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Form 6

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Research Report

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Title of Research:

Study on Trends of Contemporary Asian Architectural Thought by Discourses of ARCASIA

-Analysis on content transitions in Asian congress of architects of ARCASIA from 1984 to 2021

Purpose of Research: (200 words)

ARCASIA (Architects Regional Council Asia), which is the only official association of architects in Asia up until now, has not only deeply continuously recorded and promoted the transformation of Asian architectural thought, but also reflected the development and change of hot spots in the Asian architectural industry over 40 years. However, the systematic study of ARCASIA has been absent for a long, yet the new material and perspectives it provides on the evolution of Asian post-war architectural thought have not received sufficient attention. To further complement the absence of “institutional history” in modern Asian architecture, the author uses its primary forum - Asian Congress of Architects as the material to analyze the evolution of ARCASIA. It seeks to preliminarily construct the discourse on the evolution of post-war architectural thought in Asia from the perspective of ARCASIA; as well as to pave the way for further analysis of the changes in architectural thought in Asia, promoting the understanding and dissemination of Asian architecture in the region and beyond.

Content/Methodology of Research: (400 words)

From the entirety of keynote papers documented at ACA events since its inception in 1984, the author extracted 51 pertinent papers based on: (1) reflecting the architectural viewpoints of architects or scholars within the region, and (2) being supported by publicly available published materials, including full texts, abstracts, or video recordings. On this basis, the author uses the KJ method to process semantic analysis. Firstly, all textual information was organized into cards by the criteria: (1) each card corresponds to only one complete semantic unit; (2) the content of the card reflects the speaker's thoughts and viewpoints while downplaying factual information, descriptions and explanation; (3) the cards recorded the year of publication, the speaker, and the country or region where the speaker was located. Secondly, the cards were grouped and labeled by preliminary categories based on the contents. Subsequently, all the cards were spatially allocated and graphicalised according to the group information. Finally, the results presented in the graphical step were narrated to form the conclusions of the paper.

In accordance with the above research methodology, the author extracted a total of 298 pieces of KJ cards for analysis. The distribution of the data in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s was visualized according to the speakers' countries and regions, as well as the categories related to the content of the lectures. In terms of the speakers' countries, the overall trend is diversified and has evolved from the dominance of Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the establishment of ARCASIA towards a more balanced representation of Southeast Asia, East Asia, and South Asia. As for the lecture content categories, region context and nature environment are the two main focuses. Over time, there has been increasing attention to sustainability and the humanistic attributes of architecture.

From the distribution of the spatial graphics of the KJ cards (as shown in Figure), the semantic content of ACA contains three main sections: region & context, nature & environment, and reflection on modernism. Among these, reflection on modernism constitutes the foundation of the discourse, including the considerations of the identity crisis within global capitalism, the cultural inherent weaknesses by erasure of tradition, the significance of cultural autonomy, the aesthetics to express Asian intrinsic virtues, and the reflections on environmental issues with dichotomies in the context of rapid

urbanization. On this basis, the speakers in ARCASIA responded mainly from region and nature perspectives. In the Region & Context section, the majority of speakers expressed their responses to tradition and connection to local. Moreover, there was an emphasis on integrating the traditional cultural virtues into contemporary expression, in addition to addressing local responses to the climate, environment, and issues of the place. On the other hand, in the Nature & Environment section, views on nature, environmental technology, and ecological integration were presented for the most part. In particular, city culture, humanistic concerns, and cultural identity matters served as bridges between the three sections from various aspects.

Conclusion/Observation (200 words)

By analyzing the semantic materials of ACA using the KJ method, this study has tentatively outlined the macroscopic trends and thematic transitions in ARCASIA’s discourse from 1984 to 2021. From the statistical perspective, the ACA shows an overall modest strengthening trend in the collection of literature and the level of discussion over the past years in terms of overall quantity. Regarding the transition of speakers' regions, the number of countries or regions represented by the speakers has shown a tendency to expand in both quantity and scope. From the general characteristics’ perspective, the spatial relationships of various conceptual themes were investigated. Reflection on modernism forms the foundation of the discourse, with responses mainly from the perspectives of region and nature. In the region & context theme, speakers primarily react to tradition and local issues, addressing connections with climate, environment, and place-specific challenges. In the nature & environment theme, the focus is on views of nature, environmental technology, and ecological integration. In general, the thematic transitions in ARCASIA’s discourse emphasize the evolving nature of self-identity expression in Asian architecture, revealing multiple dimensions and requiring further microscopic analysis which will be conducted in the future.

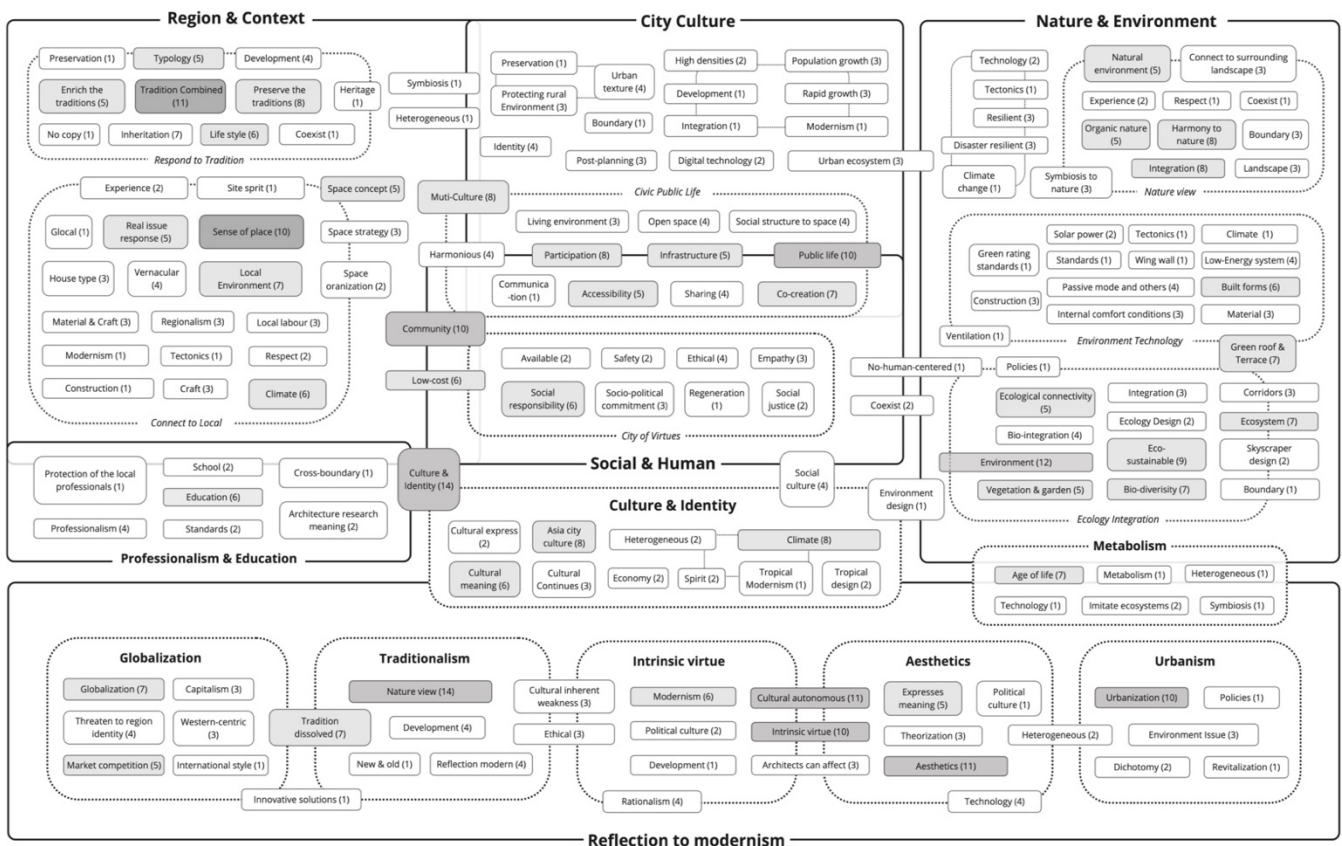


Fig. Asian Post-war architecture thoughts diagram based on KJ method of Asian Congress of Architects (1984 ~ 2021)