

Revitalization of the role of *waqf* in the field of architecture: activation of *waqf* to improve the function of public buildings

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Abstract

In our contemporary life, the Islamic *waqf* funds represent a great percentage of the societal wealth in a number of Islamic countries. The idea of Islamic *waqf* represents an important principle in the development of non-governmental sectors, which aims at the public benefit and socio-economic development.

The legal meaning of *waqf* is the retention of a specific thing in trust and the devotion of its profit or products in charity to the poor or other good objectives, it is the permanent dedication by a Muslim of any property for any purpose recognized under the Muslim law as being religious, pious or charitable.

The relationship between the *waqf*, architecture and urbanism is a very old and effective relationship in Islamic cities and plays an important role in achieving a good urban environment and providing user needs with a high degree of efficiency. Since the funds derived from *waqf* interest should be spent on maintaining historical monuments a great many have withstood the test of time, despite the passing of many years.

However, nowadays *waqf* has become less popular among Muslim societies; *waqf* properties have been neglected and no longer serve the cultural needs.

This paper attempts to clarify the historical relationship between *waqf* and architecture, in indicating how *waqf* plays an active role in achieving various stages of architectural theories in protecting the existence of the architecture of *waqf* buildings, thus achieving a proper urban environment. The role of *waqf* has undergone revitalization in the field of architecture through the revival of its role in various aspects of life and putting forward proposals to maintain monuments through activating *waqf* on public buildings.

Keywords: waqf, architecture, Islamic city, monuments, public buildings.



1 Introduction

There is no doubt that the system of Islamic *waqf* is one of the most important systems that has played an enormous role in many aspects of social, economic and urban development throughout the centuries in Islamic countries, where *waqf* was known to both the general public and elite.

Waqf is an important comprehensive system in dealing with the minutiae in the lives of Muslims. *Waqf* is diversified and includes all types of buildings without exception in addition to covering the activities taking place inside the buildings. The refunds of the *waqf* were used to support the activities covered by the *waqf* as well as refunding conservation of the *waqf* itself, which has been assisting in preserving a substantial number of historical monuments up until today.

This paper is hoping to suggest proposals to maintain historic buildings through the revitalization of the role of *waqf* in the current era.

The study pursues the analytical method and the historical descriptive approach in order to demonstrate the historical relationship between the *waqf* and architectural theories, through studying the possibility of linking the *waqf* facilities to architectural and economic entities to ensure that the primary purpose of *waqf* is to maximize the benefit to the community in encouraging *waqf* to play an essential role in improving the function of public buildings and maintaining both their physical and aesthetic architectural integrity.

2 Historical descriptive approach

2.1 Definitions

“The term *waqf* literally means detention. The legal meaning of *waqf* according to Imam Abu Hanifa is the detention of a specific thing in the ownership of *waqf* and the devotion of its profit or products in charity to the poor or other good objectives” [1].

Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad said that: “*waqf* signifies the extinction of the *waqf*’s ownership in whatever has been dedicated and detention of everything in the implied ownership of God, in such a manner that its profits may revert to or be applied for the benefit of mankind” [2].

Waqf means: the permanent dedication by a Muslim of any property for any purpose recognized under the Muslim law as being religious, pious or charitable [2]. By the 10th century, after the Islamic *waqf* law and *madrasah* foundations were firmly established, the number of *Bimaristan* hospitals multiplied throughout the Islamic lands until in the 11th century every Islamic city had several hospitals. The *waqf* trust institutions funded various expenses in the hospitals, including paying the wages of doctors, ophthalmologists, surgeons, chemists, pharmacists, domestics and all other staff; purchasing food and medicine and hospital equipment such as beds, mattresses, bowls and perfumes; and repairing buildings. The *waqf* trusts also funded medical schools and their

revenues covered various expenses such as their maintenance and the salaries of teachers and students [1].

2.2 History of *waqf* in Islam:

According to Raissouni [3], *waqf* activity began during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when there was *waqf* for the purpose of worship, e.g. as in the case of Quba' Mosque in Medina which was later considered as the first religious *waqf* in Islam. Beside religious *waqf* there was also charitable *waqf* which aimed at assisting the poor and for use in social purposes. For instance, Mukhairiq (one of Prophet's companions) gave his seven orchards in Medina as a *waqf* to help the poor and needy. During the period of the second Caliph (Umar-Bin-Al-Khattab), the Islamic state developed and extended the activities of *waqf* until they reached their peak during the Ottoman Empire. In the early seventh century, mosques and religious education constituted the largest portion of *waqf* and voluntary contributions.

Throughout time, *waqf* has played a significant role in the development of Muslim societies, especially at social and economic levels. Raissouni [3] reveals that "Islamic *waqf* contributed substantially to the promotion of mutual support and solidarity among Muslim individuals and institutions, as well as social and economic development. In fact, *waqf* was the richest charity institution". For instance, in Egypt the *waqf* owned around 24% of the agricultural lands [4]. In addition, Raissouni [3] stated that *waqf* institutions in many Islamic countries were limited exclusively to mosques and some of their related facilities, while neglecting social welfare, cultural activity and educational development. However, during the nineteenth century in colonial times, *waqf* management was subjected to the colonial system but later after Islamic countries gained their independence and most of their leaders were secular, *waqf* properties were added to the public sector, e.g. in Syria, Egypt and Turkey" [5].

Nevertheless, nowadays some countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Turkey and Algeria have enacted laws relating to *waqf* property in order to develop and revitalize *waqf* property and encourage the Muslims in such countries to create new *waqf*.

2.3 Types of *waqf*

Farfor [6] classifies *waqf* based on its purposes, namely:

1. General *Waqf* (or public *Waqf*): the usufruct of which is used specifically for a wide range of public interests such as public restrooms, hospitals and mosques.
2. Family *Waqf* (posterity *waqf*): the same as general *waqf* but with some conditions which specify that the *waqf* revenue will be designated for the *waqf*'s (the founder's) children and their off-spring, without them being able to sell the property.
3. Private *waqf* (philanthropic *Waqf*): is charitable *waqf* with a specific purpose, such as for the poor in Africa or buildings or land for mosques or schools, with any of its revenue being used for *waqf*.



Kahf [7] categorizes *waqf* into two types based on the nature of its output. The first type has assets that generate consumable services to be utilized by the beneficiaries for the purpose of providing philanthropy (direct *Waqf*). The second type has assets which are intended for investment for *waqf* properties and produces marketable goods and services to be sold in order to generate a net income for utilization in reconstructing *waqf* properties or fulfilling philanthropic purposes (investment *Waqf*).

While Raissouni [3] classifies *waqf* based on its functions and roles into worship (mosques and facilities for worship rites); science and education (schools and universities and their facilities and teachers' wages) and social welfare (helping the poor and needy; health and medicines; public facilities such as providing water resources; marriage and needy married couples).

2.4 The role of *waqf* through international Islamic organizations:

International Islamic organizations play a leading role in the maintenance of the Islamic *waqf* through their international charters and systems to highlight and emphasize the role of *waqf* in Islam and Muslim societies in general and minor communities throughout the Islamic world.

The following is a brief outline of the role of international Islamic organizations in the restoring the role of endowments, particularly in serving Muslim minorities worldwide:

(i) Organization of the Islamic Conference [8]: The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 States spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world in ensuring to safeguard and protect Muslim interests in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony and aims to:

- enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States; and
- safeguard and protect common interests and support the legitimate causes of the member States in coordinating and unifying their efforts in view of the challenges faced by the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general.

(ii) World Assembly of Muslim Youths [9]: WAMY UK is a non-governmental youth and student organization affiliated to the United Kingdom. It supports those involved in the personal and social development of young Muslims and works towards enabling them to fulfill their potential in British society. Through its various projects, WAMY provides support structures to encourage the positive engagement and integration of youth in their social environment. It also aims to help assist towards diffusing social tensions and protect Muslim youth from extremism and similar trends that result in social instability.

WAMY UK aims to:

- preserve the identity of Muslims and help overcome any problems they may face;
- educate and train Muslim youth to become active and positive citizens in their countries;

- introduce Islam to non-Muslims in its purest form as a comprehensive system and way of life;
- establish a relationship of dialogue, understanding and appreciation between Muslim organizations and Western societies; and
- provide assistance to Muslim and non-Muslim organizations to fulfil these goals through training and cooperation.

(iii) Muslim World League (Organization of Islamic popular) [10]: During the pilgrimage season in 1381 AH in Mecca, a number of scientists and leaders in the Muslim world met to consult on serving the nation and Muslim minorities in the world (known as the First Islamic Conference) who agreed on the establishment of a Muslim entity called “Association of the Islamic World” which will hold the next meeting on 14 of *Dhu al-Hijjah* 1381 AH, at its permanent headquarters in Mecca.

Since its establishment, the Association has sought to care for Muslims and Muslim communities in every continent throughout the world by offering them moral and material support to maintain their Muslim faith under the guidance of the Secretariat of the Association for Service to Islam. In order to take care of the Muslim minorities they created the following divisions:

1. Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Australia;
2. Regional Office for Africa;
3. Regional Office for Europe; and
4. Regional Office for North and South America and the Caribbean.

3 Analytical study

3.1 Understanding Islamic architecture

3.1.1 Studying the governing law of Islamic architecture [11]

The first record of the rules of jurisprudence for the architectural scholar Ibn Abd al-Faqih, who died in 214AH/829AD, in his book “Architecture” divides buildings into four main sections:

1. Duty constructions: houses of worship such as mosques where prayers are held and forts to defend the Muslim homes.
2. Delegate constructions: minarets in mosques to call worshippers to pray and markets for buying goods.
3. Permissible constructions: housing built with a view to exploitation. It is known that Islam came to serve the purposes of religion, psychology, finance, supply and birth control, and God made it possible for humans to achieve those goals.
4. Outlawed buildings: such as prostitution houses and graves built on other people’s land.

Architecture and the axis of jurisprudence should be taught in the faculties of architecture to produce a new generation of architects with the ability to provide contemporary Islamic architecture.



3.1.2 Islam deals with architecture as constructing for the whole society and not only its devotees [11]

Nowadays, individuals build their homes without taking into account their neighbor's privacy or realizing that through such home they are interacting with their neighbors. The values of yesterday no longer exist today.

3.1.3 Islam encourages solidarity within wealthy communities to provide services to city residents [11]

Rich men used to build *sabil* to provide water to passers-by in the sweltering heat and *kottab* to educate the children of poor Muslims, together with schools to complete their education. Accordingly, the *waqf* system in Islam is one of the approaches that understands the nature and role of enterprises and service establishments in Islamic architecture.

3.1.4 Islam and the role of engineers in Islamic societies [11]

Muslim engineers deal with architecture through the community and users of such architecture, and accordingly develop its facilities to meet the users' needs.

3.2 Role of *waqf* in forming Islamic cities

A city or any urban development creates values, attitudes and specific behavioral patterns or in other words a mode of life and a special cultural form. This special mode of life can include the nature of experiences, human awareness and behaviour or new forms of social organization [12].

The studies in forming Islamic cities reveal that the approaches, theories and methods of the discipline focus on one aspect of dwelling, i.e., on people attitudes and values or on buildings, urban forms and urban structures. Heidegger [13] argues that dwelling is not merely an extension of an existential space or place, but rather a fundamental human activity, in the light of which both place and space find their initial clarification. He interprets a dwelling or built environment as being crucial because it supports and reflects a person and a community's way of being-in-the-world [13].

The role of *waqf* in the services of housing and urbanization which are regarded as the indicator of the level of civilization in a society, were historically important especially in Ottoman administrative organizations. Typically, in the Ottoman Empire, *kulliyes* comprised a combination of various facilities called the *imaret* system which were also established and managed via *waqf* and played an important role in the establishment and development of Turkish and Muslim cities, in the general social and economic life of the country [14].

One of the most important effects of those endowments is the permanent maintenance of a large number of public buildings. Muslim public buildings in Islamic countries need plans for maintenance, restoration and exploitation of public service. Also, all public buildings, especially the governmental ones need a plan for maintenance and preservation that would provide maximum benefit for the building and the users.

The system of Islamic *waqf* is one of the main reasons for the existence and survival of a number of monuments of historical, artistic and architectural value

in most Arab and Islamic towns and cities, such as mosques, *sabil*, public baths, markets, palaces and domes, like Al-Azhar mosque figure 1, the Dome of Sultan Al-Ghuri, and *sabil* Mohammed Ali in El Muez Street (which are all endowments and monuments of Cairo city).



Figure 1: Al-Azhar Mosque – Egypt.

In general, looking at the relationship between architecture and *waqf* (with its economic studies), we find that in order for the system of *waqf* to be effective and sustainable it must be based on full architectural studies, which ensure the efficiency of the building functionality and lead to a healthy urban environment. Figure 2 shows that integration between architecture and *waqf* guarantees a healthy urban environment.

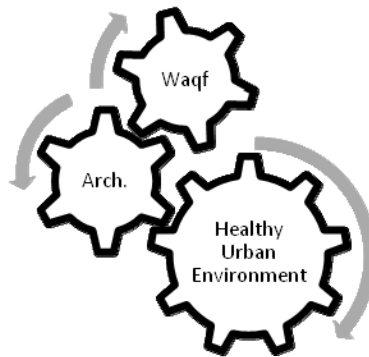


Figure 2: The integration of architecture and *waqf* guarantee a healthy urban environment.

3.3 Waqf institutions

Currently, institutions are encouraged to adopt *waqf* and are managing projects that serve all Islamic cities. One of the most important Islamic charities around the world is “The Islamic Relief Worldwide” [15].

Donations are pooled and invested according to the principles of Islamic *Shari'ah* with the income then being used to help the poor. Islamic Relief organizes *waqf* to cater for long-term projects such as:

Water & Sanitation *Waqf*: including building water supply systems in deprived areas, digging and restoring wells, implementing water purification projects.

Health *Waqf*: including Mother and Child Health Care in Bangladesh & Sudan, Medical Care for Disabled People in Bosnia, Healthcare Program in Chechnya Prevention of Blindness in Pakistan.

Education *Waqf*: Islamic Relief's (IR) work in education varies from supporting schools and school children to setting up institutions which train students in computer science, mechanics and other forms of work.

Income Generation *Waqf*: IRs income generation development projects enable poor families to earn their livelihood instead of relying on external support. To realize this aim, IR has worked to develop small growth projects.

Qurbani Waqf: IR has over 17 years of experience in implementing the *Qurbani* project. Muslims donate the cost of a sheep or cow to be sacrificed on their behalf by IR and the meat is then distributed to the needy in poorer countries

Emergency & Relief *Waqf*: Within the last twenty years, the world has witnessed disasters that have overwhelmed vulnerable communities, including floods, droughts, earthquakes, famine, and man-made disasters such as wars.

3.3.1 Analyzing *waqf* projects in terms of the need for architectural intervention (construction/studies)

Most projects require the intervention of architecture at various stages which demonstrates that a *waqf* project cannot perform its purpose without the intervention of architectural studies as seen in table 1.

Table 1: Architectural requirements in '*waqf*' projects.

<i>Waqf</i> Project	Architectural Needs			
	Furniture/ Decoration	Landscaping	Architecture	Building/ Shelter
Building new mosques/ renovating old ones	√	√	√	√
Building schools	√	√	√	√
Water and Sanitation <i>Waqf</i>			√	√
Health <i>Waqf</i>	√	√	√	√
Education <i>Waqf</i>	√	√	√	√
Income Generation <i>Waqf</i>	√		√	√
<i>Qurbani Waqf</i>				√
Emergency & Relief <i>Waqf</i>	√			√

Steps of any architectural study integrate with the steps of implementing most *waqf* projects as showed in figure 3. Where both architectural and *waqf* projects



pass through similar steps, i.e. site inventory (building/construction), site analysis / public needs, project program, program development, conceptual design, development of concepts, final design, feasibility, implementation /construction and post-occupancy evaluation.

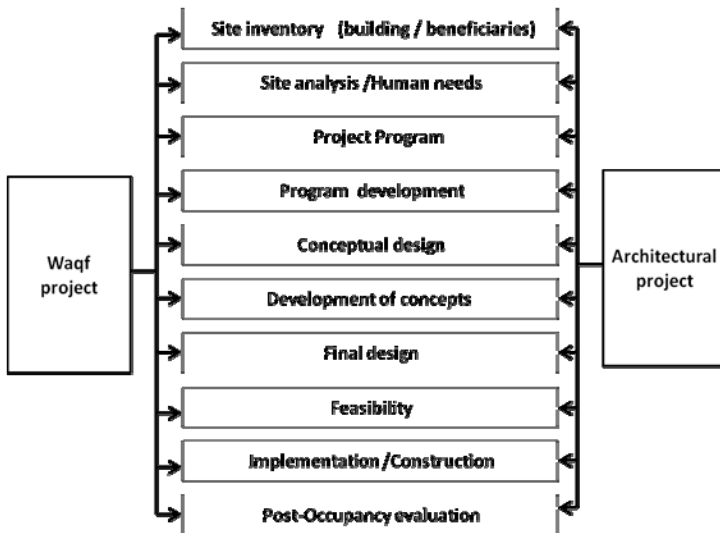


Figure 3: Integration between the stages of architectural/*waqf* project.

3.4 System for the management of *waqf* institutions

To implement an architectural and economical system for managing *waqf* institutions we must have a full integration of methods of financing the *waqf* buildings and their architecture (construction/maintenance), taking into consideration the needs of both the public and the monuments and traditional buildings that require maintenance as shown in figure 4.

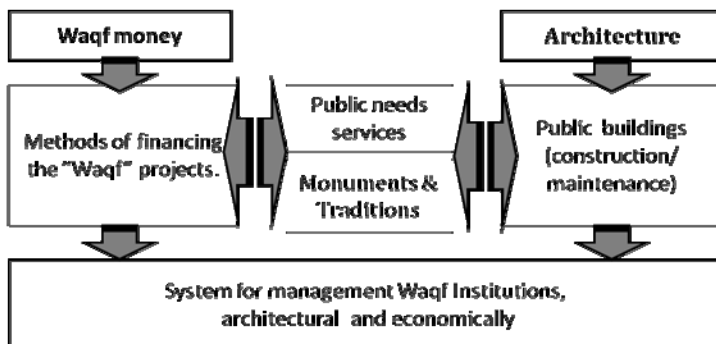


Figure 4: System for the architectural and economical management of *waqf* institutions.

4 The proposed structure

An effective system for managing a *waqf* should include the following branches:

- Architecture: For all architecture studies, which ensure the efficiency of the building functionality and lead to a healthy urban environment.
- Economics: For all economic studies which have programs for collecting money, buildings for *waqf* projects and to manage such projects (for public needs, monument maintenance, public buildings, helping the poor, etc).
- Public needs: For all studies relating to the citizens (shortage of public services in Arab countries, the poor, etc).

The three branches should work together to manage *waqf* projects such as those relating to healthcare, educational, public services/facilities, religious, religious tourism and industrial/commercial. Recycling monthly profits so that a part goes towards the maintenance of monuments and public service buildings with the remainder being used for managing new projects for public needs in Arab countries. Figure 5 shows a proposed system for managing a *waqf* project for establishing and improving the function of public buildings and maintaining their physical and aesthetic architectural integrity.

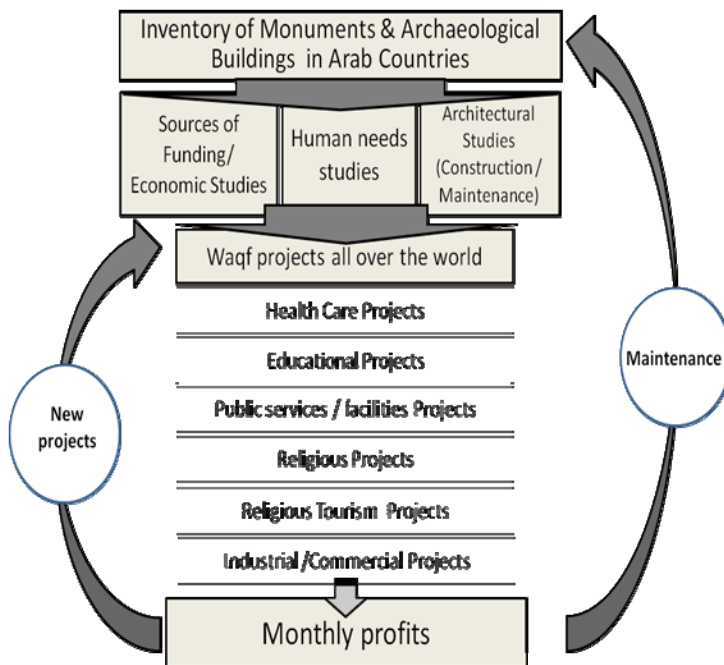


Figure 5: Proposed system for managing a *waqf*.

5 Conclusions

The paper concludes the following points:

1. *Waqf* is an integrated system that involves a set of values that assist in playing its role efficiently to serve various components of architecture according to the architectural theories.
2. This historical and active role of *waqf* assists in achieving the physical environment and the durability of *waqf* buildings which are lacking in today's buildings.
3. Social awareness is required in order to revise the *waqf* process, together with the application of successful systems for investing funds.
4. Some institutions are encouraged to apply *waqf* and are managing projects that serve all Islamic cities where donations are pooled and invested according to the principles of Islamic Shari'ah, the income of which is then used to help the poor.

6 Recommendations

1. To apply a system for architecturally and economically managing *waqf* institutions we should have a fully integrated inventory for methods of financing the *waqf* buildings and their architecture (construction /maintenance) at the same time.
2. Steps should be taken to safeguard historic buildings from sabotage and demolition, such as:
 - surveying the archaeological and/or heritage sites to be protected and record them with blueprints, documentation and photographs;
 - recording the lists of buildings to be protected under the umbrella of legal protection;
 - devising a system for the architectural and economical management of *waqf* institutions;
 - encouraging international Islamic organizations to take lead a role in the maintenance of Islamic *waqf*;
 - promoting religious awareness in the importance of the *waqf*;
 - establishing trust between the foundations and the community;
 - applying successful systems for the management and investment of endowment funds;
 - monitoring the of disbursement of public funds; and
 - investing in surplus funds to main *waqf* capital.
3. A course covering architecture and the bases of 'shari'ah' should be taught in addition to the main courses of Islamic theories and architecture in the faculties of architecture, to produce a new generation of architects with the ability to design contemporary Islamic architecture.



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