

From the Middle East to Europe as a female architect of colour

A case study on Dame Zaha Hadid

This paper researches the approach of a female architect of colour to her career in architecture. It positions itself through background research on the discrimination that takes place in the field of architecture against people of colour and women and applies this gained perspective to the case of Zaha Hadid, as she is a perfect candidate to bring these two points of discrimination together. A case analysis is executed on Dame Zaha Hadid, where her journey through the field of architecture is analysed and reflected upon. The aim of this paper is to establish how she broke through all the stigmas and became quite possibly the best known female architect of all time. In the case analysis Hadid's childhood, education, career and personal development are analysed. Hadid is known to have a strong and extravagant personality. She always stayed true to her art style and always aimed to become greater while remaining unique. Even though she can be seen as a feminist icon, Hadid is not very outspoken on female struggles within the field of architecture and often remains apolitical and unfazed.

Key words: Zaha Hadid, Feminism, Female architect, Architect of colour, Suprematism, Parametricism,

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1. Introduction

The importance of inclusivity seems to be rapidly growing in our society in the last decade. Many work fields seem to be adopting this into their moral (Shore et al., 2011). However, some industry seem to be lagging concerning this issue. According to the 2018 survey (of the yearly survey) by Bruce Tether 1 in 7 women in the field of architecture have experienced harassment by their male colleagues, employers and peers. This significance of the issue of harassment and bullying seems to have a big influence on the experience of women in the field of architecture, as 1 in 5 women do not recommend a career in this field (Tether, 2018). Additionally, there is also a great lack of representation of people of colour. The industry seems to be primarily “white-male-led”, dominating the public’s understanding of architecture and the experience of all parties involved (Nelson, 2020). From the outside looking in, Dame Zaha Hadid seems to have risen above all the stigmas that being an immigrant female architect would have to face in her career. For many Hadid serves as an inspiration, not only because of her ground-breaking architecture, but also because of her many other great achievements. As the first woman to win a Pritzker Architecture Prize and a Royal Gold Medal, she can be described as a pioneer for modern female architects. However, to truly measure the significance of the obstacles and the struggles of a female of colour within the field of architecture, there needs to be a deeper dive into Dame Zaha Hadid’s journey as a young architecture student to the pioneer that she has become over the years. As an immigrant, Hadid has had influences from multiple cultures and environments and these can be taken into consideration in the analysis.

1.1. Personal fascination

Dame Zaha Hadid has a great portfolio of ground breaking architecture, interesting theories and innovative approaches to design. However, the greatest fascination with the late Zaha Hadid, that has led to this paper, is her attitude concerning her background and gender. In a field where odds seemed to be stacked against her, she not only rose above the expectations that the field has of female architects, she became a pioneer in her branch and quite frankly somewhat of a legend, since she is the first female architect to have won a Pritzker Price (The Pritzker Architecture Prize, n.d.), her approach to battle prejudice, but also her development as an architect seems to be highly effective. However, her perspective seems to be of a different nature. Hadid is known for her somewhat nonchalant attitude and even though she understands the struggle of women and immigrants in the field, she has never let this define her or her path (Miranda, 2016). Therefore, even though books can be written about Hadid’s great successes, her style of design and her process, this paper’s main focus is going to be creating an understanding of Hadid’s journey through the field of architecture in relation to the struggles and stigmas she had to face, and how she handled these.

1.2. Academic context

The case study executed in this paper will have a focus on acquiring information through personal interactions with Zaha Hadid herself. This includes documentaries where the late Zaha Hadid makes an appearance, interviews, conferences and lectures. Using these an attempt will be done to draw a well-rounded conclusion on her personal position on her success, her view on navigating through the field of architecture and her approach to creating a successful career. Using her as an example this can serve as an inspiration for other women and immigrants to succeed in the field of architecture. BBC interviews, such as the Desert Island Discs, Life in a Day and The Interview Archive, will serve as a base. Additional information will be retrieved through the documentaries, such as The Architects Series: A documentary on Zaha Hadid, The Tate talk with Zaha Hadid and a Q&A at the Oxford Union. However, the research conducted on Zaha Hadid consists of many documentaries, mainly available on YouTube.

Additionally, there is a lot of information to be sought on the place of women and foreigner or coloured people in the field of architecture. This will form a foundation to create a well-informed understanding of what a female architect of colour had to face in the time Hadid entered the field. It is important to understand that what is left implicit and the difference in attitude towards these issues from women of various generations. Studies such as “The Space between the Studs: Feminism and Architecture” by Ahrentzen (2003) and “Women and Architecture” by Standley et al. (1974) add great insight into the issue. Personal experiences can be found in articles of and interviews with female architects, where female architects speak up about the discrimination they have faced and still face in their field. A couple of these articles are “I Am Not the Decorator: Female Architects Speak Out” and “The invisible women: How female architects were erased from history”.

A lot less is known about the discrimination of immigrants or people of colour in the industry. An interesting book jumps out when discussing this subject, namely *Race and Modern Architecture*. Moreover, articles such as "On race & architecture: Facing the design profession's diversity problem and its changing future", "Growth in Racial Diversity Among Architects is Slow, but Experts Say the Conversation Continues" and "Louis Nelson in conversation with Dianne Harris and Damon Rich on architecture and racism" bring a lot of perspective to the table.

The position of women in architecture has been discussed for over three decades, however not much research is done on the position of people of colour within the field of architecture. Interviews such as "16 architects of color speak out about the industry's race problem" by Syrkett et al. (2017) show the presence of the issue and the need for representation, though it remains a greatly undiscussed subject in comparison to issues such as the lack of women in architecture. This is based on the lack of academic papers and interviews to be found on this subject. Additionally, the combination of these issues is even less highlighted. How women of colour navigate within the field of architecture is not really known, mainly because there are barely any female architects of colour, especially in the West. This research aims to fill the gap, by bringing these two subjects together. As an Iraqi born immigrant, Dame Zaha Hadid brings this new perspective to the table. Therefore, the main research question of this paper is: *How did Zaha Hadid develop her career and manoeuvre through the field of architecture, as an Iraqi born female architect?*

1.3. Methodology

This paper will attempt to break down what it took for Zaha Hadid to be successful in this industry, while questioning the position Hadid took as a female designer from a feminist perspective. As a woman from a different generation she had to face a more present male dominated bias with tabus and dogmas that the new generation may have grown out of, therefore her approach must have been different from that of a female architect of this generation. This paper is a historical study on the development of inclusivity in the field of architecture, by researching the two groups that, on a great scale, have been excluded from the field for many generations, namely women and people of colour. This research will be executed through a literature study on the two issues and applied to a case study on Dame Zaha Hadid, to test the theories developed through the comparative literature study. As a great and well-known architect, she seems to have overcome all the obstacles and by examining the path she has taken, more will be understood about the position of women of colour in the field of architecture.

1.4. Structure

In the following chapters, first the theoretical subjects of women in architecture will be discussed, along with the subject of people of colour in architecture. In the third chapter, the life, career and studies of Zaha Hadid will be reviewed. Furthermore, in the conclusion, the information retrieved in the first two chapters will be applied to the life and career of Zaha Hadid based on the research done in the third chapter and a conclusion will be drawn where the research question will be answered.

2. Discrimination in the field

In order to create a framework and an understanding of the extent of the issue, an academic analysis is executed on the subjects 'women in architecture' and 'people of colour in architecture'. This will create the foundation on which the case analysis can be positioned on. These issues root deeply into the architectural society and it is of great importance to create an understanding of what issues this paper will look for in the case analysis. The analysis of these subjects are based on academic literature, surveys and interviews with important voices in the field. Studies such as "The Space between the Studs: Feminism and Architecture" by Ahrentzen (2003) and "Women and Architecture" by Standley et al. (1974) discuss the position of feminism and females in the field of architecture. As women have tried to enter the field for many years, yet could only be deemed significant while partnered with a male architect, as architect Quintanilha said in an interview with Pogrebin (2016) of the New York Times:

"I did what most successful female architects did before Zaha: I partnered with my husband. Saying that sounds horrible, but I never thought it could be different. I simply chose not to swim against the tide. Yes, he knows I use him sometimes to open the road for me, and he is fine with that."

2.1. Lack of female representation

A clear issue in the field architecture is the lack of female representation, however the field is not only predominantly male, it has been deemed a female unfriendly environment. One would argue that the entrance of women in the field of architecture has been actively fought by their male peers (Wainwright, 2018). Whether it has been intentional sabotage or prejudice, this has led a lot of great barriers that yet remain unbroken by the majority of female architects. According to a 2017 survey by Bruce Tether women in architecture experience a great amount of discrimination, bullying and even sexual harassment. To quote a survey taker, a 45-year-old American administrator, 'I have had to explain to my boss that it's inappropriate to repeatedly joke about having the clients gang rape me.' (Tether, 2017). In an 2016 article of The New York Times "I Am Not the Decorator: Female Architects Speak Out" many female architects speak out on the lack of inclusion of women and minorities into the field of architecture. The article includes quotes from many female architects of colour and they all seem to have the same point of view. They all seem to agree that not only is the industry biased against women, it also is a strongly white-dominated field. As Farida Abu-Bakare, a Toronto based African-American architect, puts it; female architects of colour are a rarity in the field (Pogrebin, 2016). In the 2019 list of ThoughtCo "21 Famous Women Architects: Meet architecture's pioneering female influencers past and present" 21 female architects are highlighted for their contribution to architecture. According to ThoughtCo, this list was made to shine light on the underrepresented and underappreciated female architects that have been contributing to the field for many decades (Craven, 2019). An interesting note to realise, however, is that sixteen of these architects are of North-American or European decent.

The underrepresentation of women in the industry seems very odd, especially since the gender split in architects under 30 seems to be 50/50, however this split rises to a whopping 71% in favour of men when looking at registered architects (Lowe, 2020). This seems to suggest either a significant dropout, or a gender based discrimination in the hiring process. The discrimination women face in the industry is not exclusive to the social aspects of the field. According to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) there is a significant gender pay gap in the United Kingdom of around 10%-17% (RIBA, 2019). According to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) the American gender pay gap is similar to that of the United Kingdom, sitting at 14% (Marshall, 2019). According to an Archinect and a Dezeen article this is mostly because of the male domination in the high paid senior roles, even though the pay gap seem to be present in every function level (Marshall, 2019; Mairs, 2017). Additionally, the rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017 has affected this issue in a negative sense. According to a study from The University of Houston, in 2019 there has been a rise of 6% in reluctance to hire attractive women for jobs that require close interpersonal interactions with men, compared to 2018 (Bower, 2019). This absurd twist shows that the habit of the industry, where they would rather apply discrimination, rather than adjust their behaviour. To get to the heart of the matter, there is a great amount of discrimination in this field. Not only is this field predominantly male, most renowned architects and architectural works are "Western". As it is now, it seems as if as a collective we have forgotten about all other cultures and deemed it irrelevant. As Dianna Harris puts it (McGuiga, 2020):

So, when you ask, "In what ways is racism shaping and operating in architecture as a discipline and a professional practice?": in every way it is. We have to stop even calling it racist; we have to call it white supremacist, because that is functionally what it is. And if we don't get this conversation started, it's never going to end: racism is never going to be dismantled until we dismantle white supremacy and whiteness.

2.2. Architects of colour

In 2021 the white domination within the field of architecture still seems obvious, as most renowned architects are still white male architects, usually from the 'modern' era and architects of colour remain underappreciated in the industry. Simply googling "best architects" will give you many lists created by important architectural websites that exist mostly out of white male architects. For example, the website [Re-thinkingthefuture.com](https://re-thinkingthefuture.com) has created such a list of 50 most famous architects in the world of all time and from 50 famous architects, where only a total of eight can be defined as 'non-white'. And of these eight architects three have been educated in the West. This can serve as a representation as how hard it is for an architect of colour to break through in the West. It is also important to notice that this title of this list (and many others) includes the terms "of the world" and "of all time". In a Arb report of 2021, from the 29,645 research Arb registered architects, only 11% can be defined as any other Ethnic background than white (including mixed), while 83% can be defined as white.

The lack of representation for architects of colour is most definitely a deeper lying issue. The ideas of European dominance are often rooted within the education; specifically the biased in the teachings of European history. The narratives written by historical figures, such as Bannister Fletcher, have moulded the idea of European dominance within the field of architecture. Bannister has written a book "A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student Craftsman, and Amateur" in 1896 that has been updated over the years. In the fourth edition of his book (1901) Fletcher distinguished two styles, namely the Historical and the Non-Historical. In the category Non-Historical you would find styles such as Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Central American and Saracenic, that in contrast to Western architecture were not a logical solution to problem, but rather "in the East decorative schemes seem generally to have outweighed all considerations" (Dr. A. Thomas, TU Delft Lecture 2020). Teaching such as these have led to the incorporation of racialism into architecture. 20th century architectural moderns is on a very large scale formed by 19th century historicism and architects of the 19th century believed that the architecture of the future laid in laws or genetic principles governing historical cultural development (Cheng, 2020). Architects seemed to share racial beliefs, where someone's genetics would define the architectural styles they adopt and through racial evolution some architectural styles that have been developed were deemed the superior one, often associated by the 'Aryan' peoples style, developed in Europe. The racial thinkers of the 19th century, such as Johannes Fabian, made great 'scientifically proven' historical schemes where different races were arranged on a chronological schemes, where non-European races were categorised as primitive and the Europeans were categorised as most advanced (Cheng, 2020). One can imagine that this mindset might, to this day, consciously or subconsciously be present in many, as the prime of these theories was the 20th century, that was just a century ago. This could easily explain the bias of the architectural field and create an understanding of the unlearning that needs to be done in order to correct these beliefs.

3. Zaha Hadid

3.1. Growing up

Hadid was born in Baghdad in 1950, meaning she grew up in a post-war Arabic capital, where she inherited a sense of a centuries-old culture along with a passion for progression (Pyla, 2008). Her family consisted of her father Muhammad al-Hajj Husayn Hadid, who was a wealthy industrialist and politician, her mother Wajiha al-Sabunji and her two brothers. As an eleven-year old girl Hadid had already decided she would seek her future in architecture. Her inspiration and ambition for architecture began throughout her childhood, when travelling frequently with her family to England and Switzerland (The Art Story, n.d.). She inherently was also fascinated by the interior design of her family home and at the age of nine was already extremely architecturally aware. Hadid was very close to her father, who always motivated her to achieve great things and instilled in her the capacity to look past obstacles. Her parents never made her gender a point of discussion, neither did they treat her differently from her brothers. Additionally, by growing up in a male dominated household, she was comfortable in her ability to manoeuvre in a male dominated 'world' (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). Hadid developed a multicultural, as well as international education, since she attended boarding schools in Switzerland and England. For pleasure, she and her family visited architectural sites, interesting buildings and museums in each city they visited, enhancing her inspiration in becoming an architect (The Art Story, n.d.).

3.2. Education and development

Hadid commenced her studies at the American University in Beirut and graduated in the field of mathematics. At first glance this would seem contradicting with her fascination with architecture, however as mathematics greatly inspired the Arabic culture, this had its influences on Hadid as well (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). Thereafter, she pursued her ambition by moving to London and continued her studies at the Architectural Association. She was recognized for her exceptional talent by some great names such as Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, and Bernard Tschumi (The Art Story, n.d.). Her rich background, as well as her strong upbringing paved the way for her to assert herself in between many male legends (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). During her fourth year, Hadid designed a hotel: 'Malevich Tektonik', for the Hungerford Bridge on the River Thames in London. She was personally introduced to Kazimir by Rem Koolhaas during her project. Her design was praised for its fearlessness and near to anti-architecture (The Art Story, n.d.). It was therefore her attitude and her willingness to stand out through her art that made her a recognizable designer and respected among her peers. She continued to graduate with a Diploma Prize in 1977. Shortly after she became partner at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), a firm founded by Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zenghelis, located in the Netherlands (The Art Story, n.d.). It might be interesting to note that, even though the main architectural partner at the firm were men, the founders of the firm existed out of men and women. Which was, for its time, already a major progression. This would have affected Hadid as well, since her first professional experience was that of a mixed environment. In 1980, however, Hadid moved to London to launch her own firm 'Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA)'. She started the company with merely four people and over time grew the company to 400 employees. Patrick Schumacher joined early on as an extension of his studies and over time grew to become her partner (Iris Ceramica Group, 2020).

Hadid enjoyed painting and found inspiration in Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist paintings of geometric shapes, who was the founder of Suprematism and the Russian art style. Furthermore, from her fascination with Malevich's art, Hadid learned to use abstraction in her professional career as a tool to develop new designs. Abstraction helped her develop new means of drawing as to explore the affiliation between buildings and elements, rather than to be limited in the concept of a building as a solid mass (Lee, 2005). Her fascination with Malevich's art played a significant role in her career and the development of her style, and as Malevich could be considered a quite radical, modern artist, this later on affected her career significantly.

3.3. Launching her career

Due to her unwillingness to colour within the lines, Zaha Hadid came up with more difficulty as a professional architect. Her work was inspired by abstract modern art, which made it harder for her to be accepted in the still very conservative 80's (Mertins, 2006). In 1983 Zaha Hadid won the prestigious competition for The Peak proposal of a leisure and recreation centre in Hong Kong. Herein, the

influence of Suprematism is very visible (see Figure 2), however the project was cancelled before execution. Despite this, Hadid managed to make a name for herself in regard to her ambitious and creative ideas. She managed to gain a respected reputation through her abstract drawings, and she started teaching architecture at schools such as, but not limited to Cambridge University, Architectural Association, Columbia University and Harvard Graduate School of Design (The Art Story, n.d.). This proved to be a significant step in her career, and her development as an architect, as many employees claim that her office felt like an extension of their studies (Iris Ceramica Group, 2020). Hadid wanted her office to reflect her teachings, by encouraging close collaboration, contextual design and unlimited creativity (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013).



Figure 1: Architectural drawings of The Peak proposal (left) and Suprematic art by Malevitch (right), showing the influence of Suprematism in Hadid's style (Source: Zaha Hadid Architects, n.d.; Carré D'Artistes, n.d.)

Her gained reputation helped her get her artwork exhibited at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1988, where many agreed it was extraordinary. And even though she was greatly appreciated as an artist and a teacher, she still struggled to get her designs realised and over time gained the nickname "paper architect" (Mertins, 2006). However, Hadid blames struggles were mainly on her avant-garde style, rather than gender-based or racial discrimination (Iris Ceramica Group, 2020). This could be substantiated with the fact that OMA, a firm with two male founding architects, also struggled realising designs in the early 70's (OMA, n.d.). Thus, despite of all of her other achievements throughout the years, her designs, such as the one for the 1994 competition for an opera house in Cardiff, were often rejected, mostly due to cost measures (The Art Story, n.d.). From her first design to win a competition (in 1983), it took Hadid a total of ten years to finally get her first project realised. This project, the Fire Station in Germany (seen in Figure 2) broke through the "paper architect" stigma and helped Hadid create a name for herself as an established post-modern architect with an avant-garde style (Mertins, 2016).



Figure 2: Architectural context drawing and a picture of the Fire Station in Germany, where the influences of Suprematism are still very apparent (Source: Zaha Hadid Architects, n.d.)

In the last 15 years there was a radical shift within the field of architecture, making contemporary art and architecture more desired. This paved the way for Hadid to establish herself as a household name, as the shift was drawing towards her preferred style (Abdullah, Said & Ossen, 2013). This should have skyrocketed her career immediately, however Hadid's strive to be innovative seemed to always be ahead of its time. As she grew her architectural firm and became a household name, her 'obsession' with thinking outside of the box kept her a fascination point, but also a subject of controversy. She continuously aimed for something grander, so when contemporary architecture grew in popularity, she continued to develop her style towards the extraordinary (Desert Island Discs, n.d.). As a trained mathematician, Hadid often used her unique background to design outside of the regular x, y, z dimensions. Being both scientifically and creatively trained set her apart from many of her peers with similar styles (Abdullah, Said & Ossen, 2013). Hadid's designs were held in high regards, but were often critiqued for their complexity and their lack of cohesion with surrounding architecture (Iris Ceramica Group, 2020). Hadid, however, continued to be fascinated with context and could always set herself apart from her peers, as she imagined a building to be imbedded into the landscape.

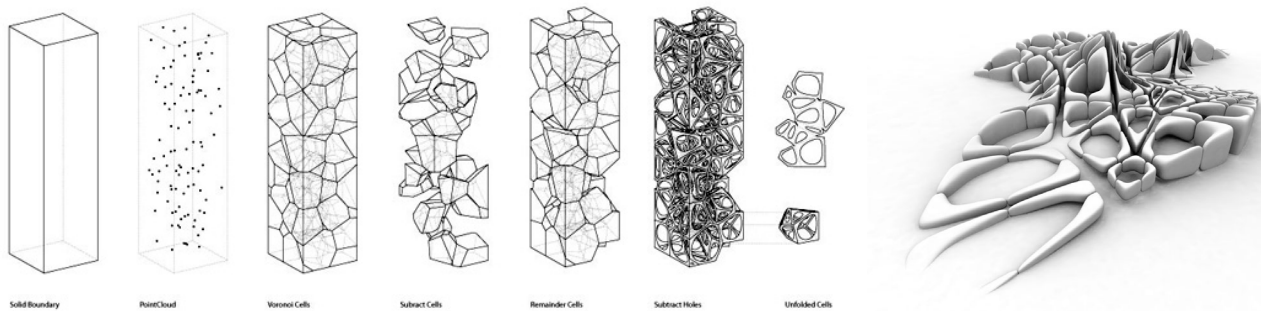


Figure 3: Parametricism. A style newly developed by Patrick Schumacher and Zaha Hadid that incorporates geometry in architecture (Source: Schumacher, 2008)

As technology progressed, Hadid's pursuit of mathematics and geometry within design became less of an fascination and more a realisation. Together with her partner, Patrick Schumacher, who was also greatly inspired by geometry, they developed a new style named Parametricism (Lee, 2015), see Figure 3. This style is mostly visible in Hadid's most famous design, namely the Heydar Aliyev Centre in Baku (see Figure 4). This design completely adapts to its environment, but can be described as the ultimate ZH design. Hadid's main inspiration is found in the context and surroundings of the building and the cultural heritage of the surroundings seems to be less of an influence in her design process (Lee, 2015). This has caused Hadid's design to become timeless and boundless, however it has also been the cause of a lot of criticism from her peers and users. Critiques seem to think Hadid often disregards the culture of the area her projects are in, or the time they are built in (Fairs, 2015), for example with the Port House in Antwerp. There seems to be a lack of attachment to the heritage of the existing building, which is a monument, as her design looks nothing like it or looks to have drawn any inspiration from it. The design does, however, take great inspiration from the landscape.

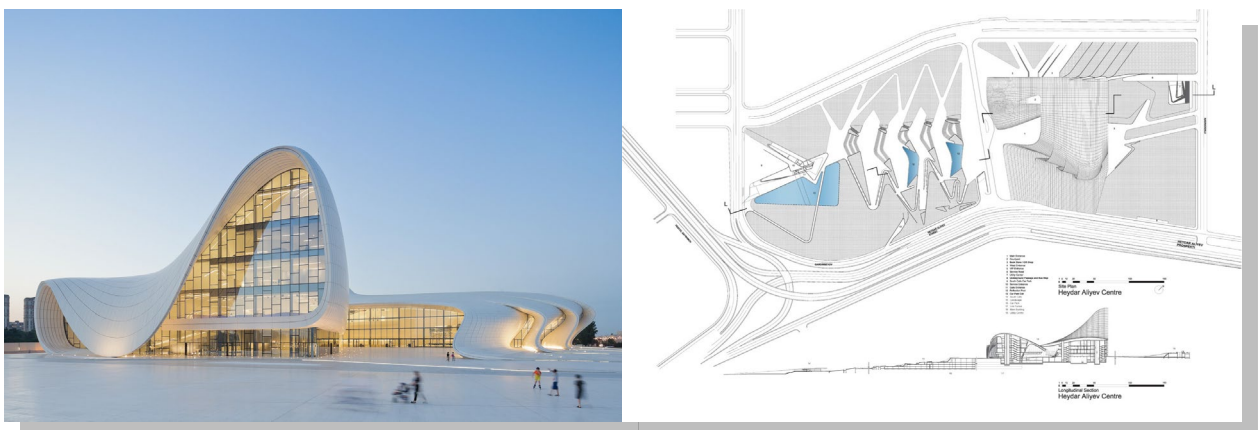


Figure 4: The Heydat Aliyev Centre in Baku. Zaha Hadid's most famous project and a project where Parametricism is greatly recognisable (Source: Zaha Hadid Architects, n.d.)

3.4. Struggles and obstacles

As an evolutionary female immigrant architect Hadid was bound to experience some struggles along her journey of becoming the legend she is now. Due to the nature of the field, women often were regarded as designers, rather than great founding architects, that were able to start their own firm (Booth, 2014). Hadid also seemed to be aware of this struggle. When receiving her Business Woman of the Year Award she speaks of this fact by saying: "Architecture is no longer a mans world. This idea a woman can't think three dimensionally is ridiculous" (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013, 4:22). And even though Hadid believes a female architect has had to struggle through a lot of prejudice, she mentions that in her case it is mostly due to her innovative ideas and her stray from existing architecture, rather than her being a women. In an interview with BBC regarding this subject she mentions: "It was very difficult for anybody that was trying to do something new". She adds, "it was more difficult for me, because at the beginning it was too wild and I have to say I think the whole card of Saga (...) I really think in hindsight it had a very negative effect" (Desert Island Discs, n.d., 4:00). As she grew up with two brothers and had a very close relationship with her dad, she felt comfortable navigating through a male dominated community, and had a strong personality that aided her herein (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013).

In her BBC interview with Carrie Gracie, Hadid mentions how particularly women should be encouraged from a young age to make the next step. There are many young women with great potential, yet without a good support system and encouragement, it is almost impossible to rise to greatness. She puts emphasis on the team effort and support of her students as well as her colleagues and the encouragement this gave her, even though they went through a long period of losing competitions or not being able to realise her designs (Desert Island Discs, n.d.). Hadid always pursued greatness and never let her gender, culture, ethnicity or religion stand in her way. She describes her childhood as "fabulous" and explains how her dad continuously encouraged her to be curious and goal-orientated. She learned to manage through social situations by being different during multiple occasions in her life. One of the first occasions she mentions are when she attended a Christian school as a child, where she was confronted with a difference in religion, however she managed to assert her identity as a non-Christian and eventually did not have to join in on the Christian practices (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). This situation paints a picture of how Hadid tends to deal with being different. Not only does she question the different perspectives, she asserts herself by remaining true to herself and embracing her uniqueness. During her studies at the Architectural Association Hadid again was confronted notion of uniqueness, however in this situation it was encouraged. She mentions how there was a period of 'anti-design' and 'anti-architecture' that resulted in students experimenting with sounds, crafts and some even set up a farm in Wales. Hadid, however, refused to give into most of this. The 60's had influenced the teaching to the degree that designs were left limitless, formless and boundless. Wherein the students were supposed to find themselves and their fascination, for Hadid this was the teachings of Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis. Koolhaas and Zenghelis both were impressed by Hadid's presence and her ability to express her art and greatly encouraged her to pursue her goals (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). What seems to be of great importance is that the 'hippy culture' of the 60's seemed to have influenced the teaching at the Architectural Association to celebrate uniqueness and disregarding gender or ethnicity. This allowed Hadid to develop herself as a designer, without being held back by her gender or ethnicity.

When entering the field of architecture as a professional Hadid faced more struggles regarding her gender and ethnicity. She now faced discrimination by older established architects, potential clients and critiques. In an interview with Charlie Rose in 1999 she mentions how at the time that she won the competition for The Peak in Hong Kong, the client initially was not aware of the fact that she was a woman and how this caused some friction upon discovery. She brushes it off and explains that it was a situation out of her control and therefore there was no reason to be stressed about it (The Charlie Rose Show, 1999). Apart from being confronted with sexism in her professional meetings, Hadid is also confronted with it through the media. In her interview with the BBC Hadid is confronted with something that often happens to women in the field of architecture. The interviewer, Gracie, asks if Hadid's team has been a substitute family to her, adding "you're not married, you don't have children (...) are they your family?" (Desert Island Discs, n.d.,12:00); a remark that is usually not made with her male colleagues. This does not seem to faze Hadid. What is interesting is how she answers this question and brushes off the comments and says: "I think of them really as friends". Hadid explains how she has maintained friendships with a lot of her students, however her strengths are in "knowing how to delegate", suggesting that that is the key to forming great bonds with her students and colleagues (Desert Island Discs, n.d.,12:20). The culture at her firm, Zaha Hadid Architects, does seem to reflect this. Many of her colleagues and employees describe the firm as an extension of the Architectural Association or schools that she taught at. They explain that Hadid did not instil a

hierarchical structure, whereby she would merely delegate, or order her employees around. The atmosphere created by Hadid was that of a collaborative nature. Everyone worked together, expressed ideas and brought forward concerns (Iris Ceramica Group, 2020). This would be a lot different than the culture in male-led architectural firms, where the hierarchy is quite visible present (Oxford Union, 2016). Hadid expresses that many of her employees do not allow her to touch the models, as she often accidentally or non-accidentally breaks them (Tate Talks, 2014). Furthermore, Schumacher and Hadid seem to have a more friendly relation as well, where they feel comfortable using pet names, tease each other or confront each other's bad ideas. However, all of her peers do express that Hadid is an extremely complex architect, that does not like to be contained. She has a huge ego, as her peers convey all architects should have, and is always inspiring to others (Parsons & Hanlon, 2013). This sketches a more comfortable and friendly business culture, whereby employees and employers feel comfortable expressing their opinions and creating dialogues and perhaps this has been the secret to the success of ZHA.

Another point that often comes up in regards to Hadid is her cultural background. In her interview with BBC Hadid is asked if her work reflects her Arab roots in any way, in which she answers with "I'm sure there is, I mean I know where it is... (...) You know in the Arab world there was a tremendous interest in Math, Algebra and Geometry. And I would say... It's Geometry. (...) A lot of people think it's calligraphy, the flair of the calligraphy lines. (...) But also I think that in a way, in all Arab cities the field is very different. And it's much more seamless, the way it flows." Hadid puts the emphasis on how she was taught the importance of progress (Desert Island Discs, n.d, 6:10). Hadid seems more often than not, to become slightly frustrated at the perception of what the Europeans have on the Middle-East. In particular Iraq and Lebanon. She explains how the countries were not isolated and often had influence from all over the world. A big influence would be for instance Brazil, but also the United States (Tate Talks, 2014). Often people seem to either be ignorant of the culture, progress and societies in the Middle-East, or rather base it on post war devastation and propaganda. This dialogue often paves the way for unnecessary criticism on architects of colour, while western-European architects are spared these kind of criticism.

4. Conclusion

This paper has aimed to create an understanding of the journey Zaha Hadid has led in order to become the legend that she is today. In a field that is known to be discriminatory against women as well as non-white people it is impressive to have achieved the status that Zaha Hadid has as both a woman and a immigrant (of colour). The combination of these two aspects, along with her great achievements, made her the perfect candidate for a case analysis that would serve the purpose of creating an understanding of how a female architect can manoeuvre through the field of architecture.

This paper positioned itself by first creating a narrative for the female architect of colour. First, important voices on the subject of feminism and discrimination in the field of architecture were researched. This allowed for an (fact-based) narrative to be created of what women and people of colour in the field of architecture have had to face over the years. This allowed for potential biases to be checked. From this research the conclusion can be drawn that even though the field of architecture has advanced its inclusivity, it is nowhere near an acceptable rate. Over the years women were granted more rights and allowed to enter the field as architects, however this has not protected them from discrimination. More often than not, women are looked down upon by their male peers, paid less, offered less opportunities and even harassed. Female architects face more criticism for the same activities, compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, because of indoctrination of the masses in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, European architecture is regarded as superior, compared to all other (ancient) cultures. This perspective may have improved over the years, however a lot of misconception still exists, which has led to ignorance and discrimination.

With this background information, Zaha Hadid's case was approached. This conducted research aimed to answer the research question: *"How did Zaha Hadid develop her career and manoeuvre through the field of architecture, as an Iraqi born female architect?"*. The journey started when Hadid was yet still a young child, where she received great amounts of encouragement and opportunities to achieve her goals. She was introduced to design and architecture at a young age and became extremely fascinated by it. Because of her mixed education and her exposure to western culture, Hadid was very comfortable with the western culture when she entered the Architectural Association. Here, she was further encouraged to pursue her dreams, as her peers and tutors were fascinated by her abilities and her art. Since her gender or ethnicity were not massive factors on which she was held back up until this part of her life, she had uninterrupted developed a great sense of identity. When she finally entered the field of architecture as a professional, she faced a lot more discrimination. However, Hadid did not seem to experience her gender or ethnicity as the main sources of her struggles during her career. She was an avant-garde artist that always aimed to be different and unique, and in a conservative architectural period, this proved to be her biggest struggle. Hadid was deemed unrealistic and not functional. This, however, did not stop her. She continued developing her style and merely brushed criticism off. When suddenly a radical shift took place in architecture. Contemporary architecture became the norm, making Hadid a trendsetter. However, Hadid continued to be criticised, as she continued developing her style. Hadid positioned herself as an architect, gender or ethnicity disregarded. Even though she understood the stigmas she was faced with as a female architect of colour, she did not let it faze her. She established herself as a household name and brushed critique about her gender or ethnicity off. In interviews she often remained apolitical, asserting that even though she loves to be an inspiration to female architects or designers, design is genderless and success within the field of architecture should not be dependant on gender, nor ethnicity, but on talent and skill. In the end Hadid always remained true to herself and never acknowledged that her gender influenced her art. Her cultural background did aid develop her style, as her fascination with geometry stems from her Arabic background, however, Hadid's often put her designs in a physical context, whereby the landscape played the biggest role.

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