional dwellings—once embedded within a regimented colonial grid—remain largely overlooked in mainstream Australian architectural history. These structures, fragile yet deeply significant, risk being subsumed under the broader category of "Malay vernacular," further marginalizing their unique hybridity. This omission reflects a broader historiographical blind spot that privileges dominant narratives while neglecting transient yet crucial histories.

By critically examining these architectural traces, this study highlights the need for a more inclusive discourse that acknowledges hybridized forms and shared narratives. The exclusion of Cocos Malay dwellings from architectural history—despite their instrumental role in shaping early settler life—exposes the gaps in existing frameworks. Addressing these omissions requires a re-evaluation of architectural historiography, challenging static representations of "Malay" architecture and recognizing the plural, evolving traditions that define the built environment in multicultural Australia.

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GLOCALIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY RESTORATION PRACTICES IN SINGAPORE: TRANSNATIONAL EFFORTS AT LIAN SHAN SHUANG LIN MONASTERY

Xiang Xing

CONTEMPORARY RESTORATION PRACTICES IN SINGAPORE: TRANSNATIONAL EFFORTS AT LIAN SHAN SHUANG LIN MONASTERY

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Since the 1990s, the restoration of the Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery in Singapore has involved collaboration between experts and laborers from China, India, and Southeast Asia. In the context of globalization and population migration, this process illustrates the concept of "glocalization", where global universals and local specificities intersect. Despite the importance of traditional labor, the roles of craftsmen with local skills have received limited attention in Southeast Asian studies. This research adopts a transnational approach to explore how strategies emerge between non-elite and elite discourses, linking individual cases with global technological and cultural exchanges. The Shuanglin Monastery restoration reflects the globalization of local practices, creating a collaborative model that both transplanted and innovated original practices from home countries, where traditional artisans and architectural experts share an equitable voice in decision-making. It also emphasizes the need to move beyond idealized conditions to understand the specificities of the construction process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery in Singapore, founded in 1898 by traditional craftsmen from South China, underwent restoration from the 1990s onward through the collaboration of experts and laborers from China, India, and Southeast Asia. Bound by the sea and cultural identities, traditional Chinese craftsmanship and modern technologies converge here, transcending physical and political boundaries (Figure 1). To explore how technology flows across borders and how culture is created beyond boundaries, this paper aims to reconstruct the restoration process over the past three decades.

Fig 1. Aerial view of Shuanglin Monastery (Source: Shuanglin Monastery 120th Anniversary Editorial Committee, 2018).

In social studies, postcolonial critiques have increasingly examined mobility within the localized, differentiated, and unequal processes of globalization. Roland Robertson introduced the concept of "glocalization", highlighting the simultaneity and mutual penetration between the global and the local, and between the universal characteristics of modernization and the specific cultural, social, and market contexts[1]. Architectural historians, building on these theories, have similarly emphasized how these processes shape the expansion of modernization[2]. Many scholars start to address mobility in architectural studies from transnational perspectives. Transnationalism within global architectural production networks has been proposed after 1990s, often framed by modernism by examining the global flow. Scholars have explored how transnational movements shape architectural design and production strategies, primarily concentrating on modern architects, developers, and governments. For instance, Davide Ponzini linked global physical forms, decision networks, and spatial strategies to specific places and contemporary multi-scale urban experiences[3]. Yet, Kishwar Rizvi began to discuss a traditional and ethnic architectural form, mosque, for its construction within transnational connections between architectural institutions and political networks, highlighting the international ideological impact on architectural design[4].

Meanwhile, the material turns in social sciences highlight the social and cultural history in technology. Influenced by concept of Foucault's "technologies of power" and Bourdieu's "habitus", material culture studies often intertwine with analyses of body practices, culture, and power. Technological anthropologists frame their studies within historical processes, focusing on how power and ideologies permeate everyday technologies. For instance, in Sinological anthropology, Francesca Bray has explored how everyday technologies in China, particularly "women's crafts", shape gender differences[5]. Jacob Eyferth, in his study of the papermaking industry in a Chinese village, demonstrated how production skills serve as a platform where major historical processes intersect with everyday practices[6]. These studies examine how skills encompass the interaction between social processes and daily experiences, and how they, in turn, shape the social structures and cultural identities of the material world.

Studies on Southeast Asian architecture overlapped the epistemology in an indigenous, colonial, and immigrant landscape. Among these studies, architectural mobility is interpreted in three main threads: one thread examines how the architectural features of immigration and colonialism are transplanted and integrated locally, as seen in Chen Zhihong's research on Chinese settlements in Penang, Malaysia (Chen, 2019); one thread explores the impact of colonial regulations on architectural forms, as seen in studies on Southeast Asian shophouses (Izumida, 1990; 1994); one thread focuses on labor's participation in local architectural production, as seen in Shuji Funo's fieldwork in Vigan, Philippines (Funo, 2020). However, technology is largely peripheral in the cultural narratives of architecture. While few scholars have organized social history from a technical perspective, Roxana Waterson discussed the anthropology of architecture

between construction processes and social relations in indigenous architecture (Waterson, 1990). The technological focus in colonial architecture primarily addresses the tropical environment, with Jiat-Hwee Chang's work beginning to explore how discourse outside the "space experts" identified tropical architecture"[7]. Yet, little has been discussed about technological factors involved in immigrant contexts.

Immigration studies usually serve as a core element in the epistemological framework of Southeast Asian studies: indigenous, colonial and immigration. Influenced by Western anthropological theories on migration, earlier research in Southeast Asian primarily focused on issues related to assimilation[8]. The concept of diaspora emerged as an explanatory model, interpreting Chinese immigrants as Sojourners with national identities displaced abroad in 1990s[9]. At the same time, studies began to adopt transnational perspectives, particularly in the context of globalization and post-reform Chinese migration. Aihwa Ong highlighted the flexibility of these migration practices within the cultural logics[10]. Xiang Biao's fieldwork on Indian technical migrants situated their experiences within global capital flows, and highlighting that exploitation and oppression continued[11]. While immigration studies in Southeast Asian pointed to the cultural identity and flexible practices of Southeast Asian migrants in global resource flows, offering a non-Western, localized perspective on globalization, there has been limited attention to the modern laborers, particularly those with quotidian and traditional skills.

Thus, initially, this research adopts a transnational perspective. Transnationalism within global architectural production networks has been proposed after 1990s, often framed by modernism by examining the global flow. Scholars have explored how transnational movements shape architectural design and production strategies, primarily concentrating on modern architects, developers, and governments. For instance, Davide Ponzini linked global physical forms, decision networks, and spatial strategies to specific places and contemporary multi-scale urban experience Yet, Kishwar Rizvi began to discuss a traditional and ethnic architectural form, mosque, for its construction within transnational connections between architectural institutions and political networks, highlighting the international ideological impact on architectural design[12]. In this paper, the overlooked roles of laborers and craftsmen will be discussed beyond the physical and political borders.

Next, this research investigates strategies in architectural production at the intersection of non-elite practices and elite contributions. The emphasis on everydayness in architectural studies has expanded research beyond architects and engineers to include overlooked objects, discourses, and practices. Construction techniques have been documented from the perspective of non-elite builders rather than architects[13]. Henry Glassie, for instance, highlighted untold stories of these builders through his work on vernacular houses in Virginia[14]. Recently, Jiat-Hwee Chang expanded the colonial tropical architecture studies in Southeast Asia to encompass

sociocultural and technological discourses beyond "spatial experts"[15]. Beyond focus on common buildings, Andrew M. Shanken researched on the everydayness of memorials, shifted the binary between "everyday" and "exceptional" to a continuous interaction[16]. Similarly, craftsmen, traditionally marginalized in architectural discourse, engage in meaningful exchanges with architects. Modernization fosters a constant interaction between everyday practices and exceptional contributions, while strategies actually emerge through their interaction.

Third, this study views technology as a site where material experiences intersect. In architectural studies, scholars have examined the discourses and ideologies surrounding construction technologies, exploring how they emerge, identify, and shape society. The material turn in social sciences has also highlighted the relationship between the history of technology and society. Influenced by concept of Foucault's "technologies of power" and Bourdieu's "habitus", material culture studies often intertwine with analyses of body practices, culture, and power. In Chinese technological anthropology, these studies are often framed within historical processes, focusing on how power and ideologies permeate everyday technologies. or instance, Francesca Bray has explored how everyday technologies in China, particularly "women's crafts", shape gender differences[17]. Jacob Eyferth, in his study of the papermaking industry in a Chinese village, demonstrated how production skills serve as a platform where major historical processes intersect with everyday practices[18]. These studies examine how skills encompass the interaction between social processes and daily experiences, and how they, in turn, shape the social structures and cultural identities of the material world. This research similarly views restoration skills as an intersectional site of material experiences, exploring how it mediates the convergence of elite discourses and everyday practices, and how it influences transnational cultural exchange across the South China Sea.

Finally, this study adopts a "micro-global history" approach. Emerging from microhistory, the global turn seeks to explore global issues through individual cases, even focusing on a single person. For example, Emma Rothschild narrates 300 years of French history through a pre-marriage contract for a family[19]. Eugenia Lean, while discussing Chinese stories, examines the life of Chen Diexian, a writer and businessman from the Republic of China, to explore the rise of local industrialism and its connections with global technological and knowledge flows[20]. Such studies reveal the broader transnational connections that shape individual experiences, focusing on marginalized groups and lesser-known cases rather than grand historical narratives. In this essay, it aims to connect cross-border construction histories with global exchanges, examining how international factors influenced the restoration process and how these cases reflect the broader flow of technology and culture.

Therefore, this study will examine how techniques serve as a site where everyday experiences and elite discourses intersect in transnational processes, and how they shape global flows of technology and culture. In Section 2, the paper will provide an overview of the cross-border restoration history of Shuanglin Monastery, placing it within its social and institutional context, to analyze how global factors influence heritage restoration projects. It also aims to present the broader context of cross-border cultural exchanges in Chinese communities from the 20th century to the present. In Section 3, the paper will specialize how restoration techniques acted as a convergence point for everyday practices and elite discourses in transnational processes, through illustrating how these techniques shaped organizational and production models, reshaping the flow of technology and culture in postcolonial Chinese societies. In Section 4, it will examine how transnational factors influenced specific restoration techniques and how they were adapted during the negotiations between building experts, traditional craftsmen, and stakeholders. Section 5 is the conclusion.

2. CONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION OF SHUANGLIN MONASTERY IN GLOBAL HISTORY

In 1898, a revered monk named Xianhui from Xichan Temple in Fuzhou, China, embarked on a journey to Singapore. There, he found support from Liu Jinbang, a prominent overseas Chinese leader from Zhangzhou, who generously donated land to establish Shuanglin Monastery. Funding a temple construction was a common practice among early overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. Singaporean scholar Kua Bak Lim aptly describes such endeavors as "gentry power consecrated by divinity", a means for these leaders to elevate their social status[21]. Historian Philip Kuhn interprets these activities as Chinese to adapt to their new environment, serving as an approach to bridge across class divides[22]. To assert the status, Liu engraved his official title purchased from the Qing government onto stone steles within the temple and also invited distinguished community leaders to compose couplets.

So then, from late 19th to early 20th centuries, craftsmen and materials from South China made their way across the South Sea, to construct the Chinese temple. The main buildings, Mahavira Hall and Heavenly King Hall, still endured to this day. In the 1990s, Taiwanese architectural historian, Li Qianlang, found it combined traditional skills of artisans from various districts in South China. The master timber artisans came from Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou, while stone carvers hailed from Quanzhou, and ridge ceramic artisans came from Chaozhou. One remarkable feature he identified was the division of work even on one single structure—where the upper wooden eaves were crafted by Fuzhou timber artisans and the lower by those from Quanzhou[23]. It set the temple apart from many temples in China, where, especially, wooden structures were typically crafted by artisans from a single region.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, Shuanglin Monastery underwent a major restoration during a time when mainland China remained isolated from the world. It meant that they could not access traditional Chinese craftsmen or materials, while by this time, such craftsmen had proved disappeared from Singapore as well. In 1970s, following the independence of Singapore, they turned to local teams, applying reinforced concrete as a substitute for timber. As a result, reconstructed structures such as the Dharma Hall, Bell and Drum Towers, and newly added features like the archway, gatehouse, and Guanyin Hall were all built with reinforced concrete. Although some original components were reused, elements like the slope of the roof ridge were modified based on conjecture[24].

In the 1970s, the global rise of the heritage conservation movement reached Singapore. As part of this broader shift, Singapore began formalizing its commitment to preserving its cultural heritage. In 1971, Singapore issued its first version of Preservation of Monuments Act[25]. Two years later in 1973, the newly established Preservation of Monuments Board identified the first batch of National Monuments based on criteria "of historical, architectural or religious significance"[26]. Consequently, Shuanglin Monastery was designated a National Monument in 1981[27]. Additionally, eight years later in 1989, concerns about the safety of the monastery prompted the Public Works Department to take action. Under Section 23(3) of the Building Control Act concerning "dangerous building works", Public Works Department in Singapore ordered a comprehensive safety inspection of Shuanglin Monastery[28].

Diplomatic relations between China and Singapore were established in 1990, and the restoration of Shuanglin Monastery became a pioneering project for cultural exchange. In 1991, the monastery formed a Restoration Committee, which successfully invited a team from China to collaborate on the restoration[29]. The restoration project in Shuanglin Monastery marked the return of traditional Chinese craftsmanship to Singapore after 50 years, exemplifying communication across the fields of architecture, culture, academia between the two nations. Inspired by its success, other Chinese temples in Singapore, such as Fengshan Temple and Yuehai Qing Temple, also began partnerships with teams from China[30].

3. LOCAL TECHNIQUES AND TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION STRATEGIES AT SHUANGLIN MONASTERY

Transnational Expert

To achieve the best restoration, the Shuanglin Monastery Restoration Committee embarked on a lengthy journey to select the most suitable teams for the project. To meet the legal requirements in Singapore, the committee appointed local RSP Architects, with Liu Thai Ker, led by Liu Thai Ker, former Urban Redevelopment Authority director, as statutory architect for the entire process from surveys, design to

construction[31]. However, lacking expertise in traditional Chinese techniques, they turned to China for restoration specialists.

Initially, the Shuanglin Monastery Restoration Committee sought expertise from northern China and relied on official Chinese institutions, believing that these sources could provide the traditional techniques needed for the restoration. In 1992, they hired the China Institute of Building Standard Design & Research for a comprehensive survey, particularly the facade and structure using traditional techniques. Experts Li Zhujun and Song Sencai were also brought on board to advise the application of traditional restoration skills[32]. Subsequently, Wang Qiheng and Yang Changming from Tianjin University were invited. These efforts were followed by the involvement of architects Wang Qiheng and Yang Changming from Tianjin University. Inspired by the layout of Zen Buddhist architecture in Fujian, they proposed a comprehensive plan to restore the Mahavira Hall and Heavenly King Hall, as well as expand the temple complex with additions like a gate tower and east and west wings. However, although the committee intended to preserve the original craftsmanship, the northern Chinese architects and institutions, focused on different regional practices, were not equipped to replicate the detailed, region-specific skills required for the restoration. Moreover, when they submitted the construction plans to the Singapore Preservation of Monuments Board, the plan to incorporate wooden structures was rejected by local authorities, who were unfamiliar with their safety risks[33].

Thus, in 1992, they turned to Fujian for case studies, seeking the traditional skills originally used in the temple. During this process, they met Fang Yong, an architect at Hua Qiao University in Quanzhou, Fujian, who had rich experience in restoring local traditional temples. His expertise informed his revision of the original construction plans for the Mahavira Hall and Heavenly King Hall, which earned approval from the Singapore Preservation of Monuments Board[34]. When Fang returned to China in 1994, he recommended Taiwanese architectural expert Li Qianlang to succeed him, known for his extensive restoring experience for traditional buildings in Taiwan—where architectural practices share similarities with those in Fujian. Consequently, Li became the chief planner, and his studio has since led the design and restoration of most structures. Over the next several decades, Li's team produced detailed restoration drawings for other parts, including the gate tower, colonnades, Dharma Hall, and Bell and Drum Towers (Figure 2)[35].
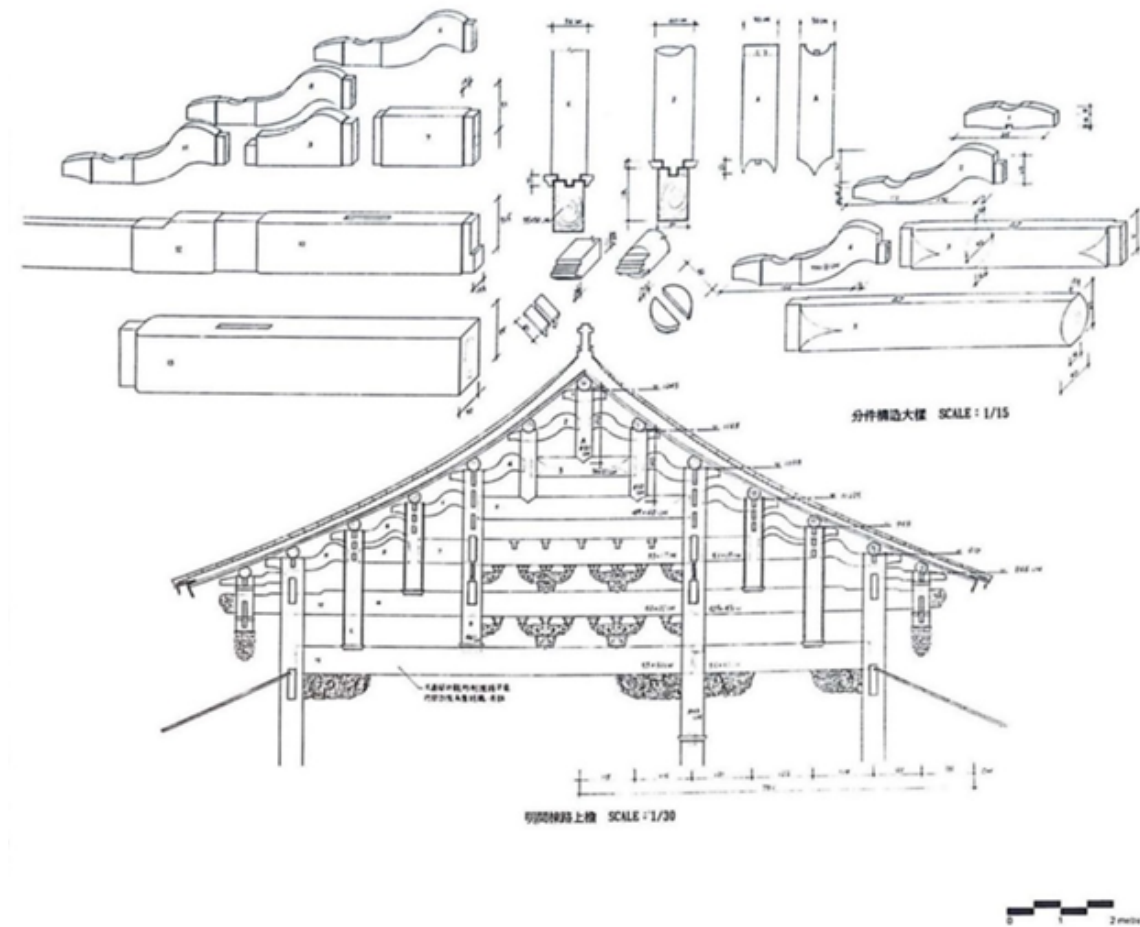
Fig 2. Node restoration design of the Maharajah Hall from Li Qianlang studio (Source: Shuanglin Monastery 120th Anniversary Editorial Committee, 2018).

After the restoration project officially commenced in 1994, however, in order to apply traditional techniques, cross-border legal restrictions persisted to complicate collaboration. Singapore's strict regulations required both the engineering and design teams to be locally based. As a result, the committee appointed RSP Architects, led by Liu Thai Ker, Singaporean Chinese, as the statutory architect responsible for overseeing the project from surveys to construction. Liu was actively involved in discussions with other groups, and proposed the "preserve-restore-replace" principle regarding his heritage conservation experiences[36]. Fang Yong and Li Qianlang were officially designated as "Chinese Historic Building Consultants"[37], and, in practice, responsible for the detailed design work. A unique compromise emerged: while all the design drawings were created by Fang Yong or Li Qianlang, the official stamps were placed by RSP Architects.

Notably, this project marked a significant milestone in reintroducing traditional Chinese restoration techniques to Singapore's architectural community. As one of the earliest heritage restoration efforts involving a professional team from China, it provided a valuable learning opportunity for local practitioners.

Yeo Kang Shua, an employee at RSP Architects then, participated in the restoration process, even documenting and acquiring skills from traditional artisans. This expertise became instrumental in his subsequent work, as he contributed to the restoration of several traditional Chinese temples in Singapore between 2000 and 2020, such as Fengshan Temple and Yueh Hai Ching Temple. Meanwhile, he joined the Singapore University of Technology and Design as the first scholar to focus on heritage restoration and traditional Chinese architecture. When the restoration of the Bell and Drum Towers at Shuanglin Monastery resumed in 2017, Yeo had acquired the expertise to lead efforts involving traditional Chinese techniques and guided his students in field investigations and learning traditional craftsmanship[38].

Transnational Labor

While technological constraints reshaped expert selection strategies, they also prompted a more intricate evolution among the artisans involved in the restoration. In Fujian, traditional artisans operated within a hierarchical and collaborative framework. Timber craftsmen, often local to the temple's region, typically led these projects. They coordinated other types of artisans, from neighboring areas or distant districts when local expertise was limited[39]. Specially, these traditional teams were often rooted in bloodline or geographic ties, forming distinctive local craft schools with their own technical identities, and extended their influence to practices in Taiwan[40].

After the restoration began in 1994, the committee successfully engaged artisans from Quanzhou, Fujian in South China. This team belonged to the renowned Xidi School, a traditional craft collective based in Xidi Village, celebrated for its rich expertise in local temple restoration. Known for their expertise in temple restoration, they had previously contributed to several notable projects, including the restoration of Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou[41]. The team comprised a diverse range of specialists essential for temple restoration in China: masons, carpenters, woodcarvers, stonemasons, painters and sculptors. Entrusted with all tasks requiring traditional craftsmanship, they not only brought traditional skills but also adhered to their collaborative model from their hometown[42]. In this team, a master carpenter led the team, followed by other types of artisans, while also assisting with experts about the restoration drawings. Traditional measurement techniques, such as Zhanggan and Gaochi, were also documented in reports from the period (Figure 3)[43].

Fig 3. Xiaomuzuo: Xidi Artisans from South China carving wooden components (Source: Zhu, 1994).

By 2010s, the aging Xidi artisans could no longer meet the demands of the project. A compromise was reached: the most critical timberwork components were still entrusted to craftsmen from the original region, while artisans from other parts of China were hired for supplementary roles. By the time the Bell and Drum Towers were reconstructed in 2019, the number of Xidi artisans had dwindled from over twenty to just about five. To address this challenge while preserving traditional techniques, the committee turned to Taiwanese craftsmen introduced by Li Qianlang[44]. These artisans were descendants of Xidi artisans who had migrated to Taiwan during 19th century, and had rich experiences in restoration projects, including Taipei Confucius Temple and Lukang Longshan Temple, whose craftsmanship and collaborative methods closely mirrored those of their Fujian ancestors[45]. Working with the remaining Xidi artisans, the Taiwanese craftsmen completed the essential components of traditional timberwork, known as Damuzuo (major timberwork) and Xiaomuzuo (minor timberwork). Some wooden elements were intricately carved in Taiwan, transported to Singapore by sea, and then further refined and assembled on-site by the broader team.

Another team came from Shexian, Anhui, in eastern China. Initially employed by the Shexian Ancient Architecture Company, these artisans earned recognition for their work on Chi Lin Nunnery, a traditional Chinese building in Hong Kong, and were recommended by Master Hong Xun. In 2010, they arrived to assist with roofing and tiling. Their expertise secured a long-term role at Shuanglin Temple, and over time, they became key contributors among the Chinese artisans. This team also included artisans in timberwork, painting, and tiling, all with skills in traditional Chinese building restoration. The timber artisans assisted with

the Xidi and Taiwanese craftsmen on essential timberwork components, such as Damuzuo (assembling traditional timber structures) and Xiaomuzuo (painting and assembling).

Additionally, new team also included artisans invited from regions renowned for their specialized skills to complement the team's expertise. For instance, a craftsman from Jiangsu, also in eastern China, brought aluminum-working skills to support roofing. Similarly, stonework was completed on-site by masons from Quyang, Hebei, a northern region famed as the "stone carving capital of China".

Yet, to apply Chinese traditional techniques, new collaboration within artisan teams also emerged due to cross-border legal restrictions. Local-based laborers were required by official laws and thus, Yeow Lai Seng Construction Pte Ltd, a local construction company, was designated with hiring workers for the Bell and Drum Tower restoration in 2019. It employed Indian laborers, commonly used in modern construction projects across Singapore. It also led to a special resolution: Chinese artisans were responsible for tasks requiring traditional craftsmanship, while Indian laborers handled modern construction activities. These included construction tasks, such as building the exterior walls and applying paint; safety measures, including scaffolding assembly and securing platforms; and maintenance duties, such as site cleaning and ensuring temporary structures' stability (Figure 4).

Fig 4. Indian laborers constructing a concrete foundation (Source: Exhibition in Shuanglin Monastery).

Among legal and cultural challenges, a new collaborative model was created to incorporate local techniques: local teams in Singapore were appointed as the statutory architectural and engineering teams, while Chinese experts and artisans were informally hired for the core restoration work, with elite experts and non-elite artisans sharing equal voices in design and construction. Meanwhile, the collaborative model of local teams was initially replicated from the original region. However, as human resources became limited, artisans from across Asia with expertise in traditional Chinese techniques came together to contribute to the project (Figure 5).
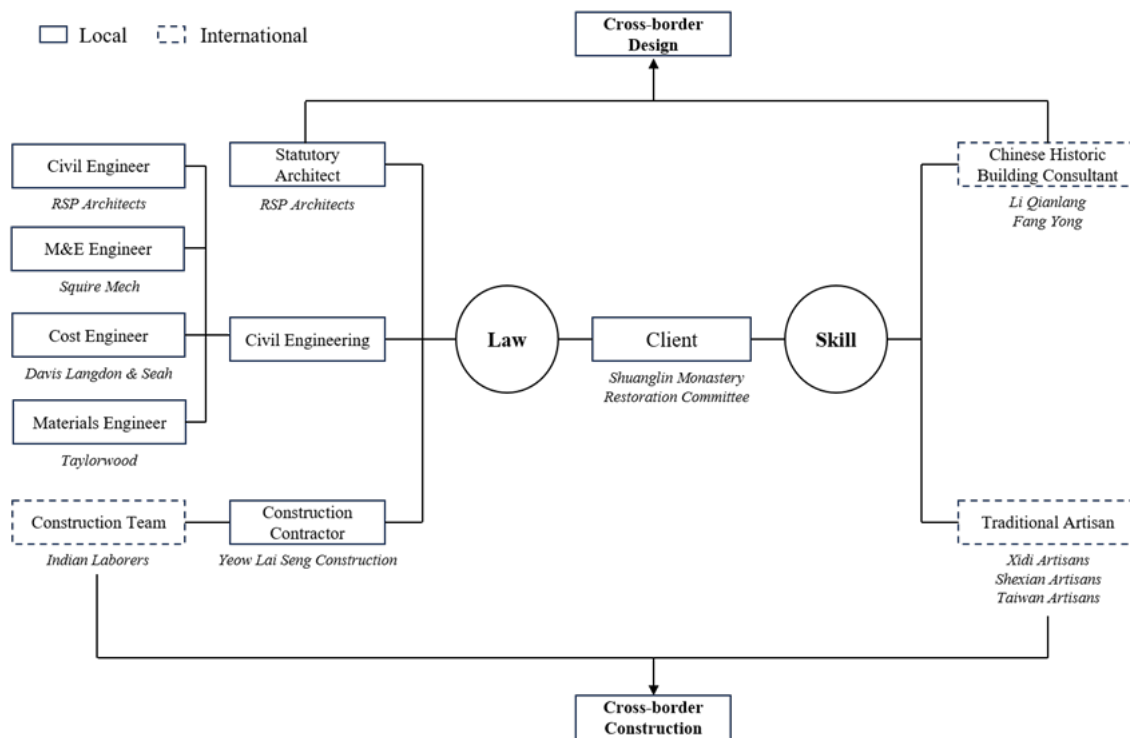

Fig 5. Cross-border management framework of Shuanglin Monastery restoration project (Source: Drawn by author).

4.   TRANSNATIONAL INNOVATION IN LOCAL TECHNIQUES

As discussed earlier, during the restoration process, the Shuanglin Monastery committee prioritized preserving the facades to its original form, while also maintaining the authenticity of traditional skills. Nevertheless, transnational context necessitated some deliberate innovations in local techniques.

In the restoration of the Bell and Drum Tower, despite the extensive use of Chinese artisans and traditional techniques, the project was required to incorporate a reinforced concrete foundation. Traditionally, such structures in Chinese architecture typically relied on natural foundations, using well-engineered wooden

frameworks for stability[46]. This was also the case with the Mahavira Hall and Heavenly King Hall, the National Monument. However, since the Bell and Drum Tower was not part of the heritage site, it had to strictly comply with local building regulations. Consequently, Indian workers were assigned to implement the modern techniques to build the reinforced concrete foundation (Figure 4).

Moreover, the eave pitch, a key feature distinguishing regional techniques in South China, was also a vital point for the restoration of the Mahavira Hall and Heavenly King Hall before 2010. However, in the Bell and Drum Tower, built in the Fuzhou style, the Xidi artisans from Quanzhou were unable to replicate the precise angle required, or it would have compromised the restoration quality and increased the risk of water leakage. As a result, the committee opted for a gentler slope, ensuring both the technical feasibility and long-term durability.

The roofing method was also adapted. In traditional Chinese architecture, the "wet-laying" method is commonly employed, where wooden purlins are laid over wooden rafters, followed by a plaster layer for protection and waterproofing, and then roof tiles are placed[47]. This method was used in the restoration of the Mahavira Hall and the Heavenly King Hall before 2010. Yet, this approach was not effective due to the humid and hot climate in Singapore, as the roof quickly crack and leak. Since the committee had ordered tiles from Japan, these Japanese experts suggested a new method recently adopted in the restoration of traditional Japanese buildings: the "dry-laying" method. This involved replacing the original wooden rafters and purlins with aluminum one, and roof tiles were then directly fixed to the purlins using screws and holes, eliminating the need for a plaster layer. This method significantly slowed the rate of water infiltration and, since the structure was hidden between the ceiling and the roof, it remained visually indistinguishable from the original method. Thus, the Shexian artisans learned, and then adopted this dry-laying method in subsequent roofing restorations[48].

5.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, within the broader context of glocalization, it reconstructs the production site of the restoration project of Shuanglin Monastery over the past three decades. Positioned within global technological and cultural flows, it demonstrates how localized techniques influence organizational and production models, and how transnational factors foster innovative strategies between elite and non-elite discourses.

The restoration of Shuanglin Monastery constructs an alternative narrative of glocalization: transcending the intersection of global universality and local particularities, it exemplifies the globalization of local particularities. The restoration project represents the global integration of local techniques, while also closely

intertwined with broader global practices such as migration, social reform, and the international heritage movement.

The restoration process, with its emphasis on traditional techniques, has engendered a collaborative model that has both transplanted and innovated original practices from their home countries. This has resulted in the emergence of diversified management models for both local and overseas groups among experts and workers. Consequently, the flow of technology within postcolonial Chinese communities transitioned from being driven by geographical channels to channels of knowledge systems. Within this context, technology emerged as a critical instrument for constructing cultural identity across Chinese societies.

The globalization of traditional techniques exemplifies a localized process where traditional artisans and architectural experts share an equitable voice in decision-making. Strategies are formulated through the interaction of elite and non-elite discourses as they respond to local challenges such as climate and legal frameworks. These interactions encompass not only their opinions, but also the limitations they face. For example, when artisans lack the technical capacity to meet conservation standards, such as achieving precise eave pitches, atypical techniques from Japan are introduced. This collaboration underscores the dynamic flow of architectural technology, enabling both continuity and innovation.

Finally, this paper challenges the traditional focus on idealized conditions and universally accepted principles, encouraging a more grounded exploration of the construction site itself. By reconsidering the often-overlooked contributions of marginalized communities in the construction process, it underscores the compromises and innovations that are inherent in the formation of architectural heritage.

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COSMOPOLITANISM IN URBAN SPACES:
THE CASE OF KUZGUNCUK AND ITS HYBRID
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IN ISTANBUL

Huriye Armağan Doğan Stewart, Omid Ebrahimbaysalami, Xiang Ren

COSMOPOLITANISM IN URBAN SPACES: THE CASE OF KUZGUNCUK AND ITS HYBRID HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IN ISTANBUL

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Kuzguncuk, a historic neighborhood in the Asian (Anatolian) part of Istanbul, Turkey, serves as an exemplary case study to identify the complicated relationship between urban tradition and cosmopolitanism. The unique architectural heritage of Kuzguncuk is characterized by a variety of religious buildings, including two synagogues, two Greek Orthodox churches, an Armenian church and a mosque, all located in the immediate vicinity. The presence of different residential buildings built by people from various backgrounds also emphasizes the multicultural heritage that has shaped the urban fabric of Kuzguncuk. This spatial arrangement is not only an example of the historical cosmopolitanism of the area but also identifies the characteristics and sustainability of cosmopolitan architecture. The current situation in the area demonstrates the possible approaches and strategies which can be used for the sustainability of cosmopolitan architecture even though the cosmopolitan nature of the society has decreased over time. This article looks at the changing cosmopolitan character of Kuzguncuk, focusing on how the multi-ethnic harmony and their representative architectural coexistence have evolved over time and examines the impact on today's urban space.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, scientific research on heritage shifted its focus from individual buildings to historic fabric, which expanded the scale of the meaning of heritage in historic cities. Especially the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach of UNESCO, which was introduced in 2011, demonstrated new methods of managing and conserving heritage and added new layers to the topic. Since it proposed an integrated approach to heritage, it determined that heritage preservation does not only affect individual structures but has a huge impact on the environment as well.[1] HUL also articulated and emphasized the integration of heritage conservation with contemporary urban development, which can facilitate the preservation of cultural values that are the elementary component of sustainable urban development.[2] In historic cities, which are a palimpsest of diverse cultures and traditions, from time to time, it might be hard to preserve all the values created by different communities. When that is the case, it is important to establish a strategy which can keep the cosmopolitan culture alive.

The term cosmopolitan heritage was first coined by British cultural historian David Held in the early 2000s in his work on cosmopolitanism and global ethics.[3] In his research, he emphasized the interconnectedness of societies and the importance of a global perspective in the perception of heritage. Even though it does not necessarily mean the built heritage, the term can be used in relation to the complexities of cultural heritage in cities in the context of modern and globalized cities with multiple cultures interacting and influencing each other. On the other hand, it can be used for historic cities that used to contain various societies living in the same neighborhood; however, the demographics of the city or the neighborhood have changed, and the

multicultural heritage still exists in the present. Kuzguncuk, which is the selected location of this paper, is one of those neighborhoods which used to contain different communities from different cultural backgrounds. In this context, the paper analyses several key issues using Kuzguncuk as a case study.

First, it examines the defining attributes of cosmopolitan architecture by analyzing the interplay of various cultural and religious influences in Kuzguncuk's built environment. It gives brief information about the formation of the area, which has four main groups, and the history of the region. Furthermore, it explains the concept of the neighborhood, Mahalle, in Turkey's socio-cultural dynamics.

Secondly, the paper addresses the characteristics of the urban environment shaped by the cultural and religious identities of different communities. By tracing the historical development of Kuzguncuk and the changes (both historical and contemporary) in its demographic composition over time, the study highlights the challenges and opportunities that multicultural neighborhoods face to maintain their cosmopolitan essence. The analysis also examines how community practices, cultural events and heritage preservation efforts help to maintain a cosmopolitan identity. The diverse architectural heritage of Kuzguncuk has the ability to provide fertile ground for exploring the benefits of such hybridity, including increased cultural exchange, architectural innovation and social cohesion. Conversely, the study also explores the potential drawbacks such as cultural dilution, gentrification and the erosion of minority identities.

To summarize, this paper contributes to understanding the relationship between urban tradition and cosmopolitanism by providing a nuanced analysis of Kuzguncuk's hybrid-built environment. It highlights the need for a balanced approach that recognizes the historical significance of cosmopolitan spaces while promoting sustainable and inclusive urban development.

2.   HISTORY AND SOCIETY (WITH FOUR MAIN GROUPS)

Istanbul, which used to be the capital of the Byzantine Empire and later on the capital of the Ottoman Empire, has been the home for people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and nationalities for a long period of time which created a cosmopolitan environment in the city. Kuzguncuk is located on the Asian (Anatolian) side of the city, and like Istanbul itself, it has a long history, with people from different backgrounds living together.[4] For centuries, Jewish, Armenian, Turkish, and Greek people have coexisted in this area, and they left their cultural marks, which can be easily seen in the urban fabric.

One of the first maps/illustrations of Istanbul, prepared by Buondelmonti in 1422, shows that the settlement in the city was more in the historical peninsula and Galata area. Only Scutari (Üsküdar) is mentioned from the Anatolian side, but Kuzguncuk is not displayed (Figure 1). This map reflected the borders of the city before it

was conquered by the Ottoman Empire, and it was the outcome of the observations of the Florentine traveler Buondelmonti.[5]
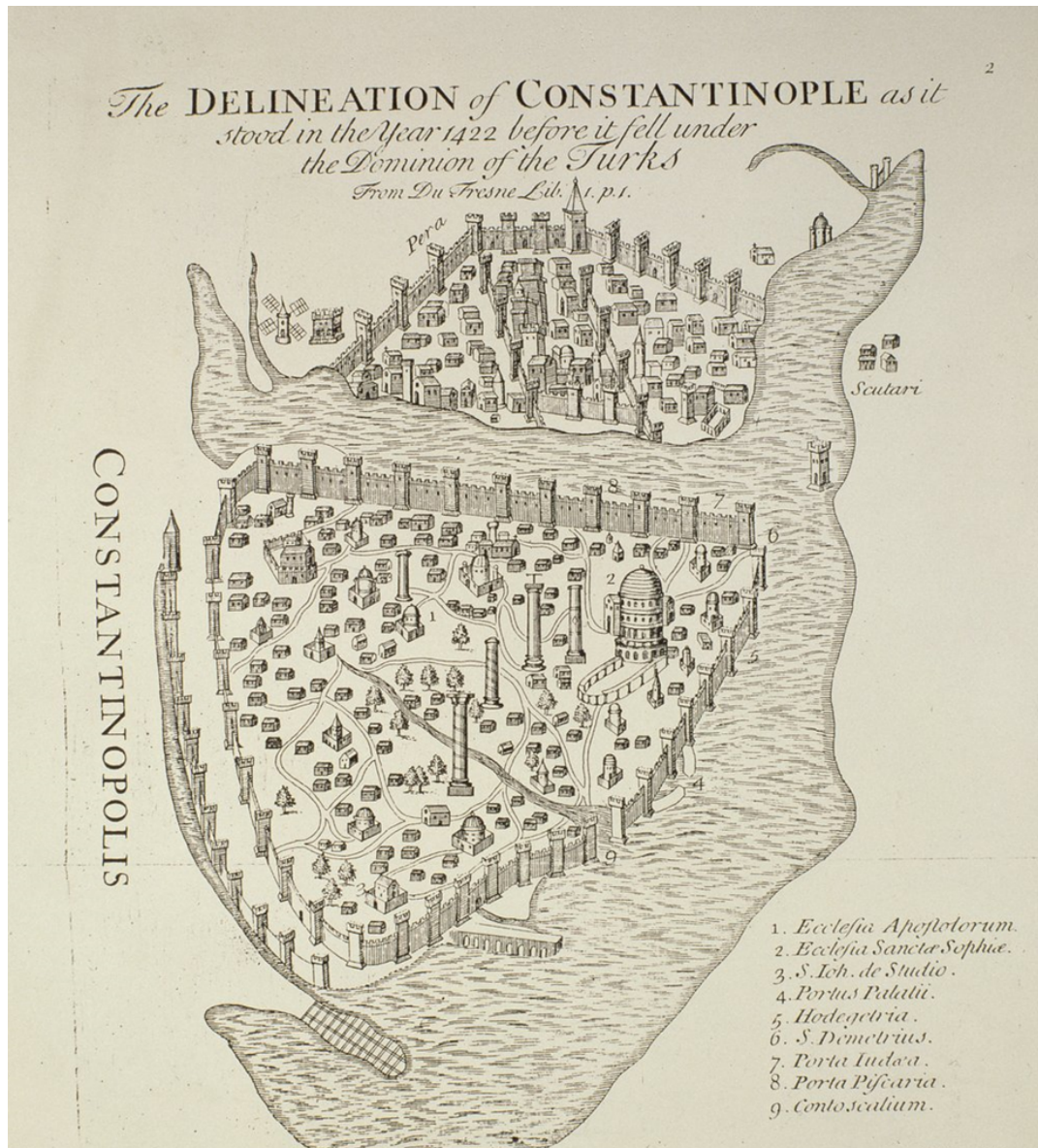

Fig. 1: Map of Constantinople drawn by Buondelmonti (Source: Kubilay, 2015).

Most of the latter maps from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries only included the central area, and the Anatolian part of the city was neglected, even though it was known that there were settlements in the area. The Jewish community has lived in the region since the Byzantine period; however, they were primarily located in the European part of the city, to begin with. It is believed that they first settled in Kuzguncuk around 1492 after Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal chose the area as their new home.[6] Kuzguncuk can be detected for

the first time in the map of Dutch traveler Dapper from 1688, and the maps drawn after this date included the location of Kuzguncuk (Figure 2).
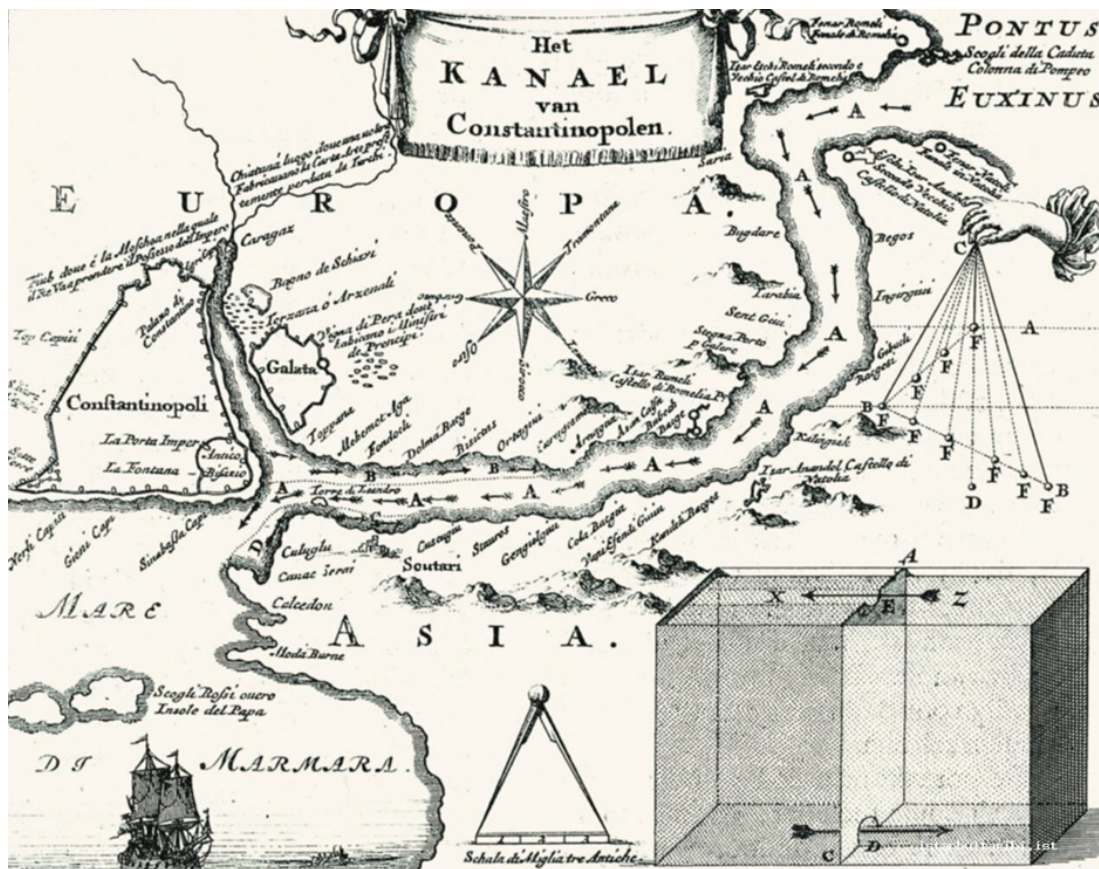

Fig. 2: Map of Bosphorus drawn by Olfert Dapper (Source: Kubilay, 2015).

After the Jewish community moved to the district in the late 15th century, they built houses and synagogues for themselves, which are one of the oldest buildings in Kuzguncuk. The area was seen as the last stop before reaching Jerusalem for the Jewish community; therefore, it had a special and holistic place.[7]

The Greek population started to increase in the 17th century, and the Armenian community began to settle here by the 18th century.[8] As Bektaş states, the Turkish population only started to be established in this area, rather than the neighboring districts, by the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century, the area had acquired its cosmopolitan character, with different communities co-existing and contributing to the cultural landscape. According to research by Cuinet from 1894, there were 1270 houses in the neighborhood at the time, and while all the communities preferred to live near the seaside, some of the Jewish people lived around the valley, and some of the Armenian and Greek people lived both around the valley and the hilly area at the north.[7] The district where the Muslim community used to live was not mentioned by Cuinet; however, he mentioned the existence of 230 inhabitants and a Turkish school in the area in 1894. As Nalcı (2024) states,

the urban fabric of the area was shaped in such a way that families that were socio-economically similar were living around the same surroundings.[9] In that regard, there were not any distinct borders or boundaries between the communities regarding their ethnicity or religion, but the urban space was shaped in a more cosmopolitan way.

One of the first maps around Kuzguncuk can be dated back to 1845 from the Ottoman era which was prepared by students of Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Hümayun-currently named Istanbul Technical University.[10] This map provides a depiction of the district's historical core and urban layout (Figure 3). Unfortunately, several fires in the latter half of the 19th century led to the destruction of many wooden houses in the area.[11] However, the monumental buildings constructed in the second half of the century, as well as houses built with stone or brick, managed to survive.

Fig. 3: Map prepared by engineering students of Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Hümayun (Source: Kubilay, 2015).

Until the 20th century, there were no direct passenger ferries to Kuzguncuk, which also preserved its isolated nature (Figure 4). Therefore, it was merely a small fishing village with artisans selling their products to the center of Istanbul, on the other side of the Bosphorus.

Fig. 4: 1932 insurance map of Kuzguncuk/ Istanbul (Source: Pervititch, 2000)[12].

Due to transportation becoming easier, changes in politics and immigration both from and to the area, demographic characteristics started to change.[13] According to the population statistics of 1933, 90 per cent of the population in Kuzguncuk was non-Muslim at the time, and 10 per cent were Muslim citizens. The ratio shifted from 6 per cent of non-Muslim citizens to 94 per cent of Muslim citizens in accordance with population statistics in 2004.[14] In this context, the demographics of the district transformed significantly over time. Nevertheless, individuals who once resided in this area maintained their connections with the neighborhood. According to an interview recorded in 2018 with the vice president of the Beth Yaakov Synagogue, although daily services are no longer crowded and only seven or eight families attend, especially during holidays and Saturday services, they still have approximately 150 community members.[15] Consequently, the cosmopolitan character of the area and the place attachment of the community members persist (Figure 5).

Fig. 5: Bird's-eye sketch of contemporary Kuzguncuk from the master's thesis of Gülden Akıncı (2020), which demonstrates the cosmopolitan urban fabric of the area with religious buildings.

3.   MAHALLE: THE CONCEPT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD

The concept of neighborhood can be found in every culture, both in rural areas and urban environments. Due to its nature, it is more of a dynamic term and layered over time since it is the outcome of the relationship between people to people and people to the environment.[9] It is a universal feature of human settlements found in various contexts, and it is not only a physical asset but also carries historical values and fundamentals of daily life. Neighborhoods are essentially collections of smaller local groups and structures that have existed since ancient cities or poleis. Therefore, every nation or country has a similar concept and a special word for neighborhood.

The notion of the mahalle, which defines a neighborhood in Turkey, describes not only an area or a district but also a community and its interaction with its surroundings, which do not necessarily have the same ethnicity or religion. Mahalle, in the Turkish context, represents the space where intimate daily life takes place, which shapes the narratives and creates bonds due to the feeling of knowing.[16] According to Şimşek (2002), it is not only related to the space, but it also reflects many words associated with the concept, which include warmth, intimacy, collectivity, and family.[17] From the understanding of Turkish people, mahalle is a type of extended family in which people share their daily lives in an urban setting. Therefore, it is the intersection between the public and private life.[18] Females living in mahalle perform activities together, which involve preparing food together, helping with daily chores or looking after each other's kids when busy. In that regard, mahalle can be defined as a form of community as well.

On the other hand, it can be defined as a form of special place attachment or a sense of place where people feel at home. In mahalle, everyone tends to know each other and, at the same time, is known by everyone as well.[16] This feeling can create a unique emotional connection to the environment and establish a stronger bond. Building emotional connections with places is crucial for individuals, as it helps them develop their identities and provides the sense of stability and familiarity needed for their well-being.[19] The sense of familiarity, which is one of the core characteristics of mahalle can be the outcome of various practices. The practices that immediately come to mind include frequent visits to local shops for shopping, engaging in social interactions on sidewalks, and participating in gatherings at the weekly market, particularly within the neighborhood context. Therefore, in a sense, it is the collection of events which take place in proximity to home.

As Işık Tamdoğan-Abel (2002) states, the tradition of mahalle and the practices that shape the concept are related to the socio-political organization that is related to the Ottoman cities.[20] In these cities, people were not only responsible to each other as neighbors, but they were also responsible to the state as a collective social unit. Therefore, even though the legal frameworks that form this unit at the governmental level do not

exist anymore, culturally, the collectivity between the residences in mahalle continues to exist as a tradition, and it also remains as a historical phenomenon in the society.

Kuzguncuk is one of those historic mahalle settings commonly referred to in Turkey due to its authenticity. It is believed that it is not only due to social interactions but also due to some physical characteristics as well. The scale of the buildings and streets is known to help people to socialize, and in Kuzguncuk, 81.5 per cent of the houses are small-scale, and even the apartments have a maximum of four flats.[21] Therefore, it allows inhabitants to get acquainted with each other and creates a mahalle feeling for them. This urban fabric in Kuzguncuk is mostly preserved due to having special building regulations in this area. In Istanbul, the areas around Bosphorus are strongly protected and called the "Bosphorus Foresight (visual) Zone". The borders of the Bosphorus region were shown in the 22/07/1983 approved master plan, and the coordinates and borders were determined within the scope of the same plan; it is divided into four main regions: the Bosphorus coastline, the front view (foresight) zone, the back view zone and the impact zone. Each zone has its own characteristics and different construction conditions.[22] In the areas of the foresight zone, structures which are only reserved for tourism, recreation, and public use can be built, provided that they are recorded in the land registry and cannot be used for purposes other than their intended use. Coastlines and shores can only be used in accordance with the public interest, and recreation and tourism facilities can be built in a way that the public can benefit, provided that they comply with zoning plans. In coastlines and front view areas, construction of ancient structures, reinforcement, and simple renovation works can be permitted to the extent permitted by legislation. Furthermore, it is not allowed to construct high-rise buildings or anything which can have an impact on the view of the coast. Since Kuzguncuk is inside this zone, it has been advantageous for the neighborhood to keep its integrity and urban characteristics.

4. HISTORICAL URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF KUZGUNCUK

In the Ottoman Empire, the state administration policy of urban settlements was based on the integration of all the different nations and minorities which were living in the same area rather than dividing settlements into sections. Therefore, the intention was to create a cosmopolitan character where every citizen lived as a whole. Like other cosmopolitan districts of Istanbul, Kuzguncuk was formed in this way, and the 18th and 19th centuries constitute the traditional structure of the district. It shows the characteristics of a typical Ottoman city with its bay windows, wooden houses, coffee houses and barber shops.[23]

The urban characteristics of Kuzguncuk were shaped not only by the religious buildings but also by the style of residential architecture that was related to the background of the communities. Furthermore, in a relatively small area, there are cemeteries for each community as well. The houses, which define the urban character of

the district, are situated on narrow plots and often along narrow streets. They are closely aligned, with private backyards. The size of the houses, along with the ornamental details and other decorative elements on their facades, generally reflect the financial status of the property owners.[6] The houses can have up to three floors. The ground floors of these residences, which feature row houses, are generally built of brick or stone. While Turkish and Armenian houses are predominantly built with wood, it is known that Jewish houses are built

with masonry, either brick or stone (Figure 6).

| a | b | c |

Fig. 6: a) An example of a Turkish house b) An Armenian house c) Jewish houses located near the synagogue (Source: Akıncı, 2020).

The reason for the Turkish community to use wooden frames as a method while building their houses tends to be related to the tradition of Turkish people, and it suits the characteristics of Anatolia, which is a seismic zone. According to Bozkurt (2013), wooden-frame Turkish houses demonstrate similarities with tents (yurt) and the nomadic lifestyle of the ancestors of the Turkish community.[24] Furthermore, it reflects the perspective of society regarding life, which focuses on temporality. While houses were built with wooden materials in a way that they could be expanded due to changes in the family member numbers, the social and religious structures were more permanent and built with masonry. On the other hand, Greek houses have masonry ground floors and tend to have bay window areas on the upper floor, which are covered with wood (Figure 7).

Fig. 7: An example of a Greek house in the neighborhood (Source: Akıncı, 2020).

While the houses built by the Muslim community followed the characteristics of traditional Turkish houses, most of the houses constructed by the non-Muslim community (Greek, Armenian, Jewish) had an opposite approach rather than following these characteristics.[21] They are not as privacy-oriented as Turkish houses, and they do not have inner courtyards. On the contrary, they are positioned in close contact with the street, facing outwards, and the buildings are directly entered from the street through an entrance hall.[15] In all these different structures, there is a reflection of the living habits and traditions of the different communities who live in the neighborhood. However, regardless of the construction methods or materials, whether built from wood or masonry, the common denominator in this architectural diversity is related to the fact that they all represent the cosmopolitan nature of Kuzguncuk, and they demonstrate the interactions between the various groups that have shaped the district over centuries.

5. KUZGUNCUK TODAY

After some of the non-Muslim community of Kuzguncuk left the area due to political changes of the 1950s and 1960s, part of the population of the area was replaced by migrants coming from the rural parts of Turkey.[25] Even though these changes had a reflection on the demographics of the neighborhood, the sense of mahalle stayed. Since the early 1980s, Kuzguncuk has been popularized in media due to its characteristics, and this increased its visibility as an authentic mahalle by being the setting of famous television series.[26] Especially after well-known architect Cengiz Bektaş, bought a property in the 1970s and moved his house and architectural office to the area, the changes in the district gained momentum. After he arrived in the area, other architects also started to move to the district, which converted it into a district full of architects and artists. Furthermore, Cengiz Bektaş has also implemented many urban projects here, which have created social and spatial characteristics for the area, which made it distinctive from the other districts of Istanbul. Especially after the 1980s, he started various projects with his colleagues aimed at children to regain the sense of a neighborhood and accelerate the place attachment. They worked on creating social spaces, art workshops and summer schools to establish different collective activities for kids regardless of their socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds. Bektaş argued that children are the ones who never see the differences between backgrounds; therefore, they are the base point for starting.[27] With the works of Bektaş, the district started to gain the feeling of a neighborhood, and it reached its peak when the government made development plans for the orchard area in the early 1990s. The Kuzguncuk Neighborhood Association (Kuzguncuklular Derneği) was established in response to this proposed project, and it provided a platform for building connections between the residents, offering an alternative to traditional forms of neighboring and resisting for the neighborhood. All these activities created a sense of neighborhood for the residents, which had reflections on different communities as well.

Since 1998, Beth Yaakov Synagogue and its community have organized dinners for the Muslim community to break their fast during Ramadan.[15] Furthermore, shared spaces are designed in the environment, which enhances the feeling of community. The orchard at the center of Kuzguncuk, which has been an orchard since the Ottoman era, still exists, and the resistance of the community resulted in keeping it as a communal garden (Figure 8, Figure 9). The plot is also used as an open-air cinema in summer, and people come to watch movies here and have picnics. However, all these unique characteristics of mahalle increased the popularization of the area, which increased the number of newcomers to the area as well, resulting in a gentrification environment in recent decades, which puts the mahalle fabric in danger. The newcomers tend to have jobs in different parts of the city, which minimizes the time that they spend in the neighborhood. As a result, the feeling of acquaintances is vanishing.

Fig. 8: Current satellite map of Kuzguncuk with the orchard marked with a red circle (Source: İstanbul Şehir Haritası – IBB)[28].

Fig. 9: Orchard of Kuzguncuk (Source: Üsküdar Belediyesi Kurumsal Web Sitesi)[29].

6. CONCLUSION

Kuzguncuk's architectural diversity and its enduring mahalle identity are inseparable from the multicultural history that shaped the neighborhood. The variety of architectural styles—reflecting the Turkish, Greek, Jewish, and Armenian communities—offers a visual narrative of the cultural exchanges that have defined this area for centuries. However, beyond the physical structures, it is the mahalle itself, as a living, dynamic entity, that sustains the sense of community. The intimate scale of Kuzguncuk, with its narrow streets and small-scale houses, is essential in fostering interaction among residents and reinforcing a deep connection to the place. The existence of sacred buildings for different religions also helps the feeling of connection. Although the Greek, Jewish and Armenian populations have gradually moved away, a new community has formed in the neighborhood. However, many former residents continue to visit their cultural and religious sites and thus remain connected to the neighborhood. Therefore, the architecture manages to bond the people with the place.

The social bonds within this space are not only created by architecture but also by shared experiences and practices as well. Community events, such as gatherings, festivals or even daily/weekly activities such as local markets, can assist in establishing a sense of society and a collective identity. Due to the gentrification and the new social dynamics created by the demographic shifts, the interaction of people with the place is being affected. Since both males and females have to work for economic reasons, most of the inhabitants spend their time at work outside of the area. This can interfere with the place attachment and also the feeling of community. The introduction of specific strategies aimed at strengthening the feeling of belonging among both long-standing and newer residents can help preserve the mahalle spirit. In that regard, communal activities that take place can become increasingly crucial.

As can be learned from Kuzguncuk, initiatives that promote inclusivity, such as interfaith events or the creation of shared spaces like the communal orchard and open-air cinemas, can help bridge the gap between the diverse populations living in the area. In Kuzguncuk, the formation of the feeling of the neighborhood created a place of attachment for the people and allowed the inhabitants not to see the differences between the communities but as a whole who live in the same neighborhood. Therefore, it created a sense of community within different communities. Kuzguncuk also shows that urban development plans should respect both the architectural and social fabric of the area. Establishing a citizens' association is crucial to ensure that residents have a unified voice when it comes to urban planning decisions. It is important to ensure that all residents feel represented and valued—whether through architecture, public spaces, or community activities- and to maintain a cosmopolitan nature. Kuzguncuk can be seen as an example of the

mahalle culture, which can continue to serve as a model for how urban spaces foster inclusivity, cultural exchange, and a strong sense of belonging amidst change.
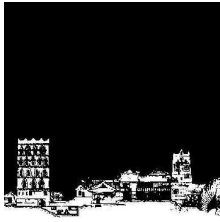
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COSMOPOLITANISM AT THE MARGINS

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