

**Renewable Success: Development of Good Architecture in the case of  
Arriyadh Development Authority, Saudi Arabia**

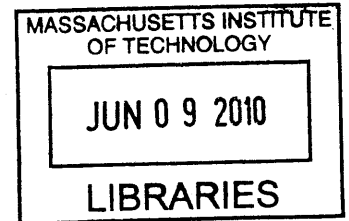
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Bachelor of Architecture  
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture, in Partial  
Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science in Architecture Studies

at the  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
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## **Abstract**

ArRiyadh Development Authority (ADA) is an unusual city development authority within the Saudi Arabian government hierarchy. Part of its responsibilities is coordinating and overseeing the design and building of buildings for Ministries and other projects needed by the government. ADA has a positive reputation for achieving quality award winning architecture.

Though there have been studies on the development of Riyadh, there has been no study of how quality of architecture is perceived and defined by ADA and why ADA was able to sustain a record of successful project. Investigating ADA's methods in approaching architectural projects would provide assistance to architectural firms, agencies, and scholars interested in the perception of quality architecture in Riyadh.

To pursue these questions, I have interviewed 20 people who had experiences with ADA and related their input to current literature on design excellence. This study attributes the success of ADA in creating 'good' architectural projects to five elements: symbolic capital, efficiency and competence, architectural vision, adopting multi-perspectives and flexibility. The study concludes with a discussion of the future challenges facing ADA.

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In Saudi Arabia, I wish to thank the administration of Arriyadh Development Authority who gave me the opportunity to interview ADA. I am thankful to those who allowed me to interview them. This study would not be possible without the help and transparency of Mr. AbdulAziz Alshaikh, insights and feedback from Arch. Khalid Alhazani, and the discussions and help of Arch. Sa'ad Alghamdi. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview Prof. Mohammed Alshaikh, without whom I would not be able to grasp the larger picture and realize our responsibility.

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My time in Cambridge could not be any happier without the friendship and company of Christian Hedrick, Aftab Jalia, Zameer Basrai, Nancy Demerdash, Ila Sheren and Jared Eisenstat.

I cannot thank my parents and family enough, their unconditional love and support was my fuel at rough times, especially my wife, Rehab, for her constant unlimited support, and making me realize the value of family.

Early on, I was taught that what really matters is to educate the 'self' rather than to collect, the embodied cultural capital we call: certificate. I hope I learned that.

#### A note regarding the name of the studied agency

The naming of ADA is not accurately translated into English even by sources in Saudi Arabia. Despite this inaccuracy, I follow the conventional name 'ADA' (arriyadh development authority) to specifically refer to what in Arabic is named the Projects Center at the High Commission for the Development of City of Riyadh. My only reasoning is to avoid discrepancy with other sources citing ADA.

# | Introduction |

"Every house in every street of every city ought to be good architecture"

John Ruskin

## Good Architecture(s)

The stages of an architect's journey to become a successful architect are defined by rites of passage. Admission to a 'good' architecture program, graduation, first commission, publication, becoming a junior architect, senior architect, principal, or becoming a field recognized architect are all milestones to be reached by architects to be. To successfully reach and accomplish a stage, certain requirements or conditions have to be met. These conditions vary from one stage to another and over time they get renewed, remodeled and redefined. Throughout that journey, the term "good architecture" is used loosely in designing, discussing or consuming architecture to express what is thought to be Architecture with a capital A. This understanding of what is good architecture is of the main conditions for the architect to transition from one stage to another.

The subject of "good architecture" manifests in the debate between those who will find sufficient motive in primary goals vs those who see design as an expression of human needs. This debate can be found as early as in the treaties of Vitruvius.<sup>1</sup> Good architecture is rationally explained, for Vitruvius, by the triad of Firmitas, Vanustas and Utilitus. Al-

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1. Pollio Vitruvius, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris Hicky Morgan (New York: Dover Publications, 1960).

berti articulates good architecture into 'lineamenta' (design, idea or form) and 'structura' (the construction) and although no historical or stylistic aesthetics are suggested, compliance with nature serves as aesthetic criteria. Today 'design excellence', 'construction quality' and architectural quality might be used to signify aspects of 'good architecture'. Though awards, prizes or any system of merits are often helpful as indicators of good architecture, they are not sufficient.

Understanding what is and what makes 'good architecture' is especially of concern to decision makers not only to provide evaluation criteria but also to discuss and rationalize their decisions. This is particularly significant when a decision about architecture has to be made in a bureaucratic, governmental or corporate setting due to ensuing financial liabilities.

Like many other governmental bodies that are responsible for architectural projects, Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA), is trying to find out what good architecture is. This is reflected in their efforts of involving reviewers, judges, and consultants in their projects. The ADA is a unique agency, within Saudi Arabia's governmental system, in its structure and its affiliations that have not only succeeded in attracting attention to its award winning projects, but has also been positively reviewed by government officials, academics and practicing architects and the public at large.

ADA has a small team of architects who commission architectural firms to design architectural projects for the governmental agencies in Riyadh. Typically ADA develops a program, requirements and objectives. It then collaborates closely with the firm in the design and decision making process. In this respect, its close involvement with architectural firms replicates a structure similar to a design firm that subcontracts with another firm. Given the ADA's reputation, a question arises: what is good architecture as perceived by ADA and how does it manage to recreate its success in providing that architecture? Be-



cause ADA is mediating between clients and firms, the definition of what 'good' is, has to be clearly stated.

It is the intent of this study to investigate, by looking at the work of this particular agency, how success in architectural projects is perceived and defined within the context of Riyadh. This study will explain the organization and structure of ADA showing how and why it was established and the challenges it faced.

Studying ADA as an architectural firm allows us to see how its formation and the experience of its early projects crystalized into the agency's work culture. Moreover, it allows us to analyze a firm's success and articulate it in terms of design quality and firm practice of excellence. Awards, prizes, visibility (i.e. the symbolic, cultural, social capitals)<sup>2</sup> play an undeniable role in building success and investigating ADA in terms of architectural firm situates it in social and cultural context.

The first chapter presents the purpose of, and the context in which the ADA was established. An account of the events surrounding its formation gives a glimpse into the characteristics that distinguishes this governmental body from others and how the ADA addressed challenges that were present in Riyadh. The second chapter investigates the concept of success as it applies to successful projects, successful designs and successful firms or practice. The last chapter, selecting key projects, this study investigates how and why ADA's projects were perceived as being successful and what is ADA doing to maintain 'success'. Reflections and final thoughts are discussed in the concluding chapter.

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2. Cultural capital is a concept developed by Pierre Bourdieu maintaining that culture shares characteristics of economic capital in that it is sought to increase one's symbolic capital.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, vol. Cambridge studies in social anthropology ; 16 (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977)., 183

# I. Formation of ADA

The conditions that led to the establishment of the ADA were those fundamental and challenging conditions of urbanism in Saudi Arabia. Although urban expansion affected all provinces, Riyadh was growing at a particularly high rate. Today, Riyadh has about five million people in an area of 2400 km<sup>2</sup>. With current growth rates, Riyadh's population is estimated to be about seven millions by 2025.<sup>3</sup> However, when Saudi Arabia was first recognized and declared in 1932 Riyadh was very different from what one sees today.

The urbanization of Riyadh began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the presence of potential ground water. This attracted the Bedouin community to settle around Riyadh and participate in city life. However, the discovery of oil in 1938 and selling it in commercial quantities in the early 1940s initiated an urban revolution in the capital and through out the country.

The rapid increase in the population inhabiting Riyadh, the sudden change of their economic conditions and a shift in the political status of Riyadh all accelerated the urbanization rate. The government responded with a number of projects to address the demands on infrastructure and supporting services. Three projects' administrative committees were grouped together to form the nucleus of today's ADA. These projects were: Riyadh master plan, Diplomatic Quarter (DQ) and Justice Palace District (JPD).

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3. ADA housing symposium 2007

These projects generated valuable experience because they required very high standards of coordination with the various governmental agencies in addition to efficiency and speed in execution. Although some of these projects were initiated in the early 1970s, the resulting experiences from these projects were embraced by the ADA and formed the basis of its work culture when it was established in 1983 as the executive branch of the High Commission of the Development of Riyadh.<sup>4</sup> An introduction to these projects follows.

### **a. Riyadh Master Plan**

Since 1902, when King AbdulAziz started his campaign to bring Saudi Arabia under his rule, Riyadh was his permanent residence and base of operations. when King Abdulaziz declared Riyadh the capital in 1932, Riyadh was a walled settlement of about 36,000 people and a total area of less than one square-kilometer.<sup>5</sup> The main structures of Riyadh were the Al-Masmak Fortress in the northeastern quarter of the city, the Justice Palace at the center of the city and seat of King AbdulAziz. The Congregational Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Jami') was near the palace in the center of the city as well.<sup>6</sup> Today, these make up the historic city center district named Justice Palace District (JPD).

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4. The ADA was formed in 1983 June 12, Council of Ministers resolution 221

5. Faisal Abdul-Aziz Mubarak, "Urban Growth Boundary Policy and Residential Suburbanization: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia," *Habitat International* 28, no. 4 (2004): 567-91.

Early travelers were William Palgrave visited Riyadh in 1862 described Riyadh in his *Narrative of a Year's Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-1863)* Then H Philby in 1919.

6. Saleh A Al-Hathloul et al., "Riyadh Architecture in One Hundred Years," *CSBE* (2003), 1

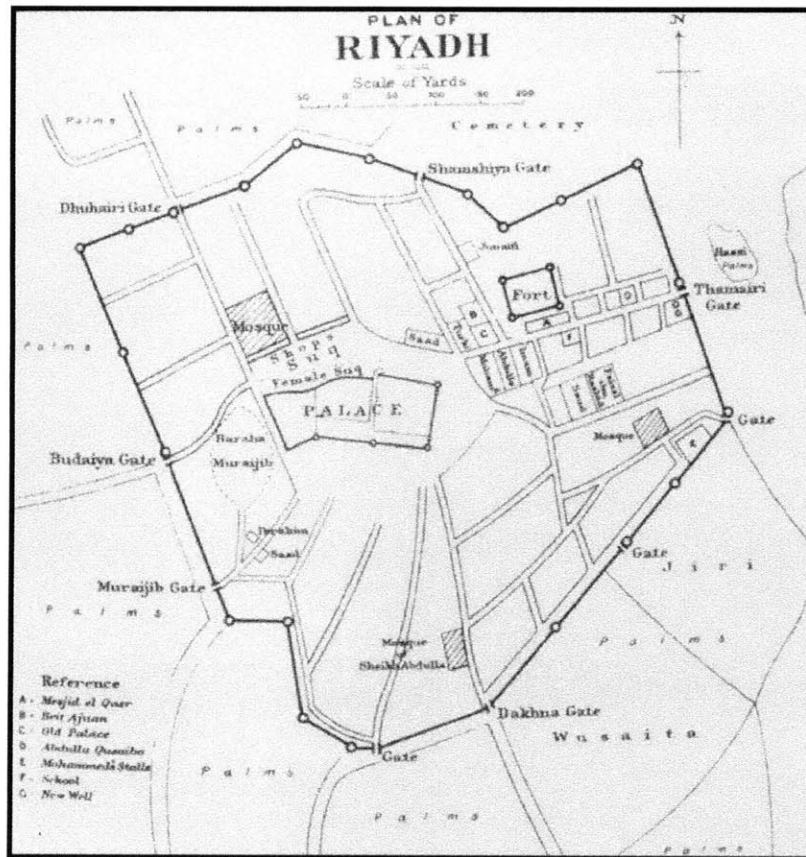


Figure 1: Philby plan of Riyadh in 1919

Development of sites outside the walled area helped Riyadh expand in different directions. Because Riyadh was bound by farms at the edge of wadi Hanifa from its west and south, the expansion was mainly towards north and east. The first direction was two kilometers north where Al-Murabba palace was built. This administration and palace complex, built in 1938, set a trend for royalty to build outside the city wall especially with the advent of cars. Further to the north Bechtel completed the first airport in 1953.<sup>7</sup>

7. William. Facey, *Riyadh : The Old City From Its Origins Until the 1950s* (London: IMMEL Publ, 1992)., 323 previous to that, a horse race track was used for landing.

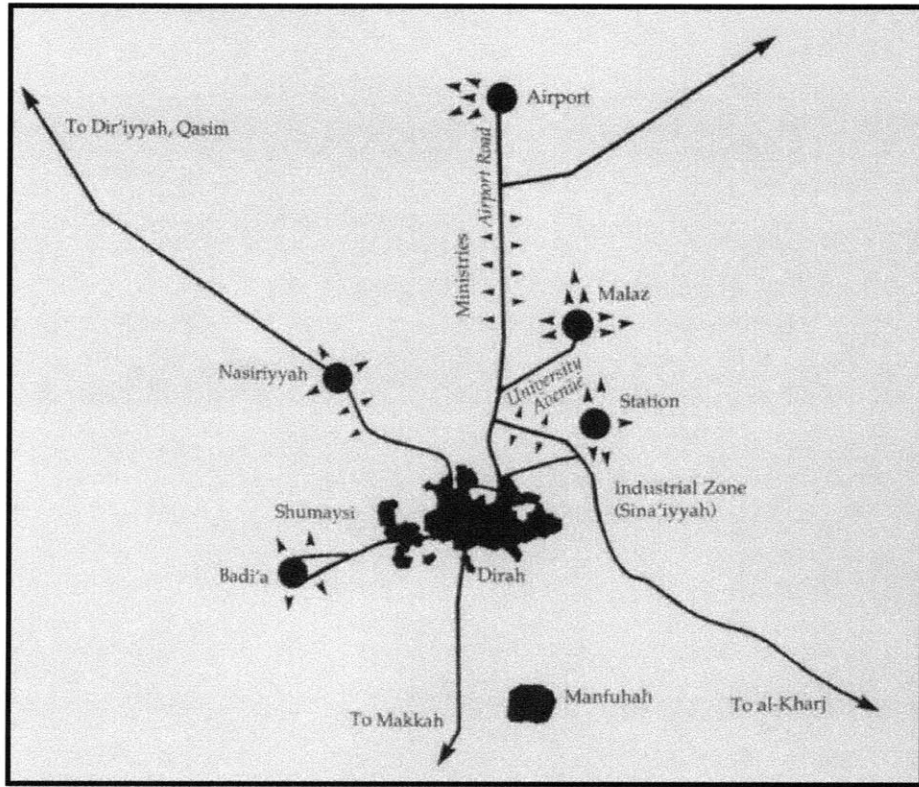


Figure 2: Growth direction in 1950s and 1960s

A minor expansion was towards northwest of the city center where farms were located. King Saud moved his residence from Almurabba to Alnaseriyah where he owned about 40 hectares (100 acres) on which a large two-story summer residence existed 3 km west of the city center. To accommodate this new use, Alnaseeriah was extended to 250 acres and the residence demolished. In its place, a complex of reinforced-concrete palaces and gardens was planned on gridiron pattern. The introduction of new and faster building materials acted as a catalyst for the construction industry.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Saleh A Al-Hathloul, *The Arab-Muslim City: Tradition, Continuity and Change in the Physical Environment* (Riyadh: Dar Al Sahan, 1996).

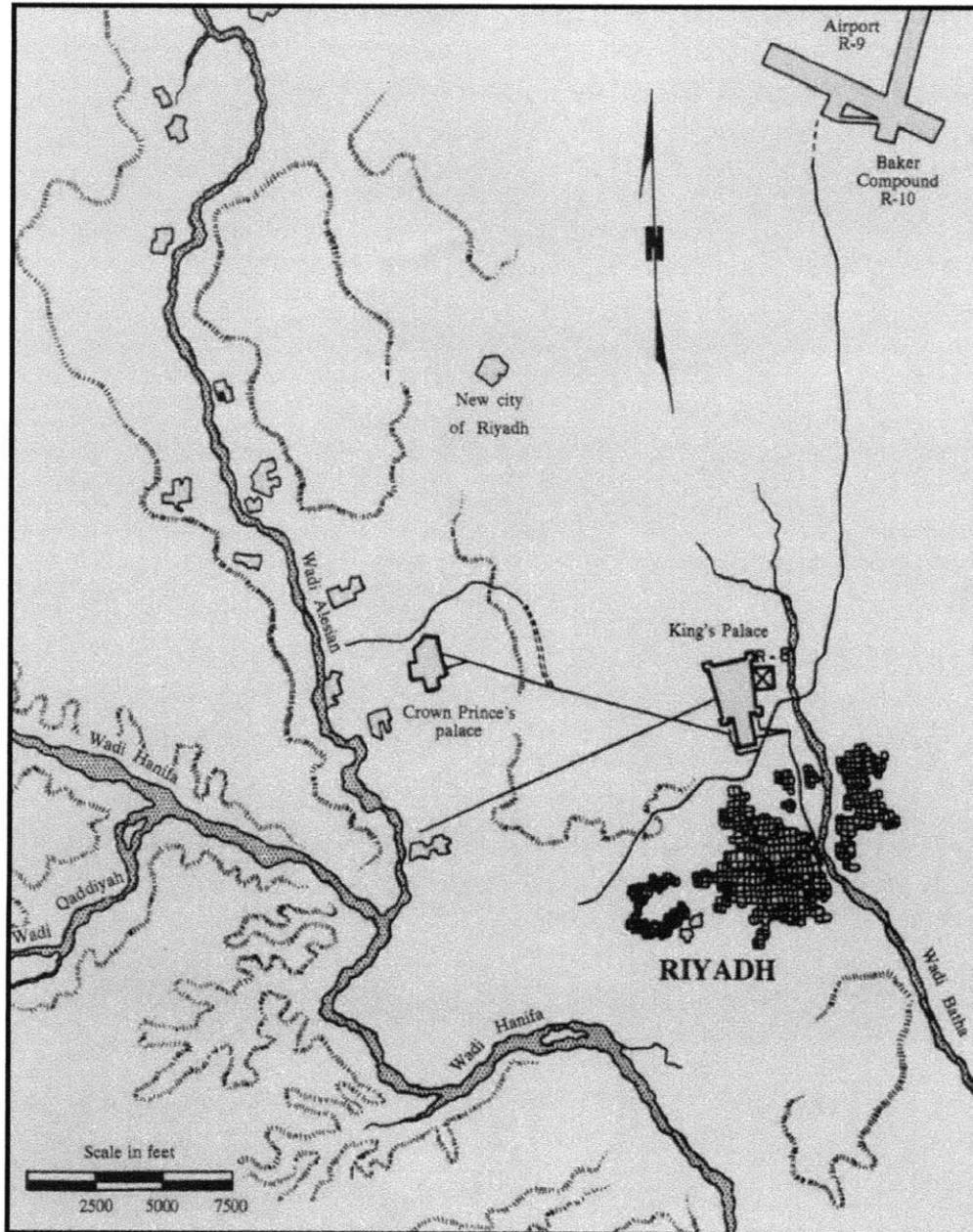


Figure 3: Location of new expansions in 1950s

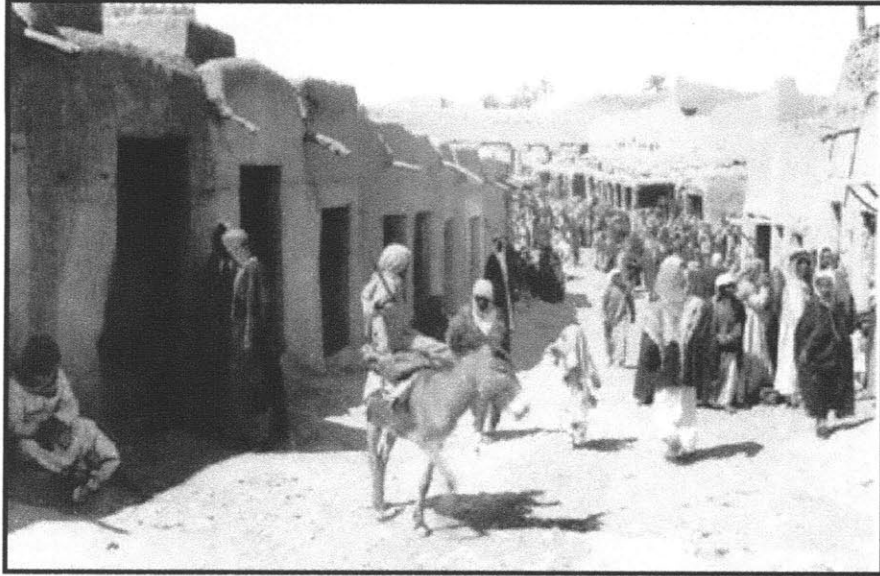


Figure 4: a picture of the clothing *Souq* in early 1950s

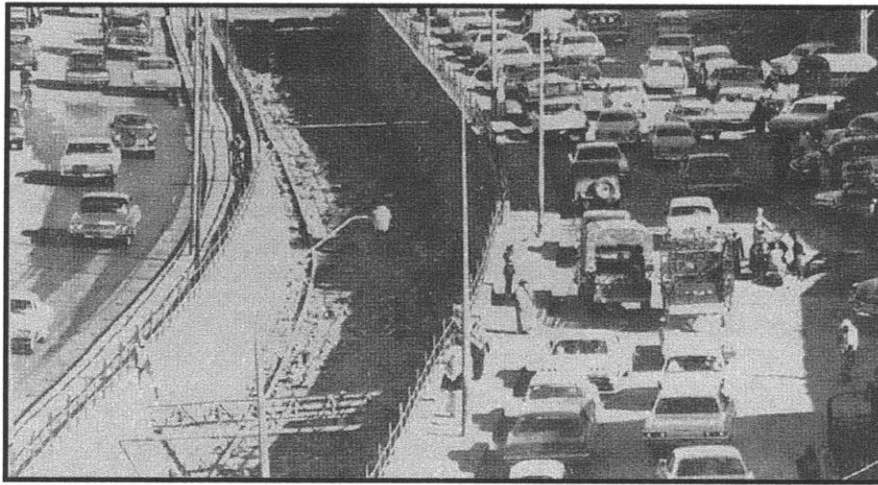


Figure 5: Street view in Riyadh in 1965

As Riyadh was assuming its political position as the capital of Saudi Arabia, its urban landscape changed as well. In 1953, King Saud ordered the ministries to move from Makkah, the old capital, to Riyadh, which placed higher demand on building construction to house these ministries and services related to them. Most of the ministries were located on the road leading to the airport (airport road) because the street was wide and away from the congestion of the city center. Concentration of ministries and government bodies in Riyadh encouraged commercial activities and the population to relocate to Riyadh, which in turn increased the construction demand even further.

This high demand on construction and infrastructure was not anticipated nor planned for by the government. Governmental and commercial activity increased and by the mid 1960s, Riyadh's population reached 300,000. Notwithstanding Riyadh Municipality existence in 1953, a state of chaos and disorganization was present in Riyadh.<sup>9</sup> The relatively few staff of the municipality and the unavailability of Saudi consultants specializing in planning did not help.<sup>10</sup> Riyadh, and the country at large, lacked a supervising governmental body and a planning policy to regulate urban activity.

In the mid 1960s, the ministry of interior, which was responsible for mayoralty, realized that a solution for these urban problems was needed and so consulted the United Nations, which in turn recommended experts in planning and development of cities. Among these was Dr. Omar Azzam who has also been working in Kuwait. Arriving in September 1960, Dr. Azzam was the General Director of Regional Planning Offices and oversaw the first efforts in planning procedures on a large scale to collect general statistics and mapping surveys for about 45 cities and towns throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> For the planning of

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9. William. Facey, *Riyadh : The Old City From Its Origins Until the 1950s*. p318

10. Abdulrahman M Al-angari, "Mantaqat Qasr Alhokm: Twentieth-Century Development," *King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives*. <http://www.darah.org.sa/bohos/Data/15/15.htm>

11. Ibid.



Riyadh, an international competition was organized to develop a master plan. Konstantinos A. Doxiadis and Associates won the competition and were assigned the project in 1968. The master plan, which considered growth until the year 2000, was submitted in 1971 and approved by the government of Saudi Arabia in 1974.

Doxiadis associates prepared a report on the existing conditions that identify Riyadh's urban problems in 1968. The report pointed out that Riyadh lacked a structure for growth and its expansion progressed in haphazard manner. This was, the report maintained, reflected in poor organization of residential areas that lacked community consideration, inadequate amenities and disintegrated road network hierarchy. Further, the report identified other problems such as airport noise, housing needs, over-concentration and congestion of uses in and around the central business district.<sup>12</sup>

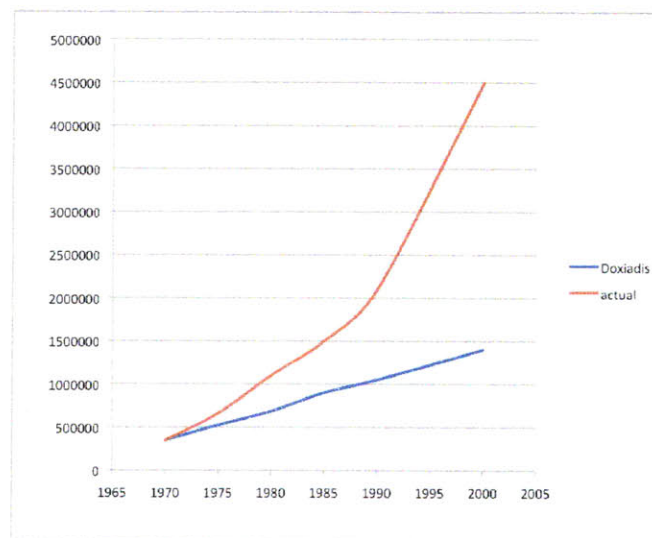


Figure 6: Doxiadis population estimates vs actual populations.

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12. *Riyadh, Existing Conditions : Final Report*, rev. ed. (Athens: Doxiadis Associates, 1970).

However, by the time the master plan was approved in 1974 the city's buildings crossed the planned urban limits. The master plan was obsolete not only due to unregulated expansion but also because of unanticipated growth in population. Later, the government realized that in order for the master plan to serve its purpose, it has to be updated to reflect actual changes. Although some of the master plan recommendations were implemented, control over land use could not be implemented for reasons such as lack of human expertise, resources, and a structural body for follow-up.

Governmental policies on housing further added to the problem of control and expansion. The Real Estate Development Fund (REDF) that started in 1975, had as its objective meeting the demand of housing in the kingdom. This was achieved by providing two types of interest free loans. One for citizens building their own housing units and the other for citizens building commercial housing. Furthermore, a 20% discount was offered to those who delivered their payment on time and another 10% for early settlement. These were for 25 years. Commercial ones had a five year period but were extended to 10 years in 1978. In addition, building materials private sector suppliers received government aid.

In addition to REDF, land policy encouraged housing with less attention to the master plan. In the absence of property taxing, or other types of land taxing, nothing stopped citizens from looking for the cheapest land, which usually laid at the outskirts of the city mostly unserviced, to build their houses with the help of these policies and the REDF. The search for cheap land meant that other serviced areas were kept unused. For citizens who could not afford a land, land grants were another policy the government used to help meet housing demands. However, even land grants were not within the master plan and were seldom serviced.

Finally, because of these conditions, the government commissioned SCET international in 1976 to revise and update the master plan that was completed in 1983. Doxiadis master plan affected the establishment of the ADA in two ways. The first, under Doxiadis's

suggestion, a governmental agency to follow up with the implementation of the master plan. Therefore, the High Commission for the Development of the city of Riyadh (HC) was established in 1974.<sup>13</sup> The second was its recommendation to develop the central business district or Justice Palace District (JPD).

The High Commission (HC) was assigned responsibilities of which are: drawing policies for the development of Riyadh, approving development plans, approving time schedules, approving programs of service, approving means of involvement of the private sector and suggesting alterations and development for the city when needed. However, the main task of the HC in reality was ensuring the prompt implementation of Doxiadis Master Plan.<sup>14</sup> A decree was issued in 1978 to reconstitute the HC to include 14 members with the governor of Riyadh as the chairman, Deputy Governor as Deputy chairman and the mayor of Riyadh as secretary general and member.<sup>15</sup> The rest of the members represented different governmental agencies. This restructuring was due to adding the responsibility of "municipal council" to the HC which was set by the establishment of Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA).<sup>16</sup>

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13. some sources mention "High Committee of the Evaluation of the Riyadh Master Plan", see Saleh alhathoul in 100 years.

14. "... Most of the issues discussed in the HC meetings were requests for exemptions from some of the regulations of the master plans. The HC lacked comprehensive development policies and experienced staff"

Zahir Othman, "The Role of Planning Authorities," in *Urban Development in Saudi Arabia : Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Saleh A Al-Hathloul, and Narayanan Edadan (Riyadh: Dar Al Sahan, 1995),. 317

15. Royal Decree no. 439

16. Ibid.

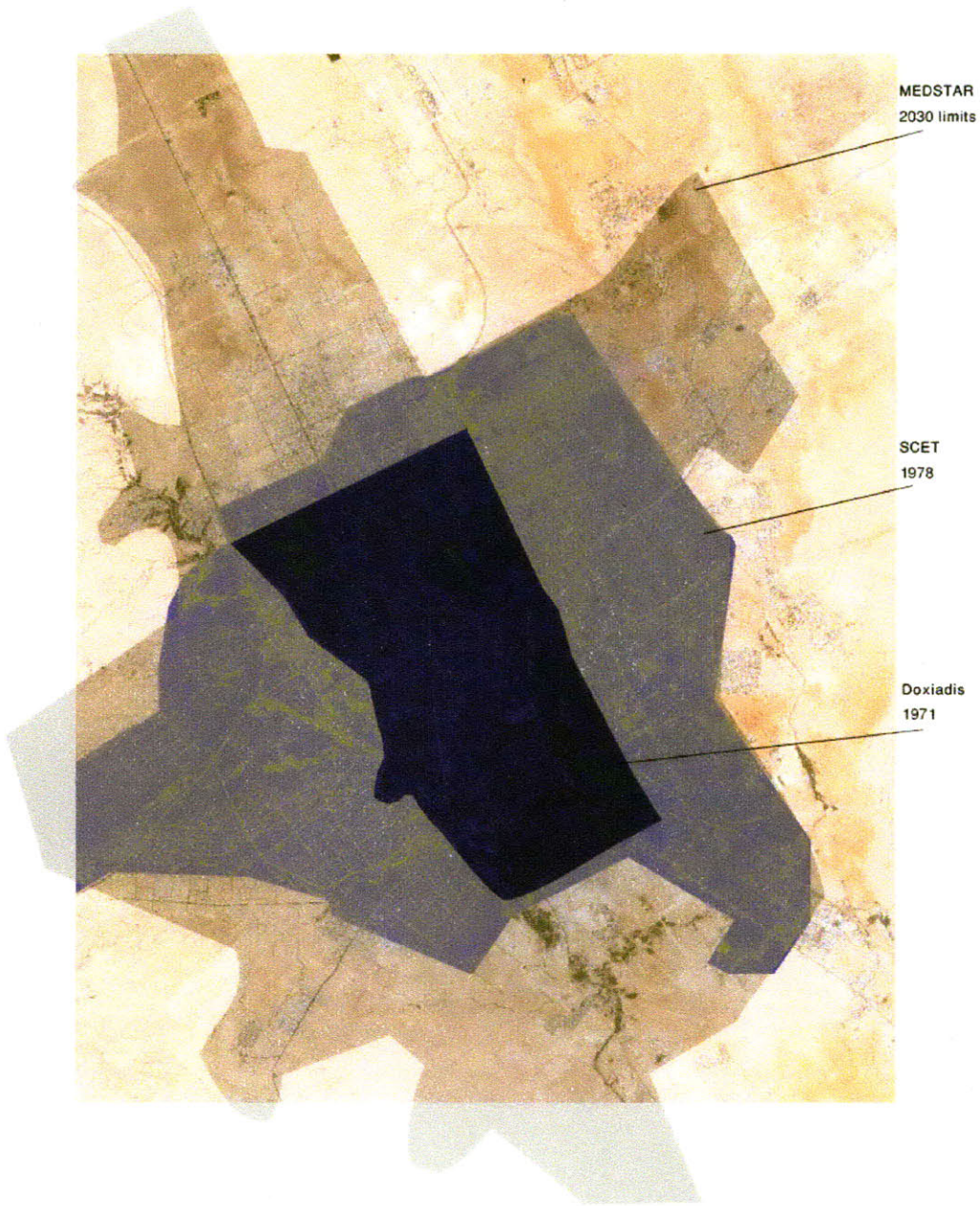


Figure 7: Doxiadis master plan, SCET update and MEDSTAR scopes

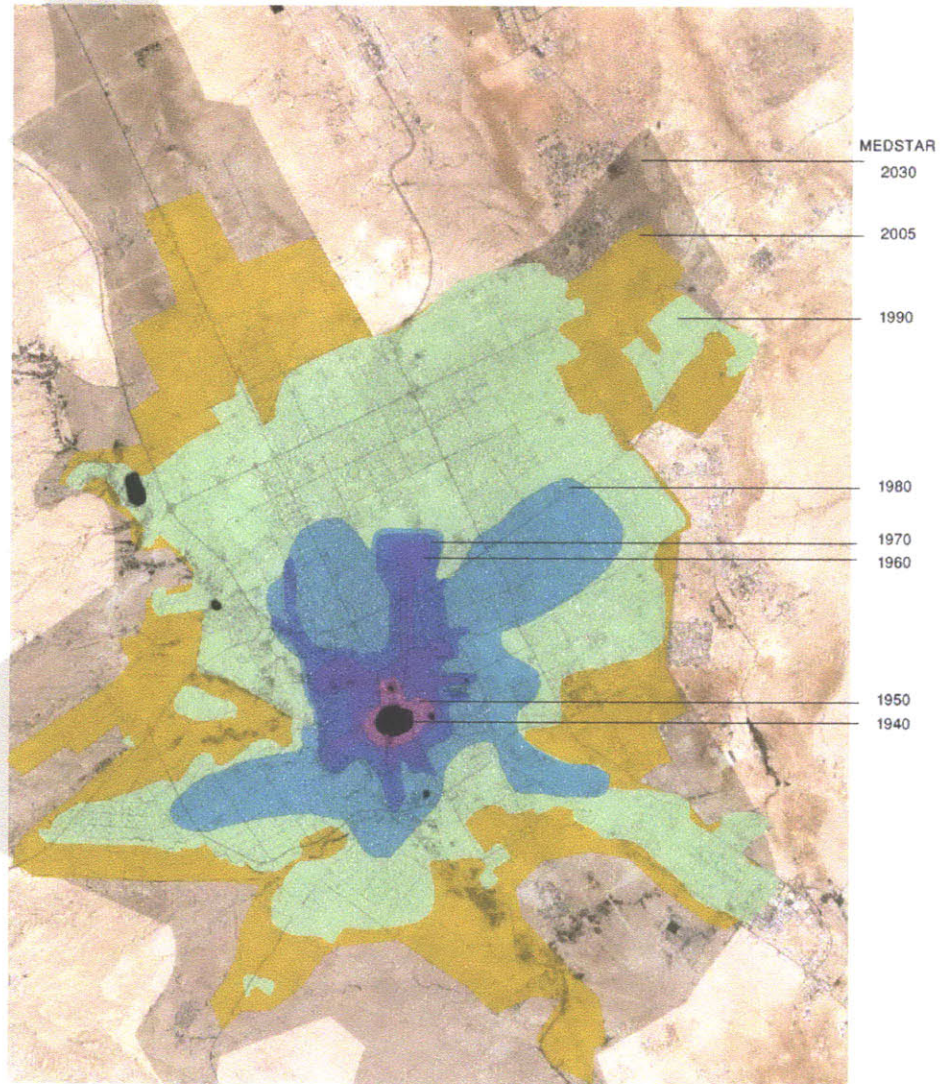


Figure 8: Riyadh urban development since 1940  
(adapted from Doxiadis report, MEDSTAR, and Aramco World illustration)

## **b. Diplomatic Quarter & Housing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees**

Around the time the HC was established in 1974, Jeddah housed the majority of embassies and consulates, a fact that made the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to also be located in Jeddah. However, to complete transferring all ministries to Riyadh, the government decided to move the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Riyadh and with it, the government asked the international missions, consulates and embassies to relocate to Riyadh. The decision came in 1975 by decree from the council of ministers. To facilitate this and due to a shortage in housing, the government sought to dedicate a site for all missions to move to. Two projects came to be as a result of this decision: a housing complex for the staff and employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh and the establishment of Diplomatic Quarter (DQ). These projects were under one committee: The Bureau for the project of the housing of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Quarter. This Bureau was under the direction of Prince Salman, the governor of Riyadh region directly. This meant that the DQ committee had enough authority to allow it to make decisions for the projects.

The housing complex covers an area of about 96 acres and designed to house a total population of 3600 people in 612 residential units. In addition to residential units, the complex features mosques, schools and other services. The location of the site was at what was then the northern outskirts of the city. The Diplomatic Quarter site was selected also at the edge of the city. Located 8 km from the Riyadh down town.<sup>17</sup> Accommodating 120 plots for international missions, it has a residential campus and related services.

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17. Clark Arthur, "Riyadh's New Dq," *Saudi Aramco World* 39, no. 5 (1988): 8-21.

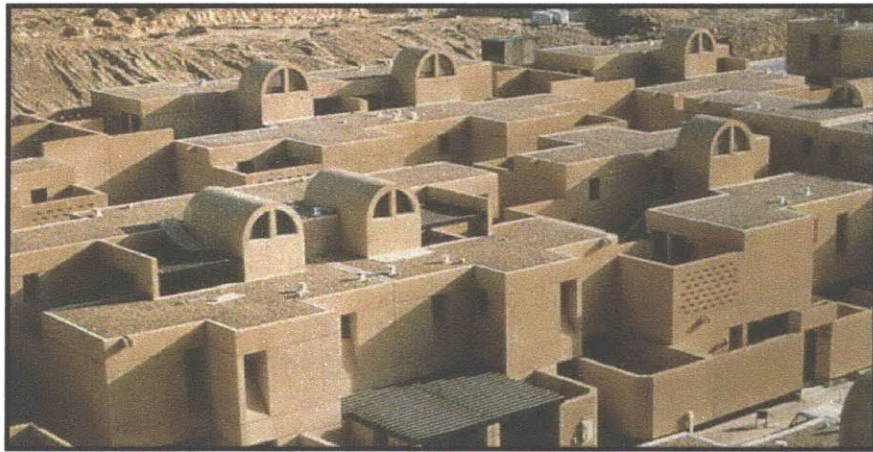


Figure 9: Housing of Ministry of Foreign Affairs employee



Figure 10: Diplomatic Quarter

Although the Bureau scope was limited to planing the site, it went beyond that in an attempt to achieve a better environment. All embassies and missions' buildings in DQ were encouraged to consider the context of Saudi Arabia, in their architecture. The objective was that it relates to the diplomatic quarters' design philosophy and the harmony and unity of the quarter. This had to be delicately, and diplomatically, handled as embassies are



usually interested in representing the culture of their countries, not their host countries.<sup>18</sup> This project is significant because it is a project that hosted award winning projects as well as it being the first project the ADA exercised its philosophy in selecting architects and design quality.

### **c. Justice Palace District**

The project of redeveloping the central historic area known as Justice Palace District (JPD) was initially under the supervision of the municipality of Riyadh. Doxiadis's master plan suggested a redevelopment of the JPD defining it as an action area. Historically, this area accommodated Almasmak, which was alongside the central mosque with other governmental buildings. Almasmak was left and the area deteriorated as the majority of the area's residence moved to newer houses. A preliminary design was proposed by Dixoiadis associates to bring up a modernized city center featuring an interaction of the historical buildings with future development. However, this suggestion ran into difficulties as it was not possible without total rebuilding, an expensive option due to the increase in land prices.

The municipality (mayoralty then) of Riyadh commissioned the Italian architect Franco Albini to design the city center. A feasibility study report was submitted to Riyadh in 1974 and by 1976 the design was submitted. The proposal acknowledges the importance of the Almasmak palace, which by then was deteriorating and suggested a restoration of Almasmak as well as the development of the area surrounding it. Albini studied the surrounding area and suggested that the development could be linked visually and functionally with traditional architectural styles. However, due to a change in administration in the

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18. Ibid.

municipality and land expropriation, only the restoration of Almasmak was approved and it was initiated in 1979. The municipality decide to hold to the other parts of the proposal until land acquisition was resolved.

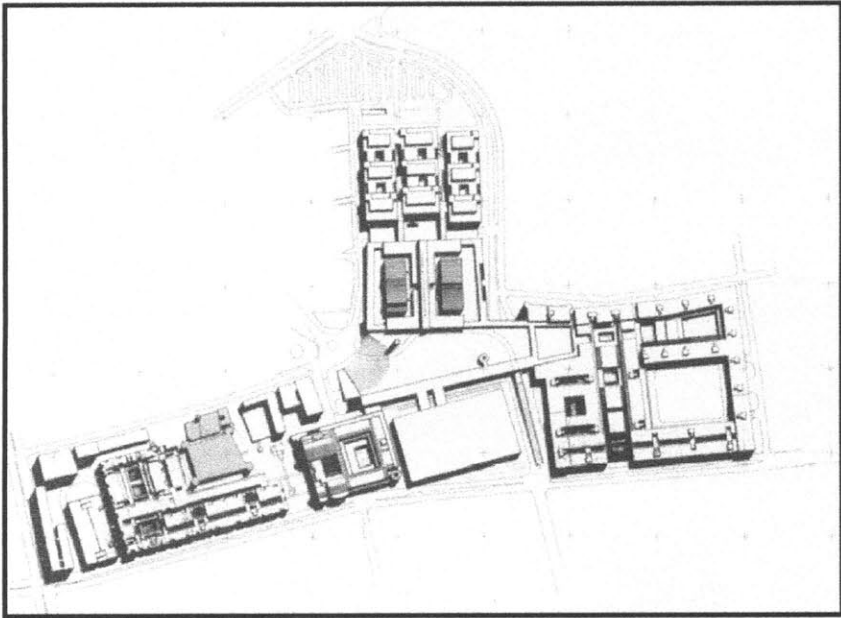
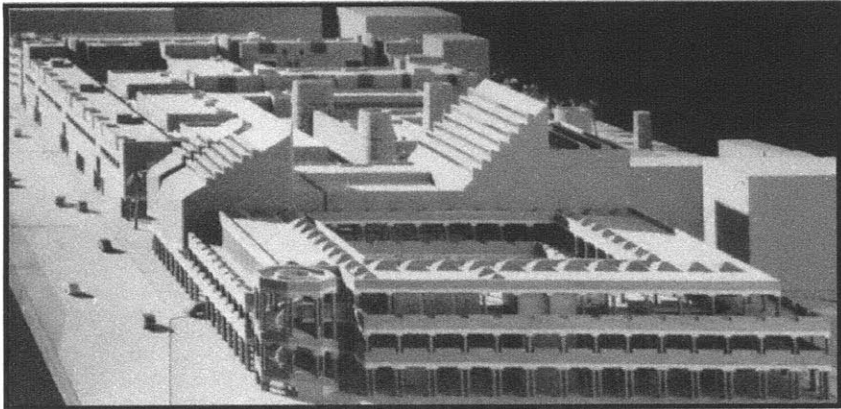


Figure 11: Albini Proposal for JPD

To expedite the process of developing the central area and due to the difficulties in land expropriation and the increasing responsibilities of the municipality, it suggested the

establishment of a committee under the HC to be responsible for the development of JPD in similar fashion to that of the DQ committee. On January 19, 1979 Riyadh High Commission established the High Executive Committee for the Development of Qasr Alhokm Area (HECDQAA).<sup>19</sup>

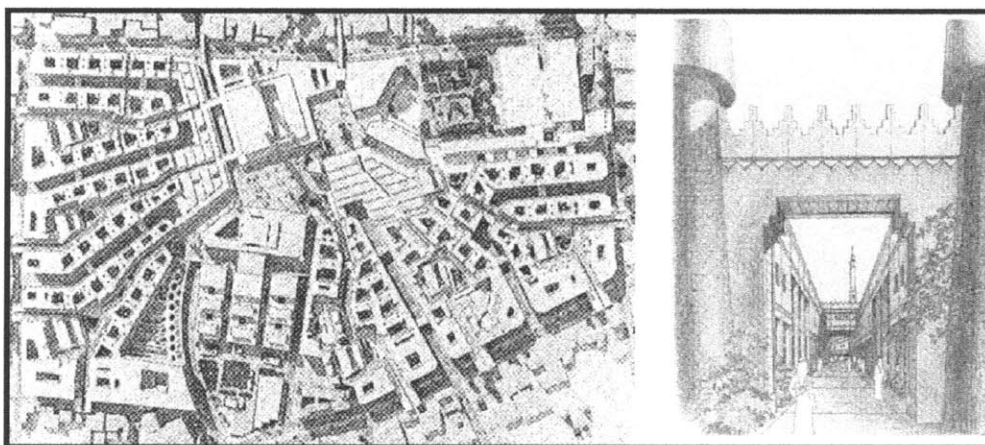


Figure 12: JPD proposal by Albeeah

The first task of this committee was to review Albini's design. Now almost six years after the feasibility study, with Riyadh exponentially expanding, the government space requirement increased. HECDQAA added, in addition to the new spacial requirements, comments, and requests for redesign and attempted to proceed with another tender. A Saudi firm Albeeah, won. Although Albeeah designed three buildings, it did not agree to the request of the committee to only change the elevation of the buildings that Albini studios designed. Finally, it was HECDQAA with the help of another Saudi firm, Saud Consult, who altered the elevations despite objection from Albini studios. The committee then

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19. Abdulrahman M Al-angari, "Mantaqat Qasr Alhokm: Twentieth-Century Development," *King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives*. <http://www.darah.org.sa/bohos/Data/15/15.htm>

initiated a series of design competitions for the various remaining parts of the development.



Figure 13: JPD as built

The design of Albeeah was very different from the modern style proposed by Albini. Although both took into account the context and history of the area, Albeeah proposed a design that was inspired by the traditional vocabulary of Riyadh's architecture. The committee saw the design as a bridge between modern architecture and the historical significance of the area being developed. The project continued even after JPD was part of ADA in 1983.

#### **d. Establishing ADA**

Since it started in 1974, the High Commission assumed more responsibilities. Its responsibilities increased in 1981 to include coordination and execution of all Riyadh infrastructure services.<sup>20</sup> To fulfill these responsibilities, the chairman of the HC recommended the establishment of a technical body linked directly under the HC to serve as an executive technical and administration office by combining the Bureau of Diplomatic Quarter and Justice Palace District committee. Its responsibilities would be to take over the work of the of DQ, JPD projects and the planning tasks of the planning department under the municipally. It would also be responsible for all major (and special) projects afterwards, which would eliminate the need for future special project committees.

The council of ministers approved this request and in 1983 the ADA was established. In addition to the responsibilities mentioned above, comprehensive planning of Riyadh and addressing critical urban issues (e.g. traffic, high water table) was also added to its responsibilities. To achieve better coordination with various governmental agencies, the Council of Ministers increased HC members from 14 to 18 in 1984.<sup>21</sup>

Since then, the ADA has successfully accomplished a number of projects in Riyadh. Building on their previous experiences, the ADA created an urban database as an aid for their future decisions and planning. Riyadh urban database consists of mapped information on economy, demography, land use, transportation and infrastructure. Being part of HC, ADA's president had the opportunity to review planned projects in Riyadh. This allowed the president to offer making studies, alternatives or suggestions on projects utilizing the technical expertise of the ADA. For example, King Fahd highway, Riyadh's north-

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20. Council of Ministers decree number 37

21. The four additional members represented the following : Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Agriculture and Water, Electric company, Ministry of Post, Telegram & Telephone

south axis was design to be an elevated street but ADA offered to conduct another study then to provide an alternative design. The implemented design was the one that ADA had suggested, except for the parts where construction had already started. As a result of the ADA's activity and the new responsibilities of HC, the perception of HC changed from a body that met in an intermittent manner to discuss approvals of special buildings' exemption to a body that has major responsibilities and is active in various decisions affecting the city of Riyadh.<sup>22</sup>

The ADA also managed a number of architectural projects. In the 1980s, Saudi Arabia witnessed several developments in the architectural field. For example, five university programs in architecture and planning were established. Graduates from these programs as well as Saudi graduates from universities in the United States and Europe were returning and started to participate in their relative fields of study. Among these were many graduates in architecture and planning. Universities conducted symposiums and seminars inviting international scholars have raised the awareness of architecture and issues of urbanism. Published in Riyadh, *Albenaa*, the first Saudi architectural journal, started in 1978 and acted as forum for academic and professionals. Internationally, the increasing interest in Arab\Islamic cities and architecture, as exemplified by the establishment of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, stirred discussions about the conditions of Saudi cities.<sup>23</sup>

These activities, in addition to the political and cultural climate, encouraged the discourse on identity, encouraged Riyadh's citizens, architectural specialist and the general public to react to the urban development of their city. The identity of the city was reshaped and expressions of alienation and cultural discontinuity were not uncommon between

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22. Zahir Othman, "The Role of Planning Authorities."

23. Khaled S Asfour, "Identity in the Arab Region," (*Architecture and Identity Research Project Sponsored by VolkswagenStiftung and Berlin University of Technology, 2004: //www.architecture-identity.de//*). (2004). p7

professionals and in the public press.<sup>24</sup> This is evident in the topics of research conducted by Saudi's such as Saleh AlHathoul "Tradition, continuity and changes in the physical environment: the Arab-Muslim city"<sup>25</sup>, Jamil Akbar "Support for court-yard houses: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia"<sup>26</sup> and "Responsibility and the traditional Muslim built Environment"<sup>27</sup> the majority of which depart from a critical analysis of the urban development in Saudi or Muslim cities that were not very different from Riyadh.

Tracing reactions in the local press reaffirms these concerns. Those reactions varied between criticism of environmental appropriateness of the modern architecture and cultural 'compatibility' with Saudi way of life. Nonetheless, a desire, and perhaps nostalgia, to secure an architectural identity was also common.<sup>28</sup> The consistent message was "... people want architecture that reflects their culture" as Ali Alshuaibi expressed in discussion of JPD architecture.<sup>29</sup>

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24. Mashary A. Al-Naim, *Al-°Im°arah Wa-Al-Thaq°afah : Dir°as°at Naqd°iyah F°i Al-°Im°arah Al-°Arab°iyah*, Kitab Alryadh 137 ed. (Riyadh: Mu°assasat Al-Yamamah Al-Sahafeeyah, 2005).

25. Saleh A Al-Hathloul, "Tradition, Continuity and Changes in the Physical Environment : The Arab-Muslim City" (Ph.D diss, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981).

26. Jamel A Akbar, "Support for Court-Yard Houses : Riyadh, Saudi Arabia" (MIT, 1980).

27. Jamel A Akbar, "Responsibility and the Traditional Muslim Built Environment" (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1984).

28. Mohammed H Al-Ibrabim, "The Criticism of Modern Architecture in Saudi Arabia," *Journal of King Saud University* 2 (1990): 63-80.

29. Ali Alshuaibi, principle of Albeeah in Saleh A Al-Hathloul, and A. Shuaibi, "The Justice Palace District, Riyadh," in *Continuity and Change: Design Strategies for Large-Scale Urban Development* (1984). p47



Figure 13: phases of JPD



Figure 14: Superimposition of old city wall on recent aerial picture.



Reception of the ADA and its projects was positive. Architectural projects in DQ and JPD with their attempts to reinterpret local architecture into modern forms has not only pleased the local community but also gained an international recognition. Indeed, it was intentional as AlBeeah principle, Ali Alshuabi, spoke about the development of DQ Alkindi Plaza and the surrounding buildings "*will have a good chance of succeeding because they will have a character that will distinguish them from the buildings of other regions and allow all who come to the area to know where they are*".<sup>30</sup> Indeed, once the DQ was eligible, it won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.<sup>31</sup> The consecutive cycles gave another prize to JPD. In fact, the ADA is the only institution that won a total of four awards from the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

The positive reception, as outlined above, is shared by many parities participating with ADA in their projects: architects, contractors, consultants, advisors and ADA staff. The formation of ADA, that was outlined in this chapter, has a direct relationship to the values it holds in executing projects and thus on its ability to secure excellent and successful projects. From what has been discussed above, it is shown that ADA attained architectural distinction. In the next chapter, this study will address how architectural distinction is understood.

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30. *ibid* p47

31. Eligibility criteria for AKAA states that the project has to be completed and in use for one year.

## II. Architectural Distinction

There is an evident interest from the various parties engaged in the construction industry to attain knowledge in what makes good architecture. This is not surprising as all parties are trying to be successful in their profession. Participants are not limited to clients, contractors and architects, but rather extend to all 'consumers' of architectural services such as corporations, city planner, cultural institutions and political and cultural institutions. There are two questions that can be stated framing our exploration of the subject: What values are employed in determining 'good' architecture? and What are the processes and best practices that help in attaining good architecture?

### a. Value

In some fields there exists adjectives, which are expressive in relation to the purpose of their fields such as 'efficient' for engineering and 'healthy' for medical practice, which in turn highlight the fields' core values. Perhaps no better expression exist that can capture the comprehensive aspect of architecture like 'good' does for architecture. The value of goodness reflect the interdisciplinary nature aspect of the field, as it can be applied to different stages starting with design, building maintenance and operation or project management that is relative to all building stages. Moreover, because it is an expression of value it highlights aspects of value judgment, in that the sum of the values of the various stages may be different than that of the whole.

## **i. Architectural Management**

Management in the architectural field is a relatively new one. The reluctance of introducing management in architectural practice, at least from the perspective of the architect, is due to the conflict between the image of the architect as an artist and that of the manager as a business man.<sup>32</sup> Management thinking extended to aspects of design and construction only in the second half of the 20th century. Central to the discipline of Architectural Management is how to achieve good architecture on a constant bases. Architectural Management has a larger scope than that of construction management in that it attempts to take into consideration the scientific aspects (or hard qualities) as well as the artistic ones (soft qualities). In identifying 'better' architecture, literature in architectural management describe good architecture as 'quality architecture'.<sup>33</sup>

However, The term 'quality' recalls a body of production-based services that makes 'Architectural Quality' related to QM (or TQM, Total Quality Management) a technical term used in fields of management. TQM, born out of manufacturing and services industry, did not find similar success in design practice as witnessed by firms in the 1980s. The concept of quality management is focused on efficiency and the minimizing of errors in production, a concept more suited to construction management or firm management rather than cultural production.<sup>34</sup>

When architects discuss 'architectural quality', confusion on perception of the meaning of quality in architecture persist. For example, in the AIA '*Architect's handbook of professional practice*', one author explains quality in architecture in terms of consistency

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32. Matthijs Prins, "Architectural Value," in *Architectural Management*, ed. Stephen Emmitt et al. (Chichester, U.K. ; Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

33. Ibid.;

34. James R. Franklin, *Architect's Professional Practice Manual* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000). p3.15 also see Charles Nelson, *Managing Quality in Architecture : A Handbook for Creators of the Built Environment.*, 6

while another employs a management approach to focus on "budget management, value analysis, controlling, substitutions, submittal review, controlling construction nonconformity, and design compromise".<sup>35</sup>

As Architecture is understood as a cultural product, it cannot be taken from its cultural, historical, and social context. Therefore, an understanding of architectural value must take into account creative and subjective aspects.<sup>36</sup> Although there have been notable advances in Architectural Management in addressing value of design, some architects refuse the notion all together arguing that, the tools of management are not able to capture 'design'. In an attempt to emphasize the design and creative aspects of architecture 'Design Quality' is sometimes used.

## **ii. Design Excellence**

The investigation of what makes good architecture is not foreign to architects. In 1989, the president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) asked "what precisely, makes a building or place excellent, and on whose terms?" "Why are certain architects and firms able to accomplish it all, both excellence in design and excellence in practice". Addressing these questions, AIA introduced '*1989 Design Practice for the 90s Program*' which was a collection of roundtable discussions, workshops, panel discussions and conferences that gathered hundreds of leading architects (all among AIA Award winners) as well as a panel of advisors consisting of academics, sociologists, consultants, practitioners and a lawyer. Part of the program was published in a book titled '*In Search of Design Excellence*' which is widely cited in today's design excellence literature. Key findings were a preliminary definition of what Design Excellence is and what helps a design be 'excellent'. For

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35. Ibid., 6

36. Matthijs Prins, "Architectural Value.", 6

example, an "excellent client" is an essential ingredient in producing excellent architecture.<sup>37</sup>

Design excellence, that makes good architecture, was defined to be the "*perceived quality of the experiences a building or place provides for at least three groups*". These are the **profession**, **participants** and the **public**. The First group, profession, is understood as the recognition of the field, through its institutions and/or authorities, design awards, publication, review or merits. The second group, participants in design or construction such as clients, architects, consultants, and contractors express its perceived experience through pride (of users or client) or satisfaction. The third group is the public such as tenants, users, community groups and city council which express quality in terms of approval, support and use.

The AIA initiative acknowledged the complexity and difficulty to prescribe a list of 'ingredients' for design excellence, for these cannot be "bottled and sold" as the AIA president, Benjamin Brewer, stated. Some members stated that "we all know great design when we experience it, yet we can't describe, much less prescribe, exactly what makes it great."<sup>38</sup> However, from the proposed definition, design excellence is understood as a 'perception' of (positive) experiences that a building provides to both the senses and intellect of the three groups' judgment. It also follows that good architecture is project based as participants maintained "there are only excellent projects."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, some architects argued

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37. *In Search of Design Excellence*, vol. A Vision 2000 publication ; v. 1, no. 1 (Washington [sic] DC (1735 New York Ave., NW, Washington 20006): American Institute of Architects, 1989), x

38. Bill Caudill as cited in James R. Franklin, *Architect's Professional Practice Manual*, 3.66

39. Dana Cuff, *Architecture : The Story of Practice*, 1st MIT paperback ed ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992).

that every project is unique; that a 'generalized' list cannot address what constitute a project's success.<sup>40</sup>

In this respect design excellence as it was studied is problematic in several ways. First, because it is based on 'experience', it accounts for buildings that are already built and does not account for competitions or design schemes. Indeed, as one of the important points listed was that "design excellence requires tenure ... It can be verified only over time". Secondly, the judging criteria, for all three groups, are not clear. the Public group may support or approve a design based on reasons other than design. An example of this would be tenants approving lower quality project because it wont add extra fees to their rent. Finally, although design excellence, or what makes good architecture, is project based, the investigation of design excellence has come only after identifying good 'architects'.<sup>41</sup>

The challenging aspect of the two approaches discussed above, architecture management and design excellence, is investigating aesthetics or therefore the lack of. Architectural management approach mostly relies on Vitruvian triad and attempts to model and quantify construction (firmitas) and functional (utilitas) criteria for 'good design'. If we would accept the binary notion of seeing architecture as science vs. art, criteria defining 'good' art received little attention. Considering aesthetics in design was challenging not only because it is unquantifiable but judgment regarding taste and aesthetics is in itself a complex matter as witnessed in the field of fine art.

Theories of architecture establish values for defining architecture. In classicism, for example, the purpose of Vitruvius 'De Architectura' is to provide guidelines of the "princi-

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40. Ibid. 196

41. *In Search of Design Excellence.*, 4

The difinition is problematic to say the least. it is not clear what makes these groups. Also what is project limitation, where does a project start or ends.

ples of the art" for Caesar (as well as the readers) to "enable you, by observing them, to have personal knowledge of the quality of both of existing buildings and of those which are yet to be constructed."<sup>42</sup> The Vitruvian tirade (Firmness/structure, Commodity/function, Delight/aesthetics) in this case, states design criteria of architectural quality. Indeed, it is possible to see the history of architectural theories as successive propositions of what constitutes 'good' design. However, our understanding of aesthetics is the most contested criteria of 'good architecture' and what defines architecture as an art. Despite the origins of architectural theories that had a social and cultural agenda, i.e. 'modern architecture, aesthetics became the determining value and the modern movement was eventually conceived as the international 'style'.<sup>43</sup>

## **b. Success**

The proposition that what is today conceived of as 'good architecture' focuses primarily on aspect of aesthetics and totally ignores the aspect of construction, building materials, technology, or sustainability in architecture, would not be a valid one. However, it is clear that priorities exist and that at least contemporary architecture artistic's aspects and 'supposed' cultural meaning are sometimes isolated and elevated over other values.<sup>44</sup> For example, in architectural academia and practice, creativity and artistic qualities for employees as well as for firms rank highest in value.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Pollio Vitruvius, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture.*, 4

43. Garry Stevens, *The Favored Circle : The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).

44. Edward Winters, *Aesthetics and Architecture*, vol. Continuum aesthetics (London: Continuum, 2007).

45. Dana Cuff, *Architecture : The Story of Practice.*

How can success be defined in terms of architectural project or an architectural firm. Beyond understanding 'success' in terms of economic and financial gain, success essentially is satisfaction of criteria. The Oxford dictionary defines 'success' as “the accomplishment of an aim or purpose”. Architecture by its nature is a multidisciplinary field and questioning its aim would address the very essence of what makes 'Architecture': how can success be defined in architecture, what aim or purpose does this mode of cultural production -architecture- serve and who is to judge its quality. The concept of success is used here to emphasize the ever-changing nature of the purpose of a project and to reflect the social nature, in terms of participation and evaluation of the field at large.

Even if we would address success of a firm by prevailing strong in a competitive market, the criteria and objectives change over time. As noted by Judith Blau in her study, the surviving architectural firms in the US before the economic crisis in Manhattan were different than those after.<sup>46</sup> The definition and requirements of success changed.

How can success be accounted for and how can it be maintained? Indicators of success are many such as award winning, publication, reviews, user occupancy and energy consumption. Although values are established and they reflect judgment of a project, these indicators appear disconnected. How do these aspects of a building interact to construct 'success' of a project? If a methodology exists to analyze the mechanics of creating a distinct project, would it help in maintaining that distinction?

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46. Judith R. Blau, *Architects and Firms : A Sociological Perspective on Architectural Practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984).



### **i. Cultural Capital as Value**

I am proposing the use of the concept of cultural or symbolic capital as a method of understanding architectural value. Two of Bourdieu 'thinking tools' are relevant here: Capital and Field. The concept of cultural capital was developed by Pierre Bourdieu in the early 1960s. Bourdieu identified four types of **capital**. The first, economic capital, which is formed by economic value of assets one owns. The second is social capital, which is available through relationships, group membership or network connections. The third is cultural capital, which is based on being 'cultured' such as knowledge, experience or other forms of competence. Finally, Bourdieu identifies Symbolic capital as resources based on honor, prestige and recognition.

These modes of capital resources are available for agents are positioned in a **field**. Bourdieu defines field to be "synchronically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants... a state of the power relations among the agents or institutions."<sup>47</sup> Fields are a network of posts held in a structured objective manner. These posts are filled with agents with people operating in the field. Agents are located in these posts depending on their capital.

Capital, which by definition is a scarce commodity, is the medium through which the processes of the field operates. Cultural and symbolic capitals gain value through a process of recognition.<sup>48</sup> Symbolic and cultural capitals are non-arbitrary commodities, that is to say cultural capital of being an artist is different than the capital of being gallery curator. However, capital has value only within a field. For example, the above-mentioned capital has less, if any, in the field of science. Cultural capital can also exist in three forms: 'em-

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47. Cited in Michael Grenfell, and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules : Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts*, English ed. ed. (New York, NY: Berg, 2007). p29

48. Ibid. 30

bodied' by a state of 'being' competent such as being fluent in languages. Institutionalize cultural capital is exemplified by a university degree or certification as in the case of a certified architect. Pertinent to this study, is the objectified cultural capital. Painting, operas or architecture are of this category. The value of objectified cultural capital stems from the relative cultural capital required to be able to consume it.

Cultural capital is not only influenced by recognition, it is also influenced by revaluation or devaluation of the field through a change in what is conceived to be 'good'. A historical example of similar change would be new expressions, in art and architecture, after 1930s.

Society is seen here as a collection of field with the power at the top of the hierarchy. Not only agents within fields have conflicts and competition, but also fields compete to gain power. Every field has its own internal logic that work to preserve its autonomy. Bourdieu theory is different from structuralists (i.e. Lévi-Strauss) in that agents within a field redefine the structure of the field.

Looking at architecture from this point of view, successful architecture is that which gained symbolic and cultural capitals. Because these capitals are only gained by recognition, it becomes clear that building in high circulation (i.e. publication, iconic) are considered to be the most successful.

## **ii. Aesthetics**

It is important to understand Bourdieu's critical position on aesthetics to understand the sociological approach. Bourdieu's position on aesthetics cannot be seen in isolation to Kant's theory of aesthetics. The pure gaze, disinterestedness that is central in Kant's judgment of aesthetics is the very aspect that Bourdieu critiques.

Bourdieu argues that Kant's theory has to be contextualized. In a paper titled "Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic", Bourdieu rhetorically questions the difference between art and ordinary object, presenting that 'art objects exist in an art world' as an acceptable answer.<sup>49</sup> However, he immediately asks what is the difference between a philosophical discourse and an ordinary one, arguing that if a work of art is accepted in the history of an artistic institution, a philosophical disposition should be found in the history of a philosophical institution.

He maintains that the very act of 'disinterestedness' or gaze is a historical product resulting from conditions of the art world, at a particular time. The very act of separateness, pure gaze, is a competence or a capacity that is not available to everyone and therefore is of high value. The disinterestedness becomes an act of distinction and a claim and legitimization of justified dominance by a social fraction. The field of art becomes a battlefield where social stratifications (or classes) struggle. The judgment of aesthetics, for Bourdieu, cannot be taken away from its social context.<sup>50</sup>

### c. Social Process

Cultural capital understood as a resource for agents in social network is hardly a new concept in architecture. Vitruvius, for example, praised Augustus in that the emperor's buildings had their own 'auctoritas'. Understood to mean 'influence' or prestige, the concept of *auctoritas* ensured remembrance by posterity. In fact, Vitruvius' treaties can be seen as an attempt of Vitruvius to gain his *auctoritas* as well as to lay the foundation for archi-

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49. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 201-10.

50. Michael Grenfell, and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules : Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts*.

pects to do that. He instructs the architect to be educated and that, regardless of competence, no architect would claim their *auctoritas*.<sup>51</sup>

Similar to *auctoritas*, Alberti reflect on the concept of *virtu*, his advice of seeking patrons of the highest quality and rank in particular those who love the arts. In similar fashion, he thinks that lesser patrons detracts from the architects' *virtu*, "Why should I offer those inventions which have cost me so much study and pains to ... persons of no taste or skill?" .. " work loses its dignity by being done for mean persons"

These two historical references present us with cultural capital in the works. Architects seek clients with higher capital (economic as well as symbolic and cultural capital), and consequently the architects gain cultural capital. However, as noted by Bourdieu, agents are in constant conflict and competition and therefore for the patron to select an architect, values of what constitute 'good architecture' are used.

I used success to denote a project or a firm that maintains or increase its cultural capital. Although the individual opinion of what is 'good architecture', the collective 'Good architecture' is culturally constructed through aesthetic values and priorities of values. It is well known that merits (awards, prizes publications..etc) can be an indication of what is taken to be good architecture. However, Bourdieu's theory allows us the ability to examine how capital is gained through other 'actors' in the field and that cultural capital is subjected to monopolization.

In an interview in 2004, the world renowned architect, Peter Eisenman, acknowledged this difference between the two different modes of good architecture and competition for

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51. Diane Favro, "Was Man the Measure?," in *Architects' People*, ed. Russell. Ellis, and Dana Cuff (New York: Oxford university press, 1989). p 19

cultural capital: "[clients] want the stars, they do not want good architecture, they want good stars, and the media have done this."<sup>52</sup>

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52. Peter Eisenman. Interview by Chiara Visentin. Floornature. (architects interviews)  
[http://www.floornature.com/architetto\\_intervista.php?id=31&sez=5](http://www.floornature.com/architetto_intervista.php?id=31&sez=5)

### **III. ADA & Architectural Development**

ADA receives assignments for projects from ministries, associations, or other government agencies that plan to commission an architectural project in Riyadh. Usually, these requests reach ADA through the board of HC, which then in turn forwards them to ADA for a study. Other times, as a result of a study ADA has conducted, ADA suggests a project and so a proposal is submitted to HC for approval.

The first step for ADA, after an initial approval, is to prepare a Term of Reference (TOR) for architects. This is a document of all information and requirements the architects would need to evaluate the project. It consists of spacial and functional programs, site and site conditions, and relative regulations and requirements of the client. The architectural team puts an extra effort in preparing this document, as they believe it is the foundation of a quality project.

Depending on the project and whether or not an architectural competition is possible, ADA would compile a list of about 20 architectural firms to be further studied internally in an effort to narrow them down to five. The team that deliberates these candidates consists of ADA's architects, hired advisors, and a representative of the client. After an initial contact with architectural firms and confirming their interest in participating in an architectural competition, ADA takes the responsibility of organizing and administrating the process as well as coordination (and selection) of the jury panel. Once the competition has been juried, three finalist are announced, typically, two of the finalists receive a prize and one is awarded the project. ADA negotiates the project with the first place winner, if no agreement is reached, ADA moves to the second place winner and a prize is awarded to

the first place candidate. The same is with the third place candidate if no agreement is reached. All three winners receive their prizes but only one is award the project. This process helps ADA control the quality and 'chemistry' of those invited and the possible winner. It also allows ADA to be presented with alternative designs.

All throughout the design phase, ADA acts as a mediator between client (i.e. government agency) and the appointed design firm. The ADA draws from its previous projects, urban studies, demographic, traffic studies, and its vision for the city master plan, to supplement the design team with required or additional data in an effort to enhance the quality of design as well as reducing effort and costs. Although planning efforts of ADA are not as visible as their architectural projects, data and information from studies conducted by the ADA are plugged-into architectural projects design yielding a better integration with the overall city urban structure. This is evident in particular in projects that demand high coordination with other government sectors (i.e. social services, security, infrastructures..etc.)<sup>53</sup>

### **a. Successful Projects**

To be able to determine the success of ADA projects, one has to find out how a building or a design is perceived by the three groups outlined above. However, this task faces a number of challenges. Projects vary in their scope and purpose and so the reaction of the three evaluating groups are not uniform. Public projects like Salam Park for example, pertain to the public more than a project like GCC building, which relates mostly to VIPs and

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53. Al-Hazani, Khalid. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 2.

dignitaries. Generally speaking, participants and people's evaluation can be seen in repetition and use of spaces as well as public press and retail price.

Professional architectural publications in Saudi Arabia are limited, as only two journals are published and valued by professionals and architects. *Albenaa* periodical published its first issue in 1978 from Riyadh and continue till today. However, it has not evolved to be a discussion forum for architects. The other is *Alem Albenaa* published in Egypt, which is much more established but covers all Arab countries. Scholarly publication, such as displayed by *King Saud University Journal* rarely addresses contemporary architecture. As for architectural competitions, there was only one architectural competition, King Fahd Award for Architecture, in Saudi Arabia and it was international in its scope. Unfortunately this competition did not run for another cycle.

### **i. DQ and JPD**

These two mega projects are special in that they were started before the ADA was formally conceived and they also form the basis of the ADA's experience. Because of their quality, DQ and JPD set high expectation for succeeding projects. Both projects have significant symbolic value because DQ is the political campus of the international missions and JPD is the historic center of the capital and.

Professional reception of JPD has been positive as a number of its sub-projects were nominated for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Locally, architects and critics welcomed the reinterpretation of historical and regional architecture because the projects were built at a time discussion of what was named 'neo-traditional' architecture was at the forefront.



The 1980s saw the return of the first group of Saudi architects and scholars from universities who were mainly earned their degree in Europe and The United States. They saw that 'good architecture' is that which responds critically to regional architecture, a perspective that bears resemblance to critical regionalism. Indeed, some scholars see that a major catalyst in this was the architectural program at MIT and the Aga Khan program (including its award) from which graduated key players in Saudi architectural scene graduated. Scholars such as Jamil Akbar, Saleh Alhathloul and Farahat Tashkandi to name few.<sup>54</sup> The 1980s also witnessed a surge in the search of Arab 'identity' induced by cultural and political events.<sup>55</sup>

JPD and DQ also gained symbolic and cultural capital because they embody a successful attempt of prevailing ideas that wanted a reinterpretation of historical forms and to reaffirm a sense identity. This understanding was reaffirmed as JPD won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA). The reception of DQ to the profession was also positive. With it winning an award from the AKAA for its landscaping and Alkindi plaza by Albeeah group in 1989, and a third award for Tuwaiq Palace in 1998 by Atelie Otpp, Buro happold and Omrania architects.

The public identified with this change in architectural style. The change in architectural style was very much welcomed by a public who started to exhibit nostalgia and, by then, tasted the implications of urbanism. DQ park successful attracted citizens of Riyadh. JDP land value and retail flourished as people were drawn to its plaza and pedestrian streets. Elements that were not developed in Riyadh before that.

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54. Alnaem, Mashari. Interview by author. Dammam, Saudi Arabia. January 8.

55. Mashary A. Al-Naim, *Political Influences and Paradigm Shifts in the Contemporary Arab Cities : Questioning the Identity of Urban Form*, vol. Crissma working paper ; n. 7 (Milano: C.Ri.S.S.M.A. Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2005). p70

Another remarkable feature about these two projects is the fact that they were maintained by ADA (in an attempt to insure quality) in addition to their expansion. JPD is in its third, last, and largest phase, which will add additional buildings into the area. DQ is still accommodating additions which are not limited to diplomatic missions but include non-profit organizations, housing, public spaces and cultural institutions.

## **ii. Supreme Court**

Although this project has not won any design prizes, it was designed by Rasim Badran, a well known architect in Arab countries. Its significance stems from its design which broke with the norm of government buildings, especially those concerned with security. This was not only by eliminating the need for a property wall but opening the premise to be used publicly. For people, this project offered them a landscaped plaza in the middle of downtown.



Figure 15: Supreme court

The challenge of the project comes from the fact that it is a court building for the Ministry of Justice. The ministry envisioned a walled site with heavy security and observation towers. ADA managed to not only convince them that their needs can be met without resorting to that 'vision', but also ADA went beyond the site to eliminate a street and join two sites together.

The project, succeeded in exceeding the expectations of even the parties that participated in the design of the project. Very few believed, given the conservatism of the ministry of justice, that it would agree on the proposal. Furthermore, even fewer expected that interfering with, demanding site changes and of streets would be met positively.<sup>56</sup>

### **iii. Environmental Projects**

The flagship project of ADA environmental projects is Wadi Hanifa. Located to the west of the city along Najd plateau, the wadi was used for many quarrying and industrial activities by the early 1980s. As the conditions of the wadi deteriorated, which was an important source of water for the region, Riyadh dependence increased on desalinated water transported from coasts and the wadi turned into illegal industrial, clinical and local waste dump site. ADA turned the wadi into a park, by stopping quarrying and industrial activities then cleaning the dumps.

The wadi then was designed to as natural retirement plant for water poured from the city by introducing bioremediation plant. Landscaping and designing the wadi as a park changed the perception of the wadi from dumping site to highly desirable park attracting Riyadh residences. This project appealed to users, professionals and participants in design.

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56. Al-Hazani, Khalid. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 2.

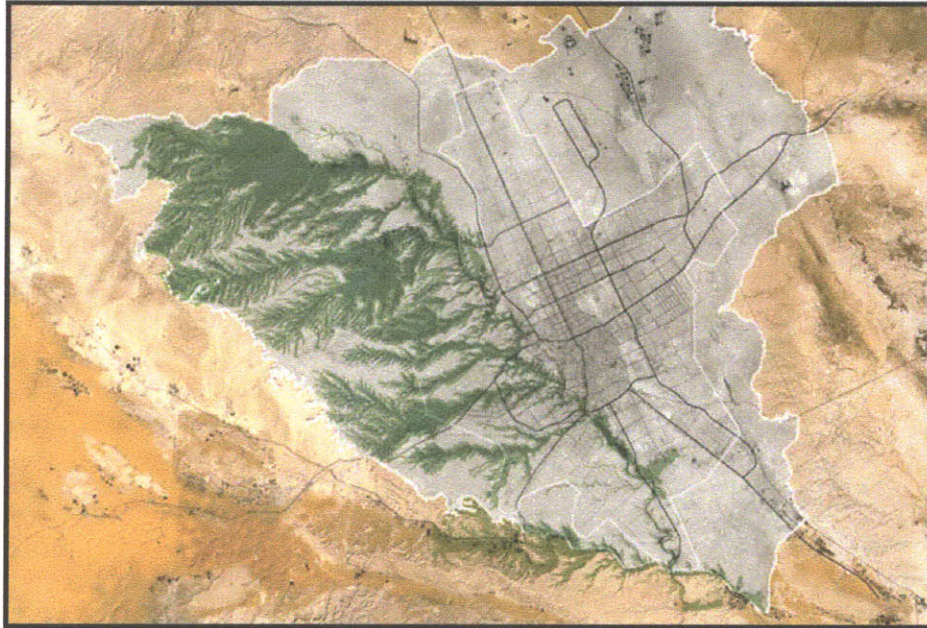


Figure 16: Wadi Hanifa in relation to riyadh (top), view of development (bottom)

## b. Success Renewed

Creativity is among the most valued traits in the architecture profession. Quite often, architects see code, regulations, and even clients and their 'functional' needs as obstacles in attaining a 'high-brew' architecture, to use Bourdieu term. The focus, of administrating the process of realizing a project would even shift to getting the client on board with the design. How was this possible in the case of the ADA? What process and values did ADA adopt for its project that help it succeed?

According to literature on administration theory, firms can succeed by having a strong idea, service or delivery.<sup>57</sup> 'in search of design excellence' highlighted that a 'good' is an integral factor to achieve an excellent project.

In *Architecture : the story of practice*, Dana Cuff's study of architectural profession list seven 'dialectics' that characterize excellent or successful projects. These are: quality demands, simplicity within complexity, stereovision, open boundaries, flexibility with integrity, teamwork with independence, and exceeding the limits.<sup>58</sup> In that study, Cuff adapted the definition of excellence in architecture from AIA's program mentioned earlier, to include designs of architectural projects as well as projects themselves. The Three groups are evaluators of the design and not necessarily have to physically experience a building. Thomas Walton in his *architecture and the corporation* presents four maxims for

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57. Weld Coxe, "Charting Your Course: Master Strategies for Organizing and Managing Architecture Firms," in *In Search of Design Excellence*, ed. Thomas Vonier (Washington [sic] DC (1735 New York Ave., NW, Washington 20006): American Institute of Architects, 1989).

58. Dana Cuff, *Architecture : The Story of Practice*.

corporates to help them attain excellence in their projects. These are: multiple perspectives, casting, research, and decision making.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout the interviews conducted and project reviews for this study, I think the ADA's ability to sustain success in their projects relies on five major points. I will relate to literature wherever it is relevant. As these points are 'success' factors, they also mark challenging issues ADA might face. These challenges will be addressed in the conclusion chapter. The following points should be understood in terms of quality, balance and overlapping points rather than the presence of discreet element. Although certain aspect of these success factors can be generalized to architectural practice, it is important to see these points within the context of architectural profession in Saudi Arabia, specifically in Riyadh.

### **i. Symbolic Capital**

The resources available to ADA and its ability to go beyond the project's limits are related to the agency symbolic status or in Bourdieus' terms: symbolic capital. Its reputation and political influence affects the opportunities ADA is offered, and can offer to design firms the ADA contracts with. These rare and distinct opportunities increase the chances of achieving a distinguished and successful project.

ADA's symbolic capital can be understood as a result of four factors. The first is its position as a governmental agency, being part of HC and headed by Riyadh governor Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz.<sup>60</sup> The political weight and support of the prince facilitates the

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59. Thomas Walton, *Architecture and the Corporation : The Creative Intersection*, vol. Studies of the modern corporation (New York London: Macmillan Collier Macmillan, 1988).

60. Prince Salman is the son of the founder of the kingdom King Abdulaziz and a brother of current King Abdullah.

ADA's mission to coordinate and communicate with the country's ministries. This support is not surprising knowing that the governor himself recommended the establishment of ADA in 1983 and oversaw the development of DQ and JPD. The ADA administration and architectural offices which have collaborated with ADA, understand the value of this support because as it allows them to cut down on bureaucracies and presents them with rare opportunities.<sup>61</sup>

It is essential, however, to highlight that this continuing support is also based on the performance of ADA in providing services to various governmental agencies in Riyadh. ADA's planning department, for example, receives request for studies such as demography, transportation, or studying utilities distribution as well as studies concerning economic development of the city. The second factor in ADA's symbolic capital is this networking with the various government agencies that utilize ADA's expertise in coordination and efficiency.

The third factor that contribute to the symbolic capital of ADA is the fact that it is a development agency for the capital, Riyadh. In addition to its political significance, Riyadh's population is the largest in the kingdom.<sup>62</sup> Because it is the capital, many 'special' projects are justified while in other regions such is not allowed. An example of this, is King Abdul Aziz Historic Center which includes a national museum. It would not be logical, or political, to locate the national museum anywhere but the capital.

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61. The majority of interviews with administration of ADA have highlighted the support of Riyadh Governor as a prime requirement for their achievements. Additionally, local architectural firms see that as an opportunity of working with a quality client.

62. according to census of 2010



Figure 17: Historical interpretation of JPD plaza

The last factor that increases ADA's symbolic capital, is its efforts in historic preservation. For example, ADA's has a program of historic preservation of Der'ya, the first capital of Alsaud family. By bring involving with historical preservation and interpretation, the ADA is not only a planning agency, it extends to significant cultural roots of the nation's founders and it allows it to have authority in reinterpreting historical forms and aesthetics in contemporary architecture.





Figure 18: Der'ya historic preservation project

## **ii. Efficiency and Productivity**

ADA, according to its governmental position, has a defined objective. Since a royal decree was issued in 1981 stating the formulation of a Municipal and regional planning body, the existence of ADA has been officially temporary. ADA projects and services are what protects its existence. Within this position, they are a governmental agency when it comes to funding and communication but it acts like a private sector corporation in its efficiency and bias toward achieving objectives to protect its existence.

Dr. Mohammed Alshaikh who was the first president of ADA and head of the committee responsible for realizing the DQ project, stated these criteria in his last meeting with ADA employees before moving on to become the minister of municipality and regio-

nal affairs in 1992. 'Their collective job security is hinging on the performance of the center' Alshaikh adds 'in this regard, all employees have a stake in the center's success'.<sup>63</sup>

This sentiment is also shared by the current administration of ADA and could explain their cautious attitude towards expanding their departments and responsibilities. ADA vice president Eng. Ibrahim AlSultan, who was among the first in ADA, asserts that 'challenges with growing is a decrease in efficiency'.<sup>64</sup> ADA has total of 300 employees today, however, the architectural team has only 20 full time employees.

Local architectural firms support this view and describe ADA as a private, professional agency. Additionally, because ADA's scope is governmental work, they tend to commission large projects, lucrative for many private firms if professionalism is maintained. This could explain the interest of many firms in competing to work with ADA.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, the structure of ADA is relatively horizontal, based on tasks rather than departments resembling a private enterprise. A group work is defined by tasks on which completion, the group is restructured for new tasks. This allows ADA a flexibility of structure and an efficiency in resources. ADA vice president also asserts that ADA has a pragmatic position in its quest for excellence, it searches for the best.<sup>66</sup> This drive towards productivity and efficiency has created a work culture and an identity for ADA employees, with which a set of values and experiences are associated, that are transmitted and 'taught' to new comers to ensure continuity.

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63. AlShaikh, Mohammed. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 14.

64. AlSultan, Ibrahim. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 2.

65. Omrania. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 7.

66. AlSultan, Ibrahim. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 2. This was in response to a question about Saudization in ADA.

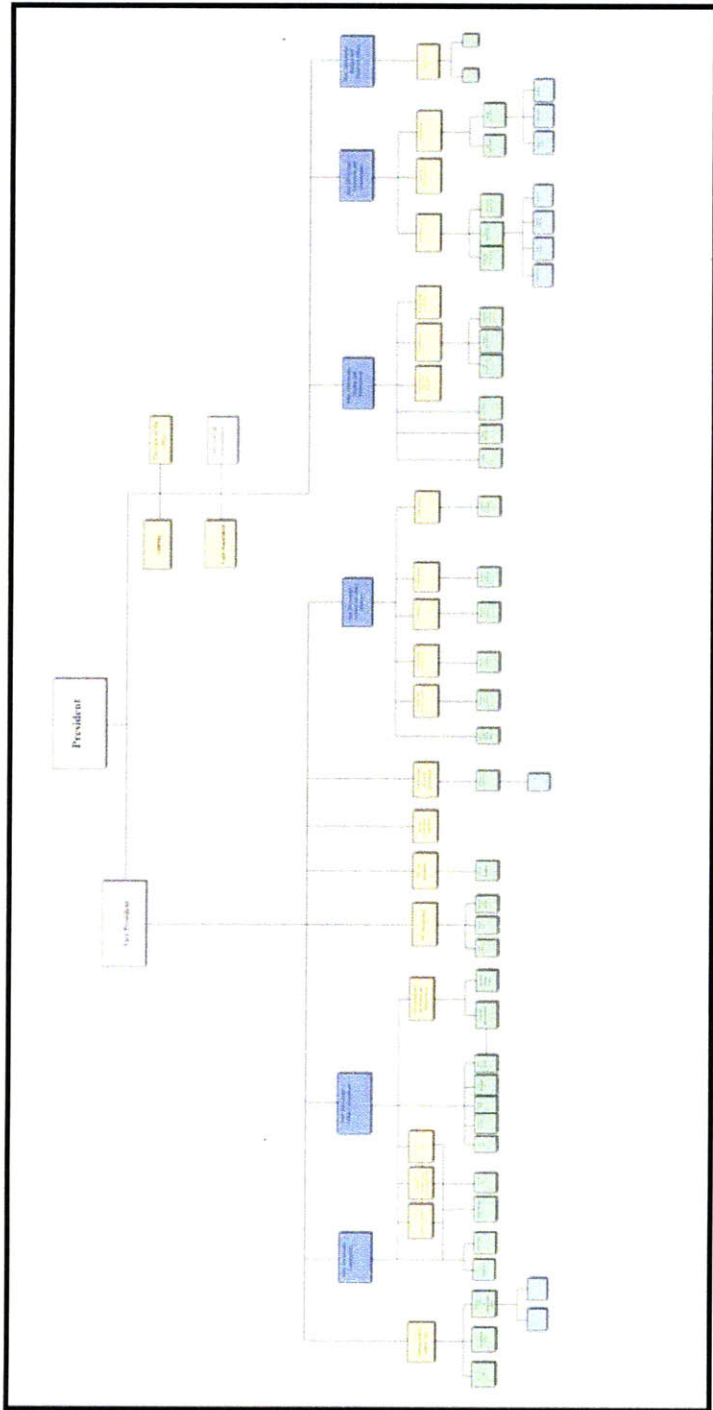


Figure 19: Organization structure

Another area where values of the work culture can be seen is communication and decision making. Usually a client like a governmental agency is a large and bureaucratic organization that seeks firms with similar organizational structure. The result is prolonged and complicated procedures of communication and decision making between the two organizations due to the bureaucracy inherited in both structures. Even when the organizations are not large, there is an inevitable conflict between professionals whenever they engage in a single project. This becomes a problem by and of itself detracting attention from architectural design issues to focus on managerial procedures.<sup>67</sup> ADA simplifies and guides decision making while focusing on design problems because of their understanding of Saudi government agencies, ADA symbolic capital, and architectural competence. In this manner, clients of ADA feel in control as uncertainties are minimized, a welcomed feature for any governmental and corporate culture.<sup>68</sup>

The work culture maintains a leadership in the design process. The realization that everyone in the team has significance, acknowledging the other's role will drive staff to exceed their assignment requirement.<sup>69</sup> King Abdulaziz Historic Center, for example, was completed in less than two-years despite it demanding significant effort in coordination, planning and dedication. ADA relied on its dedicated staff to complete the project.

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67. Dana Cuff, *Architecture : The Story of Practice*. 240

68. Thomas Walton, *Architecture and the Corporation : The Creative Intersection*. p 187

69. Alghamdi, Sa'ad. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 2.



Figure 20: King Abdulaziz Historic Center, Riyadh

### iii. Holistic Quality in Architecture

The ADA's vision of what kind of architecture is suitable for Riyadh, guides its understanding of architectural quality on several levels. On the level of the agency, ADA is continuously in search of ways to complement their expertise. Due to organizational structure and the different professional background of its employees, ADA adopts a flexible training program. Periodically, a list of workshops and courses are circulated where employees only have to indicate their interest in participating. Employees are encouraged to search for other relative opportunities and bring them forward to the administration to be considered. Given the structure and efficiency of ADA, affirmative decisions are arrived at without delay.<sup>70</sup>

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70. Alghamdi, Sa'ad. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 13.

Development of human resources is seen prominently in ADA collaboration with international expertise, scholars and research centers on specific projects or in researching specific problems concerning Riyadh. ADA has two type of advisors, one advise it on the agency level and its structure, making sure it is up to date besting its practices. The others are technical advisors consulted in specific projects and defined requirements.<sup>71</sup> Within the category of the latter are architectural and urban consultants as well as jury committees for architectural competitions. This effort of complementing ADA experience with external professionals is thought of as a success factor.<sup>72</sup>

By maintaining competent and professional staff, ADA sets the first step in maintaining architectural quality in their project. As a result of their training as well as their experience from previous projects, the architectural team is able to "demand quality that architectural firms themselves are accustomed to demand from clients."<sup>73</sup> In this respect, ADA challenges architectural firms on a ground that both understand. Furthermore, ADA does not define their quality in terms of a 'bottom line', instead they set open-ended positive goals with limits. However, as it will be discussed in the next section, ADA keeps reminding their partners in design (as ADA internally calls them) that limits are negotiable.

The third element in maintaing quality is ADA's work style with, and selection of, architectural firms. ADA works in a 'workshop' style, characterized by periodic meetings and a discussion of design issues. This allows it not only to be present in every design stage witnessing the development of the project, but also it permits the uninitiated ADA employees to have on-job training mostly working under the supervision of the projects'

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71. For example ADA partnered with UC - Berkeley in symposium in Riyadh on the issue of parks and public facilities. Also, ADA send its employees for programs in city planing such as SPURS program at MIT.

72. Ibid. p 184

73. Dana Cuff, *Architecture : The Story of Practice*. 236

architectural firm when ever possible. Although this could be helped by the process of selection of architectural firms as it is noticed that ADA prefer to work with smaller architectural firms or ones that interested in working 'with' rather than 'for' ADA.

Architectural firms understand the demands of quality that ADA makes. Local architectural firms accept the challenge because they too, are interested in a quality client. Khaled Odhabat of Otaishan group asserts that "it is a good indication that [the project] will be also constructed in good quality and its integrity will be respected", this is in addition of course to its symbolic capital.<sup>74</sup> International firms, like the Australian Tropman and Tropman understood very well that working with ADA is not an easy task "there is associate risk for any firm to work internationally, but sometimes it is rewarding"<sup>75</sup> It is because ADA demands quality and shares an architect's understanding of architecture, that they are valued clients for architectural firms.

#### **iv. Multi-Perspective**

By the nature of its position, coordinating between architectural firms, clients and then overseeing the project construction, in some cases even the project maintenance, ADA's architectural team can not help but take into consideration the nature of an architectural project's multi-perspectives.<sup>76</sup>

All members engaging in a project clearly have a purpose of achieving 'good design', however, the interpretation varies sharply. For managers it is efficiency and long/short

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74. Odhabat, Khalid. 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 7.

75. Tropman, Lester and Storey, Tasman 2010. Interview by author. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. February 14.

76. Although Dana Cuff uses the term 'stereovision', I opted to Thomas Walton 'multi-perspectives' because it avoids the assumption that only two parties are of concern.

term cost effectiveness. For users, it could imply equality of space quality and privileges, for architects it would mean a structure that is functional and aesthetically pleasing. ADA understands that all parties have a stake in the project and that consideration for all participants is needed to attain 'success'.

During the early stages in the phase of developing terms of reference, ADA conducts research, collects information and engages its clients' administration, employees while also representing the client's values. On the other hand, ADA translates architectural work in terms the clients would understand. More significantly, central to ADA is the 'city' perspective, by demanding that a design be related to Riyadh from an urban as well as cultural perspective.

In a paper, ADA president Abdullatif Alshaikh pointed to that the citizens' satisfaction being the first priority of the ADA's objectives: "*ADA conduct surveys of the citizens' social and age groups to find their opinions and aspiration in what relates to their city... field work and workshops to determine future city planning ... and development of urban environment for the public.*"<sup>77</sup>

Adopting a multi-perspectives approach proved to be a successful strategy for projects as well as to educate the public and their clients.<sup>78</sup> The Supreme Court building was a case in point. The client's concern over security and function, the architect's spacial qualities, and the public's delight over the open park were all features of one project complementing each other. In addition, the project depicting materials and formal qualities bearing resemblance to Riyadh local architecture.

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77. Alshaikh, Abdullatif. Paper given in the second symposium of project management. 2009.

78. Thomas Walton, *Architecture and the Corporation : The Creative Intersection*. p 26





Figure 21: Salam Park

#### **v. Flexibility**

A result of the previous four points is flexibility in project design and management. Resources available to ADA due to its symbolic capital, their interest in achieving maximum quality and taking into consideration all players permits ADA the flexibility of studying alternative options. ADA is not only flexible in design related limits but also in financial terms. The justification of ADA's flexibility is maintaining quality and design integrity of their architectural projects.

ADA's symbolic capital, efficiency, its commitment to quality and value engineering, gives it a leverage when it comes to exceeding budget or negotiating rules with other government agencies. For example, ADA is able to negotiate regulations set by the Ministry of Municipal and Regional Affairs on the basis that ADA understands the city's master plan.

Financially also, when ADA is able to justify an increase in budget, its repertoire and previous projects stand as a recommendation to take the ADA's request seriously.

This privilege, given to it by the board of HC, is based on the general conservatism of ADA in meeting deadlines and adhering to budget limits whenever it does not affect quality of project. Flexibility, as ADA sees it, is not about 'what' limits to exceed but rather to what 'degree' a project can exceed limits.

### **c. Cultural Activities**

ADA's participation in cultural activities is intended to educate and foster a culture sensitive to their built environment. ADA organizes lectures, exhibitions, symposium as well as student and international architectural competitions. These activities, in addition to raising the awareness about architectural development, serves two other purposes.

Firstly, from these activities, ADA listens to the opinion of participants. For example, in 2005, the ADA offered a short course targeting university instructors on the techniques and use of adobe bricks as building material. The hands on workshop, was an activity conceived from the team responsible for historic preservation of Dir'ya. This activity falls within the ADA mission in raising awareness about methods of developing local architecture as well as the introduction of sustainability.

Secondly, These activities contribute to ADA's symbolic and cultural capital. By organizing courses and symposium on topics pertinent to local architects, ADA has become a hub for professionals (and the profession) to commune. Development agencies are usually associated with mass market, project housing but not architecture.<sup>79</sup> Although architectur-

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79. Garry Stevens, *The Favored Circle : The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction*. p 85

al association exists in Saudi Arabia, their weak performance and coordination makes it easy for ADA to dominate. The ADA, for example, issues publication to raise the awareness of people interested in building new houses, a role reserved to architectural association in other countries.

### **i. Awards**

Architectural competition and awards to and by ADA is a significant element of its symbolic capital. The competition of artists and the practice of awarding prizes is common because of its prevalence. However, it is also foreign because of its association with a 'winner' of a competition. The competition echoes a sense of a sport event that may associate an artist with an Olympic athlete. Architectural competitions add another layer of complexity. Namely a contract. By contracting with a winner, the act of distinguishing 'cultural' turns it into buying a commodity, in this case the design. The symbolic capital bestowed on a winner, is not merely a declaration of a winner. It takes a ritualized form akin to a religious ritual that takes into account the place and time is it conducted, who is presenting the prize and who are the attendees.<sup>80</sup> The cultural value, or capital, of an award relies heavily on the cultural capital of those judging and awarding the prize. However, even recipients add to the significance of an award because who received the prize in earlier runs also signifies of the award's value.

ADA engages in two forms of awarding, and both have a cultural significance: receiving and awarding awards. The most significant, is its recipient of three Aga Khan Awards of Architecture. Winning awards, without any doubt, serves ADA positively. Not

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80. James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige : Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005). p2

only does it solidify its position and secure its existence within the governmental structure but also attracts more architectural firms interested in working in Riyadh.

ADA participates in awarding prizes for their project by means of invited competitions. King Abdulaziz mosque competition was won by Rasim Badran, who has also won AKA for his JPD mosque for ADA. ADA realized early on that in order to invite well know architects to their competition, jurors of the competition also have to be well recognized by profession. ADA is not limited to architectural competitions. In 2007, in its third run, housing symposium was accompanied by a design competition for professionals and students. Design competitions have less financial obligation.

1989	Aga Khan Award for Architecture - DQ landscaping & alkindi	*
1990	ATO	
1995	Aga Khan Award - JPD grand Mosque	*
1999	Aga Khan Award - twaiq palace	*
2000	Council of Arab housing and development ministers	
2001	Ontario Association of Architects	
2003	The Waterfront Center prize	*
2004	King Abullah the second for creativeness	
2007	Islamic cities and capitals organization	
2007	Prince Sultan bin Salman for architectural heritage	
2007	2nd LivCom : strategic plan	
2007	2nd LivCom : KAHC project	
2007	2nd \ Gold medal for Hanifa project	
2007	Bronze medal for Salam Park	
2009	Best web portal	
2009	GCC prize for best enviornmental awareness program	

List of awards ADA received (\*juried awards)

All ADA cultural activities serve to raise architectural awareness in Riyadh. The three groups mentioned above, the profession, participants and the people, that evaluate the excellence of a building become better equipped to receive good architecture. Working on these two fronts, making good architecture and raising the awareness of its nature, the ADA is able to attain success in its projects.

## IV. Conclusion

Part of what makes it difficult to distill a process of excellence is inherited in the quest of good architecture. A tendency exist to separate the process of what makes good architecture from the evaluation (or evaluators) of good architecture. Because criteria of what makes good architecture change constantly, the process of what makes good architecture is influenced as well. This study reveals that the process of making and the evaluation of the product has to be thought of as two sides of the same coin.

The five points highlighted above that helps the ADA to succeed in respect to today's evaluators are subject to change when the criteria and relative value of each group and their influence changes. ADA, by keeping a dynamic and attentive outlook, sensed this aspect of making good architecture. ADA's collaboration with consultant, advisors, reviewers on bases of assignment rather than a contract, liberated ADA in terms of choices and helped it keep the dynamic. This agency runs the risk of being eclectic and inconsistent. Consistency is addressed by keeping a small number of employees and maintaining their work culture.

"success" is used in this study because success is not excellence, it is 'distinction'. Projects can be successful because they are excellent. Excellence can be in excellence in design but also can be excellence as architectural statement, excellent aesthetics, excellent architect, excellent theory, excellent functions or excellent icon. Success seems to be not related to arithmetic sum of all excellences, rather it is based on the value of the excel-

lence. Bourdieu's term is capital. If a specific theory in aesthetics has a higher value, then excellence in aesthetics in respect to that theory, would most likely mean success.

The field is subject to valuation or devaluation and so these 'distinctions' are subjected to change. If anything the field is characterized with its dynamism as new ideas, aspiration, technologies and design principles replaces old ones. Sustainability, as the expression goes, 'came into currency' in contemporary times. Similar changes happened in 1960s to modernism in architecture.

The ADA success was facilitated because it acts as the soft matter in-between the hard objects of an architectural firm, construction, clients, interior designer etc. By overseeing all aspects of the project, they are in a position to select the 'right' match for the project. This reflects on the quality of the project because no responsibilities fall in the cracks.

However, reading this perception can be challenging as the case in Riyadh. ADA had to go the extra mile to be able to listen to the perception of the three groups and sometime it had to encourage it. The three groups, like any other social entity, interact in an order. This study borrowed some thinking tools of Bourdieu's social theory to investigate the relationship between these groups in the architectural field and how they establish value.

By observing carefully, the ADA was able to see what the profession valued and considered 'good architecture'. By adopting architectural style that reflected regional and local aesthetics and environment at a time the style had its highest values in the eyes of the majority members of the three groups, it allowed ADA to be recognized and gained it its initial cultural capital.

ADA might be aware of this aspect in the architectural field. This might explains why ADA is constantly keeping itself actively engaged with local consumers, participants and the profession at large. ADA, the perception of what is good architecture, can not be iso-

lated from its cultural and social context which dictates that there is inviable influence on perception of good architecture in relation to who made it.

### **i. Challenges Facing ADA**

ADA is distinguished in that it was able to maintain success (with veritey of excellences) in awards, cultural activities, project quality, etc. As it was shown in the first chapter, ADA was successful in meeting its past challenges. Similarly, ADA faces challenges today, albeit different, given their success and experience there is no reason to assume that ADA is not able to address them.

One of the characterizing aspects of ADA is its unique as a temporary governmental status. However, there is an inevitable moment after which this agency would have to be either instituted as a government agency or replaced by another. Although the majority of ADA employees hold that what keeps the ADA is its performance, it is not foreseeable that even if the performance of ADA decreases, it would be disbanded. On the other hand, ADA might be instituted as a government entity. It will be challenging as the condition that has been a driving force for ADA, will disappear and it might lose its distinction. Additionally, if ADA is instituted as a governmental body it will lose its flexibility, its financial and organizational independence which affects every decision it makes. The challenge facing ADA is to maintain that flexibility and independence even when or if ADA is instituted as governmental body.

Maintaing ADA status will be even more difficult in light of the increasing responsibility ADA receives. At the time of this study, the architectural unit is responsible for thirteen projects. Although it speaks greatly for the efficiency and competence of the team, it also indicate that employees are handling more work every year. Despite the effort of the administration of ADA to limit and filter the projects it commits itself to, agencies in the



government are tempted to divert some of their daunting and complicated urban or architectural tasks to ADA because, after all, ADA is very good at what it does. The possibility of expanding the ADA is challenging as it would affect the dynamics of ADA work culture. So far, because ADA members are relatively limited, ADA has depended on its efficiency in communication and collaboration between its members.

In architectural projects, ADA architectural success to an extent is related to what was culturally (locally) relevant in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, the issue of architectural "identity" is not the most relevant cultural aspect in Riyadh and so neo-traditionalism becomes less interesting than it used to be. Also, contemporary architecture discourse is not strong in the local Saudi architectural field and academe, a matter that makes it difficult to engage with contemporary architecture. What the ADA faces now is the challenge of re-defining and centralizing an architectural issue that engages the profession, participants and the public in a similar way as it did with neo-traditionalism. It might be rewarding to do that by taking the architectural competitions and their cultural activities as a launching ground.

ADA might face challenges in its symbolic capital as well. When ADA started in the early 1980s, it was among the few, if not the only, that could attempt projects of that scale and type. Today, however, a number of other agencies have evolved to take larger projects. KAUST north of Jeddah and Ithra' in Dhahran are two projects that indicate that there are institutions, in this case Aramco, with tremendous potential. Another example is Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) with their flagship project King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) also display a high level of quality and organizational competence. Though these institutions should not be thought of as competitors, ADA does not become the arbitrator on Riyadh's buildings which the case with the Aramco supervised King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) designed by Zaha Hadid in

Riyadh. The work of these institutes in Riyadh without ADA participation or quality insurance affects the overall symbolic capital of ADA.

Although ADA symbolic capital as seen through awards, projects and status is well established, the symbolic capital from the support of the governor of the region of Riyadh could also be challenging for the future of the ADA. In itself the support of the governor person, and not his post, is a dilemma. If the support of the governor is set in a policy, though it is different from being a governmental body, it would be the sort of rigidity that ADA has not been accustomed to work with. Alternatively, it is not clear what alternatives ADA has and if the governor moves to a higher post.

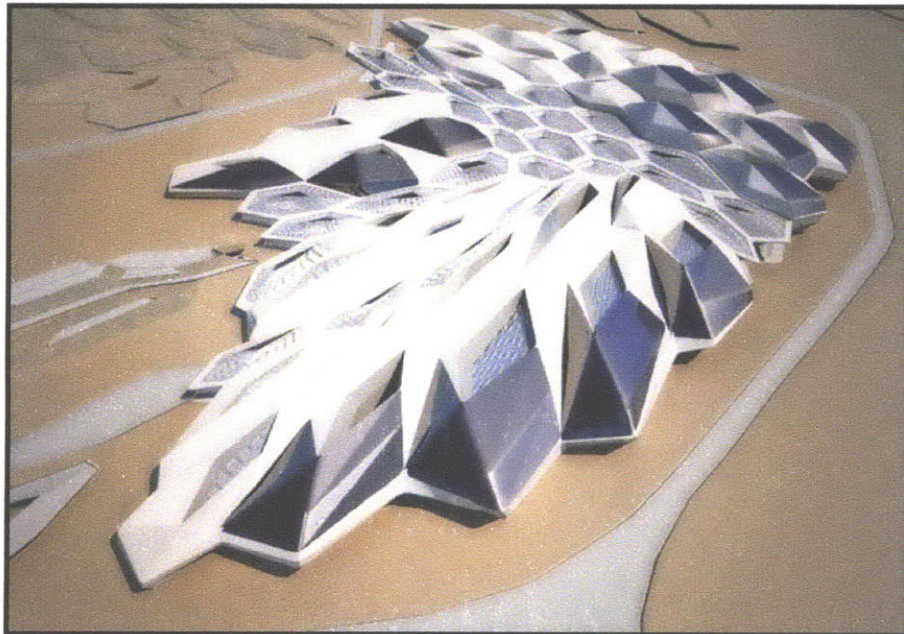


Figure 22: KAPSARC in Riyadh by Zaha Hadid

Symbolic capital of ADA could also influence the staff of ADA. Already ADA employees are somehow critical of their compensation which changed little to nothing since the ADA started some 28 years ago. What was then a 'sizable' compensation taking into consideration the absence of pension, today is not distinctive when accounting for years of inflation. Though many employees are content because of the opportunities ADA offers them in terms of education and training, some realize that after they gained enough experiences, little incentives are available to keep them within ADA. The challenge here is the pride in work and continuity of work culture that if gone, a major aspect of ADA success is jeopardized.

## **ii. Final Thoughts**

ADA was successful first and foremost in finding comfort in uncertainties and contingencies. ADA questions 'to what degree' rather than 'do or do not'. The architectural team poses their question 'to what degree should the budget increase' or 'to what degree information are helpful'.

This study touched upon many areas of architecture, urban planning, administration, and management and so. But this is the nature of this agency. Although one has to focus on a specific aspect, e.g. architectural project, this agency and perhaps many other agencies can not be seen as in shade, probably, a holistic look and investigation is required. similar to that of planning.

There are some areas that ADA could benefit from. ADA needs to keep an archive of their work. and publish more about their projects, in an attempt to raise the cultural education of architecture. The competitions and public open house need to be actualized. they can capitalize on that and go small again. By Architecturally defining themselves knowing something even if its wrong, is better than not knowing. they were able to defend their ar-

chitectural position. Sustainability can be one: Sustainability and green building is an aspect that could be exploited further. A rapid employment of this approach in the architecture of ADA projects would provide them with expertise.

This basic study of the ADA reveal that there are menu areas in the ADA that deserve additional studies. With proper tools, planning efforts can be evaluated and studied in a similar manner architecture projects studies here. Additionally, investigating ADA from strictly administration/organization perspective might shed light on area that are not seen here. From the beginning, the approval of ADA and providing information tells a lot about their confidence.

Through interviews conducted for this study this study found that, despite the positive outlook, not every firm or client would like to have successful designs all the time. A simple explanation might be that successful projects are taxing on both the client, mostly in terms of cost, and the architect in terms of uncompensated working hours. Additionally, both parties are subjected to uncertainties that add excitement but also adds weight.

# | Appendix |

## **Illustrations & photo credits**

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Figure 22	KAPSARC website <a href="http://kapsarc.org/imagegallery/TheBuilding">http://kapsarc.org/imagegallery/TheBuilding</a>

## Interviews

01 Saad Alghamdi	ADA Architect	Architectural Projects Program
02 Salvatore Virgillito	ADA Architect	Senior Project Manager
03 Khalid Al-Hazani	ADA Architect	Director Architectural Project Program
04 Thomas Ciolek	ADA Architect	Senior Project Manager
05 Abdulaziz A. AlShaikh	ADA Director General	Studies and Information
06 Tariq A. Al-Faris	ADA Director	Projects & Urban Facilities Managment
07 Anas A. AlShaikh	ADA Director General	Diplomatic Quarter
08 Ibrahim A. Al-Shaye	ADA Head of EPI	Strategic Planning For ArRiyadh Region
09 Ibrahim Aleid	ADA Director	Urban Planning Department
10 Ibrahim Alsultan	ADA Vice President	ADA
11 Abdulrahman Alsari	Project Director	Mawten
12 Mashari Alna'em	Professor of Architecture	AlDammam University
13 Saleh Alhathloul	Professor of Architecture	King Saud University
14 Rukn Eldeen Mohammed	Senior Project Manager	Omrania
15 Khalid Odaibat	Design Manager	Otaishan Consulting
16 Shih-fu Peng	Architect	Heneghan Peng Architects
17 Ehab T. AlAmri	Exc Vice President	Aljubail Development
18 Tasman Storey	Principal Architect	Tropman & Tropman Architects
19 Lester Tropman	Director	Tropman & Tropman Architects
20 Mohammed Alshaikh	President (1983-1992)	ADA

### List of ADA projects

	Project)	Architectural firm	notes
1	Qasr Alhokm 1976	Saudi Consult, KSA Rasim Badran, Jordan Abdulhalim Ibrahim, Egypt  1979 designed	phase 1 - 1983 - 1988 phase 2 - 1988 - 1992 (470) phase 3 - 1992 - now
2	Foreign Ministry Housing  1977	Albert Speer & Partners Germany + CRC  construction began 1980	SR 679 Millions
3	Diplomatic Quarter  1977	Albert Speer & Partners Frei Otto architects  master plan approved/construction 1978	on-going
4	Althumama  1982	  1994 got a bit serious	Phase 1 - opened in 2004 On-going
5	GCC building  1986	Omrania associates, Saudi Arabia	
6	Wadi Hanifa  1987	  Construction 2003	Opened in 2010
7	Almalaz mosque  1992 March	Renamed to King Fahd Mosque  Muhandisoon	15 million 1994 Oct 18
8	Arab Bureau of education of the Gulf States. ABEGC  1992 Dec 2	Omrania, Saudi Arabia	695,000  Opened in 1997 Feb
9	Civil Defence Center in Qasr alhukom  1992 Dec 2		693,000  1998 May 19

10	Supreme court  1992	Saudi Consult, Saudi Arabia Mohammed Makkiyah, UK 1994 awarded  Construction 1998 March\April	198 million  Opened in 2000 Nov/Dec
11	Science oasis	Albert Speer & Partners	Opened in 1994 Dec 7
12	Almasmak museum		Opened 1995 June 12
13	UN development Program  1994 Jan	Abdullah Bukhari ArchiPlan 1995 Dec 13 - contract	15 million  consted c1999
14	Ren	Alqabali and Rumailah mosque renovation	
15	Arabian Insatiate for City development	Nabil Fanous, UK	Opened in 1998 May 17
16	Salam Park	Aukett Fitzroy Robinson Omrania Designed in 1995	Opened in 2004 Jan 6
17	King Abdulaziz historical center  1996	Buro Happold, UK Moriyama & Teshima Architects, Canada Rasim Badran, Jordan Omrania, KSA	
18	Mohd bin Saud Mosque in Der'ya  1996 June 7	Abdulhalim Ibrahim, Egypt	Opened in 1998 Nov 18
19	King AbdulAziz mosque in alkharj  1996 June 7		Opened 1997 Nov 25
20	Saudi Center for Organ Transplantation (SCOT)  c1996	Omrania  construction started 1997 Dec 29	64 million  opened in 2000 Nov 5
21	Business oasis	Croxton architects, USA Saud Consult	



22	Dir'ya 1998 Oct 9		
23	Rehab center in Madina 2000 Feb		
24	King Saud Mosque in Nassiriyah 2000 Jan		Opened in 2000 Nov 25
25	AlMada Mosque 2000	Part of KAHC	Opened in 2004 October
26	Mohd ibn Ibrahim Alshaikh 2001 Jan 21	Baha Attar Design finished in 2002 Jan	
27	King Fahd national Library January 2004	Saudi Consult, KSA Gerber Architekten, Germany 2007 Oct Construction	Ongoing
29	Saudi journalist commission 2004 Sep.	Almemariah	
30	Criminal Court Complex 2005	Albert Speer & Partners, Germany 1st prize in international competition 2008 march construction started	352 million Under construction
31	Ministry of higher education 2005 Nov 29		
32	King Faisal University 2005 Nov 29		
33	Red Crescent association 2005 Nov 29		

34	GCC standardization organization  2005 Nov 29		
35	Saudi Commission for Health Specialties	Alotaishan  Construction 2003	Opened 2006 May 16
36	General Auditing Bureau  2007		
37	Alhamra Palace  2008	Truman & Truman Associates KAHC	
38	International forum for Energy	Omrania	Opened in 2005 Nov 15
39	Prince Salman University	Zuhair Fayez & partners 2006 winner awarded	Ongoing
40	Prince Salman oasis for science	Albert Speer & Partners	100 million
41	ArabSat HQ  2008	Heneghan.peng architects Awarded in 2009 March	Ongoing
42	Prince Turki Alsidairy		opened in 2004 Dec 15
43	Alwatan Garden		Opened in 2006 Jan

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