

The identity and history of the Swahili-speaking peoples of the East African coast have long been contentious, and they continue to be so today. This is partly a function of the politics of history within highly diverse and stratified societies, in which people frequently invoke historical claims regarding foreign origins, social and religious status, or genealogy to substantiate contemporary political, social, or economic positions. In line with this claim, the author seeks to document and derive the architectural constants and elements of the buildings in Pate region by establishing the relationship between symbolism and built form. This would assist in giving identity and building structures that the people will relate to and have meaning to the future generations. Traditional typologies were used as descriptive case studies because they were built in the early years by the early inhabitants of the towns within the Island. Structured observations and interviews were used during the course of this research. Shape and geometry, materials, scale, dominance, architectural building styles and cultural influence were the chosen parameters to carry out the field studies on the link between form and symbolism. A detailed analysis of both traditional and modern building forms was done and similarities and differences were noted. Changes have been noted in the modern built forms and some are affecting the preservation of culture that is meant to be preserved. The study recommends the use of design parameters used in the traditional built forms that enhanced cultural and communal values like the use of spacious courtyards, plasterworks and carvings that had inscriptions about the religion or meaningful messages, openings and elongated rooms. Privacy levels have to be maintained in the upcoming structures as moral values are highly recognized in the Islamic culture