



# Spatial Organization of Public Buildings: An Evaluation on the Capital City of Turkey

*Kamu Yapılarının Mekansal Organizasyonu:  
Türkiye'nin Başkenti Üzerine Bir İnceleme*

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## ABSTRACT

Ankara, a small town of Anatolia before becoming the capital of Turkey, experienced a fundamental spatial restructuring process following the proclamation of the Republic. The vision of modernity and protective economic structure of the Early Republican era determined the spatial configuration of the city and produced public buildings as the icons of the young regime. The last ninety years witnessed different political-economic climates redesigning the urban regime of Ankara and symbols. One of the most tangible transformations is observed in the public buildings, which convey the economic understandings and urban politics of each period through their spatial and architectural organizations, and symbolic meanings. This study explores the change in the urban symbols with an emphasis on public buildings. For this, the ministry buildings of the capital city were selected to investigate spatial organizations, architect buildings, and the messages conveyed to the public. Focusing on the the intentionally developed clusters of ministries, this study adressed basically three periods concerning the change in political and economic systems; the foundation period, the liberal years and the neoliberal era. As a result of this study it is stated that that in the Turkish case public buildings reflect the main motives of the period they were produced, their spatial organization serves as a medium containing information about the political, economic and social structure of each period.

**Keywords:** Ankara; capital city; public buildings; spatial organization; urban symbols.

## ÖZ

*Türkiye'nin başkenti olmadan önce Anadolu'nun küçük bir kasabası olan Ankara, Cumhuriyet'in ilan edilmesinin ardından temel bir mekânsal yapılanma süreci deneyimlemiştir. Erken Cumhuriyet döneminin modernist vizyonu ve korumacı ekonomik politikaları kentin mekânsal yapılanmasını belirlemiş ve genç rejimin ikonları haline gelen kamu yapılarını üretmiştir. Doksan yıllık dönemde Ankara'nın kent rejimi ve simgelerini yeniden tasarlayan farklı politik-ekonomik iklimler deneyimlenmiştir. En somut değişimlerden biri, her dönemin ekonomik kabullerini ve kentsel politikalarını mekânsal ve mimari organizasyonları ve simgesel anlamlarıyla ileten kamu yapılarında gözlemlenmektedir. Bu çalışma, kamu yapılarına odaklanarak kentsel simgelerin değişimini araştırmaktadır. Bunun için, mekânsal organizasyonları, mimari projeleri ve kamuya ilettikleri mesajları araştırmak üzere başkentteki bakanlık binaları seçilmiştir. Çalışma, bakanlıklar niyetiyle tasarlanan kümelere odaklanarak politik ve ekonomik sistemdeki değişimlere göre temel olarak üç dönemde irdelenmektedir; kuruluş dönemi, liberal yıllar ve neoliberal yıllar. Çalışmanın sonucunda, kamu yapılarının üretildikleri dönemlerin ana güdüsünü yansıttığı, Türkiye örneğinde ise bu yapıların mekânsal düzenlemelerinin politik, ekonomik ve sosyal yapı hakkında bilgi içeren araçlar oldukları ortaya konulmuştur.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Ankara; başkent; kamu yapıları; mekânsal organizasyon; kentsel semboller.

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**Article arrival date: November 16, 2018 - Accepted for publication: August 28, 2020**

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## Introduction: Spaces of Political and Economic Power

### Public Buildings in Administrative Thinking

The broad literature on public space acknowledges that public buildings are the testimonies of power (Carr et al., 1992; Killian, 1998; Moore, 1996; Marcus, 2006; Vale, 2008; Carmona, 2010; Minkenberg, 2014). With the institutionalization of relations, bureaucratic thinking appeared as a product of modernity. Max Weber (1947) defined bureaucracy as an illustration of the rationalization process of modern human experience. Since the end of the 19th century, the organizational space of state institutions has been characterized in line with the modernity paradigm. In bureaucratic thinking, the institutional structure of the state is embodied with public buildings in the forms of bureaus and offices to fulfil public services. The classical administrative approach argues that the space of bureaucracy reflects the optimization and rationalization of the work. The bureaucratic units are, therefore, characterized as divided, controlled, imposed, hierarchical, productive, personalized, symbolic, and social places (Chanlat, 2006). The new spatial representations of administrative thinking are identified by being neutral, and defending the public good contrary to private interests.

The idea of modern governance has been criticized since the 1920s, denouncing the classical organization as being a non-democratic environment. Particularly, the rise of conflicts in the process of globalization questioned the institutional structures of the modern age that relied on the premises of reason, objectivity and progress. The globalizing market structure of the 1980s depending on flexibility, specialization and disorganization demanded a new atmosphere in many organizations.

### Reorganization of Public Buildings

Similar to the change in administrative thinking, since the 1980s, urban space has been structured around the neoliberal economic policies which provide a market-oriented insight into decision-making processes. The political and economic transformations have led to new trends in urban development. The most obvious change in political and economic transformations is seen in cities. However, today, the main explanations behind urban space structuring are not simply linked to the globalizing market structure. During the post-2000's, dynamics at the global level force states to transform and redefine their roles using their capacity to alter the political and institutional arrangements across space (Brenner, 2003). The neoliberal policies arguing for the erosion of state interventions are not valid for the new era. Instead, the state expands its field of intervention as well as increasing its entrepreneurship to adapt to the new circumstances and to mitigate the effects of the emerging social and

economic crises. Thus, the new era of neoliberalism is characterized by a hybrid of neoliberal economic and non-neoliberal political strategies exemplified by the intensive interventions of the state in spatial decisions (Fuller and Geddes, 2008).

### Public Buildings As Spaces of Power

Political power forms the spaces that scale the city, holds the traces of values embedded by different cultures in the city and acquires a social identity. From the seminal work of The Urban Revolution arguing that “truly monumental public buildings not only distinguish each known city from any village but also symbolize the concentration of the social surplus” (Childe, 1950, pp. 11), public buildings are considered as the material forms of power of the authority. As an instrument of the state propaganda, monumental structures and spaces have been used to embody the values of dominant ideologies, which do not necessarily have related to size, but with the intensity of expression (Curtis, 1996). Chanlat (2006, pp. 209) argues that “the spatial forms, architecture, aesthetics and materials of the buildings, offices and plants are full of meaning”. Hence, the urban design, architecture, and monuments notes Cinar, are functioning for the state “to establish its power and authority in controlling and dictating the norms that guide daily public life” (Cinar, 2014, pp. 228). As acknowledged by many scholars, architecture and spatial planning have been used to transmit the political power to society “through the recognition and acceptance of the symbols of legitimacy” (Moore, 1996, pp. 3). Minkenberg states that “public architecture, official buildings and the urban design of official places can be can always be interpreted as ingredients of the establishment of political legitimacy” (Minkenberg, 2014, pp. 3). From the widely acknowledged symbolic meaning of public buildings, it is possible to argue that the political-economic climate of different periods could be observed widely in the landscapes of power.

### Public Buildings As the Units of Spatial Analysis

As a part of the infrastructural provision and public works, public buildings serve the society for administrative, recreational, employment, health and safety purposes to the society. The buildings housing post offices, courthouses, community centres, government agencies, schools, libraries, auditoriums, and other civic institutions are funded and constructed by the state to support daily public life. Carmona (2010, pp. 169), in his influential study on the public space, extends the definition of the concept beyond financing and construction by classifying the types of space according to their distinctive characteristics. Here, among the property-related public space categories, in contrast to the commonly acknowledged definition of the public space. Carmona exemplifies privately owned public buildings in forms of retail spaces (privately owned

but publicly accessible spaces), visible private spaces (physically private, but visually public space) and third place spaces (public and private meeting and social places). Therefore, public buildings can be defined as a particular property that “bridge cultural and economic divides, and places of both protest and celebration” (PPS, 2018).

Public offices are produced as showcase of the authority, and among them, ministry buildings, being the utmost units of the administrative system, are constructed intentionally in order to convey the image of authority to the public. Based on the symbolic nature of these units, the ministry buildings have been designated as the subject of this paper.

The political and economic systems of the states determine the planning scheme and the design approach of administrative public buildings. In addition, the decisions on the location of such public buildings are taken with respect to the dominant economic and political systems that can implement different spatial regulations based on their land market and policy frameworks. Ulug (2004) states that urban design and architecture generate ideological effects in so far as they create space and make the meaning operational in the built environment to sustain relations of domination. However, in the literature, the extent of public obtained through the production of public buildings has been understudied in terms of urban planning and policy.

In the evaluation of public buildings with a particular focus on ministry buildings, the method applied in the study relies on a periodization allowing to intersect their construction years with the pre-determined periods showing the identical social and economic composition of the state. Since the foundation of the Republic, Turkey has experienced different economic and political approaches resulting in varied social and spatial outcomes. The research, conducted in Ankara, one of the newly planned capital cities of the last century, allows observing the change in the city's social and economic composition of its urban structure within the last century. In this respect, the periods followed in the analysis can be divided into three: the construction period (1920s-1940s), liberal years (1950s-1990s), and neoliberal era (2000 to the present). Despite the extensive documentation on early republican years, the existing academic literature on the design of the recent public buildings is limited; articles and reports were pieced together to provide a comprehensive and continuous discussion on the spatial organisation of ministry buildings. The analysis of the spatial distribution of public buildings is done to present the symbolic reflection of the authority, its political and iconographic space, and its intended urban characteristic.

The aim of this paper is to provide a basis not only to discuss contemporary spatial implications but also

to compare different practises from a place-sensitive perspective. In this context, this paper starts with the identification of political and economic structure of the construction period. The first part evaluates the spatial configuration, architectural styles and symbolic meanings of the ministry buildings located in *Bakanlıklar* District, produced in the early Republican years. Subsequent sections present the liberal and neoliberal years and the relevant implementations influencing the city's spatial composition. Here, with a particular focus on the 2000s, the ministry buildings constructed since the 1950s were discussed in terms of their spatial organization, architecture and symbolic messages. The final part concludes by each period being evaluated as concrete forms and material expressions of power through the spatial organization of public buildings with differing political and economic backgrounds.

### Production of Public Buildings: Ankara in the Construction Years

After having gained its independence, Turkey accepted a governmental model based on national sovereignty by severing the state's traditional ties with the Ottoman Empire. A number of social reforms were carried out in the construction of nation-state in accordance with the vision of modernity. One of the most radical reforms was the proclamation of Ankara as the new capital, which replaced Istanbul on October 13, 1923, shortly before the establishment of the Republic. In line with the economic rationalism and modernism ideals, the nation-state was structured around the new capital and constituted the mechanisms of national administration. The Republican regime aimed to create a capital city that would be a model for Anatolian cities by addressing modernity and a western life style in connection with the nation building project. The Grand National Assembly and new administrative units of the Republic, therefore, had to be institutionalized not only ideologically, but also spatially. In order to achieve this goal, urban planning efforts that provide total control on urban areas were initiated as a part the reformist approach of the republican regime. The new independent state aimed at transforming the town into a western capital city with contemporary planning paradigms. Modern urban planning and architecture “was imported as a symbol of the radical program prepared for creating a westernized and secular nation of a young regime breaking its ties to the past and as an instrument to achieve these goals” (Bozdogan, 2002, pp. 18). Despite industrialization was prioritized, the main application domain of the modernization movement was urbanism and architecture. Thus, urban plans and public buildings developed by state initiatives would be the concrete steps of the modernization ideology of the period.

Idealized as a model for the Republican modernization, the capital had been a small town of 20,000 people with a formidable citadel with its historical Hittites roots (Vale, 2008). The new political order established the modern institutions of the Republic so that the new urban development was expected to site the major governmental buildings and public spaces for the capital city of the young ambitious nation with grand aspirations. In doing so, the new state allocated a significant part of its scarce resources to the construction of Ankara. The very first attempt at a development plan for Ankara dates back the appointment of Carl Christoph Lorcher in 1923 (Cengizkan, 2004). Although Lorcher's plan designed for a population of 25,000 people was rejected in part due to disagreements over design proposals concerning transformation of the old town around Ankara Castle, his proposals for the new city were accepted to meet the growing demand for housing, which would also constituted the spatial basis of the Republican institutions, boulevards, and squares (Cengizkan, 2004; Gunay, 2006). Since Lorcher's plan was limited in size and in scope to guide the construction phase, an international competition was held in 1927 to prepare an urban development plan for the city. Prof. Hermann Jansen, the winner of the competition, would be the author of the plan enacted in 1932.

During the construction phase of the new capital, the creation of places to be worthy of nation was aimed by comprehensive and futuristic planning decisions. The Jansen plan was structured for the following 50 years around an estimated population of 300,000. To ensure the development project, in accordance with the statist approach, 3 million m<sup>2</sup> of land were expropriated by Law no. 583 in 1925 (Tankut, 1993). In line with principles of the City Beautiful movement, a zoning approach was applied in order to differentiate urban functions geographically around an impressive centre. In this way, administrative, residential, recreational, industrial, health and educational zones were created in the new city, apart from the existing historical areas.

Jansen's plan envisioned the governmental centre to represent the landmarks of republican ideology and to display national prestige. The planning approach was to generate a centre with administrative and business entities within the entire spatial organization of the city. The quarter of ministries, known as *Bakanlıklar*, has led to the development of a central business district around itself, therefore, as Gunay claims, the locations of the administrative units served the continuity and strength of the new centre (Gunay, 2006). The locations of Republican institutions were established along with the spine representing the urban growth axis. Jansen's choice of location for the quarter of ministries chimed with the

ideals of the new regime by encouraging growth towards the south of the city, and by providing appropriate space for new development (Vale, 2008). Intentionally located in the focus of the new town, the siting of governmental offices would reflect the revolutionary spatial characteristics of Ankara and highlight the power of the state symbolically.

The governmental buildings were designed and constructed between 1930-1935 on a regularly sloping area within the triangular centre. With its public spaces, squares, walkways, monuments, and architecture, the urban design of the quarter would serve as the locus for the social activities of the new citizens. In the Jansen plan, straight, wide, and monumental boulevards, namely *Ataturk Boulevard* and *Milli Mudafaa Avenue* were designed to border the administrative district and to connect it with different urban functions. The central location of the district improved accessibility for both pedestrian and vehicle traffic along these boulevards. In the making of the urban space for the capital city, Ataturk Boulevard played a significant role for Ankara. The north-south axis of the city was determined to connect the old and new towns and to identify the newly planned administrative, residential, recreational, industrial, health and educational zones (see Figure 1). In this respect, the axis separates the quarter of ministries and the parliament buildings from each other according to the plan, keeping both old and new administrative centres. Constituted the spine of the city, the boulevard began from the first national assembly building in Ulus and ended at the presidential palace in Cankaya (Turhanoglu, 2010, pp. 312). The Presidential Palace or so called the Pink Villa (*Pembe Köşk*) was designed by Clemens Holzmeister, the author of ministry buildings' plan of the quarter, to instill the cultural codes of Western life-style through its contemporary design principles in its form, plans, facades (Akcan, 2012). The palace was built in 1932 and intentionally located at



**Figure 1.** Ataturk Boulevard. (Source: Ankara digital city archive, accessed: 13.12.2012).

the end of the urban spine, and also at the highest point of the new city, to symbolically express the image of the modernity.

The quarter began with Guven Park, including the Security Monument which symbolically represents the political power of the Republic (see Figure 2). At the apex of the southern end, the Turkish Grand National Assembly was constructed to designate the significance of the district (Ulug, 2004). Apart from the Assembly, the quarter included the buildings of the Supreme Court of Appeals, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Public Works, National Education, the Internal Affairs, and National Defence along with the General Directorate of Security, the Gendarmerie General Command, and the General Military Staff. In addition to the public buildings in the quarter, the park with its pool and trees provides a gathering space and promenade for local residents. Keskinok states that, “contrary to the historical gardens of the Empire that were based on the separation of gender and social strata, Republican Parks were the places where socialization and recreation occurred together” (Keskinok, 2010, pp. 185). In this respect, the public spaces of Ankara served as a model for the modern and contemporary social life of a homogenous society and enhanced the public realm.

In the early Republican years, the monumentality of the new public buildings was obtained through the Ottoman Revivalist approach or the First National Style characterized by symmetrical and axial mass design, pointed arches, tiles, wide eaves and ornamented front facades (Batur, 2005). Since the new political order aimed at establishing a new symbolism, the architectural works would be kept free from the signs belonging the legacy of past, and thus gaining a formal-looking modernism with the help

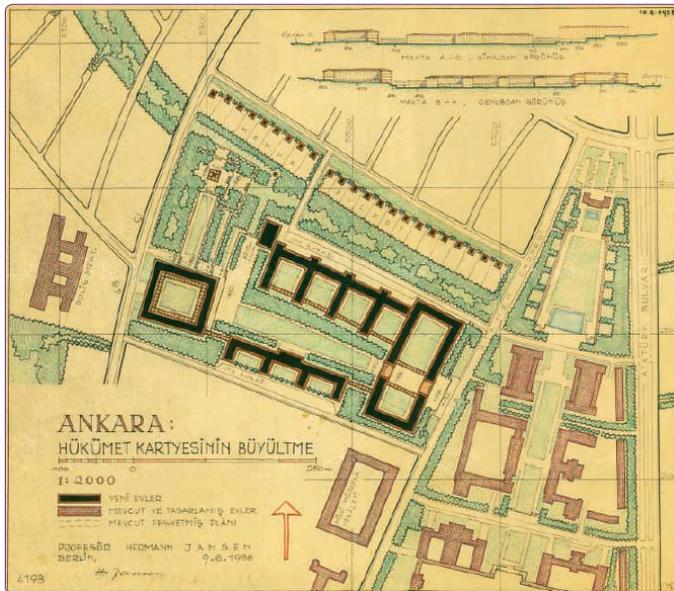


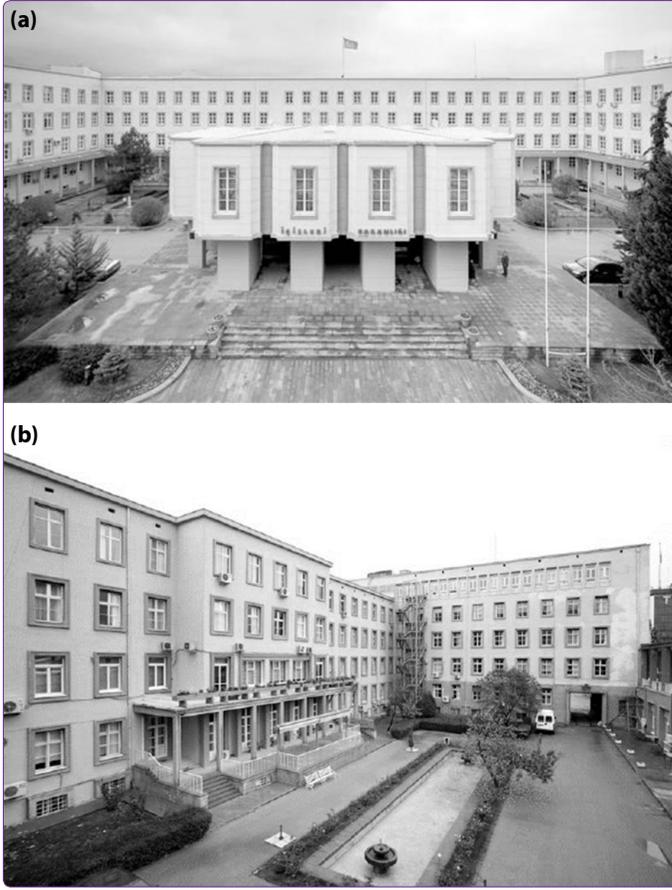
Figure 2. Quarter of Ministries in Ankara (Source: Jansen, 1932.).

of invited foreign architects to achieve a progressive modernism as in Western world. In this respect, the government commissioned the architectural projects of the administrative centre of the new capital to an Austrian architect, Clemens Holzmeister who was invited to Ankara for the construction of Ministry of National Defence in 1927 (Balimir, 2010). Holzmeister contributed to the construction period of Turkey by designing the buildings of Ministry of Public Works, National Defence, Internal Affairs, Supreme Court of Justice, and the other official buildings such as General Staff headquarters, Central Bank, Austrian embassy building, Presidential Residence, and most importantly the Grand National Assembly (Balimir, 2010).

The architectural culture of the construction period was influenced by protective economic policies (Bozdogan, 2002). The global economic crisis of 1929 and protective policies resulted an economy primarily based on the trade of local goods. (Aslanoglu, 1980). The modern architecture of the period was formed by cubic forms, Cartesian grids, and concrete, glass and steel materials according to the needs and means of an industrializing country. In line with this perspective, Holzmeister applied a common attitude to public buildings in terms of symmetry, proportion, axially and façade details (Bozdogan, 2002; Aslanoglu, 1980). These buildings had both simple and modern traces in terms of their construction methods, materials, and forms in order to create the symbol of the regime and to convey its ideals to the nation (see Figure 3). Thus, the buildings would be the visual representations of modernity and economic structure accompanied by the Republican ideology. Public buildings contributed to the creation of publicness by visually inspiring those seeing them with their facades, volume and scale.

The cubic forms of buildings and clear geometric shapes, as well as the simplicity of their facades clarify the societal image of the new spatial order and promote homogeneity among citizens (Ulug, 2004). Large, simple, symmetrical masses of the public buildings appear harmonious in proportions and volumes. They were built not more than five stories high in order to adapt to the general silhouette of Ankara. Other characteristics of these buildings were their monumental entrances with stairs, high colonnades, plain roofs, corner cantilevers, large glass surfaces, and horizontal lane windows (Aslanoglu, 1980). The plainness and simplicity of these modern forms and unornamented facades were seen as extensions of the rationality and economic structure of the Early Republican period.

In the Early Republican period, public spaces and buildings were created within the urban spatial pattern to consolidate national unity and establish a homogenous society. As a product of this vision, urban planning and



**Figure 3.** The Ministry of Internal Affairs (a) and The Ministry of Public Works (b) constructed in the early Republican period (Source: Ergand, 2014.).

architecture were intentionally used as an instrument to build a new collective memory and to represent contemporariness of the new state to the world and sovereignty and modernity to the Turkish nation.

### Dispersal of Public Buildings: Ankara in Liberal Years

In the following years of the Turkish Republic, a substantial change was experienced in social, political and economic structure of the country. Since the 1950s, the country has witnessed transformations such as the transition to a multi-party regime, adoption of a liberal economic policies, mass rural-urban migration, population concentration in cities, and therefore emerging populism in cultural and social domains. By the 1980s, liberal economic policies became dominant and the effects of globalization intensified. The state tended to reduce its functions with the effect of free market economy, privatization policies were consolidated as a common stance in the world system. As a result, political and economic transformations have led to dynamic development patterns, a rise in formal and informal construction, an expansion of the city borders, and an urban population concentration in the inner city.

Ankara, the capital of the nation, experienced echoes of all these transformations in both its spatial and architectural structure. Due to the increase in the urban population Jansen plan's, falling behind the population projection realized in the 1950s, another competition was held to regulate the city's growth. Approved in 1957, the Uybadin-Yucel Plan left the Ataturk Boulevard as the only axis between the old and new centres while preserving its existing central features and loading it with various functions. In the meantime, the number of people working in public services increased, so the need for land provision for public services accelerated.

Construction efforts continued for public buildings until the 1950's, but its scope remained limited due to financial constraints stemming from the World War II. In this period, only one ministry building due to limited public investment, the construction of the Ministry of Agriculture, which took five years between 1944 and 1949, was possible. In the 1950s, new governmental institutions were founded on the *Eskişehir* highway in the southwest of the quarter of ministries, which was regarded as an extension of the district. These institutions including the General Directorate of Highways, the State Hydraulic Works, the State Statistical Institute, and the State Supply Office were located on the land allocated from the territory of military academy (Altaban, 1987). However, due to the increasing demand for public buildings but the limited allocation of resources in the 1960s, the administrative units had to move to rental buildings in different parts of the city centre. According to Altaban (1987), between 1960 and 1970, the Ministries of Development and Housing, Tourism, Rural Affairs, Transport, Culture, Social Affairs and Security, and Youth and Sports were scattered among the rental properties across the city.

During the 1970s, the Ankara Metropolitan Planning Bureau was tasked with preparing the Master Plan for Ankara for 1990, estimating the population to be 2.8 to 3.6 million; this plan remained valid until 2007 (Gunay, 2006). According to the survey carried out by the Bureau, around 50 hectares were required for the settlement of the dispersed public buildings in the 1970's (Altaban, 1987). Using the techniques of both structural and comprehensive plans, the Master Plan sought to coordinate the planning and implementation processes, and two relevant key strategies were adopted. The first was the creation of the western corridor as the main direction of urban growth, and the second was the decentralization of the central districts, *Kızılay* and *Bakanlıklar* along the *Eskişehir* axis as a part of this enlargement towards the western line. The decision concerning the development corridor, directed the urban growth towards the western plains, supporting the commercial and administrative units there instead of

the dense urban core. The proposal of the Plan to create a second quarter of ministries was not implemented, but additional state institutions were constructed in a cluster near the governmental district, in line with the desired direction of development direction. The Plan argued that public buildings have a regulatory impact on the urban macroform; however, location-related problems continued to increase until the 2000s due to the lack of land supply for public buildings.

In the meantime, the need to establish ministries was put on agenda of governments occasionally. In particular, it was aimed to place public buildings close to the quarter of ministries, and along the *Eskişehir* highway. As an initial example of the process, the General Directorate of Highways was placed on the *Eskişehir* axis to strengthen the development in the western direction. In 1963, the General Directorate was designed as a campus by Fikret Cankut, the winner of the national architectural project competition. Similarly, the General Directorate of Hydraulic Works was built at a neighbouring location in 1970, and designed by national architects, Enver Tokay, Behruz Cinici, and Teoman Doruk. As in the early years of the Republican years, process of developing ministries in the following period contributed to the development of the central area. However, the main difference between these two periods was seen in their spatial organization. These units were affected by the campus-like development trend, and individually designed to meet the needs of the period. Thus, the spatial configuration of public buildings in the liberal era remained inadequate to create a common milieu. Additionally, the individually designed buildings with expanding masses, built both vertical and horizontal did not successfully show consistency with their architectural styles (see Figure 4).

During the liberal years, despite the proposals of long-term planning schemes, public buildings were not addressed as a whole, and failed to generate a symbol of unity and consistency that would denote the power of state as achieved in the previous period. The cluster of public institutions succeeded in driving the urban growth and central development in the desired direction as proposed in the master plan of the 1990s. However, since each administrative unit had its own territory, their neighbouring locations did not provide a public milieu for social practices and interaction. Moreover, their individualistic design did not allow the creation of a strong image for society.

### Decentralization of Public Buildings: Ankara in Neoliberal Years

Since the 2000s, the global economic structure has been under the influence of neoliberal policies. While the



**Figure 4.** The Ministry of Employment and Social Security (a) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (b) constructed until 2000s (Source: Author's archive, 2017 (a) and Emek Construction, 2020 (b)).

neoliberal policies have an impact on land-use decisions with a market-oriented approach, states seeking to develop a new vision in the spatial structure are on the rise. In Turkish case, in addition to the decisive role of the market, the central and local authorities have become significant actors in the spatial organization of cities again. In the meantime, while Istanbul has gained a central role for capital and global networks, Ankara continues to be a political centre at the national level and undergone a significant change in its spatial order with the influence of neoliberal economic policies that prevailed following the 1980s.

The newly produced administrative units were located along the *Eskişehir* highway in accordance with the 1990 Plan which was determined the corridor as the development axis of the city. However, as Altaban (1987) states, due to the land allocation problems and lack of funds, the proposal for Second Quarter of Ministries suggesting the location of 8 ministries serving in dispersed locations could not be realized. Despite the regulatory effects of public buildings on urban growth, a comprehensive

approach at the urban scale was not developed. Rather, disorganized urban planning efforts guided the relocation and dispersion process of public buildings until the 2000s. With the 2000s, in parallel to the land expropriation policy of the early republican era, the period seeks to find existing public lands and sites with potential for easy expropriation for the location of public buildings, particularly around the *Eskişehir* highway, the city's new prestigious area.

In this period, in terms of the spatial organization of public buildings, new public buildings were settled on the western corridor by strengthening their visual representation and ensuring continuity between the *Bakanlıklar* quarter and the periphery. The new public buildings are strongly linked to city centre and other facilities along the corridor with a metro line running along the highway. The transit system, other than the local buses between these units and city centre can be regarded as a significant tool in overcoming the problem of integration to the city centre and supporting the corridor development. However, the dispersed locations of the units make it difficult to perceive a pattern of centrality. The separated locations of these units limited the spatial and functional interaction between each other. Although the newly produced public buildings managed the formation of a protected, monumental place, loaded with idea of symbolic power, the surrounding environment has failed to generate considerable diversity in the urban setting. Since all public buildings are individually designed and access is limited, the surroundings of these buildings remain inadequate to create public spaces in the form of squares and plazas.

In architectural terms, the ministry buildings are constructed with hi-tech methods, giving an air of globalization. Post-modern traces can be seen in their forms and materials. Thanks to the individually designed structures, the diversity of their form, façade or material blocks prevents unity in silhouette. The existing discourse was symbolized by the architecture of the new public buildings with their facades, grand masses and volumes (see Figure 5). Unlike the human scale applied in public buildings of the early republican era, the structures of administrative units constitute examples of monumental scale. Thus, the landscape provided by the new ministry buildings denotes the urban politics of the neoliberal era through their forms and materials.

### Evaluation of the Spatial Organisation of the Ministry Buildings

Ankara in its present urban configuration hosts administrative units that are primarily settled in the city centre as it was targeted in the Jansen Plan and along the *Eskişehir* highway according to the 1990 Master Plan. The new locations of public offices have led and supported



**Figure 5.** The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (a) and the Ministry of Customs and Trade (b) constructed in post-2000s (Source: Orhan, E. (2017) author's personal archive).

to the sprawling of the city along the western corridor (see Figure 6). However, despite the practices supporting this corridor development, the following development patterns, ordinary mid and high-rise apartment buildings in addition to low-rise residential units as well as newly settled office towers have filled the gaps between different urban functions along the *Eskişehir* highway. On the one hand, the urban development along the western corridor has been shaped by the public institutions in addition to the universities, shopping malls, business entities, office functions and residential districts. On the other hand, the new development process has triggered the relocation of private enterprise offices as well as public buildings from the central area to the corridor leading to a considerable influence on the city centre. Since private-sector

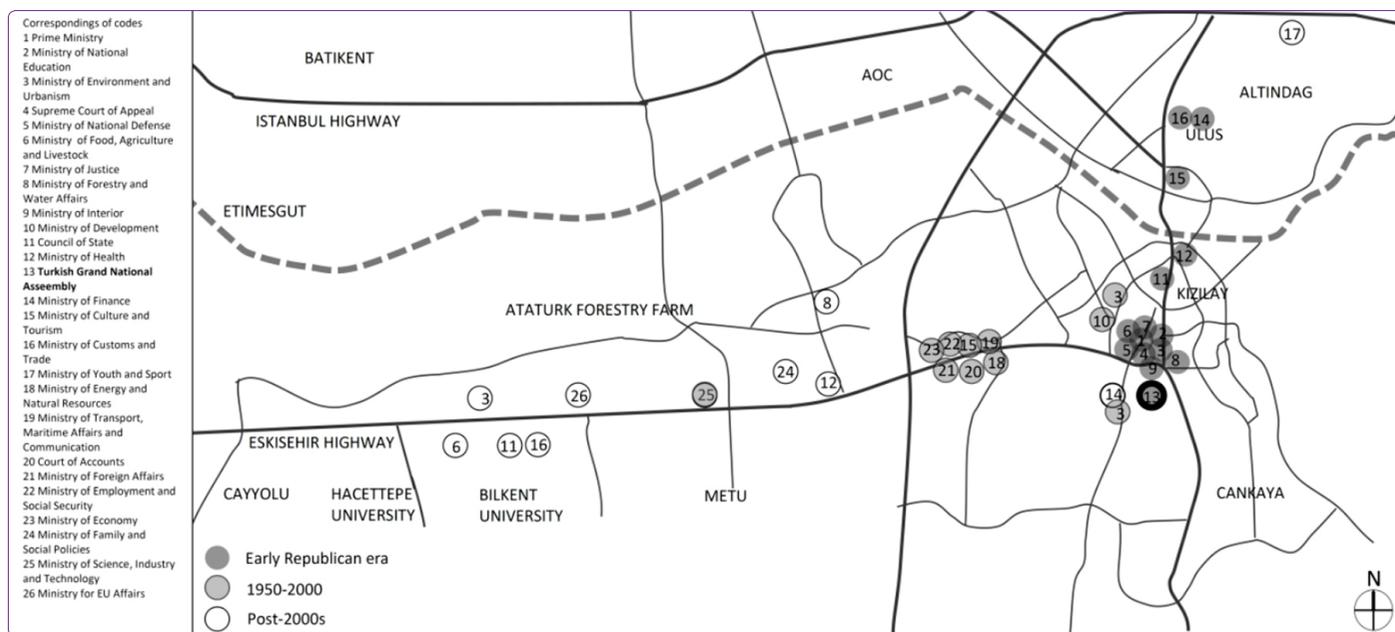


Figure 6. Current locations of ministries (Source: Orhan, E. (2019) author’s personal archive).

companies and government establishments moved from the overcrowded centre to the western corridor, the city’s central and mono-centric structure has declined. As the corridor has been promoted by the process of dispersion and relocation of business activities, the central district has been inadequate to adapt to the new conditions. Thus, the separation of public buildings and other business functions contributed to the decentralization process of the central district that had been the source of public space, public culture and social interaction.

In addition to the locational dispersion of the administrative units, the design composition of the buildings housing ministries differed in parallel with the shift in the social, cultural and economic structure (see Table 1). The geometrically designed, simple and undecorated masses identified the silhouette of the city centre during the Early Republican period. The dispersal of the units from the core of the city was accompanied by their visual divergence from the previous period that could be shown by the proportions and volumes of the

Table 1. National composition, planning approach and design principles of periods

Periods	Main motives of national composition	Planning approach	Design principles
Construction years	Statist economy Authority Modernity National sovereignty	Comprehensive plans Compactness Strong city centres Revolution space New institutions Rationality Publicness and squares Western life style Open spaces	Monumental Comprehensiveness Continuity Balance and coherence Hierarchy Human scale Simplicity Geometric architecture Homogeneity
Liberal years	Liberal economy Populism Privatisation	Piecemeal planning Population agglomeration Campus-like developments	Discontinuity Fragmentation in coherence Dispersion Heterogeneity
Neoliberal years	Globalisation Authority Post-modernity	Urban Sprawl Suburbanisation New administrative units Alternative public spaces Individuality	Vertical monumentality Grand architecture New urban silhouette Diversity Globalized landscape

structures. Today, the recent examples of ministry buildings reorganized along the new development axis contributed to the formation of a new landscape with their individually shaped and monumentally designed structures.

### Conclusion

Political and economic transformations have multi-dimensional impacts on the restructuring of cities. In this context, different periods identified with different political and economic climates produce identical spatial configurations and symbols in cities. Particularly, public buildings play a crucial role in transmitting these political and economic approaches of states to societies. Experiencing different trends since the proclamation of the Republic, Turkey presents a significant case in understanding the repercussions of political and economic structures on cities. Hence, this paper examines the spatial configuration of these periods by focusing on public buildings as a product of state interventions. Planned in accordance with a vision of modernization and strong spatial concentration, Ankara was intended to be a role model for the rest of the national territory. Since then, the city has been experiencing construction and transformation processes in its spatial composition. Thus, the urban development of the city provides the opportunity to assess the production and spatial organization of public buildings from 1923 until today.

Comparing the production process of public buildings during the construction period, the liberal years and the neoliberal era, it can be observed that these periods differ in term of political and economic basis, and the approach adopted for public building production. These deviations obtained from the analysis highlight four points. The first concerns the planning approach behind the location choices for public buildings. In accordance with the modernism ideals, Ankara remains the first western-style planned city, in the history of the Turkish Republic. The administrative district designed in the construction period was a part of the entire urban structure. Despite structural plans and plan decisions that coincided with the liberal era in later years, partial applications, limited resources and difficulty in allocating sufficient land reduce the impact of spatial organisation of public buildings due to the overcrowding of the central district. Compared to the comprehensive plan approach of the former period, designed to regulate the spatial order of an entire city, the planning approach of the later period is dominated by piecemeal implications which are inadequate for the production of a well-integrated space syntax.

The second point is that the location choices or public buildings affect the city's centrality. In the former period defined in this study, one can observe the quarter of

ministries that played a crucial role in directing the development of a new town by enhancing its centrality. Similarly, the following periods encouraged the formation of a new centrality by urban decentralization as a result of the spatial organization of newly produced administrative units. Therefore, it is noteworthy to claim that public buildings developed in each period had substantial impacts on the urban development of Ankara. The quarter of ministries fostered the emergence of a new core in the central district, and the newly produced public buildings also supported the formation of a new centrality in the western corridor by driving decentralization process.

Thirdly, particularly both the early republican and neoliberal periods make use of public buildings as the physical expression of bureaucratic space. During the construction period, urban design and architectural principles with strong ties to modernity were employed as the instruments for consolidating Ankara's function as the capital city. Particularly, the quarter played a major role in this period in giving an identity to the new town by offering unity and coherence in its design. Likewise, the newly produced public buildings also supported urban development at a macro level in the desired direction. However, in the next period, the administrative units were not designed as a cluster of public buildings. Rather, these units were produced individually, so that they could not take enough advantage of the ability to have a cumulative effect on the development of a coherent and unified image on society.

Finally as well as their spatial organization, the architectural design of public buildings improves the configuration of the image of these bureaucratic spaces. In the early republican period, the landscape of the ministry buildings represented rationalism and functionality through their designs, and aimed to give the capital city an identity and uniqueness. Afterward, on the one hand the need for office area grows with the increasing number of staff and specialized structure of institutions, and on the other hand, the land allocation could not be easily meet the expansion need of public buildings. Therefore, in the latter periods, they were settled individually, and produced their own monumentality. In architectural terms, the human scale adopted in the construction period has been replaced by massive buildings accompanying the landscape of the new business corridor.

To sum, the spatial organization of public buildings is expected to serve the development of cities in accordance with the desired growth direction, and to contribute to the image of the bureaucracy spaces. The locations and buildings of administrative units are the outcomes of economic and political processes. This paper asserted that the transformations that occurred in the political and

economic approaches, as seen in the Turkish case, from a protective and statist to liberal and neoliberal economic policies, not only affect the built environment but also they are influential on the symbolic meaning of cities. Each period makes its mark on urban space, particularly through public buildings. These processes can be observed in Ankara in the construction of public buildings, particularly in ministry buildings. Based on the findings of this study, it should be noted that the expansion need of public buildings should be considered in urban plans; and a comprehensive planning approach is required here with regard to the fundamental role of public buildings in forming the identity and image of a capital city. Although a partial planning approach has often been used in the production of public buildings in the Turkish case, a comprehensive understanding in planning should be fostered both for developing administrative units having coherence and unity in order to generate a strong image for the society, and for revealing a cumulative impact on urban growth and centrality.

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