

# διαπλοκές του χώρου

ήθος - κοινωνικές πρακτικές - αρχιτεκτονική

Πανελλήνιο Συνέδριο με Διεθνή Συμμετοχή

21-23 Μαΐου 2021

Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης

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**Διαπλοκές του Χώρου. Ήθος - κοινωνικές πρακτικές - αρχιτεκτονική**  
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**Kyriaki Tsoukala**

**In collaboration with**  
**Paraskevi Panteliadou**  
**Kelly Papaioannou**

**Department of Architecture, AUTH**  
**Department of Political Sciences, AUTH**  
**School of Architecture, NTUA**  
**Department of Architecture, UP**  
**Department of Architecture, UOI**

# **Changes in Public Buildings Practice in Turkey: The Impact of Competition Projects**

**Türkan HARMANBAŞI, Serhat ANIKTAR**

Ress.Asst., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design

Asst. Prof., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Department of Architecture

Throughout history, architecture has been an important tool in which the rulers have demonstrated their power, ideology and identity to people. The authorities aim to create these representations on the ruled with the size of the building, the architectural style and the materials chosen. Every authority wants to have a building that represents itself in the city to not be forgotten. At the present, governments continue to build public structures with the same mentality. They want to show how deep their roots go by emphasizing their ties with the past in their buildings to demonstrate the power of authority. Increasingly in recent years, public buildings are determined by the projects selected in architectural competitions. With these competitions that are open to everyone, it is seen that there are differences in the design of public buildings. With public competitions, instead of a decision made by a single authority, public buildings are selected by a jury decision in a more democratic manner. By this means, the buildings started to represent the public instead of the government, and the ruled instead of the ruler. It appears to be a positive development in terms of architectural ethics. Within the scope of this study, the effects of ten selected public buildings on users were measured with a survey study. Some of the buildings designed with different architectural vision are projects selected as a result of the competition. With the survey study conducted on sixty people, it is aimed to measure how the buildings selected with the competition project change the public building perception of the users.

**Keywords:** Public buildings, ethic, perception in architectural design, identity perception, architecture

## **Public Buildings and Design Principles**

Physical spaces that can be accessed by all citizens and allow society to take part in social life by coming together such as streets, avenues, squares, parks, theaters, cafes constitute public structures. (Birsal, 2010). Public buildings are elements of the urban complex. They are buildings where different public services are dedicated to the peoples. Public buildings fulfill various public services such as institutional, public, cultural, etc. (MIQCP, 2010). These structures appear as a modern or historical building in the city center or outside the city.

Jürgen Habermas said the following on the subject: “...as in the expression ‘public building,’ the term need not refer to general accessibility; the building does not even have to be open to public traffic. ‘Public buildings’ simply house state institutions and such are ‘public’.” (Habermas, 2010).

Public buildings exist not only physically, but also as a part of the urban image, with their functions, locations, relations with their surroundings, and the perceptions they leave on society. These buildings are sources of prestige not only for their users but also for those who pass by. For this reason, public buildings also affect their environment with their extroverted features.

Throughout history, clergymen, statesmen, kings, administrators, companies had magnificent buildings constructed such as palaces, churches, mosques, castles and skyscrapers to show their power. In this context, they used architecture as a means of showing power/authority. This use of architecture as a means of showing power by authorities has also affected architectural styles. For example, Hitler and Mussolini engaged in architectural activities in order to show themselves strong and influence their peoples. At the present time, government buildings, justice palaces and cultural centers are buildings where the government expresses itself.

Public buildings carry various meanings with their architectural identity. These meanings could be; power, permanence, monumentality, sincerity, justice, authority, tradition, modernity, etc.

With the establishment of the Republic in 1923 in Turkey, new public buildings were erected in the 1930s, especially in the capital Ankara. During this period, the French municipalism mentality was adopted and public buildings were also influenced by the French model. The invited foreign architects were asked to construct buildings that would show the ideology and prestige of the state. In the 1950s, with industrialization and urbanization, architecture ceased to be a means of the state ideology. While public and social transformations are taking place in public buildings, architectural designs had started to come out of the sovereignty of the government, especially with the prominence of the concept of democracy in the society. In this period, it is seen that functionality became more prominent and international styles were followed. (Tapan, 2007).

### **A Method: Architectural Design Competitions**

Obtaining architectural projects via design competitions is a valid method in Turkey as in the whole world. Architectural design competitions are organizations where the

same program data and design proposals requested in the same deadline are evaluated by a jury (Figure 1).

Architectural projects are important organizations in terms of opening up horizons to architecture, developing creativity and positively affecting the motivation of newly graduated architects. The competitions help the development of architectural culture as well as the acquisition of buildings. It mediates many individuals from different professions to establish dialogue. It also provides recognition in professional circles for award-winning individuals

Competitions are participatory and democratic organizations where equal rights are given to each competitor. It is expected that the public buildings, which are the representation of democracy in the city image, will be determined by the competition project method.

In the competitions held in the first term of the Republic of Turkey, designs that are intended to reflect the new ideology and fulfill the basic functions were aimed generally. (Akçay, 2018). Parallel to this, different designs were trended. The cultural level, tastes and expectations of the society changed in time. Architectural design competitions in our country transformed from a period when financial opportunities and the number of participants were limited and foreign architects worked intensively into a period when financial opportunities improved, the number of architecture schools increased, and the interest in national architectural design competitions increased. From the Bursa State Building Competition in 1930 until the end of 2016, it is seen that 46 municipal public building competitions were announced among the 926 architectural / urban design competitions. (Ar, 2018). Looking at the periodic distribution of these competitions, it is seen that there has been a great increase in the municipal public building competition in the period after 2000. However, when the percentage of practice is considered with the increasing number of competitions, it is seen that the number of projects practiced is 18, although there are 46 municipal public building competitions announced.

### **The Concept of Democracy and Ethics in Public Building Design Decision**

Democracy is a form of government in which all members of a community have equal rights. The word 'Democracy', originated from Greek, consists of the words 'demos' and 'kratein'. 'Demos' means the people, the mass of the people, while the word 'kratein' means exercising power. (Schmidt, 2002). So, democracy means ruling the people.

The reflection of the concept of democracy is seen in many areas. Its reflection on architecture can be in the form of places where the public and the state are together, physical and visual integrity, transparency, and regulations that ensure public participation. (Türkmen, 2009).

In the early period of the Republic, the constructions of the public buildings were carried out with projects commissioned by the architects appointed by the state. Buildings were constructed to symbolize the power and ideology of the new state established with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In the progress of time, with the establishment of the concept of democracy in the society, the demands of the people have also changed. The rulers representing the people have realized the importance and necessity of getting the people's opinions. Especially local governments care to be closer to the peoples. As a

reflection of this in architecture, it is seen that architectural design competitions are organized by making the design decisions of public buildings open to public.

### **Field Study**

Architectural projects provide a democratic contributing to the construction of public buildings in Turkey. This study is carried on the purpose of measuring the perception of the municipality buildings constructed according to the competition method that created in the society. Survey study was preferred as a method in this field study. Participants responded the survey online via computer or phone. A survey study was presented to the participants to see their thoughts about the facade constructions of public buildings and their general aesthetic evaluations. With the obtained analysis results, the physical and sensory concept evaluations of the participants on the facade constructions of the municipality buildings were determined.

First of all, in order to determine the public building perception of the users, eight adjective pairs were given to the participants, and they were asked to choose the adjectives that most express the term 'public building' (Figure 2). While choosing these adjective pairs, it has been tried to select the words that are frequently used side by side with the term public building in the literature. While the municipality building projects selected by the administrators are generally close to the traditional design, it has been observed that the projects selected through the competition process are modern design products. According to the results of these adjective pairs, it was tried to be understood whether the users preferred the projects selected by the administrators or the projects obtained through the competitions.

In the next section, a semantic scale interval consisting of adjective pairs was created by giving ten public building images to users.

They were asked to evaluate public buildings in the images according to 'Inviting / Repulsive, Permanent / Temporary, Unique / Widespread, Brave / Modest, Monumental / Intimate, Elegant / Rough, Traditional / Modern, Easy to understand / Difficult to understand, Clear entrance / Not clear entrance, Well designed / Badly designed, Representing power / Not representing power' adjective pairs. (Figure 3). The reason for choosing these adjectives is to determine the architectural features that participants prefer in public buildings.

In the study, 10 public buildings from the different cities of Turkey and in different architectural styles, some of which elected among the competition projects, were selected to be shown to the participants. (Figure 4). Physical properties such as being in different styles, being constructed in different periods, having symmetrical formation on the façade, presence of arch and columns, clarity of the entrance, rhythmic, horizontality or verticality, transparency or rigidity, circularity effect in the buildings were taken into consideration in the selection of images. It was regarded that the images selected from different building technologies should be similar in size and scale and that their point of view is from the entrance front.

### **Evaluation and Conclusion**

Participants have chosen Symmetry 89.7% , Monumental 87.9%, Simple79.3% , Traditional 60.3%, Low-rise / horizontal 56.9%, Linear / flat 84.7%, Deaf surfaces are the majority 82.8%, Modern building materials 67.2%, as the words that most express the term 'public building'. To the users/ participants' mind, the most powerful terms for 'the public building' has been 'symmetry' first, then 'monumental', 'linear, flat' and 'deaf surfaces are the majority' respectively (Figure 5). In addition, it is seen that users prefer simple lines and modern materials in public buildings.

In the percentage distribution of the survey results, the table prepared according to the first three buildings that received the most votes on the basis of adjectives is shown in Figure 6. According to these results, it is seen that the public buildings determined and implemented by competition projects are 'inviting, unique, well designed' but 'not represent power'.

The developments and changes emerged in the period from the foundation of the Republic to the present have also affected the field of architecture. From the periods when the power of the state was clearly demonstrated, present periods in which more transparent, unruly and inviting buildings were adopted that aimed to be in touch with the people. However, it is seen that the serious and strong expression that reflects the public identity in public administration buildings has survived until today. Innovations on the basis of materials and construction systems were preferred instead of extreme architectural designs. The concepts that do not change against the changing form and style are that the state continues to aim to make its presence felt towards the people. Social identity found expression in the architectural form with its formal, monumental, static, partially or completely distant approach that can be distinguished within the city.

It is thought that the data obtained as a result of the study will provide data for the design phase of the new public buildings to be built and the evaluation criteria used in the study will form a method for examinations to be made for different building typologies. In the future, it will be possible to determine the architectural elements preferred by the user in the competition projects by making a study where only the architectural products obtained through the competition project will be evaluated.

Decisions to be taken regarding the squares of the city, the buildings to be constructed in these squares, the width of the streets, the height of the buildings, parks and gardens affect all individuals living in the city. In this respect, competitions are beneficial organizations for the decisions taken for the citizens, both to choose the best project and to make the decisions concerning the city through democratic means. Obtaining municipal buildings through competition is important in terms of democratically determining municipal buildings, which is an institution representing democracy. By means of public competitions, instead of a decision made by a single authority, public buildings are selected by jury decision in a more democratic and ethic manner. Thus, public buildings represent the people instead of the government, and the ruled instead of the ruler. It appears to be a positive development in terms of architectural ethics.

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## Image Sources

Figure 1: Architectural design competition process

Figure 2: Adjective pairs describing the term 'public building'

Figure 3: Adjective pairs given in the survey

Figure 4: Public building images used in the survey

Figure 5: Percentage distribution of words expressing the term 'public building'

Figure 6: Percentage distribution of the survey respondents according to the adjective pairs of public building